

Edition: Under the Magnifying Glass

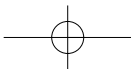
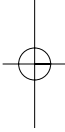
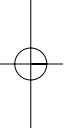
ŠEKI RADONČIĆ

# A FATAL FREEDOM

The Deportation of Bosnian Refugees from Montenegro



HUMANITARIAN LAW CENTRE



To the victims of the deportations and their families

After the slaughter, all that remains are always graves, memories and words. Every half a century or so that passes between two episodes of slaughter in the Balkans, new more ruthless warriors arrive, who, with the strength of old hatreds and new weapons, bury the bones of the previous victims in fresh graves. The grass then covers the mounds, memories of the atrocities and those who committed them fade in time. Heroes are soon forgotten in any case. Only the written word remains.

The Author

## INTRODUCTION

At this moment, millions of refugees roam the world, fleeing before the whirlwind that has engulfed their homes and homelands. All they carry with them is fear and remembrance. Everything else, whatever they made for themselves or inherited from their ancestors they leave at the mercy of armed men whose guns and knives they are fleeing. Whether their tragedy will become even greater depends on the good will of good people, in whose houses or countries the refugees have taken shelter, and on whether humanity may yet conquer hatred and the ancient greed for new territories.

Like a river which overflows but sooner or later returns to its bed, at the end of a war most refugees return to their destroyed homes, to their homeland. Others never live to see this moment: broken by grief and illness they leave their bones in the country where they have sought temporary refuge. There are those who until the end of their lives roam the world looking for a new homeland and peace of mind. There are those very rare ones whom misfortune helps raise to dizzy heights, such as the Czech girl refugee Madeleine Albright who fled the Nazis and almost half a century later became Secretary of State of the United States of America.

This is a true story about refugees, but an unusual one. It is a story about people who managed to flee the war and take refuge in another country, but were illegally arrested by the authorities there and returned to the people from whom they had fled. This is a story of refugees from the hilly Balkans who sought shelter from the cruelty and killing in their homeland of Bosnia and Herzegovina by fleeing to their next-door neighbour, Montenegro. Tiny Montenegro, blessed with beautiful mountains and beaches stretching along the Adriatic coast was, until the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, one of the six equal states of that country which parted in bloodshed. Montenegro did not formally participate in that terrible war. It is because of this that the Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees took refuge in this place of magnificent beauty and proud men. But they made a mistake: the Montenegrin police hunted the Bosnian refugees down like beasts and deported them to the para-military forces of the war criminal Radovan Karadžić. Only a few survived the hunt, deportation, torture and horror of the Serb concentration camps in Bosnia.

This is a story about them, and in memory of them.

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## A TRUST BETRAYED

In the spring of 1992, fleeing the horrors of war, great numbers of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina sought refuge in neighboring Montenegro. Driven out of their own, these frightened people settled in the homes of relatives, friends, or kind-hearted strangers. Some took refuge in holiday resorts owned by Bosnian companies on the Montenegrin coast, the wealthier in their own apartments and holiday houses. That was a mistake: contrary to Montenegrin tradition and ethics, or at least to what they were believed to be, contrary to the Constitution, the law and all international conventions, the Montenegrin police arrested more than a hundred of these Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees and delivered them with their hands bound to Radovan Karadžić's henchmen. Most of them were killed, such as the Klapuh and Avdagić families, refugees from Foča, each family consisting of three members whom Karadžić's "specials" killed in Montenegro.

The hunt for the refugees lasted for days and covered most of Montenegro. The unfortunate people were arrested all along the Montenegrin coast from Ulcinj to Herceg Novi, and inland from Podgorica to Pljevlja. Bosniak refugees were arrested on charges of being extremists, war criminals and common criminals, while Serb refugees were accused of being deserters and traitors.

In organisation, selectiveness and hatred, the persecution of the Bosniaks was similar to the Nazi hunt of the Jews. Adult men were arrested only because of their name, place of birth, or the place where their identity cards were issued. Raids were carried out in streets and squares, houses and holiday homes, pubs and hotel rooms... On the charge of being war criminals, the Montenegrin police arrested and deported reputable Bosnia-Herzegovina businessmen, former mayors, political scientists, engineers, fellow policemen, foresters, young soldiers, officers... even women. Apart from the refugees, Bosniaks who had been living and working on the Montenegrin coast for years or happened to find themselves there on a business trip were taken away, as were Montenegrin citizens whose place of residence was in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Refugees from Bosnia were denounced by neighbours, by unprincipled individuals in the Red Cross, by local sowers of hatred who took a dislike to a Bosnian accent. Among the most meticulous were provocateurs from Bosnia, known as "the bloodhounds", who, passing themselves off as refugees, infiltrated refugee camps with only one aim: to point out to the Montenegrin police the ones that should be arrested.

The race to catch the refugees was joined by the Montenegrin state and secret police, the para-police of Radovan Karadžić, the military police, the reservists.

With no warrants, in the middle of the night or at dawn, sons were taken away in front of their panic-stricken mothers; children cried out for their fathers, wives for their husbands, sisters for brothers. This did not deter the representatives of authority from carrying out their patriotic mission, nor did the pleas of decent householders not to take their relatives and friends from the shelter of their homes. The common people, full of hatred, encouraged the police: "The Turks are there, take them away, take them away..."

Journalists of the state media especially contributed to this atmosphere of a lynching. In addition, it was the duty of Serb intellectuals in interviews, articles and publications to spread and foster hatred of Muslims and Croats in Montenegro. Foremost in this were the followers of Professor Novak Kilibarda, leader of the People's Party. Adhering to Kilibarda's slogan, frequently and publicly proclaimed, that a nineteenth century poem, "The Mountain Wreath" by Montenegro's prince bishop, Petar Petrović Njegoš, was the official programme of this ultra-chauvinistic party, they screamed out Njegoš's lines: "How these renegades do smell", "Hunt we the leper now from out our fold", "Hew down the Devil! Leave of him no trace!", "That they may rid their land of Islam's yoke", "Our land is foul - reeks of this False Religion!"... At the tops of their voices they also sang newly composed rhymes: "Who's second/ I'm first/ to drink of Turkish blood", "We love you, Slobodan, because you hate the Muslims", "How these Turks do smell"...

The collective mood was also evident in the regime daily, *Pobjeda*, which reflected the views of the Montenegrin state leadership. In the column Iz

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časa u čas (From one Moment to Another), at the beginning of June 1992, an article entitled Mobility for Peace<sup>1</sup> was published:

- In recent days police of the Herceg Novi Security Centre while going through lists of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and combing the terrain, have discovered <sup>48</sup> Muslim extremists taking temporary refuge here from well-deserved punishment. The number is probably even higher today, as police action continues unabated and the information of the moment is superseded from hour to hour. The famous leader of The Green Berets, Avdo Štedimlija was apprehended in Igalo recently. Having been "processed" at the Security Centre, he was extradited to the authorities of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same applies to fifty others who broke the law by bloodying their hands or in some other way. At the request of the authorities of Serbian Autonomous District of Herzegovina, the men of the Centre also discovered about a hundred Serbs from that region, aged 18 to 60, capable of defending their historic homes, and extradited them across the state border...- writes Pobjeda.

In carrying out the arrests, the diligent Montenegrin policemen frequently did not allow the refugees to get dressed. They were taken away in pyjamas, shorts, slippers, and held half-naked in cold basements and cells. At the moment of arrest, and especially during their detention, many of the refugees were abused. The furious investigators would beat the tied-up Bosniaks, throw them downstairs, hold knives to their throats. The police took away money, jewellery and cars from those they arrested. Ten years later, some of the cars taken from deported refugees were still to be found among the vehicles used by the Montenegrin police.

However, this orchestrated hatred did not completely extinguish generosity:

- Please, let me just pay him his daily wages, I don't want to owe it to him  
- a man from Perast begged the policemen while they were taking away an arrested Bosniak who had that day worked for him for a modest wage on the building site of his house. The man did not want the foundation of his house contaminated by this debt.

<sup>1</sup> Pobjeda, 8 June 1992, article Mobility for Peace, author Miljenko Vico.

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This is a story of two Montenegros, an old story of the struggle between good and evil: while official Montenegro arrested and deported refugees, the other, made up of independent journalists and a small democratic opposition headed by the Liberals and Social-Democrats, set their face against the atrocities being perpetrated by the Montenegrin authorities on the orders of the Bosnian Serb authorities in Pale in the name of a Greater Serbia.

While investigating this tragedy, for a full thirteen years I talked to the victims, witnesses of the arrests, policemen who took part in the operations, bereft parents, wives, sisters, children. I visited them in their houses, refugee camps and at their offices. Often in various ways they came to me to tell me their sorrows. This book records what became of them.

Besides writing this book, the grievous nature of this crime inspired me to prompt and encourage the families of the victims to seek justice through the courts, before the judicial authorities of Montenegro.

Let us recall: although six decades have passed since the defeat of Fascism, democratic Germany does not seek to diminish her responsibility for what happened during the Nazi period of her history. On the contrary: in a central square in Berlin a great museum has been built dedicated to the Holocaust, next to the institutions that symbolise the greatness and power of the German nation.

In Herceg Novi, from where, following a well-planned operation of arrests, most of the refugees were deported to their deaths, a small monument at least should be erected to the victims of that crime. When Montenegro sees to this, then we will be able to acknowledge her shame and the beginning of some kind of catharsis.

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Sarajevo, April 2005

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## ROUND UP ALL THE MUSLIMS TONIGHT

The collection centre for all Bosnian refugees apprehended throughout Montenegro was in Herceg Novi. Slobodan Pejović was at that time working as an independent inspector for violent crime at the Herceg Novi Security Centre. A sparely-built man with a lean pale face, he speaks of those dramatic days with unmistakable remorse.

He spoke out, he says, immediately after the operation "because of my conscience, because of my children, because of those innocent, dead Bosnian Muslims, killed both here and over there, because of their orphaned children dispersed throughout the world, because of Montenegro's good name".

- I remember it well - Pejović says - that sunny day in May of 1992. Towards the end of the working day, I was told to come at eight o'clock in the evening for a meeting with the Deputy Head of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, Damjan Turković. I entered his office at the appointed time. He was there with two other inspectors, my colleagues, sitting at his desk with a paper in front of him. He says: "Listen, we've received a dispatch from the Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović. You have to round up all the Muslims tonight."

I asked him who these people were, what they had done, and why we were arresting them. He said: "Well, buddy," (a way he had), "Minister Bulatović clearly writes saying that we have to arrest and bring in all Muslims between the ages of 18 and 60 to the Herceg Novi Security Centre and surrender them to the authorities of the Serbian Republic." I asked him again: "But why, what have these people done?" He replied: "The Muslim jails are full of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Muslim refugees should also be brought in and handed over to Radovan Karadžić's police so that an exchange can take place."

"How are we supposed to find them, when we don't know where these people are?" I asked again. "Don't worry. Their houses have been pinpointed", said Turković and handed me a list. He explained that I was the

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leader of the group and that two policemen would be going with me, and another person. "Have we got anything in writing, some kind of arrest warrant?" I asked again. "No, no, just start the operation, bring them in and hand them over to the duty service. Write down their names on an ordinary piece of paper and leave it on my desk", he said.

Pejović went into the duty room and called out the policemen who were supposed to take part in the operation.

- There was also some fellow in combat uniform there, covered in mud, as if he had just come out of the trenches. That was the first and last time I saw him. We got into the car, a service Volkswagen, and set off towards Meljine. We stopped outside a two-storey house across the way from the Prvoborac men's hostel. About thirty men, women and children started to pour out of the surrounding houses. One of them, very sweaty and dressed in shorts, was yelling: "The Turks are there, the Turks are there. Take them away, take them away"... I was sickened. I started moving them back. In the beginning they were surprised by my reaction, and then they moved away and looked on from a distance.

The policemen went into the house. All hell broke loose.

- You could hear children crying, women screaming, chaos. In the middle of the living room a man weighing over 120 kilos was sitting, naked to the waist, with a huge scar on his chest. An older woman was drying him off with a towel. I asked him what was the matter and he told me he'd undergone heart surgery and had a bypass. I asked him if he had any medical documentation. When he answered in the affirmative, I told him to take it and come with us. The one in combat uniform, without asking anyone and without any authorisation, started searching the house. You could see he was well trained. He found a man hiding under a bed, his legs protruding slightly. He ordered him to come out. He found another one hidden on the balcony and went on searching.

I was sickened - continued Pejović - I told him: "That's enough, we're leaving now. There are three of us and three of them, the car can't take any more." He obeyed. We got into the car and arrived at the Security Centre.

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I told my colleague Mihajlović to take the sick man to the hospital, so that they could give an opinion as to whether such a person could be kept in detention and whether he was fit to travel. I took down personal information from the other two refugees and wrote it on a piece of paper as I had been told. They were about thirty years old. I don't remember their names.

Pejović then left the office and went into the duty room.

- That's where we were supposed to hand over the arrested persons. I asked my colleagues where the other arrested people were. They pointed towards the restaurant. There I saw two groups of people. In one corner were Serbs, in the other Muslims. The Serbs were laughing, but the Muslims, as if sensing misfortune, were sad and dejected. This scene, and also the tears of the children and the crying of the women back at the house made me feel restless and unhappy. I decided to let the two of them slip away through a side entrance to the building. I also found the sick one. The doctor had stated that because of his ill health he couldn't be detained. I let him go too. I know nothing further about them.

Unlike his colleague Slobodan Pejović, Damjan Turković, deputy of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, had no moral qualms: he praised the police operation at the founding meeting of the Veterans Association of the 1991-92 War in that town.

"There are incursions by foreigners who seem not to know where the border is, and people with blood on their hands who think they have found refuge here. We are effectively rounding them up and returning them to where they came from to be tried or rewarded. There is no room in Herceg Novi for murderers and war criminals. Each child and family will be welcomed into this environment, but as for the soldier, he will be returned home, given a rifle and told to defend his hearth", wrote Podgorica daily Pobjeda<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Pobjeda, 30 May 1992, article: Boka is Safe, author M.V.

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Next day, in an interview to the local radio station Herceg Novi, later carried by the opposition daily Liberal<sup>3</sup>, Turković was even more specific:

- We at the Herceg Novi Security Centre are taking every measure and action to prevent anyone who has in any way come into conflict with the law and bloodied their hands, as they say, from finding refuge in the Gulf of Kotor. Up to now, we have apprehended forty-one Muslims, and we have the authority, on the orders of the Serbian Republic, to apprehend anyone between the ages of 18 and 60 in the precinct of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, and hand them over to the collection centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have apprehended 92 such persons in the last three days.

- What about Avdo Štedimlija, who was mentioned in the press and who was in Herceg Novi? - asked a reporter.

TURKOVIĆ: Avdo Štedimlija was checked by the workers of the Security Centre. He was brought into the Security Centre and detained for three days until he had been checked out, and was then handed over. He was exchanged for someone else and is currently in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- There is a terrible story going about town about a sabotage attempt. You denied this yesterday. Does the possibility nonetheless exist of someone doing something of the kind in Herceg Novi?

TURKOVIĆ: In this difficult situation, we are trying to prevent things of this kind from happening in Herceg Novi, because the police are, even with the small numbers they have, working day and night... About the people being disturbed, it is true that an extremist from the Muslim ranks who was detained at the Herceg Novi Security Centre escaped from an upper floor and jumped from the window. However, we jumped after him, so he was caught, imprisoned and handed over to the collection centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>3</sup> Liberal, 27 June 1994.

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- Were any weapons found on him?

TURKOVIĆ: No, no weapons were found on this person, since he had been arrested a couple of days previously. This person's name is Muhamed Pilavdžić, he was born in 1960 in Tuzla and is a mechanical engineer, employed by the Orao Company in Sarajevo. He arrived in the Herceg Novi Security Centre precinct on 30 April. He was wanted by the Republika Srpska, and on this basis we handed him over. In the course of this day we have brought in eleven Muslims and five Serbs, and we shall continue this operation every day, because this is what Republika Srpska is requesting. We are escorting Serbs back in order for them to respond to the call-up to enlist in the army, anyone between the ages of 18 and 60, and the Muslims who are wanted because of what they did there.

Only four months previously, Muhamed Pilavdžić had married his great love Sanja Bošnjak, a Montenegrin. Seeking refuge from certain war, the couple left Sarajevo and for Belgrade, and then, at the inducement of their friends, arrived in Igalo. They moved into the Simo Milošević hotel. Not wishing to see their love spoiled by the nationalist madness already raging through the former Yugoslavia, they applied for and received visas from the Australian authorities in Belgrade. They also made reservations for air tickets - one way.

However, at around ten o'clock on 26 May, the dreams of the married couple were shattered when their room was raided by the Montenegrin police. After a search, they took Muhamed away for "a preliminary interview". Sanja tried in vain to explain that her husband was not an extremist or an enemy, even showing their tickets for Australia. While he was being taken away he managed to tell Sanja to wait for him there and that he would be back.

Time passed slowly. Sanja feverishly thought of ways to save her husband. And Muhamed did everything to regain his freedom and get back to Sanja. He decided on an almost suicidal act: he tried to save himself by throwing himself through a second-storey window of the Herceg Novi Security Centre and succeeded in getting away, but unfortunately for him, dragging one leg. An all-out search for him began. Soon, two well-armed policemen knocked on her door again.

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- They came at about two o'clock - They were angry. They took away my passport and Muhamed's university diploma. They also asked for his photographs, for identification. They told me he had jumped through a window and that he was on the run. They held me as a hostage and threatened: "We won't let you go until your husband surrenders."

Armed with Kalashnikovs they watched through the window of the room and waited to see whether Muhamed would show up.

- There were others surrounding the hotel. I was afraid they would kill him on sight. They cursed and insulted me. They asked me why I had married a Muslim. I cried. It all seemed like a bad dream. After a couple of hours they were contacted by radio from headquarters and told that Muhamed had been caught. They left. I found out later that they caught him on the beach somewhere and that they kicked and beat him mercilessly with batons and fists.

Sanja went straight to the police headquarters. They would not let her in. Next day she went again. She was told that her husband, along with the rest of the arrested Muslims, would be sent to Bratunac to be exchanged there for Serb prisoners. On the same day Muhamed's sister Edisa, who had telephoned the police, was told by the Herceg Novi police that he had been released and that they did not know his whereabouts. Sanja then went to her aunt in Bijelo Polje. She searched for Muhamed through the personal columns in the newspapers, she approached the Red Cross, wrote letters to the police, the Montenegrin Parliament... The only reply she received was from the Bureau for Petitions and Proposals of the Parliament of Montenegro<sup>4</sup> which read:

"The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro has informed us that your husband and some other persons of Serb nationality from the Srebrenica area were taken away by authorised personnel of the Srebrenica police, Petar Mitrović and Predrag Perendić."

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum of the Bureau for Petitions and Proposals of the Republic of Montenegro, no. 04-1386-5, 5 July 1993.

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Drunk on Greater Serbian nationalist propaganda, the Montenegrins sent Muhamed Pilavdžić, a man who had married one of their own, to his death. Sanja, however, did not reconcile herself to this: in the following days and months she camped on the doorsteps of police and politicians. She even reached the office of the then Montenegrin President, Momir Bulatović, but there was no help: there was no trace of Muhamed. After an entire year of fruitless searching, Sanja left Montenegro and went to Sweden.

Which is where she stayed.

## THE MAYOR'S LAST NIGHT

Malik Meholjić, former mayor of Srebrenica, was last seen on 15 April 1992 in Bar, in a police vehicle, wearing handcuffs. Since then every trace of him has been lost. He has been on the list of missing persons of the International Red Cross for years, but he was not on the list of deported refugees, as Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković stated in answer to a deputy's question<sup>5</sup>.

Malik's wife Elhidada, an economist, remembers well that fateful arrest:

- At the beginning of 1992 there was panic in Srebrenica, following the information that Arkan<sup>6</sup> and his Tigers had massacred Bosniaks in Zvornik and that he was heading towards Srebrenica. Three months previously, Malik had handed in his resignation as Mayor of Srebrenica because he did not wish to take part in the ethnic divisions in the town, but he was still carrying out the duties of President of the Muslim-Bosniak Organisation. I begged him to flee to Sarajevo, but he said we would go to Montenegro, where we had many friends and our property, in the village of Dobre Vode, between Bar and Ulcinj.

We started off in our car - continues Elhidada. - Our children were with us, five-year-old Bećir and six-year-old Ismail. Behind us was a truck driven by Šaćir Nalić, a neighbour from Srebrenica. He was driving about twenty people, who were seeking refuge from Arkan in Montenegro. We arrived in Bar on 10 April 1992. We stayed in the house of our friends, Sveto and Komsa Borožan, in the old part of Bar. It was at their suggestion that we had bought a piece of land there in 1989. He was retired, she was a clerk at the Municipality of Bar.

<sup>5</sup> Reply by Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković to parliamentary question no. 278/2 of 8 April 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Željko Ražnatović, known as "Arkan", an internationally-wanted jewel thief and bank robber, for many years a hired executioner of the Yugoslav secret services. At the outbreak of the war he became a favourite of Slobodan Milošević and leader of a notorious paramilitary group, The Tigers, responsible for numerous atrocities against non-Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Because of this, he found himself on the list of Hague indictees. Arkan was murdered in a gangland killing in Belgrade after the war.

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After a short pause, with tears in her eyes, she continues her testimony:

- We had started building the foundations for our holiday-house. And on that 15 May we started off early for the property. Malik, our son Bećir, myself and two daughters of my two brothers-in-law, who had remained in Srebrenica. At about half past two in the afternoon, the police arrived on the property. Two very arrogant policemen first asked Malik his name. When he identified himself, they shoved him roughly into the police car. They also ordered me to come with them. In my fear I asked whether my six-year-old son could stay behind. The policeman shouted: "No, he can't. Get into the car all of you."

When we arrived at the police station in Bar, they put us in a big hall with wooden benches. I was so frightened that my legs gave way and Malik had to carry me up to the third floor. From fear and agitation I began crying and vomiting. After half an hour the police brought in my second son Ismail, my two sisters-in-law, Mina and Murveta and her thirteen-year-old son Amel. The police had taken them away from the house of Sveto Borozan. At about four o'clock a policeman took Malik away for interrogation. Then they took Mina away also. She was gone for more than two hours. Since then her hands sweat a lot - says Elhidada. Her face contorts with pain.

- At about eight o'clock in the evening I happened to look through the window. I saw Malik standing in front of a police van. There was another police car there too, and four policemen. His hands were handcuffed. Then they freed one of his hands. I could see him taking something from the police van where our things were. Later I realized what it was: he took out all our savings, eleven thousand German Marks, which we kept in my suitcase. Malik then sat in the white police car, on the back seat, between two policemen. I never saw him again. I didn't even get to say good-bye. He was only 36 years old.

The policemen, in the meantime, went to our property and took their car. It was getting dark, the children were hungry.

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- They didn't give us anything to eat. Sveto Borozan and his friend Sadik Hodžić from Old Bar came to the front of the police station and asked us through the window if we needed anything. I begged them to bring us some food. At their request, a little later one of the policemen brought us a bag with food, which they had bought. Sveto begged the policemen to let us go to his house, that he guaranteed with his life that we would stay with him and always be available to the police. At about eleven o'clock at night they let us go. We went again to the house of Sveto Borozan.

The next morning, Eldihada went with Sveto to the police station to inquire about Malik:

- We asked to see the police chief, Medenica. He wouldn't talk to us. Sveto begged them to tell us what had happened to Malik. The policemen said that they couldn't tell us anything, because Medenica wasn't there. When we were leaving the police building, Sveto met two policemen on the corner and asked them about Malik.

They started insulting him. They said to him: "You took balijas (derogatory term for Bosnian Muslims) into your home, shame on you." I started crying. He told us to get going. For the next four days we went to the police station every morning, but they wouldn't tell us anything. In the meantime our friends would come by. They comforted us and said that the police were arresting other people from Srebrenica in Bar. They suggested we should make a run for it. I didn't want to until I had some news of Malik. Sveto said we should stay and that he would provide for us all. After a couple of days Sveto's brother, I don't recall his name, said to us: "Children, what are you waiting for? Get out of here as fast as you can. Can't you see that you too will come to a bad end?" The three of us sisters-in-law decided to take our children and flee to Macedonia the next morning.

There followed years of wandering through refugee camps in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Spain. Days of hunger, sorrow, uncertainty and pain. At the end of the war, Malik's family returned to Bosnia, to Sarajevo. Years pass, there is no trace of Malik Meholjić. He was declared dead in March 2000.

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Five years later I managed to get a hold of the police document<sup>7</sup> which revealed part of the mystery of the disappearance of the former Mayor of Srebrenica: four days after his arrest, the Montenegrin police transferred Malik Meholjić to Užice in Serbia by car and there handed him over to the Serbian police.

He was never heard of again.

Even after all these years, the Montenegrin Ministry of Internal Affairs is silent on the subject of this crime.

<sup>7</sup> After several years of research, in mid-September 2005 I came on a secret document - "Information on measures taken by the Interior Ministry towards displaced persons from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina", filed under number 05-129 of 24 November 1992, and signed by an assistant on behalf of the then Minister of the Montenegrin Police Nikola Pejaković. The signature is illegible. This document was sent by the Montenegrin Interior Ministry to the Montenegrin Parliament and addressed to the Deputy Speaker at the time, Asim Dizdarević. In addition to the names of refugees mentioned in the reply to parliamentary question no.278/2, it contains the name of Malik Meholjić and those of the deported refugees Jasna Begović, Esad Čengić and Almir Hasanović, whom the Montenegrin policemen took by train to Užice in Serbia and there handed them over to their colleagues in the Serbian police.

## A FORCED CONFESSION

A young traffic policeman by the name of Almir Hasanović from Srebrenica took shelter from the war at the house of a friend in Bar. Since Montenegro was not at war, he thought he was on neutral territory and that he was safe there.

However, he was soon to pay a dire price for his gullibility.

- On arrival, I registered with the local Red Cross, just in case. Several days went by, nobody bothered me. And then at about five o'clock in the morning on 9 May 1992, a group of Montenegrin policemen, armed with rifles and bulletproof vests, burst into the house in brutal fashion. Practically dragging me from bed, they took me away for interrogation. At the police station in Bar, in a large sort of conference room, there was already a group of about thirty refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina - says Almir.

The policemen interrogated the refugees individually. Then it was the turn of their colleague from Bosnia, Almir.

- After taking down my personal details, they questioned me as to whether I had been infiltrated into Montenegro as an enemy agent, whether I was engaged in arms trafficking and supplying arms to the Muslims, which I denied vehemently. It didn't last long and they returned me to the room. At the end of the day, the investigators let us all go, with the explanation that there were no arms traffickers among us.

Almir returned to his friend's house, believing that the misunderstanding had been resolved, but two days later the police arrested him again.

- This time the inspectors demanded that I confess to arms trafficking, of supplying Muslims with weapons, of having connections with the main Muslim party in Bosnia, the Party for Democratic action or SDA. I denied everything again, saying that I was their colleague, that I was only twenty-two and that I had no interest in politics. It didn't help: during the interrogation I was also slapped across the face a dozen times. All the same: I wouldn't agree to these monstrous charges.

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Angry and frustrated, the police interrogators turned sadistic:

- They ordered me - says Almir - to take off my sneakers and lie over a chair. Then they began beating me on the soles of my feet with a baton. It hurt terribly. When they'd had enough, they ordered me to stand up. I could hardly stand on my feet. One of them in his fury struck me a savage blow with a baton on the top of my foot. The pain seemed to go directly to my brain. In the afternoon they told me: "You're free, go home!"

Early in the evening of 19 May 1992, however, a police patrol brought Almir Hasanović in again. They took him to the building of the Bar Security Centre. There he found Jasna Begović and Esad Čengić from Goražde. They had both been arrested in Donji Štoj, near Ulcinj. Fleeing from the war, Jasna had taken refuge with friends, and Esad had a house there.

- I have a family house in Donji Štoj. For years I spent my summer holidays in Ulcinj, I had many friends and colleagues. That's why at the beginning of war I moved my family to Ulcinj, but the Montenegrin policemen soon arrested me - says Esad, who was then, at thirty-five, Chief of the police crime prevention department in Goražde, Bosnia.

This was evidently an aggravating factor, because his former Ulcinj colleagues, with whom just a short while ago he used to have coffee in the summer holidays, kept him in prison. Jasna, three years older, had a very black mark against her name as far as the Montenegrin police were concerned: she was arrested because her husband, Dževad, was Chief of the Security Service Centre in Goražde.

- I spend the night there, handcuffed to a chair - continues Almir. In the morning two policemen arrived. They shoved me into a car with Jasna and Esad and drove us to Bar railway station. There we boarded the Belgrade train, escorted by the two policemen. At Užice in Serbia we were taken over from the Montenegrin colleagues by a police patrol of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb Autonomous District of Romanija.

Karadžić's policemen took them to the police station in Sokolac, Bosnia. Almir was placed in one cell, Jasna and Esad in another. The investigators set to work:

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- The inspectors wanted at all costs to get me to admit to illegally supplying the Muslims with arms. They wanted me to admit that I had handed out guns to the Muslims and that I had killed Serbs. They beat and kicked me. They caught me in a Judo stranglehold and after giving me a good beating they took me down to the cell, where I spent the night - says Almir.

In the morning, the interrogators were waiting for Almir again, and their expression chilled the blood in his veins. They told him, he says, that as their fellow policeman he should cooperate. If he did, he would remain alive.

- They wanted me to confess before the TV cameras to trafficking in weapons and distributing them in Srebrenica, and promised to let me go in return. If not, there would be beatings, and then a bullet to the head. There was nothing I could do. They brought in a television crew from TV Novi Sad. I recited a text for the cameras which I had memorised beforehand, and which they had written for me. The reporter kept asking me questions, and I would look away as I answered.

However, Almir's first appearance before the TV cameras did not satisfy the directors of the show.

- The next day they called me up again and said: "We're doing it all over again. Almir, you didn't look at the camera the way you should have, you looked at the floor. You weren't convincing at all, lad!" We repeated the shoot. This time when I answered the questions, I looked directly into the camera. Afterwards the reporter from TV Novi Sad patted me on the shoulder. They were satisfied. They took me back to the cell. At the end of May there was an exchange of prisoners at the Vrbanja Bridge in Sarajevo. I managed to get to freedom - says Almir, who is currently working for the Sarajevo police.

Novi Sad Television went on broadcasting this recorded material for days at prime time, contributing to the creation of a climate of distrust and hatred between neighbours and friends. By showing Almir's forced confession, Milosevic's warmongers were in fact telling the "unarmed" Bosnian Serbs that the Muslims were armed to the teeth and preparing to slaughter them.

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Together with Almir, Jasna Begović and Esad Čengić also made it to freedom. Several years later, in his capacity as the Goražde Canton Minister of Police, Esad Čengić came on an official visit to Montenegro. As soon as he stepped onto Montenegrin soil he was overwhelmed by powerful emotions:

- A cold sweat came over me when I crossed the Montenegrin border, even though I was heading an official delegation. The old, painful memories returned. For a moment I felt a new distrust of my Montenegrin colleagues and the authorities. I even regretted going with that delegation, but our host, the Chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, Goran Žugić, did his best to give us a warm welcome. Some fears cannot be erased by time. They are pushed into the background, but they still remain...

## BOSNIA: GRAVE BY GRAVE

Like a dangerous criminal, a major of the former Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), Zijad Velić from Čajniče in Bosnia was arrested by the Montenegrin police at a border-crossing and deported the same day to their counterparts in Čajniče. Several years later, his wife Ismira told her story to the Bosnian media<sup>8</sup>:

- Zijad was arrested by the Montenegrin police on 18 May 1992 at the Metaljka border crossing and immediately handed over to the Čajniče police. Having nearly beaten him to death, they transferred him to the hospital in Pljevlja, Montenegro. After using all my Serbian connections and acquaintances, I was allowed in to see him. His head was all swollen, huge, I suppose from all the beating. One eye was blood red. He managed to tell me that in Čajniče they had put a sack over his head and beaten him. When I came to see him the next day, they told me that he had been handed back to the Čajniče police. I haven't seen him since. They have information in Goražde, which they got from the Serb prisoners, that my husband's throat was cut in an old hunting lodge three kilometers from Čajniče. I'm afraid that this is the truth.

