

**YOUNG, MILITARIZED, AND RADICAL:
THE USTASHA YOUTH ORGANIZATION, IDEOLOGY AND
PRACTICE, 1941-1945**

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Abstract

This dissertation examines and analyzes, for the first time, the ideas, establishment, practices, and connections of the fascist *Ustaška mladež* [Ustasha Youth] organization during the Ustasha regime, the *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941-1945* [Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945]. Empirically, this study contributes towards a wider understanding of fascism in Central and Southeastern Europe, especially with regard to the youth organizations which emerged during the interwar and Second World War periods. The main hypothesis presented is that the Ustasha Youth organization, the key variable within the Ustasha regime, was deemed crucial for setting in motion the Ustasha idea of an all-embracing, totalitarian revolution whose main goal was to create a new national community composed of ‘new’ Croats – the Ustashas. Led by their charismatic *Poglavnik*, Ante Pavelić, the Ustashas embarked on a totalitarian experiment of creating a new state and a new individual devoted to the *Poglavnik*, as the embodiment of this state and nation. Their ‘new’ state and society were envisioned as a strong national community, where the individual matters only as much as he/she devotes himself/herself to the cause and benefit of the community. Once set in motion, this revolution consisted of two interconnected, mutually depended practices: prosecution, mass murder, and Holocaust, all legalized within a month of the regime’s existence, and the youth regimentation and reeducation.

The Ustasha Youth organization was tasked with providing the youth with new education, with a new worldview, so as to create the ideal ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha. Education, sport, manual work, camping, separately established Ustasha schools, and transnational connections with other fascist youth organizations all had the purpose of immersing the youth into this ‘new reality’, as presented by the Ustashas. Through all

this the youth was to learn what it meant to be the ‘real’ Croat – the Ustasha, who was to become an active participant in this emerging ‘new’, fascist Europe. Despite swift organizational success, within a year of its establishment the Ustasha Youth organization’s ideas and practices were hindered by serious organizational and political problems. These included the lack of trained youth officials, lack of youth facilities, decrease in number of members, and unwillingness of parents to enroll their children in the Ustasha Youth. All this was further influenced by organizational failures and deteriorating security situation in various regions, which caused diminishing of popular support and consequently led to a complete defeat of this radical policy of remolding of Croatian society.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Illustrations	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
Aim and Methods	1
The Structure of the Dissertation	8
Croatian Historiography on Fascism – Coping with One’s Own History	12
Fascism and Youth – Literature Review and Approach	22
CHAPTER I: The Ustasha in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941	34
Introduction	34
1.1. A Prelude to Action – The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from Versailles to January Dictatorship, 1918-1929	36
1.2. Ante Pavelić and the Newly Established Kingdom	39
1.3. The Origins of the Ustasha Movement, 1929 – 1934	44
1.4. Ustasha Ideology and Organization	47
1.5. Ustasha Organizational Activities and Publications, 1934-1941	57
CHAPTER II: The ‘Prophet’ and His Followers, 1941-1945	69
Introduction	69
2.1. The Poglavnik and the Ustashes – Charisma and Charismatisation	70
2.2. Welcoming the ‘Savior’? – The Poglavnik and ‘His’ People	78
2.3. The Ustasha Elite – Attempt at Charismatisation of the Youth	85
CHAPTER III: The Youth and the Ustasha Idea of a ‘New’ Croat	99
Introduction	99
3.1. Ideological and Organizational Models – The Hitlerjugend and Gioventù Italiana del Littorio	101
3.2. The ‘New’ Croat – The Ideology of the Ustasha Youth Organization	114
3.3. Organizational Challenges: Call for Reforms	128
3.4. The Ustasha Revolution(s) and ‘New’ Youth	138
3.5. Gender Roles within the Ustasha Youth Organization	147
CHAPTER IV: Breeding Young Minds and Bodies – Education, Work, Sports, and Militarization	152
Introduction	152
4.1. The Ustasha Youth and State School System	154
4.2. Alternative Education and Upbringing? – Ustasha Youth Courses and Schools	164
4.3. Moral and Physical Upbringing – Work and Sports	176
4.4. Militarization of the Youth – A Quest for Heirs	197
CHAPTER V: Charity and Sacrifice – Martyrs and the Cult of Youth	215
Introduction	215
5.1. Young and Kind – The Ustasha Youth and the Role of Charity	217
5.2. Immortal Youth – Sacrifice for the Homeland	225
CHAPTER VI: The Ustasha Youth and the “New Europe”	244
Introduction	244
6.1. Interactions and Transfers	246
6.2. ‘Equality’ Among Future Leaders – The European Youth Alliance	256
6.3. In Search of Better Suited ‘Comrades’ – Hlinkova mládež	260
Conclusion	279

Bibliography	291
SOURCES.....	291
PERIODICALS.....	294
SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY	296

List of Illustrations

Chapter I:

Figure 1.1. A picture of Ante Pavelić from 1929.

Figure 1.2. The front page of *Hrvatski Domobran*.

Figure 1.3. Ante Pavelić's book *Strahote zabluda*, 1941.

Chapter II:

Figure 2.1. The *Poglavnik* surrounded by the Ustasha Youth members during his speech at the Workers Chamber in Zagreb.

Figure 1.2. An idealized picture of the *Poglavnik* and young girls.

Chapter III:

Figure 3.1. “The Ustasha Youth – the Strength of the State.”

Figure 3.2. “The Ustasha Youth – the Foundation of our Construction.”

Figure 3.3. “Work with Children – Preparation for Future Duties.”

Chapter IV:

Figure 4.1. The Ustasha Youth School for Officials in Borovo.

Figure 4.2. Ante Jakaša and members of the Ustasha Youth during the course at the Borovo School for Officials.

Figure 4.3. A Poster of the State Labor Service calling for the enrollment of those wishing to become leaders.

Figure 4.4. The Ustasha Youth summer Labor Service.

Figure 4.5. The front page of *Ustaška mladež*, depicting a young athlete during a youth competition.

Figure 4.6. The Ustasha Youth members playing chess during their time in camp.

Figure 4.7. The Ustasha Youth members marching at St. Mark's Square in Zagreb.

Figure 4.8. The Ustasha Youth camp in Ozalj.

Figure 4.9. The Ustasha Youth members in the camp at Ozalj – raising of the mast.

Figure 4.10. The front page of *Ustaška Uzdanica* showing a youth member dressed in uniform.

Figure 4.11. Young girls dressed in uniforms.

Figure 4.12. The Ustasha Youth members dressed in uniforms during one of their rallies.

Chapter V:

Figure 5.1. “Help is not Charity but Duty.”

Figure 5.2. “The Winter Relief of the Ustasha Youth” – the Ustasha Youth leaflet calling citizens to help them in collecting donations for their winter relief program.

Chapter VI:

Figure 6.1. Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth, Ivan Oršanić, during his speech in Vienna.

Figure 6.2. The front page of *Suradnja* showing the Ustasha Youth member with his Hitler Youth peer.

Figure 6.3. The Hlinka Youth members during their audience with the *Poglavnik*.

Figure 6.4. The Hlinka Youth delegation during their visit to Borovo.

Figure 6.5. Leaders of the Hlinka and Ustasha Youth: Alojz Macek (left) and Ivan Oršanić (right).

Figure 6.6. The front page of *Ustaška mladež* showing fascist youth members raising flags during their joint camp.

Figure 6.7. Members of the Hlinka Youth during their visit to Borovo.

Figure 6.8. Commemorative sign of the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth joint course at the Ustasha Youth School for Officials in Borovo.

Figure 6.9. “The Ustasha Youth Leadership in Slovakia.”

INTRODUCTION

“their [Ustashas’] extreme nationalism led them to emphasize a few points of singularity, but nothing either in theory or practice that was not consistent with generic fascism.”¹

Aim and Methods

This dissertation addresses, for the first time, questions of ideology, structures, and practices of *Ustaška mladež* [Ustasha Youth] organization. On the one hand, it provides an insight into the ideas and practices behind the establishment of such all-embracing fascist youth organization, and on the other, it reconstructs the relations, responses, and practices of its members on national and transnational level. The aim is to answer several important questions with regard to the establishment and practices of the Ustasha Youth organization. In the first place, it addresses the question of ideology, that is, of the ideological background which influenced its establishment. The question is why the Ustashas, immediately upon assuming power, saw it necessary to establish such an all-embracing youth organization and for what purposes? What was the role assigned to the youth within the Ustasha worldview and how this role was to be fulfilled? How did such totalitarian vision of the youth reflect upon the youth, their education, everyday activities, and especially the position assigned to the youth within the society? Another important question is the degree to which the organization succeeded or failed in engaging the youth while influenced by various political and social factors. In order to provide a more contextualized picture, this dissertation also addresses the important question of relations with other fascist

¹ Stanley G. Payne, “The NDH State in Comparative Perspective,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* vol. 7, no. 4 (2006): 410.

youth organizations, and their ideological, structural, and practical influence on the Ustasha Youth. Chronologically, this work deals with the period of Ustashes in power, 1941-1945; however, in order to provide a clear and contextualized picture with regard to the youth, the idea behind its establishment and its practices I find it important also to provide an insight into the earlier period of the Ustasha formation and their actions.

In order to answer these and other questions, there are two key methodological tools used in this work. One of the key methods used in historical studies is that of critical source evaluation. Since this dissertation builds mostly on primary archival and newspaper sources, source evaluation presents a key segment of this research. By analyzing source materials and examining the context of their emergence, this dissertation aims to construct a historical picture surrounding this organization, its ideology, and practices. My key sources, until now unknown, come from *Hrvatski državni arhiv* [Croatian State Archives] from the collection *Zbirka zapisa upravnih i vojnih vlasti Nezavisne Države Hrvatske i Narodnosolobodilačkog pokreta – ZIG NDH – 1549* [Collection of Records of Administrative and Military Authorities of the Independent State of Croatia and People's Liberation Movement – 1549].² Unfortunately, this is also the most difficult collection to work with. Sources referring to the Ustasha Youth are not classified as such, and one has to search by names of the officials, meaning that you go through boxes only to find the official only mentioned somebody, or that a person's name and surname are listed on the general list of names. Also, it needs to be noted, that although there is an abundance of sources connected with this topic, there is no single archival collection dedicated specifically to the Ustasha Youth, and thus many other archival collections, as well as the two local

² This collection is best known, and often referred to, by its abbreviation *ZIG NDH* which will also be used in this work as a reference for the documents from this collection.

archives from the cities of Dubrovnik and Varaždin, were used during this research. The majority of the archival materials used in this work date from the period of 1941-1945. As such these materials are taken as more credible, that is, when approached critically, compared, and placed in a broader context they depict and describe authentic events. The method of critical source evaluation gains bigger importance when such sources are combined with various newspaper and journal materials. In these materials various information, official speeches, interviews, as well as the reports from the local branches of the organization are found. Therefore, the two, archival sources and newspapers and journals, combined, contextualized, critically examined, and compared can provide a coherent picture with regard to ideological background and practices of the Ustasha Youth organization.

The second important method is that of asymmetrical comparison. For a long time comparison was a completely neglected tool in fascist studies, even more so when it comes to those movements and regimes often described as peripheral. Constantin Iordachi recently argued that fascism, when used as an analytical concept and viewed as a European-wide phenomenon, or used so as to describe a “generic or universal phenomenon”, presents “an exercise in comparative history”.³ Since this dissertation considers the Ustasha movement and regime as belonging to this wider framework of European fascism comparison, in this case asymmetrical comparison, presents an unavoidable and useful methodological tool. While this work does not use comparison in a sense of comparing “two or more historical phenomena systematically with respect to their similarities and differences” it nevertheless engages into asymmetrical comparison when comparing the Ustasha Youth with the Nazi *Hitlerjugend* [Hitler Youth], Fascist *Gioventu Italiana del Littorio* – *GIL* [Italian

³ Constantin Iordachi, “Introduction,” in Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative Fascist Studies – New Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 3.

Youth of the Lictor], and Slovak *Hlinkova mládež* [Hlinka Youth] organizations.⁴ The reason for this is that all these youth organizations were established on similar ideological basis, with their structure and practices often influencing and resembling each other. Another important reason for such approach lies in the fact that these youth organizations established close contacts and often served as reference points in emphasizing their achievements and successes when it comes to their individual youth organizations. However, it needs to be stressed that while the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth served as role-models for the Ustasha Youth, it was the Hlinka Youth which was seen and taken as a more equal partner. This should come as no surprise, since comparing themselves with practices and achievements of the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth, their massive membership and well developed infrastructure, could hardly fulfill the aim of presenting Ustasha youth policies as massive, developed, and successful. Therefore, while structured and organized according to the Nazi and Fascist youth organizational models, the Ustasha Youth used the Hlinka Youth as a reference point against which they could measure themselves more successfully and present their youth policies more effectively. While not examining the three organizations in depth, so as to provide a full comparison, all three youth organizations serve as comparative reference points in this study.⁵

Justification for such approach results from the fact that fascist movements and regimes presented youth, with its élan and strength, as the key component through which their national revolution was to be achieved. As Stanley G. Payne argued, fascism was “a revolutionary new epochal phenomenon with an ideology and a

⁴ Jürgen Kocka, “Comparison and Beyond,” *History and Theory* vol. 42, no. 1 (2003): 39. Further on I will make use of English versions of their names, with Lictor Youth for the *GIL* organization.

⁵ Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg,” *History and Theory* vol. 38, no. 1 (1999): 40. For more on the questions of comparison and cross-national approaches see Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor, eds., *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

distinctive set of ambitions in its own right”.⁶ The youth became essential within the fascist worldview as the carrier and protector of the upcoming ‘new order’, “new Europe”. Their emphasis on youthfulness served to show their ability of regenerating their respective nations thus presenting themselves and their youth as the symbol of change.⁷ As Michael Ledeen argued:

This concept of youth was set against the decadence and senility of the contemporary world, as well as against its artificiality and cynicism. Thus in opposition to ‘old Europe’, the Europe of the Versailles treaty [...].⁸

With such a worldview fascists gave special attention to their youth organizations. Due to the importance and role assigned to youth within all fascist movements and regimes, methodological tool of asymmetrical comparison becomes important in providing a broader and contextualized picture with regard to the Ustasha Youth organization.

Within such methodological setting, this dissertation also provides an insight into the question of transnational fascism, that is, of the cross-border relations among fascist youth organizations.⁹ As will be shown in this dissertation, both the Nazi and Fascist youth organizations served as models for the establishment of the Ustasha Youth. Thus the idea of embracing the youth into a single, state controlled organization was not specific for the Ustasha regime, but was highly influenced by existing organizations in other fascist regimes, and was, to an extent, adjusted to the national specificities. Besides high-level political collaboration among fascist movements and regimes, their relations also extended to other political and social

⁶ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 494.

⁷ Bruno Warnooij, “The Rise and Fall of Italian Fascism as Generational Revolt,” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 22, no. 3 (1987): 401.

⁸ Michael A. Ledeen, “Italian Fascism and Youth,” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 4, no. 3 (1969): 137.

⁹ For more on the question of relations and problems of comparative and cross-national history see Michael Miller, “Comparative and Cross-National History: Approaches, Differences, Problems,” in Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor, eds., *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 115-133.

fields, while simultaneously adapted and appropriated selectively according to different national contexts. Thus this dissertation, while dealing specifically with the Ustasha Youth organization, will also “highlight the transnational and cooperative efforts” with the above mentioned fascist youth organizations, especially with the Hlinka Youth organization.¹⁰ Such an approach, which moves away from a simplistic nation-based narrative, is important in order to examine the influence and transnationalism of fascism in the interwar and Second World War periods. The main argument is that, while the national presents a key context within which ideas and actions are formed and developed, it is transnational influence and exchange which often determines its outcome on a national level. In other words, the national and the transnational level are to be viewed as interconnected variables influencing each other, thus creating historically specific national dynamics and outcomes. Therefore, one of the main arguments of this dissertation is that fascism, as a dominant interwar ideology and practice, undoubtedly influenced the Ustasha movement and their youth organization, and the appearing differences are outcomes of their adjustments to a nationally specific context during the period of their regime.

Established in July 1941, the Ustasha Youth organization had the main purpose of reeducating Croatian youth according to the Ustasha worldview, and thus to create a ‘new’ generation of Croats – the Ustasha generation. The youth presented an important aspect within the Ustasha movement and regime, with most of its members being in their twenties when they joined and became active members of the movement. Considering themselves the vanguards of the ‘new’ Croatia, representatives of the ideal of the ‘new’ Croat, the core members emphasized the role and the importance of youth.

¹⁰ Arnd Bauerkämper, “Transnational Fascism: Cross-Border Relations between Regimes and Movements in Europe, 1922-1939,” *East Central Europe* vol. 37, no. 2-3 (2010): 238.

Such view on the youth and its role was further accompanied by the Ustashas worldview according to which, the political system established within the *Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca – Kraljevina SHS* [Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes – Kingdom of SHS], first parliamentary and after 1929 dictatorial, was aimed at the destruction and suppression of Croatian nation and national feelings, and therefore the youth was to be given importance over the older generations. The same was depicted by George L. Mosse with regard to the Hitler Youth, where youth was given precedence “at the expense of the older generations, which might still harbor vestiges of liberalism or even socialism”.¹¹ In spite of the emphasis and all-embracing Ustasha youth policy it is hard, perhaps even impossible, to determine the exact number of the youth actively involved within the Ustasha Youth organization. While it is known that during the regime period there were all together some 3 900 appointed male and female youth officials, the exact number of members involved actively remains unknown. Certainly, the number of half a million members provided by the Ustasha Youth officials presents an exaggeration.

The importance of the new policy with regard to the youth was further followed by depiction and description of the Serbian nation as inferior to Croatian nation, due to its eastern, Byzantine roots. Since it was the Serbs who, according to the Ustashas, had the entire political and social power within the newly established state, the ‘contamination’ and degeneration of Croatian nation set in. Such view was further developed in their discourse which stated that it was exactly during this period that Croats were forced to give up their national feeling and pride for some higher idea of *Yugoslavism*, which to them presented an artificial product forced upon them by the inferior Serbian nation and domestic traitors. In order to prevent this destruction, they

¹¹ George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture – Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 263.

argued for the establishment of an independent Croatia, based on exclusive nationalism, where only Croats would have the right to govern and rule. They saw the establishment of the independent state, not only as the Croats' historical right, but as a necessity in preventing further degeneration, thus realigning Croatian nation back into its 'natural' habitués of Western European nations. With such pernicious view on the future of Croatian nation, their first acts upon the establishment of the regime, *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska – NDH, 1941-1945* [Independent State of Croatia – NDH] on April 10, 1941, were connected with the idea of purification and regeneration of the Croatian nation. Racial and other discriminatory laws were proclaimed only a month after the establishment of the regime and the idea of an all-embracing youth organization was put forward already in May/June 1941. Viewing their nation as an organic whole, as a coherent unit which should consist only of worthy and healthy individuals, the Ustashas aimed at creating the atmosphere of imminent need to regenerate and thus save the Croatian nation from decadence and destruction. In order to accomplish their vision of national salvation, Ustashas instigated a large scale terror during the existence of their regime, against the Serbs, Roma, and Jews as those deemed unworthy of belonging to Croatian nation, while simultaneously implementing their youth policy, aiming at regenerating and reeducating a new generation of Croats, the Ustasha generation.

The Structure of the Dissertation

With the aim to provide a coherent and contextualized picture of the above mentioned my first chapter is dedicated to the context from which the Ustasha movement emerged. Its aim is to show how this movement came to exist and how it developed, both organizationally and ideologically during the late 1920s and 1930s.

By examining its origins, it will show that the initial phase of the movement can be traced already in the late 1920s, especially with regard to its members' actions and ideas connected to the youth. It will also examine movement's organizational and structural principles during the 1930s as well as its core ideological postulates as developed by the *Poglavnik* [Leader] and his closest associates.

My second chapter deals with the question of charisma and charismatisation within the Ustasha movement and regime. It investigates the relations established between the *Poglavnik* and his initial followers, the 'charismatic aristocracy'. The aim is to examine how these relations came to be and how they were structured and developed during the period of the 1930s. The purpose is to engage with the questions of charisma and charismatisation, and how such established relations later reflected and influenced various practices within the established regime, especially with regard to the Ustasha Youth members. It will argue that the initial followers saw the *Poglavnik* as a charismatic persona and themselves as part of this 'charismatic community'. By perceiving themselves and their *Poglavnik* as the embodiments of the real, 'new' Croat – the Ustasha, the core-members of the Ustasha movement, embarked on the project of transferring their feelings, beliefs, and ideas onto the younger generation of Croats by establishing the all-embracing youth organization under their strict control and guidance. The idea was to mold and educate Croatian youth according to their vision and their ideas of Croatian nation in order to create the new generation of the *Poglavnik's* Ustashes.

In my third chapter I will show in detail how the Ustasha Youth organization was established, organized, and structured according to age and gender division. By introducing two models, the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth, this chapter will show, through asymmetrical comparison, how the Ustasha Youth organization was

organized and structured on similar ideas and principles. Through analysis of the discourse surrounding the Ustasha Youth, the purpose is to probe into the ideological settings and the idea behind the establishment of such comprehensive youth organization. The aim is to examine how the youth was envisaged by the older generation of the Ustashes, and what the role assigned to it was, within the notion of the Ustasha revolution and their newly established state. I will argue that the youth presented the core of the Ustasha vision of reorganizing and regenerating the Croatian nation. Thus the youth was seen as crucial variable in implementing and conducting the Ustasha revolution which aimed at creating a 'new' Croat – the Ustasha - in a new Croatian fascist state.

My fourth chapter further elaborates on the role assigned to the youth by focusing on its education, the role of sports, work, and militarization. It examines the relations between the school system, family, and state youth organization as the third factor in youth's development and education. I will show that the Ustashes were to an extent unable and unwilling to embark on implementing total school reform, thus causing confusion and dissatisfaction among its youth members with regard to the question of authority within the school premises. The chapter also examines the role which the Ustashes assigned to work ethics and sports as essential within the idea of creating a 'new' stronger, healthier, and intellectually superior Croat. One aspect was that of installing the feeling of an individual who belongs and is worth only as much as he/she contributes to the national well-being in general. Therefore, manual work presented the key component of this second aspect. Building strong young bodies presented only one aspect of regeneration of Croatian nation. The second aspect was that of sports, especially athletics and chess, which had the role of molding strong and healthy young bodies and minds, capable of performing the most demanding social

and national tasks, especially military ones. Combined together, work and sports were seen as a necessary prerequisite for educating and molding of the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha. This ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha was also to awaken and inherit the century-old military virtues of Croats. Therefore, militarization, in the sense of education and regimentation through premilitary education and uniforms, presented an important additional aspect in the youth education and everyday activities. All these combined together, was to prepare the youth for any present and future hardships.

In my fifth chapter I explore how the youth was assigned different tasks of charity and national feeling in order to fulfill the role of becoming active and worthy individuals within this newly established national community. It examines the role of charity and help for their members, for soldiers and families in need. It argues that, by presenting the youth with their new vision of Croatian society and state the Ustasha officials aimed at installing and creating the feeling of national solidarity among the youth for the purpose of presenting themselves and their ideas as crucial and beneficial to the future of the Croatian nation. The chapter also examines how the notion of youth sacrifice and the creation of the youth martyrs’ cult were used in order to justify certain extreme outcomes of youth policy and the fact that some of its members became active soldiers in their early years and were sent into the battlefield. It will show how sacrificing young lives was presented as ‘natural’ to every ‘proper’ Croat – the Ustasha – and as necessary in order to safeguard the existing Ustasha regime.

My final chapter is dedicated to the research of the transnational character and practices of the Ustasha Youth organization. It will examine the connections and exchanges between the Ustasha Youth organization and the two models which influenced it, the Hitler Youth and the Lictor Youth. Also, it examines the

establishment and the impact of the Europe-wide fascist youth organization, established in September 1942, the idea behind it and the significance it was given by the Ustasha Youth journals and magazines. The final section of this chapter provides the first ever account of mutual relations, connections, and transfers between the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth organizations. The structure, idea, and connections between these two organizations will be compared and examined in order to provide for the first time a detailed analysis of these two youth organizations.

Croatian Historiography on Fascism – Coping with One’s Own History

After the Second World War, history writing with regard to fascism in Croatia was highly influenced by two strongly distinctive approaches; the communist/Marxist approach and the nostalgic-apologetic approach.¹² These ideologically charged approaches in history writings produced historical evaluations which consisted of “a priori established evaluations, frequently with exaggerations, and supported by boring propagandistic phrases”.¹³ The communist approach connected the movement and the state with the “practice of extreme Croatian nationalism” within which the Independent State of Croatia was “exclusively defined as a racial, genocidal, and fascist entity”.¹⁴ While such scholarly works positioned the Ustashes within the wider framework of European fascism, this was based on a simplistic ideological view where antifascism and antifascist communist struggle became a key denominator, thus creating a simplistic ideological view of Ustashes as fascist. One of the examples of such approach is the book *Ustaše i NDH: 1941-1945* [The Ustashes and the

¹² Nada Kisić-Kolanović, “Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja,” [Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945) as a Subject of Historical Research] in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] vol. 34, no. 3 (2002): 683-691.

¹³ Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu* [Holocaust in Zagreb] (Zagreb: Novi Liber i Židovska općina Zagreb, 2001), 598.

¹⁴ Kisić-Kolanović, “Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja”: 685.

Independent State of Croatia: 1941-1945] written by Fikreta Jelić-Butić in 1977, where the term “fascism” was used without any investigations of what constitutes fascism and how that relates to the Ustasha organization, structure, ideology, or practice.¹⁵

The second approach, apologetic, was developed by a group of Croatian emigrants gathered around the journal *Hrvatska Revija* [Croatian Review].¹⁶ They considered the Ustasha movement and the Independent State of Croatia as a modern nation-state, i.e. as the “historical realization of an independent Croatian state”, with the “apotheosis of its romantic-liberating aspect”,¹⁷ a thousand-year-long aspiration of the Croatian people. Within such approach, fascism was non-existent, and when it appeared it was seen as a foreign element forcefully imposed by the Nazis and thus only superficially accepted by the Ustashas.

Unfortunately, the post-1990 period did not change much when it comes to scholarly investigations of Ustasha and their regime in Croatian historiography. The only difference is the variety of topics now being researched. However, this was mostly due to the fact that archival materials from this period became more accessible and open for investigation. Scholarly research tended to be directed towards emphasizing idiosyncratic aspects of the Ustasha movement and regime, with visible influence of the apologetic approach, therefore remaining closed within the boundaries of national paradigm as the most relevant aspect. This led to the rejection and neglect of broader conceptual and methodological research when it comes to the question of fascism and Ustasha movement and regime. This trend in Croatian

¹⁵ Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska: 1941-1945* [The Ustashas and the Independent State of Croatia: 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Sn Liber, Školska knjiga, 1977).

¹⁶ The journal *Hrvatska revija* [Croatian Review] was first published in Buenos Aires in 1951 by Vinko Nikolić and Antun Bonifačić. In 1967 the editorship moved to Europe. First they set up their offices in München in 1967, and after 1978 the journal had headquarters in two cities, Munich and Barcelona. In 1991 the editorial board was transferred once again, this time to Zagreb. See Kisić-Kolanović, “Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja”: 687.

¹⁷ Kisić-Kolanović, “Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja”: 687.

historiography, where national history was placed in the centre of historical research, was well detected in 1997 by Croatian historian, Mirjana Gross, in her article *Europska ili provincijalna historiografija?* [European or Provincial Historiography?], where she stated that there cannot be a great national historiography confined only to its own backyard. She further elaborated that it would be unimaginable for historians “in Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, or Poland who would know nothing about the developments in contemporary historiography outside their own country, or who would disparage it all together”. She finished her article by posing a question: “Should Croatian historiography really remain an exception?”¹⁸

Almost twenty years later, her concerns and her question still carry relevance, especially when it comes to scholarly investigations and explanations of the Ustasha movement and regime with regard to their position within a broader context of fascist studies. Despite the presence of the Ustashas in contemporary everyday political, social, and scholarly discourses, scholarly investigations of the Ustasha movement and regime in Croatian historiography did remain confined to their own backyard. Although certain advancement in approaches and issues examined can be detected especially regarding the question of Holocaust,¹⁹ when it comes to a broader picture of Ustashas and fascism, as European phenomena of that time, Croatian historiography remains completely silent.²⁰ One exemplary case of how Croatian scholars tend to ignore the relevance of fascism in their studies of the Ustasha movement can be found

¹⁸ Mirjana Gross, “Europska ili provincijalna historiografija?,” [European or Provincial Historiography?] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] vol. 29, no. 2 (1997): 311-322.

¹⁹ See Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*. Their book was the first one to have dealt with the question of Holocaust during the Ustasha regime. Despite the fact that their research was limited to the city of Zagreb, the book gave incentives for further research of Holocaust during the Ustasha regime.

²⁰ For more on collective memory, popular myths, and the usage of past in Croatia see Mark Biondich, “‘We Were Defending the State’: Nationalism, Myth, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Croatia,” in John Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds., *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of the Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004), 54-82.

in Mario Jareb's 2007 book *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941* [The Ustasha-Domobran Movement since its Establishment until April 1941].²¹

In his six-hundred-page long study on the organizational and ideological developments of the Ustasha movement during the 1930s, Jareb provides a reader with a vast amount of sources and various data on the Ustashes formation and ideology. This makes his book valuable in a sense that Jareb managed to gather an incredible amount of source materials and data which any scholar can use either in his/her own writing, or for orientation of his/her research on the Ustasha movement period. Nevertheless, while this study does provide a reader with an abundance of information, it completely lacks any broader conceptual or contextual analysis and understanding of the Ustasha movement, or fascism for that matter. When trying to cope with the question of fascism Jareb shows a lack of understanding of fascism either as a generic term or as analytical tool, as well as the vast literature dealing with this topic. While he acknowledges the possibility that Fascism influenced Ustasha movement, he mostly deals with Italian Fascism and not fascism as a generic concept.²² Without any elaboration on fascism as that time European phenomena, Jareb simply compares Ustashes ideological document, the *Principles*, with the *Doctrine of Fascism*, and concludes that "even superficial reading of the *Doctrine* shows that, in a substantial sense the Ustasha-Home Guard principles have almost no similarities whatsoever".²³ By doing this, Jareb misses the point completely. The question here is not to compare two ideological documents and evaluate their similarities and differences in order to make a conclusion, but rather the mode of

²¹ Mario Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941* [The Ustasha-Domobran Movement since its Establishment until April 1941] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2007).

²² In this study I use Fascism, with a capital F, to denote Italian Fascism, and fascism without capital letter to denote a generic concept applicable to various movements and regimes during the interwar and Second World War period.

²³ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 152.

action, the structure, the ideology of the Ustasha movement during the 1930s, combined with a supranational context and influences. Unfortunately, in his analysis Jareb completely ignores the possibility of transfer, and dismisses transnational aspects of historical developments. By doing this he limits his research on fascism to the simplistic comparison of two ideological documents which he uses to make his conclusion.²⁴

When it comes to the Ustasha regime, *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska – NDH* scholarly investigations on certain topics are numerous, but also mostly constrained within national aspect of research, often lacking conceptual or methodological perspective and innovativeness. For example, Nada Kisić-Kolanović approaches the strictly historical aspects from a variety of social, cultural, ethnic, and political themes.²⁵ She does not address these themes in a broader perspective of European Interwar and Second World War fascism, but examines more specific inner components of the Ustasha movement and their regime. In fact, contemporary Croatian historiography still has not produced any relevant study of the Ustasha regime that would position it within the on-going debate about the structure, practices, and ideologies of fascist movements and regimes in Central and Southeastern Europe.²⁶

The return to a more serious scholarly approach on the topic of the Ustasha movement and regime occurred in 2006 when a collection of articles was published in

²⁴ Ibid, 145-155.

²⁵ Nada Kisić-Kolanović, "Drama vojskovođe Slavka Kvaternika," [Drama of the Army Soldier Slavko Kvaternik] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] vol. 28, no. 3 (1996): 379-398; Mladen Lorković – ministar urotnik [Mladen Lorković – Conspiracy Minister] (Zagreb: Golden marketing and Hrvatski državni arhiv, 1998); *Muslimani i hrvatski nacionalizam, 1941-1945* [The Muslims and Croatian Nationalism, 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2009); *NDH i Italija: političke veze i diplomatski odnosi* [The Independent State of Croatia and Italy: Political Connections and Diplomatic Relations] (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2001); "Hrvatski Državni Sabor Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1942," [The Croatian State Parliament of the Independent State of Croatia in 1942] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] vol. 32, no. 2 (2000): 545-567.

²⁶ For more on this debate and what constitutes fascist regime see for example Aristotle A. Kallis, "The Regime Model' of Fascism: A typology," *European History Quarterly* vol. 30, no. 1 (2000): 77-104.

the journal *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion*. This was one of the first attempts to present this topic in a foreign language, and it included various scholars from Croatia as well as prominent international scholars such as Sabrina P. Ramet, Stanley G. Payne, and Mark Biondich. Articles presented by these three authors emphasized several important aspects regarding the research connected with the question of the Ustasha movement and regime. First was Ramet's article in which she argued that, despite the passing of time, the Ustashas still remained "subject of controversy" and various interpretations.²⁷ The second aspect, which is completely neglected by Croatian scholars, was shown by Payne, who questioned this from the point of evaluating the presence and importance of fascist ideology and influence from a comparative perspective.²⁸ Mark Biondich dealt with an uneasy topic on the role of Catholic Church and Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac during the Ustasha regime, a topic which even today causes disputes and ideologically charged debates in Croatia. However, Biondich managed to provide one of the first scholarly sober approaches to this topic and his article remains a 'must read' when it comes to the role of Catholic Church and Stepinac during the Ustasha regime.²⁹ The fact that it was only scholars outside Croatian academic circles who posed the questions of controversy, comparison, fascism, and the role of Catholic Church should not come as a surprise. Even today, we are witnessing that fresh conceptual and methodological investigations concerning the Ustasha ideology and practices as well as new research questions are provided by scholars outside Croatia. One such example is a groundbreaking study on the Ustasha violence in the book *Utopias of Nation – Local*

²⁷ Sabrina P. Ramet, "The NDH – An Introduction," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* vol. 7, no. 4 (2006): 399-408.

²⁸ Payne, "The NDH in Comparative Perspective": 409-415.

²⁹ Mark Biondich, "Controversies surrounding the Catholic Church in Wartime Croatia, 1941-1945," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* vol. 7, no. 4 (2006): 429-457.

Mass Killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1941-1942 written by Tomislav Dulić.³⁰ In it Dulić, for the first time, argued that the Ustasha violence and terror was planned, centralized, and state organized. Recently, another book was published, *Visions of Annihilation – The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941-1945*, by Rory Yeomans, in which he dealt with cultural politics of the Ustasha regime. Although his research is mostly based on the analysis of Ustasha journals and magazines, the book nevertheless presents important addition towards the more contextualized understanding of the Ustashas.³¹

To define fascism is not an easy task, and ever since its emergence, scholars, intellectuals, and politicians have come up with different suggestions and definitions of what fascism was, and how to define it. In fact, Payne stated that *fascism* is “one of the vaguest of the major political terms” and the term *fascist* served as “one of the most frequently invoked political pejoratives”.³² Emilio Gentile suggests that there were three periods of renewal in fascist studies: from 1960s till 1970s when fascism was seen as anti-modern and anti-historical phenomenon, from 1980s when Payne depicted fascism as modern and revolutionary, and from the 1990s there has been a turn towards a more theoretical aspects of fascism, its cultural and aesthetic aspects, as well as its ideology, a period marked by Roger Griffin’s book *The Nature of Fascism*.³³ In his book, *A History of Fascism*, Payne provided a typological definition of fascism, arguing that fascism consists of three important aspects which he categorizes as ‘the fascist negations’, ‘ideology and goals’, and ‘style and

³⁰ Tomislav Dulić, *Utopias of Nation – Local Mass Killings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1941-1942* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2005).

³¹ Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: the Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941-1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

³² Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 3.

³³ Emilio Gentile, “Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion: Definitions and Critical Reflections on Criticism of an Interpretation,” in Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism, Totalitarianism and Political Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005), 36-43.

organization'.³⁴ On the other hand, Griffin elaborated on the theory of generic fascism providing a concise one-sentence definition of fascism as “a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of the populist ultra-nationalism”.³⁵ Both authors, as well as other influential scholars of fascism, do agree that fascism is to be viewed and considered, not as a reactionary ideology, but rather as a modern and revolutionary ideology which fought for its place against the dominant liberal paradigm, against which it pitted its own idea of “spiritual national regeneration in a post-liberal organic community”.³⁶ Griffin’s book was highly influential and debated. In fact, its popularity and influence were such that one often comes upon the term *consensus* in fascist studies, a consensus based exactly on Griffin’s approach and definition. One problem of Griffin’s “fascist minimum” is whether it is possible to define the eclecticism and various manifestations of fascism within such a simple one-sentence definition. The question is that of “ideal-type” definitions and whether the ideas encompassed within such definitions can embrace and explain all their differences and national idiosyncrasies.

While Griffin’s work and definition undoubtedly influenced fascist studies, there are scholars who criticize his approach and definition. For example, Michael Mann has argued that Griffin omits and neglects power organizations “without which ideas cannot actually do anything”.³⁷ What Mann argues is that when probing into the problems of what fascism was and how to explain it, scholars must take fascist values seriously, but also while doing so they must add to its values “programs, actions, and

³⁴ Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 7.

³⁵ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 26.

³⁶ Stevo Đurašković, “Ideologija Organizacije jugoslavenskih nacionalista (ORJUNA),” [The Ideology of the Organization of the Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA)] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] vol. 43, no. 1 (2001): 227.

³⁷ Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12.

organizations”.³⁸ In fact, Mann argues, somewhat similarly to David D. Roberts, that collective actions and organizations are the key to understanding the impact of fascism. It is not an easy task to elaborate on all the approaches and definitions of fascism. However, I do agree with Iordachi that no definition or approach to fascism, be it deductive or inductive, should exclude each other. On the contrary, they should serve as complementary and be based on new methodological approaches, as well as for the examination of new case studies, especially those deemed peripheral and still under-researched. Thus the engagement should consist of a dialogue:

[...] over the key theoretical and methodological issues involving their relationship between the theory and the history of fascism, and between the fascist ideology and its various forms of implementation.³⁹

Within all of the above mentioned issues and scholarly debates with regard to fascism, the Ustasha movement and regime are often examined superficially. The lack of engagement of Croatian scholars with the contemporary theoretical literature on fascism is rather inexplicable. Although there is an abundance of archival materials now available, the majority of Croatian scholars dealing with this topic prefer to stay within the boundaries of the national, idiosyncratic view of historical development. Unfortunately, such an approach often leads to complete omission of contemporary scholarly research in fascist studies. Even more so, it produces highly descriptive, theoretically, and conceptually confused outcomes, thus further detaching the research on the Ustasha movement and regime from contemporary conceptual and methodological approaches. One example of such detachment can be found in the fact that Croatian historiography has failed to produce research which would examine certain aspects of either the Ustasha movement or regime from a comparative perspective, or would become engaged in a broader international discussion on the

³⁸ Ibid, 12.

³⁹ Constantin Iordachi, “Introduction”, 27.

question of fascism in Europe at that time, especially on the question of fascism in Central and Southeastern Europe. It is not my intention to imply that the work done by Croatian scholars is irrelevant. On the contrary, scholarly works dealing with various segments of the Ustasha movement and regime are numerous and they do have scholarly value and significance. However, besides being mostly written in Croatian language, the majorities of research is focused on the national aspects and thus lack contemporary conceptual and methodological approaches which detach it from broader scholarly circles engaged into investigations of fascism and totalitarianism.⁴⁰

As a consequence, within the two most influential books on fascism, the Ustasha movement is seen both as fascist and as proto-fascist.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Besides those used in this work here are also listed some of the most known authors who dealt or are still dealing with this topic: Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše* [Ante Pavelić and Ustashas] (Zagreb: Globus, 1978); Bogdan Krizman, *NDH između Hitlera i Mussolinija* [The Independent State of Croatia between Hitler and Mussolini] (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Bogdan Krizman, *Ustaše i Treći Reich* [The Ustashas and the Third Reich] (Zagreb: Globus, 1983); Mario Jareb, "The NDH's Relations with Italy and Germany," in *Totalitarian Movements and Political religions* vol. 7, no. 4 (2006): 459-472; Nikica Barić, *Ustroj kopnene vojske domobranstva Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941-1945* [The Establishment of the Home Guard Army of the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2003); Nikica Barić, *Ustaše na Jadranu* [The Ustashas at the Adriatic] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012); Nikica Barić, "Željeznički promet i njegova zaštita u NDH," [Railway Traffic and its Protection in the Independent State of Croatia] in *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* vol. 30, no. 1 (1998): 257-278; Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Nezavisne Države Hrvatske* [A History of the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Naklada P.I.P. Pavičić, 2002); Hrvoje Matković, *Designirani hrvatski kralj Tomislav II, vojvoda od Spoleta: povijest hrvatsko-talijanskih odnosa u prvoj polovici XX. stoljeća* [The Designated Croatian King Tomislav II, the Duke of Spoleto: History of Croatian-Italian Relations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century] (Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, 2007); Jere Jareb, *Državno gospodarstveno povjerenstvo NDH, od kolovoza 1941. do travnja 1945, dokumentarni prikaz* [State Economic Committee in the Independent State of Croatia, from August 1941 till April 1945, Documentary Review] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001); Jere Jareb, *Polu stoljeća hrvatske politike – povodom Mačekove biografije* [Half a Century of Croatian Politics] (Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1995); Jere Jareb, *Zlato i novac Nezavisne Države Hrvatske izneseno u inozemstvo, 1944-1945* [Gold and Money of the Independent State of Croatia Taken Abroad, 1944-1945] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1997); Davor Kovačić, *Redarstveno-obavještajni sustav Nezavisne Države Hrvatske od 1941. do 1945.* [The Police Security and Intelligence System of the Independent State of Croatia, from 1941 till 1945] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2009); Jure Krišto, *Katolička crkva i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, Vol. 2* [The Catholic Church and the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1998); Jure Krišto, *Sukob simbola. Politika, vjere i ideologije u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj* [The Clash of the Symbols. Politics, Religions, and Ideologies in the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Globus, 2001); Ivan Mužić, *Katolička crkva, Stepinac i Pavelić* [The Catholic Church, Stepinac and Pavelić] (Zagreb: N. Dominović, 1997); Darko Stuparić, ed., *Tko je tko u NDH: Hrvatska 1941-1945* [Who's Who in the Independent State of Croatia: Croatia, 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Minerva, 1997).

⁴¹ Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 15, and Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 129.

Fascism and Youth – Literature Review and Approach

Scholarly investigations dealing with fascist youth organizations are somewhat neglected when it comes to fascist studies. As Patrizia Dogliani recently showed in her article *Propaganda and Youth*, even the Lictor Youth organization, still suffers from a lack of more serious scholarly investigations.⁴² However, research studies focused on various aspects of the Hitler Youth are numerous.⁴³ In Croatian historiography there is not a single monograph, and until recently there was not a single seriously written scholarly article dedicated to the question of the Ustasha Youth organization.⁴⁴ The only author who mentioned this organization in her monograph was Fikreta Julić-Butić, and even she dedicated it little attention, writing less than half a page on this

⁴² Patrizia Dogliani, "Propaganda and Youth," in R. J. B. Bosworth, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 186. For literature on *GIL* see: Marina Adis Saba, *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio – La Stampa dei giovani nella guerra fascista* [Italian Lictor Youth – The Youth Publications in Fascist War] (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1973); Fabrizio Felice, *Sport e fascismo: la politica sportiva del regime, 1924-1936* [Sports and Fascism: Sports Policy during the regime, 1924-1936] (Rimini, Firenze: Guaraldi, 1976); Patrizia Dogliani, *Storia dei giovani* [History of the Young People] (Milano: B. Mondadori, 2003); Maria Rosa Cutrufelli, *Piccole italiane: un raggiro durato vent'anni* [Small Italians: A Trick which Lasted Twenty Years] (Milano: Anabasi, 1994).

⁴³ These are just some of the most known titles: Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Heinz Boberach, *Jugend unter Hitler* [The Youth under Hitler] (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1982); Karl-Heinz Jahnke, Michael Buddrus, *Deutsche Jugend 1933-1945. Eine Dokumentation* [The German Youth 1933-1945. Documentation] (Hamburg: VSA, 1989); Peter D. Stachura, *Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic* (Santa Barbara: Clio Books, 1975); Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (London: Routledge, 1962); Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2010); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Martin Klaus, *Mädchen in der Hitlerjugend: Die Erziehung zur 'deutschen Frau'* [Girls in the Hitler Youth: Education for the 'German Woman'] (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1980); Gisela Miller, Kipp, ed., *'Auch du Gehörst dem Führer'. Die Geschichte des Bundes Deutscher Mädel (BDM) in Quellen und Dokumenten* ['You also Belong to the Führer. A History of the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) in Sources and Documentation] (Weinheim und München, 2001). For a more detailed list of works see Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 371-374.

⁴⁴ Recently an article was published which examines the role of sports within the Ustasha Youth organization and ideology. See Goran Miljan, "Fašizam, sport i mladež – ideja i uloga tjelesnoga odgoja i sporta u odgoju i organizaciji Ustaške mladeži, 1941.-1945.," [Fascism, Sport, and Youth – Idea and Role of Physical Education and Sport in Educating and Organizing the Ustasha Youth, 1941-1945] *Radovi – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* vol. 46, no.1 (2014): 361-382. There is also an article written by Franko Mirošević on the Ustasha Youth organization from the city of Dubrovnik. However, the article uses no archival sources but is rather limited to the analysis of reports and articles published in *Hrvatski narod* [Croatian People] journal. Also, his analysis is restricted only to the year 1941. See Franko Mirošević, "Ustaška mladež u Dubrovniku 1941. godine u svjetlu službenoga glasila 'Hrvatski narod'," [The Ustasha Youth in Dubrovnik in 1941 in the Light of the Official Journal *Hrvatski narod*] *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* [Radovi – Journal of the Institute of Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academia for Science and Arts in Zadar] no. 54 (2012): 305-322.

topic, basing her conclusion of the complete organizational failure on a single archival document.⁴⁵ One reason why this topic was neglected during the communist/socialist Yugoslavia might lay in the fact that communist youth organization, the idea behind it and its practices, bore significant resemblance to the idea, structure, and practices of the fascist Ustasha Youth organization. And while it could be understandable that the Ustasha Youth organization was not a subject matter which sparked interest in communist Yugoslavia, it comes as a surprise that not a single historian in Croatia has been engaged into this investigation since the 1990s. It is the aim of this dissertation to fill this *lacuna* and provide materials for future investigations and comparison of fascist youth organizations.

This dissertation is constructed around two major concepts present in fascist studies: charisma and totalitarianism. Both concepts have until recently been neglected in the scholarly investigations of Ustasha movement and regime. The concept of charisma is used to investigate the relations established between Ante Pavelić as the *Poglavnik* of the Ustasha movement and regime and its core followers during the 1930s. This is important in order to show how the idea of the *Poglavnik* and its “vanguard elite” was transferred onto the younger generations which were to follow in the footsteps of the ‘original Ustashas’ – the real Croats. On the other hand, the concept of totalitarianism serves to indicate and examine the mode of action conceived and implemented by the Ustashas in order to achieve their idea of an independent state as well as that of regeneration and rebirth of the Croatian nation. Such a worldview, built on the notions of either destruction or salvation, claimed to have possessed the will, and above all the right, to change the course of development and thus to create a completely new society.

⁴⁵ Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941-1945*, 108.

The concept of charisma presents an important aspect of scholarly investigations within fascist studies. Numerous books and articles written on this topic tried to encompass its meaning and applicability to various fascist movements and regimes. In 2006, a journal *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* issued a special issue dedicated to this subject,⁴⁶ and that same year Aristotle A. Kallis published his article *Fascism, Charisma, and Charismatisation: Weber's Model of Charismatic Domination and Interwar European Fascism*.⁴⁷ However, while the concept itself was applied to the core movements, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, it was not until Iordachi's book, *Charisma, Politics, and Violence: The Legion of the "Archangel Michael" in Inter-war Romania*, that the concept was applied to the so-called peripheral fascist movements and regimes.⁴⁸

The term and concept of charisma has passed "a transformation from religious idea to sociological to general usage".⁴⁹ Nowadays, the term is applied to virtually every situation in which a certain person, be it political or civil, is involved.⁵⁰ However, it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that this concept came into scholarly usage. Max Weber first used the term charisma outside religious connotations when he defined charisma as a:

[...] certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional powers or qualities.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* vol. 7, no. 2 (2006).

⁴⁷ Aristotle A. Kallis, "Fascism, Charisma, and Charismatisation: Weber's Model of Charismatic Domination and Interwar European Fascism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion* vol. 7, no. 1 (2006): 25-43.

⁴⁸ Constantin Iordachi, *Charisma, Politics, and Violence: The Legion of the "Archangel Michael" in Inter-war Romania*, (Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures and Societies, 2004).

⁴⁹ John Potts, *A History of Charisma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1.

⁵⁰ Joseph Bensman and Michael Givant, "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept," in Roland M. Glassman and William H. Swatos, Jr., eds., *Charisma, History, and Social Structure* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 28.

⁵¹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 358.

The main difference was that in the writings of St. Paul, charisma was restricted to a small Christian community. According to the Epistles of St. Paul, the word charisma meant the gift of God's grace within certain individuals with the purpose "to create unity, to strengthen community and to build the church".⁵² Weber's usage of the term is more general, and thus manifests itself across cultures and throughout history.⁵³ However, Weber's concept of charisma remained focused on a person, a leader, keeping the basic form of its religious aspect that of an individual bestowed with God's grace. Besides individual's grace, as a necessary prerequisite, Weber also placed a great emphasis on the belief and recognition of this by followers and by the leader himself.⁵⁴ Thus, Weber took the notion of charisma and applied it to a modern society, with an individual at the center. In a somewhat similar form, charisma was often applied and explained within fascist studies when determining the role of an undisputed leader to his closest associates and society in general, the so-called *Führeprinzip*.⁵⁵ However, while an individual can claim his/her position as superior, it is his/her followers who need to recognize it as such. Even Weber argued this when he stated that it is "the duty of those to whom he addresses his mission to recognize him as their charismatically qualified leader".⁵⁶ However, the question here is larger than the mere recognition of followers. In order to understand charisma and charismatic relations, scholars, according to Kallis, need to pay attention to that:

[...] special position that many fascist leaders eventually occupied in the political and psychological structures of their movements which alludes to an exceptional degree of charismatisation by the community of their followers.⁵⁷

⁵² Potts, *A History of Charisma*, 43.