Ismira's forebodings came true: the remains of Major Velić were found in late 2002 in the Mostina mass grave near Čajniče.

On 19 May 1992 at the Metaljka border-crossing, according to official documents<sup>9</sup>, along with Zijad Velić, the Pljevlja policemen handed over to the Čajniče police Mirsad Huren, Rasim Kajgana, Ibrahim Šandal, Milomir Kezunović, Marko Mijatović and Nikola Brčić, arrested in Pljevlja, and all from Foča in Bosnia.

According to statements given to Bosnian investigators at the end of the war by Faik Tafro and other prisoners incarcerated in the Serb camp at Foča prison, Ibrahim Šandal and Rasim Kajgana of "the Velić group" were brought there, which meant that Mirsad Huren, like Major Velić, was probably killed earlier.

<sup>8</sup> Dnevni Avaz, 26 August 1997.

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 5

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According to the testimony of surviving camp inmates, Ibrahim Šandal, a farmer, died as a result of torture on 6 September 1993 in the Foča camp. Rasim Kajgana was a butcher. He shared a room at Foča with one of the survivors - Munib Hadžić. With a group of inmates, Kajgana was taken away from the prison to pick plums. None of them came back. No one even knows where they are buried. One location might be the mass grave at the waste disposal site of a coalmine near Foča.

In the summer of 2004, thirty kilometers from the Montenegrin border at the waste disposal site of the Miljevina brown coal mine near Foča, a mass grave was discovered containing 73 bodies of victims from the camp. Whether any of the refugees deported from Montenegro were among them is difficult to say.

A hot, humid day. The huge expanse of waste stretches out over an area the size of ten football stadiums. In a place so vast it was not easy to find two mass graves, each about ten metres square, cunningly concealed close to the Serb cemetery with its big marble cross, a monument with the inscription "We await the resurrection of the dead".

- Looking for these graves was like searching for a needle in a haystack. We knew there were four mass graves here, but had not been able to find them earlier. This time we had the help of a Serb, Aleksa D., a former member of an artillery unit in the Bosnian Serb Army, who witnessed the killing of four groups of prisoners. He helped us without asking for any recompense - explains Sejo Koso, a member of the Committee for Tracing Missing Persons.

Because the earth is porous here, there is none of the smell which usually accompanies the uncovering of mass graves in clayey terrain. The blood chills as the bodies are found to be all in a heap, indicating that they were buried with the help of construction machines; one has heavy chains on his hands and feet, there is a cane lying next to another, a third has a brace on both lower legs. A skeleton, the entire arm in a cast, speaks of the victims and their killers. One is found with both hands around the neck, which indicates, experts say, that he probably had his throat slit. There are many spent rifle cartridges, and several smashed skulls.

Something makes me pick up one of the skulls. How light it is! Doctors say that an average human head weighs about five kilograms. Dried up like this, it can weigh hardly half a kilo. I inspect it, my hands unconsciously spread, holding it carefully, rather nervously. As I slowly turn the skull around, the rough bones catch at my fingers. The jaw has all its teeth, so I come to a layman's conclusion that this is a head of younger person. The top of the skull is dominated by a large irregular hole which leads me to conclude that the unfortunate man was killed by a powerful blow from a pickaxe.

- First we should see what the cause of the fractures to these skulls is. There are several possible causes: fracture of the skull by a blunt object, a shot to the head, stones and rocks thrown on to the bodies which can shatter a skull, and of course they could be due to technical reasons during exhumation, by careless operation of a mechanical excavator, for instance - explains Amor Mašović, Chairman of the Committee for the Missing.

- Aleksa D. heard the killers during the liquidation of the Bosniaks chanting "Blood for blood" and "Revenge, revenge", says Sejo Koso, joining in the conversation.

By way of clarification: only fifty metres from this mass grave, over by the big cross, in 1945 the Communists murdered about three thousand Chetniks and threw them into a pit. This pit was 70 metres deep and for twenty years nobody was allowed to approach it until it was completely covered by tailings from the mine. On the eve of this latest war this was the gathering spot of Greater-Serbian academics and writers who incited the people to arms and demanded revenge.

- At this place - explains Amor Mašović - on the eve of this war, Vuk Drašković and similar writers such as Novak Kilibarda promoted his novel Knife. Well, this mass grave full of innocent Bosniaks is the answer to Drašković's Knife and his calls for revenge.

And they got it: the common people listened to the "men of learning" and rose up to slaughter their neighbours.

Grave by grave, pit by pit, blood for blood, that is Bosnia.

Šeki Radončić

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RIKALO BROTHERS

Vahida Rikalo, an elderly woman from Foča, lived to see three of her sons sent to their deaths by the Montenegrin police. I spent years searching for her although she lived less than a kilometer from me. The apartment is small and lacking in comfort. Worn and ill, her tired eyes look straight into mine, as if expecting me to tell her something important about her missing sons. Her voice trembles, her hands shake, her eyes are full of tears.

- Ah, son, if I could at least find the remains of my children, to give them a decent burial, to let their souls rest in peace. That is all I wish for now - says Vahida.

Husein, Zaim and Midhat disappeared in May 1992 after being arrested by the Montenegrin police and deported to the authorities of Radovan Karadžić. Their mother has no doubt of who is responsible for the deaths of her children.

- Montenegrin policemen sent them to their deaths. They arrested them for no fault or crime and sent them back to Foča. If it wasn't for them, my sons would be alive today. Who it was that killed them, I don't know.

The drama of the Rikalo family began in April 1992. At the time, says Vahida, Foča was in flames. The JNA was also burning the surrounding villages. There was shooting on all sides. Ethnic cleansing began, refugees started fleeing. The numerous Rikalo family sought refuge close to the Montenegrin border, in the village of Mazoče, near Šćepan Polje in Montenegro, where they originally came from.

- After spending a couple of nights in the woods, my eldest son, Husein, decided that we should cross over into Montenegro. Besides my sons, Zaim's wife Zehra and their two daughters, Samra aged two-and-a-half, and four-year old Azra were also with us. Husein took his wife Safija, twelve-year-old daughter Alma, ten-year old son Almir, and twins of seven months, Benjamin and Adela with him. And we had the children of our cousin Enver - Vahida tells me.

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- We crossed over - she continues - into Baošići and moved into two rooms of an insurance company home. We registered with the police and the Red Cross. To make it easier for us, after a couple of days Husein moved with his wife and children to Bar, to the home of Džemal Kolašinac. We had no problems at all at the time - says Vahida.

One night, just when Husein had come to visit them, someone threw a grenade into the house next to theirs. Husein's daughter Alma takes up the story:

- That's why father stayed on with us the following night. After midnight on the second night, the house next door was set on fire. We went to the window and watched it burn. The police came. Neighbours were unsuccessfully trying to extinguish it. Someone in the crowd shouted that the son of the owner of the holiday home was in the Croatian National Guard. It burned to the ground. We finally got to sleep before dawn.

- At dawn on 23 May - continues Vahida - two policemen knocked on our door. "We have a warrant to take your sons", they said shortly. I started crying: "Why are you taking them? They have nothing to do with that fire. They're not guilty of anything". They shoved passed me and entered the house. They came up to my sons and began pushing them outside, yelling: "Get up! We're going for questioning." They started off. The policemen went ahead, my children behind them. They stopped by the next house, from which they took our cousin Enver Rikalo, and then they pushed them into a police car.

She thought they were being questioned in connection with the fire and that, as they were not guilty, they would soon be released.

- If I had known at that moment that I was seeing them for the last time, I would have begged, screamed, cried, I would have defended the lives of my sons with my fingernails. But I didn't know it was for the last time.

Impatient and fearful as any other mother, Vahida waited for her children. After a couple of hours, matters became clearer. Enver returned, but there was no sign of her sons:

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- When I saw Enver without my sons, I cried out: "Enver, where are my children?" Enver said: "They let me go, because they know my father, Rašid, but they detained them. They say there has been a dispatch from Foča that they are to be arrested and returned." I could see by his face what the situation was.

On the following day, with her daughters-in-law and grandchildren, Vahida went to the Herceg Novi police. She was received by the Chief of Police:

- I told him: "I've come to you to see what has happened to my children. I know that they are not guilty of anything. They came here to save themselves and their families". He sent me to see his deputy. He was a large, striking man, almost two meters tall, with a deep voice. I begged him to let me see my children, to at least give them some cigarettes. He just said coldly: "You cannot see your sons. By the end of the day they will be deported to Foča." I cried: "Why are you sending them to Foča, there's a war on there! You will kill my children! " Nothing helped. We came home in tears.

Ten days later Vahida went to see a neighbour from Foča, Novo Blagojević, in Baošići.

- I had no one else to go to. He had a truck business in Foča, he knew a lot of people. I begged him to save my children. He said to me: "Vahida, I saw your children in Plužine when the Montenegrin policemen were handing them over to our people from Foča. Showing me his bound hands, Husein said to me: 'Look, Novo, what they're doing to us, as if we were big time criminals!' I saw bruises under his eye. He was beaten up in the Herceg Novi police station. He asked me to tell you that all three of them were being taken to Foča".

Zaim's wife Zehra soon left with her two children to stay with her brother in Požarevac in Serbia. Vahida, with her daughter, Husein's wife and children started off for Foča. They reached the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica, but missed the bus for Foča by five minutes. Somehow they managed to get to Nikšić. At the bus stop, twelve-year-old Alma went to the platform.

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- A bus had arrived from Foča, full of women and children. I recognized my doctor, Indira Hadžiahmetović. She asked me what I was doing there. I told her we were going to the prison in Foča, that they had taken my father and uncles there. She told me that she had been forced to work for a time there and whispered to me that she had seen my father, that he was alive, but not to go there under any circumstances. "You won't make it alive to Foča. You'll be killed as soon as you cross Šćepan Polje." I froze to the spot - says Alma.

The doctor was continuing to Macedonia, Alma quickly returned and told her grandmother what had happened, but she did not believe the child. She set off to talk to the doctor herself.

- It was too late, Indira had already gone. Then I met two Serb women from Foča, whom I knew. I told them I was going to Foča with the children. One of them caught me by the sleeve and took me around the corner. She said to me: "Listen, woman, if you know what's good for you, take those children where best you can. You mustn't go to Foča. It's all burning, shooting, slaughter and killing over there."

Vahida changed her plan and decided to save those who had remained. That night they set off for Novi Pazar in Serbia. The refugee trail led them to Tutin, Skoplje in Macedonia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. They returned to Bosnia after the war.

Vahida, who suffered severe mental stress, once climbed to the top of a building in Bulgaria:

- Ah, son, what did those people do to me, to take them from me like that? I don't know why I went on living. I climbed to the third floor and decided to jump. What good was my life without my children? How was I to live, who was I to go to? Every New Year, every Bairam (a Muslim holiday) passes, and there are no sons of mine to come to me. And they used to come all the time... At the last minute they got me off the roof. No money, not a thousand million Euros, could ever make up for my children and for their lives, but I hope that one day it will be known who was responsible for their deaths, and where the bones of my children lie.

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Vahida lives with her daughter in someone else's apartment in the Sarajevo suburb of Hrasno and expects every day to be evicted. Of four children only her daughter Elvira has survived. She is married, with two children. She remembers well the day when the Montenegrin police sent her three brothers to their deaths:

- My brothers never hurt a fly: the oldest, Husein, who was thirty-five, worked as an electrician, Zaim, six years younger, was a driver, and the youngest, twenty-four-year-old Midhat, was in the catering industry. None of us could have imagined what would happen. For years we spent our summer vacations on the Montenegrin coast, we had many friends there. We believed in Montenegro and in the Montenegrins and that was our misfortune...

On 24 May 1992, policemen of the Plužine Security Department handed over the three Rikalo brothers to the Foča police. "These persons were admitted to the Foča police department by the chief of the station, Milomir Mališ," states the reply by Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković to a question in Parliament.

According to the testimonies of survivors of the camp at Foča jail, the Rikalo brothers were killed between 25 and 28 June 1992 on the bridge over the Drina near the prison and their bodies thrown into the river. The Foča ethnic cleansers succeeded in exterminating the men of the Rikalo family. Twenty days previously, on 8 June, in their home village of Mazoča, another nine members of this family were done to death: Alija (60), Derviš (60), Fehim (40), Mustafa (30), Omer (35), Rašid (30), Šaban (20), Samir (20) and six year old Šahman.

It took all of ten minutes to kill them.

## HATRED DRIVES OUT GENEROSITY

Zlata and Ševko Kubat found themselves in a long column of refugees moving slowly towards Montenegro. Their way to freedom was not easy. There were frequent stops along the narrow road when the refugees had to move out of the way of huge convoys of army vehicles, tanks and field guns of the JNA rumbling imperiously down from Montenegro towards Foča. Fleeing as far as possible from the town under attack, with no special destination in mind, Zlata and Ševko arrived in the Montenegrin seaside towns of first Sutomore, then Bar, and moved into a complex of holiday bungalows. A month later they were visited by the police.

- The police came on the afternoon of 20 May. They ordered Ševko and Šaćir Radža to go with them for questioning, promising to return them soon. We waited all night. In the morning Šaćir's sister and I went to the Bar police. It wasn't till the afternoon that some officer agreed to see us. He told us: "Don't be afraid, we took you in, gave you food and a place to stay. If they're not guilty they'll be released, even though your people are shooting at our people in Goražde. Now you can go."

In the evening they set off for the Bar Security Centre again. Zlata says the officer on duty was a good man. He let them come in, but only "for a short time". He took them to a hall where there was a ping-pong table.

- Ševko and Šaćir were handcuffed to one another. My husband had large hands, so the cuffs were restricting him. His arm was purple. I started crying. I asked why they were being restrained. Ševko said everything would be all right, that they would let him go, since he had done no harm to anyone. The officer on duty allowed me to bring him a sweater and his medication later on, since he had a duodenal ulcer- says Zlata.

In the morning the policemen visited the refugee settlement again. They looked dangerous. They took Zlata, her father Mustafa and two refugees from Foča, Ibro Ćerimagić and Ramiz Babić.

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- They didn't say anything, they just put us in a car. They took us to the room where Ševko was and locked us up. From time to time they would open the door to bring in other arrested people from Foča. I was the only woman among them. Then they said that Mišo Stevanović, nicknamed Šumar, had arrived from Foča, that he was the one who decided who was to be taken and who was to be released. I was relieved. He worked together with Ševko, so I thought that he would let him go. Around noon, two policemen came in with a list. They called out my Ševko, Ramiz Babić, Ekrem Ćemo and Abdulah Kamerić, and said: "The rest are free."

Zlata came back to the station in the evening and was allowed to see her husband.

- They had removed Ševko's shoelaces and his belt. He told me not to cry, that everything would be all right, that the most important thing was that they had let me go. I saw him then and never again - says Zlata, to whom the "good policeman" secretly handed back the registration papers for their car.

When she returned, there was real panic in the bungalows. Bosnian refugees were fleeing in fear of their lives. Terror, pain and distrust drove them to get as far away as possible. By next day, Zlata found herself outside the local offices of the Muslim charity Merhamet in Rožaje, a largely Muslim populated town in the Montenegrin part of the Sandžak region.

- We were received by the chairman of Merhamet, Erdžan Fatahović. The people of Rožaje gave us a wonderful welcome, outdoing one another in trying to be the first to help us, the first to take us in. Along with my parents I was taken in by the family of Isad Drndara. We stayed with them for a month.

Zlata went on to Macedonia, then to Pula in Croatia, where she stayed with her brother. From that distance she continued to search for her husband Ševko. They had been married for eighteen years, had no children, and were completely bound up in each other. Zlata describes him as a wonderful husband, well-known for his ability as a forklift mechanic throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fatal Freedom

A year later, she received a short letter through the Red Cross:

Dear Zlata,

I have been in the prison in Foča since 25 May 1992... Last year I was very sick with a perforated ulcer. I am well now. I work a little in the prison workshop maintaining the vehicles. I think about you a lot. Lots of greetings to everyone from Ševko.

- That and the following messages - says Zlata - meant a lot to me. I knew that he was alive, but sick. He asked me to send him medication, but the prison management wouldn't allow me to pass it on to him. I kept hoping that he would soon be exchanged.

At the end of February 1993, Zlata received another letter from Ševko, wishing her a happy birthday. He wrote that he could not see very well, that he had terrible stomach pains, but that "now it was getting better". But it wasn't. Lacking medication and adequate medical treatment, Ševko Kubat died on 8 July. The Red Cross informed Zlata of his death only at the beginning of November. Along with their condolences, the Red Cross also sent her an official record<sup>10</sup> from the Lower Court in Foča saying that the investigating judge and a coroner had visited the scene and noted the following:

"In Room 15 of the prison premises, on a bed to the right of the entrance door a lifeless body was lying, covered with a white sheet and blanket, hands beside the body, head tilted backwards, eyes and mouth closed, the jaw bound up, dressed in light-blue pyjamas. The body was facing with its head towards the window. As the commission learnt, it has been established that on 8 July 1994 at approximately 8 hours and 40 minutes, the death occurred of Ševko Kubat, son of Munir, born 1952 in Foča, prisoner of war since 1992. Present at the moment of death was Bećir Čaušević, prisoner of war and medical orderly to the POWs in the prison".

<sup>10</sup> Record of on-the-spot investigation, Lower Court in Srbinje, no.33/94 of 11 July 1994.

Šeki Radončić

- For a long time I couldn't accept this as the truth. News of his death destroyed all my hopes, all my strength, even the will to live - says Zlata, who asked the Red Cross to send her Ševko's death certificate so that she could know where he was buried.

How much hatred had driven out human kindness, Zlata realised the following year, when she received a death certificate<sup>11</sup> for Ševko. The column headed "Place of burial" was blank.

Since then Zlata has been unsuccessfully searching for the grave of her husband Ševko.

<sup>11</sup> Death certificate in the name of Ševko Kubat, no. 13-202-50/95, Srbinje, 3 February 1995.

## DIKSI FORESEES HIS OWNER'S DEATH

When Nedžib Lojo brought home a Border collie puppy, popularly known among the locals as a "Lassie", his daughters Lejla and Alma were overjoyed. His wife Azra was not thrilled: she loved animals, but not in her own house. In time, however, the lovable Dixie grew on Azra so much that she often slipped away from work to feed the household pet. Nedžib, for many years manager of the maintenance department of the Foča Šipad Company, availed of every free moment to play with Dixie. A former footballer with Sutjeska, he would play at dribbling the ball until both man and dog collapsed from exhaustion.

And then the war came. The Lojo family left Foča and went into exile. The old story of man's best friend was to repeat itself four months later, when Dixie died of a broken heart after his master Nedžib was killed.

- Fleeing from the fires of war we headed towards Montenegro. Nedžib was driving, I was sitting beside him, and the children and Dixie were in the back. We couldn't leave him behind, we loved him too much. The road took us to Pljevlja. Scared away by the war cries of Šešelj's followers and Kilibarda's followers, on the seventh day we left the town and fled towards the coast - Azra begins her tale.

- As soon as we arrived in Ulcinj - continues Azra - we registered with the Red Cross. They put us in the house of Ćemal Lozaja who generously opened the doors of his home to Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees. Besides lodgings, he also gave the unfortunate food and clothing. My sisters Saliha and Munivera also arrived, with their children and husbands.

In the early hours of the morning of 22 May 1992, Montenegrin policemen raided the house and took away the men for questioning. About thirty Bosniaks from Bosnia were arrested that day in Ulcinj.

- They took them away in front of the children. My little girls were crying. Dixie ran barking after the police car that was carrying Nedžib almost as far as the building of the Security Department, as if he had the premonition that Nedžib was in mortal danger - says Azra.

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That day Azra and Nedžib were to have celebrated sixteen years of marriage: on 22 May 1976 they had married in Dubrovnik. As troubles never come singly, on their wedding anniversary Azra heard that the Foča Chetniks had looted and set fire to their house.

- A couple of hours later, my brothers in law, Fehim and Nedžad, returned. They said they had been interrogated by Mišo Stevanović whose nickname was Šumar, a restaurateur from Foča, and that he had detained Nedžib in custody.

I went to the police. I asked to talk with the chief of police. After a lot of waiting he received me and told me that Nedžad has been detained and that they would let him go that same evening. At about eight o'clock at night they allowed me to talk to him in the presence of the police. We talked for about ten minutes. He told me that they were being kept in airless, stinking rooms in the cellar where there were human faeces, that nobody from the police had talked to him, that Munib and Esad Hadžić from Foča were also there.

Nedžib spent the night in the cells. In the morning Azra went with her daughters to the police.

- The Chief promised me Nedžib would be released at about twelve o'clock, and the policemen told us to leave the building. I sat on a bench with the children and waited for Nedžib. At exactly twelve o'clock they brought him out of the building together with Munib and Esad Hadžić. We ran towards him, but the policemen put him into a car. I only managed to ask where they were taking him. He said: "To Bar or Foča" - says Azra, adding that that was the last time she ever saw Nedžib.

Azra went to Bar Security Centre to inquire about her husband.

- They wouldn't let me in. The policemen in front of the entrance to the building told me that Nedžib had been killed, and threatened that they would also kill the children and me, because we were their enemies. One of them roared at us: "You are killing our people in Bosnia, and we will kill you."

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In fear of the fury of the Bar policemen, Azra returned to Ulcinj and asked the chief of police there, whose name she cannot remember, for a certificate that her husband had been arrested.

- We are not obliged to issue any certificate, since your husband didn't spend longer than 48 hours in the police - the chief of police replied coldly.

Azra did not give up. She went to Podgorica and asked to be received by the Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović, and his deputy, Nikola Pejaković, but they would not see her.

However:

- I called the Office of the Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović. Thanks to some mutual friends whose names I mentioned, he came to the phone. I told him briefly how the police had arrested Nedžib and how he had been taken to Bar. I begged him to intervene so that they would let him go, because my husband had done nothing wrong.

"I don't know what this is about. I have no information. I give you my word of honour that I will look into it. Call me tomorrow," the Minister of Police told me.

Azra did not sleep all night. The dawn came slowly. In the morning she called the Minister of Police again.

- "I still don't know what's going on. We're looking into it. Please feel free to call me tomorrow," the Minister of Police told me. I called the next day also. Again he hedged. I repeated my call on the next day also, and then he stopped taking my calls. His secretary would simply tell me that he wasn't in and to call at another time.

At the same time Azra called the Deputy Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković.

- He also claimed that he was not informed, that he didn't know what this was about, that he would look into it all. Then he would ask me to call him later. I did that. Later on he also started avoiding me. The secretary would repeat that he was in an important meeting or that he was away.

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The Minister of Police and his deputy could no longer be reached, but Azra did not give up. She sent several letters to Pavle Bulatović and to his deputy, Nikola Pejaković: She begged them one thing only: "Tell me at least where the remains of my husband's body are."

She never got an answer.

Azra also applied for help to Slobodan Kalezić, Secretary of the Montenegrin Red Cross.

- He agreed to see me - says Azra - because I told him I came on the recommendation of his Ulcinj friend, Fejaz. He promised that he would try to find out something about Nedžib and that he would call us. We left our telephone numbers. Soon afterwards he called the telephone of the Lozaja family. He told us that Nedžib was in Foča.

On many occasions Azra also spoke on the phone with Asim Dizdarević, Deputy Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, and a Muslim himself.

- I begged him to save Nedžib. In the end he was honest with me. He told me: "Believe me, I can't help you. I myself have a close relative from Višegrad, a doctor, and I can't find out anything about what has happened to him."

She did not call him anymore.

Realising that she had lost the battle for Nedžib and that the threats to kill her children could all too easily be carried out, Azra packed her suitcases and left Montenegro with her children, sisters, brothers-in-law and their children, starting off on the long road to Macedonia.

- We decided to leave Dixie with a girl from the neighborhood. She promised to look after him and keep him with her until we came to get him. In the evening Lejla and Alma cried. Believe it or not, Dixie cried too. There were tears coming from his eyes the same as from the children's. Saliha couldn't bear to watch this anymore: she said we were to take him with us. The six of us settled into the car. I held Dixie in my lap from Ulcinj to Skoplje. The journey lasted almost twelve hours.

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- They arrived in Skoplje in the evening. They stopped at a parking lot. They had nowhere to spend the night.

- A young man, a stranger, a Macedonian, came up to Dixie. He started petting him and talking to us. We told him of our predicament. Thanks to Dixie he decided to help us. He took us to a one-room apartment of his friend, where we bathed and spent two days.

Then they headed for Štip, to the holiday home of the brother-in-law's friend, a man called Pančev. There they spent about twenty days. In the meantime, Azra talked to Slobodan Kalezić. "I was in Foča. I didn't see Nedžib, but I have reliable information that he is in the prisoner of war camp. Unfortunately, we did not manage to get in there," said Kalezić.

They left for Croatia. They knew the way ahead of them was long, filled with uncertainties. They decided in the end to leave Dixie with the owner of the holiday house. At the moment of parting, says Azra, everyone was crying again, including Dixie, of course. After a journey of about a month through Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, they arrived in Umag, Croatia. There they stayed at the house of an acquaintance before leaving for Germany. It was to be five years before they returned to a liberated Bosnia and Sarajevo.

Azra was in regular telephone connection with Skoplje:

- After we left Skoplje, at the end of August, they told us that Dixie had died. He refused food until the end. At the same time Nedžib was also taken from the Foča camp. After that every trace of him is lost. He was probably killed at that time.

Nedžib's sister Nađa says that her brother did not deserve to be arrested and deported by the Montenegrin police:

- My brother Nedžib saved so many people. He had a very rare blood type. He didn't mind giving blood to everyone. He helped everyone and his blood saved the lives of many Serbs from Foča.

The lives of the very people who killed him.

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## PAGE TORN OUT

The Piljak hole is located on the hillsides of Zelengora, on the Mališ peak, twenty kilometers from Foča. It is about forty metres deep, with an opening the size of a small room, narrowing as it plunges downward to about a square metre at the end. At the bottom, like an inverted mushroom, there is a pit about thirty metres square. In the middle of June 2001, the remains of 63 Bosniaks from Foča prison were found there in a heap. Karadžić's henchmen, the experts say, shot innocent people on the verge of the pit and pushed their bodies in without bothering to cover them up.

Three years later the remains of twenty-seven-year old Suad Karačić from Sarajevo were found there. His mother Haska was present to identify him, her face contracting, hands clenching and unclenching, as she looked helplessly upward toward the sky. The tears flowed. Another mother in pain for her lost children.

- Our life stopped when they called us from the Federal Committee for Tracing Missing Persons and told us to come to Visoko, to identify what remained of the bodies. From the DNA they established that the remains of our son Suad were there. We were desperate. With my closest kin I went to identify my son. My husband Rasim couldn't come, because he had had two major strokes. While I looked at what remained of my child, I wished I was no more - says Haska.

Suad was born in Sarajevo where he studied mechanical engineering at secondary school. As he could not find a job in his line of work, he worked in pizza restaurants from time to time. The beginning of the war found him in his hometown. As the situation in Sarajevo was growing more difficult with every passing day, he decided to go to Budva, where he used to work at the San Marino pizza restaurant during the summer season. The restaurant was owned by Nikola Slovinić. Suad called his family every day, but one day the phone did not ring. The family began to be plagued by dark thoughts.

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On that 24 May 1992, Montenegrin policemen in Herceg Novi stopped a car driven by Nikola's son, Vedran Slovinić. In the passenger seat beside him was Suad Karačić. After inspecting their identity cards, the police arrested Karačić. The reason: "He is from Bosnia and Herzegovina". They took him to the collective center in Herceg Novi.

- We had a feeling - says Haska now - that something was not right. My husband Rasim called Vedran on the phone. I listened carefully to the conversation and realized that something was wrong. Rasim then put the phone down and started crying. Panic seized me. I asked what had happened. He couldn't speak. He barely managed to say: "Haska, they have arrested our Sudo!"

- Vedran, Haska goes on, told Rasim that Suad had been taken away by the Montenegrin police.

- We called everyone we knew in Montenegro, we talked to Nikola every day. When the phone lines were disconnected, we tried to find out something through the help of amateur radio operators and the Red Cross. Our neighbour Nevenka had a brother on the enemy side. We asked her to inquire from him about Sudo. Her husband Marinko called someone in Foča one day. He was curtly told: "Sheet torn up", which meant that Sudo had been killed. We didn't want to believe it, but we despaired more and more.

In the hope of finding out something about Suad, his family began to make the rounds of various clairvoyants. Rasim regularly went to watch prisoners being exchanged in the hope of seeing his son among them. All was in vain. Then they received a call from a camp inmate, Hamed Čelik. He had been in the camp in Foča with Suad, but was exchanged. He told them that Sudo, as he was known by his family, was very worried how his family would react when they found out that he was imprisoned and wondered whether they were hungry or afraid. Hamed told them that when he left the camp, Suad was still alive.

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- We also heard - says Haska - from an Ibro Karović, who was also imprisoned with Sudo, then from someone called Sadik from Trebinje. He told us that he had handed over his entire property in exchange for his freedom. During the exchange he begged them to let Sudo go too. They just looked at him but didn't say anything.

Strange how the faces and voices of unfortunate mothers are tinged by the same sadness.

## THE FOČA INFERNO

Munib Hadžić, a retired teacher of handicrafts from Foča, is among the few who survived Montenegrin deportation and the Foča inferno. He begins his story slowly, as if in no rush to get anywhere. He tells how he was arrested and deported to Foča, how after three months he was brought back to Nikšić, Montenegro, in a bus full of prisoners only to be returned the same day to the Foča camp, and how he was finally set free in the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica... As time passes, the pauses in his speech grow longer. He begins the part of the story when his nephew Esad was arrested and deported with him, and who died six days later in the prison in Foča. They wouldn't help him in prison, he says. Munib stops here and is silent.

- Whenever I tell this story, my throat dries up, I get a tightness in my chest. I can't carry on, I have to pause for a bit. He is barely audible. He sits quietly, looking down at his hands. He looks as if he's at death's door. He takes a sip of water, but it doesn't help. He swallows, clenches his fists. It's no use, the voice won't come...

Munib Hadžić left occupied Foča with his family at the beginning of May. They took shelter in Ulcinj, with their host Midhat Katana, but, during a raid on 22 May, the Bar police arrested Munib, his wife Asima, daughter Almira, son Nusret, nephew Esad, and his wife's relatives Senad and Sabina Vahid.

- They took us to the police building in Ulcinj. In the hallway we met another twenty people from Foča who had been arrested. Then Mišo Stevanović - Šumar, a Serb from Foča came along, whom I knew very well. He greeted us and went into the office where they were interrogating those they had arrested. A couple of hours later, an inspector from Ulcinj stood before us, holding a list in his hand: "Munib Hadžić, Enes Hadžić and Nedžib Lojo are to stay. The rest are free", said the inspector.

They took them down to the cellar to a solitary confinement cell. In the evening they allowed Munib's wife and daughter to visit him. Munib warned them to take their son Nusret, aged thirty, and flee immediately

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as far as possible. The next day the policemen took Munib, Enes, and Nedžib to Bar. They were again put in a damp cellar.

- On the way down - continues Munib - a tall policeman with a moustache cursed and punched each of us in the back of the neck in a casual sort of a way. There we found another four people from Foča: Ekrem Ćemo, Ševko Kubat, Asim Babić and Abdulah Kamerić, whose remains were discovered ten years later in a pit near Tjentište. After two hours they took us back upstairs again. The man with the moustache was there waiting, and hit us again.

They were loaded into a police van. Destination - the collection center in Herceg Novi. It was hot, cramped and stifling.

- We were almost suffocating - remembers Munib. - It was worst for Eso. When we arrived at the ferry, they opened the doors of the Black Maria. The policemen pointed at us, telling the passengers on the ferry that we were criminals. The people watched us in fear and loathing. In Herceg Novi they took down our personal information and locked us up in a room in the cellar.