⁵³ Ibid, 119.

⁵⁴ Bensman and Givant, "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept", 28.

⁵⁵ See for example Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 14.

⁵⁶ As quoted in Iordachi, *Charisma, Politics, and Violence*, 13.

⁵⁷ Kallis, "Fascism, Charisma, and Charismatisation: Weber's Model of Charismatic Domination and Interwar European Fascism": 25.

Kallis argues that charisma and charismatisation need to be viewed as a rationally pursued and developed process.⁵⁸ And while leaders undoubtedly held prominent positions in various fascist movements, usually explained through the above mentioned *Führerprinzip*, Iordachi, on the other hand, argues that such focus can be seen as a reduction of the concept of charisma. In his call for reconceptualization of charisma, Iordachi claims that it is necessary to recover its original religious connotations as well as to reexamine its social connotations and its link with national communities and ideologies.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Iordachi sees the concept of charisma as:

[...] an ideology that regards the nation as an elect community of shared destiny living in a sacred homeland which, on the basis of a glorious past, claims a divine mission leading to salvation through sacrifice under the guidance of a charismatic leader.⁶⁰

What Iordachi demonstrates is that the interwar charismatic nationalism is based on the idea of a chosen, glorious national community led by its charismatic leader's divine mission towards salvation. One of the key arguments in this dissertation will be that relations established between the *Poglavnik* and his core followers were based on similar ideas of a glorious past, sacred homeland, of the imminent need for national salvation, regeneration, and the creation of a 'new', 'better', more 'natural', primordial Croat. Thus, the *Poglavnik* and his elite were to become the symbols of national salvation and regeneration, a symbol which was to be transferred onto the new generations of Croats through the Ustasha Youth organization.

⁵⁸ Ibid: 27.

⁵⁹ Constantin Iordachi, "Fascism in Southeastern Europe: A Comparison between Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael and Croatia's Ustaša," in Roumen Daskalov and Diana Mishkova, eds., *Entangled Histories of the Balkans Vol. II* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 401.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 402. See also Constantin Iordachi, "Charisma, Religion, and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael," in John Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds., *Ideologies and National Identities – The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2004), 19-43.

The second concept used here is that of totalitarianism. Ever since the end of the Second World War, scholars have tried to define totalitarianism both as an ideology and as a political system. The term itself was coined in Italy in 1923 by a politician and journalist, Giovanni Amendola. By referring to the changes of election laws requested by Mussolini, Amendola stated that what is taking place here is a totalitarian system, *sistema totalitaria*.⁶¹ During the Cold War period, totalitarianism as a concept became disputed as having no meaning and heuristic purpose. In fact, during the Cold War totalitarianism was proclaimed dead several times, but nevertheless managed to resurface in scholarly investigations.⁶² Its complete reemergence or rebirth can be dated in the year 2000 when international journal *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* was established and in which authors like Peter Grieder,⁶³ Emilio Gentile,⁶⁴ Tzvetan Todorov,⁶⁵ Roger Griffin,⁶⁶ Vassil Girginov,⁶⁷ and others reasserted totalitarianism as a useful category in historical research, especially within fascist studies.

After the Second World War two models of totalitarianism became dominant: the analytical model and the developmental model. The analytical model is connected with Hannah Arendt and her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in which Arendt for the first time elaborated on the concept of totalitarianism trying to provide a new

⁶¹ See Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 14.

⁶² See Daniel Baratieri, Mark Edele, and Gisueppe Finaldi, "Beyond the Delusion – New Histories of Totalitarian Dictatorship," in Daniela Baratieri, Mark Edele, and Giuseppe Finaldi, eds., *Totalitarian Dictatorship – New Histories* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 1-20.

⁶³ Peter Grieder, "In Defense of Totalitarianism Theory as a Tool of Historical Scholarship," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 8, no. 3-4 (2007): 563-589.

⁶⁴ Emilio Gentile, "Fascism, Totalitarianism, and Political Religion: Definitions and Critical Reflections on Criticism of Interpretation," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 5, no. 3 (2004): 326-375.

⁶⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, "Totalitarianism: Between Religion and Science," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 2, no. 1 (2001): 28-42.

⁶⁶ Roger Griffin, "Introduction: God's Counterfeiters? Investigating the Triad of Fascism, Totalitarianism, and (Political) Religion," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 5, no. 3 (2004): 291-325.

⁶⁷ Vassil Girginov, "Totalitarian Sports. Towards an Understanding of its Logic, Practice and Legacy," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 5, no. 1 (2004): 25-58.

perspective.⁶⁸ In her approach, Arendt moved away from simply examining the twentieth century development, and instead focused on long-term developments which led to the appearance of totalitarianism. She traced the antecedents of this idea back into the nineteenth century in investigating the role and influence of anti-Semitism and imperialism during this period. In fact, two-thirds of her book is dedicated to these issues.⁶⁹ The key components which Arendt stressed as defining totalitarianism were the masses, terror, secret police, and domination over all aspects of an individual's life. While all these segments had their role and significance, what Arendt depicted as "central institution of totalitarian organizational power" were concentration and extermination camps.⁷⁰ In fact, she argued that, when compared with camp systems, all other segments and experiments of totalitarianism become of secondary importance.⁷¹ It is also interesting to notice that in her book, Fascist Italy was not seen as a totalitarian state, and is not included in her observations. She argued that Mussolini never attempted to achieve this, but was satisfied with "dictatorship and one-party rule".⁷² Arendt's assessment of Fascist Italy was based on its apparent statism as well as on the fact that, unlike Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, it lacked a developed camp system and terror apparatus.⁷³ Arendt's main argument was that it was the movement which possessed totalitarian dynamic, and once incorporated into the state it lost this dynamic and became static. However, David D. Roberts recently claimed that even the "state could be the vehicle for ongoing dynamism, understood as an ongoing action" and thus concludes that Arendt's, and later Renzo De Felice's, view of Italian Fascism as static and Fascist Italy as merely an authoritarian state

⁶⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (San Diego, New York: A Harvest Book and Harcourt Inc., 1968). This book established Arendt as a major political thinker.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 3-305.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 437-438.

⁷¹ Ibid, 437.

⁷² Ibid, 308-309.

⁷³ David D. Roberts, *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 9.

“have been too limited” and too restrictive to allow for the possibility that totalitarian system could possess its own dynamic and possibility of evolving.⁷⁴

The developmental model, which became more influential over time, was developed by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski. In their 1956 book *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, the two authors developed a totalitarian model based on six characteristics: official ideology, a mass party, police control, monopoly of armed combat forces, monopoly of mass media and communication, and central control of the economy.⁷⁵ A major problem with their developmental model is that it also presents a static view of totalitarianism with simply defined categories which then serve as an easy in-or-out check list.⁷⁶ Such a static model does not allow any transformation or changes of totalitarianism, but demands that these characteristics be fulfilled in order to detect a certain system as totalitarian. In this sense, the model neglects the role and possibility of contingency in historical development as well as the possibility of change influenced by human actions and occurring within different historical contexts. Roberts rightly argued that with this model becoming popular and broadly used, “totalitarianism became a kind of political science classification scheme. Connoting a static system”.⁷⁷ What both of the mentioned models have in common is that they place significant emphasis on notions of terror and repression as the key features of totalitarianism.⁷⁸

In 2006 David D. Roberts published his seminal book *Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth Century Europe – Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics* where he

⁷⁴ Ibid, 9.

⁷⁵ Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), 9-10.

⁷⁶ For a recent example on how the usage of their model can be used to simplify research and conclusions see Sergej Flere and Rudi Klanjšek, “Was Tito’s Yugoslavia Totalitarian?,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* vol. 47, no. 2 (2014): 237-245.

⁷⁷ Roberts, *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth Century Europe – Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics*, 7.

⁷⁸ See Iordachi, “Introduction”, 27-32.

deals with the question and problem of how to formulate and define totalitarianism, and more specifically how it developed in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Soviet Russia. By proposing a new way of research and understanding of totalitarianism, Roberts proposed to look at totalitarianism as a new mode of collective action through different layers, such as the ahistorical and historically specific. For Roberts:

The ahistorical encompasses an array of categories from evil and power to careerism and fear [...] The historically specific, in turn, may be idiosyncratically national or supranational.⁷⁹

Roberts argues that the ahistorical needs to be considered within “their historical genesis, with sufficient openness to historical contingency”, especially when dealing with for example, the Holocaust and other monstrous crimes.⁸⁰ He further argued that scholarly investigations of this phenomenon need to pay “attention to the interface between the idiosyncratically national and the supranational historically specific”.⁸¹ His main argument is that we need to understand totalitarianism as a new mode of action occurring within the modernity itself, not as its alternative, but rather as alternative modernity.⁸² In order to achieve this he argues that what is necessary is to encompass, connect, and investigate all three of these layers. By saying that “the originating aim was a new mode of collective action”⁸³ based on newly conceived historical-political sense, he argues that:

Insofar as something like a system of control resulted, it stemmed not from some originating desire for control for its own sake but from the need to master the process and sustain the ongoing action.⁸⁴

According to Roberts, the originating agency of such new collective action came from a:

⁷⁹ Roberts, *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth Century Europe – Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics*, 23.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 25.

⁸¹ Ibid, 30.

⁸² Ibid, 36.

⁸³ Ibid, 430.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 441.

[...] self-appointed and self-described elite, defined not by socio-economic place but by consciousness, values, will, and spirit, and claiming a unique capacity to spearhead what it claimed was essential change beyond the liberal mainstream.⁸⁵

According to him, these self-appointed elites used “effective galvanizing and unifying myths” in order to sustain this new mode of collective action, of which no one knew where it might lead.⁸⁶ Seeing totalitarianism as a new mode of collective action, by avoiding teleological perception, removing ourselves from the sanitized view of modernity,⁸⁷ allowing the possibility of contingencies in historical development, and above all that it occurred in historical time and for historical reasons, Roberts argues that:

The key is to probe totalitarianism not as a form of rule or set of extreme outcomes but as a historically specific dynamic, which grew from aspirations that became possible only at a particular moment from within the ongoing modern political experiment, and through which certain extreme and unforeseen outcomes came to be. Although the dictators grasped certain contours and intended certain directions, no one set out to create what actually resulted, no one knew what totalitarianism was – because it was just then coming to be for the first time.⁸⁸

Thus, totalitarianism, taken as the new mode of collective action with its own historically specific dynamic, presents an important aspect in this dissertation. The will and desire for continuation of fascist collective action is perhaps best seen within the ideas and practices of fascist youth organizations. Fascists saw their youth as the guardians and future carriers of their struggle and ideas, reflecting to a degree all the attributes of older generations of fascists. Besides this ideological role, the youth was also given the role of portraying fascism as an all-embracing system, concerned not only with the general national well-being but with the well-being of each individual within its national community. The main idea was “to insert the children of the

⁸⁵ Ibid, 418.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 430.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 35.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 17.

populace into collective life and so ‘nationalize’ them”.⁸⁹ For fascists the youth presented the core of their development and future socio-political arrangement. As Payne argued:

Fascist exaltation of youth was unique, however, in that it not only made a special appeal to them but also exalted youth over all other generations, without exception, and to a greater degree than any other force based itself on generational conflict.⁹⁰

Fascists stressed the youth and its importance in opposition and at the expense of the older generations, whom they regarded as potential carriers of old ideas and practices. The case was no different in the Ustasha regime where the youth, as the new generation, a sort of *tabula rasa*, was regarded as the most important wheel within their mode of collective action. By establishing their youth organization, the Ustashes established the organization whose main goal was to save and recreate a ‘proper’, ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha. Thus, the youth was regarded as a factor capable of wholeheartedly understanding and carrying further the Ustasha action which they set in motion. The Ustashes claimed openly that they set on the path of establishing a totalitarian state which was to:

[...] integrate, connect, and manage all sources of national strength, both spiritual and materialistic, because it takes onto itself a complete, total care for all national strata in all their life’s needs [...] It is totalitarian because it takes equal care of a child to go to school, of a peasant to get seeds, of a mother to give birth without worry, of a worker to have a safe job, of an old man to spend his last days in peace...It is totalitarian because it strives to put the life and work of each individual in the service of common national benefit.⁹¹

Since the youth was seen as the new generation, a generation embedded with new virtues and values, and the future guardian of the Ustasha achievements, a sort of “anthropological revolution” within a totalitarian Ustasha state was set in motion. The idea was to insert into the youth all the values, will, strength, and spirit perceived as

⁸⁹ Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”, 195.

⁹⁰ Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 13.

⁹¹ Danijel Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta* [The Principles of the Croatian Ustasha Movement] (Zagreb: Tiskara Matice hrvatskih akademičara, 1942), 113.

essential to every ‘proper’ Croat – the Ustasha, in order to keep this collective action and its dynamism in constant motion.

CHAPTER I: The Ustasha in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941

“Croatian Home Guard fights with this motto: Homeland above all and in this work for homeland it holds to this: An eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, and for head, two.”¹

Introduction

The post-1918 political context from which the Ustasha movement originated is connected to a highly complex political situation within the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In a chronological sense, the history of this new state can be divided into three stages: from its establishment in December 1918 to the proclamation of dictatorship in January 1929; from January 1929 to the assassination of the King Aleksandar in September 1934; and from September 1934 to the Nazi German occupation in April 1941.

From the outset, this newly formed political entity was faced with constant political instability and national tensions. The inability to establish political stability and to come to terms with various national questions and problems culminated in the June 1928 parliament assassination of *Croatian Peasant Party* – *HSS* representatives, and consequently in the proclamation of dictatorship in January 1929. The proclamation of dictatorship led to further radicalization of political life and actions, especially among the more radical nationalist politicians such as Ante Pavelić, who decided to establish the Ustasha movement with the purpose of destroying Yugoslavia and establishing an independent Croatian state. After providing the movement with

¹ “Omladino! Čuj glas ‘Hrvatskog Domobrana’” [‘Oh Youth’ Hear the Voice of Croatian Home Guard] in *Hrvatski Domobran – Omladinski list* [Croatian Home Guard – Youth Magazine], November 30, 1928, no. 2, 8.

organizational and ideological structure, which from the outset showed the impact of the then dominant fascist ideology, during the first half of the 1930s, the culmination of the Ustasha actions came in September 1934 when they, in cooperation with the *Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – VMRO*, organized the assassination of the King Aleksandar in Marseille. The idea was that the assassination of the King would cause political, national, and social instability and thus consequently the implosion of the Kingdom itself. However, this proved to be wrong and the Ustasha movement reached a period of crisis, no longer enjoying the widespread support of neither the Italian nor the Hungarian government.

Even with this period of crisis, the Ustasha movement managed to survive, and following the 1937 *Italo-Yugoslav Agreement*, some of the prominent Ustasha members returned and became active within the Kingdom, thus providing the movement with new organizational and ideological activities. This became especially visible, and to an extent successful, after the August 1939 *Cvetković-Maček Agreement*, when *HSS*, the strongest Croatian political party at the time, acknowledged the need for the preservation of the Kingdom by agreeing to establish an autonomous province *Banovina Hrvatska* as part of it. This act, presumably, caused dissatisfaction among nationalistic individuals and groups, which started showing stronger and more open support for Pavelić and his movement. Despite the Ustasha influence and activities during the post-1934 period, it was not until April 1941, when Nazi Germany decided to invade and occupy the Kingdom, that the Ustashas and their *Poglavnik* came to power.

1.1. A Prelude to Action – The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from Versailles to January Dictatorship, 1918-1929

The newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes – Kingdom of SHS formed a new political entity on the political map of interwar Europe. Built on the variants of the nineteenth century idea of *Yugoslavism*, it represented a multi-national, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and above all multi-ethnic environment with different and often overlapping national ideas.² Immediately upon its establishment on December 1, 1918, various political groups argued for different versions and visions on how this newly established state was to be politically formed. As Goldstein points out, the majority of Serbs regarded the unification as an act of Serbian expansion, while the majority of Croats and Slovenes regarded this unification as an act of independent nations constituting a completely new state.³ From its outset the nature and political form of this new state was contested by those arguing for a federalized version against those arguing that it should be based on strong centralized principles.⁴ However, it would be wrong to assume that the only problems with which this new state had to deal with were those of political or nationalistic prominence. While these aspects did present the most visible confrontation within, there were other factors as well which influenced the clashes and inability of state's 'normal' functioning. For example, the Kingdom of SHS was faced with the enormous problem of integrating "seven different territories each with its own legislative and administrative system".⁵ It was also confronted with multiple problems of economic integration since it embraced "four different railway networks, five currencies, and six customs areas and

² For more on the history and ideas of *Yugoslavism* see Dejan Djokić, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992* (London: C. Hurst, 2003).

³ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest* [Croatian History] (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2003), 234.

⁴ J. B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 1-9.

⁵ Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, 1.

legal systems” which all dated from the period prior to 1914.⁶ Thus, the decade following the unification was marked by the inability to cope with problems while indulging all political sides. Therefore, Djokić is right when he states that: “The jubilation of the first weeks following the unification was followed by a long period of hangover.”⁷

The ongoing, politically exhaustive struggles for power, marked by the formations of unlikely but politically suitable coalitions, combined with national tensions all caused a perpetual political crisis. In June 1921 a new Constitution was proclaimed, the so-called *Vidovdanski ustav*. It proclaimed freedom of personal and political rights of its citizens, established monarchy as a form of this new state with limited parliamentary power, and proclaimed the principles of unitarism and state centralism.⁸ According to the Constitution, legislative power was in the hands of the King and National Assembly, with King having the power of summoning and dissolving the National Assembly as well as to confirm and proclaim laws. According to Goldstein, this Constitution “generated by itself political and social instability”.⁹ How unstable was the political life in the Kingdom can best be seen from the fact that twenty-five prime ministers were appointed until January 1929, with an average duration of their mandates of less than one year, with the exception of Nikola Pašić’s second mandate, which lasted for three years.¹⁰ Even more so, out of twenty-three governmental crises, only two were caused by National Assembly, while the remaining twenty-one were dismissed by the King.¹¹

⁶ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 118.

⁷ Dejan Djokić, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 41.

⁸ Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918-2008* [Croatia 1918-2008] (Zagreb: EPH Liber, 2008), 58.

⁹ Ibid, 60.

¹⁰ See Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 454.

¹¹ Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918-2008*, 60.

The tensions present from the outset and further exacerbated by unstable, short-term lasting governments culminated in June 1928 and ended with the proclamation of the royal dictatorship in January 1929.¹² Divisive and unstable politics combined with the ever-present competing nationalisms reached their climax on June 20, 1928. During the parliament discussion on the ratification of the Nettuno Conventions,¹³ Puniša Račić, a member of the Serbian *Radikalna stranka – RS* [Radical Party] fired a gun, killing two members of *Hrvatska seljačka stranka – HSS* [Croatian Peasant Party], Pavle Radić and Đuro Basariček, while Stjepan Radić, Ivan Pernar and Ivan Granda were wounded. Stjepan Radić, the leader of the *HSS*, was rushed to the hospital where he had the bullet removed, after which he returned to Zagreb.¹⁴ Although it seemed that Radić would recover from his operation, he died on August 8, and his funeral turned into a political manifestation.¹⁵

The funeral, attended by some 200 000 people¹⁶ combined with the ongoing demonstrations in Croatia, forced King Aleksandar to proclaim dictatorship on January 6, 1929.¹⁷ In his *Royal Proclamation* he stated that:

The moment has arrived when there can, and should be no intermediary between nation and the King [...] The parliamentary system and our whole political life are taking on an increasingly negative character [...] It is my sacred duty to preserve the unity of nation and State by all means; and I am determined to fulfill this duty to the end without hesitation.¹⁸

¹² Djokić, *Elusive Compromise*, 41.

¹³ The Nettuno Conventions were a complex trade agreement favorable to the Italian interests signed in June 1925 between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of SHS. See Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 158.

¹⁴ For a more detailed account on Stjepan Radić's life and activities of his *Croat Peasant Party – HSS* see Mark Biondich, *Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904-1928* (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 249, and Ljubo Boban, *Maček i politika Hrvatske seljačke stranke, 1928-1941* [Maček and the Politics of Croatian Peasant Party, 1928-1941] (Zagreb: Liber, 1974), 19.

¹⁶ Djokić, *Elusive compromise*, 67-68.

¹⁷ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 249-251.

¹⁸ "Royal Proclamation Abrogating the Constitution and Dissolving the Parliament of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom," in Snežana Trifunovska, *Yugoslavia Through Documents – From its Creation to its Dissolution* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1994), 73.

The King also enforced new administrative changes by dividing the country into nine *banovinas* [counties]. He dissolved the parliament, abolished the freedom of the press, as well as all political parties with national, religious, or regional features. The name of the country was changed from that of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes into that of *Kraljevina Jugoslavija* [Kingdom of Yugoslavia], the government thus tried to impose a new, cohesive Yugoslav identity enforced from ‘above’.¹⁹ Following the killings in the parliament, Ante Pavelić, at that time active politician of nationalistic *Hrvatska Stranka Prava – HSP* [Croatian Party of Rights], described this act as “intentional and well prepared”, further stating: “In political situation there shall be a tremendous shift.”²⁰ And this shift did occur. On the one hand the King proclaimed a dictatorship, disbanding the parliament and political parties, and on the other hand, Pavelić went into exile, where he was to form a fascist Ustasha movement.²¹

1.2. Ante Pavelić and the Newly Established Kingdom

Ante Pavelić was born on July 14, 1889 in the small village of Bradina, in present day Bosnia and Herzegovina. He completed his elementary education in the Bosnian city of Jajce, after which he finished a Jesuit gymnasium in the city of Travnik, continuing his studies in the coastal city of Senj.²² He was admitted to the

¹⁹ Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis – Central and Eastern Europe Before World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 327, and Djokić, *Elusive Compromise*, 69.

²⁰ Ante Pavelić, “Zločin od 20. lipnja je proti cijelom hrvatskom narodu,” [The Crime of June 20 stands Against the Whole Croatian Nation] in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem Hrvatskog državnog prava: Poglavnikovi govori, izjave i članci prije odlaska u tuzinu* [On the Road of Croatian State Right: Poglavnik's Speeches, Statements, and Articles Before His Exile] (Zagreb: Naklada Glavnog ustaškog stana, 1942).

²¹ The Ustasha officials referred to themselves both as an organization and as a movement, often mixing the two throughout the decade of the 1930s. For the purpose of this work I will refer to them as a movement in order to avoid this confusion, although it has to be noticed that both terms can be used as such.

²² Ivo Bogdan, *Dr. Ante Pavelić riješio je Hrvatsko pitanje* [Doctor Ante Pavelić has Resolved Croatian Question] (Zagreb: Naklada Europa, 1942), 4.

Law School at the University of Zagreb, where he obtained his law degree after which he was employed in a private councilor's office. He became politically active already during his studies in Zagreb, when he became a member of the *HSP* and was soon elected Council representative for the city of Zagreb in 1921.²³

During the politically unstable decade of the 1920s, Ante Pavelić remained an active opponent of the newly established Kingdom, and a fervent advocate of Croatian independence. In order to preserve his idea of the Croats' right of independence and their right to establish their own state, Pavelić simultaneously maintained relations with various Croatian émigré circles. These circles mostly consisted of former military officers and officials from the former Austro-Hungarian army, who stood firmly against the newly established Kingdom.²⁴ In his 1925 article, published in *Kalendar Hrvatski Blok* [Calendar Croatian Bloc] Pavelić wrote that "they [the Croatian people] are guided by the idea of their right [...] their right for self-determination, which shall bring them to be themselves on their own".²⁵ As a member of the *HSP*, which formed the *Hrvatski blok* [Croatian Bloc] with *Hrvatska Federalistička Seljačka Stranka* – *HFSS* [Croatian Federalist Peasants Party] of Ante Trumbić, Pavelić won a mandate during the 1927 elections which allowed him to participate in the National Assembly. Giving his first speech at the Assembly, he stated that:

[...] the fact of the participation of Croatian Bloc in the parliament of the National Assembly does not mean that we acknowledge and approve the existing

²³ Danijel Crljen, ed. *Poglavnik – život, misao, djelo* [Poglavnik – Life, Thought, and Deed] (Zagreb: Povjereništvo za odgoj i promidžbu u postrojničtvu, 1944), 4, and Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše*, 9.

²⁴ Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 17. Members of this organization formed the Croatian Committee in May 1919, with their headquarters first in Graz, then Vienna, and later in Budapest. Despite the fact that at the beginning they were united they soon started disagreeing in many questions, especially those concerned with their future actions and objectives. The Committee issues split into two groups, the so-called "legitimists" led by Colonel General Baron Stjepan Sarkotić and the other one led by Ivo Frank, son of Josip Frank, the former president of *Hrvatska Stranka Prava*. The main difference between the two groups was in their concept on how to achieve the independence of Croatia. See also Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 33-47.

²⁵ Ante Pavelić, "Smije li se zdvajati?," [Can There be Any Doubts?] in Bzik, ed., *Putem Hrvatskog državnog prava*.

situation. On the contrary, the Croatian Bloc will work with all lawful means to change the situation of the Croatian people with the establishment of the sovereignty of the Croatian state.²⁶

During his trip to an international conference of municipal representatives in Paris in 1927, Pavelić met in Vienna with the former Austro-Hungarian Colonel Stjepan Sarkotić, who arranged the meeting between Pavelić and an Italian representative, Robert Forges Davanzati, editor of *La Tribune* journal and member of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* – PNF [National Fascist Party]. The meeting took place in Rome in July 1927, where Pavelić met with Davanzati, and to whom he submitted the copy of the memorandum which Ivo Frank, a member of the *HSP*, also delivered to the Italian envoy in Budapest. This memorandum argued for the Croatian state, for the ethnic principle of self-determination, and it also emphasized future wishes with regard to the establishment of the new Croatian state and its territory.²⁷ Tomashevich says that this memorandum “in several ways presaged developments in 1941”.²⁸ It was during this early period that Pavelić managed to establish and confirm himself as an important, somewhat different figure within the Croatian émigré circles thus providing them with “the new strength and marking the new type of separatist, completely different from the old émigrés which emit the smell of a decomposed Habsburg Monarchy.”²⁹

²⁶ Ante Pavelić, “Nismo došli ovdje da to stanje priznamo,” [We Did Not Come Here to Acknowledge this Situation] in Bzik, ed., *Putem Hrvatskog državnog prava*.

²⁷ Sadkovich argues that these two programs were almost equal in their content. See James J. Sadkovich, *Italija i Ustaše* [Italy and the Ustashas] (Zagreb: Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 1987, 2010), 38-39.

²⁸ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*, 30-31.

²⁹ Sadkovich, *Italija i Ustaše*, 40. Sadkovich made a mistake here, naming the former state Habsburg Monarchy, which ceased to exist after the *Ausgleich* [compromise] reached in 1867, after which it was referred to as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.



Figure 1.1. A picture of Ante Pavelić from 1929.³⁰

Besides his activities in “high-politics” Pavelić was also active in organizing the youth within his party. In June 1927 *Savez hrvatske pravaške omladine – SHPRO* [The Union of Croatian Rights Youth] was formed with Branko Jelić, a close associate of his, as its president. Further on, in October 1928, *Hrvatski domobran* [Croatian Home Guard] was founded with the purpose of becoming an all encompassing nation-based youth organization, with an idea to attract all Croatian youth, and not only that of the *HSP* party.³¹

³⁰ See Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 73.

³¹ It is unclear who initiated the organization of the Croatian Home Guard. Branimir Jelić argues that it was SHPRO, while Mijo Bzik argued that it was Pavelić who organized the whole thing. Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 54-55.

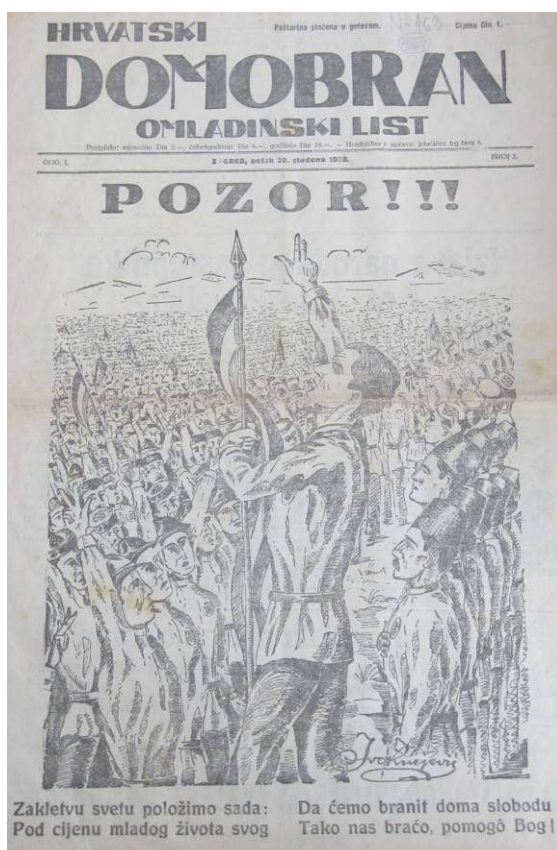


Figure 1.2. The front page of *Hrvatski Domobran*.³²

Since the King banned all political parties, the organization was registered as a public sports society, while actually presenting a platform for the organization and activities of a group with a purpose of fighting for, and achieving Croatian independence.³³ The members of this youth organization were given uniforms and were taught how to handle weapons. According to one report their uniforms consisted of “a blue shirt with Croatian emblem on the left side of their breast, while their neckties were of white color with densely lined red cubes”.³⁴ The same report states that this organization was considered somewhat illegal “formed from swarms which counted four to five persons, on the basis of complete obedience to the group

³² *Hrvatski Domobran*, November 30, 1928, no. 2.

³³ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 55.

³⁴ Hrvatski Državni Arhiv – HDA, Služba Državne Sigurnosti Republičkog Sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske – SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Elaborat o ustaškom pokretu od 1918. do 1941*. [A Survey on the Ustasha Movement from 1918 till 1941] – 013.1. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1. The same account is given by Jareb in his book *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, see his footnote 179 on page 56.

leader”.³⁵ Thus, *Domobran* was envisioned as an undercover, paramilitary youth organization which later served as a platform for the establishment of the Ustasha movement.³⁶ Its members were in charge of organizing demonstrations, such as those which took place on December 1, 1928, aimed at disrupting the ten-year anniversary of the Kingdom. They were also in charge of assassinations of those supporting the new state, such as the assassination of Toni Schlegel, manager of publishing concern *Jugoštampa*, who was murdered by Mijo Babić, later a prominent member of the Ustasha movement and a close associate of Pavelić.³⁷ The organization also published its journal *Hrvatski Domobran* [Croatian Home Guard] with Branimir Jelić as the chief editor and Mijo Bzik, the main ideologue of the Ustasha movement and regime, as head of the journal’s board.³⁸ Often confiscated and censored by the government, certain issues of the journal have blank pages within, as for example number 2 from November 20, 1928. The last issue of this journal was printed on December 22, 1928, reaching by then a circulation of around 30 000 copies.³⁹

1.3. *The Origins of the Ustasha Movement, 1929 – 1934*

Following the King’s proclamation of dictatorship, Pavelić fled from country and went to Bulgaria where he, together with Gustav Perčec, signed the *Sofijska deklaracija* [Sofia Declaration], thus establishing cooperation with the Macedonian National Committee. The Declaration emphasized the need to continue their political

³⁵ HDA, SDS RSUPO SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1., 9.

³⁶ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 55-56.

³⁷ For a detailed account of this early activities of Pavelić and his associates see, until now unknown, memoirs of a prominent Ustasha member Mijo Babić, “*Zašto sam danas u tuđini?*,” [Why Today I am in Foreign Country] in HDA, Zbirka zapisa upravnih i vojnih vlasti Nezavisne Države Hrvatske i Narodnosolobodilačkog pokreta – 1549 – ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 205/411. Further on HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, VI/205/411.

³⁸ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 56-57.

³⁹ Ibid, 58. Especially see his footnote no. 192.

fight with the final aim of achieving Croatian and Macedonian independence.⁴⁰ Due to his connections with the *Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija – VMRO* [Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization], in July 1929 Pavelić was charged and sentenced to death *in absentia* which meant that he was unable to return to the Kingdom and that the only viable way for his return was through achievement of his idea of independent Croatia.⁴¹ With such a constellation of events, Pavelić turned to Fascist Italy for help. He found an ally in Mussolini, from whom he gained financial, political, and infrastructural support, which made it possible for him to gather, organize, and train his close associates and those who were joining them during the first half of the 1930s. With the financial help of Mussolini, Pavelić organized his first groups of Ustashas in the small mountain place of Bovegno.⁴² In his memoirs, published after the Second World War, Colonel Slavko Kvaternik, a person of Pavelić's trust until 1942, stated that:

The goal and purpose of this organization was a violent fight against the Yugoslav state and the creation of the independent Croatian state with Italian assistance.⁴³

From his statement, and from the Ustasha actions which occurred during the first half of the 1930s it is clear that Pavelić established the Ustasha movement with the aim of establishing independent Croatia through acts of terrorism and violence when necessary. Jareb also argues that terrorism presented an important aspect of the Ustasha actions since they used “terrorism as one of its important methods in their actions”.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Pavelić established training camps in Italy and Hungary not

⁴⁰ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 81, and Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska: 1941-1945*, 20.

⁴¹ Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska: 1941-1945*, 20, and Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 32.

⁴² R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Fascist Dictatorship* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 284.

⁴³ Nada Kisić-Kolanović, *Vojskovođa i politika: sjećanja Slavka Kvaternika* [Army General and Politics: Memoirs of Slavko Kvaternik] (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1997), 86.

⁴⁴ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 230.

only for the purpose of training his members on how to handle guns or to produce improvised explosives. According to one report, these camps also served the purpose of training its members so that “in case of a revolution taking place in Croatia, each one of us would know how to lead 250-300 people”.⁴⁵

During the first half of the 1930s, the Ustashas focused on the destabilization of the Kingdom by planning and executing terrorist actions. Besides some ‘minor’ terrorist activities, Pavelić and his associates also planned and executed three bigger events aimed at destabilization of the Kingdom. These were the so-called *Velebitski ustanak* [Velebit Uprising] which took place in September 1932, followed by two attempts on the King’s life. The first, failed attempt on the King’s life was organized in December 1933 with the plan to assassinate him during his visit to Zagreb. The second one was the Marseille assassination of the King Aleksandar and French Minister of Foreign Affairs Louis Barthou on October 9, 1934. However, despite their successful assassination of the King, this action did not bring the response and the outcome which Pavelić had hoped for. On the contrary, it resulted in the isolation of the Ustasha members in Italy, where they were gathered and placed on the island of Lipari, while Pavelić was first placed in jail in Torino and later interned in Siena. Eugen Dido Kvaternik, son of Slavko Kvaternik and later the Head of *Ravnateljstvo za javni red i sigurnost – RAVSIGUR* [Office for Public Order and Security] in the Ustasha regime, was also arrested by the Italian authorities, and in November the German authorities arrested Mladen Lorković, lawyer and Pavelić’s close associate, but decided not to extradite him to the Yugoslav authorities. Sadkovich argues that the reason for this could be found in the fact that the Ustasha group in Germany was well connected with Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi ideologist and editor of the party newspapers

⁴⁵ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Materijal o Janka Pusti* [The Materials on the Janka Puszt Camp] – 013.2. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, MOJP – 013.2.

Völkischer Beobachter [People's Observer], through Kvaternik's brother-in-law Karl Potthoff as well as due to Kvaternik's contacts with the Nazis. The Ustasha training camp of Janka Puszta, which they established in Hungary for the purpose of infiltration within the Kingdom and execution of various terrorist attacks, was closed.⁴⁶

1.4. Ustasha Ideology and Organization

As mentioned, during the 1920s, various political parties and their leaders were striving to achieve power and to promote their ideas on how this new Yugoslav state was to look like. Pavelić was also among those politicians with a strong stance of opposing the existing state. After the parliament shooting and the establishment of the dictatorship in January 1929, things changed profoundly in the political arena. Political parties were banned, press was strictly controlled and censored, some politicians were arrested, and some decided to flee.⁴⁷ Pavelić left the Kingdom with a clear idea. His idea was that of a historical, in his mindset 'natural' right of Croats to have their own, independent state. Roots of this idea stretch back into the nineteenth century, when his *HSP* party was formed by Ante Starčević as an anti-thesis towards that-time influential and popular idea of Ilirism.⁴⁸ Starčević based his idea on the notion of historical rights of Croats and their unalienable state rights, which dated

⁴⁶ Sadkovich, *Italija i ustaše*, 248. For more on the process against Hungary and some interesting features of Ustasha's connections in Hungary prior to the assassination see *League of Nations – Official Journal*, 1934-1935.

⁴⁷ The new leader of the *HSS*, Vladko Maček was arrested, while some other prominent leaders of the *HSS*, such as Juraj Krnjević and August Košutić, fled the country. See Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 251-253.

⁴⁸ *Ilirski pokret* [Illyrian movement] was both cultural and political movement founded in the first half of the nineteenth century by Ljudevit Gaj, a Croatian intellectual and writer of the first Croatian grammar. Members of the movement believed that the old Illyrians were Slavs and that therefore the culture of the South Slavs can be accomplished only under the name of Ilirism. Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, it developed into the idea of *jugoslavenstvo* [Yugoslavdom]. For more on this see Mirjana Gross, *Izvorno pravaštvo: ideologija, agitacija, pokret* [Genuine Party of Rights: Ideology, Canvassing, Movement] (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2000), 38-40.

back from the Middle Ages.⁴⁹ Thus, during the interwar period Pavelić accepted the notion of an independent state as a natural, historical right of Croats. However, the discourse on racism, cultural hegemony, superiority of some nations and races over others, purity of nations and their right for ‘natural’ development caused radicalization of his state idea to an extent which later on led to mass exterminations and relocations. During the 1930s, Pavelić organized the Ustasha movement, became its undisputed leader by coordinating movements actions aimed at destabilizing and destroying the existing Kingdom. Besides the organization and activities of the movement, Pavelić also generated ideological and organizational documents which served as the basis of the Ustashes’ organization and ideology. Their importance is best seen from the fact that these documents became the cornerstones of the later established Ustasha regime, the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945.

Already at the beginning of the 1930s, Pavelić and his associates, e.g. Branimir Jelić, Mijo Bzik, Mile Budak, Mijo Babić, Zvonimir Pospišil and others, started publishing their first journals such as *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca* [Ustaša – The Croatian Revolutionaries Herald], *Grič – hrvatska korespondencija* [Grič – Croatian Correspondence], *Nezavisna Hrvatska Država* [Independent Croatian State], *Croatiapress*, and others. Their purpose was to make their ideas known, but also to acquaint not only the Croatian public, but the international one as well about their activities, ideas, and aims.⁵⁰ For example, in their journal *Ustaša* from February 1932⁵¹ it was stated that:

⁴⁹ Stračević claimed that Croatia volonterily joined a personal union with Hungary in 1102 through the so-called *Pacta Conventa*. Based on this, he claimed that Croats have every political and historical right to dissolve such union and establish independent Croatia. For more on this see Dulić, *Utopias of Nation*, 56-57.

⁵⁰ That is why they also published journals and books in foreign languages, mostly in French and German. For a more detailed analysis of the Ustasha journals and publications see Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 184–211.

⁵¹ The first issue was published in May 1930. See Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 115.

THE GUN, REVOLVER, BOMB AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE⁵² are the idols which shall bring back the land to the peasant, the bread to the worker and the freedom to Croatia [...] those are the bells which shall be a harbinger of the new dawn and of the RESURRECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT CROATIAN STATE.⁵³

Another issue of this journal, from February and April 1932, contained a section entitled *Tehnika revolucije* [The Technique of Revolution], where they elaborated on the attacks on government buildings and infrastructure, on the usage of bombs and “how in the hour of final insurrection one can by usage of fire further help and ease its success”.⁵⁴ In February 1932 issue, there is a description on how to organize Ustashas within the Kingdom and how to recruit new members.⁵⁵ Two issues from January and March 1934 spoke for example about the Ustasha virtues and all the vices which the Ustasha has to avoid because “the Ustasha-Home Guard is not an ordinary man. He lives a special life”.⁵⁶ In December 1940 issue, they wrote about the victims and martyrs of the Ustasha fight, emphasizing that their movement:

[...] is a result of a 1300 years of state and national life of one of the oldest, most noble, and most deserving nations of the European west, which by accident became prey to a semi-savage, and in every way inferior, Serbian conqueror.⁵⁷

The cultural hierarchy of nations, which the Ustashas established in their ideological mindset, was that of West versus East. It was the idea of injustice imposed after the Versailles which made possible for a nation of Western European culture, seen as superior, to be ruled over by an inferior, Eastern one. Notions of superior and inferior nations, in which the Croats are portrayed as a civilized, European nation

⁵² It is unclear what exactly was meant here by the term 'infernal machine'. One possible explanation is that it refers to some sort of concealed or disguised explosive device.

⁵³ “Ropstvo je dodijalo,” [Fed up with Slavery] *Ustaša – Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca*, [Ustasha – Herald of Croatian Revolutionaries] February 1932, 1.

⁵⁴ “Tehnika revolucije,” [The Techniques of Revolution] *Ustaša – Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca*, April 1932, 6.

⁵⁵ “Upute za organizaciju,” [Instructions for Organization] *Ustaša – Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca*, February 1932, 4.

⁵⁶ “Ustaške vrline,” [The Ustasha Virtues] *Ustaša – Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca*, January and March 1934, 2.

⁵⁷ *Ustaša – Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca*, December 1940, 1.

while the Serbs are portrayed as Eastern, and thus inferior, became more present in the discourse during the regime. Such ideological mindset certainly had a huge impact on the role of violence, and consequently on the extermination and forceful removal of the Serbian population from the territory of the Independent State of Croatia.⁵⁸

Further organizational and ideological aspects of the Ustasha movement can be discerned from several documents and publications developed and written by Pavelić. The two organizational documents, *Ustav Ustaše, hrvatske revolucionarne organizacije* [The Constitution of the Ustaša, Croatian Revolutionary Organization] from 1932,⁵⁹ and *Načela Hrvatskog Domobrana* [The Principles of the Croatian Home Guard]⁶⁰ described and determined the movement's structure, internal relations, its hierarchy, as well as its aims. The two other publications analyzed here are books *Hrvatsko pitanje* [The Croatian Question],⁶¹ and *Strahote Zabluda – Komunizam i boljševizam u Rusiji i svijetu* [The Horrors of Illusion – Communism and Bolshevism in Russia and the World],⁶² written by Pavelić during the second half of the 1930s, in which the ideological stand of the *Poglavnik*, and thus its movement, can be detected.

As stated in Clause I of *Ustav Ustaše*, the prime goal of the Ustasha is:

[...] the task of liberating Croatia from foreign domination by means of armed uprising (revolution), so that Croatia becomes a completely autonomous and independent state on all of its national and historic territory.

⁵⁸ As mentioned in my Introduction until recently, Ustasha violence was considered as a product of irrational 'Balkan hatreds' and thus portrayed as uncontrolled, wild, and without any preconceived ideas. However, this view was disputed by Tomislav Dulić, who has shown that the Ustasha violence occurred not as an irrational action but as a direct result of political decision-making. See Tomislav Dulić, "Ethnic Violence in Occupied Yugoslavia," in Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsay, eds., *New perspectives on Yugoslavia – Key issues and Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 82-100.

⁵⁹ I will use here the reprint provided by Mario Jareb in his book *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*. Scanned document can be found on pages 122-123.

⁶⁰ Here I also use the reprint from 1934 as printed in Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 126-127.

⁶¹ I use here the Croatian version as published in Ivo Bogdan, ed., *Dr. Ante Pavelić riješio je Hrvatsko pitanje*.

⁶² This document also exists as a reprint in Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 126-127.

Clause III describes and determines the Ustasha organization as consisting of the *tabor* [Commune], *logor* [County], *stožer* [District], and *Glavni ustaški stan – GUS* [Supreme Ustasha Headquarters]. Further on, Clause XI brings the text of the Oath which every person wishing to become an Ustasha member had to swear upon:

I swear by the God almighty and everything which is sacred to me, that I shall follow the Ustasha principles and submit to its regulations and will unconditionally perform all decrees of the Ustasha leadership, that I shall, every secret confined to me keep strictly to myself and never tell anyone anything.

I swear that I shall fight within the Ustasha ranks for the achievement of the independent Croatian state and will do everything the leadership decrees.

If I am to violate this oath, I am to be, by the Ustasha regulations, punished by death sentence.

So help me God. Amen.⁶³

What is clear from this oath is that the Ustasha movement was established on the basis of strict hierarchy, with the *Poglavnik* as undisputed leader, as can be discerned from Clause 4, which determines that he was the head of the *Glavni ustaški Stan – GUS*, and Clause 5, which states that only the *Poglavnik* can name his assistants.⁶⁴ Members of the movement had to swear loyalty to the *Poglavnik* as well as to secrecy, especially with regard to actions which were to lead to the establishment of the Croatian state. Another interesting aspect of this is that any violation of the oath would, by regulations, lead to the death sentence. Unfortunately, the sources from this period do not provide any concrete information regarding this, even though certain authors mention such acts occurring.⁶⁵ From this basic document of the Ustasha movement, it can be argued that Pavelić envisioned it as the authoritarian movement with military characteristics, based on strict hierarchy and secrecy.

⁶³ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 122-123.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 122.

⁶⁵ See for example HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1, 23-24, which includes data on the killings of the Ustasha members. Similar accounts can be found in Šime Balen's book, *Pavelić* (Zagreb: Hrvatska seljačka tiskara, 1952), 19-21, and Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 264, see his footnote 825.

The second document from this period is *Načela Hrvatskog Domobrana* [The Principles of the Croatian Home Guard].⁶⁶ Although the exact date of the publication is unknown, the Ustasha regime used June 1, 1933 as the date of its first publication.⁶⁷ The first publication of the *Principles* consisted of fifteen points. During the regime period, 1941-1945, two additional points were included, and the *Principles* received some minor changes and alterations.⁶⁸ However, the main ideas of Croats as an “autonomous ethnic (national) unit”, of their land as the territory which the Croats “inhabited, have grown with, and have given it the authentic and natural name Croatia”, of Croats as “free people, by their own free will”, of their ancient statehood which they established immediately upon their arrival “with all the hallmarks of statehood”, of Croats maintaining their state “through centuries until the end of the World War” remained unchanged in the later publication. The *Principles* further depicted the Croatian nation as a unit, an organic unit, within which:

⁶⁶ I used here the reprint from Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 126-127, as well as the version published in Ante Valenta, prir., *Tumač načela Hrvatskog domobrana: kako je nastala t.zv. "Jugoslavija" ili pravi uzroci pogibije Aleksandra u Marseille*, [Interpreter of the Principles of the Croatian Home-defender: How the so-called Yugoslavia came to Exist or the real Causes of the King Alexander's Death in Marseille] Biblioteka Hrvatskog domobrana, br. 5 (Buenos Aires: s. n., 1935), and their most extensive and most elaborated version written by Danijel Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta* [The Principles of the Croatian Ustasha Movement] (Zagreb, 1942).

⁶⁷ For more on the problem of determining their exact date of publication and various publications where they were published see Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 121-124.

⁶⁸ Originally, the Principles consisted of fifteen points, while the ones published in 1942 consisted of seventeen points. There are certain differences between the *Principles* published in 1933 and those from 1942. First of all, the 1933 Principles consist only of short and simple information on what might be seen as the Movements' main ideas and intentions. In contrast to this, the 1942 edition provides more or less the same information with an added *Introduction*, a short chapter named *Poglavnikova duša* [Poglavnik's Soul] and broader explanation, meaning, and purpose of the main points, written and explained on 117 pages. While some points have been shifted in scale, some newly introduced points appear in the 1942 edition. For example, there is a point 8 which depicts the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, point 14 which is entitled *The Nobility of Work and Duty*, which is also non-existent in the 1933 edition, as well as the newly added point 15, *The Principle of Responsibility*. At the same time point 12 from the 1933 edition which states that Croatian people belong to the Western culture and Western civilization is removed from the 1942 edition, while the point 15 of the 1933 edition is divided into two points, points 16 and 17 of 1942 edition, entitled *Sources of Croatian Strength* and *Progress and Tasks of National Work*. For the 1942 edition of *Načela* see Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta*.

[...] happiness and wellbeing can be accomplished for the people as a unit and for individuals as members of that unit in the completely autonomous and independent Croatian state.⁶⁹

Also, the *Principles* clearly stated that “the Croatian people have their supreme right (sovereignty) by which they are the only one to rule in their state and govern their own state and national affairs”.⁷⁰ What all this shows, as Goldstein rightly argues in his book, is a clearly developed ideological system.⁷¹ This was a system envisioned on the basis of exclusivist national, ethnic, and state idea. It was a system which strived towards the achievement of an independent state, which was seen as being abruptly taken from the Croats by a ‘foreign impostor’. This new national community was envisaged on the basis and form within which a group is given precedence over individuals, and where Croats would be the only factor with the right to rule and govern. In this future vision of Croatian society, the individual matters only as long as he/she obeys and lives by the rules set up by a larger community, in this case represented by the Croatian nation as envisioned by the Ustashas. The *Principles* represented the basic ideological document for the Ustashas throughout the 1930s and especially during their regime, when it served as a sort of the Constitution.

As mentioned, besides basic organizational and ideological documents, Pavelić also wrote and published two books. His 1936 treatise, originally published in German language under the title *Die Kroatische Frage* [The Croatian Question], is important due to the fact that here for the first time one encounters the notion of anti-Semitism in his writings.⁷² In it, he talked about the Jews as controlling almost all “financial and commercial goods”.⁷³ Further on, he also talked about communism and its ideas,

⁶⁹ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 127.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 94.

⁷² As mentioned, the book was republished in Croatian language and edited by Ivo Bogdan. See Ivo Bogdan, ed., *Dr. Ante Pavelić riješio je Hrvatsko pitanje*.