We were left there - continues Munib - without food or water for two days. They wouldn't even let us use the toilet. One of us, I'd rather not mention his name, had to relieve himself right there in front of all of us. There was no other way. Later we lifted him up in our arms so that he could reach the small window and throw out the bag of excrement. At around noon, on 25 May, the policemen brought a new group of Bosniaks arrested on the Montenegrin coast into our cell: Hamed Ćelik and Ismet Pašović from Foča, Ismet Isaković, Enes Bičo, Mirsad Borovac and Samir Krdžalija from Goražde, then five people from Srebrenica - Bekir Krdžić, Nezir Krdžić, Bego Jahić, Azis Burić and Enver Mujičić. They also brought in Sadik Demirović from Trebinje and Suad Karačić from Sarajevo. Alija Čardaklija from Goražde was put in solitary next to our cell, I don't know why.

While they were bringing in the new prisoners, Munib asked one of the policemen to let him drink some water. The toilet was right there, across the hall. He allowed him. When he had taken a drink, Munib began washing his face, which infuriated the gracious policeman.

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- He punched me in the back of the neck, grabbed me and shoved me into the cell. "Maybe I should give you a shave as well, you mother-fucker", he yelled. So he let me drink water, but he didn't like me also trying to wash my face.

Around noon the policemen put twenty-one Bosniaks and sixteen Serbs from Bosnia on a bus. Final destination: the jail in Foča. The Bosniaks were being taken there as alleged criminals, and the Serbs as deserters.

- While they were loading us onto the bus outside the police station in Herceg Novi, a friend of mine from Foča, Osmo Bajrović, happened to pass by. As soon as he spotted us he realized what was happening. He turned around slowly and started running as soon as he was round the first bend. A day later he was caught and deported to Srebrenica. He didn't survive - says Munib sadly.

- We started off. There were also policemen armed to the teeth in the bus. When we got to Plužine, they handed us over to their colleagues from Foča. We were transferred to the Foča bus. We arrived at Foča jail at around nine o'clock in the evening. They lined us up against a wall and ordered us to face it with our hands raised. We were then searched by Slavko Koroman, who told us cynically that no one would touch a hair of our heads. We Bosniaks were placed in room number 20, which is where Alija Izetbegović served his sentence years before the war, and the Serbs were taken to a separate room. They didn't have it so bad. They were free to walk around, they had better food, they weren't beaten. Later they let some of them go, and the others were said to have been taken to the war fronts. Anyway, soon there were no Serbs left in the camp.

Only two days later the first head rolled:

- On Wednesday 27 May at around ten o'clock at night, Esad's ulcer perforated. He was bleeding heavily. I asked him: "Shall I call the guard?" He said: "Don't call them, they'll kill me". He soon began to lose consciousness. In panic I called out: "Guards! Guards!" Milenko Vladić arrived with another colleague. I told them what was going on. They told me that all the doctors were on the battlefield and left. In vain I begged them to bring

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Doctor Ibro Karović from the next cell or Doctor Aziz Torlak, to at least help Eso with advice - says Munib.

During the night nobody came to help. In the morning, Esad fell into a coma.

- By now he was in a coma. From time to time he regained consciousness, but for very short periods. From the window I spotted Gojko Čeranić, the prison medic. I called him over and told him through the window what was happening. He came back two hours later, looked at Esad and said: "Four of you put him on a blanket and take him up to the third floor to the infirmary". There Gojko tried to put Eso on a drip but couldn't find a vein, he had lost too much blood. They said they would take Eso to the hospital. Policeman Zoran Matović told me later that Eso was taken to the town hospital, to the internal ward, and that he died there, but I'm afraid that they didn't even take him to the hospital, that they threw him straight into the Drina - says Munib, barely restraining tears.

In the Foča prison camp living conditions were on the verge of human endurance. The inmates were, testifies Munib, exhausted by hunger, beaten and abused physically and mentally. After torturing them in the evening they would be taken to execution next morning.

- When the beatings began at night, I would put a pillow over my head. I couldn't sleep because of the screaming. I don't know what they did to them, but their screams could be heard across half the town. Anyone who was beaten never returned alive. And you were just waiting for your name to be called out. One evening I opened the window to jump, to kill myself, because I thought my turn had come. That was on 24 June, when a group of inmates were taken to the administration building where they were tortured until dawn. Those screams haunt me to this day - says Munib, who lost more than twenty kilograms in just a month.

For breakfast, explains Munib, the inmates would get a cup of tea and a thin, almost transparent slice of bread. A loaf was cut into 22 pieces. The one who got the end piece was the lucky one. For lunch: usually only boiled potatoes or macaroni, without salt or flavouring, and the piece of

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bread. For dinner usually nothing. Later on that was also reduced, so that the inmates daily received only "breakfast" - a cup of tea and a thin slice of bread.

Munib, however, was lucky: he was transferred to a work unit. He didn't have to spend the entire day in the cell where they had to sleep on the floor, but worked in a workshop. They also took him into town: there he would pick locks and break into safes in apartments and houses abandoned by Bosniaks. As soon as Munib would open a safe, the police would take all the valuables from it. Munib also got something to eat: a thin slice of bread and margarine. It would happen that when he was in town one of the good Serbs would give him an entire loaf of bread.

After exactly a hundred days of captivity Munib got a brief taste of freedom.

- A former pupil of mine, policeman Zoran Matović, called me to his office on 30 August. He said: "Munib, you're going to the free territory". I asked: "Where is that?" "To Montenegro", he replied, surprised. Then they gathered me and another 54 inmates together in the prison canteen. They had decided to let us go, I think that camp was supposed to be shut down. While we were waiting for the transport, they took about a hundred people from the camp, among them Abdulah Kamerić. They killed all of them. We waited for the bus, which didn't arrive until the following day. Under police escort, they boarded us. We started off for Montenegro.

However, they were harassed by soldiers on the border at Šćepan Polje.

- The drivers took the lists with our names to a hut on the border. While they were dealing with the formalities, a soldier came up to our bus, knocked on the window to a youth inside and ordered him to cross himself. He wouldn't. The soldier came inside, went up to the young man and hit him around the head, making him bleed from the mouth and nose. Another soldier yelled: "Good on you, Miletić!" This Miletić then comes up to another inmate, who couldn't have weighed more than forty kilos, and asks him his name. The man tells him, and Miletić says: "You mother fucker, your name is Slobodan Milošević. Say your name is Slobodan

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Milošević". He won't - keeps quiet. Miletić hits him across the head and repeats the same question. The unfortunate man gave in and says loudly: "My name is Slobodan Milošević". Then the drivers arrived. We moved on without the Foča policemen, who went back from the border.

The prisoners had finally arrived in the "free territory" of Montenegro. They had already reached safety on the outskirts of Nikšić and were planning the quickest way to reach their families when matters took a hideous twist. Just outside Nikšić their bus was overtaken by a car from Foča. In it was the notorious Chetnik military leader, Pero Elez. He motioned to the driver of the bus to pull over.

- Dressed in army uniform, bearded and full of himself, Pero Elez ordered the drivers to turn the bus around and return us to Foča.

The inmates bowed their heads: they knew that the Montenegrin authorities would do nothing to stop the Chetnik military leader from taking them from the heart of its territory back to the concentration camp, many of them to their deaths. Mirsad Borovac also knew very well that the Montenegrin police and the customs officers would not turn them back from the border, even though they were obliged to do so by every law, human or divine.

- As there were no policemen in the bus, Mirsad Borovac sat down on the floor between the driver and the conductor. He begged them to open the doors of the moving vehicle so that he could jump out. Kunarac and Blagojević, the driver and conductor, both from Foča - didn't want to. They kept saying that Pero Elez was behind us, that he would be killed as soon as he jumped from the bus, even though we were in Montenegro. "In the name of God, just open the door for me. I'll jump, whatever happens. Let them kill me if they will, at least my grave will be known!" begged Mirsad. They didn't open the doors. Along with the rest of us he was returned to Foča.

After a short hold-up, the bus crossed back over the Montenegrin-Bosnian border. Three months after the May deportation of the Bosnian refugees, the Montenegrin authorities were again active accomplices in a new crime

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against the Bosniaks. At about four in the afternoon the bus pulled in again to Foča. The prisoners were placed in a room in the jail. Two hours later a policeman arrived.

- He called out the names of only thirty-five of us. Again they put us on the bus for Montenegro. We started off immediately. The rest were later taken for execution. Among them were Mirsad Borovac and Ismet Pašović, arrested in Herceg Novi.

Before dawn they arrived in Podgorica. The drivers told them they were free. The prisoners hurried to leave the bus as soon as possible, in case Pero Elez appeared again. Munib got on a bus to Ulcinj, the rest went to Rožaje.

- With them was Rasim Jusufović, a teacher from Foča, married to a Montenegrin woman, and Hasan Čankušić, whose two sons were killed in the prison in Foča. They didn't want to kill him, they left him alive deliberately and let him go, knowing he would suffer more.

When Munib arrived in Ulcinj, Mithad Katana didn't recognize him.

- Is that you, Munib, are you ill, why did you lose so much weight?" he asked me. While he was taking me home, I told him what I had been through. They immediately brought out some food for me, I remember well - goulash. I took a little. They started saying: "Eat, eat!" I was barely able to convince them that my stomach had shrunk, that I couldn't eat - says Munib, whose old Jugo car was waiting for him outside the house.

- I didn't know where my folks were. I somehow managed to get in touch by phone with Šefika, Eso's wife. I told her that Eso had died from a perforated ulcer, that they wouldn't help him in the hospital. She started crying, she couldn't speak.

- Suddenly everything went black before my eyes. I couldn't believe that they had killed my Eso. I didn't know how I would tell this to our seven-year-old Alma. I was paralysed. I had to put down the phone - says Šefika in tears.

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- Later, when Šefika had calmed down a little, I called her again. Through her I established contact with my family who had fled to Rijeka in Croatia - explains Munib.

And then Munib headed for the Ulcinj police department. He went looking for the chief of police. He only wanted to ask him why he had arrested him.

- Luckily I didn't find him. I suppose everything that happened had made me a little crazy - says Munib, smiling.

- There, I was so crazy that I got into my Jugo and headed for Bar and put my car on the Belgrade train. Luckily, nobody in the train asked me for my identity papers. I didn't say a word during the whole journey. Then I drove to Subotica, even though I knew that Mehmed Sofradžija from Foča had been arrested in Novi Sad, brought to the prison in Foča and killed. I passed five or six police patrols, nobody stopped me. I had told my folks to wait for me at the bus station. I arrived there at about ten o'clock at night, parked the car and fell asleep. Around midnight someone knocked on my window. I was relieved to see it was my daughter and wife. They had come through Hungary to meet me and bring me my passport. Oh, how many tears were shed there!

Later, they got to Rijeka. Because of mental problems Munib sought professional help. The following year they went to Germany. Munib continued his treatment with the psychiatrists there. Four years later he returned to Bosnia, to Sarajevo. He is still taking the "German medicine", but he has not managed to free himself of the scenes of arrest and imprisonment, the screams and howls he heard night after night in Foča.

Munib often wonders who it was that saved his life. He believes that the key moment was at the camp when he was brought in for interrogation by interrogators Vojo Starović, Zoran Vladičić and Miodrag Koprivica.

- I used to work with Vojo before the war. They asked me if I was a member of the Muslim political party, the SDA, even though they knew well that I was a member of the League of Communists. I begged Vojo to let

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me go. He said to me in a friendly manner: "Munib, if I were to let you go now - you wouldn't make it alive to your flat. One of the Serbs would kill you in the middle of the street." I begged him to let me go to Montenegro, to go and look for my family. He promised me: "I give you my word I'll help you".

Munib also thinks that he might have been saved by Savo Todović, the deputy warden of Foča prison, since indicted by The Hague Tribunal for appalling atrocities committed against Bosniaks:

- When they told me I was going to Montenegro, Savo told me: "Munib, say hello to Nusret for me. I hope we will meet after the war". One of them must have helped me. If they hadn't - I wouldn't be alive today.

After the war he really did try to look up Savo Todović in Foča.

- I didn't find him. They told me he had been proclaimed a war criminal and that he had run away somewhere.

Savo Todović, nicknamed Bunda, in the meantime found himself behind bars in the prison at Scheveningen in the Netherlands, along with Mitar Rašević, commander of the guard in the Foča prison, charged by the prosecution on eighteen counts of political, racial and religious persecution, illegal imprisonment of civilians, murder, torture, acts of cruelty and other crimes committed in Foča prison during 1992 and 1993. On the same charges, the Tribunal in The Hague condemned the warden at Foča, Milorad Krnojelac, to fifteen years of prison.

Munib also found out that Pero Elez, commander of the Miljevinski Battalion of the Foča Brigade, had been killed. While parading his unit on 21 October 1992, he dropped his Colt pistol which went off. The bullet penetrated his stomach and wound up in his spine. He was transferred to the Clinical Hospital Centre in Podgorica, where wounded Serbs from the Bosnian war zone came for treatment, and where he died after fifteen days. So Pero Elez himself died at the hands of a criminal, as the writer Marko Vešović would say.

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## FATHER WAITED FOR DAWN HOLDING A RIFLE

At the last minute, the family of Jovan Nikolaidis fled the deadly ring that was closing around Sarajevo. Jovan's son Andrej, later to become a well-known writer, remembers those days very clearly:

- We arrived in Ulcinj at the end of April. In the mayhem of Sarajevo airport, my brother and I boarded some kind of military transporter. During the summer I found out it was called a "Kikaš"<sup>12</sup> and had been used for arms trafficking. My mother and father arrived a week later in a broken-down yellow Wartburg through a snow-covered Bosnia. They drove through the snowdrifts and with a lot of luck managed to reach Ulcinj. I have thought many times about the snow that fell so late in 1992 and today I know why. Something Alfred Hitchcock once said helped me understand. When asked why he preferred blondes, Hitchcock replied: "Because they're like virgin snow that shows up the bloody footprints". That's why the snow fell: to make the tragedy of Bosnia more visible, so that the terrible sight of blood on snow would warn people to stop the slaughter. But the wrongdoers showed no understanding for visual sensation. The snow fell in vain: long years were to pass before the West finally gave in and put a stop to the bloodshed in Bosnia.

On 7 May Andrej turned eighteen. The quiet celebration was spoiled by fear that the Montenegrin police would burst into the house and take the young man, just come of age, and his father back to Bosnia.

- It was the saddest celebration I ever saw. I was eighteen years old and completely lost. Telephone lines with Sarajevo were still working. I talked to my friends from secondary school. I called Irma and Edo Branković, only to cry afterwards. The feeling was killing me that by leaving Sarajevo I had betrayed all my friends, my entire past, everything that I was. I feel very similar today. That feeling of guilt will probably haunt me for the rest of my life. And to tell you the truth, I don't try to fight it. You can't fight the truth.

<sup>12</sup> After a wealthy Canadian immigrant who dispatched a planeload of weapons to Croatia in the early 90s. The aircraft was captured by the JNA and later used to airlift Serbs from Sarajevo at the beginning of the war.

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- My nervous system was coming apart quickly. From early morning my hands shook, I walked the town like a zombie. Mother on the other hand was calm. She had heard that the police were hunting refugees from Bosnia and delivering them over to Karadžić. That's why she didn't register me with the Red Cross - you couldn't trust anyone. Not until 1994 did I register my stay in Montenegro. Up to then I lived illegally. Night after night, my father, mother and I would jerk awake every time we heard a car stop in front of our house. My father waited for each dawn, hunting rifle in hand, waiting for the moment when they would come to get us. I avoided going into town. For years I didn't travel anywhere outside Ulcinj. Every time I saw a police or army uniform I would break into a sweat. I lived like a Jew in a ghetto.

Andrej says that the whole of Ulcinj knew that the police were catching refugees and deporting them back to Bosnia.

- But the terror was complete - nobody said a word about it. Only recently, when I went to report that I was receiving death threats because of an article I wrote on the shame of Herceg Novi from which most people were extradited, I was told at the Ulcinj police that the arrested refugees had been tied like dogs to radiators in the hallways.

The policemen told Andrej what the refugees had been exposed to, but did not reveal who had broken the windshield of his car several days earlier. All the same, his visit to the police was yet another confirmation that he had conquered his personal trauma and fear.

- I didn't overcome my fear of the police until 1997, when the DPS<sup>13</sup> fell apart and the police became Montenegrin<sup>14</sup>. Up to then, and especially at the beginning of the 90s, that police force was the keeper of the Serbian

<sup>13</sup> The ruling Montenegrin Democratic Party of Socialists emerged from the former Communist Party. During the war in Yugoslavia, it unswervingly supported Greater Serbian policies, Slobodan Milošević and the Serb side in Bosnia.

<sup>14</sup> The Montenegrin police worked hand in glove with official Belgrade until 1997, when the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović, broke with the politics of Slobodan Milošević and turned to the project of a sovereign Montenegro.

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cause in Montenegro. It was clear that it was being commanded from Belgrade. Today the Montenegrin police are something entirely different. Some of the more extreme elements had eventually crossed over to the notorious Seventh Battalion<sup>15</sup>. Some of the Serbs too crossed over to the Montenegrins. If need be, they will return to being Serbs again. Here, that's like changing football clubs. Belonging to a nation is like having a profession - you play for a while for one side and then for a while for another.

Even after thirteen years of uninterrupted residence in Montenegro, Andrej still has the status of refugee. The authorities will not grant him Montenegrin citizenship even though his father Jovan was born in Montenegro and his old family home is still there. They tell him that he only registered as a refugee in Montenegro in 1994 and so has not acquired the legal right to Montenegrin citizenship.

What a pity. For Montenegro.

<sup>15</sup> The Seventh Battalion was officially part of the Yugoslav Army stationed in Montenegro in 1999. It recruited hardened Serb fighters from the battlefields in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, some of whom were criminals. One of its missions in Montenegro was to intimidate supporters of the government, which had sometime earlier broken with the policies of Slobodan Milošević.

## THE EVENING THEY CAME FOR DADDY

- I always dream of my father without his head. I can see his body, his hands, everything, but there is no head. I talk to him, he also talks to me, but there is no head. I can see his shoes, but not his face. It's been like that since I was eleven years old. And I would like so much to see his face - says Elma Čardaklija, a beautiful twenty-year-old economics graduate.

Elma was eleven years old when Montenegrin policemen arrested and took away her father, Alija. They took no heed of a crying child. She is convinced that her dreams are deeply related to that fateful event.

Until 18 December 2003, Alija Čardaklija's family knew nothing of what had happened to him. On that day, the birthday of his wife Suada, the telephone rang in their flat in Goražde, Bosnia. The Federal Agency for Missing Persons in Bosnia-Herzegovina informed them that Alija's remains had been found in the mud by the banks of the Drina river, in the village of Prohići near Žepa. All hopes were shattered: it was one of the worst days of her life.

Alija Čardaklija was born in Pljevlja, Montenegro, and lived in Goražde where he worked as shop manager. His wife Suada was a chemical technician in an arms factory. Daughters Elma and Lejla, her elder by four years, did well at school. Alija also had an apartment in Herceg Novi where he spent summers with his family, and every free day he could. The war in Bosnia was to change their life. Suada took refuge with the girls in Herceg Novi. She counted on being safest in the homeland of her husband and in her own apartment. However, the fact that he was born in Montenegro did not help Alija: one evening the Montenegrin police arrested him and on the very next day, along with another 36 Bosnian refugees, he was handed over to the Deputy Chief of Security of Foča prison, Slavko Koroman.

While she speaks of Alija, Suada wipes away tears and has to take a sedative.

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- In the middle of April we left Goražde, through Čajniče. Alija paid Momir Vuković, a Serb from our town, to conduct the children, myself and my parents safely to Herceg Novi. As we thought that we would stay only ten days and that the situation would calm down in the meantime, we took only the bare essentials with us. On the eve of 1 May I asked Alija to come and bring us some money. He came all right, but he didn't even have enough money for cigarettes. He paid a lot for us to get out and what was left was taken away from him by the Serbs while crossing the border at Rudo. We had nothing to live on, so we registered with the Red Cross. I had to come to terms with the hard truth: I waited in long lines with people who would say: "There's no room for Turks here", "You came here to eat Slobodan Milošević's bread"... I couldn't take it anymore. I would have given up, but Gospava Kovačević, who had been working there for years as a volunteer, convinced me not to.

The days went by. The situation in Bosnia was becoming worse and worse. Blood was flowing on all sides.

- On Saturday, 24 May - Suada says - at about eleven o'clock at night, two men knocked on our door. One was in the uniform of the Montenegrin police, the other in combat uniform. They arrived in a police car - a Yugo. Alija was taking a shower, so I opened the door. They asked for the owner of the apartment, Alija Čardaklija, and whether he could come with them to provide them with some information. They told him to hurry up. He dressed quickly and with his hair still wet he went with them. Since my husband suffered from a serious diabetic condition and had a clot in his right foot which required rest, I asked them when he would return. They said in half an hour. My father, Mustafa, offered to come along with Alija. They asked him how old he was. When he told them he was 70, they told him to stay there.

Alija didn't come back in an hour, or two, or the whole night. In the morning Suada went to the Herceg Novi police to look for him.

- When I asked about Alija at the reception desk, three policemen started laughing. "There's a Turk here looking for her husband," "It'll be up to us to fuck her, then", one of them sneered. There were plenty of other insults

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and vulgarities on my account. The second one went away somewhere and came back in a couple of minutes. He told me that Alija was not feeling well, that he asked me to bring him socks and something to eat, which I did. When I arrived on the following day to visit my husband, they told me that they had returned Alija to Bosnia. I never saw him again.

In the darkness that was Herceg Novi, there was also a ray of humanity. Suada was helped by a neighbour, Gospava, and her daughter-in-law Melanija.

- In our building we were especially taken care of and watched over by an elderly woman, someone who had fought in the national struggle for liberation in World War II, Gospava Kovačević. She took care of us like a mother, helped us morally and financially. She even paid for an English course for both my daughters. She enrolled the younger one in primary and the elder in secondary school. Her daughter-in-law, a well-known journalist, Melanija Bulatović, encouraged us and helped us from the first day of our misfortune. They restored our confidence in good people.

But Suada has not forgotten the people who made her suffer either:

- One day Veljo Vrećo, a surveyor's technician, and Đurica Lubarda, a painter from Goražde, came. In front of the children they told us to move to Turkey and said that we had no place being there. They paced up and down our apartment, measuring it and working out how many square meters there were. A couple of days later, Veljo Vrećo arrived again, this time with his son, a JNA officer from Kumbor. He said I was to go with them to Foča to look for Alija. My mother wouldn't hear of it. She said to me: "What are you thinking, your children have lost their father, do you want them to lose their mother too? You won't return alive. My child, you still don't know what the Chetniks are." I gave up the idea.

At the end of the year Suada was summoned to the Herceg Novi police. There were three detectives waiting for her in the office. Then Veljo Vrećo came in.

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- He started shouting and demanding how a Turkish woman could be sitting there. He lied that he had lent Alija five thousand German Marks and demanded that I return him the money by selling the apartment and the car. I refused. I asked him how he wasn't ashamed of lying, since my Alija used to help him financially. "Do you hear what this Turkish woman is saying on Serb territory, fuck her Turkish mother!" yelled Vrećo. I turned to the inspectors. I asked them how they could permit Vrećo to insult a woman in their presence. One inspector, whom I later discovered was called Milorad Šljivančanin, just said: "The prosecutor's office is next door, go there if you want to sue him". I stood up and walked out.

Children who lose their father at an early age grow up more quickly and begin to take life seriously even faster. I suppose they have to get to grips with it a lot sooner. This unwritten rule is also confirmed by Elma. She appears unusually serious for her age:

- When they took my father away, the doors to an easy childhood closed far too early - explains Elma who can still not free herself of ugly memories.

- Once, two of Karadžić's men burst into our apartment. They told us to pack our things, that they would take us to our father, who they said was in a private camp. Lejla called the police, who arrived in three minutes, headed by their commander, Milorad Šljivančanin, who arrested the men immediately. Šljivančanin told us then: "If anyone is harassing you, call me immediately".

With the beginning of the following year things become even worse. Members of the Republika Srpska Army, who in those days in Montenegro went about acting as liberators and national heroes, also knocked on Suada's door.

- 1993 was the worst year for us - says Suada. - Every weekend, bearded, filthy and armed to the teeth, Serbs from Republika Srpska would come to our door. They harassed us and threatened to take us to a camp, like Alija. We would call the police, the police would take them away, but they would come back again. This went on for the entire year.

Suada also wrote a letter to the Montenegrin President, Momir Bulatović, asking for the truth about her husband. At the beginning of July 1993 she received a reply<sup>16</sup> which read: "On 25 May 1992, personnel of the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior surrendered to the warden of Foča prison, Slavko Koroman, 37 persons of whom 21 were Muslims and 16 Serbs. Among them was Alija Čardaklija. Following the handover, the Interior Ministry of the Montenegrin Republic has no further information on these persons due to the outbreak of civil war on the territory of the former Bosnia and Herzegovina, which brought police cooperation to a standstill and made it impossible to gather information on the subsequent fate of the persons handed over".

In this way Suada found that her husband had been deported from the state in which he was born, and that the President of Montenegro was treating the internationally recognized country of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a former state.

Despite these crushing revelations, Suada remained in her apartment in Montenegro. The children went to school, Elma to primary and Lejla to a secondary school specializing in economics, where she was in the same class as the daughter of the notorious Gojko Janković from Foča, later to find himself behind bars as a war criminal at the Tribunal in The Hague.

- Gojko's daughter secretly slipped a picture of Alija Izetbegović into my notebook and wrote "I love Muslims" in it. Then she showed it to the whole class. I was saved by a class friend, Saša Vučurović, who told the others that he had seen her putting the picture in and writing in my notebook - says Lejla.

Elma, on the other hand, had trouble with her teachers. In eighth grade, during a Serbian language lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to state their nationality. Lejla was in great difficulty.

<sup>16</sup> Reply from the Commission for Petitions and Complaints of the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic of Montenegro, no. 07-436 of 5 July 1993.

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- The lesson of 45 minutes seemed to last 45 years. The pupils all said that they were Serbs. Then it was my turn. I stood up. The teacher said that if I wished to say that I was a Serb, she would write that down. I was silent. She asked me again. Then I decided: I said that I felt I was a Muslim... This difficult lesson came to an end. I'm standing in front of the school, watching the rain fall, mixed with a strong wind. My bones are freezing from the cold. Fathers are arriving by car to collect their children, I'm standing there alone. There is no one to pick me up. Evil men took away my father away when he was 43 years old. They would not let him stay to protect us from misfortune. I stood there, waiting for the storm to calm down. Then I continued home on my own.

At the end of August 1995, Suada's father Mustafa died. He was buried at the town cemetery in Herceg Novi, in the tomb of the Kusturica family. Ten years later, Alija Čardaklija was buried in Bosnia. Suada and Lejla live in Gorazde, Elma in Sarajevo.

They have not sold the apartment in Herceg Novi.

## THEY DROVE US AWAY LIKE DOGS

In the family home of Enes Bičo, only the soft footfall of his mother Ramiza, a saddened old woman, is to be heard these days. Usually once a year, Ramiza is visited from distant Denmark by her daughter Vahida and Enes's wife, Sabina, with the children. She is always delighted to see them, but they only stay for a short time: everything in that house reminds them of Enes, arrested and deported by the Montenegrin police and killed by Karadžić's warriors.

Before the war, Sabina and Enes Bičo owned a small textile boutique in the center of Goražde in Bosnia. They lived in the family house and were well off. With no major problems and a new baby on the way, they took pleasure in the first steps of their two-year-old son Kerim. But their life suddenly became a nightmare: this contented family had to abandon everything as war overtook them. Overnight they became refugees with nothing to call their own, and sought refuge in Montenegro. In the middle of April they arrived in Herceg Novi and settled into a Bosnian-owned holiday resort in Kumbor. They were not alone: with them was Enes's sister Vahida, her husband Ismet and their two sons.

The brothers-in-law Enes Bičo and Ismet Isaković started off early on that 25 May for the market in Herceg Novi. With them in the car was their friend Bogoslav Droco, but in Meljine they were stopped by the police. Having asked to see their ID, they took them in for questioning. They soon let Bogoslav go as he was disabled. Bogoslav went straight from the police to Sabina and Vahida with the bad news.

- When he told us what had happened, we panicked - says Vahida. I immediately went to see Mato Milović, an old friend from Herceg Novi. Together we went to the police. Outside the Herceg Novi Security Centre there were a lot of police, army and weaponry, including two tanks. I recognized some Serbs from Goražde. They were moving about freely, constantly going in and out. They let Mato in. He soon returned. He told me that he had seen them, but that there was nothing he could do. He brought me Ismet's wedding ring and Enes's chain. The tears froze somewhere at the back of my eyes. Then I went back to Kumbor...

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Sabina joins in the conversation:

- In tears, Kerim asked me why the police had taken Daddy away. I told him his daddy would be back soon. I was racked by pain and fear: the baby in my stomach also contracted as if it too felt some evil...

Vahida quickly packed some food and clothing and headed for Herceg Novi again taking Sabina and Kerim with her. On the way she bought two cartons of cigarettes and two loaves of bread. She did not suspect that this would be the last gift she would ever give her brother. To this day the sight of a loaf of white bread reminds her of that moment:

- I always wonder whether those were his last cigarettes and his last morsel of bread.

When Vahida arrived in front of the Security Centre, she asked the policemen to tell her what was happening to her husband and brother.

- In the meantime - says Vahida - a lot of mothers, wives, sisters and children of the people arrested had gathered. The policemen shooed us away, like dogs. I came up to a younger policeman and asked him what they were going to do to them. He stared at me and yelled: "We'll take out their eyes. We have to send Alija Izetbegović two kilograms of Muslim eyes!" I stood still. Then something boiled up inside of me. I cursed his Chetnik mother and the man who gave him a police uniform. He took out his gun, cocked it and put it to my forehead. I felt the horrible coldness of steel. Sabina was screaming. In shock, I kept on saying: "Shoot, shoot!" A tall policeman with a moustache sharply ordered him to lower his gun, but he still kept on holding it to my forehead hysterically threatening: "I'll kill her, I'll kill her!" but the one with the moustache went up to him quickly and took away his gun.

Two buses were parked outside the police building, soldiers were singing Chetnik songs. One of them came up to Vahida.

- He offered me a bottle saying: "Drink, bula (Turkish or Muslim woman in oriental costume), you'll feel better!" I looked at him scornfully, and he splashed me with the brandy from the bottle. The police watched all this in silence.

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Then they brought out the prisoners - continues Vahida. - They filed by, two by two, led by the tall policeman with the moustache, who was holding some papers. To the side were numerous, well armed policemen. I had seen scenes like this only in Partisan films, where the Germans, Chetniks and Ustashas would take away people to be shot. I picked up the bags with the bread, clothing and cigarettes and went towards the column. The policemen would not let me approach, but the one with the moustache signalled to them to let me through. I gave them the bags. Every muscle on my husband Ismet's face was twitching, as if some animal had got under his skin and was vainly looking for a way out. He squeezed my hand and whispered: "You know what to do?" My brother Enes hugged me tightly and kept repeating: "Take care of Kerim and Sabina". Two large tears rolled down his face.

It started raining. The buses started off and were soon lost from sight. Weeping, Vahida set off for Kumbor:

- I felt ashamed. I was ashamed of my own stupidity. I wondered how I could have been so stupid, so naive as to come here expecting the Montenegrins to protect me from the Bosnian Serbs. Well, you had to hand it to them.

But this was not the end of their troubles.

- As we passed through the streets of Herceg Novi, passers-by insulted us. They said they were happy that our husbands - "snipers from Goražde" - had got what was coming to them. I couldn't respond. I swallowed my tears, fearing for the life of my son and my unborn baby - says Sabina.

- We were harassed - adds Vahida - endlessly. Especially in the dead of night. We never put on our pyjamas, nor did we sleep at the same time. We didn't know who would attack us or when: the police, the various armies, ordinary people, young people, the children of the Serb refugees...

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In the meantime, Sabina received an official confirmation<sup>17</sup> from the Herceg Novi Security Centre, signed by the Chief, Milorad Šljivančanin, that Enes Bičo "pursuant to a dispatch from the MUP RCG (Interior ministry of the Republic of Montenegro), along with other citizens of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Republic, was returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina on 25 May 1992, to the Collective Centre, and handed over to personnel of the Foča police station".