⁷³ Ibid, 25.

which with the help of the Jews were being promoted in Croatia. For him, communism and Jews are compatible in the sense that they accept this new state and “are working against the national liberation of Croatia”.⁷⁴ In his treatise, Pavelić also talked about the unfairness of Versailles,⁷⁵ about how this new state was built on the false premise of “Croats and Serbs as one nation” as well as on the premise that Croats wanted this new state.⁷⁶ It is also in this book that for the first time Pavelić plays with the idea of the Gothic origins of Croats.⁷⁷ This treatise was first and foremost intended for the Nazi officials. It was written in the German language at the time when Pavelić and his Ustashas were interned and found themselves without open support of Mussolini. Thus, it should be looked upon as an attempt of Pavelić’s rapprochement towards Nazi Germany as the emerging political, military, and ideological force in Europe.⁷⁸

Pavelić presented similar ideas in his most known book *Strahote zabluda*,⁷⁹ in which he also wrote about the connections between communism and the Jews, but this time he created a direct link between the Jews and the communist idea. For him, communism was an idea invented and propagated by:

⁷⁴ Ibid, 27.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁷⁷ Pavelić was not the first one to play with the idea of Croats actually being of Gothic origins. However, it is plausible to presume that he introduced it in his text in order to please the Nazi officials to whom this treatise was intended for, and thus position the Croats higher within the Nazi racial hierarchy. However, the idea of Croats as being of Gothic origins was developed during the medieval period and as such was then taken over by various authors and intellectuals, such as for example Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006). For more elaborated work on the appearance and development of this theory during the medieval period see a study by Danijel Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in post-Roman and early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 99-104.

⁷⁸ See also Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 430-431.

⁷⁹ Pavelić’s book was first published in the Italian language in 1938 in Sienna under the title *Errori e orrori*. It was published under his pseudonym A. S. Mrzlodolski and was confiscated by the Italian authorities. It was republished in Croatian language in 1941.

Marx, the eastern Semite [...] the modern communism, which was made a state system by the Bolsheviks' October Revolution, descends from Germany, not from the Germans, but from the German Jew Marx.⁸⁰

In his view, most of the communist leaders were of Jewish origins, and thus the internationalism of communism was seen as an act of Jews trying to conquer and establish world domination.⁸¹ For him communism represented a dangerous idea aimed at the destruction of national community, family, spiritual life, worker and other values of Western civilization. It was the product of an Eastern culture, an inferior culture in his mindset; as a culture for which he asks:

[...] has it not always been the key point for emergence of peculiar and exotic doctrines, sight of prophets and messiahs, in search of a dream, promised countries, rivers of life, phoenix-birds and nirvanas?⁸²



Figure 1.3. Ante Pavelić's book *Strahote zabluda*, 1941.

The context in which this book was written is significant having in mind that Pavelić wrote it in the midst of the Spanish Civil War, which can be viewed as the first conflict, the first open battle between the two newly emerging, highly exclusivist

⁸⁰ Ante Pavelić, *Strahote zabluda – komunizam i boljševizam u Rusiji i svijetu* [Horrors of Illusions – Communism and Bolshevism in Russia and the World] (Zagreb: Tiskara knjižare St. Kugli, 1941), 17-19.

⁸¹ Ibid, 169-171.

⁸² Ibid, 18.

totalitarian ideologies of communism and fascism in Europe. In it Pavelić left no suspicion about the question which idea he sees as more acceptable and more suitable to Croatian state and nation, as he envisaged it. He devoted an entire chapter in his book entitled *Fascism and Bolshevism*⁸³ where he described fascism as the only viable system of beliefs which can defeat communism, and thus save Western civilization. He blamed democracy for missing the opportunity to impose itself in the East, thus allowing communism to flourish.⁸⁴ Furthermore, he saw democracy as an old, dying system, and therefore regarded fascism as an idea, a system “born in the West on the ruins of democracy which showed itself incapable of standing against bolshevism”.⁸⁵ According to Pavelić, due to democracy’s weaknesses and inability to strongly oppose the communist idea, there had to come something new, something stronger, something which would be capable of defeating bolshevism, and that “found its outcome in fascism. Of course fascism had to eliminate democracy first, as it proved immature and incapable for this fight”.⁸⁶ Pavelić juxtaposed these two ideological frameworks of fascism and bolshevism, on a simple dichotomy of good and evil, light and darkness, civilization and barbarism. For him, fascism represented a “movement of ideas and nations” while bolshevism represented a “synthesis of barbarism and destruction”.⁸⁷ In his concluding remarks he stated that:

It is in vain to speak that fascism is not for export. Bolshevism is universal evil and wants to reign everywhere. Fascism stands in fight for death or life with it, and therefore must contest it everywhere, in every corner of earth, and the unavoidable consequence of this is that it thus becomes, general, »universal« [...] Of this, cannons in Spain speak today, where history of the fight between the two worlds is being written in blood.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid, 261-273.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 261.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 261.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 262.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 266.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 273.

1.5. *Ustasha Organizational Activities and Publications, 1934-1941*

In March 1936 Pavelić was freed, but still under surveillance of Italian authorities, and from 1937 he was interned in Siena.⁸⁹ During this period, the Ustasha activities came to a standstill. Pavelić maintained correspondence with his followers, but these were more letters of encouragement to maintain their morale than to plan or execute any activities against the Kingdom. Contrary to what Pavelić had hoped for, the period after the assassination was marked by the process of rapprochement between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Fascist Italy, which was sealed by the *Italo-Yugoslav Political Agreement* signed by Yugoslav prime-minister Milan Stojadinović and Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano on March 25, 1937. Italy benefited from this Agreement in a sense that it managed, as Sadkovich says, to “secure Italy’s positions in the Balkans but it also meant the *coup de grace* for the French system of alliances and the Little Entente”.⁹⁰ Article 4 of the *Agreement* stated that:

The High Contracting Parties undertake not to tolerate in their respective territories, or aid in any way, activities directed against the territorial integrity or the existing order of the other Contracting Party.⁹¹

However, despite this clause the Italians still kept relations with the Ustashes, thus, as Jelić-Butić argued, maintaining them as a reserve factor.⁹² Stojadinović hoped that the *Agreement* would make it possible to destroy the Ustasha movement *in toto*, even if that meant that some of its members would be allowed to return to the Kingdom. He hoped that, by separating and dividing them, he would manage to distance them from Pavelić, thus causing disruptions within the movement and the inability of Pavelić to control them upon their return.⁹³ And to a certain degree he

⁸⁹ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 432-433.

⁹⁰ Ivica Šute, *Slogom slobodi!: Gospodarska sloga 1935-1941* [In Harmony Towards Freedom!: Economic Harmony 1935-1941] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2010), 276.

⁹¹ See Appendix A in Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, 301-302.

⁹² Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska: 1941-1945*, 27.

⁹³ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 437.

succeeded. After the Stojadinović-Ciano agreement, Pavelić signed a decree with which he “dissolved from active Ustasha service all members of the Ustasha organization present on the territory of the Kingdom of Italy as well as their camps”.⁹⁴

Budak mentioned that:

The Poglavnik sent a memo [...] that each of us can return back to our homeland, if one was not involved in any terrorist act, that is, if someone does not wish to do so, Italy shall provide him with a passport to go to some other country, and if they do not wish to do that either, they can remain in Italy [...] Poglavnik gave me an order to listen to each man individually and make a record of this.⁹⁵

It is difficult to determine the exact number of the Ustasha members who decided to return. However, some of the more prominent members, such as writer Mile Budak and Mladen Lorković did return, and remained dedicated to the ideas and goals of their *Poglavnik*. There are no indications that Pavelić was unaware of their decision to return or that Budak and others decided to return in order to break their connections with him. I would therefore agree with Aralica when he states that:

[...] everything points to the fact that the return of Mile Budak was planned, far-reaching, and indeed the most important move of the Ustasha leadership after the Marseille assassination.⁹⁶

Budak returned to the Kingdom in July 1938⁹⁷ at which point he approached Maček and his *HSS*.⁹⁸ It is known that members of the Ustasha movement infiltrated the *HSS* and its organization during the post 1934 period. For example, in his report when interrogated by the Yugoslav communist *Služba Državne Sigurnosti – SDS* [Office of State Security] Budak stated: “We advised our people, during and after the dictatorship, to become members of the HSS, since it was impossible for the HSP to

⁹⁴ Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i Ustaše*, 281. Krizman did not provide a full transcript of this decree, and Jareb says that it was never published as such during the existence of the NDH.

⁹⁵ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Dosje Mile Budak* [Dossier Mile Budak] – 013.0.52. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

⁹⁶ Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj* [Matrix Croatia in the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2009), 85.

⁹⁷ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

⁹⁸ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 517-523.

become politically active.”⁹⁹ The level of infiltration is best seen from an example of Ustasha member Kruno Batušić. From 1938 he served as the commander of Maček’s personal guards. This fact is mentioned by Budak, but also by an Italian diplomat Carlo Umilta in his May 1937 report.¹⁰⁰ Even with Budak’s initial attempts to cooperate with Maček, such a line of action changed rapidly after the August 1939 *Cvetković - Maček Agreement* by which *Banovina Hrvatska* was established as an autonomous entity within the Kingdom. The *Agreement* allowed for *Banovina* to have certain independent sections such as that for internal affairs, education, judicial system, industry and trade, finances. It also established a new joint government in which Maček became its vice-president, and Ivan Šubašić became the viceroy of *Banovina*, responsible to the *Sabor* [Parliament] and to the King.¹⁰¹ It can be presumed that Maček’s policy of negotiation with the Belgrade showed Budak that Maček stands on the line of negotiating and preserving the existing Kingdom, thus giving up on the idea of Croatian independence, something that Budak would never accept.¹⁰² From this period onwards, Budak took it on himself to organize Ustasha members within the Kingdom. Jareb argues that his actions “substantially influenced the revival of the Ustasha organization and caused for a sudden increase in their organizational and sworn-in members”.¹⁰³ Due to opposing standpoints and Maček’s

⁹⁹ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

¹⁰⁰ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52., and Sadkovich, *Ustaše i Italija*, 313.

¹⁰¹ See Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 264-265, and for more detailed account on *Cvetković-Maček Agreement* see Ljubo Boban, *Sporazum Cvetković-Maček* [The Cvetković-Maček Agreement] (Beograd, 1965).

¹⁰² For the Ustasha criticism and attitude towards this agreement see the publication dedicated to its anniversary entitled *I mi čestitamo Dr. Vlatku Mačeku prigodom godišnjice sporazuma* [And We also Congratulate Dr. Maček the Anniversary of Agreement] signed by Croatian nationalists, Ustashes and Home-Guards. In this leaflet Maček is depicted as a corrupt politician whose only aim is to remain in power. *I mi čestitamo* in HDA, Zbirka Stampata – ZS – 907 – 96/27, 1940. Further on HDA, ZS – 907.

¹⁰³ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 516.

policy of negotiations and agreement with Belgrade, Budak ended all relations with him, especially after the 1938 elections.¹⁰⁴

Following his break-up with Maček, in February 1939 Budak started publishing a weekly magazine named *Hrvatski narod* [The Croatian People], in which he openly propagated Ustasha ideas about the need and right of independence, simultaneously strongly supporting policies of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. This support can be discerned from various published articles such as *Italija na straži Europe* [Italy Guards Europe],¹⁰⁵ *Hitler*,¹⁰⁶ *Posljedice Versaillesa* [The Consequences of Versailles],¹⁰⁷ *Susret revolucija: boljševičke, fašističke i nacističke* [The Meeting of Revolutions: Bolshevik, Fascist, and Nazi],¹⁰⁸ and others. This shows that by 1939 Budak and some of the other returnees, as well as Pavelić as their *Poglavnik*, stood on the side of fascism as that time dominant ideology and were thus firmly supporting the need for further political and social rearrangements in Europe, as envisioned by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Of course, the question of influence and readership of this newspaper is hard to answer by exact numbers. However, after the *Cvetković-Maček Agreement* many became disappointed with Maček's policy of negotiation with Belgrade. Jelić-Butić argued that Maček came under strong criticism and attacks for trying to save the existing Kingdom and for working against an independent Croatian state.¹⁰⁹ It is possible to assume that Maček's policy of negotiation and safeguarding the existing state caused further political radicalization, which spurred growth of support for the Ustasha movement. Budak also mentioned this when he stated that:

¹⁰⁴ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

¹⁰⁵ "Italija na straži Europe," [Italy Guards Europe] *Hrvatski narod* [The Croatian People] December 15, 1939.

¹⁰⁶ "Hitler," *Hrvatski narod*, April 7, 1939, 6.

¹⁰⁷ "Posljedice Versaillesa," [The Consequences of Versailles] *Hrvatski narod*, May 5, 1939.

¹⁰⁸ "Susret revolucija: boljševičke, fašističke i nacističke," [The Meeting of Revolutions: Bolshevik, fascist, and Nazi] *Hrvatski narod*, September 22, 1939.

¹⁰⁹ Fikreta Jelić-Butić, "Prilog proučavanju djelatnosti Ustaša do 1941," [A Contribution to the Study of the Activities of the Ustasha until 1941] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* vol. 1-2, no. 1 (1969): 77.

The supporters of the earlier Party of State Rights were dissatisfied with the Maček-Cvetković agreement and this dissatisfaction found its reflection in the increasing publication of the Croatian People /80 000 copies/, even though they were all members of HSS [...].¹¹⁰

There were also other pro-Ustasha publications in this period, namely *Hrvatska smotra* [The Croatian Review], *Hrvatska revija* [The Croatian Magazine],¹¹¹ and *Hrvatska pošta* [The Croatian Post]. That these publications were pro-Ustasha oriented can be discerned from the fact that, in the December 1940 issue of *Hrvatska pošta*, one finds the full text of the *Principles* as well as that of the *Constitution*.¹¹² How wide this support really was, and how successful the propaganda presented within was, is hard to determine. There exist neither electoral results nor any data upon which we could calculate Ustasha supporters and followers in exact numbers. However, having in mind Maček's policy of collaboration and agreement with Belgrade, which caused wide-spread dissatisfaction among more radical nationalists, and student population, the number was certainly higher from the number traditionally accepted.¹¹³ What is indicative is that the government of *Banovina* decided to ban *Hrvatski narod* in 1940 and that it also arrested the most prominent members and supporters of Pavelić such as Professor Ivan Oršanić, Mladen Lorković, and others.¹¹⁴ However, before these acts, the Ustashas managed to organize themselves on a wider scale, gaining support among the Croats. Despite the suppression of *Hrvatski narod*, during the 1940s the Ustashas printed and spread leaflets, as well as their journal *Ustaša* where they talked about the situation within the existing state and which promoted the Ustasha views and ideas on the future Croatian state. One such

¹¹⁰ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

¹¹¹ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 538.

¹¹² *Hrvatska pošta* [Croatian Post], December 1940.

¹¹³ For example, *Elaborat o ustaškom pokretu* provides a number of 1 000 while Jelić-Butić argued that there were only some 2 000 Ustasha supporters, active and passive, during this period. See Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941-1945*, 55.

¹¹⁴ Jelić-Butić, "Prilog proučavanju djelatnosti Ustaša do 1941": 84.

interesting leaflet was published in December 1940. The leaflet had no title but only the abbreviation *ŽAP – On dolazi*, which was an abbreviation from the slogan *Long live Ante Pavelić – He is Coming*.¹¹⁵ The leaflet described the struggle of Ante Pavelić throughout the interwar period, as well as emphasizing the false policy of Maček. However, the most interesting part comes at the end, which contains eight points by which the Ustasha demands are described. These demands are: the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, the return of Ante Pavelić, radical solution of the social question “so to make it impossible for a few capitalists and politicians to suck the life out of the masses”, creation of middle-range peasant farms, minimum security wages, better life conditions for civil servants, and the protection of craftsmanship. Although all these points seem quite populist, and they had in mind their main purpose, i.e. to popularize the Ustasha ideas and to attract more people for the Ustasha movement, there is one segment, which to a certain degree anticipates future radical policy of expulsion and extermination. The final point of this leaflet states that they ask “for a special status for all national minorities, and especially the relocation of all Serbs, which have moved to Croatia after December 1, 1918”.¹¹⁶ This relocation did occur during the regime period, but was also accompanied by brutal extermination as well as with the implementation of racial laws and consequently the Holocaust.¹¹⁷

Another important segment of the Ustasha activities during this period was an attempt to organize supporters and members of the Ustasha movement through various societies. The idea was to have official Ustasha organizations within the Kingdom, which would enable them to gather more supporters as well as to create a

¹¹⁵ Such slogans and graffiti were known throughout the 1930s. See Ivo and Slavko Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 98.

¹¹⁶ “ŽAP – ON DOLAZI,” [Long Live Ante Pavelić – He is Coming] December 1940, 2.

¹¹⁷ For more on the question of violence during the Ustasha regime see Tomislav Dulić, *Utopias of Nation: Local Mass Killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1941-42*, for the only book on Holocaust see Ivo and Slavko Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 2001.

broader platform for their actions and the promotion of their ideas. One such society was that of *Uzdanica* [Confidant]. *Uzdanica* was formed as a cooperative society in 1939 and thus “authorized for public work”.¹¹⁸ A survey on the Ustasha movement described *Uzdanica* as the “headquarters around which gathered all those who accepted the Ustasha ideology and who recognized Pavelić as their leader”.¹¹⁹ A similar statement on the role and purpose of *Uzdanica* can be found in Budak’s report during his investigation where he stated that, in *Uzdanica*, “all members were Ustashes”.¹²⁰ This organization had several tasks. One was to form branches across the country and to distribute Budak’s journal *Hrvatski narod*. Other tasks consisted in forming *rojeve* [swarms] where active supporters could gather. Thus many Ustasha members and supporters, as for example professor Aleksander Seitz, Ustasha official Ante Štitić, and Jure Francetić, later an Ustasha Colonel and the leader of an infamous *Crna Legija* [The Black Legion] became actively engaged in organization and promotion in regions of Lika, Bosnia, and Slavonia. The Ustasha supporters were also present in Dalmatia as well as in the cities of Varaždin and Osijek.¹²¹ Besides spreading Budak’s journal, *Uzdanica* also served as the center for spreading various illegal leaflets and pamphlets. In order for these materials not to be confiscated by police or secret service officials, their content was disguised under irrelevant titles such as *Mlinska industrija u Hrvatskoj* [The Milling Industry in Croatia], *Štakori i druge štetočine* [Rats and Other Pests], *Rastava od stola i postelje* [Separation from the Table and Bed].¹²²

¹¹⁸ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, “Izjava Božidara Cerovskog o radu ‘Uzdanice’,” [Statement of Božidar Cerovski on the Work of *Uzdanica*] – 013.4. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, BCU – 013.4.

¹¹⁹ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1.

¹²⁰ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

¹²¹ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 544-545. For more on the activities of *Uzdanica* see also HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, BCU – 013.4.

¹²² HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1.

Another stronghold of the Ustasha members and their activities within the Kingdom was the *Kulturno Društvo August Šenoa – KAD* [The Cultural Society of August Šenoa] formed at the University of Zagreb.¹²³ In order to curb and weaken various student associations, the Yugoslav government established a state based *Jugoslavenska akademska čitaonica – JAČ* [The Yugoslav Academic Reading Club] envisioned to “represent the student youth”.¹²⁴ Very often members of different student organizations came into conflicts, often culminating in open street brawls, thus creating an atmosphere in which “Demonstrations and physical settling of scores were a common phenomenon.”¹²⁵ Members of *KAD* often shouted slogans of support for Pavelić and his ideas, thus clearly showing that they came under the strong influence of the Ustasha movement. It is known that they disrupted various events by shouting “We do not recognize Dr. Maček as the leader, our leader is Pavelić!”¹²⁶ During student elections at the Faculty of Law in January 1937 colleagues of Franjo Nevistić, who won the elections against his opponent from the *HSS* student organization, shouted “Long live our leader and chief, Dr. Pavelić”, or “Long live free and independent Croatia.”¹²⁷ Even more so, one report states that students, while singing the song *Lijepa naša* [Our Beautiful], the Croatian national anthem banned by King Aleksandar, had “their right hands outstretched”.¹²⁸ Due to its activities and open support for Pavelić and Ustashas, *KAD August Šenoa* was dissolved in 1940. Since this society could no longer be active as such, the illegal *Ustaški sveučilišni stožer* –

¹²³ For a more detailed analysis of student organizations prior and after the establishment of the Ustasha regime see Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941-1945*, 29-81.

¹²⁴ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Kulturno akademsko društvo (napisao Božidar Kavran 1948. godine)* [Cultural-Academic Society] – 013.6. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, KADBK – 013.6.

¹²⁵ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, KADBK – 013.6.

¹²⁶ As quoted in Pavlaković Vjeran, “Radicalization at the University of Zagreb during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939,” *Historijski zbornik* [Historical Review] vol. 62, no. 2 (2009): 496.

¹²⁷ Ibid: 496.

¹²⁸ Ibid: 496.

USS [The Ustasha University Headquarters] was formed. Its district leader was Zdenko Blažeković, a prominent member of the later established Ustasha Youth organization.¹²⁹ Such open activities and evident increase in their membership caused a more open public display of support, which manifested itself in public gatherings and demonstrations during which they shouted slogans openly supporting Pavelić.¹³⁰ One such manifestation took place on November 1, 1940. According to one report the Ustashes military formations, with some 1 000 members, visited the graves of HSP party members at the city cemetery in Zagreb and Šestine.¹³¹ Božidar Cerovski, a close associate of Mile Budak and author of several articles in his *Hrvatski narod*, described this same event during his interrogation.¹³²

With all the above mentioned it can be said that, after the *Italo-Yugoslav Political Agreement* and the *Cvetković-Maček Agreement*, the Ustashes managed to gain a stronghold within the Kingdom. This is important, since until then Pavelić and his Ustasha movement were active outside their homeland, a fact which certainly reduced and limited their possibility of influence upon the wider population. It is also clear that during this period the Ustashes infiltrated, organized, and gathered wider support. This can also be concluded from Budak's statement during his interrogation: "As for the home country I emphasize, that in all places of Croatia we had our people, and supposedly in all army units as well."¹³³ Though certainly a bit far-fetched, the statement nevertheless conveys that the Ustashes managed to establish themselves as a considerable force within the Kingdom. It was exactly during the period after the Marseille assassination that the Ustashes, until then organized as a small, radical,

¹²⁹ Jelić-Butić, "Prilog proučavanju djelatnosti Ustaša do 1941": 84, and Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 560-561.

¹³⁰ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 556.

¹³¹ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1.

¹³² HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, BCU – 013.4.

¹³³ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DMB – 013.0.52.

fascist movement in Italy, managed to propagate and establish their movement and its leader as the only force capable and willing in executing the idea of independence to its fullest. It was in the second half of the 1930s that they managed to present, and elevate the idea of independence to an unseen mythical level.¹³⁴

As shown, throughout the interwar period Ante Pavelić argued for the establishment of the independent Croatian state. He stood on the notion of Croats' historical and 'natural' rights for self-determination, and formation of their own, Croatian state. It was exactly in the interwar period, seen by Pavelić and his associates as the unjust and forceful interruption of Croatian statehood and freedom, that the idea of the independent state became a necessary prerequisite for the 'natural' development of Croats. The prominent position which the idea of independence had in Pavelić's discourse and the Ustasha actions were further emphasized by their usage of religious language. Pavelić talked about the sacrifice, the sufferings, and the martyrs in this fight for liberation and independence. Even more so, he connected the idea of the state to biblical parallels when in 1927 he stated: "After Golgotha the Resurrection must come. The sea of the Croatian people's force can never dry out."¹³⁵ The same parallel was used in November 1928 when he stated: "The ten-year-long Calvary of Croatian people cannot and must not be ended with some agreement, but only with a Resurrection."¹³⁶ It is plausible to think that the usage of religious vocabulary served to further sacralize the idea of state and nation, as well as to further enhance the view of Croatian nation and its people as the 'chosen one'. This then allowed Pavelić and his closest associates, such as Bzik, Kvaternik, Babić, Budak, Lorković, Oršanić,

¹³⁴ See Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, 80.

¹³⁵ Ante Pavelić, "Gore srca," [Hearts are Burning] in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem Hrvatskog državnog prava*.

¹³⁶ Ante Pavelić, "Svako popuštanje značilo bi izdaju Hrvatske i oskvrnuće lipanjskih žrtava," [Any Yielding Would mean Betrayal of Croatia and the Defilement of the June Victims] in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem Hrvatskog državnog prava*.

Črljen, Francetić, and others, to position themselves as being predestined, chosen to achieve this historically imminent, predetermined independence. The emphasis placed on the notion of state and nation, on imminent need for purification and salvation of Croatian nation, combined with the articles written on the topic of the *Poglavnik*, Ustashas, their just fight and belief, further accentuated with the constant presence of *Providence* in the Ustasha writings on the state and the *Poglavnik*, could all be placed within Iordachi's concept of *charismatic nationalism*.¹³⁷

After all, it was Pavelić's belief in the achievement of the state's independence that established the Ustasha movement with a mission to achieve this 'natural' and 'predestined' independence of Croatian state. This idea was then transferred by Pavelić into a highly hierarchic, military, and revolutionary movement with one purpose only, the achievement of independence, and thus consequently, the salvation of Croatian nation. While the movement took its roots already in the second half of the 1920s, it achieved its realization to the fullest during the 1930s, when it received a strict organizational and ideological basis, serving as guidance towards the realization and establishment of the state. As shown above, once established, this state was to be based on the dominant ideology of fascism with its totalitarian character serving the purpose of emphasizing the historical necessity to purify the Croatian nation from foreign, intruding, and destructive elements.¹³⁸ It served to enact and produce anthropological revolution through regimentation and reeducation of the 'new' Croat – the Ustasha for the purpose of regenerating the Croatian nation. This would allow then to return it on the 'natural path' of its historical development, that is, to its 'natural roots', which for Pavelić and his Ustashas were abruptly interrupted by the

¹³⁷ Iordachi, "Fascism in Southeastern Europe: A Comparison between Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael and Croatia's Ustaša", 395-404.

¹³⁸ For a rare account on the Ustasha state as totalitarian see a brief chapter by Tihomir Cipek, "'Stoljeće diktatura' u Hrvatskoj," [A Century of Dictatorship in Croatia] in *Hrvatska politika u XX. stoljeću*, [Croatian Politics in Twentieth Century] (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2006), 283-307.

Versailles and the forceful creation of an 'artificial' Kingdom where Croats were ruled by a foreign and inferior nation, the Serbs.

CHAPTER II: The ‘Prophet’ and His Followers, 1941-1945¹

“Poglavnik, we are Yours! Lead us forward, lead us to final victory!”²

Introduction

The relations established during the initial phase of the Ustasha movement formation and development, between Pavelić as the *Poglavnik* and his initial followers, occurred outside of what could be described as normal social and political context. Formed and established in a foreign country, between Ante Pavelić, as a person sentenced to death *in absentia*, and those who decided to leave everything they had behind in order to follow him, relations were based on the unquestionable belief in the *Poglavnik*, his ideas and his actions. Pavelić used the idea of independence as his ‘mobilizing myth’ by which he managed to gather his initial followers. Those who accepted his ideas and actions did so not because they had no choice but rather because they saw him as the ‘chosen one’, as someone who epitomizes this idea of independence and without whom this idea of independence could not be achieved. The main argument is that, from early on, the *Poglavnik* became a charismatic leader who was recognized as such by his initial followers and who then further nurtured and developed this relationship and sentiments during the 1930s.

Since the *Poglavnik* became the embodiment of the state, an exemplary model of a ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha, his initial followers, those comprising the ‘charismatic aristocracy’ of the movement, wished to transfer their belief in the *Poglavnik* onto the

¹ Certain sections of this Chapter have been published in my article “Karizmatični Poglavnik? Poglavnik i formiranje karizmatičke zajednice – primjena i korisnost Weberova koncepta karizme,” [Charismatic Poglavnik? Poglavnik and the Formation of Charismatic Community – Applicability and Usefulness of Weber’s Concept of Charisma] *Historijski zbornik* [Historical Journal] vol. 66, no. 1, (2013): 121-149.

² Ivan Lasić, “Ustaška mladež izpunjena je vjerom u pobjedu,” [The Ustasha Youth is Filled with Belief in Victory] *Banjalučko Novo Doba*, [Banja Luka New Age] February 27, 1943, no. 9, 3.

entire society, especially onto the younger generations who were to take over their positions in future. Thus, the *Poglavnik* cult, unquestionably developed and propagated during the regime period, stemmed not from the need to justify his actions, deeds, and character, but rather from the belief of his initial followers that he was the ‘chosen one’, the one without whom this state would not have been possible. It was this belief, later described as the essential inner feeling of every proper Croat – the Ustasha, which was to be awakened among the younger generations of the Ustashes. What took place here was an attempt at *charismatisation* of a society *in toto*, with special emphasis placed on the youth as the next generation of the true Croats, the next generation of the Ustashes.

2.1. The Poglavnik and the Ustashes – Charisma and Charismatisation

The people have sensed His coming; for he has to come [...] Everything is going on its completely safe path, a completely determined path of Providence [...] Be aware, because the One, who is Justice and Truth, arrives to save his people.³

It was with these words that Mile Budak, a poet and close associate of the *Poglavnik*, described his feelings on the Christmas Eve of 1939. While his text is devoted to Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ, Budak pays more attention to the political situation in Europe, and within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia than Christmas itself. He used this occasion to draw parallels to the *Poglavnik*’s persona as the savior predestined to liberate the Croatian people. The fact that Budak wrote these words while living in the Kingdom, and as such being detached from the Ustashes and *Poglavnik*, who at that time were scattered throughout Italy, poses a question about the relations established between the core members of the Ustashes and their leader.

³ Mile Budak, “Rodjen je i on je tu,” [He is Born and He is Here] *Hrvatski narod*, December 25, 1939, no. 46-47, 1.

Can one talk of a charismatic relations established between the *Poglavnik* and its initial followers? Was the meaning and role of the *Poglavnik's* charisma transferred within the established Ustasha regime? Here it is argued that the position which “fascist leaders eventually occupied in the political and psychological structures of their movements [which] alludes to an exceptional degree of *charismatisation* by the community of followers and by those functioning within the movement’s hierarchy”⁴ can also be traced among the relation established between the *Poglavnik* and its core followers, especially those who joined his cause during the 1930s.

During the nineteenth century, Croatian romantic nationalism was devoted towards confirming Croatian state rights, their historical continuation, and the importance of historical territory, thus emphasizing the uniqueness of Croats as a political nation. However, in the post-1918 discourse, such a romanticized view of Croats’ past, its uniqueness, and historical state rights was seen as endangered within the newly established Kingdom. For those of a more radical political orientation, this danger was not merely a political one, exercised through political power and suppression, but above all one of cultural and even racial contamination being imposed by an inferior, Serbian nation. Pavelić viewed all this through lenses of biological determinism, in which such a constellation immanently lead towards one’s destruction and disappearance, and thus had to be stopped and altered. Such an ominous vision called for the need of national salvation through an all-embracing rebirth. This rebirth was to occur under the guidance of a charismatic leader, who carries with him the idea and promise of salvation.⁵ As Iordachi states, this rebirth, led by charismatic leader and his movement, would lead to “the ethnic, racial, or religious purification” and was to occur

⁴ Kallis, “Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic' Domination and Interwar European Fascism”: 25.

⁵ Robert C. Tucker, “The Theory of Charismatic Leadership,” *Daedalus*, vol. 97, no. 3 (1968): 742.

[...] through new forms of socialization based on a new ethical code of conduct leading to the creation of the new man, and the emancipation of the status of the respective people in international affairs.⁶

After the already mentioned parliament shooting and the establishment of the dictatorship, Pavelić declared: “Farewell! I shall either return to a free Croatian state or I shall never return again!”⁷ Pavelić regarded Croatian state independence as a just and natural historical development. For him, this natural development came to a halt by the actions of political traitors within the Croatian nation and the forceful imposition of an artificial Yugoslav state in the aftermath of the First World War. In his mindset, the liberation of the Croatian people and creation of independent Croatia was only a matter of time, thus seen as an unavoidable reality.⁸ It was exactly this core belief in the historically determined and naturally envisaged liberation of the Croatian people, connected strongly with the creation of their own independent state, at any cost necessary, which became his ‘mobilizing myth’. His followers accepted these core beliefs and thereby surrendered themselves to him as an embodiment of it. Pavelić presented these ideas as though they are of a higher, religious, God-given prominence. It comes as no surprise that, in his apocalyptic vision of the Croats’ destiny, he saw the post-1918 period as that of the “Calvary of Croatian people”, the Calvary which could only end by the resurrection and rebirth of the Croatian state and nation.⁹

The religious vocabulary served the purpose of emphasizing a mystical, God-given reference to the idea of independence of Croats. The vocabulary incorporated

⁶ Iordachi, “Fascism in Southeastern Europe: A Comparison between Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael and Croatia's Ustaša”, 404.

⁷ Ante Pavelić, “Ili u slobodnoj državi Hrvatskoj ili nikada,” [Either in a Free Croatian State or Never] in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem hrvatskog državnog prava. Poglavnikovi govori, izjave i članci prije odlaska u tuđinu*.

⁸ Ante Pavelić, “Smije li se zdvajati?,” [Can there Be any Doubts?] and “Velika povjesna borba,” [Great Historical Battle] in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem hrvatskog državnog prava. Poglavnikovi govori, izjave i članci prije odlaska u tuđinu*.

⁹ Ante Pavelić, “Svako popuštanje značilo bi izdaju Hrvatske i oskvrnuće lipanjskih žrtava,” in Mijo Bzik, ed., *Putem hrvatskog državnog prava. Poglavnikovi govori, izjave i članci prije odlaska u tuđinu*.

suffering, slavery, sacrifice, and predestined fate with the purpose of bestowing this idea as natural, predestined, prewritten, awaiting its fulfillment under the guidance of the *Poglavnik* and his followers. But what did such religious connotations mean for the ‘mobilizing myth’ and its leader? Such discourse and beliefs served the purpose of emphasizing the “messianic” mission of the *Poglavnik* as being the ‘chosen one’ and of the Ustasha movement *per se*.¹⁰ For example, the establishment of the Ustasha regime, as seen from the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia on April 10, 1941, delivered by the *Poglavnik*’s deputy Slavko Kvaternik, became possible only thanks to God’s providence, allies, and the *Poglavnik*’s sacrifice which “had defined that today, one day before the resurrection of God’s Son, our Independent State of Croatia is resurrected”.¹¹ The usage of religious vocabulary during the regime period served the purpose of further emphasizing the notion of predestination, thus creating the image of the *Poglavnik* and his Ustashes as being the ‘chosen’ Croats.

Such a divine vision of the idea of independence can also be traced within the already mentioned key organizational document of the Ustasha movement, *Ustav – Ustaše, hrvatske revolucionarne organizacije*.¹² Not only did this document set up the hierarchical and organizational foundations of the Ustasha movement, it also contained a segment showing the basics of the relation established between the *Poglavnik* and those who decided to surrender unconditionally to him, as a carrier and the embodiment of the idea of independence. The already mentioned Ustasha oath shows that every person wishing to become a full member of the Ustasha movement had to accept and surrender himself/herself to the idea of “the achievement of the independent Croatian state”. Furthermore, each individual member had to swear in

¹⁰ Kallis, “Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic' Domination and Interwar European Fascism”: 29.

¹¹ *Hrvatski narod*, April 10, 1941, 1.

¹² I use here the Constitution which Jareb scanned for his book and which appeared in 1932. See Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 122-123.

God's name that he/she shall obey the Ustasha principles and "will unconditionally perform all decrees of the Ustasha leadership". At the end, they agreed upon passing the control over their future life to the Ustasha leadership, since in the case of the violation of the oath, the text stipulated: "If I am to violate this oath, I am to be, by the Ustasha regulations, punished by the death sentence. So help me God. Amen."¹³ It is clear that submission to the idea of Croatian independence meant first of all submitting oneself to the *Poglavnik*. By transferring their control over their own destiny into the hands of the Ustasha leadership, that is, to the *Poglavnik*, those who wished to become members of the Ustasha movement had to above all embrace and accept the *Poglavnik* as the embodiment of this idea, the carrier of it and of the movement itself. For them the *Poglavnik* became the idea, he came to personalize the 'mobilizing myth'. They regarded him as the 'messiah', the 'chosen one', the leader who was predestined to save Croatian nation and establish the Croatian state. As Ante Moškov, a close associate of Pavelić, stated during his interrogation by the Yugoslav Secret Service:

With regard to our common and highest goal, the goal of the independent Croatian state, it was fostered, and with all means strengthened, by our belief and obedience to the *Poglavnik* as the carrier and personification of this struggle.¹⁴

When reading the text of the oath, it is clear that the only person, or being, above the *Poglavnik* was God, to whom the Ustasha members called upon to guide them in their conduct so that they may not do any wrong. Therefore, they ask for God's guidance in their actions and deeds so they would not violate their oath to the *Poglavnik* and thus lose their right of having control over their lives. By becoming Ustasha, their lives were determined by strict rules, conducts, actions, and the will of their leader, the *Poglavnik*. That this was not just something written on a piece of

¹³ Ibid, 122-123.

¹⁴ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Dosje Ante Moškov* [Dossier Ante Moškov] – 013.0.58. Further on HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DAM – 013.0.58.

paper, but rather taken very seriously and implemented on several occasions, can best be seen from reports and testimonies regarding the murders of several Ustasha members due to their misconduct and violation of the oath.¹⁵ Those who decided to join the Ustasha movement were thus willingly accepting and approving this ‘mobilizing myth’ set forward by the *Poglavnik*. Observing the unconditional obedience and surrender of Ustasha members to the *Poglavnik*, it can be said that, during the 1930s, the core members of the Ustashes started perceiving the *Poglavnik* and his idea as being charismatic, as being endowed with God’s grace. Thus, it can be argued that, during the initial phase of the movement’s formation, they passed through the process of “persuasion and voluntary subscription to the mobilizing myth”.¹⁶ This total subscription to the mobilizing idea, the myth, is taken as the strongest bond between the leader who embodies the myth and his followers. Once the *Poglavnik* became perceived as the embodiment of the myth, as its incarnation, a person without whom this idea would vanish and could not be fulfilled, a charismatic relation was formed. His followers recognized him as such, thus setting him apart from ordinary men and seeing him as, “endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities”.¹⁷ In such relations, all rational thoughts and objections become non-existent. Even during the time of crises, as was the case with the Ustasha movement after the 1934 Marseilles assassination, the psychological and emotional bond created between the *Poglavnik* and its closest followers was not dissolved. He remained their leader despite his mistaken calculations that once King Aleksandar was assassinated, the Kingdom would simply break down and a Croatian

¹⁵ For example HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, EUP – 013.1., brings data on the killings of the Ustasha members, and the same can be found in Šime Balen, *Pavelić*, 19-21, and Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 264, see his footnote 825.

¹⁶ Kallis, “Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic' Domination and Interwar European Fascism”: 30.

¹⁷ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 358.

state would be established. On the contrary, his miscalculations caused several years of detention and hardship for his closest followers, which nevertheless did not rattle their firm belief in their leader and the idea he epitomized. To put it in Kallis's words:

The leader, already charismatised within the movement as either the 'prophet' or the actual 'messiah', already identified psychologically with the myth, and capable of generating devotional loyalty, could pose the dilemma in terms of victory with him, or obliteration without him.¹⁸

Therefore, the key component here is the belief in the *Poglavnik* as an embodiment, incarnation of an idea, of his mobilizing myth and unconditional surrender to him by his closest followers that is, their feeling of a "complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality".¹⁹

With the above mentioned it can be argued that the initial members of the Ustasha movement provided the necessary recognition of the *Poglavnik's* authority. They entrusted him with the power to organize, develop, and direct their actions and beliefs. However, it would be wrong to assume that their relation was linear throughout. While they were ready to leave their families, sacrifice their lives, live in harsh conditions, and to accept an unknown future in order to follow and accomplish his idea, there were moments in which some members did question the *Poglavnik's* actions and conduct, especially after the Marseille assassination. One such moment occurred with Pavelić's close associate Branimir Jelić. Jelić was at the island of Lipari from December 1934 till March 1935. During his stay there, he came into conflict with the group gathered around Mile Budak and Mijo Babić. In his book, Jareb brings testimonies of various Ustasha members from which it can be concluded that this conflict had its roots in the relations with the Italians. While Budak was strongly oriented towards Italy and its policy, Jelić, who was of Dalmatian origins, was less

¹⁸ Kallis, "Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic' Domination and Interwar European Fascism": 31.

¹⁹ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 359.

trustworthy towards them.²⁰ According to Ante Moškov, it was the group gathered around Mijo Babić which considered that Jelić might pose a threat to Pavelić as the *Poglavnik*.²¹ Jelić wrote similarly in his memoirs when he described that Budak was the one in charge of attacking him since he had refused to follow the line.²² According to Sadkovich, there was a group of ‘dissidents’ gathered around Jelić, mostly intellectuals, which started questioning Pavelić’s authority in that period. Sadkovich argues that due to the amount of support which Jelić enjoyed among the Croats in North and Latin America, he “really believed that he was equal to Pavelić and superior to Budak”.²³ For this, Jelić was given support by the Italians, who thought it useful to have an ally among the Ustasha circles in case of Pavelić’s disobedience or lack of support among his followers.²⁴ However, according to Sadkovich, the American branch of the Ustashes showed their loyalty to Pavelić, thus forcing Conti, an Italian police agent who was in charge of surveillance over the Ustashes, to give up the idea of supporting Jelić as a possible counter toward Pavelić.²⁵ Conti thus organized a meeting between the two, and once their dispute was settled, which left Pavelić as an undisputed leader, Conti organized for Jelić to be transferred to Munich.²⁶ Jelić’s case was the only public opposition to Pavelić throughout the 1930s from within its members. For a short period, Jelić even enjoyed the support of the Italian officials in case Pavelić was to be rejected by other followers, thus trying to forestall the possible developments and keep the Italian grasp over the Ustasha movement. However, the support for Pavelić did not diminish among its followers. On

²⁰ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 415-422.

²¹ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, DAM – 013.0.58, 15.

²² See Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 421.

²³ Sadkovich, *Italija i Ustaše*, 287.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 288.

²⁵ For more on the Ustasha organization and its activities in North and Latin America see Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 344-370.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 288.

the contrary, it grew stronger and thus Jelić was removed from Italy and from the vicinity of the Ustasha leadership in Italy.

This episode of ‘conflict’ between Jelić and Pavelić, which came to an end with their reconciliation and Jelić’s removal, cemented Pavelić’s leadership even during the time of crisis. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, when talking about the act of liberation, Budak stated that there can be only one truth connected to it and that was that “this was the deed of the Poglavnik [...] others have participated as well, but without him – everything would, with more or less occurrences, wait for its leader”.²⁷ What Budak had in mind here, when he talked about these events, are probably those which took place after he and other prominent members returned to the Kingdom. However, notwithstanding their actions, according to him, the deed of liberation could have only been accomplished with the return of their leader, the *Poglavnik*. After all, for them he was the idea, he was the ‘chosen one’.

2.2. *Welcoming the ‘Savior’? – The Poglavnik and ‘His’ People*

As shown, the core members of the Ustasha movement who joined Pavelić and lived in harsh conditions in training camps established in Hungary and Italy, and after 1934 interned on the island of Lipari, formed such relations and beliefs which can be termed as charismatic. However, the question remains how much of Pavelić’s influence and ideas were transferred within the Kingdom itself, prior to the establishment of the Ustasha regime. The question is that of how much support the *Poglavnik* and his movement had in Croatia during the 1930s?

²⁷ Mile Budak, “Omladina je izvršila svoju dužnost,” [The Youth Has Fulfilled its Duty] *Ustaška mladež – prilog* [The Ustasha Youth – Appendix] August 3, 1941, no. 5, 3.

Since the Ustashas were not a political party and did not participate in any of the post-1935 parliamentary elections, it is impossible to discern the percentage of electoral support they might have had. In various historical research, estimated numbers of support ranged from those of 1 000 to 2 000 members to that of around 100 000.²⁸ However, an increase in support can be determined from the fact that in the post-1938 period some of the prominent Ustasha members managed to return to the Kingdom, such as Mile Budak, Ivan Oršanić, Mladen Lorković, Juco Rukavina, Juraj Veselić and others.²⁹ The same can also be discerned from the fact that more radical intelligentsia, especially students who were influenced by the Ustasha ideas, started taking prominent positions within the academic societies, such as that of *August Šenoa* and *Eugen Kvaternik*. What is also indicative, as Goldstein says, is the fact that “since 1935/1936 and later graffiti *ŽAP-Živio Ante Pavelić* [Long Live Ante Pavelić] were written on the buildings of the city of Zagreb”.³⁰ According to the *Yugoslav Secret Service – SDS* reports such graffiti were also written in other towns such as Pakrac, Daruvar or Grubišno Polje where “during the night, members of these [youth] sections would write *ŽAP* on walls of the houses, fences and other public places”.³¹ According to these reports, the same actions also took place in the city of Dubrovnik, where after 1934 more and more slogans ‘*ŽAP*’ started appearing”,³² and similar events took place in the town of Vinkovci.³³

²⁸ See Jelić Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, 55, and Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 566-567.

²⁹ Fikreta Jelić-Butić, “Prilog proučavanju djelatnosti Ustaša do 1941”: 84. All the above mentioned persons later became prominent members of the Ustasha regime. For example, Oršanić became the leader of the Ustasha Youth organization. Budak became the minister of education and later the ambassador to Berlin. Lorković served as the *Poglavnik's* deputy and for a short term the ambassador to Slovakia.

³⁰ Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 98.

³¹ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Bivši ustaški aparat na kotaru Daruvar – Elaborat* [Former Ustasha Apparatus in the District of Daruvar – A Survey] – 0.13.0.10.

³² HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Bivši Ustaški aparat na kotaru Dubrovnik – Elaborat* [Former Ustasha Apparatus in the District of Dubrovnik – A Survey] – 0.13.0.11.

³³ HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Bivši Ustaški aparat na kotaru Vinkovci – Elaborat* [Former Ustasha Apparatus in the District of Vinkovci – A Survey] – 013.0.42.

An indication of home-based support, albeit not in exact numbers, can be found in the report of an SS-Standartenführer³⁴ Veessenmayer written on April 14, 1941. In his report to Berlin, Veessenmayer mentions the expected meeting with Pavelić in the city of Karlovac, to which Pavelić did not arrive until 8:45pm due to the fact that “his trip through Croatia was a triumphal procession” and that the welcome given by his supporters was numerous. Further on, Veessenmayer wrote that “Pavelić’s qualifications for a leader are indisputable due to the discipline of his followers and the love of its people”.³⁵ In addition, we also have later testimonies and reports by some of the Ustashas actually present during the *Poglavnik*’s trip back, which further support Veessenmayer’s report. For example, Dr. Ivo Guberina, who was returning together with Pavelić, writes about the welcome in the small town of Lokve “where the whole place was decorated with flags and was in a celebratory mood”.³⁶ Furthermore, he states that, throughout the towns and villages which they passed, people threw “flowers and were shouting: Long live Pavelić, Long live the Ustashas”.³⁷ Similar sentiments, and perhaps one even more confirming of Veessenmayer’s report, were reported by Ivo Bogdan, one of the founders of *Hrvatski narod* and *Spremnost* journals, and since 1944 Head of the *Glavno ravnateljstvo za promičbu* [Main Directorate for Propaganda]. In his article he described his meeting and the trip with the *Poglavnik* with these words:

We pass [the town] of Duga Resa and arrive at Zveča [...] the further we go, the more people we see on the road. We encounter triumphal arches, and everywhere there are flags and more dense groups of people. Now on every road there were more

³⁴ The second highest officer rank in the Third Reich (characteristic for SA and SS as well). Veessenmayer served as a plenipotentiary of the Third Reich in the Independent State of Croatia.

³⁵ *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XII. The War Years, February 1-June 22, 1941, (London: H.M.S.O., 1950-1964), 549.

³⁶ Ivo Guberina, “Na putu u Domovinu,” [On a Way to Homeland] *Spremnost – Misao i volja ustaške hrvatske* [Readiness – Thought and Will of the Ustasha Croatia] April 5, 1942, 6.

³⁷ Ibid.

and more people. At each settlement the road was jammed [...] It is clear to us that with such a slow advance we shall not reach [the city of] Karlovac until late at night.³⁸

All of the above mentioned, combined with the fact that the pro-Ustasha elements often disrupted student meetings and venues by shouting: “[w]e do not recognize Dr. Maček as the leader, our leader is Pavelić!”,³⁹ shows that the *Poglavnik* and his core followers were not some unknown, marginal group, nor as it was recently put “a ramshackle and marginal group of gangsters and political failures”.⁴⁰ Rather, it could be argued that it was exactly in the post-1937 period that the Ustasha movement started gaining a wider support within the Kingdom, by publishing various newspapers and journals, thus also increasing their presence within various student clubs and societies.⁴¹

According to the above mentioned testimonies and reports, the *Poglavnik* was greeted with joy and acceptance, as the liberator, as the person who came to establish the longed-for Croatian state. What is important to emphasize here, is the fact that the people actually welcomed and greeted the person whom only few had seen in person in the previous ten years. Pavelić was absent from the public sphere for more than a decade, thus the image of his character and personae was mainly constructed by word of mouth, and perhaps some leaflets and pictures. The general public was informed of his actions and character through their dissemination and propagation by the *Poglavnik*’s followers such as Budak, Blažeković, Bogdan, Lorković and others. In fact, it can be said that the public image of the *Poglavnik* and his importance were constructed and disseminated by those who believed in him unconditionally.

³⁸ Ivo Bogdan, “Susret s obnoviteljem hrvatske državnosti i nezavisnosti na Uskrs 1941,” [Encounter with the Restorer of Croatian Statehood and Independence on Easter 1941] *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, April 5, 1942, 6.

³⁹ As quoted in Pavlaković Vjeran, “Radicalization at the University of Zagreb during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939”: 496.

⁴⁰ Such evaluation was put forward in a recent book review written by John Paul Newman. See <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2013-2-220>.

⁴¹ For more details see Pavlaković “Radicalization at the University of Zagreb during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939”, and Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 98-101.

Therefore, their unconditional belief in the *Poglavnik* as the ‘messiah’ was now fulfilled by his triumphal comeback and the establishment of the independent Croatian state. This fact presents an important psychological factor when examining the question of leader and his followers, that is, when trying to examine the role and situational characteristics of the process of *charismatisation* within the Ustasha regime.

Belief in the *Poglavnik* and his infallibility became even more accentuated and firmly rooted with the establishment of the Ustasha regime. The main pillar of belief, that he was the chosen one, the one destined for this role, remained the same. Religious vocabulary was now even more present and further accentuated. For example, in an interview with the *Poglavnik*’s parents after his return, strong biblical and religious parallels are evident. The author emphasized his parents’ sufferings and their love, which they gave up due to his higher goals for which, as the Ustashes claimed, *Providence* had chosen and directed him on the path of fulfillment. Strong correlation was made between Christ and his mother, the *Poglavnik* and his mother. Furthermore, the unknown author stated:

If we look closer at the symbolic nature of Resurrection, we shall see that Christ took special care of his mother’s grievances, but that he made himself present once he was with his pupils. He belongs to the people, to pupils, and the great mother was not jealous of her people, because she as well loves them above all, and therefore she does not feel his love for his homeland as her own rebuff, but as simple right.⁴²

In the conclusion the author states that it was them who “gave such a great son to their people, the Liberator of Homeland, a resurrector of the Croatian State”.⁴³ The *Poglavnik* was presented as God-given, since it was he whom “Providence has sent [...] It was Providence which created the date July 14, 1889. We are thankful to God

⁴² “U domu majke i oca koji su hrvatskom narodu dali osloboditelja,” [In the Home of Mother and Father Who Gave to Croatian People their Liberator] *Hrvatski narod*, April 15, 1942, no. 62, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 5.

for that date”.⁴⁴ Luka Puljiz, the leader of the Ustasha Youth organization from the city of Vukovar stated:

[...] because God has given to us, in this historical period of life, not just of our [life] but of the entire world, in this period of a painful birth of a new condition and order in the world, a wise and farsighted Leader, our Great Poglavnik.⁴⁵

Within their regime, core members of the Ustasha movement became role models of a ‘new’ Croat, especially for the youth.⁴⁶ Their leader, the *Poglavnik*, was now presented to the masses as the embodiment of the state. As one article stated:

With the foundation of the Ustasha movement and restoration of the Croatian State – Dr. Ante Pavelić becomes a carrier of Croatian rights and Croatian statehood, as well as the biggest genius of all times, he becomes the leader of Croatian people, he becomes Poglavnik of Croatian nation and Croatian State [...] He unites in himself all ethical and moral, social and political virtues of Croatian nation.⁴⁷

Furthermore, he was being described as the one who “collected all our national, social, and moral values, He created the Ustasha Croatia”.⁴⁸ In further emphasizing the idea of his uniqueness, *Poglavnik* was given his own flag which symbolized his presence or absence from office, and which was to be carried next to him in all public events.⁴⁹

While the *Poglavnik*’s cult was further developed and accentuated during the regime period, it would be wrong to argue that his cult was created out of nothing, i.e. that it gained prominence only after the establishment of his rule, as was the case with Salazar, Franco or Metaxas. In this case, the ‘leader cult’ elevated during the regime

⁴⁴ Danijel Crljen, *Poglavnik. Život – misao – djelo* (Zagreb: Povjereništvo za odgoj i promičbu u postrojničtvu), 16.

⁴⁵ Luka Puljiz, “Ustaška mladež temelj države,” [The Ustasha Youth as Foundation of the State] *Novo Borovo*, [New Borovo] February 11, 1944, no. 6, 1.

⁴⁶ I will elaborate on this notion in my next chapter, where I will analyze the Ustasha youth organization, its role, ideas, and practices within the regime.

⁴⁷ “Lik i značaj Dr. Ante Pavelića – Poglavnik je utjelovljenje hrvatske državnosti i nezavisnosti,” [The Character and the meaning of Dr. Ante Pavelić – *Poglavnik* is the Embodiment of Croatian Statehood and Independence] *Hrvatska riječ – Ustaški glas Požeške doline*, [Croatian Word – The Ustasha Voice of Požega Basin] January 22, 1944, no. 3, 1.

⁴⁸ “Ustaška hrvatska,” [The Ustasha Croatia] *Vihor – hrvatska riječ požeške kotline*, [Vihor – Croatian Word of the Požega Basin] September 18, 1941, no. 19, 6.

⁴⁹ Petar Požar, *Ustaša: dokumenti o ustaškom pokretu* [Ustasha: Documents on the Ustasha Movement] (Zagreb: Zagrebačka stvarnost, 1995), 157-159.

emanated from the already existing charismatic relations established during the previous decade. Therefore, even though some accepted it through purely mechanic participation, induced by rituals, mass rallies, speeches, and other instances of propaganda, it was those who accepted Pavelić as a charismatic leader during the period of the 1930s that now set upon a path of *charismatising* the nation. Therefore, Kallis is right when he states that such extension of charisma to the whole of society:

[...] was not simply left to the psychological potency of the leader's personality but was crucially systematized, supported and enhanced by state-controlled networks of information, leisure and collective ritualisation.⁵⁰

However, this systematization was carried out by those who belonged to the already mentioned, initial group of followers. It was carried by those who joined and followed the *Poglavnik* for more than a decade before the achievement of his 'mobilizing myth' the independent Croatia, who developed emotional bond with him, and who entrusted him with their lives. Those involved into this transfer were the core members, the core believers, or as Iordachi argued:

[...] a personal staff, a charismatic aristocracy composed of a group of adherents who are united by loyalty and selected according to personal charismatic qualification.⁵¹

This systematization of *charismatisation* was most present, and took its most clear form exactly within the Ustasha Youth organization. According to Jere Jareb, a member of the Ustasha Youth and later editor of the journal *Ustaška mladež* [The Ustasha Youth], the *Poglavnik* was both a ruler and a leader who:

[...] united all Croatian rulers Tomislav, Zvonimir, Krešimir, and Tvrtko, as well as the Croatian leaders Starčević and Radić. Through his veins flows the blood of the Croatian warriors, statesmen and leaders. The *Poglavnik* watches over the Croatian youth as a carrying father, as Croatian leader and Croatian ruler. Today's

⁵⁰ Kallis, "Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic' Domination and Interwar European Fascism": 35.

⁵¹ Iordachi, "Charisma, Religion, and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael", 20.

generation of Croatian youth is the Poglavnik's [...] it is the luckiest of all past generations, that it can call itself the Poglavnik's youth.⁵²

2.3. *The Ustasha Elite – Attempt at Charismatisation of the Youth*

As mentioned previously, the idea of youthfulness, its energy and dynamism was at the core of the Ustashes' worldview and practices. As Yeomans rightly states, being Ustasha "above all, meant being young".⁵³ However, being Ustasha also meant another important feature, and that was the one of being the embodiment of the 'new' Croat – the Ustasha. It was exactly these two features which presented the key ideological and descriptive aspect within the Ustashes discourse. According to their vision, it was the youth which was to accept, inherit, and further develop the characteristics and beliefs of the Ustashes. As Milivoj Karamarko, a student journalist, stated in his article written in August 1941:

The returnee Ustashes and the ustasha youth were and still are the only carriers of "ustashism", the only guarantees of the state, the only Poglavnik's army [...] we are the Poglavnik's, the Poglavnik is ours and we shall not give Him to anyone, unknown gentlemen.⁵⁴

The main postulate of such a view was that the Ustasha movement, its ideas and practices were formed by those who were destined to do so. The *Poglavnik's* initial followers were being presented as an elite, as those representing the "embodiment of Croatian heroism and courage", as those who have proven "their disdain towards death and the unbreakable will for victory".⁵⁵ Furthermore, the

⁵² Jere Jareb, "Poglavnikova mladež," [Poglavnik's Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, [The Ustasha Youth] July 15, 1944, no. 13, 3. Jere Jareb presents an interesting person in a sense that he fled to the United States after WWII, where he later became a professor and a historian. He returned to Croatia during the 1990s, but unfortunately never talked about his role within the Ustasha Youth organization, nor the Ustasha movement and regime as such.

⁵³ Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 81. I will elaborate in more details on the formation, ideas and practices of the Ustasha Youth organization in my next chapter. Suffice is to say that the youth was seen as the key component within the Ustashes' vision of creating the 'new' Croat and Croatian nation.

⁵⁴ Milivoj Karamarko, "Raditi i stvarati," [To Work and Create] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 6.

⁵⁵ "Ustaše – nosioci države," [The Ustashes – Carriers of the State] *Ustaša*, October 12, 1941, no. 15, 2.

Ustasha elite was given the task of continuing the charted path in elevating the new, younger elite which was to be educated “from the rank and file of young souls”.⁵⁶ It is clear that the youth was to inherit and accept unconditionally all the basic characteristics of the core Ustasha members, of ‘charismatic aristocracy’. They were to embrace, wholeheartedly, that same spirit which “engulfed that young army of idealists prior to April 10”.⁵⁷ One crucial aspect of this spirit among others, about which I will talk more in the following chapter, was that of an unconditional belief in the *Poglavnik* as the embodiment of the nation, of the state, of liberation and of independence. First and foremost this was to be the belief of infallibility of the *Poglavnik* since:

If it was to happen to any Ustasha, to think differently from the *Poglavnik*, then it is better for each of him to think that he got confused or wrong, rather than the *Poglavnik* being the one who got confused or has made a mistake.⁵⁸

This view was based on the premise that an unconditional belief and emotional bond towards the *Poglavnik*, as exemplified by its initial followers, can be transferred onto the new, younger generation of the Ustashas to come. Ivan Oršanić, the Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth, stated that the case in question is that of the development of the “whole generation which had never existed before in Croatia – the Ustasha generation”.⁵⁹ Thus, while the core idea of the Ustashas was transformation of Croatian society *in toto*, by creating the ‘new’ Croat men and women, the youth was envisioned as that aspect of society within which the elite of the future state was to be molded from. Those considered to be the best of the youth were to become the future elite, the future Ustashas, who would appropriate all the

⁵⁶ M. Luketa, “Uloga elite u izgradnji države,” [The Role of the Elite in Building of the State] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, October 12, 1941, no. 11, 5.

⁵⁷ Spasoje Prčević, “Društveni značaj Ustaške mladeži,” [The Social Meaning of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, September 7, 1941, no. 6, 11.

⁵⁸ Rudolf Pavlek, *Izgradnja hrvatske mladeži* [Building of the Croatian Youth] (Zagreb, 1941), 16.

⁵⁹ Ivan Oršanić, “Ustaška mladež,” [The Ustasha Youth] *Ustaša*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 5.

characteristics and beliefs of the initial *Poglavnik's* followers. They were to become a generation completely and unconditionally loyal to the *Poglavnik*, whom they would follow without questioning. Therefore, by creating this new, younger generation of the Ustashas, the future heralds and guardians of the existing idea and state, they were creating the 'new' Croats. As stated by Karamarko:

The Poglavnik leads! He knows where and by which path. The Poglavnik thinks and rules over our destiny. He is aware of his responsibility and his mission. The Poglavnik leads, and we, every human, every class has to listen to Him and work.⁶⁰

Danijel Crljen, Pavelić's close associate and ideologue of the Ustasha movement, stated in his introduction to the 1942 edition of the Ustasha Principles that:

Today, they [the Ustashas] tremble from enthusiasm, when they see him; when they listen to him, tears burst into their eyes from the happiness of the affect, and they are sad that they cannot prove their unlimited, endless fidelity by sacrificing thousands of lives at once. They are unhappy, that they can bestow him with only one life.⁶¹



Figure 2.1. The *Poglavnik* surrounded by the Ustasha Youth members during his speech at the Workers Chamber in Zagreb.⁶²

⁶⁰ Milivoj Karamarko, "Poglavnik vodi – narod radi," [Poglavnik Leads – People Work] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, September 7, 1941, no. 6, 1.

⁶¹ Danijel Crljen, ed., *Načela hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta*, 5.

⁶² *Pokret – Hrvatski slikovni polumjesečnik*, [Movement – Croatian Bi-weekly Pictorial Magazine] September 1941, no. 34.

In the discourse presented to the general public, the *Poglavnik* was portrayed as a great leader, the savior, as the one sent to Croatian people by *Providence*.⁶³ And while for the general public such explanations, infused with clear propagandistic elements were seen as sufficient, when it comes to the youth and their relation to the *Poglavnik*, the situation was a bit different. Although the portrayals and depictions of the *Poglavnik* might also fall within the propaganda aspects of a regime, this was mostly carried out within the journals and books intended specifically for the youth readership. Furthermore, those ‘preaching’ these words to the youth were mostly members of the Ustasha movement who enrolled prior to April 10, 1941. This is significant because it clearly shows the intention to imbed their core belief in the *Poglavnik* as their ‘messiah’ and the embodiment of the idea of independence, onto the younger generations, i.e. those identified as carriers and protectors of an older generation’s ideas and achievements.

Through such discourses, the *Poglavnik*’s character and deeds once again assumed a mystical aspect. For example, Ivona Maixner, a female youth official, stated in an article on the role of women in the Ustasha fight for independence that “Croatia heard the *Poglavnik*’s call; that call which was transferred through whisper from mouth to mouth and from heart to heart and did not remain silent”.⁶⁴ An even more mystical aspect of the *Poglavnik*’s character, presented to this younger generation was given by Karamarko in his article *Poglavnik vodi – narod radi* [The *Poglavnik* Leads – The People Work].⁶⁵ In it, he explained the significance of leaders for entire nations, and what such leaders mean for the future of nations and states.

⁶³ *Poglavnik – život, misao i djelo* (Zagreb: 1944), 16.

⁶⁴ Ivona Maixner, “Hrvatska žena u borbi i radu – Mladež će poći putem, koji joj je odredio *Poglavnik*,” [Croatian Woman in Fight and Work – Youth Shall go on the Path Determined by *Poglavnik*] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, August 10, 1941, no. 6, 29.

⁶⁵ Milivoj Karamarko, “*Poglavnik vodi – narod radi*,” *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, September 7, 1941, no. 6, 1.

With regard to the significance of the *Poglavnik* for the Ustasha movement and regime, he stated:

The Leader! He is not a comrade, nor some acquaintance. No, he is not! That, which makes him unusual, ours but above us, human but superhuman, great but magnificent – this is neither the strength of his body, nor his genius scientific spirit – that is something more, which is not human, and is not of the people nor of the nature. That is only in the power of divinity and God-given. It is a call and a mission. God's historical mission. People, who God gives to nations not to rule, nor to teach, but to gather and lead. Those are the leaders, and that what they do they have neither learned nor inherited, that is the provision from the primordial world and a gift of Providence, which levels and administers the fate of the cosmos.⁶⁶

Mile Budak took this notion of God and *Providence* as those directing and guiding the *Poglavnik* on his path, even further. In his article *Ustaška mladež* [Ustasha Youth] he stated that:

Providence gave us the *Poglavnik*, but has also presented him with the greatest strength and buoyancy by giving Him the best youth which Croatian people have ever had.⁶⁷

It is clear that the *Poglavnik's* character was being portrayed and envisioned in mystical terms as the 'chosen one'. Even more, he was elevated to the level of the superhuman, something out of this world, as part of something bigger, some higher idea. Thus, he was presented to the youth as a God-given leader, assigned with a special purpose and mission which stemmed from the cosmos, and was not of earthly origins. This belief of God's intervention and guidance was now to be transferred and implemented into the youth which followed him. In the aforementioned quotation, Budak also wished to portray the *Poglavnik* and his mission as an act of some higher provenance. For him, the youth did not follow and believe in the *Poglavnik* because they wished, or felt obliged to do so. Budak saw this belief as the crucial component on the path which the *Providence* itself determined. As Ante Brkljača, Commander of the Starčević Youth section, stated at the Ustasha Youth rally in the city of

⁶⁶ Ibid, 1.

⁶⁷ Mile Budak, "Ustaška mladež," *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, October 5, 1941, no. 10, 1.

Koprivnica: “We must inherit the Poglavnik, so that we may become the apostles of ustashism.”⁶⁸ As already stated, such religious vocabulary served the purpose of enhancing, elevating, and presenting the persona of the *Poglavnik* to the youth in the same manner as his initial followers felt and accepted him. As Janko Skrbín, an official at the *Ministarstvo narodne prosvjete* [Ministry of National Enlightenment] since 1942 and later Head of the Propaganda Office in the Ustasha Youth organization, stated:

Our connection with the Poglavnik is not just a feeling, on the contrary, it is the belief [...] The destiny has determined, and we are grateful for that, to be guided by the Poglavnik.⁶⁹

The exact effects of such persuasion and how much of all this the youth actually embraced is hard to determine. Such discourse and ideas certainly found ground among the youth. Of course, it would be wrong to assume that everyone accepted the *Poglavnik* as such, as a charismatic leader. What is important here is the fact that the attempt at *charismatisation* was carried out by those who actually believed in the *Poglavnik* unconditionally, and who were trying to transfer and awaken this belief among those whom they considered were predestined to become their younger heralds, the young Ustasha elite.

It should not come as a surprise then, that the Ustasha Youth gave a similar oath to the *Poglavnik* as did the first Ustashas who were joining the *Poglavnik's* cause during the 1930s. In a document which describes the April 1942 visit of a female section of the Ustasha Youth to the *Poglavnik*, those present took an oath. This oath featured all the elements from the original Ustasha oath, with the only exception of

⁶⁸ “Ustaška mladež u Koprivnici,” [The Ustasha Youth in Koprivnica] *Ustaška mladež –prilog*, October 12, 1941, no. 11, 16.

⁶⁹ Janko Skrbín, “Ustaška mladež za svoj narod i državu,” [The Ustasha Youth for its People and State] *Ustaška mladež*, November 15, 1944, no. 20-21, 7.

mentioning the now established state and the female section of the movement. The oath stated:

I swear by God almighty and everything which is sacred to me, that I shall follow the Ustasha principles and will submit to its regulations and will unconditionally perform all decrees of the Poglavnik and, that I shall keep every secret confined to me strictly to myself [...] If I am to violate this oath [...] I am to be punished according to the Ustasha regulations. So help me God. Amen.⁷⁰

The difference, compared with the original oath from the 1930s, is the absence of the punishment for violation of the oath. The original oath stipulates death as punishment according to the Ustasha regulations. It remains unknown whether the same applies to the youth oath, but so far there is no documentation which would claim otherwise. It could be argued that the mentioning of a death sentence was taken out due to the fact that children, mostly from age 7 to 18 or 21, took this oath. However, notions of death and sacrifice in the name of the *Poglavnik* presented a constant theme in poems and essays written by and for members of the Ustasha Youth, and also some school teachers. For example, the theme of sacrificing one's life for the *Poglavnik* and Croatia can be found in the poem *Mi* [We], allegedly written by a fourth-grade elementary school pupil from Ilok, Antun Dobošević. The song stated:

Uzdanica mi smo
hrvatskoga roda,
najmilija nam je
njegova sloboda.
Za dom, dragi, mili,
hrvatski nam sveti
pripravni smo uvijek
ustaški umrijeti.⁷¹

[We are the Mainstay
of the Croatian genus,
dearest to us

⁷⁰ HDA, Predsjedništvo vlade NDH – 237, Tematski spisi, Vijesti i prilozi o poglavniku, “Ustaška mladež kod Poglavnika,” [The ustasha Youth at the *Poglavnik*]cApril 27, 1942. Box no. 54. Further on HDA, PVNDH – 237, TS.

⁷¹ Antun Dobošević, “Mi,” [We] *Ustaška Uzdanica*, [The Ustasha Mainstay] November 15, 1942, no. 6, 13.

is its freedom.
 For Home, dear, loveable,
 holy and Croatian
 we are always ready
 to die as Ustashes]

Another poem, entitled *Mladi Ustaša* [The Young Ustasha], makes the same references with regard to sacrificing one's life, belief, and demands:

Ja sam mladi Ustaša,
 domovine sin,
 volim našeg Poglavnika,
 sve Hrvate s njim.
 Ako treba život dati
 a i krvcu lit,
 za Poglavnika i za Dom
 ja ću spreman bit.⁷²

[I'm a young Ustasha
 son of the Homeland,
 I love our Poglavnik
 and all the Croats with Him.
 If it requires to give a life,
 to pour blood,
 for Poglavnik and Homeland
 I shall be ready to do so]

The elements of sacrifice, courage, and fidelity can also be found in songs written by teachers in elementary school. In them, the *Poglavnik* is presented as the liberator, savior, a "judge of infidels", and the one for whom "we are willing to die".⁷³ In the poem *Poglavnik nam gradi dom* [The Poglavnik Builds Us a Home], a teacher from a small village of Lupinjak described him as a builder of a new home, as the one who brings prosperity, as a guardian of the homeland, as the one who never gives up

⁷² Ivica Krasnić, "Mladi Ustaša," [The Young Ustasha] *Ustaška Uzdanica*, June 1, 1943, no. 19, 14. When reading and analyzing these songs, one has to keep in mind that while pupils were given assignments of writing such poems, these were probably later edited either by their teachers or editors of journals where they were to be published. This is most obvious when examining the vocabulary within, which is more suitable for high school or student population, than for elementary school. Nevertheless, such songs were present and read by the youth of all ages thus showing us the idea of how the youth was to perceive the *Poglavnik* and their position within the Ustasha regime.

⁷³ Ferdo Suhodobnik, "Poglavniku," [To the *Poglavnik*] *Ustaška Uzdanica*, Uskrs 1942, no. 12-13, 5.

because “God is with him, he makes Him stronger”.⁷⁴ This notion of sacrifice and willingness to give up one’s life for the idea, for the *Poglavnik*, was even more evident among the older members of the Ustasha Youth organization who accentuated and propagated the notions of blood, love, victimization, and death. In a poem written by a young poet, Andrija Ilić, themes such as blood, cemetery, and corpses are ever present. For him, rivers of blood and young corpses left behind, as well as the increase in the growth of cemeteries are not futile because:

[...] we shall not be anyone’s slaves. Ours on our own and all alone we wish to be. For Croatia we shall give everything. And the werewolf in the darkness shall learn how the Croat dies for Croatia!⁷⁵

A member of the *Ustaški junak* [Ustasha Hero] section of the Ustasha Youth wrote a poem in which sacrificing one’s life was described as normal, natural and something which happens for some higher goal. At the end of the poem he stated:

I kad se oči ustaše zadnjeg sklope
Kada nas pogodi smrtni grom,
Ustaške usne prozborit će tada:
‘Za tebe Poglavniče i Za Dom!’⁷⁶

[And when the eyes of the last Ustasha are closed
When thunder of death strikes us,
The Ustasha lips shall utter:
‘For you, Poglavnik, and for Home!’]

Sacrificing one’s life for the *Poglavnik* was considered and presented as natural, normal, as an act of courage and devotion. It was seen as something which every real Croat - the Ustasha, had to accept and embrace, not as something

⁷⁴ Štefanija Kovačević, “Poglavnik nam gradi dom,” [*Poglavnik Builds Our Home*] *Ustaška Uzdanica*, November 15, 1942, no. 6, 1.

⁷⁵ Andrija Ilić, “Ante Prvi,” [Ante the First] *U život - List Muške Ustaške Mladeži stožera Zagreb*, [Into Life – Journal of the male Ustasha Youth District of Zagreb] June 1942, no. 3, 6.

⁷⁶ “Zadnji Ustaša,” [The Last Ustasha] *Zidne novine Ustaškog Junaka – Hrvatska Mitrovica*, [The Wallpapers of the Ustasha Hero – Hrvatska Mitrovica] March 1943, no. 1, 2.

frightening and unknown, but rather as something of a deeper, almost mystical meaning. Dying for this cause was to serve as a proof of the youth's unconditional love towards their *Poglavnik* and their homeland. Readiness to give up one's life, to sacrifice oneself for a higher cause was presented as being a crucial characteristic of this 'new' Croat – the Ustasha.⁷⁷ With regard to the youth, death was presented as normality, as an implicit condition and a key component within one's life. With sacrificing their lives, the youth was fulfilling the idea of the *Poglavnik* and their role of what it meant to be an Ustasha. To them, death was to become an act which every young Ustasha was capable of performing since dying for a higher cause was to be considered as the key characteristic of every 'real' Croat – the Ustasha.

Besides this portrayal of death as normality, as an implied Ustasha characteristic, there was another important aspect in this process of *charismatisation*. I have shown above that the *Poglavnik* was presented as the chosen one, and was accepted as such by his initial followers. What followed once the regime was established was an attempt at transferring and 'awakening' such feelings among the youth as well. The youth was presented with the *Poglavnik* as a person who possessed something which could not be easy to neither comprehend nor explain, but which, in the Ustasha discourse, every real Croat sensed and felt as present. Seeing and hearing the *Poglavnik* speak was often described as an experience infused with great expectations and as an enlightening experience for the youth. For example, Štefica Vitković in her description of female youth preparations for their meeting with the *Poglavnik* at the St. Mark's square in Zagreb stated:

All eyes were fixed towards the windows, towards the balcony, where every moment now the *Poglavnik* was to appear. His flag is already here, just a few moments of silence and intense expectation [...] the *Poglavnik*! Cheering and joy has no end. Enthusiasm is immeasurable [...] We feel his presence, we see only Him, we

⁷⁷ See Ivan Šestak, "Mladež u životu naroda i države," [The Youth in the Life of People and State] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, [The Independent Croatia - Bjelovar] August 29, 1942, no. 65, 2.

hear only Him. Our dream, our wish has come true. We saw and heard the Poglavnik.⁷⁸



Figure 2.2. An idealized picture of the *Poglavnik* and young girls.⁷⁹

According to her description to see and hear the *Poglavnik* speak was a fulfillment of her dream, a feeling of a new life. A somewhat similar description of expectation and disbelief in the possibility of seeing and meeting with the *Poglavnik* was given by a female member of *Ustaška Starčevićeva mladež* [Ustasha Starčević Youth] section, Marica Polanščak. In her text *Moj susret s Poglavnikom* [My Encounter with the Poglavnik], she described her anticipation and excitement. As she stated:

I kept asking myself: God, will I really see the Poglavnik, [I] who am nothing but a common worker, and He? Will He stretch out His ustasha arm towards me as well? [...] My spirit stopped while looking at him.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Štefica Vitković, “U školi za Ustaške prvakinje – iz dnevnika,” [In School for the Ustasha Women Leaders – from the Diary] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, November 9, 1941, no. 15, 14.

⁷⁹ *Ustaška Uzdanica*, June 1, 1942, no. 17.

There are also descriptions of young girls who could not sleep due to the excitement of meeting the *Poglavnik*, or a girl who supposedly, due to her excitement about meeting him, could not fall asleep, so she wrote sheets of paper with the word *Poglavnik*.⁸¹ Such hyperbolic descriptions of feelings presented a constant theme within the texts written for and by the Ustasha Youth members and their officials. It served to emphasize the feeling and the idea of unconditional devotion and surrender to the *Poglavnik*. Also, it served to construct and present the *Poglavnik* as a father-like figure, a father of all the youth, as a role-model of a ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha. After all, in the Ustasha discourse, he was “the first and greatest Ustasha”,⁸² and for Mijo Bzik, he was “the liberator and the restorer of Croatian state” and thus he deserves that “solemn promise, that with Him, with our Poglavnik, we shall go and be everywhere, all the time, until the end”.⁸³ Such hyperbolism is best seen in the text written by Ksenija Buljević in which she described the alleged feelings of a young girl named Anica, who had trouble falling asleep on the day before April 10, and who felt as though in the murmur of the wind she heard the words “Ante...Ante...and as though that echo was becoming more and more silent until she heard her heartbeat, which in the same intervals repeated...Ante...Ante...”.⁸⁴

All of the above mentioned, the belief, the sacrifice, the mysticism installed into the character of the *Poglavnik*, notions of death and predestination, the ecstasy present in his words and character, served the purpose of awakening and installing

⁸⁰ Marica Polanščak, “Moj susret s Poglavnikom,” [My Encounter with the *Poglavnik*] *Ustaška mladež*, June 28, 1942, no. 26, 6.

⁸¹ Mira Preisler, “Nemirne zvjezdice,” [Restless Stars] *Novo pokoljenje*, [The New Generation] May 10, 1942, no. 2, 6.

⁸² “Ustaše – sve će biti sprovedeno,” [Ustashas – All Shall be Done] *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, May 22, 1941, no. 1, 11.

⁸³ Mijo Bzik, “13. lipnja u obnovljenoj Hrvatskoj,” [June 13 in Restored Croatia] *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, June 13, 1941, no. 2, 1.

⁸⁴ Ksenija Buljević, “Misli male Junakinje uoči desetog travnja,” [Thoughts of a Little Hero Girl on the Eve of April 19] *Novo pokoljenje*, April 10, 1943, no. 4, 13.

these feelings and notions as natural. As Milan Striga, a senior high school pupil, said while greeting the Poglavnik in the name of the male youth section which finished a fourteen-day training course:

Such as the warm spring sunrays are to everything that lives, so to us was the knowing of You. We were expecting this with confidence in You, our Poglavnik, our Ante, we anticipated the moment [...].⁸⁵

The above mentioned characteristics were seen by the Ustashas as the key components of every Croat's soul, but which had for centuries been suppressed on purpose, and were now to be awakened and reinstalled. This awakening was to happen exactly among the younger generations since they were envisaged as those not affected and contaminated by foreign elements and as those most susceptible to this, because:

[...] the tree bends while it is young, and it is the same with the youth in a state, which from its youth and new generations expects to elevate it in her future in every aspect and to be of use to her.⁸⁶

Thus, as Felix Niedzielski stated upon assuming his position as the Ustasha Youth Administrative Commander:

[...] national and state life demands individuals who will put themselves in their entirety, to the service [...] who surrender themselves to live for others. People who have only one thought – the wellbeing of community, one love – their own people, one passion – defense of the state. To the people of such spirit within the boundaries of Croatian people belongs the name – Ustasha. As an eternal role model of such a man remains, to all Croatian generations, the character of our Poglavnik. Therefore, from the rank and file of Croatian youth, in which every individual has to be a noble human and a good Croat, we wish to educate the elite group of the Ustashas.⁸⁷

As shown, the aim was to create the loyal youth, which would all think and act along the lines of Milivoj Žižan's words in which:

⁸⁵ "Srednjoškolci kod Poglavnika," [High School Pupils at the Poglavnik] *Ustaška mladež*, March 22, 1942, no. 12, 3.

⁸⁶ "Najmladji u Ustaškom pokretu – sto tisuća djece u postrojbama Ustaške Uzdanice," [The Youngest in the Ustasha Movement – One Hundred Thousand Children in Formations of the Ustasha Mainstay] *Nova Hrvatska*, [New Croatia] April 11, 1942, no. 85, 11.

⁸⁷ Felix Niedzielski, "Što hoće Ustaška mladež?," [What Does the Ustasha Youth Want?] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, [Official – Formal Journal of the Ustasha Youth] September 1944, no. 9, 137-138.

The Poglavnik became a part of our reasoning, the necessary performer of our essentiality, a personality, without whom we would feel all the burden of disappointment.⁸⁸

The idea was that the youth needed to realize and embrace wholeheartedly and without questioning the Ustasha fight, struggle, ideas, and actions. After all, as it was stated in the newspapers of the *Ustasha Hero* section from the city of Hrvatska Mitrovica:

The holiest sign, next to the Christ's cross, which the Croat respects, is the Ustasha sign and with its holiness we the young ones will continue the already started Ustasha struggle.⁸⁹

The aim of all this was to install and develop among the youth the feelings described in an article entitled *Znali smo, da ćeš doći...* [We Knew You Would Come...] where the feelings of the youth towards the *Poglavnik* were described with the following words:

He meant freedom, a liberation meant His return to us, who awaited him as our Messiah [...] We lived for that, to see him in a liberated homeland and we were ready to die for Him if that meant clearing the path.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Milivoj Žižan, "Nama mladeži pripada prva i posljednja," [To Us Youth Belongs the First and the Last] *Ustaška mladež – prilog*, September 7, 1941, no. 6, 2.

⁸⁹ "Drži se poštenja i vjere otaca," [Hang On to the Honesty and Faith of Fathers] *Zidne novine Ustaškog Junaka – Hrvatska Mitrovica*, March 1943, no. 11.

⁹⁰ "Znali smo, da ćeš doći...", [We Knew You Will Come...] *Novo Pokoljenje*, April 10, 1943, no. 4, 3.

CHAPTER III: The Youth and the Ustasha Idea of a ‘New’ Croat

“In this revolution of ours, all your sins as well as you yourself shall be gone, because we are the children of the new order, of the new, Ustasha and Poglavnik’s Croatia – we – the new Croatian generation.”¹

Introduction

During the interwar period and the emergence of totalitarian ideologies, the youth started to be perceived as that segment of society through which certain ideas and actions can be accomplished and preserved. This was best seen through the two fascist youth organizations, Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth, which served as role-models for the formation of other fascist youth organizations, including the Ustasha Youth organization. Analysis of their organizational principles, structure, ideas, and practices serves to provide the basis for asymmetrical comparison between the two and the Ustasha Youth. Such an approach shows how certain segments of the youth organization and policies, presented and exemplified by either the Hitler Youth or Lictor Youth, were transferred, and to an extent adjusted when it comes to the Ustasha Youth organization.

Further on, this chapter analyses organizational structure and ideas of the Ustasha Youth organization establishment. It argues that the Ustasha officials saw it necessary to establish the state as the third factor, besides school and family, in the education of the youth. Working on the premise that decadence and ‘contamination’ of Croats during the interwar period demanded a full-blown youth revolution, an

¹ Luka Halat, “Mi, novo hrvatsko pokoljenje,” [We, the New Croatian Generation] *U život – list ustaške mladeži stožera Zagreb*, April 1942, no. 1, 2.

anthropological revolution, which would create the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha and thus awake and restore the real essence of *croatianism*.

Despite swift and obligatory enrollment into the Ustasha Youth organization, problems with its various activities occurred during the entire regime period. The success of this organization was often emphasized and propagated by citing the numbers of active members and describing various youth activities. However, this was only one, official, side of the story. There are archival materials which contradict this view and tell a different story about problems occurring within the organization. Such documents often describe a lacking chain of command within the organization, lack of organizational principles, lack of trained youth officials, lack of facilities for youth activities, etc.

The Ustasha officials emphasized the importance of the youth in completing their prime task of regeneration of the Croatian nation through an all-embracing national revolution. Within this section I question one of the recently elaborated ideas of the two revolutions taking place during the Ustasha regime: the ‘revolution of blood’, which, when failed, was followed by the ‘revolution of soul’. However, it is wrong to assume that they should be viewed as two different revolutions, one preceding the other. In my view, within the Ustasha regime, they occurred simultaneously on the premise of an instant need to cleanse the Croatian nation from ‘foreign’ elements while simultaneously creating a platform for the regeneration of Croats through the Ustasha Youth organization. This is evident from the fact that both the ‘revolution of blood’ and the ‘revolution of soul’ were initiated almost simultaneously upon the establishment of the Ustasha regime, and thus should be viewed, not as two different ‘revolutions’, but rather as essential parts of the Ustasha officials’ idea of the future Croatian nation and state.

Strict gender division within the youth organization was present from the beginning and based on the Ustasha movement itself, which was structured as a masculine movement, with its membership mostly consisting of young males in their twenties. Thus the youth organization accepted and implemented this practice and view of the male Croat as a warrior, fighter, and the female Croat, especially young girls, as future wives and mothers. Boys were taught that their role was to take care of family and guard their homeland, while girls were taught that their prime role was marriage and raising future Croats – the Ustashes. Therefore, boys were educated to become strong and healthy protectors, warriors, and girls were taught that their prime role in society was motherhood and charity. While younger boys and girls were more susceptible to such views, since this was the only option provided to them, older generations, especially students, opposed such a strictly enforced patriarchal view of society and started to question it.

3.1. Ideological and Organizational Models – The Hitlerjugend* and Gioventù Italiana del Littorio

During their movement or regime, the fascists often emphasized the idea of youthfulness and vigor as essential to their worldview. It comes as no surprise then that their youth movements were seen as the essential component, in fact as the essence of their idea of a new nation. The youth, as elaborated by Lisa Pine with regard to the Nazi's *Staatsjugend* [State Youth Movement], was to provide dynamism to the movement, was malleable enough “to be instilled with the central tenets of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*,” and would consequently “grow up to become the

* I use here the term Hitler Youth as a generic term which encompasses both male and female branches as well as other age sections of the youth in Nazi Germany. When used the term encompasses male *Hitlerjugend* (14-18), the *Deutsches Jungvolk* (10-14), and female *Bund Deutscher Mädel – BDM* (14-18) and *Jungmädelsbund* (10-14). The same applies for the usage of the terms Lictor Youth, the Ustasha Youth and the Hlinka Youth.

embodiment of the ‘national community’ in the future”.² By the time the Ustasha Youth organization was formed, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had organized and educated their youth for more than a decade. Thus the Ustashes appropriated some of their features, ideas, and practices while simultaneously adapting them to their somewhat different national and social context. Comparing the two organizations, Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth, many similarities as well as differences can be found.³ While the idea of national regeneration through an all-embracing youth organization was the same, the structure, leadership, and control over the organizations differed.

In Fascist Italy, the youth started being organized since 1926 when *Opera Nazionale Balilla – ONB*⁴ [National Youth Organization] was formed with the aim of incorporating youth from ages 8 to 18.⁵ However, it was not until 1934 that this organization was given a firmer structure. It was in 1934 that the youth was clearly divided into male and female branches, each consisting of specific age section. The male branch consisted of five age categories: from ages 6 to 8 were *Figli della Lupa* [Sons of the She-Wolf], ages of 8 to 11 *Balilla*, from 11 to 14 *Balilla Moschettiere*, age 14 *Avanguardisti*, and from 15 to 17 *Avanguardisti Moschettiere*. The female branch had a similar structure: from ages 6 to 8 *Figlie della Lupe* [Daughters of the She-Wolf], from 8 to 13 *Piccole Italiane* [Little Italians], and from 14 to 17 *Giovani Italiane* [Young Italian Women]. The ONB was under the control of the Ministry of Education and thus when the *Partito Nazionale Fascista – PNF* decided in 1931 to create two additional sections for members ages 18 to 21: *Giovane Fascista* (female) and *Fasci Giovanili di Combattimento* (male), dualism between the ministry’s control

² Lisa Pine, “Creating Conformity: The Training of Girls in the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*,” *European History Quarterly* vol. 33, no. 3 (2003): 368.

³ The same can also be said for their movements and regimes. See Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-145*, 208-210.

⁴ According to Patrizia Dogliani Balilla utilizes the name of a boy Giovanni Battista Perasso, who in December 1746 supposedly threw the first stone which initiated a popular revolt against the Austrian occupiers in the city of Genoa. See Patrizia Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”: 187.

⁵ Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”: 187.

of youth groups and those established by the *PNF* erupted. This dualism was not resolved until October 1937, when the *PNF* decided to establish a new umbrella organization, *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio – GIL* with its motto *Credere, obbedire, combattere* [Believe, Obey, Fight].⁶ Although membership in the ONB was obligatory for all elementary school students, it was not until 1937 that it became compulsory for the youth to become members of this all-embracing youth organization.⁷ Those joining the Fascist youth organization also had to take the following oath:

In the name of God and Italy I swear that I will execute the orders of the DUCE and serve with all my strength and, if necessary, with my blood the Cause of the Fascist Revolution.⁸

By the end of the 1937 membership in the Lictor Youth numbered an estimated 7,532,000 youth members and at its peak in 1942 an estimated 8,830,000 youth members, with more than 90 percent of them being teenage boys and adolescents, and only 30 percent of girls.⁹

Similar structure and organizational principles can also be found in Nazi Germany. Already in 1922 the *Jugendbund der NSDAP* [Youth League of the National Socialist Workers' Party] was established with the purpose of attracting youth from ages 14 to 18. The Youth League was given its own statute which defined their goals and purpose. According to the statute the League was established as an integral part of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – NSDAP* [National Socialist German Workers' Party]. It was also stated that the aim was to reawaken and nurture certain characteristics of German blood such as love for one's country, health, physical discipline and activity, as well as to erase class or social differences. The

⁶ Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight. Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 148-149, and Dogliani, "Propaganda and Youth": 191.

⁷ Dogliani, "Propaganda and Youth": 188, and Philip V. Cannistraro, ed., *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 570.

⁸ As quoted in Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 149.

⁹ Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 220, and Dogliani, "Propaganda and Youth": 192.

statute also stipulated that the youth was to become engaged and active through weekly meetings, games and hiking. Point V of the statute limited membership only to Germans; Jews and foreigners being excluded. In May 1922, the first public meeting of the Youth League was held in *Bürgerbräukeller* beer hall in Munich, thus announcing the official establishment of the Youth League.¹⁰ Four years later, during the party rally in Weimar, the Youth League changed its name and became the *Hitler-Jugend, Bund der Deutschen Arbeiterjugend*, [Hitler Youth: Association of German Young Workers] with Kurt Gruber, a law student and regional leader of the youth movement, as *Reichsführer* [National Leader] of the Hitler Youth.¹¹ According to P. D. Stachura, the initial purpose of establishing such youth organizations was to “attract the political support of young Germans for National-Socialism”.¹² In April 1931, the Hitler Youth was subordinated to the *Sturmabteilung – SA* [Storm Detachment] and Gruber as its leader was to be subordinated to the Chief of Staff of the *SA*, that is, to Ernst Röhm.¹³ However, this subordination was not state-wide, but was confined to the regional level thus allowing for the Hitler Youth to retain “a recognizable area for maneuver independent of both the NSDAP and SA”.¹⁴ Due to the slow influx of the youth, Hitler dismissed Gruber in October 1931 and created a new office of *Reichsjugendführer* [National Youth Leader] as part of the Supreme SA Command. He appointed a 24-year-old Baldur von Schirach, a former leader of the National-Socialist Student Association, as head of this new office which was to supervise and advice all the existing youth formations.¹⁵ When in 1932 Brunings government placed a ban on uniformed units of the *NSDAP*, Hitler Youth changed its

¹⁰ Hannsjoachim Wolfgang Koch, *The Hitler Youth. Origins and Development 1922-45* (New York: First Cooper Square Press Edition, 2000, c1975), 46-49.

¹¹ Ibid, 64.

¹² P. D. Stachura, “The Ideology of the Hitler Youth in the *Kampfzeit*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 8, no. 3 (1973): 155.

¹³ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 77.

¹⁴ P.D. Stachura, “The Ideology of the Hitler Youth in the *Kampfzeit*”: 156.

¹⁵ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 79.

name to *National-Sozialistischer Jugend Bund* [National Socialist Youth Movement] to escape prohibition. This further caused the need to break ties with the *SA*, thus causing that in May 1932 Hitler issued a decree by which Schirach became solely responsible to him.¹⁶

Prior to Hitler's accession to power, the Hitler Youth passed through several stages, with both its membership and appeal fluctuating. No doubt, the Hitler Youth managed to gather certain amount of support, but it was not until Hitler became Chancellor, and Hitler Youth the only approved youth organization, that it managed to really expand its membership and exert ideological and political influence.¹⁷ It was in April 1933 that the Nazis took over the control of the Reich Committee of German Youth Associations thus gaining total control over its estimated 5 to 6 million members.¹⁸ In only five years, the organization had an estimated 7 million members, and in the early years of the war, an estimated 90 percent of the youth in Germany were members of the organization.¹⁹ Once the Nazis took power, the Hitler Youth structure was set, and remained as such until 1945. Similar to the Lictor Youth in Fascist Italy, the structure of the Hitler Youth also comprised male and female branches, each with their own sections according to the age. The male section was divided into *Deutsches Jungvolk* [German Junior Youth] from ages 10 to 14, and *Hitlerjugend* [Hitler Youth] from ages 14 to 18. The female branch was divided into *Jungmädelbund* [Young Girls' League] from ages 10 to 14, and *Bund Deutscher Mädel* [League of German Girls] from ages 14 to 18.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid, 89.

¹⁷ Stachura, "The Ideology of the Hitler Youth in the *Kampfzeit*": 159.

¹⁸ Dagmar Reese, "The BDM Generation: a Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," in Mark Roseman, ed., *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1170-1968* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 237.

¹⁹ Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 192, and Dogliani, "Propaganda and Youth": 195.

²⁰ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 101.

As can be seen, the main organizational difference between the Fascist and Nazi youth organizations was that of an age in which the youth was incorporated into youth organization. In Fascist Italy the youth entered organization from the age of 6, while in Nazi Germany from the age of 10. The same as in Fascist Italy, the participation in the Hitler Youth was not compulsory in the beginning. However, in December 1936 the *Law on the Hitler Youth* was issued, stipulating that “all of the German Youth in the Reich is organized within the Hitler Youth”.²¹ The law also stipulated the position of the youth leader, establishing that “his office is that of a higher governmental Agency with its seat in Berlin, and is directly responsible to the *Führer* and the Chancellor of the Reich”.²² Yet it was not until March 1939 that membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory for all German youth from ages 10 to 18.²³ Thus, from the mid-1930s, both Fascist and Nazi youth organizations came under the control of their respective parties, i.e. *PNF* and *NSDAP*, with their youth leaders directly responsible to their parties’ leaders, that is to the *Duce* and the *Führer*.

Similarity also arises from the fact that the education received within the youth organization was to serve as the third factor between the school and family, as a sort of corrective factor.²⁴ Thus, family, school, and youth organizations were to become heralds of youth education, with the youth organizations having primacy over the other two. Both regimes tried influencing school curricula and wished to reform respective school systems so as to suite their goals and vision of future generations; future Fascist or Nazi citizens. By 1930 school curricula in Fascist Italy was mostly changed thus, as Koon stressed, reflecting “the increasing chauvinism and militarism

²¹ Arno Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich. Die Hitler – Jugend und Ihre Gegner* [The Youth in the Third Reich. The Hitler Youth and Their Rivals] (Köln: Papy Rosa Paperback, 2014), 29.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, 37-38, and Otto Kirchheimer and John Herz, “Leadership Principle and Criminal Responsibility,” in Raffaele Laudani, ed., *Secret Reports on Nazi Germany – The Frankfurt School Contribution to the War Effort* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 502.

²⁴ Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 296.

of PNF policies”.²⁵ However, one of the major attempts at school reform came from Guiseppe Bottai, journalist and minister of national education, who drafted a document which would introduce the required changes. In January 1939 he presented to the Fascist Grand Council his *Carta della Scuola* [School Charter] whose twenty-nine points aimed at reforming and creating “a new truly Fascist school based on study, physical training, and manual labor”.²⁶ In Nazi Germany the attempt to unify school system was seen through changes in curriculum as well as in the introduction of at least five hours mandatory physical education.²⁷ Already in 1933 loyal members of the Nazi Party were installed in state committees for textbooks which gave new directives for schools and textbooks from the regional, but also from the party level. A year later a directive was issued which “made it compulsory for schools to educate their pupils ‘in the spirit of National Socialism’”.²⁸ There were three agencies responsible for preparation and censorship of textbooks: *Parteiamtliche Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des nationalsozialistischen Schrifttums* [Party Official Examination Committee for NS Literature], *Reichsstelle Für Das Schul – Und Unterrichtsschrifttum* [Reich Office for School and Instructional Literature and Reich Committee] and the Party Official Examination Committee which was in charge of issuing “a monthly bibliography (*Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie*), listing of approved books and pamphlets in all fields of literature”.²⁹ Both regimes, although claiming the unity and the need for cooperation among their youth organizations and school, faced problems in synchronizing this. Both youth organizations encroached on school time, and youth members often tried to exercise their power over teachers, with state and party often approving and supporting such conduct. For example, in 1940 a

²⁵ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 71.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 165.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 263.

²⁸ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power: 1933-1939* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 264.

²⁹ Kirchheimer and Herz, “Leadership Principle and Criminal Responsibility”: 503.

plan called “*Rapporti Scuola – GIL*” was issued which formulated collaboration between the Lictor Youth and school, working mostly to the benefit of the former by determining that children should attend school only in the morning, that winter vacations were to be free of any school projects, and that teachers were to join Lictor Youth as officers and instructors.³⁰ Such a relation between the youth and school was also noticeable in Nazi Germany with, as Daniel Horn argues, one major difference and that was that:

[...] the real educational changes emanated not so much from the government and its educational leaders as from the agitation and disruption of the schools by young Nazis.³¹

The pressure mounted by the youth regarding their time in school produced similar measures as in Fascist Italy. In July 1940 the Ministry of Education declared a *Staatsjugendtag* [State Youth Day] which decreed that Saturday is to be a school-and homework-free day, further requiring that more time be freed for the activities of the Hitler Youth.³²

Both regimes also established various schools for special education of the youth leaders; they organized summer camps, built sporting facilities, everything necessary to educate and breed young mind and bodies.³³ In Fascist Italy, for example, the regime established the *Case Balilla* and *Case della Giovane* across the state which became centers for youth extracurricular activities, as well as a system of winter and summer camps for the youth members which lasted from one week to several months.³⁴ In Nazi Germany, one finds much more attention and effort directed at the education of the youth’s future leaders. For that purpose several institutions were

³⁰ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 171.

³¹ Daniel Horn, “The Hitler Youth and Educational Decline in the Third Reich,” *History of Education Quarterly* vol. 16, no. 4 (1976): 425-426.

³² *Ibid*: 432.

³³ Dogliani, “Sport and Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* vol. 5, no. 3 (2000): 326-332, and Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 228-235.

³⁴ Cannistraro, *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*, 571.

established, such as the *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt* [National Political Educational Institution (NAPOLA)], which was established in 1933 in the form of several boarding schools. In 1937 Baldur von Schirach and Robert Ley established the *Adolf Hitler Schulen* (AHS) [Adolf Hitler Schools] which were “to train the Fuehrers of the future, and were Schirach’s instrument for an ‘inner transformation of the schools’”.³⁵ Those schools were supposed to be elite schools, supervised exclusively by the Nazi party officials and the Hitler Youth.³⁶ Nazis also established *Ordensburgen*, intended for those older than 18 and for graduates from AHS, and the *Hohe Schule*, the party academy.³⁷ However, these schools served more as an addition than a substitute to the existing school system, a case also found in the Independent State of Croatia.³⁸

Another major difference between the two was obligatory youth work. While Nazi Germany stressed its potential from both economical and educational point of view, Fascist Italy never introduced obligatory work for the youth. One of the reasons, as Dogliani argues, was the fact that in Fascist Italy “there was always latent unemployment”.³⁹ In Nazi Germany besides farm service and household aid, the *Reichsarbeitsdienst – RAD* [Reich Labor Service] was established, which was to serve as a transitional experience between the Hitler Youth membership and entering the *Wehrmacht* for male members, and entering family life for women, and was under the control of the Reich Minister of Interior.⁴⁰ Also according to the government decree from March 1939, the youth was instructed to help with public works, such as going to the countryside and helping with everyday work. The boys were usually instructed

³⁵ Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945*, 215-217.

³⁶ Horn, “The Hitler Youth and Educational Decline in the Third Reich”: 433.

³⁷ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 179-203.

³⁸ Burleigh and Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945*, 218.

³⁹ Ibid, 197.

⁴⁰ Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 194.

to help during the harvest, while the girls were sent into rural households.⁴¹ The girls' farm service became compulsory after 1938, and prior to the membership in Hitler Youth becoming compulsory, Göring established *Pflichtjahr* [Mandatory One-Year Service in the Household] as part of his 'Four Year Plan' which determined that girls need to spend at least one year in the service before they could accept a permanent working position.⁴² Such an idea, of youth helping out in the countryside, was connected with the *Artamanen* doctrine from the 1920s, which advocated the returning and rooting young Germans to their soil.⁴³ The idea was that physical work helped to keep the youth physically fit during their school year breaks and was also regarded as an addition to the economy, and viewed especially useful for the youth's premilitary preparation.⁴⁴ When it comes to the girls, the idea was that farm labor kept them away from the ills of urban centers, and prepared them for household labor by developing their feminine qualities.⁴⁵ It is known that the *BDM* often emphasized the need for elimination of "such superficial values as makeup, fashion, and luxury".⁴⁶

Another highly visible characteristic of both youth organizations was their emphasis on the militarization of the youth. Since both organizations stemmed from movements which applauded violence and readiness to fight in order to achieve their political goals and so save their respective nations from decadence; militarism and military education became an essential part within their youth organizations. First and foremost, militarism served to create the feeling of comradeship, a feeling of belonging to a community. It was to be a constant reminder of older generations' struggle and to create a community of equals with ideas and goals which surpass

⁴¹ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 115.