Enes's mother Ramiza also found out about his arrest and feared the worst:

- Even though our house is twenty kilometers or so from Foča, nobody could help me find out anything about my son. I knew what was going on in Foča: our house was on the bank of the Drina, and the river would often wash corpses ashore. I was going crazy from fear that one day I would see Eso there. I watched the bodies of the unfortunate people float down the river and prayed to God that the same fate would not happen to Eso. Anyone who is a parent can understand what I'm saying - says Ramiza.

At the beginning of a hot July Sabina's labour began. In the town in which the policemen had sent her husband to his death, a new life was being born. Enes's daughter.

- On the fifth of July - says Sabina - at about midnight, I had strong contractions. With Vahida's help I reached the hospital in Herceg Novi. At the entrance to the hospital we were greeted by a nurse and a woman doctor. I explained to them that I was having strong contractions and begged them to take me to Kotor in the ambulance. They said that we had enough time and that we had to find our own transport to Kotor hospital. I felt the baby would soon come and cried and begged them to help me but they wouldn't. I began to lose consciousness and my arms went into spasm. The doctor finally realized that the situation was serious and called for an ambulance. We set off. The pains were becoming stronger and stronger. I

<sup>17</sup> The document was not entered in the log-book, but it is signed and stamped with the seal of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, MUP Montenegro.

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begged the driver, a man called Ranko, to stop at the first hospital we came across. He stopped outside the Army hospital in Meljine. He ran out with Vahida to look for help, but there was no help to be had: the doctor kept insisting that this was a hospital for wounded men only and that they didn't have a maternity ward...

And then the baby started to come:

- Vahida ran up to me and caught the baby in her arms. I felt I was dying.

After being given first aid, there among the Serb wounded who were being treated in Montenegro, the doctors decided that Sabina had to go to Kotor immediately. The placenta had remained in the womb and the baby's umbilical cord, inexpertly tied, was bleeding profusely. But thanks to the Kotor doctors, Sabina and the baby were saved. And so fate came full circle: Enes Bičo was taken from Meljine to his death, and two months later, completely unplanned, his daughter Zerina was born right there in Meljine.

- The days in Kumbor - says Sabina - went by slowly. We became more and more depressed, defeated and hungry. One night someone knocked loudly on our door. We froze in fear. "Open up, police", someone shouted. Vahida asked fearfully: "How can I be sure that you're the police?" "Open up, listen to what I'm saying!" She fearfully opened the door. We looked on numbly to see what was going to happen. Two Montenegrin policemen demanded that we hand over our money and jewellery. We didn't have any: it had been taken from us earlier by the Bosnian Serbs. They ordered us to drive our car to the front of the Herceg Novi police station in the morning and leave it there, which we did. We had no money, and the help from the Red Cross was not sufficient. Every time we went to pick up aid, a woman called Mira from the Red Cross abused us, often spitting at us. There were, of course, also good people in Kumbor. Without them we certainly would not have survived, and we are deeply grateful to them.

After losing all hope that their loved ones would return to them, and realizing that they would not be able to stand it much longer in Montenegro, Vahida and Sabina packed their suitcases. With the help of friends who

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had left earlier for Denmark, they sought refuge there and after long years of waiting, Vahida saw her husband Ismet again. He is one of the few to have survived the Foča death camp.

- When my husband appeared at the doors of the refugee camp in Denmark, little Kerim kept peering behind his back, looking for his daddy. When he realized that his father was not with Ismet, he looked at me so sadly that that look haunts me like a nightmare. No doctors or psychologists have managed to erase those bitter years of my life. As long as I live I will testify to the inhumanity of one nation and country. I will advise those who come after me to always avoid Montenegro, where my own family originated - says Vahida.

Ismet does not know either what happened to his brother-in-law. He only knows that one day he was taken from the Foča prison to be exchanged and that he never returned.

Ismet Isaković, an entertainment agent from Goražde, was exchanged on 24 August 1994 on the Brotherhood and Unity Bridge in Sarajevo. He had been through three Serb camps: Foča, Rudo and Sarajevo. In that time he lost 50 kilograms.

When the Montenegrin policemen arrested him, he thought he was being taken for questioning and that he would soon be released. However, when they put him on a bus bound for Foča, he realized what was going to happen:

- While entering the bus we were surrounded by armed policemen of the Montenegrin MUP (Ministry of the Interior). They warned us not to think of doing anything stupid, because they would fire immediately. In Plužine we transferred to a bus from Foča. During the drive, the Foča policemen, who had taken us over from their Montenegrin colleagues, sang Chetnik songs. As we drove along the road from Šćepan Polje to Foča, I saw many houses burning - Ismet remembers.

In Foča prison Ismet was taken to room number 20.

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- It was a large room in which we did everything, even went to the toilet. Later they put me with a group of educated people from Foča, among whom were Doctor Ibro Karović, a chemistry engineer called Dževad Lojo, Dr. Amir Berberkić, a surgeon, and others. In Foča prison I lost fifty kilos and I remained there until the beginning of June 1993, when I was transferred to Rudo.

Ismet believed that he would soon be exchanged for Serb soldiers captured by the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army, but he remained in Rudo until March 1994, where he did the most difficult physical labour.

- I was then transferred to the Kula prison near Sarajevo. I stayed there until 24 August 1994, when I was finally exchanged at the Brotherhood and Unity Bridge in Sarajevo. I immediately went abroad. My life was spared, but it isn't easy to live with the wounds of the soul. My wife and I don't work because of our psychological problems.

Ismet is ill, but he is alive. Of his brother-in-law, thirty-year-old Esad, nothing is known even after thirteen years. If he is dead already, however cruel it may sound, maybe it would have been better if his mother Ramiza had seen his body in the Drina.

At least she would have given him a decent burial and she would have known where his mezar, his grave, lies.

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## MOTHER, I'M OFF

The wheel on which life and death, death and life replace each other might be called destiny. As the wheel spins, a young accordion player from Goražde in Bosnia, Sanin Krdžalija did not strike it lucky: he was arrested during a police raid the same morning he arrived in Kumbor from Pljevlja, both in Montenegro. By noon he had already been deported to Bosnia. If he had stayed in Pljevlja in the Montenegrin part of the Sandžak, as his mother Sejda tried to persuade him, he might have lived. As it is, all she has left are memories.

- After fleeing occupied Goražde at the beginning of April, we were generously received in Pljevlja by the wonderful family of Sanja Vlahovljak, with whom we stayed until 25 May. The day before my son had talked over the phone with Ismet Isaković, President of the Association of Entertainment Workers of Goražde. Ismet was in Herceg Novi and had asked Sanin to come in, because he had arranged a gig for them to play in a hotel and needed an accordion player. I begged Sanin for us not to go there, not to get far away, I had a bad feeling - says Sejda.

But her son did not listen to her: death, it seems, was drawing him like a magnet.

- We arrived in Kumbor early on the morning of 25 May. We went to the Red Cross to register, but were told there that they wouldn't take registrations from men, which I found suspicious. "Mother, I'm off", said Sanin and started off towards the camp where we had settled. On my way out of the Red Cross I met Suada Čardaklija, from Goražde. In tears she told me that her husband had been arrested the day before and taken away and that there was a big police raid going on. Panic stricken, I ran to the camp, but it was too late: my daughter Sanela ran into my arms in tears and told me that they had arrested Sanin and taken him away. I cannot describe the pain.

With her daughter Sanela, Sejda immediately headed for the Herceg Novi police station. They would let only Sanela in. They told her that she could bring her brother food and clothing and that he would be returned to Bosnia at about two o'clock in the afternoon.

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- We waited in front of the police building. There was a bus in the parking lot. The driver said that they were being taken to the prison in Foča, that the Muslims would be sent to a camp, and the Serbs to the battlefield. At exactly two o'clock a large group of men was brought out of the police building. They allowed me to hug my son. I didn't for a moment suspect that this was for the last time, that it was our last moment together. Then I had a nervous breakdown - says Sejda.

Munib Hadžić, a camp inmate who survived, watched this scene from the bus:

- Poor kid. His mother and sister were hugging him and bodily preventing him from boarding. The policemen tore them away from him and put him on the bus. It was pitiful to watch - says Munib.

In the group of deported refugees, along with Sanin, was also his friend Ismet Isaković, who was - fate again - to survive his two and a half years of captivity in the Foča prison camp.

The following three days, Sejda went regularly with Sanela to the police to inquire about Sanin. The policemen, of course, would not tell them anything.

- On the fourth day - says Sejda - there was word that the policemen would also arrest women capable of working, and that Jasna Begović from Goražde had already been arrested in Bar. I was beside myself: I didn't want to leave, because I was hoping for Sinan's return, and on the other hand, I was terribly afraid that they could also take away my daughter from me.

In fear that the policemen would take her remaining child, Sejda decided that they should flee Herceg Novi and Montenegro. Mother and daughter headed for Skopje, Macedonia.

- To this day it's not clear to me how I managed to drive the car to Skopje. My eyes were blinded by tears; around every bend I expected a police patrol that would stop us and take Sanela away from me. I didn't trust anyone anymore.

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On the last day of June, a Friday, Sejda received a call in Skopje from their friend Sanja in Pljevlja. She told them joyfully that Sanin had called and that they had been taken to be exchanged in Čajniče.

- There was no end to our happiness. We sent a message to our folks in Goradže that Sanin would be exchanged and for them to wait for him there. But our happiness was short-lived. On Sunday Sanja called me again. She told me that the exchange had not come off and that Sanin had been returned to Foča. Horror set in again - says Sejda.

Days and weeks went by, Sanin did not call. One day Sejda received a call in Skopje from Sadik Demirović. He had also been arrested on the Montenegrin coast and deported to Foča together with Sanin.

- He told me that he had been in Foča with my son and that he had news for me. Sadik, Sanela and I quickly met in a restaurant in the Bitpazar in Skopje. He recognized me from a photograph that my son had had in his pocket. He told us that he had shared a cell with Sanin, that he was let go from the camp because his wife handed over 25,000 German Marks and a Mercedes car to Serbs from Foča in Podgorica. He told me that Sanin was not beaten, but that on account of the wretched food he had lost a lot of weight. He told how every night they listened to people being taken from their cells and beaten, that from the windows of the cells they watched them kill Bosniaks and throw their corpses from the bridge into the Drina - recounts Sejda.

Sadik managed, however, to offer the worried mother a ray of hope: he said that the men brought from Montenegro had not been killed, that they were being kept for exchange. At the beginning of September this ray also died out:

- A group of men released from Foča prison arrived in Skopje. Among them I found an elderly gentlemen, Safet Kumro, who had spend some time in the same cell with my son. He told me that he knew Sanin well, that my son was a real stickler for cleanliness, that he often washed his denims and sneakers. He told me that on 30 August Sanin was taken away from the camp, along with a large group of younger prisoners. He remembers that

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day very well, he says, because he saw them from the window as they got into the bus. They were carrying their personal belongings. In the end Safet said to me: "Don't worry, that means that they have probably taken him to be exchanged, because when they took inmates for execution, they wouldn't allow them to take their personal belongings, so that their identity would not be revealed later on." That was the last reliable information on Sanin. It's thirteen years now that I know nothing about my son. He was only 22 - says Sejda.

Nothing is known either of the fate of Sanin's fellow townsman, Mirsad Borovac. They were arrested, deported, and most probably executed on the same day.

- That 30th August, about a hundred people divided into four groups were taken away from Foča prison. Among them were Mirsad Borovac and Sanin Krdžalija - says Munib Hadžić.

If things had been just a little different, Mirsad Borovac at least might have stayed alive. He was in a group of Foča prisoners who were released on 30 August 1992 and sent by bus to Podgorica. Just as it left Nikšić, the bus was overtaken by the Chetnik vojvoda (military leader) Pero Elez and company, who ordered the drivers to take all the prisoners back, because "a different decision had been taken in the meantime." While they were being taken back to Foča, Mirsad begged the drivers to open the bus doors and let him jump out. They would not do it. On the same day, with another nineteen passengers from that bus, he was taken to his death.

Mirsad's mother Bejta wonders how "those villains could have deported all those people for no reason at all", while his father Husein asks:

- We know that he was handed over to Karadžić's Chetniks, but if they have killed him, why don't they at least tell us where he is, so that we can give him a dignified funeral?

At the beginning of the war, twenty-eight-year old Mirsad left his hometown of Goražde, and with his wife Dijana, two-year-old daughter Irma and brother Nihad arrived in Herceg Novi.

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- On that sunny May morning - says Dijana - Mirsad went shopping. In the afternoon Bogoslav Droco, nicknamed Beli, came to see us. He told me that Mirsad had been arrested in the street and that he was in the police station in Herceg Novi.

Dijana immediately called the police. They confirmed that Mirsad Borovac had been arrested and that he "would be sent back to where he came from" on the same day, stressing that "visits were not allowed."

There was panic in the refugee Borovac family. No one slept that night. Dijana and Nihad decided to take Irma and before dawn flee towards Bijelo Polje, but the police stopped them in Budva:

- They took us to the police station. Nihad was arrested, and I was requested to remove myself with the child. I begged them to let him go explaining that they had taken away his brother in Herceg Novi on the previous day. The chief finally gave in. He called by telephone and established that I was telling the truth. Then he let Nihad go - says Dijana.

Nihad will never forget those moments that decided his life or death.

- I had the crazy luck to stay alive, and at the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina when we got through to the Montenegrin coast, we thought that we were safe at last.

Coincidence or fate? Nihad survived, Ismet also. Of Sanin and Mirsad there is neither grave, nor trace.

## WITNESSES ACCUSE

Sadik Demirović, a café owner from Trebinje, Ekrem Ćemo, Deputy Director of the Employment Bureau in Foča and his fellow townsman Hamed Ćelik, an ambulance driver, did not know each other before the war, but now they are forever bound together by memories of the Foča camp. The Montenegrin police, bad luck, or their own naiveté brought them to their joint place of torture. They survived to testify.

Sadik fled to Montenegro in the middle of April 1992. Some time before, because of his refusal to take part in the attack on Dubrovnik, the Trebinje authorities, headed by Mayor Božidar Vučurević - local Serb leader, close associate of Radovan Karadžić and truck driver by occupation - had closed down his café. For the same sin, Judge Novica Dimić of the JNA (Yugoslav People's Army) Military Court in Sarajevo condemned Sadik to six months in prison.

Fleeing from forced mobilization and prison, Sadik, then aged 45, took refuge in Montenegro, first in Bar and Ulcinj and then in Herceg Novi, in order to be closer to Trebinje. He stayed at the Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre in Igalo and spent a quiet two weeks there before being arrested at lunch in the hotel restaurant, while treating his two sons to some local specialties.

- While I was having lunch with my sons, fourteen-year-old Samir and Semir who is three years younger, in the restaurant of the hotel in Igalo, two policemen came up to our table. They asked for my identity card. I told them that we were guests of the hotel and that my identity card was at the reception desk. They knew that very well, since we had obviously been denounced by one of the receptionists. In stern tones one of them ordered: "Get up and come with us!" The children remained sitting at the table, and I was taken to the reception desk. There I asked for my identity card and handed it over to the policemen to inspect. They looked at it and said: "Come with us!" I asked them what I was supposed to do with my children. "The children stay," they said.

The children watched in tears as the policemen took their father away. Outside the Herceg Novi police building a young policeman began harassing Sadik:

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- He asked me: "Did you vote for Alija? Do you want a sovereign Bosnia?" this was followed by bestial and insulting questions. I kept quiet. They took me inside the building and handed me over to the officer on duty. He said curtly: "Take him downstairs," and gave one of them the keys. There was no explanation, no questions and no possibility to say anything in my own defense. They brought me to a room and pushed me inside.

In this small room Sadik found about thirty people. It was cramped and very stuffy.

- Some were begging to be allowed to go to the toilet, but the Herceg Novi policemen wouldn't let them, so they relieved themselves into plastic bottles and bags, which made conditions in the room additionally difficult.

A couple of hours later a policeman appeared at the door:

- "Out, everyone on the bus!" he barked irritably. Surrounding the bus were policemen with their rifles cocked. On the other side were the mothers, wives, sisters and children of the arrested men. Tears, sobs, screams. The police drove them away, pushing them back from us, and we were ordered "Get on the bus, get in!"

The bus started off towards Foča. During the drive Sadik tried to explain to the policeman that he was not guilty, and to persuade him to let him go in Nikšić.

- He said to me ironically: "Don't be afraid, we're not Tito's fighters, we don't kill; we're Šešelj's army, we cut throats," and laughed. I was covered in cold sweat, my knees were shaking, I barely managed to get to my seat.

In Šćepan Polje, on the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Montenegrin policemen handed over the deported men to their colleagues from Foča. Only after the "welcome ceremony" at Foča prison, did the unfortunate people realise that they had now become inmates of a camp.

- They lined us up against a wall and ordered us to face the wall. "What are we to do with them?" asked one of the armed guards. "We'll butcher some

of them and the rest we'll skin alive," replied another. They cocked their rifles, pushing the barrels into our backs. I couldn't breathe for fear, my legs went numb, as they competed in outdoing one another in brutality.

In the meantime, Sadik's wife Nebija had come to collect the children and their Mercedes car. She went to the Herceg Novi police station. At her insistence, the police commander, Milorad Šljivančanin, issued her with a stamped certificate<sup>18</sup> saying that Sadik Demirović "pursuant to a dispatch of the MUP RCG (Interior Ministry of the Republic of Montenegro), together with other citizens of the Republic of Bosnia and Hezegovina, had been returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 25 May 1992" to the "Collective Centre", and handed over to the Foča police.

Sadik was to see his fill of human suffering and human cruelty, of executioners and victims, in Foča prison.

- When the guards brought back the inmates from interrogation, they would lie for several days without moving, usually on their chests, because their backs would be black and blue from the beatings. I remember Šerif Balić, a man called Šabanović, Rasim Hanjalić, and many others. They urinated blood...

And then it was Sadik's turn. He was to become personally acquainted with men who were like raging beasts.

- One time I begged the guard to listen to me, I wanted to explain that I was there by some mistake. He started beating me with a baton. When I fell down, he kicked me mercilessly, saying: "A mistake, eh? A mistake, is it?" The other inmates found me on the floor when they returned from lunch and helped me get back to my room. A couple of days later I was taken out of the lunch line by the biggest bully among the guards, Miro Burilo. After a couple of his punches I passed out...

Sadik came to in total darkness.

<sup>18</sup> Certificate stamped with the seal of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, signed by Milorad Šljivančanin, with no date as to when it was issued or logged. See Appendix,

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- I didn't know where I was, or what was happening. I tasted salt in my mouth. The pain was unbearable. I peed in order to have something to moisten my mouth. I was in dread, wanting to cry out for help, to shout, but I didn't dare. I didn't dare fall asleep either, I was afraid of not waking up. My head and body hurt. I felt closer to death than to life...

Sadik spent three days in the dark cell before being returned to room number 12. The guards, however, had decided to pick on him, so a couple of days later he was again taken out of the lunch line:

- They beat me, burned my neck and arms with cigarettes. I have had those scars for thirteen years now - says Sadik showing the burns on his arms.

One Thursday, at about eight o'clock at night, the guards ordered Sadik to come with them. He thought he was being taken to be shot.

- They handed me over to two armed and dirty men in combat uniforms. I looked at them and shook with fear. I wondered if this was the end. How would they kill me? What would they do to me before the end came? "Don't be afraid," one of them says to me, "we've come to help you get out. If we agree on a price, we take you out of here. You're brother gave us five thousand German marks to find out if you were alive. For us to get you out, you have to forget everything you've seen and heard and pay another fifty thousand marks".

Sadik didn't have that kind of money, but his "rescuers" found a solution.

- We agreed that I would give them twenty five thousand marks and my Mercedes in exchange for my freedom. They promised they would come for me on Sunday, 9 August. I couldn't sleep all night, I couldn't believe that I would be saved. And amazingly, they came at the arranged time. Behind me the burned and ravaged ruins of Foča fell away, and with them the five hundred or so inmates who had shared the camp with me. On the road to Nikšić I learned that the pair were called Žaga and Gaga. Later, I realized from the media that Žaga was in fact the war criminal Dragan Kunarac, whom The Hague Tribunal condemned to 28 years in prison for crimes committed in Foča.

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With Žaga and Gaga, Sadik arrived in Nikšić, Montenegro, at the restaurant of Blažo Gardašević. He telephoned his family in Trebinje and his wife soon arrived with a relative, who had managed to get in touch with Žaga and Gaga through friends in Nikšić. The deal was done: they took the money and the Mercedes, and Sadik was set free.

With the help of a friend, Sadik left Montenegro hidden in the body of a big truck and arrived in Macedonia. Nebija and the children followed him to Skopje by bus, immediately carrying on to Sweden, where they live today.

Of all the deported refugees from Montenegro imprisoned in the Foča camp, Sadik Demirović was the first to get to freedom. Even though he spent only two and a half months in the prison, the deep wounds this left will never completely heal. The arrest and deportation, the torture in the camp, the scars from cigarette burns, the screams, moans and crying of the inmates cannot be erased from Sadik's memory. Regular treatment by a psychiatrist and medication, that is his life today.

- I am - says Sadik - still in that hell which I only physically survived.

At the outbreak of war, Hamed Čelik, an experienced ambulance driver from Foča, also took refuge in Igalo, Montenegro, with his friend Todor Ćurčić. He had hardly settled in at the end of April 1992, he tells us, when he was visited by a policeman called Blagojević and taken for a preliminary interview. After spending the night in prison, he was interrogated by a police official.

- I explained to him that I had taken refuge in Montenegro and was fleeing the war, that I had registered with the Red Cross, that I was staying in the house of a friend. I also showed him the Red Cross certificate,<sup>19</sup> issued in Igalo, which I have treasured like gold all these years. When he finished questioning me he told me that I was free to go, to go home, that no one

<sup>19</sup> Red Cross certificate of registration of residence no. 85227, dated 15 April 1992, issued in Igalo.

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would bother me anymore. While he was seeing me out, he apologized politely for detaining me for no reason. However, on 25 May 1992, at about eight o'clock, the policemen arrived again. They ordered me to come with them. I asked them where they were taking me. They answered that I had to leave Montenegrin territory, since Yugoslavia did not have diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. On arrival at the police station they handed me over to the officer on duty. I asked him if I could talk with the commander. He looked at me cynically and said: "Maybe you'd also like to talk to the minister? You're going to the cellar now, you can talk down there!" He opened the door and pushed me into a small stuffy room full of people - says Hamed.

Only two hours later, Čelik was taken to the bus.

- At about nine o'clock in the evening they brought us to Foča prison. "Here are your Ustashas," said a Montenegrin policeman to his Foča colleagues. They lined us up against the wall, searched us and clicked their rifles, threatening to shoot us. They put us in a big hall, where we spent the night. In the morning we saw that there were a lot of people in the camp, we estimated about five hundred. They looked terrible. I didn't suspect that I would soon be like them. I spent four months there and lost 30 kilos.

On 18 September, together with Nezir Krdžić, Hamed Čelik was taken to Kalinovik. They were told they were being taken to be exchanged.

- They separated us there. I don't know if Nezir survived, I never heard anything about him anymore. I was told that the exchange hadn't come off and that I would be a driving a "minesweeper". That in fact meant that I would be a human shield. I would drive a truck at the head of a column of Serb army vehicles. If the road was mined, I would be the first to be blown up.

Hamed was not kept in the prison in Kalinovik but at the police station, on permanent stand-by with a colleague, another driver from Foča hospital, Goran Kukavica, a Bosniak with an Orthodox name.

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- They didn't tell me where we were going. They would only say: "Get in the truck and drive slowly in front of us!" From a safe distance they would follow in my tracks in their own trucks. If it was mined, I was sure to die, I would go first. People used to say, say goodbye when you start off, if you have anyone to say goodbye to, like you're never going to see each other again. And it was like that for a full six months. All the time you're just waiting to end up as minced meat.

However, there is an exception to every rule.

- Once Goran Kukavica passed over a mine, which exploded under the tyres of a truck from the column behind him. Several Serb soldiers died. Their resentful comrades put Goran up against a beech tree to shoot him. An officer, who had been slightly wounded, mercifully wouldn't let them. He said that it was not Goran's fault and that he had been lucky. Goran also got to freedom and now lives in America.

After six months of hoping, Hamed was taken to be exchanged. Direction - Sarajevo airport.

- From Kalinovik we headed towards Foča, because you couldn't go through Rogoje and Trnovo. In the body of the truck there are five Serb fighters and me. For no reason one of them takes out a knife and puts it under my throat. "See how sharp it is," he says. "Better sharp than blunt, that way you'll slit my throat quicker and more easilier," I couldn't resist answering him back. He didn't like that. He grabs me by the ear with his long, filthy nails so brutally that the blood ran. He threatens: "I'll slit your throat at that big tunnel!" We got to that tunnel awfully quick. He orders me to get down, to kill me. I start getting off, and the others say: "Sit down, sit down, we'll slit your throat later." From the psychological point of view, they had killed us, so that we actually didn't care very much whether we lived or died.

They reached Miljevine, and spent the night there. In the morning, says Hamed, they brought along three Bosniak girls whom the Serbs were keeping in brothels, and an old man called Šukrija, and shoved them all into two Volkswagen Golf cars.

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- We headed for Montenegro. In Pljevlja we waited for hours outside the police building, while they were finishing some paperwork there. Through Prijepolje, we re-entered Bosnia via Višegrad, Rogatica and Sokolac, finally reaching Pale<sup>20</sup>.

On 24 March 1993 Hamed Čelik was taken to be exchanged.

- UNPROFOR took us to the airport in an armoured car. Our side handed over fifteen people in exchange for the five of us. After that the UNPROFOR people put me in their car and drove me to the PTT Inžinjeri building in Sarajevo. My son Muris was waiting for me there - says Hamed, who spent the whole war in Sarajevo.

Five years later Hamed left Bosnia and went to live in Denmark. As a protected witness of The Hague Tribunal he appeared at the trial of the warden of the Foča prison camp, Milorad Krnojelac, sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

- The Serbs gave away my identity the very next day, announcing in the media that I was a protected witness - says Hamed, who has no intention of returning to Bosnia.

Ekrem Čemo also appeared as a witness at the Krnojelac trial. He too has left Bosnia and is now living in Germany. He is reluctant to speak of that time:

- On the eve of the awful war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with my wife Emina and two small children I took shelter in Montenegro, in Bar, where I used to spend my summer holidays and had many friends. Prior to my arrest, the police paid several visits to Abdulah Kamerić and Ramiz Babić, also from Foča, who were later killed. They interrogated them during the night, early in the morning, in the middle of the day. They were arrested and released. After a couple of days, on 21 May 1992, at about seven o'clock in the morning, while the three of us were drinking coffee, a van

<sup>20</sup> The headquarters of the Bosnian Serbs.

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full of policemen suddenly drew up in front of the building. Armed policemen surrounded us immediately. Two of them approached us cautiously - says Ekrem.

The policemen ordered them to come with them for a preliminary interview.

- They shoved us in the van - continues Ekrem. - Sitting dejectedly inside was my acquaintance from Foča, a man called Remzija, I forget his last name. They took us to the police station in Bar. There, sitting handcuffed to chairs, were two of my countrymen, Ševko Kubat and Šaćir Redžo. They had spent two days tied up like that. Not long afterwards they pushed another forty people inside, we could hardly breathe. A policeman called out Ibrahim Ćerimović and took him away for interrogation. After fifteen minutes Ibrahim came back. We asked him: "What happened?" He said: "I don't know."

After an hour - explains Ekrem - a policeman came in, with some kind of list. He ordered: "Ekrem Ćemo, Ramiz Babić, Abdulah Kamerić, Ševko Kubat and Šaćir Redžo are to stay. The rest are free!" I asked him: "Why are we staying?" He answered sternly that the person in charge had to talk to us.

"The person in charge" turned out to be the notorious Mišo Stevanović, also known as Šumar (Forester), whom Ekrem did not know, but to his misfortune, Šumar knew him: Ekrem was deputy director of the employment bureau in Foča, and Šumar's wife had been waiting for a job for years. Šumar, who until the beginning of the war worked in the machinery section of Šipad along with Babić, Kamerić, Kubat and Redžo, had achieved his moment of revenge.

- With longing we looked through the window. And then we saw Šaćir's wife in front of the building almost kneeling before Šumar, who was with another policeman from Foča. After ten minutes or so they let Šaćir go. The four of us were put in solitary confinement, a smelly pit with a steel door - says Ekrem.

Friday passed, Saturday too. On Sunday they were visited by a policeman.

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- Through the steel opening he kept shoving a bayonet in and yelling: "You slaughtered my brothers in Bosnia, now I'll pay you back." He unlocked the door and came in. He put a knife under my throat. With one hand he held my head, yelling: "Balijo, (Muslim peasant), Turkish motherfucker!" I thought he was going to slit my throat, but he laughed and went away. I later found out that his name was Ivanović, that like us, he was from Bosnia, and that he worked as a policeman in Nikšić.

In the meantime the policemen brought in another group of arrested Bosnian refugees from Ulcinj: Munib Hodžić, Nedžib Lojo and Esad Hadžić.

- On Sunday, they put all of us in a Black Maria and took us to the police station in Herceg Novi. They took away everything: our wallets, money, chains, watches, even better quality belts. They gave us receipts to sign for the property and money, which we never saw again. And, what is worse, they beat people up. I saw with my own eyes when the Montenegrin policemen hit Ševko Kubat and threw him down the stairs - says Ekrem.

In the cellar of the Herceg Novi police station, Ekrem Ćemo and his countrymen spent another two days, without water or food. A new group of arrested Bosniaks arrived.

- At about three o'clock in the afternoon, on that day, 25 May 1992, they shoved all of us into a bus. They also shoved in about twenty or so Bosnian Serbs, who were being forcibly returned to the battlefield. At the same time, two army trucks full of arrested Bosniaks started off from the collective center towards Zvornik.

They arrived the same night at Foča prison and the long days of captivity began. In that prison, which the international organizations proclaimed a camp, Ekrem Ćemo spent "808 terrible days".

- I can't believe how I managed to survive the Foča camp: the beatings, torture, false executions... Pure luck - says Ekrem.

## Fatal Freedom

The Foča camp was closed down on 10 October 1994 when all camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed under pressure from the international community. Four hundred and thirty-one Bosniaks were killed in it. In other words, every third prisoner survived. In various mass graves, pits and caves, the posthumous remains of 128 inmates of Foča have been found and identified. The rest are still listed as missing.

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## RUSSIAN ROULETTE

On 25 May in Herceg Novi the Montenegrin police arrested a group of seasonal workers from Osmača, a village about twenty kilometers from the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, on charges of having bloodied their hands in Bosnia. In only twelve hours these young men, full of plans for their future, traveled the road from innocent people to prisoners condemned to death: Enver Mujčić, Bego Jahić, Nezir Krdžić, Aziz Burić and Bekir Krdžić were arrested in the morning, deported in the afternoon, and by evening they had already become prisoners of the death camp in Foča. Some ten years later, Aziz's bones were found in the Piljak pit near Foča, of Enver, Bego and Bekir there is no trace. Nezir survived.

The tragedy could have been even greater: only two minutes before the arrest Bego, his brother Smail and Bekir left the restaurant where they were sitting to buy jeans in a nearby boutique. Enver's brothers, Kasim and Hamdija, a cousin Asim and relative Salko remained at the restaurant table waiting for them. That saved their lives.

Asim Mujčić watched from about fifty metres away as police arrested his brother, cousin and close relative:

- That morning we went round to have a cup of coffee at the Pod Lozom pub, that's the café near the market in Herceg Novi. With us were Enver's brothers, Kasim and Hamdija, a cousin Asim and a relative Salko. Then Enver and Bego stood up and headed towards the nearby boutique to buy jeans. At the entrance to the shop they were accosted by two uniformed policemen. They handcuffed Enver. On seeing this we got away from the restaurant as fast as our legs would carry us - says Asim.