⁴² Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 85.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 84.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 84.

⁴⁶ Michelle Mouton, "Sports, Song and Socialization – Women's Memories of Youthful Activity and Political Indoctrination in the BDM," *Journal of Women's History* vol. 17, no. 2 (2005): 66.

individual needs. However, the youth militarism in Nazi Germany was given a more important agenda than in Fascist Italy. For example, there was a stronger relation and collaboration between the Hitler Youth and the *Schutzstaffel* – *SS* [Protection Squadrons], which followed the Nazi policies of creating racially pure German nation, and the main task of territorial expansionism, by allowing those deemed ideologically and racially pure to advance their status within the Nazi regime.⁴⁷ In order for the Nazis to achieve their expansionist policies, the youth had to be militarized from the beginning, and thus militarization presented “the hallmark of HJ socialization”.⁴⁸ Within the Hitler Youth camping and hiking were viewed as the most useful and successful ways of premilitary training for their youth.⁴⁹ Many of the German youth were later recruited into *Wehrmacht*, which until the second half of the 1942 held monopoly over the conscription of soldiers.⁵⁰ As the war escalated, militarization of the youth in Nazi Germany went even further. Thus in 1942, besides the regular military training in the Hitler Youth, *Wehrtüchtigungslager* – *WE* [Premilitary Training Camps] were established, as camps which served to militarily prepare those from ages 15 to 18 and were jointly organized by the Hitler Youth, *Wehrmacht*, and the *SS*.⁵¹ The most extreme example of militarism and the role assigned to the youth by Nazi officials were *der Werwolf* [Werewolf]. These were small commando groups, consisting mostly of boys who were being dropped behind the enemies’ lines in order to execute attacks and thus reverse the situation in the field, which was “an insane task in itself”.⁵² One major difference was that, in Fascist Italy, the premilitary program was mostly intended for those older than 18. The whole process was divided into three

⁴⁷ Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”: 195-196.

⁴⁸ Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 28-29.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 29.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 209.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 196.

⁵² *Ibid*, 227.

phases: premilitary, military, and postmilitary period.⁵³ In Fascist Italy the militarization of the youth gained prominence after the attack on Ethiopia in October 1935. However, it was not until 1940 that Lictor Youth started establishing and forming youth military brigades, called *bataglioni giovani fascisti* [Battalions of Young Fascists], who were then sent to the front, mostly in North Africa. Accordingly, young boys started receiving necessary military education at the Lictor Youth academies called *Campi Dux* [Duce's Camps].⁵⁴ The most visible aspect of the youth militarization were the uniforms. In both organizations, as well as within the Ustasha Youth, uniforms served to erase class and social differences in order to create a shared feeling of national and social unity among the youth. Also, another aspect of such uniformity was to symbolize and show an outward sign “of being part of the rank and file of the movement”.⁵⁵

The structure of both Fascist and Nazi youth organizations shows one significant division present from the outset. Both organizations show a clearly visible and accentuated gender division, and thus their respective roles and expectations within the youth organizations. Gender divisions and the specific roles assigned to the youth were equal in both regimes, and were based on extremely conservative patriarchal and military notions of their respective societies. While the boys were raised and educated to be soldiers, to be courageous and strong, the girls' primary role was confined to household and family.⁵⁶ This strict gender division was evident in education, but also in the general view on the role of women in society. This can be summarized in a way that women were given a threefold task, that of serving “as

⁵³ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 98.

⁵⁴ Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”: 191-192.

⁵⁵ Pine, “Creating Conformity: The Training of Girls in the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*”: 374.

⁵⁶ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 97.

helpmates to the men, to bear them children and rear them according to Nazi values, and to be faithful homemakers”.⁵⁷ As Mouton stated in her article:

While both boys and girls learned dedication to the state and self-discipline in Nazi youth groups, the agenda for girls also stressed Hitler’s proclamation that ‘the goal of female education must invariably be the future mother’.⁵⁸

However, this did not mean that girls were to remain passive, but simply that their feelings, emotions, actions, and roles were to be expressed differently from those of their male peers. In Nazi Germany, girls were being taught that “‘motherliness’ – not femininity – was the ultimate aim, while for boys it was very clearly ‘manliness’, in a militarized sense”.⁵⁹ The same view was also present in Fascist Italy where girls’ activities, especially sports activities “aimed at fostering healthy and courageous mothers, primed to educate their own children in the love of the Nation”.⁶⁰ In general, fascists thought that they can impose and install their worldview on specific gender roles onto their youth, which would then, without questioning such division, accept them as ‘natural’.

Both of these regimes regarded their massive youth organizations as guardians and beacons of their respective nations. The idea was that, through regimentation, they can mold their youth to become the future generation, the generation filled with pride, respect, and responsibility with regard to the older fascist generation’s achievements. The presumption for such an idea was that one’s nation was on the verge of decadence and destruction, and that it was exactly the youth who need realize this and safeguard it in the future, even if that meant giving their lives. It can be argued that the Ustasha Youth was built on the same, or similar, organizational and ideological principles evident within these two organizations.

⁵⁷ Kater, *The Hitler Youth*, 73.

⁵⁸ Mouton, “Sports, song and socialization – Women’s Memories of Youthful Activity and Political Indoctrination in the BDM”: 66.

⁵⁹ Pine, “Creating Conformity: The Training of Girls in the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*”: 371.

⁶⁰ Dogliani, “Propaganda and Youth”: 190.

3.2. *The ‘New’ Croat – The Ideology of the Ustasha Youth Organization*

As mentioned, fascists emphasized and exalted their youth as the new generation tasked with a role of national salvation, regeneration. In their worldview, the youth was tasked to become the carrier and successor of older generations' ideas and achievements, the future carrier and protector of the state and nation, of fascism.⁶¹ Such a view was no different from the one presented and practiced within the Ustasha regime as well. The ideal of an Ustasha was that of a young, belligerent, and merciful Croat devoted to his/her newly established state and to his/her nation. The Ustasha was to become a synonym for the ideal of a ‘new’ Croat, a new version of Croatian man/woman, and was to epitomize the mere essence of *croatianism*. Such a vision was then being transferred to the Ustasha Youth organization within the Independent State of Croatia. The Ustasha Youth organization had a prime task of creating “Croats. Ustasha – fighters [...] the Ustasha Youth is here to create only Croats – Ustashas, and not foreign subjects and servants”.⁶² As Ivo Korsky, a lawyer and officer of the *Ustaška vojnica* [Ustasha Corps] stated:

Only the youth can become Ustashas and that is why the Poglavnik has established the Ustasha Youth as obligatory organization for all Croatian boys and girls, so that he may grind the souls of young Croats and create out of them the Ustashas who shall fill in the ranks of his faithful Ustashas and replace them once these fall.⁶³

Such role of future Croatian youth was combined with the notion of nation as an organic whole,⁶⁴ within which an individual is worth only as part of a broader national community, or as Grga Pejnović, professor and prominent Ustasha Youth

⁶¹ See Moose, *Nazi Culture*, 263-317, and Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 13-14.

⁶² I. M., “Raditi za Poglavnikovu Hrvatsku,” [Working for the Poglavnik's Croatia] *Hrvatska zemlja – Tjednik za politička, prosvjetna, društvena i gospodarska pitanja* (Petrinja), [Croatian Land – A Weekly for Political, Educational, Social and Economic Questions] October 17, 1942, no. 3, 1.

⁶³ Ivo Korsky, “Ustaška mladež u novoj Hrvatskoj,” [The Ustasha Youth in New Croatia] *Ustaški godišnjak* [The Ustasha Yearbook] (Zagreb: GUS, 1942), 207.

⁶⁴ M.K., “Država je organska cjelina,” [State is an Organic Unit] *Ustaška mladež*, September 14, 1941, no. 7, 1.

theorist stated: “An individual in his relation towards the nation is a transient element and a nation is not just a sum of individuals, but a live organic wholeness.”⁶⁵ Milivoj Karamarko, a district leader of the Ustasha Youth in Bilogora, described his notion of nation and state in a similar way, arguing that nation and state are to be considered as “an organism, which never gets old, but is simultaneously old and young, one which springs and withers, burgeons and comes to fruition”.⁶⁶ The Ustasha officials saw it necessary to raise and educate new generations of Croats, the new Ustashas. It was exactly these new generations which were to become the harbingers of the older Ustasha generations ideas, struggles, and achievements. It was the youth to whom the Ustasha leaders claimed to have assigned the task of carrying and protecting the new system. Ivan Oršanić stated that the ideas of this new order belong to the future and therefore the youth represents the element tasked with carrying this new order and its ideas “which are anti-communist, anti-plutocratic, anti-Yugoslav and anti-Versailles”.⁶⁷

The youth was to become an essential part of the Ustasha state, which according to Crljen was to be totalitarian because it:

[...] integrates, connects, and manages all sources of national strength, both spiritual and materialistic, because it takes onto itself a complete, total care for all national strata in all their life's needs.⁶⁸

In accordance with such totalitarian view and vision of the new Croatian state and society, the Ustasha leaders set upon the path of organizing the Ustasha Youth organization as a total, all-embracing youth organization. The idea was not so much a political, repressive totalitarianism, but more of an anthropological totalitarianism

⁶⁵ Grga Pejnović, “Narodne vrijednote koje ne prolaze,” [National Values that Never Pass] *Hrvatska Mladost – list za srednjoškolsku mladež*, [Croatian Youth – Journal for High School Youth] September 1943, no. 1, 1.

⁶⁶ Milivoj Karamarko, “Raditi i stvarati,” [To Work and Create] *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 4.

⁶⁷ Ivan Oršanić, “Ustaška mladež nosi novi sustav,” [The Ustasha Youth Carries the New System] *Ustaška mladež*, September 21, 1941, no. 8, 1.

⁶⁸ Crljen, ed., *Načela Ustaškog pokreta*, 113.

whose collective action aimed to rebuild, redirect, and guide the youth as envisaged by the elite. Since it was the elite who fought against the decadence of the old post-1918 European order and against bolshevism, their goal of building a new national system based on national essence, authority, responsibility, and discipline for the good of the nation as a whole was to be unconditionally accepted, fulfilled, and carried further by the youth. Julije Makanec stated that the term freedom, as developed since the French revolution, had to be revised if one was to suppress the enemies of nations, capital and communism. In order to achieve this, a new system had to be introduced; a system established on the authority of a leader, an authoritative system “based on a strict discipline of an individual towards the one who confide him his task”.⁶⁹ In such a system, all individuals were seen as responsible to their leader, and their leader was responsible to God, history, and its people.⁷⁰ As lawyer Mirko Košutić argued in his article *Od absolutizma u narodnu totalitarnu državu* [From Absolutism to National Totalitarian State] the state was neutralized during the nineteenth century and “instead of a nation there exists an autonomous civil society [...] the state here was merely a facade”.⁷¹ He further stated that people need such legal system “which is subordinated to national consciousness [...] the nation forms the state from itself, from its essence”.⁷² In his text, the nation presented the substance of the state and therefore it is the nation which has to be the carrier of this state and in accordance to that he saw contemporary developments streaming towards the direction “by which it can freely

⁶⁹ Julije Makanec, “Auktoritativni sustav,” [Authoritative System] *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, August 9, 1942, no. 24, 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Mirko Košutić, “Od absolutizma u narodnu totalitarnu državu,” [From Absolutism into the National Totalitarian State] *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, December 24, 1942, no. 44-45, 2.

⁷² Ibid.

be concluded that the relations between the society and state are to be finally set straight in a totalitarian national state”.⁷³ For Makanec, the idea was to create:

[...] a program based on the foundations of general, eternal and most important values of national life and to gather forces around these values. This deed was done in Germany by national-socialism, in Italy by fascism, and in Croatia it is to be executed by the Ustasha movement.⁷⁴

The ideas of totality, authority, and discipline can also be detected in conceptualization and discourse on the Ustasha Youth organization. The organization itself was to be based on authoritative premises, where obedience, discipline, education, and upbringing would go hand in hand. As Janko Skrbinić stated:

The Ustasha Youth is an all-embracing totalitarian organization with the aim of building Croatian peasant-Ustasha, worker-Ustasha, and Ustasha intellectual. That is its final goal.⁷⁵

The main premise and idea were that it was the youth which was to become the new carrier of this totalitarian state. The youth was assigned with the task of preserving and continuing collective action, set in motion by the older generation of Ustashas, was to be confined to. The youth, considered as a certain *tabula rasa*, was seen as that segment of society best capable of comprehending the older generations' ideas and values, and thus to become the main pillar of this new totalitarian state based on Croatian national essence, customs, and in compliance with Croatian national needs. The Ustasha state was to be based on the authority of a leader, in this case the *Poglavnik* as charismatic leader, and his obedient followers. However, it was also to be structured according to the authority of those chosen to lead, educate, and direct by the *Poglavnik*, therefore structured according to the vision and needs of 'new' Croats – the Ustashas.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Makanec, “Auktoritativni sustav”, 2.

⁷⁵ Janko Skrbinić, “Nakladna djelatnost Ustaške mladeži,” [Publishing Activities of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, March 1943, no. 3, 28.

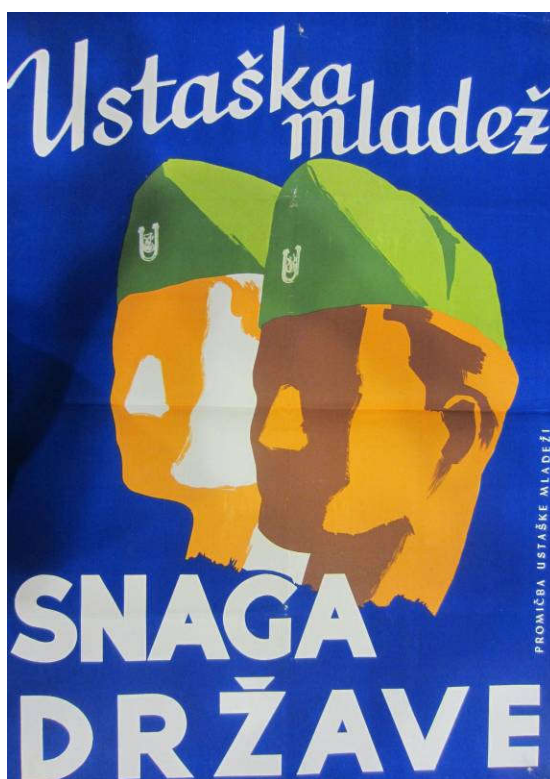


Figure 3.1. "The Ustasha Youth – the Strength of the State."⁷⁶

As mentioned in my previous chapter, the Ustashas started organizing and infiltrating various youth organizations already during the 1930s.⁷⁷ The idea of organizing their own youth was based on the experiences of interwar youth organizations, both those within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as well as those established in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, various youth organizations existed in Croatia, be it clerical or lay ones. For example *Sokol* [Falcon], a gymnastic society structured on the same principles as the one in Czech lands which was founded in 1862, was established in Croatia in 1874. *Sokol* was a gymnastic society which combined “mass physical

⁷⁶ *Nacionalna i Sveučilišna knjižnica Zagreb – NSK* [National and University Library in Zagreb], *Zbirke građe posebne vrste* [Collection of Specific Documents].

⁷⁷ The topic of various interwar youth organizations in Croatia, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in general, is still an under-researched topic. There are only a few articles written on these topics, of which two stand out. These are Sandra Prlenda, “Young, Religious, and Radical – The Croat Catholic Youth Organizations, 1922-1945,” in John Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds., *Ideologies and National Identities – The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 82-110, and Mark Biondich, “Radical Catholicism and Fascism in Croatia, 1918-1945,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 8, no. 2 (2007): 383-399.

exercises in a military spirit with liberal, nationalistic and pan-Slavic ideas, in order to mobilize popular resistance to Germanization in the Habsburg monarchy”.⁷⁸ During the interwar period, two catholic youth organizations took a prime role in organizing and mobilizing youth in Croatia. These were *Hrvatski orlovski savez* [Croatian Eagle’s Union] and its successor *Veliko križarsko bratstvo i sestrinstvo* [Great Crusader Fraternity and Sorority]. When in 1929 all youth physical education came under the control of the state-based *Sokol Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [Falcon of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia], where membership was obligatory for all schoolchildren, Ivo Protulipac, the Eagle’s leader and in 1936 head of the Catholic Action, reconstituted the Eagles as Crusaders. In 1938, when Protulipac was dismissed by Archbishop of Zagreb Alojzije Stepinac, he founded another youth organization *Hrvatski junak* [Croatian Hero]. This was a militant, exclusive nationalist organization.⁷⁹ Some of the main members of these organizations later became active during the Ustasha regime, and some even took on a prominent role within the Ustasha apparatus and also youth organization. For example, the Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth, Ivan Oršanić, was a member of Crusaders until 1933 when he became affiliated with a nationalist periodical called *Hrvatska smotra* [Croatian Review].⁸⁰ Another active member was Felix Niedzielsky, who first joined the Ustasha administration in the cities of Tuzla and Banja Luka, and in 1944 he became an Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth.⁸¹ In spite of the fact that prior to the establishment of their youth organization the Ustashes recognized those still in existence, such as Croatian Hero, they were all

⁷⁸ Sandra Prlenda, “Young, Religious, and Radical – The Croat Catholic Youth Organizations, 1922-1945”: 87.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 95.

⁸⁰ Mark Biondich, “Radical Catholicism and Fascism in Croatia, 1918-1945”: 390.

⁸¹ Prlenda, “Young, Religious, and Radical – The Croat Catholic Youth Organizations, 1922-1945”: 108, footnote 95.

soon either disbanded or marginalized.⁸² Even when on June 19, 1941 Pavelić told the Crusaders that their actions shall not be forgotten and their role in the new state will be of significant importance for “the recovery of Croatian life and Croatian society”, this soon proved an empty gesture and their recognition and acknowledgment did not last for long.⁸³

In fact, only four days later, on June 23, 1941, the *Poglavnik* issued the *Odredba o sastavu Ustaškog pokreta* [Ordinance on the Structure of the Ustasha Movement] where, for the first time, the idea of an all-embracing, state-wide youth organization was mentioned. The document divided the Ustasha movement into three separate branches, a political-organizational branch, the Ustasha Corps as its military wing, and the *Ustaška nadzorna služba* [the Ustasha Supervisory Service]. The document also mentioned the youth, from age 7 till 18, which was to be structured according to their age into three categories and was to be placed under the political-organizational branch of the movement.⁸⁴ Only two weeks later, on July 12, 1941, the *Poglavnik* issued a legal decree regarding the youth organization, published in the *Ustaša* journal, by which the Ustasha Youth organization was established.⁸⁵ However, as to my knowledge, there is no trace of this Decree in the Official Gazette, or any other legal document from that period. It seems that it was considered sufficient to publish the *Poglavnik*'s decree in the official journal of the Ustashas in order for it to have the legal power. The July Decree stated that on July 12 the *Poglavnik* issued a

⁸² See “Hrvatski junak u obnovljenoj Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj,” [Croatian Hero in a Renewed Independent State of Croatia] *Novi List*, [New Journal] May 1, 1941, no. 3, 8.

⁸³ “Poglavnik Križarima,” [Poglavnik to the Crusaders] *Križar – List za vjersko-prosvjetni uzgoj mladeži*, [Crusader – A Journal for Religious-Political Education of Youth] January-February 1942, no. 1, 3, and Prlenda, “Young, Religious, and Radical – The Croat Catholic Youth Organizations, 1922-1945”: 95-96.

⁸⁴ See “Odredba o sastavu Ustaškog pokreta,” [Ordinance on the Structure of the Ustasha Movement] *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 3, 1941, no. 3, 15-16, and also “Odredba o sastavu i djelovanju Ustaškog pokreta,” [Ordinance on the Structure and Activities of the Ustasha Movement] *Hrvatski narod*, June 24, 1941, no. 130, 4.

⁸⁵ “Osnovana je ‘Ustaška mladež’,” [The Ustasha Youth is Established] *Ustaša – vijesnik hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 11.

Legal Decree by which the youth organization is to be organized. It was stated that both male and female youth is to be organized into the “*Ustaška mladež* as an integral part of the Ustasha movement”.⁸⁶ The Decree stipulated that there exists an *Upravno zapovjedništvo* [The Administrative Command] with Administrative Commander as its leader. According to the Decree, the Ustasha Youth organization was to be divided into the male and female branch with two Administrative Commander Deputies, one for the male branch and one for the female branch of the organization. Further on, the Ustasha Youth was divided into four categories, that of *Ustaška uzdanica* [Ustasha Mainstay] from age 7 to 11, *Ustaški junak* [Ustasha Hero] from age 11 to 15, *Ustaška Starčevićeva mladež* [Ustasha Starčević Youth] from age 15 to 18 and *Sveučilišna mladež* [University Youth], with a special section dedicated to the *Radna služba* [Labor Service]. All these branches were headed by their respective commanders. The Decree also specified that there were to be eight departmental administrators, each in charge of supervising one of the eight departments within the youth organization; for military preeducation, spiritual education, propaganda, physical training, arts, health, social-economic matters, and household, the last one being active only within the female branch. According to the Decree, the Ustasha Youth organization was to be organized on the same administrative principles as the Ustasha movement, thus being composed of the Ustasha youth *tabor* [county], the Ustasha Youth *logor* [commune], and the Ustasha Youth *stožer* [district]. In December 1941, another organizational unit was added, that of *zbir* [group].⁸⁷ Each of them were to be governed by their respective commanders, that is by the *tabornik* [county leader], the *logornik*

⁸⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁸⁷ *Zbir* was to become the smallest organizational unit in rural areas. Every village where there were adequate facilities was to have a *zbir* which was to be headed by a *zbornik* or *tabornik* present in that same village. See Stjepan Blažić, “Prve upute,” [First Instructions] *Starčevićeva mladež*, [Starčević Youth] December, 1941, no. 1, 25.

[commune leader], and the *stožernik* [district leader].⁸⁸ Later on, next to these administrative units, working units were added, which consisted of the *roj* [swarm], *vod* [platoon], *satnija* [company], and *bojna* [battalion]. Within these units, members were coming together for educational purposes, mostly for their spiritual and physical education and work ethics, as well as for public performances.⁸⁹ Besides defining organizational principles and the structure of the organization the Decree also stated that by its declaration:

All previously existing similar organizations are to stop with their activities and their members are now included into the matching individual bodies of the Ustasha Youth organization.⁹⁰

The idea was that the youth organization was to be in charge of carrying and enforcing the “all-embracing national, moral, and physical education of Croatian youth from ages 7 till 18”.⁹¹ The Decree also stated that “the existing Command for premilitary education and for Labor Service of the youth is to be included into the Ustasha Youth organization”.⁹² This indicates that, prior to the establishment of the nation-wide youth organization, the Ustasha officials had already organized individual branches for Premilitary Education and Labor Service, within which youth had been organized and trained from the outset of the state’s proclamation.

Only four months later, in November 1941, a new Law Decree on the Ustasha Youth was proclaimed. The content of this Decree was the same as the one from July with only one minor difference concerning the age of those who were to be integrated into the Ustasha Starčević Youth section, i.e. they increased the age to 21, as opposed

⁸⁸ “Osnovana je ‘Ustaška mladež’”, 11.

⁸⁹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, VI/Box no. 203, 11/12, “Ustrojstvo i podjela Ustaške mladeži” [Structure and Division of the Ustasha Youth].

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, VI/Box no. 199/822 “Ministarstvu Domobranstva i Mnistarstvu za obrt, veleobrt i trgovinu,” [To the Ministry of Home defense and Ministry for Craftsmanship and Trade] July 25, 1941.

⁹² “Osnovana je ‘Ustaška mladež’”, 11.

to previously stipulated 18.⁹³ Another change with regard to the Ustasha Youth organization occurred in August 1942 when the new *Propisnik o zadaći, ustrojstvu i smjernicama „Ustaše” – Hrvatskog oslobodilačkog pokreta* [Regulation on the Task, Administration, and Guidelines of Ustasha – Croatian Liberation Movement] was issued.⁹⁴ Clause 19 of the Regulation described the Ustasha Youth organization and its structure. The main difference compared to the previous two Decrees is that in the Regulation, University Youth is no longer part of the Ustasha Youth organization. Instead, two new sections were being organized, that of *Ustaški jurišnici* [Ustasha Storm Troopers] and *Ustaške djevojke* [Ustasha Girls], which included members from age 18 to 21.⁹⁵ The Clause 22 of the Regulation stipulated requirements for membership as well as grounds for membership termination which was not present in the two previous Decrees. The Clause stipulated, same as previous Decrees, that every Croat, male or female, from the age of 7, is a member of the Ustasha Youth.⁹⁶ The same Clause stipulated that membership can end only in the case of death, if a member turns 21, if a member enrolls at the University prior to the age of 21, if a member joins the Ustasha Corps prior to the age of 21, if a member marries prior to the age of 21, or by being expelled from the organization.⁹⁷ Clause 71 of the same document elaborated on changes in departmental sections of the Ustasha Youth. From

⁹³ *Narodne Novine* [Official Gazette] November 5, 1941, no. 170.

⁹⁴ HDA, Ustaša – Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret – 249/Box no. 1, *Propisnik o zadaći, ustrojstvu, radu i smjernicama „Ustaše” Hrvatskog oslobodilačkog pokreta* [Regulation on the Task, Administration, and Guidelines of Ustasha – Croatian Liberation Movement] August 11, 1942. Further on HDA, UHOP – 249.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 6. Very little is known about the Ustasha Youth Storm Troopers and their actions. According to the testimony given by Božidar Kavran in 1948, its members were selected from individual members of the Stračević Youth section. See HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Organizacija Ustaškog pokreta – napisao Božidar Kavran* – 013.0.19. [The Organization of the Ustasha Movement – Written by Božidar Kavran] Another report written by the Yugoslav State Secret Service describing the situation in the city of Karlovac stated that “these units had the task of terrorizing the youth which was not supportive of the Ustasha ideas, and they especially physically harassed and spied on certain individuals whom they suspected of belonging to the NOP [National Liberation Movement].” See HDA, SDS RSUP SRH – 1561, *Ustaški aparat na kotaru Karlovac – Elaborat* – 013.0.13.

⁹⁶ HDA, UHOP – 249, *Propisnik o zadaći, ustrojstvu, radu i smjernicama „Ustaše” Hrvatskog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, 7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

the original eight, there were now to be six departmental sections, *Pročelnništvo za duhovni odgoj* [Department for Spiritual Education] comprising separate sections for ideological development, arts, and propaganda; *Pročelnništvo za društvojni rad* [Department for Social Work] comprising sections for social work, healthcare, and household; *Pročelnništvo za tjelesni odgoj* [Department for Physical Education] with sections for military preeducation, and for physical training and sport; *Pročelnništvo za upravu* [Department for Administration] with sections for accounting, economy, reporter bureau, and numeration. There were also two newly-established sections, *Odjel za nadzor Ustaške mladeži* [Section for the Surveillance of the Ustasha Youth] with the task of “monitoring the life and work of the youth members”, and *Odjel za vanjske veze* [Section for External Relations] with the task of maintaining and intensifying the relations with “allied and friendly nations”.⁹⁸ It is important to notice that the Regulation also determined and proscribed who can become a full member of the Ustasha movement and what were the requirements and procedures for that. For example, Clauses 16 and 17 stipulated that any male or female Croat can become an Ustasha member at the age of 21, unless they are married prior to being 21, or are enrolled at the University, in which case they can apply for membership sooner, i.e. prior to the age of 21.⁹⁹ In several of its Clauses (Clause 20, 21, 23, 24, 25), the document determined a probationary period from three to six months before allowing full membership in the Ustasha movement.¹⁰⁰ During this probationary period, a member was expected to study:

[...] the Constitution and Principles of the movement, history and the purpose of the movement, to become aware of his duties and worthy of a noble service to the Croatian nation within the Ustasha movement.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid, 31.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 6-9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 8.

However, if one was a former or active member of the Ustasha Youth organization wishing to become an active member of the Ustasha movement, he/she could skip the obligatory probationary period if his/her former county leader submitted a positive report on him/her.¹⁰² Once accepted, a new member of the Ustasha movement takes an oath, both orally and on paper.¹⁰³ With the possibility of becoming a member of the Ustasha movement without the probationary period, thus avoiding the possibility of being rejected, membership within the Ustasha Youth paved the way for faster social and political mobility and influence.¹⁰⁴ This should not come as surprise, since the Ustasha Youth organization was established exactly for the purpose of educating and molding the future leaders, future Ustashas. As Korsky stated in his article:

[...] all this, all this education will be carried out, if the spirit of discipline and work is being planted into youth, it is then that Croatia will always have new and fresh Ustashas, which will fill in the ranks of the older Ustashas and which on every call from their Poglavnik, be it for battle or for work, will always be: *Za Dom Spremni!* [For Homeland Ready].¹⁰⁵



Figure 3.2. “The Ustasha Youth – the Foundation of Our Construction.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid, 6.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁴ See also Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 90-91. However, Yeomans is wrong in stating that there was a probationary period for the Ustasha Youth members.

¹⁰⁵ Ivo Korsky, “Ustaška mladež u novoj Hrvatskoj,” in *Ustaški godišnjak* (Zagreb: GUS, 1942), 208.

¹⁰⁶ *Hrvatski narod*, December 12, 1941, no. 305, 3.

One final change regarding the youth organization occurred in November 1944, when the names of the administrative institutions were changed from that of group, commune, county, and district to that of *skup* [rally], *stieg* [flag], *nadzorništvo* [inspection], and *saborničtvo* [assembly].¹⁰⁷ Changes introduced from July 1941 till August 1942 were of a minor significance. From the outset, the University students were considered more as a separate branch within the youth organization than as its essential part.¹⁰⁸

The idea of a new generation, of a new Croat, was presented to youth through various publications, rallies, meetings, and lectures organized by the Ustasha Youth organization. The purpose was to create a common feeling among the youth, a notion that they were “the active element of every social, cultural, and national progress”.¹⁰⁹ By entering this organization, they were told that they were given the opportunity of fulfilling their national task, an opportunity of becoming the future elite, the ‘chosen ones’.¹¹⁰ Felix Niedzielski stated: “every individual has to be a noble man and a good Croat, we wish to educate the elite group of the Ustashas.”¹¹¹ Luka Puljiz, the Ustasha Youth district leader in the city of Vukovar, described the role of the youth and their responsibilities in a sense that it has to be the:

[...] first one which shall carry that heroic Ustasha spirit of Poglavnik, which gave strength to the chosen sons of Croatian nation to hold on for more than a decade all the calamities and troubles in their camps [...].¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ See “NAREDBA O MIJENJANJU IMENA USTANOVA USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Order on the Changes in the Names of the Institutions of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, November-December 1944, no. 11-12, 1.

¹⁰⁸ For more on the role of students and their activities during the regime period see Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 29-81.

¹⁰⁹ Milivoj Karamarko, “Raditi i stvarati,” *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 4.

¹¹⁰ M. Luketa, “Uloga elite u izgradnji države,” *Ustaška mladež*, October 12, 1941, no. 11, 15.

¹¹¹ Felix Niedzielski, “Što hoće ustaška mladež?,” [What Does the Ustasha Youth Want?] *Ustaška mladež*, July 15, 1944, no. 13, 3.

¹¹² Luka Puljiz, “Ustaška mladež temelj države,” [The Ustasha Youth as the Foundation of the State] *Novo Borovo* [New Borovo], February 11, 1944, no. 6, 1.

The importance of the youth within the Ustasha worldview can also be seen from the amount of publications dedicated to the youth. Even more to the point is the fact that, only three months after the state proclamation, the first journals devoted to the youth were published. The first few issues of *Ustaška mladež* were published as an appendix to the *Ustaša* journal,¹¹³ but from January 1942 the journal became a weekly “official journal of the Ustasha Youth”.¹¹⁴ In October 1941, the *Ustaška uzdanica* journal, devoted to the youngest members of the Ustasha Youth, was published.¹¹⁵ That same year, in December, a special journal, *Starčevićeva mladež*, for the Ustasha Starčević Youth section, started being published. It was intended for functionaries and leaders of working groups within this section.¹¹⁶ On April 10, 1942, a special journal devoted to the female youth section, *Novo pokoljenje*, was published.¹¹⁷ In February 1942, *Dužnostnik*, a new official journal, was being published. This was the official monthly journal of the Ustasha Youth edited by the Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth and as such “all orders, decrees and instruction published in *Dužnostnik* have official power and are obligatory for every official of the Ustasha Youth”.¹¹⁸ Besides these nationwide journals and magazines, there were also numerous local journals, published by local branches of the Ustasha Youth. Such was for example *Rakovica* from the city of Vinkovci youth branch organization,¹¹⁹ or *U Život* [Into the Life] published by the county of Zagreb male section of the youth organization,¹²⁰ or *Mladost Bilogore* [The Youth of Bilogora] published as an

¹¹³ See *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, August 3, 1941, no. 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, Christmas 1941, no. 25-26, 25.

¹¹⁵ See *Ustaška uzdanica*, October 1, 1941, no. 1.

¹¹⁶ *Starčevićeva mladež – priručni list za dužnostnike i voditelje radnih jedinica Starčevićeve mladeži*, December 1941.

¹¹⁷ *Novo pokoljenje*, April 10, 1942.

¹¹⁸ *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, March 1942, no. 1, 1.

¹¹⁹ *Rakovica – tjednik ustaške mladeži* – December 1941.

¹²⁰ *U Život – list muške Ustaške mladeži stožera Zagreb*, April 1942.

appendix to the journal for the county of Bilogora,¹²¹ or *ŽAP* published by the youth section of the city of Koprivnica,¹²² and others.¹²³ Besides the official and specialized youth journals and magazines, almost every newspaper, be it local or nationwide distributed, contained a small section regarding its local branch of the Ustasha Youth organization activities. Unfortunately, many of the mentioned journals and magazines within the Ustasha publications were destroyed, or exist only in several copies and issues.

3.3. *Organizational Challenges: Call for Reforms*

By the end of the 1941 the Ustasha Youth organization was given its basic rules and structure, most of the youth officials were appointed to their youth branches across the Independent State of Croatia with the purpose of youth organization and guidance.¹²⁴ There were also special envoys such as Josip Šprljan, with the task to help organize the Ustasha Youth in the field.¹²⁵ Such appointments of special envoys continued throughout the regime period, the last occurring in late 1944. The last male official appointed in November 1944 was Milan Grahovac in the city of Sisak and the last female official, also appointed in November 1944, was Zdravka Ferlin, appointed

¹²¹ *Mladost Bilogore*, [The Youth of Bilogora] May 1943.

¹²² *ŽAP – Glasilo nadzorničtva Ustaške mladeži*, April 1945.

¹²³ There were also many local journals of which only few issues were saved and can be found in the archives such as *Trn* [Splinter], *Zidne novine Ustaškog junaka* [The Wallpapers of the Ustasha Hero], and others.

¹²⁴ According to the list of the Ustasha Youth officials an estimated 75% of organization officials were appointed in their respective districts, communes, or counties. See HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 196-197. These documents were discovered in the Croatian State Archive during my research. They consist of two lists, one which contains the names, time, and place of the appointment, as well as the end time of service for male officials, and the other which contains the same information for the female branch of the of the Ustasha Youth organization. Whether it presents the complete list of male and female youth officials is hard to determine, but as to my knowledge there exists no other such document which would prove otherwise.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

in the city of Varaždin.¹²⁶ According to the same archive document, there were altogether 3920 Ustasha Youth officials during the regime period, out of which there were 2181 male and 1739 female officials appointed.¹²⁷ The higher number of male officials indicates that the male branch was given more attention by those in charge, and it can be also concluded that there were more male branches of the Ustasha Youth. Another interesting fact arising from this document is that it tells us that by the end of 1941, the Ustasha Youth organization was officially established across the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. Alongside major cities, like Zagreb, Osijek, Karlovac, Varaždin, Dubrovnik, Bjelovar or Sarajevo, youth organizations were also established in smaller settlements in the eastern region of Slavonia (Nova Gradiška, Đakovo, Pakrac, Dalj, Ilok, Aljmaš, Županja, Vukovar, Zemun), in the northern region of Hrvatsko zagorje (Klanjec, Donja Stubica, Krapina, Pregrada, Ivanec), in the region of Lika (Otočac, Ogulin, Gospić), on the Adriatic coast (Jelsa on the island of Hvar, Makarska), in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Derventa).¹²⁸

Despite such immediate establishment of the Ustasha Youth and official appointments, which show the Ustashes' eagerness in implementing their plans and visions, the organization was faced with serious problems. These ranged from the lack of facilities and charges of wide-spread corruption and neglect, to lack of meeting attendance and insufficient enrollment. One of the first criticisms regarding the governance of the Ustasha Youth came in August 1942 by its ex-official, Ante Brkljačić. Ante Brkljačić was one of the first officials appointed to the Ustasha Youth, and from the outset a person of Oršanić's trust. On July 15, 1941, only three days after the establishment of the Ustasha Youth, Brkljačić was appointed Commander of the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Ustasha Starčević Youth section in the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth with the task “of organizing, on all the territory of the N.D.H., all the youth from age 15 to 21”.¹²⁹ He held this position until July 31, 1942, when he was removed from all the duties in the Ustasha Youth organization.¹³⁰ A month later Brkljačić wrote a report in which he reflected on what he saw as the deteriorating situation within the Ustasha Youth. He submitted his report to Ljudevit Šolc, a member of the newly established *Sabor* [Parliament].¹³¹ In his report he mentioned his relations with Oršanić and how he was dismissed from his duties simply for standing up and not agreeing with him.¹³² According to him, the purpose of this report was to “describe the real situation within the Ustasha Youth as well as the main reasons for its organizational failures”.¹³³ This report actually consists of six smaller reports which, according to Brkljačić, were based “on a survey which was conducted among the male and female district leaders as well as among the officials in the Administrative Command”.¹³⁴ The survey asked three questions concerning the main reasons for organizational failure, those responsible for this failure, and what would be need to be done to set the Ustasha Youth on healthy foundations. In his report he talked about the lack of religion when it comes to the youth education which “is left to the will of an individual”, and for this he blamed “that Masonic liberal spirit which through the last four decades has poisoned our national organism and pushed it into the Yugoslav

¹²⁹ HDA, Sabor NDH – 211, Predsjednički spisi – Z-807/2/1, “Izvještaji o Ustaškoj Mladeži” [Reports on the Ustasha Youth] August 21, 1942. Further on HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1.

¹³⁰ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 196-197/1.

¹³¹ A Postrojnik was second in line after the *Poglavnik* in the Ustasha movement during the regime period. For more on the *Sabor* [Parliament] during the Ustasha regime see Nada Kisić Kolanović, “Hrvatski državni sabor Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1942”: 545-565.

¹³² HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/2, 4.

¹³³ Ibid, 4.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 4.

abyss”.¹³⁵ Further on, Brkljačić resented that there was still no Ustasha Youth *Propisnik* [Regulation], which could serve as a guideline and that thus:

It is unknown who is of a higher and who of a lower rank, who has the duty of listening and who has the duty of command and ordering [...] the whole organization is left to individual initiative.¹³⁶

Brkljačić was right with regard to the non-existence of the Ustasha Youth Regulation. From the outset, the youth organization was simply incorporated into the Ustasha movement, as seen from the above mentioned *Propisnik o Ustaškom pokretu* from August 1942.¹³⁷ Another criticism which Brkljačić pointed out was the fact that the organization was:

[...] developed unnaturally, that is, it started immediately with the mass enrollment without capable and educated leaders and without enough facilities in which the youth could gather and work.¹³⁸

The problem with facilities in which youth could hold their meetings and organize lectures and work was present throughout the regime period. Archival sources often show the lack of sport facilities for exercises, especially during the fall and winter period, or lack of facilities in which regular meetings of the Ustasha Youth branches could be held. For example the Ustasha Youth county in the city of Varaždin, though active for almost a year, wrote a letter to the City Government in

¹³⁵ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/2, “Problemi duhovnog odgoja Ustaške mladeži,” [Problems of Spiritual Education of the Ustasha Youth] August 22, 1942, 2.

¹³⁶ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1, “Koji su glavni razlozi organizacijskog neuspjeha,” [Which are the main Reasons of Organizational Failure] August 22, 1942, 1.

¹³⁷ However, I do have in possession a document, unfortunately undated, which shows an attempt at resolving the confusion of ranks and command within the Ustasha Youth. Since the document mentions the *Ustaški jurišnici* which were formed in August 1942, we can assume that it was written in the period after August 1942. The document made a clear distinction between the rank of office and officer rank. Unlike a rank of office, which was earned by appointment, officer rank was permanent, unless one violates the Ustasha Youth regulations. An officer within the Ustasha Youth with an officer rank was given a right of command only over his/her age group, and was under the command of his superior commander. If officers’ ranks were of the same position in a dispute then rank of office was given precedence in determining who commands over whom. However, there is also an interesting statement by which an official with a lower officer rank and a higher rank of office is to be superior to someone who holds only an officer rank. Thus, if an official combined both office and officer rank he held higher position within the command chain of the Ustasha Youth. See HDA, ZIG NDH - 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203.

¹³⁸ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1, “Koji su glavni razlozi organizacijskog neuspjeha,” August 22, 1942, 1.

May 1942 stating that they still do not have their own facilities, and are asking the city to temporarily allow them to use facilities in the city theatre.¹³⁹ Such appeals occurred even though, already from October 1941, the Ustasha Youth was to be allowed to use school premises for their needs, under certain conditions.¹⁴⁰ That the lack of facilities was a major organizational, but also a financial, problem can best be seen in a letter to the *Poglavnik's* office in which Oršanić stated that the “Ustasha Youth is in no position to pay rent across the country” and that therefore he asks that buildings and belongings which were confiscated from Jews and Serbs be allocated to the needs of the Ustasha Youth.¹⁴¹ According to one report, sports and musical instruments confiscated from Jews were mostly allocated to the Ustasha Youth organization.¹⁴² In March 1942, the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth gathered and sent land registry certificates of:

[...] buildings needed by our districts, communes, and counties to the State Treasury, Office for State-Confiscated Property, so as to conduct expropriating procedure for the benefit of the Ustasha Youth.¹⁴³

In April 1942, the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth submitted a petition to the State Treasury in which they asked for allocation of the “buildings of Jews and other persons, who left the territory of the state, for the benefit of the Ustasha Youth”.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Državni arhiv Varaždin – DAV, GP – Gradsko poglavarstvo – 0025, “Gradskom poglavarstvu Varaždin,” [To the City Government of Varaždin] May 29, 1942, no. 42/42/8858. Further on DAV, GP – 0025.

¹⁴⁰ HDA, Ministarstvo narodne prosvjete – 216, Ured ministra, Box no. 2/87, “Prostorije pučkih škola na upotrebu ustaškoj mladeži,” [Premises of Elementary Schools in the Disposal of the Ustasha Youth] September 26, 1941. Further on HDA, MNP – 216, UM.

¹⁴¹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199/4686/42, “Podržavljene zgrade i stvari dodjelba Ustaškoj mladeži,” [State Confiscated Buildings and Property Allocation to the Ustasha Youth] April 2, 1942.

¹⁴² DAV, GP – 0025, “Gradskom poglavarstvu – uredu za prodaju židovskih pokretnina,” [To the City Government – Office for Selling of Jewish Movables] no. 268/41/18843, October 27, 1941.

¹⁴³ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199/176, “Izvlastdba zgrada za ustašku mladež,” [Expropriation of Buildings for the Ustasha Youth] March 31, 1942.

¹⁴⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199/821, “Izvlastdba zgrada,” [Expropriation of Buildings] April 27, 1942.

Further in his report, Brkljačić warned of propaganda issues, by saying that: “various publications are printed and sent into regions without any consideration for the situation in the field.”¹⁴⁵ He also criticized the Administrative Command as the center of the Ustasha Youth organization. According to him, there was no unique idea and goal regarding the organization, governance and purpose of the Ustasha Youth, pointing out that it all functioned on the principle of who was stronger, and who had more power. For him:

[...] this non-uniqueness of organizational spirit, where everyone pulls in a different direction and is thus forced to work to the best of his knowledge, is a major cause of many evils and the unsuccessfulness of the organization.¹⁴⁶

One of his ideas on how the organization could be improved was to “introduce discipline and order in the Administrative Command, and all negative elements from it to be removed”.¹⁴⁷ For him, the main person to be blamed for such failure was Ivan Oršanić who, according to him, elected incompetent officials and completely failed as an organizer. This can best be seen, according to Brkljačić, in the fact that:

[...] in the beginning, the youth responded with joy to the call of enrollment, but experienced great disappointment when it did not get from the organization even the smallest part of what they expected.¹⁴⁸

That there were serious problems occurring within certain branches and sections of the youth organization can also be seen in the Ustasha Youth meetings and their attendance. For example, a report from the city of Dubrovnik on the activities of the Ustasha Mainstay section from March 1944 stated that during the month of January “there were no meetings due to the lack of supervisors...the rest of communes

¹⁴⁵ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1, “Koji su glavni razlozi organizacijskog neuspjeha”, August 22, 1942, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 5-7.

¹⁴⁷ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1, “Što treba učiniti, da se Ustaška Mladež postavi na zdravije temelje?,” [What Should be done to put the Ustasha Youth on Healthier Grounds] August 22, 1942, 4.

¹⁴⁸ HDA, SNDH – 211, PS, IUM – Z-807/2/1, “Koga treba smatrati odgovornim za neuspjeh Ustaške Mladeži?,” [Who is to be Considered Responsible for the Failure of the Ustasha Youth] August 23, 1942, 2.

and counties also had no activities”.¹⁴⁹ However, a report for the month of March, also from Dubrovnik, stated that “there were regular meetings with all the groups”.¹⁵⁰ June and July reports from the Dubrovnik youth organization also stated that there were regular meetings, although both pointed out that few children attended due to the summer breaks, or the youth simply showing up in small numbers.¹⁵¹ One major reason for why the youth was not attending the meetings, according to the report from Dubrovnik, was because:

[...] their parents forbid them to do so, especially those who are afraid that something might happen to them, that is, they are waiting, to see what comes out from all this.¹⁵²

Parents hesitated, especially in those parts where constant fighting occurred and where various sides, be they Ustashas, Italians, Chetniks, or Partisans were fighting for control over specific areas or cities.¹⁵³ Another reason why parents were reluctant to send their children to meetings can be found in a report from the city of Bosanska Gradiška in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report written to the Interior Ministry in December 1943 talked about Osman Hadjijusufović, a county leader of the Ustasha Youth. He was described as a person of low moral fiber and ethics and as a professional black marketer, something which was well-known among his fellow citizens. The report further stated that due to all this he enjoys no reputation

¹⁴⁹ Državni Arhiv Dubrovnik – DAD, Ustaška mladež – UM – 44, “Izvješće o radu s Ustaškom Uzdanicom, kroz mjesec siječanj i veljaču,” [Report on the Work done with the Ustasha Mainstay through months of January and February] March 8, 1944, 87/44. Further on DAD, UM – 44. The documents pertaining to the Ustasha Youth district from the city of Dubrovnik from this archive are all classified under the Box no. 44.

¹⁵⁰ DAD, UM – 44, “Logoru Ženske Ustaške Mladeži,” [To the Commune of the Female Ustasha Youth] April 2, 1943.

¹⁵¹ DAD, UM – 44, “Logoru Ženske Ustaške mladeži,” July 8, 1943, 221/43, and “Stožeru Ženske Ustaške Mladeži” [To the District of the Female Ustasha Youth] July 5, 1943, 172/43.

¹⁵² DAD, UM – 44, “Izvješće,” [A Report] August 5, 1943, 252/43.

¹⁵³ This was especially the case around the Dubrovnik region and Bosnia during the end of 1942 and throughout 1943. For example, in 1943 the Ustashas actually had no control over the Dubrovnik area as can be seen from a report written in July 1943. See HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 50/7, “Političke prilike u Dubrovniku,” [Political Circumstances in Dubrovnik] July 3, 1943.

whatsoever among the parents “so the parents justly hesitate to leave their children to the education and influence of such an official”.¹⁵⁴

That there was a general lack of discipline among the youth and the inability of their leaders to engage with them is also seen from a report written by Lavoslav Koprivnjak, a reporter for social care from the province of Prigorje, when he stated: “I noticed that not all youth is actively participating within the Ustasha Youth organizations.” He further went on inviting parents, intelligentsia, and schools to become more active and cooperative, further stating that lack of facilities, uniforms, and homes “is not and cannot be the reason against such suggestion”.¹⁵⁵ This lack of discipline among the youth when it comes to attendance of the meetings can also be found in a monthly report from the county of Inđija, in which it was stated that “the number of those present is unsatisfying”.¹⁵⁶ The lack of participation and activities among youth, especially with regard to their activities in their local branches of the Ustasha Youth, obviously presented a major issue within the organization. However, most of the reports are dated in the year 1943, when the Ustashes started losing their grip over their territories and the economic and social situation deteriorated significantly.¹⁵⁷ For example, a wall newspaper, edited by the local Ustasha Youth branch of Ustasha Hero from Hrvatska Mitrovica published an article entitled *Svršetak jedne godine našeg rada* [Ending the Year of Our Work]. In it, the leaders of Hero asked their members:

¹⁵⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 44, “Osman Hadjijusufović, tabornik U.M. u B. Gradiški, podatci,” [Osman Hadjijusufović County Leader of the Ustasha Youth in B. Gradiška, Information] December 21, 1943.

¹⁵⁵ HDA, UHOP – 249/Box no. 16, “Svima logorima i taborima Ustaške Mladeži Velike Župe Prigorje – Predstavka,” [To all Communes and Counties of the Ustasha Youth of the Great County of Prigorje] April 17, 1943.

¹⁵⁶ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 202/37, “Mesečni izvještaj,” [A Monthly Report] December 3, 1943.

¹⁵⁷ See Aralica, *Matica u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941-1945*.