Twenty-eight-year old Enver Mujčić had been a day labourer in Herceg Novi for more than twelve years. Bego Jahić, two years his elder, had also had a lot of experience as a seasonal worker on the Montenegrin coast. They were close relatives on the father's side.

- Enver's grandfather Smail and Bego's grandfather Ramo were brothers, but in recognition of the large dowry brought him by his bride, Ramo took

on his wife's family name of Jahić. To this day we live side by side and consider ourselves to be the closest of kin - explains Asim.

- Bego's brother Smail also barely escaped:

- I was already in the boutique and looking at some trousers when Bego and Enver were approached by two policemen. I hid. I came out only when they had been taken away.

Moving away from the streets, they headed towards the apartment that they all shared, but there was a new surprise waiting for them there:

- Our landlord told us to take our things and go, because he didn't dare keep us in the flat anymore. We started looking for accommodation, but wherever we knocked the owners would close their doors as soon as they heard that we were Bosnians. Some said that they were not letting apartments to Muslims, and others that they didn't dare take us in because of the police. We were persistent. We knew that, if we were to take a bus out of Herceg Novi, the police would catch us. Luckily, we were taken in by a professor who taught at the university in Podgorica - says Smail.

- They only left the apartment when they had to get some food, and in shifts. It was like Russian roulette: every time they went out they expected to be arrested and taken away. Before that happened they made a pledge that whoever was caught would not for his life betray the others.

- This lasted for more than twenty days. We went out only when the arrests of Bosnians in Montenegro ceased, after a member of parliament, I don't remember his name, but I know that when he was young he worked in the Srebrenica mine, requested at a session of the Montenegrin Parliament that this operation be stopped - says Smail.

They left Montenegro. They went to Novi Pazar and then to Hungary, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Switzerland, each man's fortune taking him down a different road. After the war, Smail and Asim returned to Bosnia, Kasim stayed in Switzerland, Hamdija in Germany, Salko in Denmark.

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Their relatives and countrymen were going through a difficult time in the Foča prison camp, but only Nezir remains to testify:

- We were labourers in Herceg Novi. As no one had hired us that day, Aziz Burić and I were walking about town. We were arrested at about eleven o'clock in the town center. At the same time my close relative, twenty-five-year old Bekir was also arrested, but over there by the pharmacy. An hour earlier Enver and Bego. At about one o'clock in the afternoon we were deported by bus to Foča.

A paralysing fear of the police prevented them from objecting, struggling or putting up a fight.

- We arrived at the prison at about nine o'clock in the evening. On the following days the roll calls began. Every day a couple of people would be taken away from the camp. One day they called out Aziz Burić's name, the poor kid was only nineteen years old. Then they took away Bego, then Enver. In the end they came for Bekir. I was the last to remain and wait for the time when they would take me to my death too.

And that hour arrived. Along with Hamed Čelik he was called upon to go with the prison guards. They took them to Kalinovik. There they were separated. Hamed became a "minesweeper" driver, and Nezir was given a messenger's errand from the Serb policemen in Kalinovik:

- The Serbs gave Nail Suljević and me an envelope and told us to deliver it to the Commander of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army forces in Trnovo. They also gave us white flags and told us to walk towards our forces. After two kilometers we reached our lines. When we said who we were, they let us pass. We handed over the envelope to Edhem Godinjak.

The envelope contained an offer to the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army forces at Trebinje to release two Serb fighters captured in Rogoje. Nezir and Nail stayed in Trnovo for a couple of days, and then each went their own way: Nezir to Tuzla, and Nail to Zenica. After the war, Nezir moved to the USA and now lives in Houston. It took me a long time to track him down. When I called him, there was a flood of questions.

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- Do you know what happened to the others? - Nezir asks me.

- The remains of Aziz Burić were found and buried in Potočari near Srebrenica. Of the others there is no trace.

Silence.

- Bekir left a five-month-old son and a two-year-old daughter. Do you know what happened to them?

- Belmin and Elmira are living with their mother Munira in Berlin. They're going to school.

- We were simple labourers and had nothing to do with politics, and they charged us with having blood on our hands. Do you know that?

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## WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY MAN?

Vahida Rikalo from Foča and Alija Begić from Srebrenica do not know each other, but a similar fate connects them. The Montenegrin police sent three of Vahida's and two of Alija's sons to their deaths. Vahida does not know Alija, but she knows only too well his pain for his lost children, Asim and Azem, whom the Montenegrin authorities, arrested and served up to the knives of Radovan Karadžić's warriors, just like her sons Husein, Zaim and Midhat.

- Thank God their mother died earlier, so she didn't live to see the deaths of her children, as I lived to see mine - says Vahida.

Fate would have it that old Alija Begić survived the massacre in Srebrenica, the greatest crime committed against civilians in Europe since World War II, when Serb troops killed over eight thousand Bosniak civilians. Grandfather Alija somehow managed to break through the deadly encirclement of General Ratko Mladić. At that same time, the infamous general was displaying his humanity for the TV cameras by handing out sweets to the children of Srebrenica, while Serb soldiers, as the Hague investigator Patrick Manning testifies, on his orders, "with automatic weapons, hand bombs and grenades" were killing their older brothers and fathers. Alija's two sons, Asim and Azem, sadly, did not survive the war in which they had played no part.

The brothers Asim and Azem left Bosnia at the beginning of April 1992 with Hazim Hublić and took shelter in Herceg Novi. They registered with the local Red Cross and lived like the majority of refugees: a little scared, withdrawn, in constant anticipation of an improvement in the situation in Bosnia which would allow them to return home.

Asim and Azem were the personification of loving brothers. They lived next door to each other in Srebrenica with their families. Their wives and children were also very close. When war knocked on their door, they sought refuge in Herceg Novi. They did not want to part: Azem started off

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with wife Bahrija and daughters Nura and Ajla. Asim went with his wife Hazbija and sons Emil and Elvis. They were joined by their sister Hatidža Čehajić with her children Ibro and Muhamed, and also by Bahrija's brothers, Hazim and Mehmed Hublić.

- On the eighth of April, around midnight, we arrived in Herceg Novi. We settled down in the house of Emil Redžematović. There we met the families of Esad Bosno and Hata Idrizović from Srebrenica. It wasn't very comfortable, but who cared. We believed that Montenegro wasn't involved in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we believed we were safe there - says Bahrija Begić, slowly wiping away tears.

That this was not quite so, they began to suspect several days later, when they were visited by two Montenegrin policemen. They only wanted the men's identity cards, the women did not interest them.

- They said that this was only a routine check-up and that we could feel quite free in Herceg Novi. And we believed them.

Naïve and ill-advised, the refugees from Srebrenica could not begin to imagine that they were about to be enmeshed in a spider's web. In the early evening of 23 May, the phone rang. The call was answered by Hava Bosno. An unknown man asked her whether the refugees living in that house would do some work for him. Her husband, Esad, worked as a plumber in Srebrenica.

- I went outside and called Esad. After the conversation was over he said that the man he had talked to would arrive soon. In ten minutes a car arrived in front of the house. Two men came out of it. They greeted us politely, and then talked with Esad, Azem and Hazim in front of the house about business. Soon afterwards one of them went into the next yard and started speaking into a walkie-talkie. Only a couple of minutes later a police car arrived. A man got out of the car - dressed in civilian clothes, about thirty years old, with a thick gold chain around his neck. After him came three uniformed policemen from Herceg Novi. Among them was the policeman who, when they visited the first time, had told us to feel "quite free".

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The inspector and the three uniformed policemen entered the house. In panic and fear Bahrija Begić held her two-month Ajla and three years old Nura in her arms, while Hazbija, almost in shock, watched what was happening:

- They asked for identity cards and began searching the house. Then they ordered Azem, Esad and Hazim to come with them for a "short preliminary interview". They wouldn't even allow them to get dressed. They took them away in their slippers and shorts. I thought I was dreaming, I had only seen this kind of thing in films. With the Montenegrin policemen were two JNA officers, Miladin Milosavljević and Miodrag Jokić, Vice-Chairman of the Serbian Democratic Party of Srebrenica, who had been a neighbour of ours there. We cried and called for help. The children's crying and our pleas not to take them away did not help. They were shoved roughly into the car and taken away. In the general chaos that ensued because of the crying and screaming the police forgot to arrest Mehmed Hublić.

"What is this?" asked Hava in tears of the policeman who had told them to feel free. He patted her on the shoulder, laughed and said: "Madam, don't be afraid, we are only taking your men for a preliminary interview. They will be returned in half an hour. Don't be afraid at all."

Bahrija watched helplessly as the policemen took away her husband and brother:

- From the car Azem looked me straight in the eye for the last time. That look will remain forever in my memory. As if he wanted to say to me: "Help me!" My brother Hazim was sitting next to him. He was also looking towards me, and Esad Bosno looked at his eleven-year-old daughter Narcisa.

- I remember my father's eyes, looking at me through the window of the car he disappeared in; I remember that he had shaved a couple of minutes before their arrival and that I was kissing his smooth cheek - says Narcisa, who has in the meantime grown up into a beautiful young woman.

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The owner of the house, Emilo Redžematović, and Asim Begić arrived from town. When they found out what had happened, the two of them headed for the Herceg Novi police station to find out what was going on. But the police arrested them too.

Emilo Redžematović remembers every detail:

- That terrible night I had gone out for dinner with my friend Asim Begić. When we returned, we were greeted outside the house by the crying of women, the screaming of children, the neighbours who had gathered there. I warned Asim not to go to the police station, that it was dangerous, that he should at least save himself, but he was persistent. As soon as we arrived at the Herceg Novi Security Centre, we were immediately arrested and pushed into the room where Azem, Hasim and Esad were. They were facing the wall, with their arms and legs spread. I asked them why they had been arrested. They were silent. Only after several minutes did they say that they didn't know what was happening. They were very scared. Then some policeman came in. He ordered us to get our identity cards ready. They kept taking the others out and returning them again. As soon as they got back they would have to stand facing the wall with their arms raised. In the end they brought me out also. When I gave the policeman my Montenegrin identity card, he just looked at me and said: "You go home!"

The same night Hazbija and Hava went to the Herceg Novi Security Centre. There they spotted Miodrag Jokić, nicknamed Žmiro. Hava Bosno said "Good evening" to the policemen, and turned to Žmiro, asking him: "Is this your doing, neighbour Miodrag?" He didn't answer, and acted as if he did not know them.

- That's how it happened, says Hazbija - we knew him very well. He worked in the factory in Potočari near Srebrenica. One of his daughters married a Muslim and went to Germany, and in his rage he disowned her. And then, as the leader of the Srebrenica Serbian Democratic Party, he started taking revenge on the Muslim people at every opportunity.

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One of the Montenegrin policemen asked Hazbija and Hava what their business was. They said they were looking for their husbands.

- He told us to wait outside. After five minutes he came out in front of the police building and in a voice filled with hatred threatened them: "You have five minutes to get away from here, otherwise you'll end up like your husbands!" and pointed towards the cellar. A big police jeep parked in front of us. We had to go home.

On the following morning they set off again for the police station to inquire about their husbands.

- Never in my life have I felt such humiliation. The policemen were swinging their batons, pushing us and driving us away with curses and insults, saying that we were the wives of criminals and Mujahedin. When we went to the police station with our children, Hava Bosno asked a policeman: "What am I to do with two children, what have you done with my man, where am I to go now?" He answered: "Go to Alija, your fucking Alija!" - says Hazbija.

The wives of the arrested men were received by the Chief of the Herceg Novi police, Milorad Ivanović. To this day Hazbija remembers that encounter:

- We greeted him politely and asked him about our husbands. Waving some papers, he replied irritably that he had received a list of people that he had to arrest. "Your men are on this list and they will be taken to their district of residence where they will be tried," said the Chief of police. When I asked him what was it that they had done that they had to be tried, he answered: "Well, they belong to the Green Berets. Maybe your people killed Serb children, and then fled here." I said that this wasn't true, I begged him not to believe the Chetnik, Miodrag Jokić. We tried to explain to him that our men hadn't done anything wrong, that they didn't mix in politics, that Asim worked as a supplies officer in the bauxite mines, Azem as a warehouseman, Hazim was a technical engineer and Esad a plumber. We begged him to let our husbands go. It didn't help. "Let them prove they have no blood on their hands," the Chief of the Herceg Novi police told us brusquely.

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- Crying, we went down to the ground floor of the building. A policeman asked me why I was crying and then rained curses on us: "Mother-fucking Alija-lovers! Why don't you go to Turkey, what are you looking for here?" he yelled at me. Another one, thrusting his face into mine, was shouting: "Get out of here, you're like Gypsies, you're ruining our reputation!" I admit it: after nights of sleeplessness, crying and fear we looked terrible, distorted, unkempt.

Hava also had a verbal duel with a policeman:

- A policeman told me that he knew very well that my husband slaughtered Serb children and women in Srebrenica. I answered him that that was not true, but he continued shouting. Then I said to him: "When we left Srebrenica, not a single Serb had been killed. Call our Serb neighbours in Srebrenica and check with them, but it seems that I cannot prove to you that they are not guilty, even if, in the name of truth, I were to kill this child of mine right here!" "You don't need to kill her, I'll cut her throat. I'm paid to do it," replied the policeman lifting my six-year-old Nermina by the hair. At that moment the terrified child wet herself - says Hava.

In tears, crushed by pain and helplessness, the women returned home. They never saw their husbands, fathers, brothers again. They never even found out where their wrist watches, jewellery, money, documents and cars were, all taken by the Herceg Novi Security Centre.

As soon as the police let him go, Emilo Redžematović started looking for a contact to get his friends out of jail.

- I searched for the State Security (SDB) inspectors who had headed this operation, to talk to them. As I couldn't find anyone, I went to look for Damjan Turković, an old friend from Plav and Deputy Chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, but couldn't find him because that weekend he had gone to Plav. On Monday I went to see the Secretary of the Montenegrin Parliament, Živko Musović, whom I'd known from before. He told me that nobody knew about these arrests.

Emilo also went to see the Deputy Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, Asim Dizdarević.

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- I told him what was happening to the Bosnian refugees. He called the Secretary of the Red Cross, Slobodan Kalezić, and told him to check my allegations with the MUP (Ministry of the Interior). He was told that the Ministry knew nothing about it. On the following day I went to see Asim Dizdarević again. That day there was a promotion of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) in Bijelo Polje, at which the speakers were the Montenegrin leaders, President of the Republic Momir Bulatović and Prime Minister Milo Đukanović. The two of them told Asim that they had not been informed of this operation by the MUP and that this was the first they had heard of the arrest of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the following day I informed the International Red Cross in Belgrade in detail. Their representatives immediately protested to the Montenegrin officials - says Emilo Redžematović.

For Asim and Azem Begić, Esad Bosno and Hazim Hublić it was too late: the Montenegrin police "handed them over as part of a group of 35 Bosnians on 27 May 1992 to members of the Srebrenica police, Petar Mitrović, Predrag Perendić, Slaviša Perendić, Nenad Živanović."<sup>21</sup>

Their wives and sister went to the Red Cross. There they were told that nothing was known about arrests of refugees. Hazbija started giving up: her world was crumbling, she started to think about ending it all. Hava begged her to hold on at least for the sake of her children. An elderly gentleman in the street asked them why they were crying. Hava told him what had happened to them in the last three days. He looked at them in fear and wonder.

- "Is it possible that this is happening in our quiet town?" he asked. Astounded by our story, he walked away with his head bowed - says Bahrija.

Hazbija, Bahrija and Hava realized that they were not welcome in Herceg Novi. The hatred shown to them by the Montenegrin policemen had put fear into their bones. They decided to get away as far as possible.

- We called Emil Redžematović, who lives in Plav, to help us. He told us to pack immediately and head for Plav. We divided ourselves with the children

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from a reply by the Minister of Police, Nikola Pejaković, to a question in Parliament, no. 278/2 of 8 April 1993.

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in the bus so as not to sit together, not to be conspicuous. We kept silent. We didn't speak for fear that someone on the bus might discover that we were refugees from Bosnia. I was especially afraid for my brother Muhamed who, by pure coincidence, had stayed alive. He was shivering like a stick. If we saw a police car from the bus, the blood curdled in our veins - says Bahrija.

However, they reached Plav without any problems. The people there welcomed them as if they were family.

- We had small children, we had no money. But those kind people in Plav came to our aid. They put us up in their homes, brought us food and money. The aid we received from the Muslims of Plav and Gusinje was beyond all our expectations. Neither we nor our children will ever forget those generous people - says Hazbija.

Soon Hava and Hata left with the children for Macedonia. Hatidža went to Austria. Hazbija, Bahrija and her brother Muhamed, who by pure luck had stayed alive, remained in Plav. However, frightened by the Greater-Serbia propaganda of the Montenegrin state media and the warmongering public appearances of certain politicians, they grew increasingly afraid. They decided to go abroad. But there was an almost insurmountable problem: Hazbija had lost her wallet containing all her documents in Herceg Novi.

- As in every misfortune there is always a ray of hope, we discovered that we could take out identity cards and passports in Novi Pazar on the Serbian side of the Sandžak region. So we embarked on yet another road into uncertainty. From Plav we headed towards Novi Pazar with the children. In Berane we changed into another bus. I showed the conductor my refugee card, thinking that he wouldn't charge me for the ticket. When he read my name and surname he started yelling and demanding money for the ticket. "You should run, you Turkish motherfucker, my parents fled over Mt. Čakor in the Second World War!" yelled the conductor at the top of his voice.

Hazbija was humiliated again. Crying, she took out the money and paid for the tickets. Those couple of hours drive to Novi Pazar to her seemed to last an eternity. The conductor, stretched out in his seat, would from time to time turn around, casting vengeful glances in their direction. At last they arrived in Novi Pazar. In two hours they were put up in the houses of

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Bosniaks working abroad. They were taken care of, regularly receiving food, clothes and money from the local people. After a month they got their personal documents. Profoundly grateful to the people of the Sandžak, they returned to Plav. And then came Bairam, a major religious festival when Muslims distribute sadaka, or alms. Their first Bairam in exile:

- I thought my heart would burst. Those good people of Plav and Gusinje<sup>22</sup> are not rich, but they have a wealth of soul to help people in trouble. Were my children and I to be brought sadaka like the worst paupers? That truth hurt me terribly - says Hazbija.

At the end of February 1993 there was a fresh shock and new fear: the kidnapping of nineteen Bosniaks from the Belgrade-Bar train at a place called Štrpci<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Plav and Gusinje are in the south of Montenegro, under the magnificent Prokletije masif, bordering on Albania. The majority population is Muslim. Apart from its exceptional natural beauty, Plav is also known as the first place in the former Yugoslavia to organise major anti-Milošević demonstrations in late 1988, at the outset of the rise of the Balkan Butcher. The people of Plav and Gusinje demanded that the Yugoslav leadership dismiss Milošević, warning that his Greater-Serbian policies would lead to bloodshed.

<sup>23</sup> On 27 March 1993, nineteen people were kidnapped from train no. 671 en route from Belgrade to the Montenegrin port of Bar as it halted at a small station in Štrpci near Priboj, a point where the line ran for a few miles through Bosnian territory. Armed to the teeth, members of a Bosnian Serb para-military unit known as the White Eagles (Beli Orlovi) boarded the train and having demanded to see identification, took out all the Muslims, regardless of whether they were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia or Montenegro. The men of this unit, commanded by the notorious Milan Lukić, then led them away and killed them all. At the time the railway was built, the republics through which it would pass were of no concern to the builders, since Federal Yugoslavia was then one country.

In September 2005, Milan Lukić was arrested in Argentina on a warrant issued by The Hague Tribunal. The indictment charges Lukić with the abuse, torture and murder of approximately 150 people in 1992 in the Višegrad area of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is also charged - together with Mitar Vasiljević and a close relative, Sredoje Lukić - with the killing of 70-odd civilians in the village of Bikavac near Višegrad on 14 May 1992. These unfortunate Bosniaks, among whom were women and children, were first shut inside a house that was then set on fire. Only one managed to escape.

In September 2005, Belgrade District Court condemned Lukić to 20 years in absentia for the abduction and murder of 16 Muslims from the village of Sjeverin in the Serbian Sandzak region in October 1992. The victims were taken from a local bus.

Lukić was born in Foča, southeast Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1967.

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- I read in the papers that they were abducted and killed by the Bosnian Serbs. Among them was a sixteen-year-old boy, the same age as my son Emil. I realized that there was no end to the evil the Serbs were doing to us. I became afraid for my son. We decided to immediately move on as far as possible, to one of the Scandinavian countries - says Hazbija.

After taking leave from their hosts, occasioning many tears, they arrived in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica. From there they took the train to Belgrade. As they drew closer to Štrpci:

- I was seized by fear and panic - says Hazbija - that they could also kidnap my child. The thought of the possibility drove me crazy. The closer we got to Štrpci the more I cried. Emil was silent and waiting to see what was going to happen. The train stopped at the station in Štrpci. I saw armed soldiers with beards. Real Chetniks. I decided: if they take my son outside I'm going too - let them kill us together. And then the train started. Emil and I looked at each other with tears in our eyes.

They knew then they were safe. They arrived in Belgrade, where the Novi Pazar bus was waiting for them. They headed towards the Romanian border, but were returned. Then they went to Hungary, the Ukraine, Poland... At one border crossing new problems arose when a guard told Emil in pidgin German: "Back, Serb." Emil's passport had been issued in Serbia, since he was born there. The customs officer took him for a Serb and would not let him continue. Again fear, explanations, crying and pleas. Fortunately, the customs officer gave in. The families of Asim and Azem Begić arrived in Sweden. After six days they had a bath for the first time.

- We were relieved. At last we had saved our children from the criminals. The Swedes gave us a warm welcome. They understood our sufferings, they even provided us with psychologists. After all we'd been through we really did need them - says Hazbija.

Azem's daughter Ajla is in the sixth grade of primary school in Laholm in Sweden. She doesn't remember her father, she was a two-month-old baby when he was taken away. She only saw him in photographs. She says she has one great, impossible wish:

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- How I wish I could hold him once and for at least three seconds see him in reality. When I look at the photographs of my dad, it seems as if I saw him once, while he was holding me in his lap, that he was hugging me. Mum tells me that he was a good, an honest man and that it was he who decided that we should go to Montenegro. He believed that we would have enough food there, and a doctor at hand. We are currently living in Sweden, but I like Bosnia most. We often go there to Srebrenica. I hope I will become a lawyer, so that I can help people who encounter various difficulties.

Unlike Ajla, Narcisa Bosno remembers her father Esad very well. She remembers his last look, the enduring fear, everything, but not the faces of the policemen who took him away.

- I was big enough to understand what was happening. I remember - says Narcisa - the fear which is still inside me; I remember carrying baby Ajla; I remember how my mother and Hazbija returned without my father Esad, Azem, Asim and Hazim; I remember how in the morning I hid in shame because I wouldn't go with them to the police, because I was afraid; I remember how the policemen cursed us and told us to go to Turkey; I remember how we children had to sit in the sun, because the policemen wouldn't let us stand in the shade of the police building so as "not to make a gypsy encampment out of it"; I remember how one of the policemen caught my younger sister, Nermina, by the hair and lifted her off the ground; I remember him saying that he would cut our throats; I remember how Nermina wet herself from fear, and I cried for the first time since they took my father away; I remember how we didn't dare sit together in the bus to Plav; I remember our fear that they would take away Muhamed, who was forgotten in the chaos that day when they took away my father and the other men...

On arriving in Sweden Narcisa needed the help of a psychologist.

- With the help of school psychologists I began to understand many things. Among others, that for years I blamed myself for the death of my father, because we had gone to Herceg Novi to save Nermina and me from the war in Bosnia. After the disappearance of my father I found it very dif-

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difficult to get close to people, although before the war I used to be a very happy and communicative child. I loved sitting in the house and writing poems and stories about my life. I was among the best pupils in school, because I remembered that my father found that important - says Narcisa, who misses her father both at sad and happy moments.

- My chest hurt that day when someone's father took Nermina to the hospital because she had broken her arm. I also came home sad on the day I finished secondary school, because dad wasn't there to be proud of me. I cried because dad wasn't with mother in the ambulance when she was hit by a car. I was thinking of my dad when I said "yes" at my wedding, and grieved that he wasn't with me when I divorced. I also cried when I passed my master's exam. I will cry again in ten years when my child asks me why it doesn't have a granddad. I will cry if I ever find out where the bones of my dad lie - says Narcisa.

While nothing is known as yet of the fate of Esad Bosno and Asim Begić, the remains of Hazim Hublić and Azem Begić were found and identified in Serbia, at the town cemetery in Sremska Mitrovica<sup>24</sup>, north of Belgrade. Hazim's body was thrown up by the Sava river on 23 June 1992, across from the town beach in Sremska Mitrovica, and Azem's body a day later at the confluence of the Drina and the Sava, at Sremska Rača. After the autopsy their bodies were buried at the cemetery in Sremska Mitrovica. During the war, about a hundred unidentified bodies thrown up by the Sava on the beaches of Sremska Mitrovica were buried in the town cemetery, mostly murdered Bosniaks dumped in the Drina. In this war the Drina river proved to be the largest mass grave of Muslims.

- As the DNA confirms, these are the remains of Hazim Hublić and Azem Begić. It took almost thirteen years for us to find out where his remains were, and almost two years of waiting for a full confirmation of the victims' identities - explains Amor Mašović, President of the Federal Commission for Tracing the Missing of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>24</sup> Sremska Mitrovica is a town on the River Sava in the Vojvodina province of northern Serbia. It is assumed that Karadžić's officials killed the deported Bosniaks and then threw them into the River Drina, which flows into the Sava. They were later washed ashore near Sremska Mitrovica.

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The Commission received a copy of the autopsy report from their Serbia-Montenegrin counterpart, made at the time the bodies were found. In separate reports it says that the bodies had spent about a month in the water and that "death had been violent". Hazim's corpse was found naked to the waist, while Azem's body was found without any clothes.

- It can be concluded that they were killed immediately after the Montenegrin police arrested and handed them over, that their bodies were thrown into the Drina and then floated downstream into the Sava - says Mašović.

In only thirty days Amor Mašović contacted Bahrija Begić on three occasions: first to tell her that the remains of her brother Hazim had been identified, then those of her father Ibrahim, killed in the Srebrenica massacre, and finally, her husband Azem.

Bahrija is waiting for one more call from Amor: to tell her where and how her brother-in-law Asim died.

## DEPORTED FROM WORK

At the moment of his arrest, Izet Tufekčić was not a refugee from Bosnia: he was an electrician working for the Belgrade company Elektron on the electrification of the Vrmac tunnel near Kotor in Montenegro. It was not a new job: fifty-four-year old Izet had been working with the company for years on developments along the Montenegrin coast. At weekends he went home to Višegrad in Bosnia, where he had a wife Ramiza and four children: a son Kenan and daughters Dženana, Lejla and Mersiha. At the beginning of April Ramiza called him to say that she would have to leave Višegrad, to get away from the hordes of criminals that had taken over the town. She fled to Sarajevo with the children while Izet continued working on the electrification of the Vrmac tunnel. He was soon joined by his brother Ismet, at that time director of Elektrodistribucija, the electricity supply board in Višegrad. Izet stayed as usual at the collective accommodation supplied for the workers of his company in the coastal resort of Budva, while Ismet with his wife took shelter with a friend. They saw each other often, and talked on the phone every day. One day Izet did not call. Ismet suspected that something was not right:

- He didn't call me on 23 May. Next day I went over to the Elektron bungalows in Budva to look for him there. The guard at the gate told me that Izet and other workers from Bosnia had been taken by the police to the collective center in Herceg Novi. He explained that the police were arresting Bosniaks and deporting them to Bosnia. He warned me not to go looking for him in Herceg Novi because they would arrest me too, and advised me to run away as soon as possible. I realized what the situation was. Thanks to friends from Budva, I managed to get out of Montenegro in a very short time. Then I went to Sweden, where I live now - says Ismet.

But Izet's days were numbered: three days later the Montenegrin police deported him to Karadžić's executioners. Meanwhile, Ramiza and the children were experiencing the siege of Sarajevo. Just at that time, a shell fired from the Serb guns surrounding the city severely wounded their eldest daughter, twenty-five-year old Dženana, blowing off half her jaw. Dženana had suffered for years from cerebral palsy.

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- We arrived in Sarajevo without Daddy. After a couple of days the shelling began from all sides and we moved down to the floor below. I went towards the window, as if something was dragging me towards it, and was hit by shrapnel. I came to in the hospital, and felt my head was huge. My first thought was of Daddy - says Dženana.

Even with the huge burden of looking after her disabled and now severely wounded daughter, Ramiza continued searching for Izet. She attended numerous identifications of victims brought in from various areas of Bosnia, but his body was not among them. And then during the war she heard of Šaban Karup, an inmate of the Foča Prison camp, exchanged in 1993. She searched for him for days before her son Kenan somehow managed to reach him. The old inmate sized him up for a long time without saying a word. Then he looked him straight in the eye and gestured to him to sit next to him.

- Kenan, sit by me, son, and don't cry. You're father went through the worst sort of agony. They beat him and tortured him every night. They broke his arm and his sixth vertebra. He begged them to let him go or kill him. The guard said to him: "We will do that only when we feel like it." One night Izet was taken away with a group of Bosniaks. They didn't say where they were taking them. Since then every trace of him has been lost.

Kenan could not withhold his tears. The hardened inmate cried too.

The war came to an end. Ramiza and the children, with God's help, survived almost four years of the siege of Sarajevo. Peace arrived. Ramiza headed for Belgrade, to the Elektron company, to ask Izet's managers whether they knew what had happened to her husband.

- I was seen - says Ramiza - by some lawyer. She took out his work file and showed me that Izet's employment in Elektron had expired in June 1992. The explanation: he hadn't reported for work for fifteen days, and so, she said, they had to terminate his employment, even though he'd spent a full eighteen years with the company.

Ramiza is still searching for Izet. She doesn't lose hope.

And she waits.

## LETTER TO THE POPE

As wealthy, glittering Pittsburgh celebrated Christmas of 1993, the refugee Titorić family from Sarajevo were coping with a private sorrow. In their home on the outskirts of the giant city, they were writing a letter to the Pope. Two days later, after many versions had been tried and torn up and every word weighed, the three surviving members of this Bosniak family finally finished the letter<sup>25</sup> to the Holy Father:

Your Holiness,

Our son and brother, Alenko Titorić, is a prisoner in Bosnia. We beg you to help us find him. Alenko is thirty years old. He was arrested by the Montenegrin police on 26 May 1992 in Herceg Novi, in Montenegro. According to official documentation, Alenko was arrested there along with another 34 persons at the request of the so-called Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for what was supposed to be an exchange of prisoners.

Alenko was handed over to authorised personnel of the Srebrenica police, Petar Mitrović and Predrag Perendić, and then to the military police of the Bosnian Serb Territorial Defense in Bratunac, not far from Srebrenica.

These details of Alenko's arrest are cited in an official letter<sup>26</sup> that was delivered to us on 18 September 1992, personally signed by Nikola Pejaković, the Montenegrin Minister of Police. Since Alenko's arrest we have not been able to find out anything more about him.

We are sorry that you did not have the opportunity to meet Alenko. He was the best in his class throughout four years of secondary school in Sarajevo. After that he studied engineering at the University in Sarajevo. He was good at tennis, basketball and skiing. Later he began working for the Micro-3 company, which has offices in Belgrade, Vienna and Prague. He was arrested while on a business trip in Montenegro. Alenko is married to Danijela, née Stupar, a student of law, currently living in Serbia.

<sup>25</sup> Letter to the Pope, sent on 10 December 1993.

<sup>26</sup> Reply from the Minister of Police, Nikola Pejaković, addressed to Danijela Stupar-Titorić no. 905/2 of 18 August 1992.

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It is pointless to say how much we, his closest kin, are shaken by all this. Not a single day goes by that we do not think of our beloved son and brother. It is hard not to know where and how Alenko is. Will you help us?

Your Holiness, we beg of you, if you can, to send the chargé d'affaires of the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington a letter of support for the release of our Alenko... We would consider it a precious gesture if you would help us.

The letter ends.