[...] to place their hand on their hearts and ask ourselves: What could I have done, and what I have done for the Ustasha Youth? It is then that we shall come to a sad conclusion: NOTHING!.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, the Ustasha officials had a completely different vision and version of their success. For example, in March 1943 Skrbín claimed that the Ustasha Youth organization has more than over 500 000 active members and is thus:

[...] the fourth youth organization on our continent (after German, Italian, and Spanish youth) and certainly with its dynamism the strongest organization in this part of Europe.¹⁵⁹

It further claimed that the organization had 48 districts, 220 communes, and more than 1200 counties and groups.¹⁶⁰ These numbers were higher from those presented in April 1942, when it was stated that the organization has 80 communes and 245 counties of the male Ustasha Youth and 60 communes and 234 counties of female Ustasha Youth.¹⁶¹ An article from April 1943, published in the local newspaper for the city of Varaždin, *Hrvatsko Jedinstvo* [Croatian Unity], claimed that, within only two years of its existence, there were altogether some 227 000 meetings out of which there were 113 620 meetings of the Ustasha Mainstay, 68 000 of the Ustasha Hero, and 45 000 of the Ustasha Starčević Youth section. It also stated that there were now altogether 159 male communes, 159 female communes, 921 male counties, and 899 female counties organized.¹⁶² When compared with the numbers provided by Skrbín, this article claimed that there were even more Ustasha Youth branches organized. The number of over half a million members was mentioned also by Blažeković in his 1944 book, *Mladež i država* [The Youth and State], where he

¹⁵⁸ "Svršetak jedne godine našeg rada," [Ending of the One Year of Our Work] *Zidne novine Ustaškog Junaka*, July 1943, no. 5, 1.

¹⁵⁹ Janko Skrbín, "Zadatci i djelovanje Ustaške mladeži," [Tasks and Activities of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, March 1, 1943, no. 4, 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶¹ "Ustaška mladež pokoljenje nove Hrvatske," [The Ustasha Youth Generation of New Croatia] *Dužnostnik*, April 1942, no. 2, 49.

¹⁶² "Ustaška mladež je veoma djelatna," [The Ustasha Youth is Highly Active] *Hrvatsko Jedinstvo – Varaždin*, [Croatian Unity – Varaždin] April 15, 1943, no. 15, 2.

claimed a number of over half a million Croatian youth members.¹⁶³ According to the numbers from 1943 and Blažeković's estimate of over half a million members by 1944, it would seem that there was a significant increase in organization's success during its three years of existence. However, this is completely opposite to the above mentioned *Brkljačić Report* from August 1942 and furthermore not likely to be achieved since by the mid 1943 the Ustashas had to deal with the deteriorating economic and military situation on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. While these numbers are certainly exaggerated and used for propaganda purposes, there is however one view worth mentioning regarding the initial success of the Ustasha Youth organization. When Alojz Macek, assembly leader of the Hlinka Youth organization visited Croatia, mostly its eastern region of Slavonia and the city of Zagreb in October 1941, he gave an interview to the Slovak newspaper *Gardista*. In his reflections on his visit to the Independent State of Croatia and especially the Ustasha Youth, he stated that what he had seen in Croatia "is something rarely found in a newly-born state. During this short period the Ustasha Youth organization is moving forward with great promise". He further spoke of an impression regarding the ability of the Ustashas to organize and mobilize their youth into a mass organization in such a short period of their regime's existence.¹⁶⁴ Of course, Macek was probably presented with the best there was of the Ustasha Youth organization, but it still implies that the initial phase of youth organization in the Independent State of Croatia was successful, to an extent. There is no doubt that the success of establishing and running youth branches was also widely dependant on the security situation in the field. From various reports and documents it could be concluded that regions north

¹⁶³ Zdenko Blažeković, *Mladež i Država* [Youth and State] (Zagreb: Zapovjedništvo Ustaške omladine, 1944), 145.

¹⁶⁴ "HM sa vrátila z Chorvátska," [Hlinka Youth Returned from Croatia] *Gardista*, October 26, 1941, 3; "Obetavost Chorvátov za svoj štát nepozná hranic," [Sacrifice of Croats for their State Knows no Boundaries] *Gardista*, October 29, 1941, 4.

from the Sava River, which is today the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, managed to organize better and more successfully than the regions south of it.¹⁶⁵ The territory of Bosnia was especially problematic due to the growing influence of Tito's Partisan movement and the inability of the Ustashas to impose their rule and hold control over it. There are also reports of emerging problems between the Ustasha Youth organizations and local populations. This ranged from high school professors and principals who did not wish to participate in their activities, or were simply refusing to participate when told so, to problems with local authorities when refusing to cooperate or even trying to destabilize the organization.¹⁶⁶

3.4. *The Ustasha Revolution(s) and 'New' Youth*

Within various periodicals intended for youth, as well as within general magazines, journals, and newspapers, the youth was described as the new generation, the new Ustashas, which have to take onto themselves the assignment of carrying and installing the "spirit of new life, the spirit of the Ustasha youth".¹⁶⁷ According to Milivoj Karamarko, the youth was in charge of conducting the revolution from within,¹⁶⁸ thus creating a revolutionary core, or as Oršanić stated, it was the youth from which:

¹⁶⁵ See Janko Skrbini, "Prvi totalno društvenni naraštaj," [The First Totally Societal Generation] *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, April 11, 1943, no. 59, 2. See also a report from Dubrovnik regarding the political situation there HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 50/7, "Političke prilike u Dubrovniku", July 3, 1943, and Ibid. Group I/Box no. 50/185, "Političke prilike u Dubrovniku," November 21, 1943.

¹⁶⁶ Such as was the case with a public notary who refused to cooperate with the Ustasha Youth members in the small town of Lužani in the eastern region of Slavonia. See HDA, Velika župa Posavje – Brod na Savi – 254/Box no. 6, "Rada omtanje na djelovanju Ustaške mladeži," [Work on the Obstruction of the Ustasha Youth Activities] August 3, 1942. Further on HDA, VŽP – 254.

¹⁶⁷ J. P., "Ustaški pokret i hrvatska mladež," [The Ustasha Movement and Croatian Youth] *Ustaša – vjesnik Hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Milivoj Karamarko, "Raditi i stvarati," *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 6.

[...] a whole generation, such as Croatia has not seen yet, is to be developed – the Ustasha generation [...] The wave of the Ustasha youth generation is to wash away everything and everyone whom we consider evil and unworthy.¹⁶⁹

In the same article, Oršanić stated that whoever would feel discharged from such a youthful spirit shall be discharged completely.¹⁷⁰ Antun Bonifačić, writer and politician, went even further in his article *Jedinstvo volje* [The Unity of Will], where he was describing the role and the importance of the youth. He was describing an attempt of creating an artificial human which for him was “a human which has no connection with his past, with his land and his people, but is instead molded like a puppet”.¹⁷¹ He further argued that an antidote to this was created in Europe under the name of ustashism, national-socialism or fascism “which frees the European youth from the poison of lies, and sets free its will”. Since he portrayed this as a struggle between the old and the new, he came to the conclusion that those who cannot fit within such view have to disappear “in the same way as germs disappear from a healthy organism”.¹⁷²

By organizing the youth into a single, obligatory, nation-wide organization the Ustahas aimed to regenerate the Croatian nation. In their mindset, the Croatian nation has been ‘poisoned’ by ‘foreign’ elements throughout the history, especially during the interwar period, and thus these forces should be removed “by the force of this youth, by the power of their belief and will,” as stated by Oršanić in September 1941.¹⁷³ Further in his article Oršanić argued that the youth was the carrier of this new system since older generations’ values and beliefs are not and cannot be the values of

¹⁶⁹ Ivan Oršanić, “Ustaška mladež,” [The Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 5.

¹⁷¹ Antun Bonifačić, “Jedinstvo volje,” [The Unity of Will] *Ustaška mladež*, August 24, 1941, no. 8, 52.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ivan Oršanić, “Ustaška mladež nosi novi sustav,” [The Ustasha Youth Carries the New System] *Ustaška mladež*, September 21, 1941, no. 8, 1.

a new generation.¹⁷⁴ A basic notion was to create a new generation of the Ustashas who would be able to carry further this national Ustasha revolution.

In his recent publication on the Ustasha cultural policies, Yeomans argued that there were two revolutions taking place, the ‘revolution of the blood’ and the ‘revolution of the soul’, with the former preceding the later. ‘Revolution of the blood’ refers to the fact that, upon assuming power, the Ustasha regime initiated a fierce ‘campaign’ against those deemed unwanted and unworthy of the ‘new’ Croatian nation, which resulted in mass murders, expulsion, Holocaust, and prosecutions of Serbs, Jews, and Roma people. The ‘campaign’ continued, though at a slower pace, throughout the regime’s existence.¹⁷⁵ In his study, Yeomans argued that once this ‘revolution of blood’ proved to be too extreme, unsystematic, and too violent, thus causing dissatisfaction among population, and even among the officials of the Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy stationed in the Independent State of Croatia, the Ustashas decided to reexamine it and to implement a new sort of revolution, the ‘revolution of the soul’. Yeomans argues that this took place in November 1941, after the new Ustasha regional leaders were appointed.¹⁷⁶ However, if considering that the youth organization was officially established only three months after the Ustashas assumed power, and only two months after the ‘revolution of the blood’ was initiated, and that the majority of youth officials were appointed by the end of the 1941, the question remains whether there were two revolutions taking place or was there one revolution, with two essential, interconnected, and dependable variables?

The idea of a need for spiritual revolution stems from the fact that, throughout the 1930s the Ustashas’ guiding premise was that the Croatian nation, which they

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 1.

¹⁷⁵ See Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 465-477, and Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 429-469.

¹⁷⁶ Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 20.

considered as part of the western European civilization, was after 1918 pushed into an artificial state where it was ruled by the eastern, savage, and less cultural nation, the Serbs. For the Ustasas this further led to the degeneration and poisoning of Croatian national body, which they saw as being ‘infested’ with inferior, aggressive, and foreign elements. As Pavelić pointed out in his radio speech five days before the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, “in the Croatian independent state there shall be no place for alien parasites, traitors, and corrupted persons”.¹⁷⁷ Such cancerous view of the Croatian national body was also emphasized by Rudolf Pavlek in his book *Izgradnja hrvatske mladeži* [The Building of the Croatian Youth],¹⁷⁸ where he argued that the youth needs to be prepared to accomplish the assignment, but that beforehand it needs to be abducted from the past. He further argued that this new generation needs to be:

[...] taken out of the mud which has been gathering for several decades, and based on Croatian traditions to form new creative generation on the foundations of the Ustasha Principles.¹⁷⁹

On May 8, 1941, a female writer named Zdenka Smrekar gave a lecture on the radio about the necessity of a new education and a new upbringing of young girls and women. She described the role of an individual within this new state and society, the difference between male and female roles within, and she also emphasized that “it is a rigid need to approach towards an organized work of the whole Croatian youth, male and female”.¹⁸⁰ With such view, it comes as no surprise that in June 1941 an article in *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, stated that the *Poglavnik* “after the proclamation of

¹⁷⁷ “Govor Poglavnika Dra Ante Pavelića,” [A Speech of the *Poglavnik* Doctor Ante Pavelić] *Uskrs države Hrvatske* [A Resurrection of the State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatska politička biblioteka, 1941), 4.

¹⁷⁸ Rudolf Pavlek, *Izgradnja hrvatske mladeži* [Construction of Croatian Youth] (Zagreb: Ustaška mladež, 1942).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁸⁰ “Organizacija Hrvatske Ustaške ženske omladine – Odgoj hrvatskih djevojaka izvan škole,” [Organization of the Croatian Female Youth – Education of Croatian Girls Outside School] *Novi List*, May 17, 1941.

the Independent State of Croatia is continuing another significant revolution, and that is the spiritual revolution of personality”.¹⁸¹ Three weeks later, on July 6, 1941, Oršanić gave a radio speech in which he stated that revolution means “creation of a new consciousness, new feelings, new forms, new facts”, and that therefore the “Croatian nation has to be a cultural and advanced nation, and this cannot be achieved without the inner spiritual revolution”.¹⁸²

As demonstrated, the idea of the ‘revolution of soul’ was given importance from the outset of the state’s establishment. Based on the notion of contamination, alienation, and purposely planned destruction of Croatian spirit, the inner revolution of a Croatian man/woman was thus seen as a prerequisite if the Croatian national body was to regenerate itself and survive. Zvonimir Junašević stated in his May 1942 article *Duhovna revolucija* [Spiritual Revolution] that there is an unfinished revolution and that the revolution of soul is to an extent both a precondition and a consequence of the revolution of blood. For him, older generations could never be the real Ustashas but only followers, and therefore “spiritual revolution is carried by the youth, it is carried by the Ustasha Youth”.¹⁸³ In October 1941, Janko Skrbín stated that the youth, although active in the field in assisting the Ustasha fight, it did not “forget about their spiritual development, on the contrary, it considered it an essential part of the national fight and revolution”.¹⁸⁴ For him, political revolution was now completed but the:

[...] spiritual was still not and it shall be only then when each individual and everyone as a whole shall consider ustashism not as a party, but as a spiritual movement, because ustashism is our lives view and our faith, it is the synthesis of our past and living national strengths.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ “Duhovna revolucija ličnosti,” [A Spiritual Revolution of Character] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, [The Independent Croatia - Bjelovar] June 14, 1941, no. 9, 1.

¹⁸² Ivan Oršanić, “Država i generacija mladosti,” [State and the Generation of Youth] *Hrvatski krugoval*, [Croatian Radio] July 6, 1941, no. 3, 3.

¹⁸³ Zvonimir Junašević, “Duhovna revolucija,” [Spiritual Revolution] *Ustaška mladež*, May 17, 1942, no. 20, 3-4.

¹⁸⁴ Janko Skrbín, “Naš zadatak,” [Our Task] *Plava Revija – mjesečnik Ustaške Mladeži*, October, 1941, no. 1, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 3.

One article argued that the act of state proclamation achieved the:

[...] first part of the Ustasha program [...] But it is now necessary to create new people, honest and conscious ones, which shall completely fit the spirit of New Europe and new Croatia. New people!¹⁸⁶

This was all seen in a sense that “10 April initiated a silent, inner, spiritual revolution – or perhaps evolution”.¹⁸⁷ Rudolf Pavlek argued that “without the spiritual revolution of the Croatian nation, there can be no Ustasha revolution”.¹⁸⁸

The notion of spiritual revolution, of the revolution of the soul, was strongly connected with the idea of all-embracing national revolution, which was to be carried out and strengthened by the youth and its organization. Thus the Ustasha revolution and its components, be it ‘revolution of blood’ or ‘revolution of soul’, are to be looked upon as the essential parts of one radical revolution, the Ustasha national revolution. A crucial aspect of this revolution was the notion of an urgent need to educate and raise the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha. The idea behind it was, that in order to have a new generation which will safeguard the state and continue the struggle from the 1930s, there needs to be a new generation of young Ustashes. As Bzik stated: “Ustashism is creating a new man in a new order. A new Croatian man means an Ustasha.”¹⁸⁹ From the outset, the Ustasha officials’ idea was that this newly established state needs to break with the old ways and old generations. It needs a new generation, the Ustasha generation, which will safeguard and sacrifice their lives for it, just as the older generation of the Ustashes had done during the movement period. In order to achieve this, it was not enough to simply ‘cleanse’ the Croatian nation

¹⁸⁶ Fučić Zdravko, “Tri zadatka Ustaškog pokreta,” [Three Tasks of the Ustasha Movement] *U Život – list muške Ustaške mladeži stožera Zagreb*, May 1942, no. 2, 6.

¹⁸⁷ Emil Medvedović, “Hrvatska mladost prije i sada,” [The Croatian Youth Before and Now] *Ustaška mladež*, April 26, 1942, no. 17, 3.

¹⁸⁸ Rudolf Pavlek, *Izgradnja hrvatske mladeži*, 21.

¹⁸⁹ “Temeljem ustaške misli,” [On the Bedrock of the Ustasha Thought] *Ustaški pogledi*, [The Ustasha Views] (Zagreb: Ustaška tiskara, 1944), 19.

from what were perceived as foreign elements. The success of regeneration depended on the all-embracing revolution, which would break with the old system and old worldview thus paving the way for the creation of the new system and new generation of Croats – the Ustashas. Thus the Ustasha revolution was initiated with the purpose of establishing, cleansing, regenerating, and safeguarding the Ustasha state and Croatian nation simultaneously. Or as Vinko Nikolić, administrator of the Ustasha Hero, stated:

Ustashism is the term of a new order [...] Ustashism is the term of a new man. That new man has to be created. Ustashism is a revolution, revolution of our soul, revolution of our consciousness, revolution of our personal and public life [...] Ustashism is the revolution of family, social, economic, national life [...].¹⁹⁰

The youth was envisaged as the cornerstone of this revolution. Without the youth the revolution itself, and the establishment of the state, would not have been possible. They claimed that, were it not for the youth, the Independent State of Croatia would not exist as such. As one article stated: “The Poglavnik’s Ustasha movement had its best strengths in Croatian youth [...]. It was with Croatian youth that the Poglavnik created the Croatian state.”¹⁹¹ The same author took the notion of youth and youthfulness even further and applied it to describe the Ustasha movement as a movement of youth. Besides claiming and confirming the ever-present statement that the Ustasha movement found its best members among the youth, he also claimed that it was thanks to this youthful vigor and enthusiasm, which he described as an essential part of “the Poglavnik and all His associates [...] who were the people of youthful buoyancy”, the Ustasha movement was able to perform its best deeds.¹⁹² Perhaps a far-fetched statement but, nevertheless, a statement serving the purpose of presenting

¹⁹⁰ Vinko Nikolić, “Ustaštvo je nosilac novog poredka – revolucija nove države i novog čovjeka,” [Ustashism is the Carrier of New Order – Revolution of the New State and New Man] *Ustaša – vjesnik Hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, January 11, 1942, no. 2, 13.

¹⁹¹ J. P., “Ustaški pokret i hrvatska mladež,” [The Ustasha Movement and Croatian Youth] *Ustaša – vjesnik Hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 2.

¹⁹² Ibid, 9.

youthfulness and youthful vigor of the movement as well as of justifying the establishment of the youth organization. This same idea was stated during the Ustasha Youth members' rally in Zagreb, on the Stjepan Radić square on May 28, 1942. The rally was attended by some 600 youth members, according to the newspaper reports. When addressing the youth, the *Poglavnik* said: "First and foremost you are educated to be Croats [...] you are educated to become Ustashas, and to be an Ustasha means to be eternally young and eternally a fighter."¹⁹³ This 'fighter' concept, i.e. the need of constant fight and readiness for sacrifice was another important aspect of the 'new' Croat. Militarism and a strict hierarchy presented key features of the Ustasha movement, and the same principle was transferred onto the Ustasha Youth organization and its members. The same way youthfulness was presented as an essential aspect of the Ustasha movement, so was its inherent revolutionary zeal and fight. As Oršanić stated in his book:

[...] one acting thought of the Ustasha youth is struggle; a continuous struggle within Croatian people, a revolutionary fight. The organization of the Ustasha youth is a revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Poglavnik against the age-long sediments of evil.¹⁹⁴

Within this notion of evil sediments, youth was to be cleansed in order to become capable of embodying the essence of *croatianism* now presented by the figure of an Ustasha role-model. The idea was that, since home and school were incapable of the task of creating new Ustasha generations, it was the youth organization which shall be:

¹⁹³ "Biti vječno mlad znači biti ustaša," [To be Eternally Young Means to be Ustasha] *Ustaška mladež*, June 7, 1942, no. 23, 4.

¹⁹⁴ Ivan Oršanić, *Zadatci našeg rada: govor održan dužnostnicima i članovima ustaške mladeži u Radničkoj komori 9. studenoga 1941*, [Tasks of Our Work – A Speech Held to the Officials and Members of the Ustasha Youth in Workers Chamber on November 9, 1941] (Zagreb: Promičba ustaške mladeži, 1942), 8.

[...] the factor which consistently brings together all the youth, no matter of their way of life; and through common education, and common work shall create unique members of its nation.¹⁹⁵

Since the youth was to become a mirror of everything which the Ustashas stood for, they had to become models of all the Ustasha virtues. First and foremost this was to be done through discipline and uniformity of the youth. Obedience to authority was explained through a revolutionary task, that is, the task of carrying and safeguarding the Ustasha revolution in the future. The youth was to realize that the authority “in the Ustasha dictionary means to relate to the present situation, that is the newly created form of order in Europe. It is totalitarian”.¹⁹⁶ This notion of revolution, of war and struggle was all too similar to Baldur von Shirach’s statement in which he claimed that a youth member:

As he grows older, he learns that discipline and subordination are not arbitrary inventions called into being by a few power-hungry men to safeguard their own personal position, but that they are, rather, the premises for his own and his nation’s existence.¹⁹⁷

Authority and obedience were to be regarded and accepted as ‘natural’ in this on-going fight for national salvation. They were to be considered and accepted as an integral, natural thing, necessary in sustaining this new mode of collective action in perpetual motion. Discipline, obedience, and unconditional belief in the older generation of Ustashas and their actions were to become an essential ingredient among the youth, who, once educated ‘properly’, was to continue and transfer this onto the next generations of Ustashas. Therefore, the ‘revolution of soul’ could only be carried out by the youth, the youth aware of their social, political, and economic roles and assignments, or so the older generations of the Ustashas claimed.

¹⁹⁵ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 76.

¹⁹⁶ Zdravko Radić, “Auktoritet u izgradnji zajednice,” [Authority in the Building of Community] *Ustaška mladež*, August 2, 1942, no. 31, 3.

¹⁹⁷ As quoted in Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 295.

3.5. *Gender Roles within the Ustasha Youth Organization*

Another aspect worth mentioning is that of a strict division into male and female sections in accordance to the members' age. Such division was in compliance with the Ustasha movement's worldview, its organizational structure and activities during the 1930s, and was thus transferred onto this 'new generation' of Ustashes. Besides the strict division between female and male roles within the youth organization, this was also transferred to the view of society in general. While both male and female members were expected to be able to defend their homeland and be ready to give their lives for the *Poglavnik* and homeland, there was however a strict gender division based on a highly conservative and patriarchal notion of family and society.¹⁹⁸ In general, women were seen first and foremost as future wives and mothers. They were assigned the role of giving birth, raising and educating future sons and daughters, future Ustashes, but were also to serve on the battlefield if needed. On the other hand, men were assigned the role of future warriors with the task of safeguarding their homes and state. Such gender divisions and assigned roles, though present across Europe in that period, were more firmly being emphasized within the Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy as well as within the Slovak Hlinka Youth organization.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ See Rory Yeomans, "Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae: The New Ustasha Man and Woman in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945," *The Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 83, no. 4 (2005): 685-732, and Martina Bitunjac, "Zwischen Mutter-und Heldenkult: Die Ideologisierung von Frauen und des Frauenbildes im Unabhängigen Staat Kroatien," [Between the Cult of Motherhood and National Heroism: The Ideologization of Women and Female Images in the Independent State of Croatia] *RADOVI – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest*, vol. 45 (2013): 155-179.

¹⁹⁹ See Arno Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich – Die Hitlerjugend und ihre Gegner* (Köln: Papy Rossa, 1999/2008/2014), H. W. Koch, *The Hitler Youth – Origins and Development, 1922-1945* (New York: First Cooper Square Press, c1975), Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight – Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943*, and Michal Milla, *Hlinkova mládež 1938-1945*, [The Hlinka Youth 1938-1945] (Bratislava: Ústav pämati národa, 2008), 94-95.

Within the Ustasha view on society men and women were assigned specific places, which was a highly conservative, patriarchal view of family and society as such. Julije Makanec described the position and role of women with these words:

By her nature, a woman is not called upon to be a political leader and to get too entangled in a daily political life, but is determined for family life, to be a good mother to her children, a good housewife, but still not to lose her connection with national ideals and the cultural aspirations of her people.²⁰⁰



Figure 3.3. “Work with Children – Preparation for Future Duties.”²⁰¹

The same view was shared by Mira Dugački, leader of the female Ustasha Youth, when she stated that family and home are a woman’s kingdom and that “each has to know that motherhood is her first and most holy duty”.²⁰² While young girls were taught that family, home, and motherhood presented the essence of their existence, they were also told they are equal with their male comrades in building of this new state “in the field which best suits her woman’s nature”.²⁰³

The worldview presented to the youth was that of the boys educated to become strong, merciless national warriors, proper Ustashes, and the girls educated to be

²⁰⁰ Julije Makanec, “Odgoj vodja Ustaške mladeži,” [Education of the Ustasha Youth Leaders] *Plava Revija – mjesečnik Ustaške mladeži*, [Blue Review – A Monthly Journal of the Ustasha Youth] January-February 1943, no. 1-2, 5.

²⁰¹ *Novo pokoljenje*, June 10, 1942, no. 3, 4.

²⁰² Mira Dugački, “Ženska mladež u novoj Hrvatskoj,” [Women Youth in New Croatia] *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 15.

²⁰³ Ljerka Pazić, “Hrvatska djevojka u svojoj državi,” [Croatian Young Woman in Her state] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1944, no. 5, 4.

sensitive, good mothers and wives, good teachers, and the guardians of the Croatian household and nation by giving birth and raising children in a proper manner. This female role was similar as the one presented to young girls within the Nazi female youth section, the *BDM*, League of German Girls. According to Kater, girls in *BDM* were assigned three roles; helpmates to their husbands, future mothers, and guardians of home.²⁰⁴ Having the same attitude we saw in Makanec, the Nazis considered that women and girls should not be encouraged to enter politics, or any other strictly male-envisioned activities.²⁰⁵ Even the pursuit of education and the encouragement to learn and educate themselves was done for the purpose of them being able to raise ‘proper’ new Croats, and to obtain a sense of responsibility and duties towards their nation and the Ustasha movement. The division of these roles or should we say places is perhaps also best seen in the fact that young girls, unlike their male comrades, were not given strict premilitary or military education within the Ustasha Youth organization.²⁰⁶ Thus militarism and military education were reserved for male members of the Ustasha Youth, while home, child rearing, and care for the intellectual and cultural future of the new generations, and thus the nation itself, was to be a woman’s task. However, this also changed as the Ustasha regime faced an ever-growing danger on its territory and its inability to secure or regain control over it. It was not until 1944 that one finds a section on military education for female youth appearing in *Dužnostnik*. However, even then it was different from the male military education. Female youth was to be involved at the home front by “giving up her clothing, going to the movies, and

²⁰⁴ Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 73.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 231.

²⁰⁶ See *Upute dužnostnicama ženske Ustaške mladeži – za mjesec veljaču 1942* [Instructions to the Officials of the Female Ustasha Youth – for the Month of February] (Zagreb: Zapovjedništvo ženske ustaške mladeži, 1942.)

similar leisure time while our soldiers are fighting and suffering on the battlefield”.²⁰⁷ Women were expected to show empathy and care for those returning back home; young girls were to greet them at the train stations and “donate them a warm meal or flowers [...] to ask their parents to invite them over for lunch on Sunday or holidays”.²⁰⁸ They were pictured as caring for soldiers, those who welcome back the heroes from the front, showing them that their fight had a meaning and purpose, according to Jelena Lončar, a Sectional leader for Military Preeducation within the female Ustasha Youth. Female military preeducation had a role to install discipline, “not military discipline, but that part of discipline needed to female youth”.²⁰⁹

Young girls were assigned the role of mothers and carrying comrades, to help others, especially women in the countryside with regard to their hygiene and household management. Thus girls were being told that their role was bigger and more significant than just sitting at home waiting for their husbands, and presumably caring for their children, although childbearing and taking care of their children was seen as their prime task. However, some women soon started asking for a more active participation, for the extension of the assigned roles, within this new state. They wished to become politically and militarily more active, and not only socially. Women often contradicted the official views on women and their role, especially those actively involved in the Ustasha fight since the movement period. Their acts made it impossible for the regime to ignore them, and thus by 1942 young girls were being praised for their heroic deeds in defending cities, rescuing their comrades, or giving their lives for the *Poglavnik* and the state. Such was the case with Anđelka Šarić, Anka Šimunović, Dinka Peraica, and Emilija Nagoda, who were all praised as role-

²⁰⁷ “ŽENSKA VOJNA PREDNAOBRAZBA,” [Female Premilitary Education] *Dužnostnik*, September 1944, no. 9, 146.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ “KOJE SU DUŽNOSTI STEGOVNE ZAPOVJEDNICE U TEČAJU?,” [What are the Duties of the Discipline Commander during the Courses?] *Dužnostnik*, November-December 1944, no. 11-12, 181.

model female members of the Ustasha Youth and around whom martyr cults were created to serve as examples of bravery, love, and sacrifice.²¹⁰ As the regime was reaching its end, women once again, same as during the movement period became ‘brothers in arms’ with their male comrades.²¹¹

²¹⁰ “Dužnostnice – mučenice Ustaške mladeži,” [Female Officials – Martyrs of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, November 1942, no. 9, 421.

²¹¹ See Yeomans, “Militant Women, Warrior Men and Revolutionary Personae: The New Ustasha Man and Woman in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945”: 685-732.

CHAPTER IV: Breeding Young Minds and Bodies – Education, Work, Sports, and Militarization¹

“Instead of former arbitrariness and unbridled manners now comes discipline, almost military discipline, instead of spending holidays in the countryside, now comes camping life and work.”²

Introduction

Based on the Ustasha officials’ premise of the Serbian intentional deterioration with regard to the youth education in Croatia during the interwar period, the Ustasha officials paid great attention to youth education. Contrary to their rhetoric of complete and total reeducation of the youth, they never engaged into a complete reform of the existing school system. It seems that the lack of support among the teachers and professors, and inability to replace them with a more ‘trustworthy personnel’, influenced such passivity. Criticism towards educational workers is evident in various speeches, journals, and magazines, showing that the Ustasha Youth officials were well aware of the situation, but were simply unable to gain more sympathies and support among teachers and intellectuals. With such unfavorable situation and inability to change it rapidly, the Ustasha Youth officials constrained their members from imposing supremacy over elementary and high school teachers or headmasters, as found in several documents describing these situations.

Since no major school reform was implemented, nor even attempted during the Ustasha regime, it was left to the Ustasha Youth organization to implement and

¹ Certain sections of this Chapter regarding the role of sports in the Ustasha Youth education and activities have been published in my article “Fašizam, sport i mladež – ideja i uloga tjelesnoga odgoja i sporta u odgoju i organizaciji Ustaške mladeži, 1941.-1945.”: 361-382.

² Leopold Belobrajdić, “Radna služba,” [Labor Service] *Hrvatski Krugoval*, August 31, 1941, no. 11, 3.

conduct those aspects of youth education seen as necessary for regeneration of Croatian youth outside the school premises. Besides general topics such as the history of Croatia and the Ustasha movement, discussions regarding the *Principles*, geography and others, two segments were especially prominent: manual work and sports. Manual work was seen as an essential and necessary component of every individual's education because it provided him/her with the necessary skills for everyday life through which he/she contributed to his/her national community. The youth was to learn the value of work both theoretically through courses in a sense of what work meant for an individual and for the community as a whole, but also through their practical engagement in cleaning and decorating city parks, building bridges, cleaning river banks, and helping on farms. Such activities were especially emphasized among the city youth, so that they also become acquainted with the everyday activities of rural youth, as well as to be removed from the coziness of city life. Sport on the other hand, especially track-and-fields sports and chess were seen as elements in the youth education which further helped create strong and enduring young bodies and minds. The idea was that the youth needed to become more active and thus needed to learn and pay more attention to their bodies. Another aspect of youth sports activities was to prepare them for the hardships of military service and everyday life.

Another major aspect presented to the youth was that of Croats as courageous and fearless warriors throughout their history. They saw these traits in the Ustasha movement members and thus wished to transfer them onto their new generations. The main premise was that of reestablishing and reawakening of this old 'historical' characteristic which got lost during the interwar period. Thus they placed great emphasis on the youth's premilitary education, uniformity, and practices which would

provide their youth with basic knowledge in military skills and conduct from the earliest age. Members of the youth, dressed in uniforms, presented the most visible aspect of this, serving also to erase class difference as well as to present the youth as the ‘new’ Croats – the Ustashas. Despite their effort to show unity and uniformity of their youth, problems occurred, starting with difficulties obtaining the uniforms, as only poor members did not have to pay for them.

4.1. *The Ustasha Youth and State School System*

In May 1941, in the aforementioned radio speech by Zdenka Smrekar, she argued that school system and education are insufficient for the new generation and therefore there is an urgent need to organize the work of male and female youth.³ Besides regular state-supervised schools there were also three additional components in youth education within the Ustasha Youth: the weekly meetings of Ustasha Youth members, *Radna služba* [Labor Service], and *dužnostničke škole* [Schools for Officials]. One of the main Ustasha postulates regarding the interwar school system was that it was used as an institution where Croats were educated so as to lose their national feelings, and little or no attention was given to work and discipline.⁴ An article summarized the interwar school system as serving foreign interests whose goal was to denationalize the youth of Croatia.⁵ Having this in mind, as well as the general Ustasha discourse on the post-1918 period, it comes as no surprise that only two weeks after the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia, on April 23, 1941, Mile Budak, who was appointed as Minister of Education, issued a Decree by which

³ Zdenka Smrekar, “Organizacija hrvatske Ustaške ženske omladine,” *Novi List*, May 17, 1941, no. 19, 6.

⁴ Luka Halat, “Prva školska godina u Poglavnikovoj Hrvatskoj,” [The First School Year in *Poglavnik’s* Croatia] *Ustaška mladež*, October 4, 1941, no. 10, 4.

⁵ “Zadatci suvremene škole,” [Tasks of Contemporary School] *Bilogora*, September 5, 1942, no. 66, 4.

teaching in all schools was to be suspended.⁶ Of course, schools were not be abolished as such, but rather restructured as to fit within the Ustasha worldview. With the proclamation and implementation of several laws in April 1941,⁷ the Ustashes created the basis for their policies of persecution and destruction of Serbs, Jews, and the Roma people. No doubt, these laws consequently provided also the basis for the removal of those deemed unworthy, foreign, and dangerous from the school system. All this led to the fact that most of the Serbian teachers and professors were either fired or simply forbidden to teach. According to Jelić Butić, by the end of the 1941 an estimated 1 000 educational workers were removed from the Ustasha school system,⁸ and according to Dulić some 2204 teachers of the Greek-eastern faith were deported in July 1941.⁹

Throughout the regime, the school remained an important factor in youth education, especially elementary and high school systems, but Ustashes considered that there was also a need for an additional factor which would have the power to influence the youth. While school and home were seen as two important factors in the lives of young Ustashes, there was also a need for an additional, third, factor which would have the power to monitor and guide them in their everyday activities, especially during their free time. Blažeković argued that once outside control of family and school, the youth was left on their own, without any supervision absorbing “all those trends arising from satisfying the negative elements of human soul”.¹⁰ In

⁶ HDA, Ministarstvo Narodne Prosvjete – 216, Ured ministra, Box no. 2, “Odredba o privremenoj obustavi rada u školama,” [The Decision on Temporary Suspension of Work in Schools] April 23, 1941. Further on HDA, MNP – 216, UM.

⁷ *Zakon o prisezi vjernosti državi Hrvatskoj* [Decree of Swearing Loyalty to Croatian State], *Zakonska odredba za obranu naroda i države* [Decree on the Defense of the People and the State], *Zakonska odredba o državljanstvu* [Decree on Citizenship], and *Zakonska odredba o rasnoj pripadnosti* [Decree on Racial Affiliation]. See Petar Požar, *Ustaša – dokumenti* (Zagreb: Zagrebačka stvarnost, 1995), 137-163.

⁸ Jelić Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, 1941-1945*, 213.

⁹ Dulić, *Utopias of Nation*, 156.

¹⁰ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 22.

order to derail these negative elements, he argued that a third factor is needed “because of the general need of people and state, and that is the national and state structure of the youth”.¹¹ In order to raise and educate a ‘proper’ new generation, the Croatian generation – Ustasha generation, the state was to take over the needed third factor. This was to be achieved through an all-encompassing youth organization. A similar outlook on the three factors in education of the youth was also present in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.¹² The Law on the Hitler Youth of December 1, 1936 stated:

All German young people, apart from being educated at home and at school, will be educated in the Hitler Youth physically, intellectually, and morally in the spirit of National Socialism to serve the nation and the community.¹³

However, unlike in Nazi Germany where the youth had leverage over teachers or used physical violence against them, this was not the case in the Ustasha regime. Cases, in which youth would use physical violence against their teachers or where youth was to serve as a factor in controlling their teachers, were almost non-existent within the Ustasha regime.¹⁴ Also, unlike in Fascist Italy where Bottai’s *Carta della Scuola*, presented in 1939, aimed “at creating a new and truly fascist school based on study, physical, and manual labor”, the Ustashas did not engage into any wider restructuring or reform of the school system, outside of the school curriculum.¹⁵ The idea was that they are able to create a harmonious synchronization between the three elements, which would then work together for the benefit of the nation as a whole through all-encompassing youth education.

In September 1941, the Ministry of Education issued a Decree by which the Ustasha Youth was allowed to use school premises for its purposes under certain

¹¹ Ibid, 22-23.

¹² Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 296.

¹³ Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945*, 229.

¹⁴ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 168.

¹⁵ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 165.

conditions. These were that they do not interfere with the ongoing education, to clean the premises afterwards, to compensate for any damages, and that the Ustasha Youth organization covers all utility expenses.¹⁶ Two months later, another Decree was issued calling for complete synchronization of school and the Ustasha Youth organization.¹⁷ The document stated that school and the Ustasha Youth organization have to “make efforts to build firm foundations of the new state and to introduce new spirit and order within”.¹⁸ In order to avoid collision and disputes there was to be one youth commander in each school who “in all technical questions represents the Ustasha Youth of the school before the school headmaster”.¹⁹ Further on, the Decree stipulated that the youth should be an example of proper conduct, and was to obey all school regulations and rules, even religious ones. Youth had to attend school on a regular basis and was not allowed to wear their uniforms during school time, while school was to provide for necessary facilities and other things, so that the youth could continue with their activities after school.²⁰ Wearing of uniforms within the school premises was thus banned during the Ustasha regime, unlike in Nazi Germany where “teachers faced classes dressed to advertise their primary allegiance to an institution run from the outside”.²¹ Whether this prohibition on uniforms within the schools was introduced in order to avoid confrontation between the Ustasha Youth members and their teachers, or in order to emphasize the teachers’ role as educators and superiors within the school premises, thus hoping to mobilize a greater amount of teachers and professors for the Ustasha cause, remains unknown. Nevertheless, the mistrust

¹⁶ HDA, MNP – 216, UM, Box no. 2, “Prostorije pučkih škola na upotrebu ustaškoj mladeži,” September 26, 1941.

¹⁷ “Usklađivanje (koordiniranje) rada škole i Ustaške mladeži,” [Coordination of School and the Ustasha Youth Work] *Dužnostnik*, March 1942, no. 1, 38-39. See also “Usklađivanje (koordinacija rada školske i Ustaške mladeži,” *Službeni glasnik ministarstva nastave*, [Official Herald of the Ministry of Education] January 2, 1942, 19-20.

¹⁸ “Usklađivanje (koordiniranje) rada škole i Ustaške mladeži”, 38.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 39.

²¹ Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 281.

between teachers and the Ustasha Youth officials remained ever-present throughout the regime. It seems that there was a lack of broader support among teachers, and since the Ustasha influence was sporadic, it varied from school to school, from region to region. These uneasy relations were best described by Oršanić in a speech which he gave to elementary school teachers during his visit to the city of Požega in October 1941. In his speech Oršanić was highly critical of teachers in saying that in the past they were politically wrong, that they were members of various anti-Croatian societies, and that they mostly voted for anti-Croatian voting lists. However, he finished his speech with his belief that they were doing so because they had to, because they were forced to do so. He concluded his speech by saying: “Let bygones, be bygones.”²² Mate Orešković, Head of the Department for Elementary Education in Ministry of Education, argued in a similar way that professors and teachers were ruttet and poisoned during the interwar period by foreign ideas, and have thus completely neglected their primary role as educators of young souls.²³ While describing the new youth and new generation, a high school professor, I. Ž., argued that “the Ustasha movement, and especially the Ustasha Youth, ask imperatively a complete coexistence of teachers with their pupils”.²⁴ It is clear that the Ustasha officials considered an interwar state school system as unsuitable and unacceptable for their vision of the youth education. In trying to change and redirect this so as to suit their worldview of schools as complementary institutions for educating the ‘new’ Croats – the Ustashes, they faced the problem of teachers’ loyalty to the Ustasha ideas and actions.

²² Ivo Bjelovučić, “Veliko zborovanje Ustaške mladeži u Požegi,” [Great Assembly of the Ustasha Youth in Požega] *Ustaška mladež*, October 4, 1941, no. 10, 15.

²³ “U svakom hrvatskom djetetu treba gledati budućeg radnika i vojnika,” [In Every Croatian Child One Should Look a Future Worker and Soldier] *Nova Hrvatska*, November 22, 1941, no. 206, 11.

²⁴ I. Ž. “USTAŠKI NARAŠTAJI TREBAJU USTAŠKE NASTAVNIKE,” [The Ustasha Generations need Ustasha Teachers] *Hrvatski narod*, August 6, 1942, no. 496, 3.

Several reports indicate that teachers and professors were not too eager to cooperate with the regime, and especially with the Ustasha Youth members. For example, the Decree issued in February 1943 ordered for the gymnastics and music teachers to “cooperate with the local branches of the Ustasha Youth [...] during and after the school year, that is, also during the school breaks”.²⁵ This shows two things. First, there was certainly a lack of teachers actively involved in the Ustasha Youth organization activities. Second, the regime had to issue a Decree by which it ordered teachers to become more actively engaged in the work of the Ustasha Youth organization, thus using force in order to enhance cooperation and teachers’ involvement within the youth organization. Only two months before, in January 1943, Mile Starčević, Minister of National Enlightenment, issued a Decree containing instructions to teachers regarding their work and conduct in schools.²⁶ The document stated that there was a need “that our high school sets forth on the new paths of contemporary life, the path of national and state benefit, and of Croatian national feelings”.²⁷ It further stated that duties and guidelines which determined high school teachers’ behavior and conduct were determined by the “Principles of the Ustasha movement, which are [...] the basic law of the Independent State of Croatia, source, strength, and the bulwark of our entire life”.²⁸ The document also stipulated the tasks of every high school in a sense that it was their duty to raise the youth in “the spirit of the Ustasha Principles”, to teach them the values of work and duty, to develop their physical and spiritual competences, to nurture their religious values, and to educate

²⁵ “Suradnja srednje škole i ustaške mladeži,” [Cooperation of High School and the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, April 1943, no. 4, 3.

²⁶ HDA, MNP – 216, Pravni Odsjek, Box no. 7, “Upute nastavnicima za rad u školi,” [Instructions to Teachers for their Work in Schools] January 14, 1943. Further on HDA, MNP – 216, PO.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

and prepare the youth for their later advancement.²⁹ Within this Decree it was the teachers who were put under pressure of becoming that factor through which the Ustasha spirit was to be implemented and developed in schools, and that:

It will not be hard to determine on whom lies the responsibility for failure [...] there were and still are members of the Croatian youth, into whom foreign and non-national ideas had been implemented, and which stream from the surroundings of their teachers [...] These criminals have received well-deserved, morally-ethically justified punishment.³⁰

Since these two Decrees were written in 1943, it is possible to conclude that problems involving the expected outcome of school teaching and its cooperation with the Ustasha Youth existed throughout the regime period. Threatening teachers with harsh and ‘just’ punishment, which could have ranged from being fired to being sent to one of the concentration camps, was certainly not in line with the cooperation called for in the beginning. Such threats made it difficult for teachers to maneuver within the regime, where it often remained unclear who is superior to whom, and who’s Decrees and Orders are to have supremacy. Such harsh criticism and threats stemmed from the fact that teachers often proved unwilling to cooperate with violent and obtrusive officials of the Ustasha Youth. As seen from one document from the city of Bjelina, there were only few teachers willing to cooperate with the Ustasha Youth members.³¹ There were also complaints from pupils, mostly members of the Ustasha Youth, against headmasters for sabotaging their education, listening to radio stations in English, and for being involved in illegal trade.³² Thus teachers did not only have to fear their perceived conduct and which rules to follow, but were also

²⁹ Ibid, 1-2.

³⁰ Ibid, 2.

³¹ HDA, Velika Župa Posavje – Brod na Savi – 254/Box no. 7, “Molba ustaškog logora Bijeljina za premještaj učitelja Durakovića,” [A Request of the Ustasha Commune of Bjelina for the Transfer of the Teacher Duraković] January 18, 1943. Further on HDA, VŽP – 254.

³² HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 197/579, “Velikoj župi Posavje,” [To the Great County of Požega] November 23, 1942.

under constant pressure from those members of the Ustasha Youth who took on themselves to implement and supervise a ‘proper’ conduct on the school premises.

The discrepancy between the idea of this ‘new’ school and practice during the regime was growing. It seems that the Ustasha officials were unclear on how these relations were to be structured and who was to have primacy over whom. There were opposing interpretations of Decrees and Orders between Ustasha Youth officials and their teachers. Very often an intervention was needed in order to clarify duties and responsibilities of the Ustasha Youth organization within the school premises. For example, in June 1942 a Decree was issued which stated:

Officials of the Ustasha Youth have no right to enter classrooms during classes and to supervise the education. If they feel that some teachers work against the Principles, they should report this to the headmaster and he will deal with that.³³

It is evident that some of the Ustasha Youth officials and members wished to exercise their power within the school as well. This shows that certain members actually took upon themselves as their duty, to monitor what the teachers were saying, and to report any behavior they considered wrong. However, the regime was obviously not ready or willing to sanction such reported behavior, most probably due to the lack of teachers, and the inability to replace them with more ‘trustworthy’ ones. On the contrary, those in charge of the Ustasha Youth organization often intervened in order to restrain their youth officials. Such acts show two things. On the one side, they show the Ustasha officials’ awareness of the necessity of teachers as social and educational capital, and on the other side, the inability of the regime to mobilize a greater number of teachers and professors for their cause. One document is very indicative of such situation. Written in November 19, 1943 and addressed to the Ministry of Interior, Headmaster for Public Order and Security in Dubrovnik, the

³³ HDA, Ministarstvo oružanih snaga – MINORS - ZM, 53b, D-2249, microfilm 129, “Okružnica 34-1942,” [Circular 34-1942].

document described the meeting between the Ustasha Youth district leaders and school headmasters, whose purpose was to “arrange the question of obligatory enrollment of pupils into the Ustasha Youth”.³⁴ The meeting was held due to the fact that teachers and headmasters did not ask a confirmation from their pupils that they were members of the Ustasha Youth prior to their enrollment into school. It further argued that headmasters stated their discontent against such a rule and that they used various excuses for not obeying the *Poglavnik*’s decree on this.³⁵ As seen from the conclusion of the meeting, the authority of either the district leader of the Ustasha Youth or that of the Ustasha Youth organization in general was very weak in Dubrovnik. Instead of teachers and headmasters obeying to this rule, as expected by the Ustasha Youth officials, the conclusion of this meeting was that teachers and headmasters will distribute enrollment lists to their pupils and that they will notify and explain to their parents the importance of enrolling their children into the Ustasha Youth organization. For those not enrolled after this, headmasters should ask for further elaboration from the Ministry of National Enlightenment. What is evident from this document and meeting is an obvious defeat of the Ustasha Youth organization in the city of Dubrovnik, but also of the youth organization in general. The idea that each pupil if wishing to attend elementary or high school needs to be a member of the Ustasha Youth failed, and the regime proved unable to enforce such rule, at least in the city of Dubrovnik and its region. How much all of this bothered those responsible for the school system and education is hard to determine.³⁶

³⁴ HDA, ZID – NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 44, “Sastanak stožernika Ustaške mladeži i ravnatelja škola u Dubrovniku,” [A Meeting of the Ustasha Youth District Leaders and Principals of Schools in Dubrovnik] December 9, 1943.

³⁵ Unfortunately, I was unable to find this Decree within any of the archival documents.

³⁶ See for example a report describing the situation in schools in the city of Zagreb, from 1943, where the author describes the lack of discipline among youth and professors. HDA, MNP, PO – 216/Box no. 7, “Kratko izvješće,” [A Short Report] November 12, 1943.

The fact remains that throughout the regime, as to my knowledge, the Ustashas did not engage into significant reform with regard to the school system. While the curriculum was probably slightly changed in questions of history, language, literature and other subjects through which national sentiments could be elaborated, some far-reaching reform was never attempted.³⁷ There were probably several reasons for this, one of which was certainly a lack of social capital, that is, the inability to mobilize teachers in greater numbers.³⁸ The awareness of this lack can be seen from the fact that students graduating from the Teacher Training College were expected to attend special courses organized by the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth. Headmasters were expected to explain the importance of these courses to those graduating, and while they were not obligatory, it was expected that future teachers will attend because “when appointing new teachers, the Ministry will pay attention to whether those applying have finished such a course”.³⁹

Despite the Ustasha emphasis on creating “harmony and unity between the work of the youth officials and professors and teachers,” this was hardly ever achieved.⁴⁰ To an extent, this was a utopian idea of the youth’s upbringing in which there was to be “one unique school, in one unique Ustasha state, and national spirit, which is to be carried by those from the chair and those from the benches”.⁴¹ In a regime which told its youth that they are the new generation, that they represent the first generation not poisoned by the old and decadent system and its ideas, the expectation of respect, harmony, and cooperation with their teachers and professors,

³⁷ There still exists a lack of research in this field, especially one which would compare the Ustasha educational policies and system with other fascist regimes, but also one which would compare its educational system with the one existing during the interwar period.

³⁸ See for example another report from Dubrovnik which stated that teachers are not willing to cooperate with the Ustasha Youth organization. DAD, UM – 44, May 28, 1943, 164/43.

³⁹ “Preporuka tečaja Zapovjedništva Ustaške mladeži za svršene učenike učiteljskih škola,” [Recommendation of a Course by the Command of the Ustasha Youth for Graduates of Educational Schools] *Službeni glasnik Ministarstva nastave*, July 20, 1942, no. 21, 966.