The Titorić family handed the letter to Monsignor Willam Kerr, head of the college in Pittsburgh attended by Alenko's younger sister, Jasenka. The goodhearted Monsignor Kerr happened to be en route to the Vatican at the time and was glad to take the Titorić family's letter to deliver to the Pope.

The family sent an almost identical letter to US President Bill Clinton.

Days went by, but there was no answer. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the war raged on. Nonetheless, Pope John Paul II was preparing for his first pastoral visit to Sarajevo and had prepared a sermon for the Eucharistic celebration planned for 8 September 1994 in Sarajevo. At the last moment, however, the plan was changed. Fear that the Bosnian Serbs under the command of their crazed general, Ratko Mladic, might attempt to assassinate the Holy Father led to the visit being postponed until better times.

The Titorić family did not receive a reply from the Pope, but they did get a letter from the White House. On behalf of the US President, it was answered by the Director of the Office for Eastern European Affairs, Terry Snell<sup>27</sup>:

<sup>27</sup> Reply from the Director of the US Office for Eastern European Affairs, 7 March 1994.

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Dear Mr. Titorić and family:

I have been asked to respond to your letter of December 9, 1994 to President Clinton regarding the welfare of your son and brother, Alenko Titorić, who was taken prisoner in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Bosnian Serbs. Our response was delayed awaiting information from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

We deeply sympathize with your concern about Alenko. Events in the region are tragic and we are sorry that you and your family are directly affected by the conflict...

It appears that, out of 26,000 prisoners in the region, ICRC has a list of 20,000 prisoners but the local authorities do not permit their representatives to visit them. Unfortunately, the tracing agency was not able to find Alenko's name on the list. This does not necessarily mean that he is not in one of the detention camps in Bosnia. They continue to search for him...

May we also suggest that you write to the Special United Nations Rapporteur for Human Rights, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, requesting his assistance in the search for Alenko...

I sincerely hope that the search for your son will result in good news for your family.

Sincerely,

Terry R. Snell

Not losing hope, Alenko's family wrote a letter to Tadeusz Mazowiecki, but received no answer.

The drama of this Sarajevo family began with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. When shooting broke out in Bosnia, Alenko, a Muslim, had been married for over a year to Danijela Stupar, a law student of Serbian origin. The young couple decided to leave Bosnia at least for a while, and arrived in Belgrade in April 1992. A year earlier, Danijela's father, Colonel

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Ilija Stupar, had been transferred from the Sarajevo Military hospital to the Military Hospital Academy in Belgrade, where he took over the post of Chief of the Medical Corps. His wife Mira was also a highly-placed army officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In Belgrade Alenko continued working for his computer firm. His younger sister Jasenka came for a visit. Because of his influential in-laws he felt protected there, even though the Yugoslav capital was already affected by the destructive virus of nationalism. With a male colleague, Sunčan Pavlović, and two female colleagues, Alenko soon left on a business trip to Montenegro to attend the Information Technology Fair in Budva. After doing some successful business, they decided to walk over to Herceg Novi and spend the night there in the family house of Danijela's parents.

Next day dawned, a sunny May morning. Wearing a thin t-shirt, shorts and sneakers, Alenko went with his friends for a morning coffee. At about ten o'clock, in the middle of the street, in front of the Plaža hotel, he was stopped by the police. They asked him to show his personal documents and led him off to the building of the Herceg Novi police. There he met Sunčan, who had also been arrested after police stopped his car.

- Alenko and Sunčan gave a statement to Milorad Šljivančanin, Chief of Police, who didn't believe that they were in Montenegro on business. However, he did allow them one telephone call. They called their colleagues in Herceg Novi, and they called me. I don't know whom I didn't beg for help. In the end I called the Herceg Novi police. They were offensive. They asked what Muslims were doing in Herceg Novi, and said that "they should go to their own country" - says Danijela.

Every detail is etched in the memory of Alenko's sister, Jasenka:

- As soon as Danijela told us that Alenko had been arrested, I ran to Uncle Ilija. I begged him to pull strings to save him. I told him that he could do it. He said that that was a lie, and that he couldn't do anything.

With another 34 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alenko and Sunčan were put on to a local Autoboka bus, which, as Danijela later discovered, left

for Bratunac in Bosnia via Srbinje. Five days later, Sunčan turned up in Belgrade. He told Danijela how police had stopped the bus at Zlatibor in Serbia and let him go, because he was able to prove that he was a Serb. The bus carried on. He did not know what had happened to Alenko.

Jasenka saw Sunčan too:

- He wouldn't say anything. He had a big bruise underneath his eye. The director of Alenko's firm, Lejla Uzunović, told me that one of three buses carrying prisoners to Bratunac was stopped at Konjević Polje and that all the passengers were massacred. She asked business associates from Bratunac to check whether Alenko was among those killed. They went over there and looked through the bodies but didn't find him. In the meantime, Alenko's colleagues who had been with him in Herceg Novi brought his clothes and identity card back to Belgrade.

At the Herceg Novi police station, Danijela talked to the Chief, Milorad Šljivančanin, on numerous occasions. He showed her the dispatch from the Minister of Police because of which he had handed over Alenko and another thirty-four Bosnian refugees to the Republika Srpska police. Seeking the truth about her missing husband, Danijela also approached other bodies. She wrote to the then Yugoslav President, Dobrica Ćosić, and the Montenegrin Prime Minister, Milo Đukanović. Ćosić did not respond. In August she received the reply<sup>28</sup> of the Montenegrin Government, signed by the Minister of Police, Nikola Pejaković, who at the time of the deportations was the deputy and right-hand man of former Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović.

"The Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro, Comrade Milo Đukanović, has forwarded your request to the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Montenegro, requesting us to inform you of the whereabouts of your husband and of the reasons for his arrest. Your husband, Alenko Titorić of Novo Sarajevo, was arrested on 26 May 1992 in Herceg Novi along with another 34 persons. At the request of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina he was handed over to authorised

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 26.

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personnel of the Srebrenica police - Petar Mitrović and Predrag Perendić. On the same day he was handed over to the military police at the Territorial Defence headquarters in Bratunac, where he was supposed to join a group of Muslims to be exchanged for captured Serb territorials. We have no information on the further fate of your husband, or of the other persons who were handed over to the military authorities in Bratunac. For further information, you should approach the Interior Ministry of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina," states the answer.

The following week, Jasenka left Belgrade:

- I had the feeling that Uncle Ilija was glad to be rid of his Muslim son-in-law. He would often tell Danijela in my presence that under no circumstances was she to mention that her father was an army officer in the places where she would go to make enquiries... I can only wonder what he told her when I wasn't there, - says Jasenka, who then departed for America.

When the war ended, the Titorić family left America and returned to Sarajevo, thinking it the best way to find out something more about Alenko. Danijela re-married in Belgrade and has a daughter, Katarina.

Every day, Alenko's mother Fikreta goes to the Sarajevo Papagaj café, where Alenko used to go for a coffee:

- I am still looking for my son. To this day I sit in the Papagaj, waiting for Alenko to come along. I see him every morning, standing in front of the mirror. I cannot accept that someone has cut his throat. I cannot reconcile myself to that. I can accept that he died in a traffic accident, that he died of natural causes, but not that someone cut his throat. I keep thinking of how he spent the last minutes of his life, of his fear and pain at the last.

Alenko Titorić was declared officially dead by a decision of the Municipal Court in Sarajevo<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Decision of Municipal Court II no. RO-504/00 of 13 March 2001.

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- I hope that one day the truth will be known about what happened to my brother, how he met his end, who illegally deported him to Radovan Karadžić's henchmen, who took part in his liquidation, where his remains are, so that we can at least bury him properly - says Jasenka.

The Montenegrins sent her brother to his death, but they did not poison her soul: after the war she too married outside her own community. Her husband is Ivica Perović, originally from Montenegro, and they have a beautiful daughter, Matea.

Alenko's father, Ševal, keeps silent. During World War II in Rudo the Chetniks killed his father, mother and two sisters. He grew up in a home for war orphans. He never dreamt that fifty years later the Chetniks would also kill his son.

That's Bosnia.

<sup>22</sup> Odgovor ministra policije Nikole Pejakovića na poslaničko pitanje br. 278/2 od 8. aprila 1993. godine.

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## CONVERSATION WITH A PICTURE

Munira is old and very ill. Over her bed hangs a self-portrait of her son, painted expertly in oil fifteen years ago, even though he never studied art. Every night before going to bed she looks at the picture and talks to her darling. And every morning she murmurs words of love to him, telling him what she dreamt, complaining to him about her arthritis, the pains in her chest, the sharp recurring pain in her head. She looks out the window and tells him what the weather's like outside.

- That's my son - she says proudly pointing to the picture, just as if Hajrudin were alive.

The last time Munira saw her son was thirteen years ago. Hajrudin Bihorac is one of the hundred or so Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees deported to the authorities of Radovan Karadžić. Behind him he left a son Nadir, a wife Kimeta and a sister, Fatima.

Kimeta remembers the day everything took a turn for the worse:

- That day, 20th May, Hajrudin left in the morning for his work as secretary of the Ušće-Panos hunting and fishing society in Višegrad. I was on maternity leave. A little later he came home, accompanied by a friend, Vidoje Andrić. They told me to get ready quickly, because we had to flee Višegrad. On the previous night our neighbour Behija had been killed, after her husband and son had first been taken away. Medo Smajić and his wife had also been killed.

Kimeta quickly got ready the most essential things and baby-food for eight-month-old Nadir. They locked up the house, got into the car and started off, stopping to pick up Hajrudin's sister Fatima and her children, Amela and Almir.

- On the way - continues Kimeta - we ran into columns of people carrying plastic bags and looking bewildered, with no idea of where to go. We also met Sejo whose father and mother had been killed. He was as white as a

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sheet. We didn't know where we were going either, it was only important to get as far as possible from the war, the killings, the arrests and harassment. Since Fatima had thought earlier of going to Baošići with the children, to the Montenegrin holiday resort of the company she worked in, they decided to go there.

When they arrived in Baošići, they registered with the Red Cross and the Baošić Tourist Association. That night, little Nadir wouldn't stop crying. Hajrudin, Kimeta and Fatima got no sleep, holding him in their arms all night. He only fell asleep before dawn. It was as if the child sensed some disaster. And then the evil morning dawned:

- On that unlucky day, 26 May - Fatima joins in the conversation - at about nine o'clock, Kimeta, Hajrudin and I were drinking coffee in front of the camp. Suddenly a policeman arrived. He asked for our identity cards. He ordered my brother to come with him immediately, even though he was barefoot. Hajrudin turned pale. A Black Maria was waiting about a hundred metres from the camp, in front of the supermarket. The policeman opened the door and Hajrudin stepped in. I saw a couple of other civilians inside. They didn't start off immediately. Only when other policemen had brought in several more people did they get into the vehicle and drive off.

Kimeta quickly went to the Herceg Novi police:

- I told the officer on duty that I was the wife of Hajrudin Bihorac and that I had come to see what had happened to him. I couldn't hold back my tears. "Why are you crying? What are you snivelling for? Take care we don't arrest you too!" - he threatened. They shouted at me, not caring that the child was crying. I was in a panic. Two days earlier they had taken away Enver, my brother from Čajniče. They killed him on the Čajniče bridge.

Fatima begged the policemen to tell her where Hajrudin was, but it didn't help. In the meantime, about twenty women and children had gathered in front of the police building. The policemen suddenly became very irritated.

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- We heard word - says Fatima - that one of the arrested Bosniaks had got away, someone called Muhamed Pilavdžić. He jumped from the second floor window of the Herceg Novi Security Centre building. The policemen threatened: "When we catch him, he'll be pissing blood!" Then they drove us away. We later heard that he was caught.

At about five o'clock Fatima went to the police again. She went up to a policeman begging him: "Please, will you tell me where my brother is?"

- He looked at me a little as if he felt sorry for me and said: "They've all been taken away." Covertly, he showed me the list. "Here, his name is circled under number 11. That means that he's been sent to Srebrenica." I thanked him and went out. He told me his name but I've forgotten it in the meantime. I think he was a Croat. Then we returned to the camp. In the evening we were visited by Miško Milošević, Hajrudin's school friend from Višegrad, who lived in Herceg Novi. He brought us the documents and keys of Hajrudin's car. I asked him how he didn't manage to save my brother. He shrugged his shoulders. I begged him to at least tell me where he was. He said: "In Foča."

Fatima and Kimeta spent that night in the camp in Baošići.

- Nikola, the camp manager, came by a couple of times asking: "Is the bride still crying?" and "Has the bride consoled herself?" I didn't see by his look that he was sorry - says Kimeta, whose mother was born in Pljevlja, Montenegro.

Next day, Hajrudin Bihorac's family called Smail Hodžić from the village of Potkrajci near Bijelo Polje, who came immediately to pick them up. When they told him that there were more women whose husbands had been taken away, Smail, his brother Zuhdija and a neighbour took matters into their own hands.

- My brother Smail - says Zuhdija, a kindly man - used to stay with the Bihorac family when his work took him to Višegrad. As soon as they called us, Smail, myself and neighbours Zečo Hadrović and Čifo Lukač started off

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for the Gulf of Kotor, into the unknown. When we arrived, Fatima asked us if we could also take in the Čengić and Hasanbegović families. With their three cars and our own making the fourth, we drove to Bijelo Polje. I had eleven members of the Čengić and Hasanbegović families in my house, while Smail took in seven from the Bihorac family. Our brother Džemail helped us also.

Then Hajrudin's parents arrived in Bijelo Polje from Višegrad. His father, Ramo, and mother, Munira, panicked when they saw that their son wasn't there.

- I told him that Hajrudin had been taken for a preliminary interview, that he hadn't done anything wrong and that everything would be all right. Mother started crying, Father turned pale. As if they knew they would not see him again - says Fatima.

His closest kin wore out the doorsteps of numerous institutions, but all in vain. Fatima went to see the then President of the Bijelo Polje municipality, whose name she cannot remember:

- "Why are you disturbing the public? Do you know that you can be held responsible for that?" the Mayor of Bijelo Polje threatened me. We were also received by Asim Dizdarević, Deputy Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament. He heard us out. He told us to come and see him the following day at around five o'clock, that he would see if he could find out something about Hajrudin. The next day Kimeta and I went to see him. From the next room we could see a young man watching us, a little frightened. It was a cousin of Asim's wife, from Foča. Asim told us that Hajrudin had been taken to Srebrenica and that President Momir Bulatović, as soon as he found out what had happened, had promised him that the arrests of Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees would cease. I asked him what kind of a president was it who "didn't know" about mass arrests taking place in his own country - says Fatima.

The seven members of the Bihorac family lived with Smail Hodžić for more than seven months. All those mouths needed to be fed:

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- They were no burden to me at all. I knew them from before and it was a pleasure to help them, to give them a home. Today we still talk on the phone - says Smail.

And then the travels of a refugee took the Bihorac family to Macedonia. As soon as the war was over, they returned to Sarajevo.

- The years go by, and we go on hoping that Hajrudin will come back and that we'll live together again. When fourteen-year-old Nadir asks me: "Why did they take my Dad away?" I'm not sure how to answer him. Was it because we're Muslims? Was it because some people hate others although they have done nothing to them? Or is it just fate? They often tell me that I have to come to terms with it, that life goes on. It's easy to give advice to others. My life turned upside down that day when my husband was taken away. We had just begun living, and our life stopped. In spite of everything, we still hope that Hajrudin will turn up one day - says Kimeta.

Hajrudin's old mother Munira, who has survived three heart attacks and two strokes, does not lose hope either.

She still looks at her son's self-portrait and talks to him.

## RAID ON A CAMP

Fahrudin Čengiċ, a pensioner from GoraŹde in Bosnia, spent years searching for his closest kin. His son, grandson, and son-in-law were taken away by the Montenegrin authorities, never to return. Fahrudin was another who had moved the members of his household from war-torn Bosnia to BaoŹiċi in Montenegro, close to Herceg Novi. When after many ups and downs and much trepidation, his family left the fighting in Bosnia behind, Fahrudin was happy. The old Bosnian was counting on the tradition of ethics and "manly kindheartedness" on which the Montenegrins pride themselves.

Just a few months later, far away in Denmark, Fahrudin would be searching for his loved ones through the pages of the Sarajevo press<sup>30</sup>:

- I ask anyone who has any information about my son, grandson and son-in-law to contact me. We escaped from GoraŹde in the middle of April 1992 and went to my holiday home in BaoŹiċi. In the beginning everything seemed all right. Then, at around eleven o'clock on the morning of 26 May, two Montenegrin policemen arrived. They ordered all the men out of the house. They packed us into a Black Maria and took us into custody in Herceg Novi. Along with me, they took my son Himzo (34), nicknamed Braco, a political scientist, my grandson Amer, aged 19 and still at school, and my son-in-law Smajo Hasanbegoviċ (53). Our friends Safet BuljubaŹiċ and Alija Prutina, both aged 32, were taken with us. After several hours spent in custody they returned my identity card and let me go. The others were detained. That is the last time I saw them.

- With the police in BaoŹiċi were my Serb neighbours from GoraŹde, Momir Vukoviċ, nicknamed MoŹo, and Ljubo Veljoviċ. They sat by the driver. When we arrived at the police building, we were locked up, while Vukoviċ and Veljoviċ went to the chief of police's office. So they hadn't been arrested at all, as claimed in the press, they were in fact co-executors in our arrest. I was expelled from BaoŹiċi on 8 June 1992 and went to Bijelo Polje, and later from there to Denmark. Once again I beg everyone who

<sup>30</sup> Oslobodenje, 15 September 1994.

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knows anything about my loved ones to contact me."

For a full twelve years Fahrudin waited in vain for news, and then one night he dreamt Himzo was calling to him. He died the next day.

When after four sisters a boy, Himzo, was born, there was no end to the happiness in the Čengić household. Fahrudin decided to name his son after his father Himzo, slaughtered by the Chetniks in World War II. Not in his worst nightmares did he think that the same fate would befall his son. His wife Ifeta, Himzo's mother, had had the same misfortune: her father was also killed in the war by Chetniks, and fifty years later her only son, grandson and son-in-law were to suffer the same fate. The vicious circle of henchmen and victims had now closed: the Chetniks, in the end, exterminated the male line of the family of Fahrudin Čengić.

For years, Fahrudin's family spent their summer holidays on the Montenegrin coast. Charmed by the beauty of the surroundings and the Montenegrin people, early in the 1980s they bought a holiday trailer in Baošići. There they spent their summer holidays, made friends, had good neighbours. In time Fahrudin and Ifeta spent less and less time in Goražde - Baošići had become their permanent port. Children, relatives and friends came to visit during the holidays. Himzo in the meantime received a degree from the Department of Political Sciences of Sarajevo University, and went to work in the Public Utilities Company in Goražde. On account of a slight disability - the fingers of his left hand were joined together - he did not do military service. His sisters continued to spoil and look after him. On the eve of the war, at the insistence of friends and family, Himzo left Goražde, now encircled by war.

- Every evening on television we watched the Serb atrocities in Bijeljina, Višegrad, Foča... The circle was slowly tightening around Goražde. We thought we would be safer in Montenegro. My brother Himzo, the rest of the family and I headed off in the middle of April as part of a convoy of refugees for Baošići - says Himzo's sister Fikreta.

On the road between Čajniče and Pljevlja they ran into barricades set up by the Bosnian Serbs:

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- Encountering these bearded and filthy Chetniks was terrible. They took us out of the car immediately. The notorious Kornjače brothers greeted us with the words: "And where are you going?" They separated the men from the convoy and took them to a wooden hut. Somehow they let us through. On parting they said to us: "You'll be back soon" - says Fikreta.

Somehow they made it to Baošići. Most of the members of Fahrudin Čengić's family had gathered there. But it was no longer the old Montenegro or the neighbourhood they knew. Those whose mission it was to hypnotise the masses had done a good job: Montenegro was wallowing in a chauvinistic trance. Fahrudin and Ifeta grew more and more worried. They felt some evil was brewing.

And it happened. Around noon on 26 May 1992, strong police forces led by human bloodhounds from Bosnia surrounded the camp in Baošići. The hunting down of Bosniaks had begun. Two policemen knocked on the door of Fahrudin Čengić. They requested the men to show their identity cards. Fahrudin, his son Himzo, grandson Amer Prelo and son-in-law Smail Hasanbegović reluctantly produced their documents. At that moment, Fikreta remembers, young Amer, who was still somewhere between a boy and a young man, turned to his uncle Himzo and asked: "Should I say that I don't have an identity card and that I'm only sixteen?" "No, don't worry, they'll only look at our identity cards and return them to us." Himzo replied.

But that was not what happened. The police took Amer, Fahrudin, Himzo and Smail for a "preliminary interview". Ifeta asked why they were being arrested. "Because your men in the HOS<sup>31</sup> are killing Serbs in Goražde", answered one of the policemen. "And who are the HOS?" asked the bewildered Ifeta. The policeman laughed and ordered them to move on.

They were taken to the police building in Herceg Novi and down to the cellar, to a small room, in which there were about forty Bosniaks, mostly

<sup>31</sup> HOS: Croatian Defence Forces. For a time, the Bosnian Croats threw in their lot with the Muslims in fighting the Serbs, only to later turn on their former allies.

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young men. The investigators carried on with their work, taking people out, questioning them and returning them to detention. Old Fahrudin, who had suffered from heart problems for many years, was not well. He begged them to have his medication brought in. "It'll be no loss if you snuff it!", a policeman told him.

Two hours later, Fahrudin was told that he was free to go - he was over sixty-five.

"As I left, I looked at all three of them. Amer gave me the saddest look of all. They wouldn't allow me to say goodbye to them. I left them behind in their slippers and summer T-shirts in that cold cellar and climbed to the floor above. While I was waiting to have my identity card returned, I saw Ljubo Veljović and Momir Vuković having coffee with the commander of police in his office. Shortly afterwards, they came out. I asked them where they were taking our people. Ljubo didn't say anything. Momir said that he didn't know," wrote Fahrudin in 1993, in a letter addressed to his daughter Mirzeta and son-in-law Mustafa, who had stayed in Goražde.

- When my father returned home, he couldn't speak a word for hours. He knew the tragedy that had befallen us - says Hizreta.

- They were delivered over to the monsters, but I live in hope that those monsters will be punished by God and by men. I know that none of them are alive, but I hope that it will at least be known where their bones lie, so that they can have a decent burial - adds Himzo's mother Ifeta.

Amer was an outstanding pupil of the Chemistry School in Goražde, a member of the brass band. At the moment of his arrest, his parents calculate, he was exactly eighteen years, eight months and eighteen days old. At the beginning of the war they remained in Goražde, and Amer with his younger brother Kerim went to his grandfather Fahrudin in Baošići. They thought they had moved their children to a safe place, but:

- We heard of our terrible tragedy - says Amer's mother Hikmeta - through amateur radio operators. God only knows how we lived through that news. I don't know and I will never know if I hurt more over the disappearance of my son or my brother. I became severely depressed. For many

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years we nourished a secret hope that they would turn up alive and well. However, that hope grows smaller and smaller, and the sorrow grows greater and greater. Our life is worse than hell. All the time we are haunted by images of camps, places of torture, living skeletons and mass graves. We are only biologically living, and that because of our other son Kerim. Why did the Montenegrins do this to us? Is arresting a young boy a sign of the famous Montenegrin manliness and heroism? When they had that big earthquake<sup>32</sup>, for years we took the bread out of our mouths to give money for the rebuilding of Montenegro. We had nothing but the deepest sympathy for the people there, only for them to repay us like this, by sending our children and brothers to their deaths.

Hikmeta's son, brother and brother-in-law were no criminals, as the Montenegrin authorities claimed. It is a lie, she says, that there were any warrants out for them. When the Chetniks began killing and driving out Bosniaks, the family had simply taken refuge in Montenegro, their second home.

Kemal represses his memories. He has his own trauma: since the Montenegrin police took away his older brother Amer, he has a terrible aversion towards people in uniform.

Hikmeta's sister Mirzeta is especially wounded by the claim that during the operation the Montenegrin police also arrested Bosnian Serbs, as for instance Ljubo Veljović and Momir Vuković.

- That's a big lie. They were the "bloodhounds" who helped in the identification and arrest of their Bosniak neighbours in Herceg Novi. They were even rewarded for that: five years later Ljubo Veljović became Mayor of Foča, and Momir Vuković the warden of the prison in Užička Požega. We phoned them once and asked them what had happened to our loved ones. They wouldn't tell us anything - says Mirzeta.

<sup>32</sup> A major earthquake struck Montenegro in May 1979, mainly affecting the coast, the location of the epicentre. Besides hundreds of victims, it caused damage running into hundreds of millions of dollars, which tiny Montenegro (population 650,000) could not supply. In sympathy, the people of all the former Yugoslav Republics, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, for years donated a percentage of their wages in the form of a non-returnable gift to Montenegro.

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In one day, Hizreta lost her husband, brother and nephew. She became a widow with two girls, Semina and Sedina.

Semina was thirteen when her father was taken away for a "preliminary interview" from which he never returned. While they were taking him away, she was playing outside the house. From a distance she saw the police vehicle and ran towards home. When she arrived, her grandfather, Smail's father Šemso, an old man of 85, and mother Hizreta were looking helplessly after the car as it turned the corner.

- When my Mum told me that Dad had been taken away, I thought the ground was caving in beneath my feet. I was gripped by fear that something terrible would happen to him. I started crying - says Semina.

She too grew up overnight. She too, like most children who lose their father at an early age, wondered for years why it had happened to her.

- Thinking about my father and what happened to him always triggers the pain. The worst of all is that nothing is known about him. The years pass, but the pain remains. You wonder what you did to deserve such suffering - says Semina.

Her sister Sedina was only seven when she saw her father for the last time. She did not understand what was going on while they were taking him away, but for days she waited for him to return.

- Those days of waiting have grown into years full of pain and fear. I was a child condemned to grow up without a father. Are those people happy for destroying my life and the lives of other innocent people? Are they human beings at all if they have no heart, no soul? - wonders Sedina, who is studying to be a lawyer.

In the same raid on Baošići the police also arrested Safet Buljubašić and Alija Prutina from Goražde. The story is the same: thinking that Montenegro would be a safe haven for himself and his family, Safet Buljubašić also found himself in the camp in Baošići. A fatal mistake: while he was having breakfast with his wife, police arrested him.

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- The night before a woman came from the neighbourhood to warn my husband Safet to hide, because she had heard of mass arrests of Bosniaks. In the morning he came out of his hiding place only to get a bite to eat, and then the policemen came to get him. With them were another two Serbs from Goražde, Vuković and Veljović. Our pleas and crying didn't help - says his wife Ševala.

Safet left behind a wife and three daughters. The oldest, Admira, was thirteen at the time:

- That morning I went to the beach with friends. While we were playing I noticed a police van and uniformed people. I started running towards the camp to warn father to hide, but they had already taken him away. I will never forgive myself for being too late to warn him - says Admira.

Her younger sister Elmedina didn't get to say goodbye to her father either:

- While they were taking him away, he turned towards us, looked at us, waved and told Mother to take good care of us... With tears in her eyes Mother said: "I will." I remained at the table as if pinned to the spot. I didn't have the strength to stand up, or to say goodbye to him.

The youngest, Sabina, was only six.

- While my mother and sisters sensed what would happen to father, I believed the promises of the policemen that they would return him soon. After a couple of days those policemen came again. While I was looking behind them for Daddy, they ordered my mother to come with them. My sister and I started screaming and crying, begging them not to take her too. They left her, with the promise that they would return tomorrow. That night, the three of us didn't budge from our mother's side. In the morning they came again. I don't know why, they suddenly turned around and left - remembers Sabina.

Along with her father Safet, the policemen also took away Alija Prutina. Alija worked as an economist in the Pobjeda military industry in Goražde. Since the situation in the town had become dangerous, he moved with his sister to Montenegro. There he was tracked down by the bloodhounds, arrested and deported by the Montenegrin police.

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- That day Ljubo Veljović, our neighbour from Goražde, took my brother Alija Prutina for a cup of coffee. Half an hour later they returned to the camp with Momir Vuković. Then the police came and took Alija away - says his sister Munira.

After an hour, the hunters returned to the camp to finish off the job:

- They came again. They were looking for my husband. In the meantime I had hidden him well in a small house. They started questioning me, trying to force me to tell them where he was hiding, insulting and threatening me. I asked our neighbour Momir what I was to do. He cursed my mother and told me to go to Turkey - says Munira, who lost her brother, but managed to save her husband.

By next day, the Montenegrin authorities had organised the deportation of the people they had arrested. Under strong police escort, a bus full of Bosnians left for the Republika Srpska, a total of 35 men: nineteen Bosniaks, sixteen Serbs. Among them were the bloodhounds, Veljović and Vuković. The men were taken over by "personnel of the Srebrenica police" Petar Mitrović, Predrag Perendić, Slaviša Perendić and Nenad Živanović. A report by the Montenegrin MUP (Ministry of the Interior)<sup>33</sup> reveals that this group of deportees was delivered to the military police at the Territorial Defence (TO) Headquarters in Bratunac, to "join a group of Muslims intended to be exchanged for captive Serb territorials". Not a single Bosniak from that group survived.

Their families did not know that and persistently requested the heads of the Herceg Novi police to tell them what had happened to them. And then, as if by some command, the neighbours turned on them, becoming their bitter enemies who did everything in their power to drive them away.

- Neighbours started avoiding us, some even spat at our house. At night unknown people threw stones at our windows, let off firecrackers and guns - Ifeta remembers.

<sup>33</sup> Reply by the Minister of Police, Nikola Pejaković, to a question in parliament, no. 278/2 of 8 April 1993.

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There was nothing for it but to leave their homes and go as far away as possible.

- God himself sent us Zuhdija Hodžić, whom we had never met before, to take us out of that den of Greater Serbianism. He took us under his protection and brought us to Bijelo Polje. He took care of us, fed us, helped us, and there were ten of us. Even though they had taken us in as if we were family, we lived in fear. We didn't dare go out of the house, our children didn't go to school. After a year spent with Zuhdija, we decided to move on. And then that good man paid for our journey to Denmark, for all of us - says Fikreta.

Himzo, Amer, Smail, Safet and Alija were officially declared dead by decision of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Court. The date of death is the same for all of them: 27 May 1992, the day they were deported.

Their remains have not yet been found.

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## FATHER HAS A STROKE

After the devastating earthquake that hit the Montenegrin coast at the end of the 1970s, the brothers Ramiz and Suad Topalović left their home village of Visoko in Bosnia and set off to earn a living in Herceg Novi. They got down to work and earned their bread as construction workers. Ramiz soon settled down, marrying a Montenegrin girl from Bijela called Nada, had children and made friends. Suad, on the other hand, spent his time with friends and at the pub. He loved Herceg Novi, he felt at home there, but he never got round to taking out a Montenegrin identity card in all those twelve years. That was to cost him his life. He was denounced as a Bosnian, and on 27 May, the Montenegrin police arrested him and handed him over to the authorities of the Bosnian Serb renegades.

The first to find out about Suad's arrest was his sister-in-law Nada. She was told how it all happened by Suad's friend Travolta, whose real name and surname nobody knew. All people knew was that Travolta was originally from Foča and that he had been living in Herceg Novi for years.

- Travolta told me that Suad was arrested on the 16 or 17 May, while having a casual coffee on the terrace of the popular Petica café, on the main square in Herceg Novi. My husband Ramiz had warned Suad to take care and not to go out in the street, but he didn't believe that he was in any danger. Travolta told me that Suad was kept in custody for a couple of days by the Herceg Novi police and that he was then taken to Bosnia. I asked him why he was only telling me of Suad's arrest ten days after it happened. He answered something unconvincing, I don't even remember what it was he said - says Nada.

While thirty-year-old Suad was being arrested and deported, his brother Ramiz was defending the fatherland:

- Throughout May I was in the JNA (Yugoslav People's Army) reserve, defending Yugoslavia. When I returned home, I didn't find my brother Suad there. The police had arrested him and deported him to Srebrenica with a group of 35 Bosnian refugees. However, I found out that on the way to Foča a group of seventeen or eighteen of them had been killed. I'm afraid he was among them - says Ramiz, who from all the stress soon developed diabetes.