⁴⁰ *Dužnostnik*, November 1942, no. 9, 423.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 423.

whom almost all held the same occupations in the previous system, was to say the least illusorily. This was further accentuated by the discrepancy between the classes such as history, literature, geography, physical training, and arts which were also taught during the Ustasha Youth classes and courses. Another aspect of disrespect and unwillingness from certain Ustasha Youth officials and leaders to cooperate with teachers was connected with the Ustasha Youth activities during school time. While the majority of the youth meetings, courses, camps, and fieldtrips occurred either after school or during school breaks, especially in the summer, there were courses organized during the school time. In such cases the Ustasha Youth officials were obliged to deliver the list of the youth members attending these courses, which would then be excused from attending classes.⁴² However, even in such cases a disrespect towards the school authority by the Ustasha Youth district, commune, and county officials can be found. In December 1944, a circular was sent to all the districts of the Ustasha Youth organization in which they were warned that this was for the third time that this warning, regarding them not notifying school boards of the activities taking place and pupils being absent from school, is being issued.⁴³

4.2. *Alternative Education and Upbringing? – Ustasha Youth Courses and Schools*

The weekly meetings of the Ustasha Youth members took place after school, with each branch having its meetings on a specific day. Several key educational elements were taught; spiritual education in which youth was to become acquainted with the *Principles*, physical education, arts, and, especially among male youth, premilitary education. The difference between male and female education during these

⁴² *Dužnostnik*, December 1942, no. 10, 659.

⁴³ *Dužnostnik*, November – December 1944, no. 11-12, 184.

meetings is evident from a comparison of reports sent by officials. A report from April 1942 on the meetings held by a female branch of the Ustasha Starčević Youth from the city of Otočac shows that there were lectures in spiritual education, physical education, and arts.⁴⁴ On the other hand, a report from a meeting of a male branch of the Ustasha Starčević Youth from county of Indija shows that, besides spiritual and physical education, much more attention was placed on military preeducation.⁴⁵

As mentioned in the instructions published in *Dužnostnik*, each youth member was to:

[...] complete the regular program for each age group in the field of spiritual education, Ustasha military preeducation, physical education, and arts. This program must be learned by each of our member and it is to be the foundation of our upbringing.⁴⁶

The program varied significantly, and often not all aspects were taught simultaneously. For example, in the instructions for the Ustasha Hero section, spiritual education was given priority. One meeting was dedicated to the youths' conduct and behavior at home and in school, and "especially towards those superior in rank". The other three meetings were dedicated to the learning of the history of Croatian kings, history of Bosnia, and of Croats as fighters, heroes, and warriors.⁴⁷ These same aspects of education were also applied to the youngest members of the Ustasha Youth organization, Ustasha Mainstay, except that this was to be done through fun and play. They were given lectures on the topic of parents and their love for children, storytelling, etc. They also had physical education, during which they learnt on how to perform simple physical exercises. Their military education consisted of standing in line and following commands. The artistic part of their lectures consisted of singing

⁴⁴ HDA, UHOP – 249/Box no. 16 "Taboru Ženske Ustaške mladeži," [To the County of Female Ustasha Youth] April 28, 1942.

⁴⁵ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 202/46, "Izvještaj," [A Report] August 31, 1943.

⁴⁶ *Dužnostnik*, March 1942, no. 1, 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

and learning songs.⁴⁸ The same schedule for all three Ustasha Youth sections continued throughout the regime, with changes in topics, exercises, and lectures held either by their commanders or by some higher-ranking Ustasha official.

Another problem which Ustasha Youth officials faced from the beginning was the lack of leaders and officials who could carry out the youth education as envisioned,⁴⁹ as well as controlling the misbehavior of those chosen for this task.⁵⁰ The existing mistrust between Ustashas and intellectuals, especially teachers and professors, forced Ustashas to set up their own courses and schools in which officials and leaders of youth were to be educated. However, it was not only lack of support which forced this, but also the idea that throughout history Croatian leadership, and the will to lead, was often destroyed on purpose by those wishing to enslave Croatian nation. According to Oršanić, they created: “a slave intellectual who does not feel greatness and beauty about his national independence.”⁵¹ This premise led to the idea that from the early years, the youth within the Ustasha organization needed to be trained towards respecting authority and being educated to become responsible leaders. The idea was to create separate institutions, Schools for Officials, in which future youth officials, both male and female, would be educated so that they may become future leaders of the state. Also, it was exactly through such educational institutions that youth was to be given a “proper and complete Ustasha education”.⁵² The idea was that those finishing such schools were to become the next generation of the Ustashas in which “the spirit of discipline, work, consciousness and the Ustasha

⁴⁸ Ibid, 23.

⁴⁹ DAD, UM – 44, October 19, 1943.

⁵⁰ HDA, VŽP – 254/Box no. 7, “Derventa – školske prilike,” [Derventa – School Situation] July 3, 1943.

⁵¹ Ivan Oršanić, “Stvaranje vodja,” [Creation of Leaders] *Spremnost – misao i volje ustaške Hrvatske*, December 24, 1942, no. 44, 2.

⁵² “ZADAĆE ŠKOLA USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Tasks of the Ustasha Youth Schools] *Hrvatski narod*, October 2, 1941, no. 230, 3.

worldview” would present the basis of their actions and everyday life.⁵³ The main idea behind this was to educate and raise youth cadres which would be able to take onto themselves the task of educating the youth. In a way, the idea was that youth was to lead and educate the youth.

In October 1941 the first of such Schools for Officials was opened in Borovo, a small city in the eastern region of Slavonia,⁵⁴ which was to become a role model and was organized on the same principles and according to “similar role-model schools in Germany and Italy”.⁵⁵ The purpose of such schools, which were also to be established in the coastal cities of Makarska and Crikvenica, as well as in the cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, Nova Gradiška, and Hrvatski Karlovci, was to:

[...] built a new generation of the Ustasha state [...] which shall thoroughly be educated in all things necessary for the establishment and guidance of the Ustasha Youth organization.⁵⁶

However, it seems that only cities of Makarska and Zagreb became centers of such schools, with the one in Makarska being open only for a shorter period.⁵⁷ As stated, their purpose was to achieve “what great friendly states, especially Germany and Italy, have achieved through the years”,⁵⁸ and that their meaning and significance is best seen from the successes accomplished by the youth officials in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.⁵⁹ In November the first youth officials graduated from Borovo, and

⁵³ Dolores Labaš, “Ustaško školstvo,” [The Ustasha School System] *Novo pokoljenje*, July 10, 1942, no. 4, 6.

⁵⁴ J. Macek, “Prva škola Ustaške mladeži u Borovu,” [The First Ustasha Youth School in Borovo] *Hrvatski krugoval*, November 1, 1941, no. 21, 10.

⁵⁵ “Svečano otvorenje prve škole dužnostnika Ustaške mladeži u državi,” [Formal Opening of the first Ustasha Youth School for Officials] *Novo Borovo*, September 26, 1941, and “PRVA ŠKOLA ZA DUŽNOSTNIKE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI U BOROVI,” [The First School for Officials of the Ustasha Youth in Borovo] *Hrvatski narod*, October 1, 1941, no. 229, 3.

⁵⁶ “1. Listopad: Povjestni dan otvorenja borovske škole dužnostnika Ustaške mladeži – prve u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj,” [October 1: Historical Day of the Opening of the Borovo School for Officials of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo Borovo*, October 3, 1941, no. 12, 1.

⁵⁷ “Škola Ustaške mladeži za južnu Hrvatsku,” [The Ustasha Youth School for Southern Croatia] *Hrvatski narod*, November 22, 1941, no. 280, 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “PRVA ŠKOLA ZA DUŽNOSTNIKE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI U BOROVI,” *Hrvatski narod*, October 1, 1941, no. 229, 3.

in December new courses started.⁶⁰ The Borovo School became a role-model school not only with regard to courses being taught there, but also with regard to the premises and facilities' available to youth members. This was possible due to the fact that its premises were actually donated by the Bata factory, which was one of the biggest and most modern industrial complexes in the region. The importance of the Borovo School is evident from the fact that members of other youth organizations, such as the Hlinka Youth from Slovakia, came to Borovo for joint courses with the Ustasha Youth.

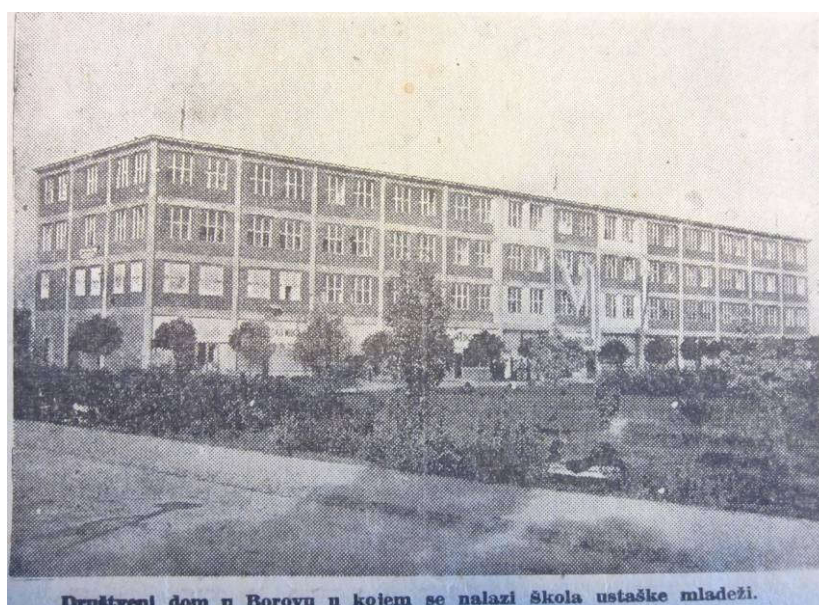


Figure 4.1. The Ustasha Youth School for Officials in Borovo.⁶¹

In June 1942, eighth months after the first school for youth officials in Borovo was established, the *Naredba o Dužnostničkim školama Ustaške mladeži* [Order on the Ustasha Youth Schools for Officials] was proclaimed.⁶² As stated in the document:

The aim of the school is to instill Croatian national and state-political consciousness in its attendees, and to give them a basic expertise necessary for the

⁶⁰ "Završetak tečaja u Ustaškoj školi u Borovu," [Completion of the First Course in the Ustasha School in Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, November 13, 1941, no. 17, 3, and "Započeo je u Borovu drugi tečaj škole Ustaške mladeži," [The Second Course in the Ustasha Youth School Began] *Novo Borovo*, December 4, 1941, no. 17, 3.

⁶¹ *Nova Hrvatska*, February 11, 1942, no. 36, 3.

⁶² This Order was printed as a special appendix to June issue of *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, June 1942, no. 4.

management of counties, communes, districts, and specific tasks within, in such a way to qualify them for becoming officials of the Ustasha Youth.⁶³

Schools were organized on the principal of boarding-schools and each of the attendees was given free accommodation, food, and clothes, and had to obey the established rules and military discipline. The school was to last for eight weeks. Attendees were given lectures in both theoretical and practical education, divided into five categories. The first category consisted of lectures on the Ustasha movement, history of Croatia, geography, and political teachings. The second category was dedicated to physical education, with courses on methodology of physical exercises, history of physical exercises, and arrangement of temporary sport playgrounds, general physical exercises, athletics, sports games, fun and physical training, military preeducation, and labor. The third category was dedicated to arts, singing, and proper conduct. The fourth category paid attention to health issues, and the fifth category to the structure of the Ustasha Youth and work with different age groups, and administration.⁶⁴ Besides this there were also practical seminars in which future officials were taught on how to prepare and finalize social events and meetings. Fieldtrips also presented a key component within. School premises were to be established either by building special facilities or by using those in existences. Boundaries of the school premises were to be strictly defined, with attendees not allowed to leave the premises.⁶⁵ A minimum of fifty and maximum of eighty attendees between ages nineteen to twenty nine was mandatory for schools to be able to organize the courses. The document also prescribed punishments for those who misbehaved, which ranged from verbal warning to exclusion from school.⁶⁶ At the end of each course, attendees had to pass final exams, which consisted of both a practical

⁶³ Ibid, 1.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 6.

and a theoretical part. The theoretical part of the final exam consisted of questions on the Ustasha movement, history and geography, structure of the Ustasha Youth organization and its inner workings, its administration, military preeducation, and labor. Practical part of the exam consisted of gymnastics, arts, and military education. If a student received a negative grade from any of the subjects, or if his/her conduct was graded as bad, he/she did not receive a certificate of course completion.⁶⁷ The document also determined and described the duties and rights of teachers, medical staff, and school administration.⁶⁸



Figure 4.2. Ante Jakaša and members of the Ustasha Youth during the course at the Borovo School for Officials.⁶⁹

By January 1943, according to one article, there were altogether 10 courses held in the Borovo School, with the number of both male and female students reaching 963 in the previous year. The same article stated that “according to the project of Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth for 1943”, an estimated 20

⁶⁷ Ibid, 7-8.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 10-15.

⁶⁹ *Novo Borovo*, December 25, 1941, no. 22, 3.

000 were to be further educated.⁷⁰ Certainly an optimistic number having in mind the deteriorating situation (both militarily and economically) at that time. The Ustasha Youth organization also organized shorter courses for its members, which often took place within the school facilities. Such courses mostly lasted up to fourteen days, with the purpose of acquainting and educating its male and female members on how to run their respective youth sections,⁷¹ or for their preparation for mandatory one-year-work in the Labor Service.⁷² Unfortunately, there are no official documents which would state how many youth members actually attended these schools, and from which parts of the state they arrived. Such information can only be found in newspaper articles related to the courses either yet to be organized or those finished. According to those, attendees of the Borovo School came from all over the state, from the cities of Zagreb, Karlovac, and Ogulin, to those coming from Bosnian cities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar as well as from the city of Dubrovnik.⁷³

After finishing the course and receiving a certificate, these newly educated officials were to return to their respective counties, communes, and districts, where their tasks were to establish, educate, and run their respective youth sections. Besides these schools for officials' education, usually lasting longer than one month, the Ustasha youth organization also organized other courses of varying duration for their members, ranging from two days to two weeks, and these were targeted at certain youth group, and a certain aspect of youth education. During these shorter courses, the youth became acquainted with the Ustasha movement and youth organization, children and how to work with them, discipline and behavior of officials, practical

⁷⁰ "Deseti tečaj škole za Ustaške dužnostnike u Borovu," [The tenth Course in the School for Ustasha Officials in Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, January 22, 1943, no. 3, 3.

⁷¹ "Završetak 14-dnevnog tečaja škole za Ustaške dužnostnice u Borovu," [The End of a Fourteen-Day-Long Course in the School for the Ustasha Officials in Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, January 8, 1943, no. 1, 3.

⁷² "Tečaj obveznica radne službe u školi ustaške mladeži," [Course for Female Conscripts of Labor Service in the School of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo Borovo*, August 27, 1943, no. 33, 3.

⁷³ Ibid, and "Početak novog tečaja za Ustaške dužnostnice u Borovu," [The Beginning of a New Course of Female Ustasha Officials in Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, October 8, 1943, no. 39, 1-5.

work with different youth groups, pedagogy, the *Poglavnik*'s personality, military preeducation, and other.⁷⁴ A document mentioning a special lecture on "Youth education in nationalist states /Germany, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Italy/,"⁷⁵ clearly shows a relation of the Ustasha Youth with their counterparts in what they regarded as 'friendly nations'. Such shorter courses were usually organized within the local youth district or commune for those members who wished to become either *rojnici* [swarm leaders] or *vodnici* [platoon leaders] within the youth organization.⁷⁶ Those in charge of running camps and smaller working units of the Ustasha Youth, *rojeve*, *vodove* i *satnije* [company] had to complete courses intended for each of the youth groups. The courses themselves usually lasted for a whole week,⁷⁷ and were meant for older youth, of good behavior and outstanding performance in their respective youth sections.⁷⁸ According to the same document, the most ideal place for organization of a *rojnički tečaj* [swarm course] was a youth camp.⁷⁹ During this course, attendees were given lectures in spiritual education in duration of eight hours, military preeducation in duration of 18 hours, physical education in duration of 14 hours, and arts in duration of 9 hours. While the course program was the same for *Uzdanica* and *Junak* youth section, those wishing to become *rojnici* in the Ustasha Starčević Youth section were given additional lectures in methods and organization of the Ustasha Starčević Youth

⁷⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/200, "Nacrt za jednodnevni tečaj dužnostnika Ustaške mladeži," [A Blueprint for One-Day Course of the Officials of the Ustasha Youth].

⁷⁵ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/197, "Nacrt rada za trodnevni tečaj dužnostnika Ustaške Uzdanice" [A Blueprint of Work for a Three-Day Course for the Officials of the Ustasha Mainstay].

⁷⁶ "Rad u zimi. Tečajevi za vodnike Ustaške mladeži – Logor Podravska Slatina," [Work During Winter. Courses for Platoon Leaders of the Ustasha Youth – Camp Podravska Slatina] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1942, no. 11, 15, and DAD, UM – 44, "Logor Ženske Ustaške mladeži," [Commune of a Female Ustasha Youth] April 22, 1942, 240/42.

⁷⁷ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/168, "Nacrt za tečajeve rojnika Ustaškog Junaka" [A Blueprint of Courses for Swarm Leaders of the Ustasha Hero].

⁷⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/195, "Rojnički tečaj," [A Course for Swarm Leaders], and HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/172, "Opće odredbe i pripreme za tečaj rojnika Ustaške uzdanice," [General Regulations and Preparations for the Courses of Swarm Leaders of the Ustasha Mainstay].

⁷⁹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/172, "Opće odredbe i pripreme za tečaj rojnika Ustaške uzdanice", 1.

members, lectures on specialized work and on the importance of national community, as well as lectures on the Ustasha fighters. Those attending courses for *vodnici* had the same schedule and same lectures with additional five days of training with courses in exercises of platoons, work with swarms, work with platoons, and principles of administrative work. At the end of the courses, there was an exam consisting of practical and theoretical sections.⁸⁰ Those wishing to become *rojnici* of the Ustasha Hero section were also given lectures in history, geography, inner organization of the Ustasha Youth, on war games, on how to handle a rifle, how to read maps, and how to orient oneself at night.⁸¹ The youth was also given strict instructions on their behavior and discipline expected of them during such courses.⁸² The main idea of such courses was to install knowledge and skills which would be transferred onto their peers. The attendees were taught that:

[...] they are members of a Great organization, which [shall] be great and exalted, existing because of the nation and homeland, and not because of individuals. It is the second army, the guardian of Croats' freedom.⁸³

The main emphasis was put on discipline, or the lack of it among the youth. Of all the youth sections, *rojnici* were especially taught how to best implement discipline among their youth peers, and how they can demonstrate it with their own behavior.⁸⁴

In June 1944 the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth issued the *Stegovni propisnik za dužnostnike Ustaške mladeži* [Regulation on Discipline for Ustasha Youth Officials], which applied to all officials of the Ustasha Youth in cases

⁸⁰ Ibid, 1-2.

⁸¹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/168, “Nacrt rada za tečajeve rojnika Ustaškog Junaka”.

⁸² HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/205, “Propisi o vladanju, radu i stegi rojničkog tečaja,” [Regulations on Conduct, Work and Discipline of the Swarm Course].

⁸³ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/172, “Opće odredbe i pripreme za tečaj rojnika ustaške Uzdance”.

⁸⁴ DAD, UM – 44, “Rojnik u Ustaškoj mladeži,” [The Swarm Leader in the Ustasha Youth].

of disregard for duty obligations.⁸⁵ Youth officials were expected to execute all their duties consciously and with diligence, to obey their superior, to keep away from persons and places which are not in accordance with the Ustasha Youth principles, and especially to be patient and respectful. Prescribed punishments for misconduct ranged from forewarning or fine to being officially relieved of all their duties, which meant that he/she was no longer suitable for any other position within the organization. The same Ordinance also stipulated the procedure required if such measures were to be taken against any official of the Ustasha Youth.⁸⁶ What we encounter throughout the text of this Ordinance is an idealized picture of a male or a female official of the Ustasha Youth; how they were supposed to behave, and which rules they were to obey. One reason for such a strict and thoroughly conceptualized Ordinance could be found in numerous complaints sent to the Administrative Office of the Ustasha Youth regarding the misbehavior of their officials. The complaints ranged from incompetence of officials in charge of organizing youth,⁸⁷ or as seen in a memo sent from the city of Tuzla in Bosnia stating that certain youth officials, though active within youth organizations during the interwar period, were simply not up to the tasks assigned to them,⁸⁸ to accusations that some commune leaders were simply using their position within the organization for their personal benefit, or were smoking and drinking alcohol.⁸⁹ Youth members were also accused of watching American

⁸⁵ “STEGOVI PROPISNIK ZA DUŽNOSTNIKE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Disciplinary Regulations for the Officials of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, June-July 1944, no. 6-7, 97-99.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 97-98.

⁸⁷ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 41/703, “Slavko Dević, stožernik Muške Ustaške Mladeži u Karlovcu, podatci,” [Slavko Dević, District Leader of the Male Ustasha Youth in Karlovac, information] January 31, 1944.

⁸⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 202/1061, “Poglavnom pobočniku profesoru IVI ORŠANIĆU,” [To *Poglavnik*’s Lateral Ivo Oršanić] August 7, 1941.

⁸⁹ HDA, VŽP – 254/ Box no. 7, “Derventa – školske prilike”, July 3, 1943.

movies, dancing, and spending their free time in bars.⁹⁰ In order to put a hold on this, it was decided that the youth was to become actively involved in supervising such misbehavior. Although an order banning the Ustasha Youth members to visit bars was issued, it seems that it was often disputed and disobeyed by the youth. In order to put a stop to this it was decided in July 1943 that all districts should choose those most trustworthy among their members, to join the police force and together make sure that no Ustasha Youth member under the age of 18 was visiting bars. Also, each district, commune, and county was to keep a record of all misconduct which would serve to determine sanctions.⁹¹ A report from the city of Dubrovnik describes a situation in which there was dancing organized in high school despite the “Poglavnik’s Decree from February 1942 which prohibited dancing”.⁹² The document further accused the Serbs and the communists as the main protagonists in organizing this as well as that the Ustasha Youth members “stated a protest against dancing [...] which caused brawl” and put an end to this event.⁹³ As seen, while the Ustasha Youth officials often had to warn their members about their conduct and possible consequences of such behavior, there were also members willing to execute orders and decrees, or to assist in supervising their implementation.

⁹⁰ HDA, Predsjedništvo Vlade NDH, Glavno ravnateljstvo za promičbu – 237/ Box no. 27, “Upravnom zapovjedništvu ustaške mladeži,” [To the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth] April 28, 1942.

⁹¹ HDA, UHOP – 249/Box no. 1, “Vladanje U.M.,” [The Conduct of the Ustasha Youth] July 2, 1943.

⁹² HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 22/1943, “Zabave dubrovačkih srednjih škola u mjesecu prosincu u Dubrovniku,” [Parties of the Dubrovnik High Schools in December in Dubrovnik] January 22, 1943. See also DAD, UM – 44/103/42 “LOGORU ŽENSKE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [To the District of the Female Ustasha Youth] July 21, 1942.

⁹³ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 22/1943, “Zabave dubrovačkih srednjih škola u mjesecu prosincu u Dubrovniku,” January 22, 1943.

4.3. *Moral and Physical Upbringing – Work and Sports*

The Ustasha Youth organization, besides providing an additional, parallel education, also paid attention to two other aspects, work and sports. As already mentioned, it was considered that throughout history, and especially during the interwar period, the Croatian youth was left to their own without any guidance. For Ustasha officials, such an attitude was especially visible among the city youth, which were viewed as lazy and spending all of their free time, especially their summer breaks “at the Riviera, in hotels” doing absolutely nothing.⁹⁴ They considered such a life-style based on leisure and laziness very dangerous, affecting the youth in the countryside, especially the peasant youth educated in cities. For this, they blamed the capitalist system and were determined to pay special attention towards reeducating and retraining young minds and bodies. In that respect, it comes as no surprise that work, especially manual work, was given prominence within the youth organization. Clause 14 from the 1942 Principles stated that:

The foundation of every value is work itself, and the foundation of every right is duty. Therefore, in the Croatian state, work denotes a value degree of each individual and should represent the foundation of the entire national wellbeing.⁹⁵

According to the Ustasha officials, work was to become a foundation of one's existence by which he/she could show its dedication towards nation as a whole. By setting aside selfishness and egoism of the previous system, an individual was to become an important wheel within the national community. In accordance with this, on July 31, 1941 the *Poglavnik* issued a Decree on *Državna častna radna služba* [Decree on State Honorary Labor Service], which set up “general and obligatory service for all citizens and state members of both sexes from age of 19 till the age of

⁹⁴ Rudolf Pavlek, “Naš rad preko ljeta,” [Our Work During Summer] *Dužnostnik*, August 1942, no. 6, 229-230.

⁹⁵ Crljen, ed., *Načela Ustaškog pokreta*, 87.

28, and was to last for one year”.⁹⁶ It was considered as an honorary service towards the Croatian nation with the purpose of “educating in national spirit, removing class differences, acquainting with, and respecting all sorts of manual work, especially that of a peasant”.⁹⁷ Citizens of non-Aryan origins, or those deemed unworthy by the Ustasas, or persons sentenced to prison, or those whose civil rights have been abolished, were not allowed to participate. While this state-wide labor service was intended for those finishing high school or university, the Ustasha Youth organization also had its own version. In fact, even prior to the establishment of the youth organization or State Honorary Labor Service, the Command for Youth Labor Service was by July 1941 incorporated into the Ustasha Youth organization as its essential part, and it became the *Zapovjedništvo za Radnu službu Ustaške mladeži* [Command for Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth].⁹⁸



Figure 4.3. A poster of the State Labor Service calling for the enrollment of those wishing to become leaders.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ “Državna častna radna služba,” [States Honorary Labor Service] *Hrvatski narod*, August 1, 1941, no. 168, 5.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ “Osnovana je Ustaška mladež,” *Ustaša*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 11.

⁹⁹ *Nacionalna i Sveučilišna knjižnica Zagreb – NSK* [National and University Library in Zagreb], Zbirke građe posebne vrste [Collection of Specific Documents].

Through this section of the youth organization, its members were to learn the value of work and its importance for state, nation, and national community. The idea was that the youth working with hoe and shovel was doing the same service to their homeland as was the soldier on the front with a rifle.¹⁰⁰ The purpose was the same as with the State Honorary Labor Service:

[...] upbringing of the youth for work and love towards it, so that national consciousness and national belief could be regenerated, since the youth currently see no value in work whatsoever.¹⁰¹

As stated by Ferdo Halla, the State Leader for Work:

Our youth, educated in honest work on their native soil, shall also be educated in such a way so as to represent the core of physically and spiritually strong, healthy, and resistant new generations.¹⁰²

The youth labor aimed at diminishing class differences, in which “[s]ons and daughters of the poorest have found themselves in the same circle as their comrades from wealthy houses”.¹⁰³ It was also emphasized that work presents an important aspect in the education of intellectuals, especially high school pupils and students, in order for them to come closer to the peasant and worker. Through manual work intellectuals were to become stronger, to learn discipline and order as well so to gain pretraining as future Croatian soldiers.¹⁰⁴ Velimir Pustajec, Deputy Commander of the Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth, stated that the main task was:

[...] the upbringing of the entire youth of Croatian nation through work, order and honesty, and pure Croatian spirit, and that shall be accomplished by volunteer work such as draining land, drying out swamp areas, forestation, building roads, cleaning river banks, and matters related to health and hygiene at the countryside.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Luka Halat, “Poziv hrvatskoj mladeži,” [A Call to the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatske novine – Glasilo hrvatskog Ustaskog pokreta za Veliku župu Gora – Sisak*, [Croatian Newspapers – Official Organ of the Ustasha Movement for the Grand Duchy of Gora - Sisak] December 1, 1941, no. 44, 2.

¹⁰¹ “Zadaća radne službe Ustaške mladeži,” [The Task of the Ustasha Youth Labor Service] *Dužnostnik*, April 1942, no. 2, 76.

¹⁰² Halat, “Poziv hrvatskoj mladeži,” January 1, 1942.

¹⁰³ Husnija Hrustanović, “Novi smjer u odgoju mladeži,” [A New Direction in Youth Education] *Hrvatski Krugoval*, June 20, 1943, no. 25, 15.

¹⁰⁴ “DUŽNOST HRVATSKE OMLADINE U ŠKOLI; U KUĆI I IZVAN NJE,” [The Duty of Croatian Youth in School; at Home, and Outside] *Hrvatski narod*, June 27, 1941, no. 153, 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Dužnostnik*, April 1942, no. 2, 80.

Since youth was the new generation, a generation which was to carry out this new order, it was emphasized that work alone presented the essence of it. It was no longer money which determined value, but work, both physical and spiritual. Thus, according to an article published in *Dužnostnik*, two things regarding work were to become clear. First one was realizing that work was “that by which human really becomes human”, and second was that “in all cases, where idleness was systematically conducted, degeneracy, perversion and depravity came”.¹⁰⁶ Velimir Pustajec argued that since the new order positions community at the forefront, it should come as no surprise that the system of this new order “is establishing institutions, which are educating the youth in the spirit of work and sacrifice for the good and benefit of the community” and by achieving this “they become conscious members of Ustasha Croatia, of the New Order and New Europe”.¹⁰⁷ However, work alone was not enough, for, according to Blažeković, if it was to have an educational value, “it had to emerge from an impulse of creativity for general good of the people and state”.¹⁰⁸ In order to achieve this, they needed officials and leaders trained to lead and supervise this work, and since there was a lack of officials, a call to submit applications was put out in April 1942. Those selected would go abroad, presumably to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, for their education.¹⁰⁹ A year later, another call was put out for officers of Labor Service, who were not to be younger than 17 and not older than 25. Education was to last for two years, after which they would get the rank of *zastavnik Ustaške mladeži, struke Radna služba* [Ensign of the Ustasha Youth, Department of Labor Service] and after another year they would become *poručnik Ustaške mladeži,*

¹⁰⁶ “Rad, kao najviša vrijednost,” [Work as the Highest Value] in *Dužnostnik*, April 1942, no. 2, 75.

¹⁰⁷ Velimir Pustajec, “Radna služba Ženske Ustaške mladeži,” [The Labor Service of the Female Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 115.

¹⁰⁹ *Dužnostnik*, April 1942, no. 2, 78. The call unfortunately did not specify to which country youth was to travel, but one can assume that it was most probably Nazi Germany, which had a similar organization within its *Hitlerjugend*.

struke Radna služba [Lieutenant of the Ustasha Youth, Department of Labor Service]. Upon their application, those applying would have to commit themselves to a 12-year service within the Ustasha Youth organization if their request was to be positively resolved.¹¹⁰

During summer breaks, work was done in the countryside, and winter and fall were reserved for collecting various plants or old and waste materials. The youth was instructed into which plants were to be collected and how.¹¹¹ Courses were mostly held in special Ustasha Youth Schools for Officials or in special camps set up for this purpose. What is interesting is that the majority of these courses, according to the available sources, were dedicated to women's education. During these courses, female members were given ideological and pedagogical education, while the rest of their time they were given practical education in "economy, so that in their educational and national work in the countryside they could teach peasants economy".¹¹² The purpose of such courses for young girls was to prepare them "to enter into a life of broadest national layers, to work physically, to help, and to spiritually raise those who have suffered".¹¹³ These courses were to equip young girls with theoretical knowledge prior to their entry into the Labor Service and being dispatched across the state.¹¹⁴ Besides courses organized in the already established Ustasha schools, which usually lasted for two weeks, in August 1941 the youth was invited into camps, such as the one established by Labor Service near the city of Križevci. There were 58 youth members

¹¹⁰ "Zapovjedništvo Ustaške mladeži Glavnog Ustaškog stana Radna služba Ustaške mladeži," [Command of the Ustasha Youth of the Ustasha Headquarters Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, May 1943, no. 3, 2-3.

¹¹¹ "Sabiranje bilja," [Herbs Collecting] *Dužnostnik*, September 1942, no. 7, 352-35, and "Skupljanje bučinih koštica," [Collecting of Pumpkin Kernels] *Dužnostnik*, October, 1942, no. 8, 408-409.

¹¹² "Tečaj obveznica Radne službe u školi za Ustaške dužnostnike u Borovu," in *Novo Borovo*, November 19, 1943, no. 45, 5.

¹¹³ Slavica Augustin, "Tečajevi radne službe," [Courses of Labor Service] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 13.

¹¹⁴ "Tečaj R:S:U:M. – Logor ŽUM," [Course of Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth – Commune of the Female Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatska zemlja – Tjednik za politička, prosvjetna, društvena i gospodarska pitanja – Petrinja*, November 14, 1942, no. 7, 4.

who were in charge of cleaning the brook.¹¹⁵ Camps were usually intended both for male and female members.



Figure 4.4. The Ustasha Youth summer Labor Service.¹¹⁶

Another camp was set up on the estate called Strminec close to the city of Djakovo in the region of Slavonia. It was a female work camp where young girls were taught how to help in the kitchen, with fruits, poultry keeping, working in the fields,

¹¹⁵ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 196/1281, “Zapovjedničtvu Radne službe ‘Ustaške mladeži,’” [To the Command of Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth] August 6, 1941.

¹¹⁶ *Hrvatski radio list*, [Croatian Radio Journal] July 20, 1941, no. 3.

etc.¹¹⁷, and they would mostly stay in camps for a whole month. There was also a camp established on the estate of Josipovac, also near Djakovo, which lasted for one month. According to the description of one visit, besides spiritual and political lectures, female members were also given lectures in “household keeping, economy, cattle raising, poultry keeping, fruit growing, health, and sewing”.¹¹⁸ According to an interview given by Janko Skrbinić, each district had a section of labor service incorporated within, and camps were established in 14 places where “7 000 youth attended and more than 1 000 helped in indexing grain capacities”.¹¹⁹

Once completing their courses and assignments in work camps, the youth was to apply the knowledge it gained in real life situations. Youth Labor Service courses and work were organized during summer, when they would help in the fields, land cultivation,¹²⁰ redirecting streams, or in the cities, helping cleaning and decorating city parks,¹²¹ cleaning city streets.¹²² Of course the Ustasha officials tried to describe this not as a continuation of school during summer breaks, but as “school of joy and comradeship, school of discipline, school of life in nature”.¹²³ Although the lectures were an essential part of these courses and gatherings in camps, it was work which was valued as the most important and influential educational tool. As stated by Felix

¹¹⁷ “Škola Radne Službe,” [School of Labor Service] *Ustaška mladež*, May 10, 1942, no. 19, 16.

¹¹⁸ Sandra Tropsch, “Jedan dan u logoru radne službe,” [One day in the Camp of Labor Service] *Novo pokoljenje*, July 10, 1942, no. 4, 5.

¹¹⁹ “Ustaška mladež, stvaralačka mladež,” [The Ustasha Youth, Creative Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, September 24, 1941, no. 222, 5.

¹²⁰ “Radni logor Ustaške mladeži,” [Work Camp of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaški glas – Banja Luka*, July 22, 1942, no. 18, 2.

¹²¹ “Radna služba ustaške mladeži svršava 18. o. mj. ovogodišnjim radom,” [Labor Service of the Ustasha Youth Ends on the eighteenth of this month with this Year’s Work] *Koprivnički Hrvat – glasilo grada Koprivnice*, August 15, 1942, no. 32, 1.

¹²² As was the case in the cities of Bjelovar and Koprivnica. See “Radna služba Ustaške mladeži,” *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, July 26, 1941, no. 15, 3, and “KOPRIVNICA – Radna služba Ustaške mladeži,” *Ustaška mladež*, October 1, 1942, no. 37, 21.

¹²³ “Naš rad preko ljeta,” *Dužnostnik*, August 1942, no. 6, 230.

Niedzielsky: “Mere lecturing does not educate, work educates.”¹²⁴ The works assigned to youth during their time at camps were to be of general national benefit and were to emphasize the three aspects of national education: political, personal, and physical education. This was seen as important by the Ustasha officials in order to educate individuals dedicated to their national community, an individual who is healthy and who respects every member of his/her national community equally.¹²⁵

While work was seen as an essential part of spiritual education whereby youth learnt the importance of manual work, comradeship, selflessness and national well-being, sports were given the role of regeneration; of breeding strong, durable, and healthy young bodies. As with an urgent need for reeducation and reintroducing the value of work, the main premise was that, during the interwar period, sport served the wrong purpose. As stated in a document which elaborated the new scientific basis of physical education within the Ustasha regime, it was stated that such negative view and distorted basis of sport “are no longer suitable neither from a national-educational point of view nor from an expert’s point of view, that is, the physical educational point of view”.¹²⁶ The main idea presented in this basic document on physical education was to coordinate:

[...] physical education of school youth with the system of physical education and units within the Ustasha Youth organization, as well as with the names within the Ustasha Youth.¹²⁷

The premise was that physical education in school should be the basis for a more elaborated physical education set to take place within the Ustasha Youth

¹²⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/158, “Suradnja mladeži kod obrađivanja zemlje i drugih gospodarskih radova, okružnica,” [Cooperation of Youth during Land Cultivation and other Economic Works, Circular] March 17, 1945.

¹²⁵ “DRŽAVNA ČASTNA RADNA SLUŽBA U DUHU USTAŠKIH NAČELA,” [State Honorary Labor Service in the Spirit of the Ustasha Principles] *Hrvatski narod*, May 15, 1942, no. 246, 3.

¹²⁶ HDA, MNP – 216, Ured ministra – UM, Pravni Odsjek – PO, Box no. 77, “Izvješće – Obrazloženje nove naučne tjelesne osnove,” [A Report – Exposition of the New Scientific Physical Basics] April 17, 1942.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 2.

organization, as well as to become more connected with the “national, social, and spiritual education of the youth”.¹²⁸ Since previous educational and scientific views and practices on the role of sports in the youth education were seen as decadent and harmful, especially with regard to the Ustasha idea on national community, immediately upon the establishment of their regime, all previous sports societies, such as *Sokol*, Jewish sport societies and various workers clubs, were dissolved and banned.¹²⁹

In April 1941, when the first ministries were formed, sport and physical education came under the competence of the *Ministarstvo urudžbe* [Ministry of Consignment].¹³⁰ In May 1942, a special *Ured državnog vodstva tjelesnog odgoja i športa* [Office of State Leadership of Physical Education and Sports] was formed, and it was in charge of coordinating and supervising all sports activities and exercises, issuing regulations and orders regarding physical education, and other.¹³¹ The purpose was to:

[...] implement and conduct a systematic care about the physical education of Croatian youth [...] to bring up a complete human with riches of all values: spiritual, soul.¹³²

Miroslav Gal, an athlete, stated in one of his articles on sport, and athletic sports in particular: “I have noticed a sad fact that we are behind other nations in this regard,” and further on “Sport is a means by which youth is educated and with that

¹²⁸ Ibid, 2-3.

¹²⁹ Ivo Banović, *Podsjetnik za polaganje ispita iz povijesti sporta* [A Reminder for Taking the Exam in the History of Sports] (Split: Kineziološki fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu, 2011.), 86.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 86.

¹³¹ “ZAKONSKA ODREDBA O OSNIVANJU UREDA DRŽAVNOG ODGOJA I ŠPORTA,” [The Legal Decree on the Establishment of the Office of State Leadership of Physical Education and Sports] *Službeni glasnik ministarstva nastave*, June 10, 1942, no. 17, 732-733.

¹³² “Hrvatski sport služiti će narodu i domovini – godinu dana rada naših sportaša,” [Croatian Sport Shall Serve its People and Homeland – One Year of our Athlete’s Work] *Nova Hrvatska*, April 11, 1942, no. 85, 13.

help develops the spirit of a fighter, conscious nationalist, and resistant individual.”¹³³

Another article, written in June 1941, stated:

To us Croats sport has to be one of the first duties, because sport makes a human healthy and physically strong, it changes effeminate person into a resistant human, it gives rest to the tired, joy to the sad, and strength to the weak.¹³⁴

As already mentioned, the idea was that Croatia, the Croatian nation, needed a ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha, capable of running and safeguarding the Ustasha state. The dominant discourse claimed that in the previous decades the youth was left on its own, that sport societies became elitist, and in general, the degeneracy of spirit and body set in. All this threatened to erase the Croatian spirit and Croatian nation, and thus strong individuals were needed in order to regain a deserving place among the new European nations and ‘new order’ being created. Miško Zebić, head of the section for *Tjelesni odgoj i šport* [Physical Education and Sport], argued that the idea was to create a new man; healthy, buoyant, and courageous, just as it was the case in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. This was needed since the Serbian power-holders have “tried to corrupt, take away and denationalize our Croatian youth [...] they have tried to create from our sportsmen a type of corrupt materialist and mercenary”.¹³⁵ Such neglect, or at least the Ustasha idea that Croatian youth was neglected in the past, led to the fact that Oršanić in his book described Croats as being “a stunted nation”.¹³⁶

The Ustasha idea of the importance of youth and the pressing need for their regeneration, and thus the regeneration of Croatian nation, was identical to the Fascist idea of restoring “the Italian people to health, both politically and physically, by

¹³³ Miroslav Gal, “Sport u historiji Helena i budućnosti Hrvatske,” [Sport in the History of Helens and in the Future of Croatia] *Ustaška mladež*, September 14, 1941, no. 7, 16.

¹³⁴ Julijan Mesić, “Zadaća hrvatskog športa,” [The Task of Croatian Sport] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, June 28, 1941, no. 11, 6.

¹³⁵ “Sport nije više zabava već nastojanje da Hrvatska mladež očeliči svoja tijela i oplemeni svoj duh,” [Sport is no Longer an Entertainment but Endeavor that Croatian Youth Strengthens its Bodies and Ennobles its Spirit] *Nova Hrvatska*, November 28, 1941, no. 212, 15.

¹³⁶ Oršanić, *Zadatci našeg rada*, 14.

means of sport and exercise”.¹³⁷ With such a premise, physical education and sport were given a prominent role within the Ustasha Youth.¹³⁸ As seen from courses, physical exercises presented a key component during the youth meetings, field trips, camping, and upbringing dedicated to the members of the Ustasha Youth. As Blažeković, who in 1945 replaced Miško Zebić, stated:

In order to achieve a complete upbringing of Croatian youth, organization of the Ustasha youth is not limiting itself only to spiritual building and strengthening of Croatian youth, but is actively dealing with physical upbringing as well.¹³⁹

For him the main idea was to create a healthy spirit in a healthy body, “physical education is in close relation with the molding of an individual’s personality as it is with its spiritual upbringing”.¹⁴⁰ The idea was to create “a complete human, with all those virtues which the new generation must possess” and therefore besides that “physical strengthening and upbringing are undeniably important for the biological potential of the nation”.¹⁴¹ It comes as no surprise than that within the Ustasha Youth organization, immediately upon its establishment, there was a special section dedicated to physical education, *Odjel za tjelovježbu* [Department for Physical Training].¹⁴² In November 1942, the *Propisnik o radu pročelnništva za tjelesni odgoj* [Regulation on the Work of Department for Physical Training] was issued.¹⁴³ Article 3 of the Regulation stated that the Department consists of the *Odjel za vojničku prednaobrazbu* [Section for Military Preeducation] and the *Odjel za tjelovježbu i sport*

¹³⁷ Dogliani, “Sport and Fascism”: 327.

¹³⁸ See Miljan, “Fašizam, sport i mladež – ideja i uloga tjelesnoga odgoja i sporta u odgoju I organizaciji Ustaške mladeži, 1941.-1945.”: 361-382.

¹³⁹ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 127.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 128.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 129.

¹⁴² “Osnovana je Ustaška mladež,” *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskog Ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 11.

¹⁴³ “Propisnik o radu pročelnništva za tjelesni odgoj, odjelnog upraviteljstva za vojničku prednaobrazbu i odjelnog upraviteljstva za tjelovježbu i sport,” [Rulebook on the Work of Section for Physical Education, Sectional Department for Military Preeducation and Sectional Department for Physical Exercise and Sport] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, December 1942, no. 10, 644.

[Section for Physical Training and Sport].¹⁴⁴ The Section for Military Preeducation had five tasks:

Building spiritually educated members with Ustasha-military virtues [...] creating bodily foundations so that an individual could overcome all the efforts and comply with all the requirements placed on him by the military call, not just in a spiritual but also in a physical way [...] providing military knowledge [...] satisfying the needs of contemporary Croatian life by building in a young Ustasha boy military virtues and physical capabilities [...] qualifying female youth for all that which war might put in front of her, so that with her knowledge and physical capabilities she could replace a man.¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, the *Odjel za tjeleovježbu* had the goal of:

[...] providing directions and materials for physical exercises, by which one can influence the physical condition, agility and health of an individual, as well as to develop determination, strong will, courage, and self-respect, elevating self-consciousness and feelings of strength.¹⁴⁶

This idea was similar to the idea and purpose of sport in Nazi Germany as well, where the sport leader, von Tschammer und Osten stated, according to a newspaper article, stated that “German sport [...] makes its nation fit for WAR [...] keeps it capable of fighting”.¹⁴⁷ Thus, sport was set to become an essential part of the youth’s everyday activities’ under the strong supervision and guidance from the state. The Ustashes emphasized Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany as role-models since both nations regarded athletics as “the best means for a complete and perfect development of a human body”.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 645.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 646.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 647.

¹⁴⁷ “Športska je djelatnost u Njemačkoj državni zadatak,” [Sport Activity in Germany is a National Task] *Nova Hrvatska*, November 21, 1941, no. 205, 15.

¹⁴⁸ “Putem sporta, Ustaški oslobodilački pokret stvara nova, zdrava pokoljenja,” [Through Sport, the Ustasha Liberation Movement Creates New, Healthy Generations] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 30, 1942, no. 203, 9.

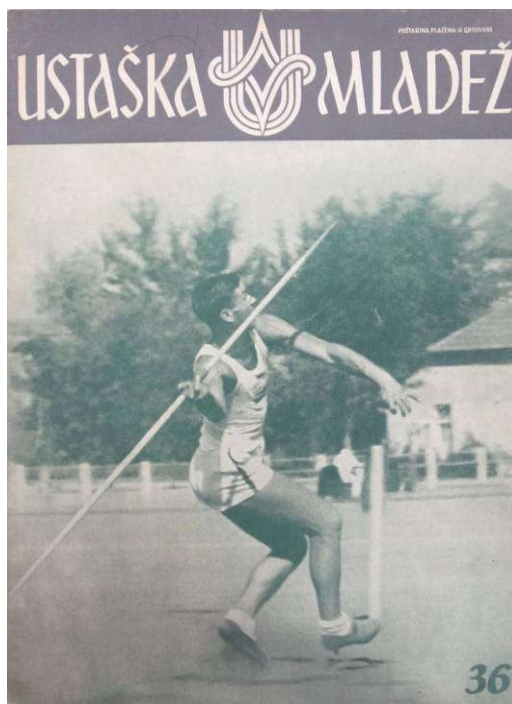


Figure 4.5. The front page of *Ustaška mladež*, depicting a young athlete during a youth competition.¹⁴⁹

As seen, the idea was to provide the youth with all the necessary knowledge which sport contains. The youth was also supposed to learn how to take care of their bodies and condition in order to prepare themselves for any tasks which life might bestow on them, be they of social, military, or everyday life's nature. It was to an extent, as Redeker calls it, an anthropo-factory in which "fabrication of a new model of the human being" was to take place.¹⁵⁰ In order to achieve this, special courses were organized for those in charge of physical and sport training of the youth. According to the *Propisnik o stručnim tečajevima tjelesnog vježbanja* [Regulation on Specialized Courses of Physical Training], courses were held for the heads of physical exercise, teachers and coaches,¹⁵¹ and were divided into general and special. General courses explained and went through the curriculum dedicated to physical training of

¹⁴⁹ *Ustaška mladež*, September 15, 1942, no. 36.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Redeker, "Sport as an opiate of international relations: The myth and illusion of sport as a tool of foreign diplomacy," *Sport in society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* vol. 11, no. 4 (2008): 498. Although Redeker sees sport as an entity in itself, as an idiosyncratic factor which cannot be molded by political or social factors, it is my opinion that his idea of sport as anthropo-factory can be applied to fascist regimes.

¹⁵¹ "Propisnik o stručnim tečajevima tjelesnog vježbanja," [Rulebook on Special Courses for Physical Exercise] *Dužnostnik*, March 1943, no. 3, 6.

the youth, and special courses were dedicated to special sections of physical exercises such as athletics, sport games such as basketball, volleyball, football and others, swimming, rowing, skiing, ice skating, boxing, wrestling and jiu jitsu.¹⁵² Courses were divided into practical and theoretical parts, with an exam at the end of each course, and they usually lasted for two weeks.¹⁵³ One such swimming course was organized in summer 1942 and it lasted from June till September.¹⁵⁴ However, besides educating future leaders, the courses also often had a preparatory purpose for those who were to take part in international competitions, such as that which took place in Breslau in August 1941¹⁵⁵ or in Milan from 24 till 27 September and where 30 female Ustasha Youth members participated.¹⁵⁶

In order to achieve this balance and to regain control over their bodies, there were three sports which were seen as crucial with regard to regeneration of Croatian youth. These were athletics, especially track and field sports, chess, and swimming. Miroslav Gal stated that if Croats were to:

[...] participate in the great game of enlightened people, if we wish to train healthy and buoyant generation, track and field sports must become the general good of our youth.¹⁵⁷

The idea was that athletics can help youth to develop not only their physiognomy and speed but “to provide basic terms of sport motions”.¹⁵⁸ Also, athletics were fairly inexpensive to organize and their outcome was seen as

¹⁵² Ibid, 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 7.

¹⁵⁴ HDA, UHOP – 249, GUS - Ured za promičbu – UP /Box no. 4, “Izvještaj o održanom plivačkom tečaju,” [A Report on Swimming Course].

¹⁵⁵ “ATLETSKO NTJECANJE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Athletic Competition of the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, August 4, 1941, no. 171, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, and “Vijesti Ustaške mladeži,” [News of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 27, 15.

¹⁵⁷ Miroslav Gal, “Laka atletika – kraljica sportova,” [Track-and-Field Sports – Queen of Sports] *Ustaška mladež*, August 10, 1941, no. 6, 31.

¹⁵⁸ Miško Zebić, “Atletika – nastavak predaje i osnovica hrvatskog športa,” [Athletics – A Continuation of Delivery and Basics of Croatian Sport] *Nova Hrvatska*, July 31, 1942, no. 177, 13.

comprehensive with regard to the development of young bodies.¹⁵⁹ Another important aspect was that track and field sports were seen as more suitable for male members while other sport games, swimming especially, as more suitable to female members.¹⁶⁰ The idea behind this division was the same as mentioned previously, and that was that sport was to create young males “determined and brave fighters, and to bring up young girls into women who shall give birth to a healthy new generation”.¹⁶¹ The role of sport and its gender division was thus the same as in Fascist Italy, where boys were to “strengthen physique, character and virility”, while for girls it was “advisable during adolescence to prepare them for their future role as strong, healthy mothers”.¹⁶² It was considered that athletics, due to the diversity of disciplines “contributes in developing of buoyant young males, capable of overcoming all tasks”.¹⁶³ Within, the greatest attention was placed on all-round competition, especially pentathlon and decathlon. The idea was to avoid specializing in only one sport “because it has bad influence on harmonious development of a young organism”.¹⁶⁴ Even though swimming was seen as most fruitful of all sports, it was considered that it was:

[...] an ideal sport for a woman. Actually, a woman should choose swimming because swimming does not just protect the posture of women and their body shape, but it makes her resistant, healthy, and strong, and that is how a future Croatian mother should be.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Michelle Mouton, “Sports, Song, and Socialization. Women's memories of Youthful Activity and Political Indoctrination in the BDM,”: 68.