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Nada believes that Suad's arrest had been planned a lot earlier. She has good reason for this:

- At the end of April, or the beginning of May, I can't remember exactly, a man who introduced himself as a police inspector knocked on the door of our apartment. He asked me where Ramiz was. I told him that he was in the JNA reserve. He asked me whether thirty-year-old Suad Topalović also lived there. I told him I hadn't seen Suad in the last fifteen days, and that I didn't know where he was currently working. "And do you have his photograph?" he asked. I said that I did. At his insistence, I showed him Suad's photograph, but I don't remember if he took it. Suad didn't cause problems. Even though he liked to drink sometimes, he was an exceptionally quiet man, so they were probably looking for him then only to deport him to Bosnia.

Nada and Ramiz spent years searching for Suad. Several months after the deportation a friend told them an almost incredible story:

- A good friend from Podgorica told us that he saw Suad, several months after his arrest, loading some materials on a truck in front of the Zetatrans building in Podgorica. They nodded at each other in greeting. He says he asked Suad whether he would be going to Herceg Novi, to which Suad shook his head in the negative. I don't know, maybe Suad was working there as a war prisoner - says Nada.

Šehid Bašić from Goražde and Osman Bajramović from Foča were also in Suad's group. To get to Montenegro Osman Bajramović, his friends testify, had to pay the notorious Chetnik warlord Pero Elez to transfer him from Foča to the free territory in Montenegro. Osman, however, was then tracked down in Herceg Novi by the "bloodhounds" and arrested and deported by the Montenegrin police. Like Suad and Šehid, after that every trace of him has been lost.

Suad's sister Suada heard of her brother's arrest and deportation in Visoko, while listening to the news on her transistor, by the faint flickering of a candle:

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- I was alone in the house, so I turned on the radio to drive away the fear. Then they announced that the Montenegrin police had arrested and handed over a big group of Bosniaks to Radovan Karadžić's criminals. Among the deported they read out Suad's full name. It was like a blow straight in the stomach. I knew what it meant. I was in shock. The whole night I sobbed and cried, there was a war on and I had nothing I could take to calm myself. He was taken away by people without souls, people without hearts. It hurts me most that he was maybe tortured and then killed, and only because his name was Suad.

However, Suada still took the news of her brother better than Suad's father Ibro:

- When father heard of Suad's deportation, he had a stroke the same day. He lay bedridden for two years.

And then he died.

## DEPORTED FROM THE BARRACKS

As soon as he turned eighteen, Azem Pljevljak went to do his military service in what was then the JNA, the Yugoslav People's Army, as young men who did not continue their education usually did. Life had forced him to go to work in the building trade straight out of primary school. When he was summoned to pay his debt to his faltering homeland, he was already known as a very good bricklayer. With the customary small celebration and great concern, his family saw him off from his hometown of Goražde to serve in Banjaluka, both in Bosnia.

As the end of Azem's military service drew near, so also was the war in the former Yugoslavia drawing inexorably closer. By the time he donned civilian clothes, Azem could not get through to Goražde: the Bosnian Serbs had blocked the occupied areas to Bosniaks. There was nothing for it but to head for the home of his uncle Ismet and aunt Zlatija Kadrić in Herceg Novi, Montenegro, where they had lived for years.

- Azem stayed with us - says Zlatija - only for a couple of days. At the end of May, while he was out walking with my little son Emir, the police arrested him in the town centre. Later they called us to bring his identity card and military ID. While Ismet was handing them the documents, he begged them to let the poor kid go. They wouldn't hear of it. The next day he took him some clothes and fruit juice. On that 27 May, along with other thirty or so refugees, the policemen took him by bus to Srebrenica. We never saw or heard from him again. Ismet died in the meantime, without ever hearing what had happened to his nephew.

Only a month after the deportation, on 29 June 1992, the Sava river washed the body of Azem Pljevljak up near the village of Laćarak, near Sremska Mitrovica. The investigating officers of the town carried out an autopsy immediately, but could not ascertain the victim's identity, as there were no personal documents. Following examination, the pathologist wrote: "Corpse 183 cm long, young, wearing blue 'Wrangler' jeans and long white underwear, violent death, spent about one month in the water." The body was then buried at the town cemetery in Sremska Mitrovica and the grave was marked with a number.

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Thirteen years later, at the end of March 2005, the Bosnia-Herzegovina Commission for Tracing Missing Persons received official confirmation from Serbia that DNA testing had established that the remains were those of Azem Pljevljak, whom the Montenegrin police had arrested and handed over to the Srebrenica police.

The procedure for handing over remains between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia usually takes up to several months. Azem's family is awaiting his remains with impatience.

- I last saw him - says Azem's mother Hatidža - on 25 October 1991. I had been very ill, so the officers allowed Azem leave to see me from the Manjača barracks. And now, after all those years, I will be greeting my son again...

His father Hasim is silent. He too is waiting to meet his son again.

According to official Montenegrin police documents, among the deported Bosniaks was another soldier who had just been demobilised - Mirsad Zec from Sarajevo. His parents, Razija and Durmo, sent him off to the JNA on 17 March 1991. He was first stationed at Leskovac, from where he was transferred to Nis, both in Serbia.

- We last talked to Mirsad the day before he was due to come out, 14 May 1992 - says Razija. - His father advised him to go to Belgrade and not to come to Bosnia under any circumstances, because the war had started. Since then we haven't managed to find out anything about him.

A couple of days after his disappearance, Durmo called Mirsad's superior officers, who told him he had gone to Belgrade. At the end of May, he also called the Red Cross in Belgrade, but they had no information. In the middle of June, Durmo also searched for his son through Sarajevo Television, but there has been no news of him ever since.

In mid-October 2005, the remains of Mirsad Zec were found and identified in Serbia, at the town cemetery in Sremska Mitrovica. Mirsad's body was washed ashore by the Sava river on 28 June 1992 on the opposite

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bank from the village of Klenka near Sremska Mitrovica. Following an autopsy, his body was buried at the local cemetery.

- DNA analysis has undoubtedly confirmed the remains of Mirsad Zec, says Amor Mašović, President of the Federal Committee for Tracing Missing Persons from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mašović says that it appears from the autopsy report that Zec was killed immediately after his arrest and surrender by the Montenegrin authorities. His body was most likely thrown into the Drina, and then floated downstream into the Sava.

Amor, a close friend of mine, asked me to come with him to break the news to Mirsad's father, Durmo. The pupils of his magnificent blue eyes dilated in fear and mistrust, Durmo kept repeating: "My son is alive, my son is alive, I don't believe in any DNA...When I last talked to my son thirteen years ago he was alive and well. I later read in the newspapers that he was arrested in Herceg Novi, then deported, this, that and the other. It's all lies.."

Durmo has not yet accepted the truth that his son has been killed.

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## THE YUGOSLAV PEOPLE'S ARMY - A MOTHER WHO KILLS HER CHILDREN

Besides the Montenegrin police, the Bosnian refugees were also hunted downhand arrested by military police of the JNA, the Yugoslav People's Army. In a raid by military police in Pljevlja, Montenegro on 23 April 1992, eighteen refugee Bosniaks aged between 20 and 50 were arrested. After an interrogation lasting several days, four men from Foča remained in the military prison in Pljevlja barracks, while the others were let go. Among those arrested was forty-year-old Edhem Kafedžić, a forester from Foča.

- Along with my husband, those who remained in prison were Fadil Divjan, Šemso Čankušić, Meho Hadžimešić and Halil Spirjan - says Edhem's wife Fatima.

In search of her husband she went to see the head of the Pljevlja garrison:

- Commander Vojo Simović agreed to see me and promised me that nothing bad was going to happen to Edhem and the rest of them and that they would be released soon. However, he didn't keep his promise: they were held in Pljevlja military prison until 25 May, when they were handed over to the Foča Serbs - says Fatima, now living in America.

None of them survived the horrors of the Foča camp. According to the testimony of surviving camp inmates, Edhem Kafedžić was taken to pick plums on 17 September 1992. He never returned. Fadil Divjan, Meho Hadžimešić and Halil Spirjan were taken from the camp to their deaths at an unknown date.

Like a mother who kills her children, in the spring of 1992 the JNA took its own Bosniak soldiers to their deaths as they left Montenegrin garrisons, having served their stint in the army. Nihad Halibegović, author of a book<sup>34</sup> on what happened to Bosnian soldiers in the JNA, states that after doing his military service in Plav, all trace of Hazrudin Bašić was lost, just like Nedžad Tabaković and Safet Čorba from the Podgorica garrison. The

<sup>34</sup> Nihad Halibegović, *Mama, moram im glavu dati*, Sarajevo, 2002.no. 04-1386-5, 5 July 1993.

same fate befell Mirsad Skando who served in Herceg Novi. It is assumed that they were deported to the Bosnian Serbs and then killed.

The list of victims of the military police would have been significantly longer had not the mainly Muslim citizens of Plav, Gusinje, Rožaje and Bijelo Polje in the Sandžak region of Montenegro taken in and hidden the recently demobbed soldiers. Five soldiers from Bosnia were saved from the Plav garrison at the last minute: Šemso Bećkanović and Hasan Dizdarević from Cazin, Midhat Hegić from Kozarac, Rešid Hušidović from Velika Kladuša and Džemal Đulović from Olovo. They stayed alive solely thanks to the generosity of people in Plav and Gusinje, who, at risk to their own safety, hid them in their homes for months.

- The military policemen were constantly on our heels, but our hosts hid us from them by transferring us from house to house. We felt like hunted beasts. If it wasn't for those good people we would surely have been killed by our former officers from the garrison - explains Šemso Bećkanović.

It was Šemso who in May 1992 approached Džavid Šabović, one of the leaders of the then Party of Equality, and told him about what was happening to newly released soldiers from Bosnia. With a large group of his fellow countrymen, Šemso was supposed to be released in two days and knew what was waiting for them.

- My friend Ferid Šarkinović and I waited for the demobilised soldiers in front of the garrison. Only five came out. We put them up in the Plav hotel, where we had some good friends working. I soon received a call from Goca Gočević at the hotel telling me that the military police had been inquiring at the reception desk about Bosniaks. We then moved them to the safest place we could think of: to the holiday home of a Bosnian Serb, Pero Barišić. However, seeing it was best if they were not all in the same place, we distributed them around various houses - remembers Šabović.

In May and June another twenty soldiers from Bosnia were finishing their military service in the Plav garrison. However, none of them ever came through the entrance barrier of the barracks as a civilian. Šabović, with local Plav officials including Mayor Sadrija Balić, paid a visit to the commander of the garrison, Radomir Purić, to find out why.

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- We requested that he hand over to us all the demobilised soldiers. He, however, refused to do so. He told us that they were being taken care of in the garrison and that they were well treated. However, after a couple of days we received information that a group of sixteen soldiers from the Plav garrison had been transferred to Podgorica on the orders of the commander of the Podgorica corps, Milorad Obradović. They were then deported - says Šabović.

- While investigating this case I managed to get a hold of a staff sergeant of the military police, who had handed over the group from the Plav garrison to colleagues in the Podgorica Masline barracks. He had kept the list of the deported soldiers: Mehmed Duraković, Alija Prošić, Edin Smajić, Hamed Smajić, Enes Zilkić, Nihad Sokolović, Suad Rahmanović, Armin Tabaković, Damir Hećimović, Almir Selimović, Hasan Puškar, Fikret Čturić, Narcis Bakija, Husein Krupić, and two Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Janko Berberović and Marjan Sertić.

What happened to them, did they survive? I asked Sead Koso of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission for Tracing Missing Persons to check whether their names were on the list of missing persons. "They're not there, which probably means that they survived," says Koso.

The five soldiers that were hidden and looked after by the people of Plav and Gusinje also lived to see the end of the war. Four of them went home to Bosnia and one remained: Šemso Bećkanović fell in love with young Dijana Radončić and stayed in Plav. There no one knows him by his name and surname, everybody calls him the Bosnian.

Occasionally he visits Bosnia, a landscape painted in sorrow.

## DENOUNCED TO THE POLICE BY THE RED CROSS

Montenegro! Land of manliness and bravery. The land of Marko Miljanov, who wrote that bravery was to defend oneself from another, and manliness to defend the other from oneself. This grand and distinguishing Montenegrin cult toppled like a house of cards during the great hunt on the Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees. The silence of the host families from whose homes the policemen led helpless people away depicts their shame and pain. However, there are also those who did not reconcile themselves to this crippling silence. Such are Aziza and Hasib Skoko. From their house the policemen took away a refugee from Foča, Rasim Hanjalić. This event was to change their lives radically.

- When they took the unfortunate man from the house, we felt as if one of our own had been killed. We felt so helpless, so terribly shamed by the evil someone else had done - says Hasib Skoko, an economist, who used to own a successful company in Podgorica.

His wife Aziza, a physics teacher and mother of six children, looks back on the scenes engraved on her memory:

- Rasim Hanjalić from Foča, his wife Vahida and their ailing son Damir came to stay with us. There was also Vahida's sister Ferida, her husband Sabahudin, their son Kenan and daughter Amela. Before that they had been staying in the house of Rasim's Montenegrin blood brother<sup>35</sup>, Ljubo Dobrović, in the Stari Aerodrom suburb of Podgorica. We would visit them often and take them food. However, when they heard of the great hunt and arrest of refugees in Montenegro, they asked us to find them some other accommodation, so we took them in with us.

The following day Aziza took Ferida and Amela in her car to fetch their clothes. While they were packing their things, she dropped in on her mother next door for a cup of coffee:

<sup>35</sup> In Montenegrin tradition, when friends wish to raise the level of their friendship to a higher level they become blood-brothers, making a formal declaration to that effect.

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- Suddenly our neighbour Ifeta burst into the house. Panic-stricken, she shouted: "That woman has been taken by the police!" I dashed back to the house and found Amela in tears. She told me the police had taken Ferida. It was clear to me that someone from the neighbourhood had telephoned them to inform them that they were there.

Aziza immediately telephoned her husband. When they arrived, they found quite a scene:

- Rasim was sitting the police car - continues Aziza - the children and women were crying. I asked the policemen why they were taking this man from our house and why they couldn't question him there. The inspector showed me an arrest warrant and told me not to defend Rasim because he "had blood on his hands." Then he turned towards Sabahudin and said: "I still don't have a warrant for you, don't you dare budge an inch from here!"

Rasim Hanjalić, the former manager of Perućica, a large trading company from Foča, was no terrorist. He had no blood on his hands and was not an extremist either. His only guilt was the fact that he was a Bosniak respected in the community, a species hunted down with special pleasure by Karadžić's "blood-hounds". For this shortcoming, Rasim Hanjalić spent 27 dreadful months in the Serb concentration camps. He is reluctant to speak of the scenes he lived through.

- It all began - says Rasim - at the end of April 1992, when I left occupied Foča and arrived in Montenegro, in Pljevlja. My wife Vahida and thirteen-year-old son Damir, who is disabled, managed to get to Pljevlja on foot. There we stayed in the house of friends. Ten days later, we heard of the arrests of Bosnians in Pljevlja. I realized that we weren't safe either, so we moved in with my good friend, Ljubo Dobrović. I believed that I would be safer with a Montenegrin family. I stayed there for almost a whole month, but when I heard of the mass arrests of Bosnians up and down the Montenegrin coast, I took shelter with Hasib Skoko in Tuzi<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Tuzi: an outlying township of the Montenegrin capital Podgorica, bordering on neighbouring Albania. The population is entirely Montenegrin Albanian. During the frequent wars in the Balkans, the Albanians of Tuzi would save people whose lives were in danger by using their own channels to smuggle them over the border into Albania.

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After three of four days, on 27 May, on the dot of noon, two cars drew up in front of Hasib's house.

- In one car - Rasim says - were two police inspectors, and in the other Ljubo Dobrović and another man whom I didn't know. The inspectors ordered me to come with them. My wife ran off to get me a sweater, but they told her not to bother, since "I wouldn't be needing a sweater."

The policemen took Rasim to the police building in Podgorica and handed him over to the officer on duty on the first floor.

- He didn't ask me anything, just took me down to the basement. At about seven o'clock in the evening, uniformed policemen arrived. We drove by car towards Foča. I spent the night in the prison in Plužine, which looked more like a stable. There was an old Bosniak there, Humić from Sutjeska, I can't recall his first name. He was 83 years old and had come on horseback to Montenegro to buy some flour, because there was none to be had in Sutjeska.

On the following day, 28 May, the Montenegrin policemen handed Hanjalić and Humić over to their fellow policemen from Foča.

- At about three o'clock in the afternoon we were taken over by the Foča police and brought to the prison, where Humić was later killed. I stayed in that camp for eighteen and a half months. I endured all sorts of things there, things I wouldn't wish on my greatest enemy...

As soon as he was taken away, Rasim's host family went to the police station. They took him a sweater and a roast chicken, but the policemen told them that he was "well fed and dressed", and that he didn't need anything. Realising that they were powerless to protect the other unfortunates who had sought shelter in their house, Hasib and some friends arranged to smuggle them to Priština in Kosovo, Serbia, and onward to Macedonia. Sabahudin was saved.

- I asked to be received by President Momir Bulatović. However, when he had heard me out, his Chef de Cabinet Zoran Čelebić called me later and told me that the President was "extremely busy".

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Two days later, in the company of two deputies of the Montenegrin Parliament, Ćazim Lukač and Đerđ Đokaj, Aziza was received by the Assistant Minister for Public Security of the Montenegrin Interior Ministry, Mića Marković:

- With us was the wife of Ekrem Ćemo and another woman from Bosnia whose husband was deported from Ulcinj. We told Marković of the mass arrests of Bosnian refugees. I told him that a man from our house had been taken away, that we felt responsible for him, that he was a refugee and that all laws protected him. Marković said that this had nothing to do with the war in Bosnia, that he didn't know how this could have happened and that he would look into it all. While we were there, he telephoned someone in Foča. After he finished talking on the phone he told us that he still didn't have any information on the deported refugees, but that we should call him in two days.

And Aziza did call. Two days later, she called the Assistant Minister of Police Mića Marković from a post office.

- He told me that Rasim Hanjalić was alive, that Ekrem Ćemo was alive, as well as the third man, whose name I have forgotten. I was happy and hurried home, but there was an unpleasant surprise waiting for me there: while I was talking to the Assistant Minister of Police, our house had been searched by his own police. They were looking for Sabahudin to arrest him, but he was already safe. I called Ćazim Lukač. He raised a storm at a session of the Montenegrin Parliament, which was broadcast on television. After his speech, all arrests of refugees in Montenegro stopped - says Aziza.

Rasim lived through days and months of dread in the Foča camp: hunger, torture, life on the verge of death. He was then taken to a camp in Kula, where he spent another eight and a half months waiting to be exchanged. For a long time afterwards, he looked back on events, wondering where he had gone wrong. And he believes that he has arrived at the right answer:

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- The best man<sup>37</sup> at my wedding was from Podgorica, where I had a lot of friends. I was convinced that I knew Montenegro and the Montenegrins very well. I knew that Montenegrin history was full of shining examples of hosts giving their lives to protect a friend, or even an enemy in danger of his life, who had taken shelter with them. I believed in the Montenegrin tradition of manliness and bravery, I counted on them not to allow me to be taken, knowing me to be innocent, from their house - Montenegro. Because of this I saw my arrest and deportation as a huge betrayal. My fatal mistake, however, was that I registered with the Red Cross in Podgorica. I'm convinced that it was the Red Cross that denounced me to the police. I stated as much to investigators from The Hague. And another thing: I believe that the greatest culprit for our arrest and deportation is the man who was then Montenegrin President - Momir Bulatović, who knew about and organized it all.

After all he had been through, Rasim Hanjalić with his family left Bosnia and the Balkans forever and now lives in Germany. Disillusioned with Montenegro, Hasib Skoko moved to Bosnia, never to return.

The ways of the Lord are passing strange.

<sup>37</sup> In the southeast regions of the Balkans, it is the custom to choose either a great friend or a well known personality from the area where the newly-weds live to be witness at their wedding and later godfather or "kum" to their children. In the Montenegrin tradition, such friendships are carried on from generation to generation, although there have been cases of where one "kum" took the life of another.

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## MOMIR AND MILO ABORT THE OPERATION

The hunting down of the men who tried to escape the whirlwind of war by finding safety in Montenegro was reaching its climax. Running before their uniformed persecutors, the panic-stricken refugees fled inland from the coast towards the north of Montenegro and south towards Albania. Having successfully cleansed the coast, at the end of May the police posse turned towards the capital, Podgorica, and northern Montenegro. Police stations in Podgorica and the mainly Muslim Sandzak towns of Bijelo Polje, Rožaje and Plav received instructions to start arresting adult refugees from Bosnia. Host families there threatened to use weapons to defend the unfortunates, usually close relatives, from being taken away from their homes. Unheeding, the government forces went on with their work: on the first day of June, Podgorica policemen returned to the home of Hasib Skoko in Tuzi to arrest Sabahudin Strujić. They searched the house in vain: after the arrest of his brother-in-law Rasim Hanjalić, Sabahudin had fled Montenegro with the help of his host.

The mothers, sisters and wives of the people who were taken away continued to demand audience with ranking police and state officials. They also informed the Belgrade office of the International Red Cross of the arrests and deportation, and the Red Cross in turn protested to official Podgorica. Terrified host families begged lower-ranking politicians to influence the state leadership to stop the murderous hunt of the Bosniaks. At the end of May, Emilo Redžematović, from whose house in Herceg Novi the Montenegrin police had taken four people, asked the help of Asim Dizdarević, Deputy Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament. Dizdarević telephoned the Speaker, Risto Vukčević, and informed him of the police operation.

- Risto Vukčević told me that he would call President Momir Bulatović and Prime Minister Milo Đukanović immediately and inform them of everything. That very evening they met and ordered the operation to cease. The police acted on their orders and the arrests stopped that same moment - says Dizdarević.

Ćazim Lukač, formerly a deputy of the Muslim Party for Democratic Action (SDA) in the Montenegrin Parliament, remembers it differently:

- The operation ceased only after I spoke out on the arrest of Bosniaks at a session of the Montenegrin Parliament which began on 5 June. When I came to the podium in front of the television cameras to say that Bosniaks in Montenegro were being arrested and returned to Bosnia, a real commotion broke out in the Parliament. Some of my fellow deputies didn't believe me and began to heckle and insult me. I paid no attention, but demanded that the Parliament of Montenegro form a committee which would look into my allegations - Lukač remembers.

Because of the heated atmosphere, Parliamentary Speaker Risto Vukčević suspended the session and ordered a break of fifteen minutes. It was to last for six hours.

- Some of the deputies tried to persuade me to back down from my proposal. They told me my allegations were not true and that in the event that it was proved that I was telling the truth, they would resign. I stuck to my guns. Later, a police inspector from Rožaje admitted to me that immediately after my speech, the police stations in the north of Montenegro received a dispatch from Podgorica saying that they were not to arrest refugees - explains Lukač.

Thirteen years later, in an interview to Sarajevo Hajat<sup>38</sup> Television, the then Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović gave his version of the story on how that two month operation by the Interior Ministry ended:

- The operation lasted only one day - said Bulatović without blinking - and it was stopped by the state leadership the moment we found out about it.

Without specifying on whose initiative the operation was aborted, Bulatović admitted that "this event deeply disturbed the Montenegrin public".

<sup>38</sup> TV Hajat, Interview with Momir Bulatović, 21 December 2004.

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- We debated this in the Montenegrin Parliament in front of the TV cameras. The debate lasted two whole days and resolutions were adopted without our being able to determine responsibility for what happened - said Bulatović.

Ćazim Lukač's original initiative was amended by a parliamentary majority and a multi-party committee was formed to monitor the humanitarian situation and the refugee problem. The committee, however, also had a mandate to gather facts on the forced deportation of refugees from Montenegrin territory. This committee consisted of Deputy Speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament Asim Dizdarević and deputies Ćazim Lukač, Mićo Orlandić and Ranko Jovović.

- After visiting all the Montenegrin municipalities to discuss matters affecting refugees and the displaced with the local authorities, the committee received the necessary reports from the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior. We then drafted a report and about mid-July we met with the then Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović - says Asim Dizdarević.

- Only Asim Dizdarević and I went to the meeting with President Momir Bulatović. Asim personally handed him our report. Bulatović, as far as I remember, didn't even look at it. He passed no comment. I suppose he knew everything already, so he didn't even need to leaf through it - says Lukač.

Whatever the case, the reconstruction of this crime committed against the Bosnians clearly shows that the deportations and the taking of Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees to their deaths were stopped by the then Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović and Prime Minister Milo Đukanović, only after 5 June, with a delay of almost two months.

At whose initiative or request, or under pressure from which quarter? Only they know.

## THE MURDER OF REFUGEES IN MONTENEGRO

When the authorities finally stopped the arrest and deportation of Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees at the beginning of July 1992 an even greater evil took place when a Bosniak family of three were killed in Montenegro, where five "specials" of the Bosnian Serb Army had lured the Klapuh family from Foča to their deaths: a husband and wife, Hasan and Ferida, and their daughter Sena. Hasan was an economist and for many years deputy warden of the prison in Foča. Ferida did not work and Sena had just graduated from university as an engineer.

The trial of the five accused of the murder of the Klapuh family opened at the end of April the following year before the High Court in Podgorica under Judge Milić Međedović. The prosecution, represented by Miodrag Latković, indicted Janko Janjić (25), Zoran Vuković (37), Radomir Kovač (31), Zoran Simović (28) and Vidoje Golubić with the extremely brutal murder of the Klapuh family. The five were members of the Dragan Nikolić special detachment of the "Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina". Only Vidoje Golubović sat in the dock; the other four were tried in absentia.

Hasan Klapuh and Janko Janjić had been neighbours for many years in Foča where the Janjić's apartment was just underneath that of the Muslim Klapuhs. The investigation established that the five indictees agreed for an agreed sum to take the Klapuh family from Foča to safety in Montenegro. On 6 July 1992 they had passed the customs post and were close to Plužine when, at the Obrad Cicmil bridge, they stopped the vehicle and took the members of the unfortunate family out of the car. With a bullet to the back of the head, as the investigation revealed, they first dispatched Hasan Klapuh. They then shot the women from automatic rifles and pushed all three of them over a hundred-metre high cliff. The autopsy established that it took the women another two to three hours to die.

The investigation also showed that the atrocity was then celebrated by General Mladić's brave "specials" at a nearby pub. The bodies of the Bosnian refugees were found by a road maintenance worker who spotted traces of blood on the asphalt while inspecting the road. The Montenegrin

police working with customs officers were very quickly in possession of the names of the killers who had crossed the border together with the Klapuh family. A month later, Vidoje Golubić was arrested. Radovan Karadžić's volunteer had dropped off briefly in Plužine to visit his wife and child, only to have his furlough cut short by the police.

The trial chamber under Judge Milić Međedović sentenced each of the absent four to twenty years in prison, while Vidoje Golubić received a sentence of eight months for failing to report a crime. Even though the indictment had charged Karadžić's five specials with committing a war crime against civilians, the court convicted them of murder for personal gain.

- The court did not accept the counts of a war crime against civilians contained in the indictment, finding that this criminal offence could only be committed in a territory that was at war, and no war was taking place in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Judge Međedović ruled.

The establishing of facts in the absence of the other four, the judge explained, was based on the testimony of the accused Golubić, "so that the court in the absence of other evidence believed him completely" - and sentenced him to eight months in prison.

In Montenegro, the brutal murderers of the Klapuh family were out of reach, but some kind of justice caught up with most of them soon enough. Immediately after the war, the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague issued a warrant for the arrest of Radomir Kovač also known as Klamfa, Zoran Vuković a.k.a. Zoca and Janko Janjić known as Tuta. They were accused of having personally taken part in the military attack on Foča and several surrounding villages, arresting and killing Muslim civilians, torturing and raping women in Foča - including twelve-year-old girls - who were exposed to "brutal beatings, rape and sexual abuse".

Members of NATO Special Forces arrested Kovač and Vuković at the end of 1999. The Hague Tribunal sentenced Radomir Kovač to twenty and Zoran Vuković to twelve years in prison. They were sent to serve their sentences in Norway.

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Janko Janjić, who during the war had risen to the position of chief of police in Foča, was not so lucky: he was killed on 13 October 2000 in Foča during an attempt by NATO commandos to arrest and extradite him to The Hague.

- During the course of the arrest, Janko Janjić detonated a hand grenade which killed him - said a brief release by NATO. Janjic had used it to threaten the soldiers who had come for him.

Zoran Simović is still living in the Foča suburb of Velečevo. He is about 160 cm tall, weighs about 60 kg, has black eyes, a beard and black hair. He is unemployed, drinks a lot and seldom takes a bath.

Of the Klapuh family only Hasan's son Ferid has survived:

- I have started proceedings through the Bosnia-Herzegovina Committee for Tracing the Missing to have the remains of my family exhumed and transferred to Bosnia. I want all this to be done officially and officially recorded.

Ferid went to visit the graves of his family at the cemetery in Nikšić:

- I was shown the graves by Ibro Hadžijalić from Nikšić, who was on the committee for their funeral. I also went to the Nikšić police. I requested that they give me all the documentation on the killers and the death of my family - says Ferid.

According to Dr Bećir Macić and Preljub Tafro, authors of a book on the genocide committed against the Foča Bosniaks between 1992-1995<sup>39</sup>, Janko Janjić known as Tuta "on the same month on the road to Mratinje, in Montenegro, also slit the throats of Muamer Avdagić from Foča, his brother Ismet and mother Mineta".

<sup>39</sup> Preljub Tafro, Dr Bećir Macić, Genocid nad Bošnjacima na području općine Foča 1992-1995, Sarajevo, 2004.

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Following up on this information, I talked to Nurudin Avdagić, Muamer's and Ismet's cousin, who lives in Sarajevo. According to him, they tried to leave occupied Foča by bus, but changed their plan at the last minute.

- They left Foča - says Nerudin - on 30 June 1992. Just as they were boarding the bus for Podgorica, they were approached by a Serb neighbour, I don't know his name, who offered to take them safely to Montenegro. They believed him. At his insistence they got into their own small Fiat and started off. We heard that he then killed them on the road to Plužine.

- I want to give them a decent burial. I have also offered money for any information on where their bones lie. A Serb from Foča promised some people that he would take me to the place where they were killed but later said that he didn't dare, it was more than his life was worth - says Nurudin.

Muamer, a thirty-year-old clerk, worked in a bank in Foča. His brother, younger by two years, had just received a degree in agriculture, and Mineta was a pensioner. Their remains have never been found.

## THE MINISTER'S SEAL ON THE CRIME

Fahrudin Čengić could not save his son Himzo, grandson Asim or his son-in-law Smail, sent to their deaths by the Montenegrin police, but his persistence in searching for the truth contributed to the Montenegrin Interior Ministry's admitting the deportation of eighty-three people, thus setting the seal on its own crime.

In his search, Fahrudin knocked on many doors and wrote letters to Montenegrin officials and international organizations. When help was not forthcoming, he wrote to a tiny anti-war party led by Žarko Rakčević, the Social Democratic Reform Party (SDPR) of Montenegro.

Referring to the letter in which Fahrudin Čengić told how his son, grandson and son-in-law were arrested and taken away to an unknown destination, the SDPR deputies in the Montenegrin Parliament, Ratko Velimirović, Žarko Rakčević, Dragiša Burzan and Ramo Bralić, raised questions in Parliament<sup>40</sup> for the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior:

- "1. Which other persons (refugees), apart from the three who have been named, were deported at the time from Montenegro and where were they deported to? Where are they now and what became of them?
2. Who requested the deportation of these people, to whom were they surrendered and what was the factual basis for their arrest and deportation?
3. On the grounds of which legislative act of the FRY, international treaty or convention was the deportation of these persons carried out?"

An answer came from the Montenegrin Interior Ministry<sup>41</sup>, signed by the Minister of Police, Nikola Pejaković. At the time of the arrests and deportations of Bosnians he was Deputy to Minister of Police Pavle Bulatović, and his closest associate. Concealing the real number, Pejaković lists the names of 83 Bosnian refugees, and more or less admits the generally known truth: that the order to arrest and deport was issued by his predecessor, Montenegrin Police Minister Pavle Bulatović in person.

<sup>40</sup> Parliamentary question no. 02-624/2 of 11 March 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Parliamentary question no. 02-624/2 of 11 March 1993.

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In the introductory part of this document, Pejaković states that the Montenegrin Interior Ministry was in possession of information that among the several thousand refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina "were a number suspected of crimes against humanity and international law, committed in areas where international conflicts with tragic consequences had already broken out."

In the quandary this posed, continues the bureaucratic document, it was decided in consultation with the authorised prosecutor's office to deal with the people who had arrived from Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the customary police practice of issuing requests for their arrest and surrender.

However, Vladimir Šušović, Montenegrin State Prosecutor at the time, categorically denies this:

- It is not true that anyone from the police consulted the Prosecutor's Office in connection with this operation. Perhaps some people from the police spoke privately with some of the prosecutors, but I solemnly declare that nobody did so officially. Nikola Pejaković can write what he likes, but only this is the truth.

Whatever the case, the document then goes on to give specific information: "On 19 May 1992 at the Metaljka border crossing, staff of the Pljevlja Security Centre handed over Mirsad Huren, Rasim Kajgana, Ibrahim Šandal, Milomir Kezunović, Marko Mijatović and Nikola Brčić, all from Foča, together with former JNA major Zijad Velić from Čajniče, to the Čajniče police." Their personal details are not disclosed, nor the place of arrest - Pljevlja.

Pejaković also reveals that the Montenegrin police deported Bosnian refugees to the secret services in Belgrade:

"Based on well-founded suspicion that he had committed a war crime against civilians, Sulejman Pilić of Kupres, born 1942, was handed over to the Belgrade City State Security Service (SDB) on 19 May 1992."

Pejaković admits that policemen of the Plužine (Montenegro) Security Department handed over the three Rikalo brothers: Husein, Zaim and Midhat, to the Foča police on 24 May 1992. "Admission of these persons to the Foča police station was carried out by the chief of the station, Milomir Mališ."

Only a day later fresh deportations followed, this time of twenty-one Bosniaks and sixteen Serbs. To the deputy chief of security at Foča prison, Slavko Koroman (wrongly referred to in the document as "warden"), the Montenegrin police handed over eight men from Foča: Hamed Čelik, Abdulah Kamerić, Nedžib Lojo, Ramiz Babić, Ekrem Ćemo, Ševko Kubat, Munir and Esad Hadžić, and five from Srebrenica: Nezir and Bekir Krdžić, Aziz Burić, Enver Mujičić and Bego Jahić. Also in this group were four men from Goražde: Enes Bičo, Sanin Krdžalija, Mirsad Borovac, Ismet Isaković, Sadik Demirović from Trebinje, Suad Karačić from Sarajevo and Alija Čardaklija, born in Pljevlja, Montenegro, but living in Goražde in Bosnia.

Sixty-six-year-old Ismet Pašović was extradited along with them. At the beginning of the war he had left Foča and with the help of a friend, Veljo Vukadin, managed to get to freedom in Montenegro. In Igalo he stayed at the house of his brother-in-law, a man called Popadić, where he was arrested by the Montenegrin police. He was imprisoned in the Foča camp until 31 August 1992 when he was taken out along with another ten inmates, from which time all trace of him has been lost.

The Montenegrin police also handed over to Slavko Koroman sixteen refugee Serbs from Bosnia: Živojin Nikolić, Miloš Marković, Savo Radunović, Risto Košarac, Vladimir Štelović, Mitar Kozić, Mladen Vujović, Dragomir Ćurić, Nikola Divljak, Branislav Srdanović, Drago Kujundžić, Miroslav Milojević, Srđan Trapo, Milan Kadrijević, Nikola Gavrić and Dragiša Škrelić.

- I know for a fact that not a hair was missing from the heads of the Serbs who were deported. Particular care was taken of them here in Herceg Novi and there in Bosnia - says Slobodan Pejović, now a retired homicide inspector of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, an unwilling participant and witness of the arrests of refugees.

A new group of 35 refugees, the document continues, was handed over by the Montenegrin police on 27 May 1992 to four members of the Srebrenica police: Petar Mitrović, Nenad Živanović, Predrag and Slaviša Perendić, "based on the attached authorization no. 53/92 of 25 May 1992 signed by the chief of the Srebrenica Public Security Station, Milutin Milošević".

This group of Bosniaks taken down the road of no return included: Alenko Titorić, Muhamed Pilavdžić, Mirsad Zec, Safet Buljubašić, Alija Prutina, Himzo Čengić, Amer Prelo, Rasim Pljevljak, Šahid Bašić, Smail Hasanbegović. With them were also deported Hazem Hublić, Esad Bosno, the brothers Asim and Azem Begić, Osmo Bajramović, Osman Bajrović, Izet Tufekčić, Hajrudin Bihorac and Suad Topalović.

Bosnian Serbs, of whom it is known with certitude that indeed "not a hair of their head was touched", were on the same bus. Two of them were Ljubo Veljović and Momir Vuković. Their neighbours in Bosnia-Herzegovina openly accuse them of in fact being the "blood-hounds" who located refugees and arrested them together with the Montenegrin police. Along with Veljović and Vuković on this list of deported Serbs were: Sunčan Pavlović, Petar Čelar, Budimir Talušin, Boro Čarapić, Rodoljub Todorović, Zoran Tomić, Slobodan Bobić, Mario Franić, Rinko Petričević, Momčilo Gadžo, Milivoj Šakota, Dobromir Kukrika, Gradimir Čebo, and Goran Vasić.

"We have knowledge that these people were taken to Srebrenica in a vehicle belonging to a local transport company, Drina DD Srebrenica, driver Radiša Milosavljević, on travel order 000111. Once they were handed over, their fate is unknown for the basic reason that a civil war broke out on the territory of this republic which led to a complete breakdown in cooperation between the police forces and it became impossible to obtain information as to what became of the people thus surrendered," the document ends.

The Minister's ruse did not succeed: as may be deduced, Pejaković's reply to a parliamentary question was in fact an unsuccessful attempt to institutionalize a murderous lawlessness and to declare that an organised man-

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hunt was part of regular law-enforcement procedure. The truth is inexorable: it was more important to the Montenegrin authorities at the time to contribute to the Greater Serbia project than to respect human rights and their own Constitution. It is nonsense to pledge oneself to respect and uphold the SFRY Constitution while at the same time acting in friendly collusion with the police authorities of entities such as the "Serbian Autonomous District of Herzegovina" and "Serbian Autonomous District of Romanija", which according to that same Constitution, could only be para-government creations.

Following the publication of this document, Dr Stevan Lilić, a well-known professor of Law at Belgrade University, told Belgrade magazine Vreme:

- It is clear in this case that Alenko Tutorić and the other persons arrested had not committed any crime, unless their only sin was to have been born Muslim, and fortunately there is no such law. The action of the Montenegrin police cannot be justified as extradition since this would imply the existence of a criminal act, nor as legal aid to another state, since arrest is not that. This is, therefore, a war crime, a manhunt in order to effect an alleged exchange, which only serves the cause of ethnic cleansing.

Šeki Radončić

## INVENTORY OF CRIME

In his reply to the question in parliament, Montenegrin Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković was not being honest either with the victims or with the public when he reduced the number of deported refugees to 83. Damjan Turković, deputy chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, would seem to have been more honest when, at the height of the arrests of the refugees, he bragged on local radio: "We have apprehended 92 such persons in the last three days."

In the thirteen years I have been investigating this case, I came across numerous names of deported refugees not found on Pejaković's list, as for instance the name of Avdo Štedimlija, of whom Damjan Turković in the same interview for Radio Herceg Novi says:

- Avdo Štedimlija was checked, brought into the Security Centre and detained for three days while being vetted. When we learned from the Foča Security Centre that he was an extremist, we handed him over.

Pejaković's list makes no mention of Rasim Hanjalić from Foča. He was arrested by the Montenegrin police on 27 May 1992 in Tuzi, near Podgorica. He was then taken to Plužine, where they handed him over to the Foča police. He survived to become a witness to the crime. In Plužine prison with Hanjalić was an elderly Bosniak called Džafer Humić from Sutjeska, whose name is also not on the list.

- He was 83 years old... Then the Foča police came and took us over. They took us to Foča prison. Humić was later killed in the camp - testifies Hanjalić.

The name of Mensur Fejzić is also missing. While defending Goražde from attack by the JNA, this twenty-seven-year old youth was wounded near the town on 8 May 1992. His right arm smashed by enemy bullets, he had to be transferred to a larger medical centre. From the Goražde emergency ward he was sent to the local hospital in Pljevlja, Montenegro. However, during the arrest and deportation of the Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees, he was handed over to Karadžić's officials and taken to the prison in Foča. His bones were found twelve years later in the Piljak pit, in the vicinity of this small town.

## Fatal Freedom

Also missing is the name of Muhamed Jusić from Sarajevo. According to his family, Muhamed was arrested in Podgorica in May 1992 and since then disappeared without trace. On the Minister's list there is also no mention of the names of Ferid Šabanović from Višegrad, Alija and Safet Delalić from Kalinovik, or Zoran Sultanović from Split. According to the revelations of Bosnia-Herzegovina Commission for Missing Persons, these four were handed over by the Montenegrin police in Plužine on 25 May 1992 to guards of the Foča prison, after which every trace of them was lost.

Also not mentioned are the names of Ismet Mislić from Banjaluka, Enver Jahić from Srebrenica and Asim Babić from Foča. According to Bećir Micić and Preljub Tafro, authors of a book on the genocide committed against Bosniaks in the Foča area, the three were arrested in Ulcinj and then deported to the Foča camp, where the trail runs cold.

Pejaković also fails to mention the gory misdeeds of the military police, who on 25 May 1992, with the assistance of the Montenegrin police, arrested and deported Edhem Kafedžić, Fadil Divjan, Šemso Čankušić, Meho Hadžimelšić and Halil Spirjan, all from Foča. None of them survived the horrors of the concentration camp.

It would be wrong, too, to omit four young Bosnian men who had just been demobilized from the JNA - the Yugoslav People's Army. Hazrudin Bašić, Nedžad Tabaković, Safet Čorba and Mirsad Skando disappeared from the stations to which they had been sent in Plav, Podgorica and Herceg Novi as soon as they completed their military service.

Neither should we forget the sixteen soldiers from the Plav garrison, who were deported to the Bosnian Serbs by the JNA: Mehmed Duraković, Alija Prošić, Edin Smajić, Hamed Smajić, Enes Zilkić, Nihad Sokolović, Suad Rahmanović, Armin Tabaković, Damir Hećimović, Almir Selimović, Hasan Puškar, Fikret Čuturić, Narcis Bakija, Husein Krupić, Janko Berberović and Marjan Sertić.

And who is responsible for the death of another twenty Bosniaks, brought by bus from Foča on 30 August 1992 to just outside Nikšić in Montenegro, and on the orders of the infamous Chetnik "vojvoda" Pero Elez returned

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again to Foča? Would Montenegrin police and customs officers at the time have allowed the reverse to occur: for a bus full of arrested Serbs to be - if one could imagine it - brought into Montenegro by someone fighting on the side of the Bosnian Army, only for him to change his mind and return them across the Montenegrin border to Bosnia?

The "Information on measures taken by the Interior Ministry towards displaced persons from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina", which I came across in mid-September 2005<sup>42</sup>, are also the names of deported refugees Malik Meholjić, Jasna Begović, Esad Čengić and Almir Hasanović. This document also reveals a group of twelve refugees, whom the Montenegrin policemen handed over to Karadžić's fighters in Trebinje.

- Acting on a request dispatched by the police authorities in Trebinje, on 27 May of this year (1992) the following arrested persons were handed over to them: Kvakić Zijad, Bećirović Mustafa, Hajrić Salko, Sijerčić Nedžib, Sijerčić Nermin, Janjić Goran, Škorić Marinko, Trajković Danijel, Pajičić Jovan, Lazić Živko, Teljigović Almir and Teljigović Selver - the document states.

A member of the Commission for the Missing of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sead Koso, checked to see whether these people had survived deportation.

- We did not discover the names of these people on our lists or the Red Cross lists of the missing. This probably means that they survived, because their families would have reported their disappearance, explains Koso.

The head of the Montenegrin police also neglected to mention another fact which completes the picture of the true extent of the hunt of the refugees: during the operation the police arrested another hundred or so adult Bosnians, who were temporarily released after interrogation. Knowing what they could expect in the immediate future, they fled hot-foot from Montenegro and for this reason are still alive today.

<sup>42</sup> See footnote 7

Minister Pejaković, therefore, admits that the Montenegrin police arrested and deported 83 Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees: 48 Bosniaks, 33 Serbs and two Croats. The list compiled by the author of this book, however, looks like this: From Montenegro 137 Bosnians were arrested and deported, 93 of whom were Bosniaks, 37 Serbs and 6 Croats. If we add to this the 20 Bosniaks taken by the bus mentioned above, we arrive at a chilling figure: In the spring of 1992, 156 Bosnians were forcibly taken from Montenegro and delivered to the renegade Bosnian Serbs.

It was on Montenegrin territory that the Klapuh family from Foča was murdered and buried. According to Dr Bećir Macić and Preljub Tafro, "on the road to Mratinje in Montenegro" the Avdagić family of three from Foča was also slaughtered, but their remains were never found.

This, unfortunately, does not conclude the black balance of the Serbian-Montenegrin war brotherhood, paid for most dearly by the Bosniaks: the final number of the arrested, deported and killed people will not be known until the Montenegrin police opens up its files. Policeman Slobodan Pejović is explicit:

- Refugees were killed in Montenegro who are not on Pejaković's official list. If this crime comes to trial I will tell everything I know, or else on my deathbed.

The then Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović has also admitted that a crime was committed against refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

- Our examination of this case from the aspect of constitutional and criminal law has shown that the man responsible was acting in accordance with hitherto established practice that a warrant for the arrest of an individual, a criminal wanted by the police from any republic, was dealt with absolutely automatically - said Momir Bulatović at a press conference held in mid-June 1994, thus absolving the "man responsible" - his cousin and Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović.

President Bulatović, who was awarded Radovan Karadžić's "Nemanjić medal", added remorsefully:

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- Unfortunately, it turned out to be a tragic mistake and a tragic lapse. A more thorough investigation will probably have to be carried out into this.

No such investigation, of course, was ever carried out. Ten years later Momir Bulatović had changed his mind. In the previously mentioned interview to Sarajevo's Hyatt Television station, he transferred responsibility from Minister of Police Pavle Bulatović to the Chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, Milorad Ivanović, while trying to pass off the loathsome untruth that the police hunt of the refugees had only lasted a day.

- This was a tragic mistake on the part of our security authorities. The operation lasted one day and was stopped by the government leadership the moment we found out about it - said Bulatović, specifying that "this very ugly and difficult thing" occurred at the request of certain security centres from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

- These were new police stations that had been taken over by the Serbs. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Muslims who were on Montenegrin territory. The police administration in some towns, especially in Herceg Novi, committed a terrible mistake. They did not contact the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but followed the logic that had applied for years in the region. They justified themselves by saying that there was no need for the case to be referred to the Ministry of the Republic or the Federal Ministry. On the grounds of these arrest warrants they began the operation and rounded up a number of people who, unfortunately, later lost their lives - said Momir Bulatović.

Bulatović's transfer of responsibility to the local police administrations was by way of a warning to the incautious Ivanović, who earlier in the heat of a discussion with the President of the Herceg Novi Social Democrats, had revealed that the top government leadership, at whose helm Bulatović was known to be, was responsible for the extradition of refugees.

- The order for this extradition was neither issued nor conceived of by me. It was adopted among the top government leadership at the time in Montenegro, through police cooperation with the Ministry of Internal

## Fatal Freedom

Affairs of Republika Srpska... In the hierarchical pyramid of executive authority stands the Minister, his assistants, the chiefs of the administrations, and only then the Head of the Security Centre, who obeys the commands and orders of those immediately above him- Ivanović told Podgorica daily Vijesti<sup>43</sup>, thus revealing in precise detail the chain of command responsibility for this crime.

His opponent and former colleague Gojko Pejović believes that this, however, does not relieve Ivanović of responsibility:

- To put it mildly, in 1992 you would have needed the hide of a rhinoceros and a pretty thin sense of decency to deport refugee Muslims to Radovan Karadžić's para-militaries, and now after so many years, to try to justify those crimes by citing your position in the hierarchy... You are not a witness, you are the executor of the action. And this has brought you political profit in the hierarchy - points out Pejović.

This is true: the "na?ve and uninformed" Montenegrin President, Momir Bulatović, was so revolted by the "terrible mistake" of the Chief of local police in Herceg Novi, Milorad Ivanović, that he soon promoted him to Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs.

Slobodan Pejović, then a criminal investigation inspector in Herceg Novi, says that this is not the first time Momir Bulatović has transferred responsibility on to others:

- This shameful action was carried out on the orders of the then Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović, and the Montenegrin President, Momir Bulatović, who is the person most responsible for this crime - Slobodan Pejović is explicit.

Bulatović's washing of hands and shuffling of responsibility on to local policemen infuriates him.

<sup>43</sup> Vijesti, 23 June 2004.

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- Šeki, please write down that Momir Bulatović is lying. With my own eyes I saw the dispatch from the Minister of Police, Pavle Bulatović, ordering the arrest of the refugees. It was personally shown to me by the deputy chief, Damjan Turković. Momir Bulatović is now trying to cover up the key issue: when they deported those unfortunate people, it was he who was in command of the Montenegrin police. The Montenegrin Constitution of the time clearly stated that in the event of an imminent threat of war danger or the outbreak of war, command of the police and the territorial defense would be assumed by the President of Montenegro, which Momir Bulatović did. In any case, a document was published in the press in which Momir Bulatović orders the Montenegrin police to go to the Dubrovnik war zone - Pejović states clearly.

What seals the testimonies of policemen that the operation to arrest and deport refugees was carried out on orders from Pavle Bulatović contained in a dispatch, are the certificates of transfer issued in 1992 by police commander Milorad Šljivančanin for Enes Bičo and Sadik Damirović. These state to the letter that each of them was "in accordance with the dispatch from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro, together with the other citizens of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 25 May 1992 returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina, handed over to the policemen of the Foča police station and taken to the Collective Centre."

New light has been shed on this crime by the Montenegrin Public Prosecutor's Office which, under pressure from the general public, in mid-October 2005, raised an indictment against six high-ranking officials of the Montenegrin Interior Ministry for war crimes against civilians, and their part in the illegal arrest and deportation of refugees. The indictment states<sup>44</sup> very precisely that Mića Marković in his capacity as Assistant Minister of the Montenegrin Police in telegram no. 14-101 of 23 May 1992 ordered all police stations in Montenegro to act on the request of the Republika Srpska, then a self-proclaimed and unrecognized state, and to begin the process of arresting and deporting refugees.

<sup>44</sup> Kt.no.263/05 of 18 October 2005

Fatal Freedom

Mića Marković is charged together with the Head of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, Milorad Ivanović, his deputy, Damjan Turković, commander of the Herceg Novi police, Milorad Šljivančanin, a member of the secret police from that town, Duško Bakrač, and Chief of the Bar police, Branko Bujić, with taking part in this war crime in prior agreement with policemen from the Republika Srpska

Slobodan Pejović has an explanation for this too: "The dispatch that I saw was signed by Minister Pavle Bulatović and was dated significantly earlier than this one now mentioned by the Prosecution. In any case, this operation began much earlier than 23 May."

For the moment, there is a chorus of denial from the accused. Milisav (Mića) Marković claims that he had nothing to do with it. This has been sent to "the wrong address," he says, adding that "he never did anything contrary to morals and the law." "This event should be considered in the light of the thinking of the time and the whole truth should be brought out," he suggests.

Branko Bujić also claims to be another "wrong address" and declares himself not guilty. "I will defend myself easily in court," he says. Asked by a reporter whether he feels any responsibility or remorse, he asked in astonishment why he should "feel any kind of remorse."

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## EPILOGUE

\*According to official sources - a reply by Minister of Police Nikola Pejaković to a question in parliament - in the spring of 1992, eighty-three refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (48 Bosniaks, 33 Serbs and two Croats) were arrested and deported from Montenegro.

\*After many years of research, the author of this book has arrived at a different conclusion: 156 Bosnians were taken from Montenegro. In addition, two three-member refugee families, the Klapuhs and the Avdagićes from Foča, were also killed on Montenegrin territory.

\*Seventeen deported Bosniaks and sixteen soldiers taken from Montenegrin garrisons survived arrest, deportation and the horror of the Serb camps.

\*Thirteen years after the crime, the remains of ten deported refugees have been found and identified while 72 are still considered missing. The chances that any of them have survived are nil. In other words, 82 Bosniaks taken from Montenegrin territory did not survive.

\*There is no information that any of the deported Serbs or Croats were killed by Karadžić's representatives.

\*No one has answered for the crime committed against the Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees.

\*At the time of their arrest, abuse and deportation, the President of Montenegro was Momir Bulatović. For his manifold services, he and Novak Kilibarda<sup>45</sup> were personally awarded medals by Radovan

<sup>45</sup> Novak Kilibarda, professor of national literature at the Department of Philosophy of the university in Nikšić, was for almost ten years president of the ultra-chauvinist greater Serbian People's Party. Novak Kilibarda is considered to be perhaps the greatest warmonger in the former Yugoslavia. In inflammatory speeches he evinced his particular hatred Muslims, Catholics, the Pope, the Vatican and the USA. On the eve of the attack on Croatia, in agreement with the military authorities, Kilibarda proclaimed himself "Duke of Dubrovnik" and named the city "Nikšić-on-Sea". At the beginning of the war the People's Party formed voluntary brigades which sowed death in Croatia and Bosnia. For his brutal propagation of the conflict, anti-war reporters dubbed him the Serbian-Montenegrin Goebbels.

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Karadžić<sup>46</sup>. Some years later, Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević promoted Momir Bulatović to Federal Prime Minister of what remained of Yugoslavia - Serbia and Montenegro. After the fall of the Belgrade dictator, Bulatović was also erased from the political scene. He is no longer involved in politics, and is a member of the Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milošević in The Hague.

\*Milo Đukanović, Montenegrin Prime Minister at the time of the arrests and deportations, still holds that position today. In the meantime he has served a term as Montenegrin President and is now leading spokesman for Montenegrin independence of Serbia in the present tenuous union between the two republics.

\*Zoran Žižić, Deputy Prime Minister of the Montenegrin Government at the time and in charge of overseeing the work of the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior, soon rose to be Yugoslav Prime Minister. He resigned from this exalted position in protest over the extradition by the Serbian authorities of Slobodan Milošević to The Hague. Žižić is the President of the Movement for European State Union, whose only goal is to prevent Montenegro from achieving sovereignty.

\*Pavle Bulatović, at the time of the deportations Minister of the Montenegrin Police, was subsequently appointed Yugoslav Minister of Police. Milošević later instated him as Federal Minister of Defense. Because of crimes committed by units of the Yugoslav Army in Kosovo, a sealed indictment was filed against him by prosecutors at the International War Crimes Tribunal. However, death caught up with him en route to The Hague: while still Yugoslav Minister of Defense, he was killed on 7 February 2000 by an assassin's bullet in the restaurant of the Rad football club in Belgrade. The assassin and the person who ordered his execution were never found.

\*Nikola Pejaković, Deputy to Minister of Police Pavle Bulatović, after the deportations headed the Montenegrin Interior Ministry. He subsequently became Milošević's diplomat, being appointed Yugoslav Ambassador to

<sup>46</sup> At a ceremonial session of the Republika Srpska Parliament on 9 January 1994, Radovan Karadžić presented Momir Bulatović with the Nemanjić medal, and Novak Kilibarda with the Njegoš medal.

Byelorussia. After the fall of the Balkan butcher, he was withdrawn from the foreign service and now lives in Belgrade where he is not involved in politics.

\*Milisav Mića Marković, Assistant to the Montenegrin Minister of Police for Public Security, was a little later promoted to Deputy Yugoslav Minister of Police, afterwards joining the Serbian Ministry of the Interior. He is currently Deputy Chairman of the Serbian Coordination Body for Kosovo.

\*Boško Bojović, Assistant Minister of Police for Public Security, i.e. Chief of the Montenegrin State Security Service which contributed so greatly to the arrest and deportation of the refugees, three years later joined the Serbian State Security Service (SDB). He was a member of the inner circle of Jovica Stanišić, Chief of the Serbian SDB and Slobodan Milošević's right hand man. Bojović also received the title of Deputy Director of the Institute for Security in Belgrade. After Milošević was brought to justice, he was out of a job. He too is living in Belgrade.

\*Vladimir Šušović, Montenegro's Chief Prosecutor, several years later went into retirement. He did not set in motion any investigation into the illegal arrests and deportations of refugees, nor did his successor Božidar Vukčević, followed in this post by Vesna Medenica. In a New Year interview to the Podgorica daily *Vijesti*<sup>47</sup> Ms. Medenica said: "There is still a lot to investigate. I ask all those who are in possession of any kind of evidence on this tragic event to deliver them to me." In response to her request, one of the first copies of this book has been officially delivered to the Montenegrin Chief Prosecutor.

\*Milorad Ivanović, Head of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, the collection centre for refugees from where they were mainly deported, went on to become Assistant Minister of the Montenegrin Interior Ministry. He was later appointed judge of the High Court in Podgorica, subsequently becoming Secretary of the Yugoslav Government. After the dissolution of the Milošević-Bulatović President-Prime Minister duo, he became a lawyer.

\*Radoje Radunović, Chief of the State Security Service in the Gulf of Kotor, having successfully seen to the deporting of the refugees, became advisor to the head of the Montenegrin State Security Service for matters relating

<sup>47</sup> *Vijesti*, 31 December 2004.

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to the coastal area. In a "package" with Boško Bojović, he joined the Serbian Interior Ministry and was immediately appointed Chief of Police for the Danube region of Serbia's northern province, Vojvodina.

\*Damjan Turković, Deputy Chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, was later appointed Deputy Chief of the Berane Security Centre in the Montenegrin Sandžak region. On retiring, he opened what he terms an independent television company in Berane.

\*Milorad Šljivančanin, commander of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, is currently chief of the municipal inspection services in that town. He is a member of the Main Board of the pro-Serbian People's Party.

\*Duško Bakrač, inspector of the Montenegrin secret police in Herceg Novi and an agile participant in the tracking down and deporting of refugees, was shortly afterwards promoted to Chief of the Herceg Novi Security Centre, thus filling the position vacated by Milorad Ivanović. He is now the head of the legal department in the Herceg Novi Aleksandrija food industry. The owner of this company is Tomislav Kovač, a close associate of Radovan Karadžić and war minister of the Republika Srpska police, who was at this post when Karadžić's military and police forces carried out the genocide in Srebrenica. The Hague Tribunal has placed Kovač on the list of suspects, charged with being one of the chief financiers of the concealment of Radovan Karadžić. He has been black listed by EU countries and the USA, where all his assets have been frozen and entry forbidden.

\*Branko Bujić, Chief of the Bar Security Centre, responsible for mass arrests of refugees, after a successful career as a football referee became a deputy in the Montenegrin Parliament. He is now a deputy in the Bar local government, representing the pro-Serbian SNP (Socialist People's Party). He also owns a private business.

\*In 2004, the Montenegrin Parliament and the Montenegrin MUP destroyed documentation on the illegal arrest and deportation of Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees whom the Montenegrin authorities deported to the Republika Srpska in spring of 1992. Not a single high official of the Montenegrin Parliament or the Interior Ministry has been held responsible for this crime.

Fatal Freedom

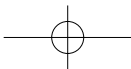
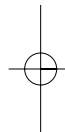
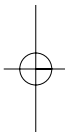
\*Slobodan Pejović, the only policeman who publicly and courageously testified about the crime committed against the refugees, is now retired. There have been two attempts on his life, he says. In the middle of March 2005, a brick came crashing through his windscreen. The police did not discover the perpetrator, or the person who a couple of days earlier also destroyed the windscreen of journalist and writer Andreja Nikolaidis, following an article in which he wrote that Herceg Novi should be avoided as a town from which Muslims were deported.

\*At five a.m. on the morning of 5 July 2004, persons unknown let off a hand grenade outside the house of the author of this book and numerous articles on the illegal deportation of refugees, Šeki Radončić, following his appearance as a guest on the Otvoreno (Open) programme on Montenegrin Television.

\*At the end of October 2005, the Montenegrin Prosecutor's Office set in motion a request for investigation of six police officials: Milorad Ivanović, Duško Bakrač, Milorad Šljivančanin, Milisav (Mića) Marković, Branko Bujić and Damjan Turković, based on well-founded suspicion that in taking part in the arrests and deportation of refugees they had committed a war crime. The case continues.

\*Ten survivors and the families of 30 murdered Bosniaks have sued the state of Montenegro. Their legal representatives, the Prelević law firm represented by Radomir, Dragan and Tea Gorjanc-Prelević, have filed cases against the Montenegrin Interior Ministry, running into many millions of Euros in damage claims. The trial continues.

\*There is no statute of limitations for a war crime. The souls of the innocent cry out to be left at peace.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Šemsudin Radončić, publicist and journalist, known to his friends as Šeki, is the author of some notable books and articles on war crimes, the criminals who commit them and the violation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia. On account of his persistent research in documenting war crimes and hunting down the criminals, he has been nicknamed the Balkan Simon Wiesenthal. He is known to be an expert on the life on the run of the two war criminals Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić. On this subject he has published a special dossier called *The Net Tightens* (Obruč se steže).

Thirteen years of research by Radončić into the arrest and deportation of about 150 Bosnia-Herzegovina refugees, illegally arrested by the Montenegrin authorities in 1992 and handed over to Radovan Karadžić's fighters, finally resulted in a thorough investigation. In this operation, as Radončić shows, 83 Bosniaks from Bosnia-Herzegovina were killed.

From the day the illegal deportation of refugees began, Radončić persisted in his efforts to set the law in motion against the organisers and perpetrators.

During work on this book, Radončić managed to gather the necessary documents and to galvanise the families of the murdered people into suing the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior for the crimes against their loved ones. Following his publication of testimony and invaluable documents on this crime in *A Fatal Freedom*, the Montenegrin Prosecution indicted six officials of the Interior Ministry for participation in a war crime.

During the launch of *A Fatal Freedom* on 30 May 2006, Radončić proposed that the anniversary of the crime should be marked and a monument raised in Herceg Novi, the town from which most of the Bosnian victims were taken to their deaths. He also proposed a Montenegrin Remembrance Day, to commemorate them in May of each year.

Two documentaries have been made based on this book and a motion picture is in the making.

Šeki Radončić was born in Ivangrad, Montenegro in 1957. He is a member of the International Federation of Journalists and the Montenegrin Helsinki Committee. For a number of years he was Vice-President of the Independent Association of Independent Journalists of Montenegro. For many more, he has been a contributor to the Podgorica independent anti-war weekly Monitor where he works as a journalist.

His articles have been carried and quoted by major international media and press agencies.

In mid-1994 in Montenegro he was sentenced to two months in prison, suspended for a year, because of articles published in Monitor in which he documented the looting of Dubrovnik and the surrounding area by the reserve of the Yugoslav People's Army and its commanders Pavle Strugar and Radomir Damjanović during the attack on Croatia. Because of his series of articles on political trials, someone tried to shoot his mother and wife, an attempt which luckily failed. Because of his writing on war crimes, a bomb was thrown at his house, his car was demolished and he was frequently threatened, both in public and private. Those responsible were never discovered.

Published works: Crna kutija - policijska tortura u Crnoj Gori [The Black Box - Police Torture in Montenegro] (Monitor, Podgorica, 1996), U četiri oka [Face to Face] (Antena M, Podgorica 1999), Crna kutija 2 [Black Box 2] (Vijesti, Podgorica, 2003), Iza maske - knjiga o zlodjelima crnogorske tajne policije [Behind the Mask - A Book on the Crimes of the Montenegrin Secret Police] (Vijesti, Podgorica 2003), Kobna sloboda [A Fatal Freedom] (Humanitarian Rights Fund, Belgrade, 2005).

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Šeki Radončić  
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