¹⁶⁰ “Starčevićeva mladež i laka atletika,” [Starčević Youth and Track-and-Field Sports] *Hrvatska zemlja – Tjednik za politička, prosvjetna, društvo i gospodarska pitanja*, April 30, 1944, no. 18, 4.

¹⁶¹ Julijan Mesić, “Zadaca hrvatskog sporta,” [The Task of Croatian Sport] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, June 28, 1941, no. 11, 6.

¹⁶² Dogliani, “Sport and Fascism”, 330.

¹⁶³ *Skrižaljka za ocjenjivanje posljedaka u atletici* [Crossword for Grading of Results in Athletics] (Zagreb: Zapovjedništvo Ustaške Mladeži G.U.S., 1943), V.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, VII.

¹⁶⁵ Zdenka Bratulica, “Plivanje – najzdraviji i najkorisniji sport,” [Swimming –Healthiest and most Useful sport] *Novo pokoljenje*, September 10, 1942, no. 6, 5.

In order to emphasize the importance of swimming further, the same article points out the fact that swimming is obligatory in Nazi Germany for all youth from age of 14 to 17.¹⁶⁶

If sport and field track and swimming were to develop and strengthen young bodies, chess was given the task of developing “mental strength, will power and bodily resistance”.¹⁶⁷ Chess was seen as a tool with an incredible educational variable since it:

[...] demanded reasonable conduct of mental strengths [...] it puts high demands on the development of attention, reasonable judgment, determination, will, stamina and readiness in decision making.¹⁶⁸



Figure 4.6. The Ustasha Youth members playing chess during their time in camp.¹⁶⁹

It was through chess that the youth was to be educated in consistent work and actions.¹⁷⁰ Oršanić stated that chess is important because it develops youth in its

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 5.

¹⁶⁷ “Ustrojstvo šahovske igre u postrojbama Ustaške mladeži Nezavisne Države Hrvatske,” [The Structure of Chess within the Ranks of the Ustasha Youth of the Independent State of Croatia] *Dužnostnik*, September 1942, no. 7, 358.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ *O taborovanju i logorovanju*, 32.

¹⁷⁰ “Šah i Ustaška mladež,” [Chess and the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, November 1, 1942, no. 39, 21.

totality in providing “all things necessary for building of the real human”.¹⁷¹ Since chess was seen as a game with additional, added values when it comes to the youth education, it was to become a game played by all members of the Ustasha Youth. According to the Ustasha Youth officials chess was not to be the game reserved only for intellectuals or that youth attending high school. On the contrary, just as the Ustasha Youth organization was comprehensive, so all sports, including chess, were intended for everyone. During his visit to the Ustasha Youth chess tournament in Zagreb in July 1943, Oršanić especially emphasized this vision of chess, stating that:

Chess must not be the privilege of only one, closed circle [...] It has to become the legacy of those doing intellectual work as well as of those who with their hands full of calluses and physical strength work for the benefit of the national community.¹⁷²

In order to fulfil their idea of sport among youth education, the Ustashes paid serious attention to sport facilities. They were determined to build new ones, suitable for the new way of sport education.¹⁷³ As stated in one article:

We shall, with our hands, start building our own grounds for practice and sport fields, we shall send our elected comrades to courses, to teach and to lead us, and the best of them we shall send to the outside friendly countries, to learn even more.¹⁷⁴

Local governments were encouraged to scout and find suitable grounds on which exercise installations and sport grounds for the Ustasha Youth could be built and they were requested to make reports of this.¹⁷⁵ However, in spite of the Ustashes emphasis on the importance of sport in the youth education, attaining sports facilities

¹⁷¹ “Šahistima Ustaške mladeži,” [To the Chess Players of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, July 1, 1943, no. 12, 15.

¹⁷² Ibid, 15.

¹⁷³ “Radovi oko podizanja sportskog igrališta Ustaške mladeži u punom su toku,” [Works on the Building of the Sport Playground for the Ustasha Youth are in Full Activity] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 5, 1942, no. 18, 3; and “Kupalište Ustaške mladeži,” [Bathing-Place of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaški glas – Banja Luka*, July 22, 1942, no. 18, 2.

¹⁷⁴ F. Knežević, “Naša tjelovježba,” [Our Physical Exercise] *Ustaška mladež*, August 10, 1941, no. 6, 28.

¹⁷⁵ HDA, Ministarstvo Vanjskih poslova NDH – MVP NDH – 223/Box no. 36, “Vježbališta za ustašku omladinu i odrede priremnih bojna – uređenje,” [Training Facilities for the Ustasha Youth and Preparatory Battalions – Putting in Order] November 25, 1941.

proved a difficult task. Similar as was the case with problems in organizing youth branches and their ancillary buildings across the state, problems also existed in the relations between the local officials and Ustasha Youth organization with regard to sport facilities and their usage. For example, the youth in the city of Varaždin was rejected by the city major in its request to have the sport gym and its grounds allocated to them on the basis that “the same already serves for sport activities of all school youth in Varaždin, who are also members of the Ustasha Youth”.¹⁷⁶ That there was a general shortage of sport equipment as well can be seen from a document written by the youth organization from the city of Dubrovnik. In their memo, they asked for a special ball for physical exercises as well as for volleyball, since there was a “lack of equipment for physical exercises’, that is, some communes have none”.¹⁷⁷ However, the youth organization from the city of Bjelovar managed to come to an agreement with local officials and was given a concession over a summer swimming pool for ten years, from June 1942 until June 1952.¹⁷⁸ A similar story can also be found in the city of Banja Luka, where, according to a newspaper article, the Ustasha Youth was given a river bank of the river Vrbas, where it built a bathing-place for its members.¹⁷⁹

And while there were stories of success and those of less successful attempts in providing sport facilities for the youth, the regime realized that facilitates are insufficient and that they are not in accordance with the proclaimed goals and aims of youth sport education. Their plans, such as building a highly modern swimming

¹⁷⁶ DAV, GP – 0025, “Mišljenje užeg savjetodavnog odbora,” [The Opinion of a Councilor Board] July 15, 1942, 11554, see also DAV, GP – 0025, “Zahtjev logora ženske ustaške mladeži,” [A Request of the Female Ustasha Youth Commune] no. 4/42, July 1, 1942 10719.

¹⁷⁷ DAD, UM – 44, “Stožeru ženske Ustaške mladeži,” [To the District of the Female Ustasha Youth] May 26, 1943, 161/45, and DAD, UM – 44, “Logoru Ženske Ustaške mladeži,” [To the Commune of the Female Ustasha Youth] May 24, 1943, 131/43.

¹⁷⁸ “Kupalište »Draženovac« pod upravom ustaške mladeži,” [Swimming Place »Draženovac« Under the Administration of the Ustasha Youth] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, June 27, 1942, no. 57, 2.

¹⁷⁹ “Kupalište Ustaške mladeži,” *Ustaški glas – Banja Luka*, July 22, 1942, no. 18, 2, and F. Knežević, “Naša tjelovježba,” *Ustaška mladež*, August 10, 1941, no. 6, 28.

facility in Zagreb with a removable rooftop, never came into existence.¹⁸⁰ The same applied to the sport complex of *Hrvatski akademski športski klub – HAŠK* [Croatian Academic Sport Club], which was to have 28.000 seats, a swimming pool, tennis courts, athletic track, etc.¹⁸¹

In order to minimize all the minuses and difficulties when it comes to sport facilities and youth education in sport, the Ustashas were eager in organizing youth competitions in order to show their achievements. Through such competitions, both domestic and international, the idea and purpose was to show what the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha, was capable of when competing with other comrades and nations. Tournaments in athletics were often organized, such as for example during the *Poglavnik’s* name day celebration in 1943.¹⁸² During this celebration, the youth was also to perform exercises in character formation of which a highly detailed description on how to perform was published in *Dužnostnik*, and which the youth was to learn how to perform. The descriptions elaborated, in sketches, the movement of the youth, forming various figure shapes. It seems that this was highly similar to state celebrations in Nazi Germany as well as in communist regimes during a leader’s birthday, name day, or some other state celebration. Guidelines on how this physical performance was to look like were issued some two months in advance on fifteen pages with detailed sketches.¹⁸³ In 1944, additional performances were scheduled for the *Poglavnik’s* name day with instructions also consisting of drawings of figures and

¹⁸⁰ “Zagreb će dobiti najsuvremenije zimsko-ljetno plivalište u Europi,” [Zagreb will get the Most Modern Winter-Summer Swimming Pool in Europe] *Nova Hrvatska*, June 14, 1942, no. 137, 16, also HDA, UHOP – 249/Box no. 16, “Javni tjelovježbeni nastup 13. lipnja,” [Public Physical Performance on June 13] May 4, 1943.

¹⁸¹ “HAŠK gradi SUVREMENO VELEIGRALIŠTE,” [HAŠK is Building a Contemporary Sport Playground] *Hrvatski narod*, July 8, 1943, no. 775.

¹⁸² “Razpored javnog tjelovježbenog nastupa Ustaške mladeži 13. lipnja,” [A Schedule of Public Physical Performance of the Ustasha Youth on June 13] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, April, 1943, no. 4, 27.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 27-43.

how they were to be executed.¹⁸⁴ A similar performance was also held in the city of Koprivnica during the youth rally in October 1941,¹⁸⁵ and with the same youth rally held a year later.¹⁸⁶ Competitions in athletics, especially track and field sports, were held on state and local levels, among or between various youth counties, communes, or districts, as for example the one which took place in a small city of Kutina in August 1942.¹⁸⁷ In October 1942 there was a youth rally held in the city of Požega, where the youth from cities of Požega and Nova Gradiška competed among each other in athletics.¹⁸⁸ A similar competition was held in July 1942 between the youth of cities of Požega and Brod.¹⁸⁹ In August 1942, a state competition was held in the city of Vinkovci. According to a newspaper article, members of youth from the districts of Hum, Dubrava, Bilogora, Baranja, Livac-Zapolja, Modruš, Prigorje, Pokupje, Vuka I., Vuka II., Zagreb I., Zagreb II., and Zagorje were present. The purposes and aim of such competition was described by the author when saying that such competitions serve the purpose for youth to show that:

[...] it wishes to erase the last traces of past materialistic and merchant spirit, which was prominent in life and in sport [...] the youth which has been built in accordance with the Ustasha Principles, has shown that it does not care about false and dishonorable records [...] but it wishes to show to all those skeptics that we are built on strong and moral foundations of life.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ "Razpored vježbi za proslavu 13. lipnja 1944," [A Schedule of Exercise for the celebration of the June 13] *Dužnostnik*, April, 1944, no. 4, 57-76.

¹⁸⁵ "Veličanstvena smotra Ustaške mladeži u Koprivnici," [A Magnificent Review of the Ustasha Youth in Koprivnica] *Nezavisna Hrvatska – Bjelovar*, October 11, 1941, no. 26, 3.

¹⁸⁶ "Smotra ustaške mladeži u Koprivnici," [A review of the Ustasha Youth in Koprivnica] *Koprivnički Hrvat*, October 3, 1942, no. 39, 2.

¹⁸⁷ "Kutina – lakoatletsko natjecanje," [Kutina – Track-and-Filed Sport Competition] *Ustaška mladež – službeno glasilo Ustaške mladeži*, October 1, 1942, no. 37, 21.

¹⁸⁸ Ivo Bjelovučić, "Veliko zborovanje Ustaške mladeži u Požegi," [Great Assembly of the Ustasha Youth in Požega] *Ustaška mladež – omladinski prilog »Ustaše«*, October 5, 1941, no. 10, 15.

¹⁸⁹ "Ponovni uspjeh požeških lakoatletičara," [Another Success of the Požega Track-and-Field Competitors] *Ustaška mladež – službeno glasilo Ustaške mladeži*, July 12, 1942, no. 28, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Husnija Hrustanović, "Na mjesta! – Pozor! – Hitac! – Velebna borba mladeži ustaške Hrvatske za prvenstvo u atletici 1942," [On Your Marks! – Get Set! – Fire! – A Grandiose Fight of the Youth of the Ustasha Croatia for the 1942 Championship in Athletics] *Ustaška mladež – službeno glasilo Ustaške mladeži*, September 15, 1942, no. 36, 6-7.

The same local and nationwide competitions were also organized for chess. For example, in March 1943 there was a chess tournament organized in Zagreb,¹⁹¹ and that same month there was also a commune tournament held in the city of Požega.¹⁹² Competitions were also held among local branches, and winners of them participated in the state-level tournament, such as the one held in Zagreb on March 25, 1943, in which youth winners from all districts participated.¹⁹³ An identical individual competition for state championship was scheduled to take place in 1944 in Zagreb. Those participating were to be provided with free accommodation and meals and were to be reimbursed for their travel costs.¹⁹⁴

As within Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, work and sport within the Ustasha regime were to provide a homogenizing element for the youth, and the nation in general. Work was given the role of strengthening young bodies and acquainting, mostly city youth, with manual labor. Sport competitions served the purpose of mobilizing the youth for the Ustasha cause and their vision of society as totalitarian, regenerated, and homogenized. In fact, sport was seen as an essential part of the Ustasha totalitarian project, which in general, as stated by Girginov:

[...] tried to reverse the playful nature of sport by turning it into a compulsory activity needed to overcome the mental and material obstacles in the pursuit of a utopian future.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ “Šahovsko prvenstvo Ustaške mladeži stožera Zagreb,” [Chess Cup of the Ustasha Youth from the District of Zagreb] *Nova Hrvatska*, March, 1942, no. 54, 4.

¹⁹² “Iz naše organizacije – Požega – Rad Muške Ustaške mladeži,” [From Our Organization – Požega – The Work of the Male Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež – službeno glasilo Ustaške mladeži*, March 1, 1943, no. 4, 13.

¹⁹³ Mirko Magdić, “Propisnik natjecanja prvog šahovskog pojedinačnog prvenstvenog natjecanja Ustaške mladeži za godinu 1943,” [Rulebook of the First Individual Chess Competition of the Ustasha Youth for the Year 1943] in *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, March, 1943, no. 3, 27-28.

¹⁹⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group I/Box no. 60/72, “Šahovsko pojedinačno prvenstvo ustaške Mladeži za god. 1944,” [Chess Individual Championship of the Ustasha Youth for the Year 1944] April 29, 1944.

¹⁹⁵ Vassil Girginov, “Totalitarian sport: Towards an Understanding of its Logic, Practice and Legacy,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* vol. 5, no. 1 (2014): 27.

Work and sport were seen as complementary and were given the role of regenerating young bodies *in toto*. Such regeneration and reeducation of the youth, according to the Ustasha officials, presented a crucial, necessary prerequisite for the salvation of Croatian nation as well as for confirming the Croats belonging within the ‘new’ European order of strong and healthy nations. By becoming physically and mentally strong, nationally conscious, a believer capable of preserving and continuing the Ustasha actions and moving the revolution forward, this ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha – was to reassert itself and its nation as belonging to this new European order.

4.4. *Militarization of the Youth – A Quest for Heirs*

Three additional aspects, emphasized in youth education and regimentation were military education, camping, and uniforms. All three connected were to mirror the Ustasha warrior, which in Ustasha ideology represented and symbolized the resurfacing of an ancient, medieval, Croatian warrior. Military virtues of Croats were mentioned already in 1933 in the first issue of the *Principles*, where it was stated that Croatian people were from the outset organized militarily and their “defensive force lays in organizational long-proved military virtues”.¹⁹⁶ Danijel Crljen, in the *Principles* published in 1942, stated that Croats came to these lands as a free warrior nation, and that this “organizational strength, by which conquerors and ruling nations distinguished themselves, was the main characteristic of the warrior-like Croatian nation”.¹⁹⁷ This idea of Croats as warriors was further emphasized during the regime, and especially with regard to the Ustasha Youth organization. A Croatian soldier was presented as an example of courage and admiration throughout the history of Europe

¹⁹⁶ Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 126-127. Principles 6 and 15.

¹⁹⁷ Crljen, ed., *Načela Ustaškog pokreta*, 38-39.

and was thus to become a role-model for the youth. A document, distributed among the youth stated that:

There is not any one big and bloody battle in which a Croatian soldier did not shed his heroic blood, always causing fear and panic among the enemy [...] At each step, across the whole of Europe, we find bones of Croatian soldiers.¹⁹⁸

Velimir Pustajec argued that militarism needs to become and remain the core aspect of the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha, even in the time of peace, because otherwise the nation will fall into decadence.¹⁹⁹ In order to further assert the need for militarization and bravery among the youth, the Ustasha propaganda emphasized Jure Francetić, the leader of the notorious *Crna Legija*, as the model to follow and look up to. In his 1942 book, *Crna legija – odredi nepobjedive mladosti*, [The Black Legion – Units of Invincible Youth], Ivo Balentović argued that the *Crna Legija* mostly consisted of young people “among whom the majority is barely at the age of 18, therefore these are mostly members of the Ustasha Youth”.²⁰⁰ Francetić was characterized as their guardian, their father, as someone who always took care of the youngest. He was a role-model, an Ustasha hero willing to sacrifice his life for the higher cause, as the embodiment of “Croatian military knightly virtues”.²⁰¹ The idea presented to the youth was that of a model Croatian soldier:

[...] who never steps back, unless ordered so. He rather falls then steps back. This trait is in his blood. He was like that in the past, he is like that in the present, he shall be like that in the future.²⁰²

In accomplishing their ‘revolution’, the Ustashas needed much more than uniforms and camp training. As mentioned, the idea was to organize and implement their own, parallel system of education, through which they would create this ‘new’

¹⁹⁸ DAD, UM – 44/9, “Zapovjed broj 4.” [Command Number 4], 1.

¹⁹⁹ Velimir Pustajec, “Važnost rada,” [The Importance of Work] *Dužnostnik*, June 1943, no. 6, 1.

²⁰⁰ Ivo Balentović, *Crna legija – odredi nepobjedive mladosti* [Black Legion – Units of Invincible Youth] (Zagreb: Promičba Ustaške mladeži, 1942), 7.

²⁰¹ “Narodni div i junak vitez Jure Francetić,” [National Giant and Hero Knight Jure Francetić] *Ustaška mladež*, May 1, 1943, no. 8, 3.

²⁰² DAD, UM – 44/9, “Zapovjed broj 4.”, 2.

Croat – the Ustasha. It was in this parallel system of education where premilitary education was given importance, especially among the male members of the Ustasha Youth. Đuro Tomić, Sectional Administrator for Military Preeducation, stated that military education among the youth had the aim of:

[...] destroying half-heartedness and pacifism, casualness, and indiscipline, which were brought by democracy, thus creating a better spirit and better men to Croatian community.²⁰³

Premilitary education was especially emphasized among older sections of the Ustasha Youth, Ustasha Hero and Ustasha Starčević Youth. Ustasha colonel Tomislav Rolf, who was in charge of conducting such education, argued that:

A nation whose youth does not grab rifles with joy is doomed to the failure of its independence and to becoming a slave to that nation whose youth does grab rifles with joy.²⁰⁴



Figure 4.7. The Ustasha Youth members marching at St. Mark's Square in Zagreb.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Đuro Tomić, "Vojnička prednaobrazba muške mladeži," [Military Preeducation of Male Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, March 1, 1943, no. 4, 12.

²⁰⁴ "Predvojnička naobrazba Ustaške mladeži," [Premilitary Education of the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, January 21, 1942, no. 331, 3.

²⁰⁵ *Ustaška mladež*, April 10, 1944, no. 6.

He further stated that there are three things necessary in order to educate and create good soldiers: military virtues, military capabilities, and military skills.²⁰⁶ All this served as a prerequisite for achieving “a revolution from the inside: fundamental change of political conception, social relations, ethical principles, and upbringing” as stated by Milivoj Karamarko in August 1941.²⁰⁷ Thus the Ustasha Youth members were to become warriors, comrades, mothers, and good wives, i.e. they were to become the ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha.

Camping presented a key area where the youth was to learn necessary survival skills. It was through their participation and activities during camp time that the youth was to understand the meaning of comradeship and unity outside their usual, everyday environment. The main purpose of such camps was to nurture and imbue youth with certain values, such as comradeship, military skills and sacrifice, discipline, duty, and understanding of responsibilities among the future leaders, the future Ustashas. This served the same purpose as in Nazi Germany where camps “functioned undoubtedly as a disciplinary space, carefully planned and managed with the aim to reproduce politically instrumental subjectivities”.²⁰⁸ Through their detachment from their everyday life, camps were regarded as providing a perfect surrounding for the youth upbringing according to their vision. The purpose of such activities was described in a manual titled *O taborovanju i logorovanju* [On Camping], which was published in 1942.²⁰⁹ Since, according to this manual, city life complicated the question of upbringing, camping was seen as an ideal place for “the building up of the youth in

²⁰⁶ “Predvojnička naobrazba Ustaške mladeži,” *Hrvatski narod*, January 21, 1942, no. 331, 3.

²⁰⁷ Milivoj Karamarko, “Raditi i stvarati,” *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 6.

²⁰⁸ Kenny Cupres, “Governing through Nature: Camps and Youth Movements in Interwar Germany and the United States,” *Cultural Geographies* vol. 15, no. 2 (2008): 185.

²⁰⁹ *O taborovanju i logorovanju, upute za voditelje taborovanja i logorovanja* [On Camping] (Zagreb: Promičba Ustaške mladeži, 1942).

spiritual and physical terms”.²¹⁰ Also, both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany viewed camping as the most important way for the upbringing of the youth.²¹¹

There were two types of camps: *taborovanje* – consisting of three platoons, and *logorovanje* – consisting of more than three platoons. Both had to last for more than three days under the tents, otherwise they were considered merely an excursion.²¹² The purpose of camping was to instill the notion of responsibility, duties, and order. As one newspaper article stated it is in camps that:

[...] besides ideological upbringing, they also learn various practical jobs, and are simultaneously becoming competent for their future independence. Being distant from their homes, left alone to themselves and to the help of their comrades in nature, often exposed to various weather conditions, performing various manual jobs just as the adults do, they are preparing for life.²¹³

Camping thus served as a detachment from everyday life, from home benefits, from parental protection, and leisure. The Ustasha Youth officials regarded all this as necessary in order to make way with the remnants of an old system, a system which pay no attention to the youth needs but instead left them to be educated by the streets.²¹⁴ The idea was to remove the youth from its everyday surroundings, which according to Grga Pejnović:

[...] stopped serving human submersion into the problems of honor, pride, duty, love, problems of good and evil, human destiny, social intrigues, problems of work, duty and rights. They do not make efforts to discover the human soul, human heart, but merely to tease human passions and to awake an animal within.²¹⁵

The main premise in all this was that throughout its history, the Croatian youth was restricted in being educated freely by some foreign element which strived, according to Oršanić, to “detour the youth from thinking about the importance of

²¹⁰ Ibid, 5.

²¹¹ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 102.

²¹² Ibid, 8.

²¹³ “U prekrasnoj okolici Ozlja,” [In the Beautiful Surroundings of Ozalj] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 16, 1942.

²¹⁴ Matija Damović, “Ćudoredna izgradnja hrvatske mladeži,” [On the Moral Building of Croatian Youth] September 14, 1941, no. 7, 34.

²¹⁵ Grga Pejnović, “Pred našom budućnosti,” [In Front of Our Future] *Ustaška mladež*, September 15, 1942, no. 36, 4.

nation [...] Alien anti-people upbringing was successful, even though it was violent”.²¹⁶ Thus youth was seen as forgotten and left on its own.²¹⁷

Another key aspect of camping was to detach the youth from what was seen as wasteful and inefficient consuming of their free time. By bringing together the youth from equal sections of the Ustasha Youth from across the country, they wished to accentuate their belonging, their comradeship, and their tasks. It seems significant that, besides the role of preparing them for the hardships of their everyday lives, as the Ustashes argued, camps also served to show the hardships through which the ‘original’ Ustashes, whom they were to replace in the future, also went through when they initiated their fight. The main idea of camps was to educate future high-ranking officials of the Ustasha Youth. The youth members deemed worthy of such duty were chosen by their local officials and sent to such camps. It was there that they learned how one such camp should look like and what were its main facilities and which tools were necessary in setting up such a camp.²¹⁸ The same manual explained how to find the most appropriate place for setting of the camp, which were the key factors determining whether a place is suitable for camping, examples of various types of tents and how to erect them, how the inside of a tent should look like.²¹⁹ Further on, the same manual described how a camp was to look like with a fence all around it, and how above the main gates there should be a sign describing whose camp is this, as well as the emblem of the Ustasha Youth. Such camp layout further served to

²¹⁶ Ivan Oršanić, “Osjećaj narodnog ponosa – temeljni osjećaj Hrvatske Ustaške Mladeži,” [A Sense of National Pride – A Basic Sentiment of Croatian Ustasha Youth] *Nova Hrvatska*, April 10, 1942, no. 84, 49.

²¹⁷ Ante Đurković, “Uloga mladeži u hrvatskoj državi,” [The Role of Youth in Croatian State] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1944, no. 5, 8.

²¹⁸ *O taborovanju i logorovanju*, 13-16.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 18-28.

strengthen the youth's feeling of belonging to the community and to emphasize its unity within the strictly defined camp boundaries.²²⁰



Figure 4.8. The Ustasha Youth camp in Ozalj.²²¹

In the centre of the camp there was to be a place for a camp fire and a mast with the state flag and the flag of the Ustasha Youth.²²² There were also instructions on how to make different kinds of fire, (night fire, kitchen fire, or fire for guards),²²³ how to store food and placing the toilet outside the camp for hygienic reasons.²²⁴ Another important aspect of youth camping was their introduction to manual labor. The intention was to teach the youth various models of practical skills; such as how to build a bridge across a smaller river,²²⁵ how to cut down trees,²²⁶ and how to chop wood.²²⁷ As within the organization itself, special emphasis was put on strict discipline within the camp. Discipline was regarded as the main “precondition for any

²²⁰ See Cupers, “Governing through nature”: 181.

²²¹ *O taborovanju i logorovanju*, 16.

²²² Ibid, 31-32.

²²³ Ibid, 36-37.

²²⁴ Ibid, 38-40.

²²⁵ Ibid, 43.

²²⁶ Ibid, 42.

²²⁷ Ibid, 46.

organizational work”.²²⁸ It was considered that there was a complete lack of it, and that until then nobody had paid attention to this crucial aspect.²²⁹ As Blažeković stated:

Within the ranks of the Ustasha Youth, discipline needs to be an outcome of knowledge, of its necessity and explanation, and it has to be achieved through a system of authoritative work of those who are responsible for the upbringing and future of the new generations.²³⁰

The youth camps were thus seen as an ideal ground for achieving this, since they isolated the youth from their everyday life and surroundings, and were under the leadership and command of their superiors. In order to achieve this, every camp had its daily schedule placed on a visible place since “the camp is not a hotel, and camping is not summering, and therefore it is necessary that there exists an order”.²³¹ The daily schedule started at 6 am by a trumpet call. The idea of getting up early was important in order for “the city youth to learn of early waking up, because this is not the case in the cities”.²³² What followed was a morning exercise, a bath, tent arrangement, camp arrangement, and putting on uniforms. After the inspection, a flag was raised and the daily command read. Then came breakfast followed by a working service, i.e. each member fulfilling the assigned tasks. After lunch, which was around noon, there was free time. In the afternoon, each member had to attend lectures on premilitary education and exercises in the duration of two hours maximum. Then came dinner and taking down of the flag. Evening was the high point when youth gathered around the camp fire.²³³ Alongside to teach youth work ethics and discipline, it was also to “eliminate all the dark sides of city life, all the dark instincts and unhealthy

²²⁸ Z. Smrekar, “Mladež i disciplina,” [The Youth and Discipline] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1942, no. 5, 12.

²²⁹ “Stega u našim redovima,” [Discipline within Our Ranks] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1944, no. 5, 11.

²³⁰ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 55.

²³¹ *O taborovanju i logorovanju*, 52.

²³² Ibid, 52.

²³³ Ibid, 52-59.

phenomena”.²³⁴ Members of the camp published their camp journal, in which all the activities, daily schedule, news and other stories were listed. A special section was dedicated to humor.²³⁵ Morning and evening prayers were obligatory as was attending masses in the nearby church, if there was one.²³⁶ In order to achieve discipline, there were also punishments which ranged from oral and written reprimand, physical punishment in the form of exercises, running around the camp, and others. One could also be punished by being the last in line during breakfast, lunch, or dinner or also by the extension of the hours one was to spend as a guard. If a member broke rules and behaved inappropriately, there was also a possibility of expulsion from the camp.²³⁷



Figure 4.9. The Ustasha Youth members in the camp at Ozalj – raising of the mast.²³⁸

According to testimonies, camping was not always easy and the life in camp had two sides, an “unpleasant one and an especially colorful and lively one”.²³⁹ The

²³⁴ Ibid, 58.

²³⁵ Ibid, 60.

²³⁶ Ibid, 61.

²³⁷ Ibid, 62-63.

²³⁸ *O taborovanju i logorovanju*, 17.

same schedule was also described by a member of the Gjurgjevac youth camp Andrija Kropolčec, where in the evening hours youth was gathered to watch movies.²⁴⁰ Camps were organized more or less successfully throughout the regime period, with their number significantly decreasing after the mid-1943. We know that there were camps at Babski-Novaki in March 1942,²⁴¹ in Ozalj in August 1942,²⁴² in Varaždin near the Drava River in August 1942,²⁴³ or on Streljani in June 1942,²⁴⁴ or in Oštrc and near the Sava River,²⁴⁵ or the one in Široki Brijeg in Bosnia in July 1943.²⁴⁶

The youth dressed in uniform presented an additional argument on the uniformity of the movement and its idea of suppressing individuality and dissemination of an idea of equality and comradeship. The uniform was given the role of presenting the uniqueness and comradeship of the new youth, of all Croats, irrelevant of whether the youth was of rural or urban origins, rich or poor. Upon the establishment of the youth organization, members were to be dressed:

[...] in a modest ustasha uniform (without unnecessary colors, various funny marks and medals!), which shall unify a member from the center of the city with the one from the periphery, pupil with apprentice, peasant son with the inhabitant of the capital city.²⁴⁷

²³⁹ “Šatori uz rijeku – iz dnevnika jednog taboraša,” [Tents Near the River – From a Diary of One Camper] *Ustaška mladež*, September 1, 1942, no. 35, 5.

²⁴⁰ “Ustaška mladež radi – opis logora Gurajevac,” [The Ustasha Youth Works – Description of Gurajevac Camp] *Ustaška mladež*, November 16, 1941, no. 20, 16.

²⁴¹ “Logorovanje ustaške mladeži Babski-Novaki,” [Camping of the Ustasha Youth in Babski-Novaki] *Ustaška mladež*, March 8, 1942, no. 9, 16.

²⁴² “Taborovanje Ustaške mladeži na Ozlju,” [Camping of the Ustasha Youth in Ozalj] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 11, 1942.

²⁴³ DAV, GP – 0025/14457, “Gradskom poglavarstvu u Varaždinu,” [To the City Council of Varaždin] August 28, 1942.

²⁴⁴ “Taborovanje Ustaškoj Junaka – Poziv roditeljima i prijateljima Ustaške mladeži,” [Camping of the Ustasha Hero – A Call to Parents and Friends of the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatska riječ – Ustaški glas Požeške doline*, June 1, 1942, no. 8, 6.

²⁴⁵ “8 dana na Oštrcu i Savi,” [Eight days at Oštrc and Sava River] *Ustaška mladež*, August 9, 1942, no. 32, 9-10. It would be plausible to assume there were more camps organized on the local level. However, information on these is scarce and many local magazines and journals were lost and archival sources scattered, or nonexistent.

²⁴⁶ “Mostar – Taborovanje Ustaške mladeži,” [Mostar – Camping of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, August 1, 1943, no. 14, 15.

²⁴⁷ Spasoje Prcović, “Društvenni značaj Ustaške mladeži,” [Societal Meaning of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, September 7, 1941, no. 10, 11.

In July 1941 Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth sent a memo to *Ministarstvo za obrt* [Ministry of Crafts] and to the *Ministarstvo za obrt, veleobrt i trgovinu* [Ministry of Crafts and Trade] in which it was stated that, in order to conduct the tasks put forward by the establishment of the Ustasha Youth organization, it is “necessary to acquire various textile products for tents, working outfits, uniforms, towels, bed sheets, etc”.²⁴⁸ In order to fulfill all these needs, the Administrative Command had established contacts with Leinen-Industrie A.G. Jarsche in former Slovenia, now under the German directorate, with the purpose of immediately obtaining the materials needed through means of compensation.²⁴⁹



Figure 4.10. The front page of *Ustaška Uzdanica* showing a youth member dressed in uniform.²⁵⁰

As seen on cover of the first issue of the magazine *Ustaška Uzdanica*, the youngest male members were dressed in green/brown shirts, with green/brown shorts, a brown belt around their waist, boots, a red scarf wrapped around their neck, and a

²⁴⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199/822, “Ministarstvu Domobranstva i Ministarstvu za obrt, veleobrt i trgovinu”, July 25, 1941.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ *Ustaška Uzdanica*, October 1, 1941, no. 1.

blue cap with the letter U.²⁵¹ On the cover of the second issue of the same journal, we find a drawing of a young female Ustasha member dressed in a green/brown shirt, a green/brown skirt, a brown belt around her waist, shoes, a red scarf wrapped around her neck, and a blue cap with the letter U as well.²⁵²



Figure 4.11. Young girls dressed in uniforms.²⁵³

The same dress code was applied to older members of the organization, with the Ustasha Starčević Youth members wearing ties instead of scarves. Ustasha Youth sections differed according to different caps and scarves. The Ustasha Mainstay had red scarf tied around the neck, Ustasha Hero a blue scarf, and the Ustasha Starčević Youth was to replace their ties with a black scarf tied around the neck. Also, leaders wore insignia above their left pocket, indicating their membership to local county, commune, or district.²⁵⁴ The belt remained the same, and the only weapon allowed was a knife, which was worn only by the male members of the organization, and it

²⁵¹ See *Ustaška Uzdanica*, October 1, 1941, no. 1.

²⁵² *Ustaška Uzdanica*, October 15, 1941, no. 2.

²⁵³ *Ustaška Uzdanica*, May 15, 1942, no. 16.

²⁵⁴ "Prilog broju 5," [Appendix to Number 5] *Dužnostnik*, May 1944, no. 5.

came in two sizes. The bigger one was worn by the members of the Ustasha Starčević Youth, and the smaller by the members of Ustasha Hero.²⁵⁵

Uniforms were obligatory, especially during public gatherings, but also during the youth meetings and activities. As concluded from several documents, uniforms were also not free, but instead, each member had to obtain one, and pay for it, the same principle as in the Hitler Youth.²⁵⁶ At first, the requests for uniforms were directed to the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth.²⁵⁷ According to one document, this was important due to the fact that “officials travel each Sunday to various areas, mostly in their civilian clothes”.²⁵⁸ In one such document there is a special request to allow distribution of 25-30 uniforms’ “for the poorest that are in no position to pay for them”.²⁵⁹ There were problems obtaining these uniforms. For example, the Ustasha Youth organization from the city of Koprivnica complained in October 1941 that “instead of receiving twenty complete uniforms, they received 60 meters of cloth for their uniforms, 60 meters of linen for shirts, and 20 ties, trefoils and buttons”.²⁶⁰ Besides uniforms not being sent when ordered, another problem was with their prices and confusion about who was to pay for them and what the available options for payment were. As seen from the official document from October 1941, written by the district leader of Prigorje, there was still no official price list of the uniforms. According to the same document, there was also a problem of not knowing who gets the uniforms for free and who has to pay for them, as well as the question of “who pays for the uniforms of those members who are poor and cannot afford to pay

²⁵⁵ “Propisnik o nožu za pripadnike Muške Ustaške Mladeži,” [Regulation on the Knife for the Members of Male Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, August 1944, no. 8, 123.

²⁵⁶ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939*, 279.

²⁵⁷ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 197, “Molba za ustaške odore,” [A Request for the Ustasha Uniforms] September 22, 1941.

²⁵⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 197, “Upravnom Zapovjedništvu Ustaške mladeži,” [To the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth] September 25, 1941.

²⁵⁹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 197, “Molba za ustaške odore,” September 22, 1941.

²⁶⁰ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 196/190, “Logor Ustaške mladeži u Koprivnici,” [Commune of the Ustasha Youth in Koprivnica] October 8, 1941.

for them”.²⁶¹ Thus, while uniform was to serve as a “sign of work and value of individual within the community”,²⁶² and wearing it was to serve as a symbol of being “something more [...] completely different”,²⁶³ it is clear that obtaining them presented a major problem.

In March 1942, the Administrative Command issued the *Pravilnik o raspoređivanju odora po cijeloj Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatski* [Rulebook on Distribution of Uniforms across the Independent State of Croatia].²⁶⁴ The Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth remained the central office, where all inquiries and demands for uniforms were to be sent. While the textile factory *Velebit d.o.o.* was put in charge of obtaining all the materials needed for the production of the uniforms, and also for their distribution, it was only when the Administrative Command “submitted its warrant on distribution [...] where the exact amount of uniforms for male and female districts would be stated”, was *Velebit d.o.o.* allowed to produce and distribute uniforms.²⁶⁵ Youth districts were not allowed to purchase the uniforms on their own without the consent of the Administrative Command. It can be assumed that, due to the problems of obtaining the uniforms, some of the district leaders tried to obtain them directly through *Velebit d.o.o.* That this was probably the case, and that the Administrative Command did not agree with such an approach due to the inability to control this, can be seen from another *Pravilnik*, [Rulebook] which established a special sub-department within the Department for Social-Economic Care

²⁶¹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 197, “Cijene uniforme,” [Uniform Prices] October 11, 1941.

²⁶² “Djevojka u odori,” [A Lady in the Uniform] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1942, no. 5, 15.

²⁶³ “Mali ustaša,” [Little Ustasha] *Ustaška mladež*, August 31, 1941, no. 9, 16.

²⁶⁴ “Pravilnik o raspoređivanju odora po cijeloj Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj,” [Rulebook on Distribution of Uniforms across the Independent State of Croatia] *Dužnostnik*, March 1942, no. 1, 42-43.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 42-43.

in charge of obtaining uniforms.²⁶⁶ In it, it was clearly stated that uniforms can be obtained only from *Velebit d.o.o.* paid by cash, although there was also a possibility of paying by installment through the Administrative Command's Section for Social-Economic Care.²⁶⁷ It further stipulated the conditions which a member had to fulfill if he/she was to pay for the uniform in installments. A member had to pay 20% of the price in advance, his parents would have to agree to pay regularly all the installments, and a certificate which stated that his district approved him/her that he/she can obtain the uniform.²⁶⁸

Obtaining uniforms by payment certainly presented a financial burden for the parents. Considering the fact that the majority of population was rural at that time, and that the economy was mostly based on agricultural production, with exception of few urban centers, income of money was restricted, especially then when the economy was doing badly and war was a daily reality. Thus youth districts, besides obtaining limited amounts of uniforms for their poorest members from the Administrative Command, also used other means for obtaining them. One such way was to ask for the support of their local governments, as can be seen from a memo written by the Ustasha Youth District from the region of Zagorje. In their memo, stressing the importance of youth as the generation which shall replace those now in power and which shall take over the leadership of the state, they asked from their city mayor to show that:

[...] he shall not abandon this youth in these difficult times with regard to them obtaining their uniforms, but shall contribute financially in buying the uniforms for the Ustasha Youth.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ "Pravilnik o radu pododjskea za nabavu odora unutar Odjela za društvočno gospodarsku brigu u Upravnom Zapovjedništvu Ustaške mladeži," [Rulebook on the Work of Subsection for Obtainment of the Uniforms within the Section for Social-Economic Care in the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, March 1942, no. 1, 43-44.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 43.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 43.

²⁶⁹ DAV, GP – 0025/7416, "Gradsko poglavarstvo," [City Government] 1942, May 22, 1943.

In his July response, the city mayor approved financial help in the amount of 2 000 kuna.²⁷⁰ Having in mind that a “complete dressing in uniform of an individual costs 2 000 kuna”,²⁷¹ it would seem that local government decided to support its youth by helping them in obtaining only one uniform, certainly much less than the youth had hoped for. Another document stated that the price of a uniform for the Ustasha Mainstay branch was around 800 kuna.²⁷² Considering also that Administrative Command took a loan of 500 000 kuna in order to help obtain youth uniforms, which means that if the price of one uniform was 2 000 kuna, the Administrative Command decided to support in buying some 250 uniforms,²⁷³ the price of 2 000 kuna for one uniform seems to be too high. However, there is no document which would give the exact price of the uniform.

As seen, local government did support its youth organization by providing financial support for its various activities.²⁷⁴ It is clear that the regime was either unable, or even unwilling, to supply its youth with free uniforms, with the exception of its poorest members. However, nothing is to be found regarding the exact numbers of uniforms sent to the poorest members, or on the extent of how much the youth actually wore them. What is known is that during various parades, gatherings, and traveling abroad the youth was dressed in their uniforms, but it seems that when it comes to their everyday activities wearing them was more an exception than a rule. From a report published in *Dužnostnik* in December 1942, *Velebit d.o.o.* had

²⁷⁰ DAV, GP – 0025/7416, “Odluka,” [Decision] July 27, 1942.

²⁷¹ DAV, GP – 0025/7416/1952, “Gradsko poglavarstvo,” May 22, 1943.

²⁷² HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 203/744, “Svim taborima na području logora Hrvatski Karlovci,” [To all Counties on the Territory of Hrvatski Karlovac Commune] September 1, 1943.

²⁷³ “Pravilnik o radu pododsjeka za nabavu odora unutar Odjela za društveno gospodarsku brigu u Upravnom Zapovjedništvu Ustaške mladeži,” *Dužnostnik*, March 1942, no. 1, 44.

²⁷⁴ At the same time the city mayor supported financially the Ustasha Youth organization from the city of Varaždin for its educational purposes. See DAV, GP – 0025, “K spisu gradskog poglavarstva u Varaždinu br. 14457/1942,” [With the File of City Government in Varaždin Number 14457/1942] September 2, 1942.

numerous caps, badges, and scarves in its stock, which would either indicate that youth was not so eager in obtaining them or that the central administration thought that there would be a higher number of youth interested in buying them. What can be seen from this report is that, despite the presence of uniforms in stock, Administrative Command was not so eager in distributing them for free to its poorest members, most probably due to the fact that it would still have to pay for them.²⁷⁵



Figure 4.12. The Ustasha Youth members dressed in uniforms during one of their rallies.²⁷⁶

As shown, since school and family within the Ustasha regime were often regarded as remnants of the old, decadent system, it was the Ustasha Youth organization which took on itself the assignment of educating and upbringing the future leaders. Emphasis placed on education, work, sports, militarization, and the detachment of the youth from their everyday activities through camping as well as their uniformity served to exemplify them as the 'new' Croats – the Ustashes.

²⁷⁵ "Velebit d.d.," *Dužnostnik*, December, 1942, no. 10, 658-659.

²⁷⁶ *Ustaška Uzdanica*, May 15, 1942, no. 16.

Through all this, the idea was to install the feeling and belief that they were that generation through which “Croatia could be treated as an equal member of the national-socialist and fascist youth revolution”.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ “Ustaška mladež ne poznaje ravnodušnost,” [The Ustasha Youth Knows no Indifference] *Hrvatska straža – tjednik za katolički dom*, [Croatian Guard – Weekly for Catholic Home] February 8, 1942, no. 6, 3.

CHAPTER V: Charity and Sacrifice – Martyrs and the Cult of Youth

“Believing that firm and lasting freedom can be achieved only through bloodshed and sacrificing of their own lives, the youth of Croatia, with its characteristic élan, went into battle.”¹

Introduction

Within the Ustasha rhetoric on society and the youth especially, one of the main postulates was that every ‘proper’ Croat, male or female, should work for the benefit of the national community. Especially the youth was to become aware that he/she belonged to a wider national community and that his/her everyday activities needed be directed towards the benefit of the community as a whole. Achieving this was one of the main goals the Ustasha Youth organization. It was exactly through charity and voluntary work, as key components of the youth activities within the organization, that the idea and goals of Croats as one great national community was to be achieved and presented. Activities of the youth ranged from taking care of the wounded soldiers and civilians, visiting them in hospitals, providing practical assistance to the young girls and women, especially in the countryside, and providing for those in need. Special emphasis was placed upon the needs of the poor members of the Ustasha Youth. Such activities took various shapes and ranged from opening of public kitchens to provide warm meals, to the youth obtaining clothes and shoes, to gathering food provisions from citizens. However, as the security and economic

¹ Janko Skrbín, “Zadatci i djelovanje Ustaške mladeži,” [Assignments and Activities of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, March 1, 1943, no. 4, 4.

situation started to deteriorate since the mid-1942, it seems necessary to ask how successful such youth actions were in a state where food shortages had been felt even before the war started, and were especially prominent during the war. Also, the question of state regulation and confiscation must have caused dissatisfaction among the population and therefore their will to help and donate additional food to the Ustasha Youth members remains arguable.

Another aspect connected with this notion of a worthy individual as part of the national community was that of the youth's sacrifice. Already in the early 1930s, members of the Ustasha movement started creating their own pantheon of martyrs. Persons brought into this pantheon were those deemed suitable by the Ustasas, i.e. those willing to sacrifice everything, especially their lives, and die for the cause of the Croatian state and nation. Such sentiments were then transferred into the regime period, especially among the youth, as the new generation of Croats. The youth was also given its own pantheon of youth martyrs, within which courageous and merciless youth was presented as the essence of this 'new' Croat – the Ustasha. The youth inner desire to give up their lives for the *Poglavnik*, and therefore for the Independent State of Croatia, was hyperbolized within the Ustasha officials discourse as well as throughout the youth and other Ustasha publications. How truthful were such reports on the sacrifice and bravery of the youth members, and how much the youth actually accepted such views as something normal, is hard to determine. No question, the Ustasha Youth officials and propaganda machinery used this extensively in order to promote their idea of a 'new' Croat – the Ustasha, the one willing to sacrifice his/her life. However, while acts of youth bravery and courage in the time of war were certainly present, the question remains how much was all this due to the war

circumstances and how much was due to their proclaimed duty to safeguard with their lives the ideas and actions of the *Poglavnik* and his Ustashas.

5.1. *Young and Kind – The Ustasha Youth and the Role of Charity*

One of the key characteristic emphasized in the Ustasha discourse on decadence with regard to the interwar period, was that of an individual selfishness, laziness, and exploitation without any sense for community.² Therefore, besides helping peasants during summer, or building roads, renovating houses, and doing field work through Labor Service system, the youth was also expected to help those in need on an everyday basis, with the idea to:

[...] develop broad social activities [...] with which the Ustasha Youth will become the carrier of new social spirit in Croatia [...] and shall be imbued with one aim – the well-being of the entire Croatian nation.³

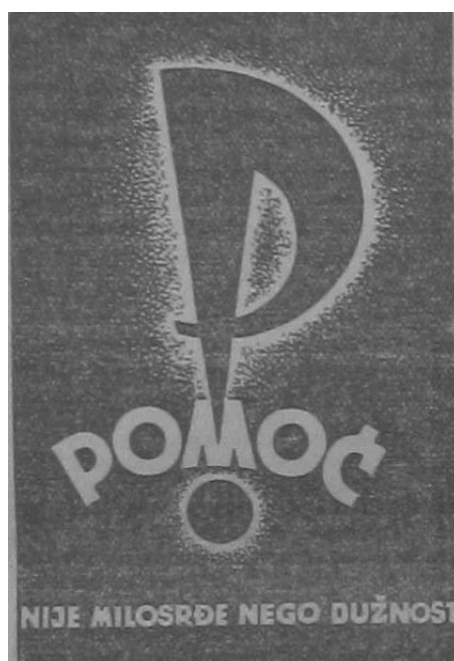


Figure 5.1. "Help is not Charity but Duty."⁴

² Ivan Oršanić, "Dragi dužnostnici i pripadnici Ustaške mladeži," [Dear Officials and Members of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1944, no. 10, 3, and R. Srnak, "Stvaralačka snaga Ustaške mladeži," [Creative Strength of the Ustasha Youth] *Mladost „Bilogora” – prilog Bilogore*, [Youth of "Bilogora" – Appendix to Bilogora] May 8, 1943, no. 2, 1.

³ Spasoje Prčić, "Društvenni značaj Ustaške mladeži," *Ustaška mladež*, September 7, 1941, no. 6, 11.

In September 1941, a Legal Decree on the establishment of the statewide organization of *Pomoć* [Help] was issued. Its main task was to “help the poor and those in need on the whole territory of the Independent State of Croatia, especially during winter months”.⁵ The youth was to play an active role within all this from the beginning. According to one article, even prior to the establishment of statewide institution of *Pomoć*, Circulars were issued with instructions for the youth on collection for winter relief which was to last “from 5 till 15 of November, publicly on streets, in private houses, public and state institutions”.⁶

The help gathered was to be distributed on December 6, the St. Nicholas Day, which is traditionally the day when children receive presents in their boots. In fact, most of the winter relief collection intended for the youth ended by December 6 and the goods gathered were distributed by the Ustasha Youth members on that day.⁷ In order for such activities to be successful, the youth displayed leaflets and placed ads in the city streets in which they “call upon the whole nation to help them in their noble endeavor”.⁸ These leaflets and ads were distributed across the state with the purpose of informing citizens about the youth activities as well as demonstrating expectation of all citizens to participate by various donations.⁹ As Vjekoslav Šišul, a law student, stated:

⁴ *Hrvatski narod*, November 26, 1941, no. 284, 6.

⁵ “ZAKONSKA ODREDBA o osnutku »Pomoći«,” [Legal Decree on the Establishment of »Help«] *Zbornik zakona i naredaba Nezavisne Države Hrvatske*, [Anthology of Law and Orders of the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Ministarstvo pravosuđa i bogoštovlja, 1941), October 15, 1941, 703-704.

⁶ “Zimska pomoć Ustaške mladeži,” [Winter Relief of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, September 9, 1941, no. 15, 3.

⁷ HDA, ZS – 907/102/68, “U 5 sati popodne u vatrogasnom domu,” [At 5am in the Firefighters House] 1941, “Tabor muške ustaške mladeži – Požega,” [County of Male Ustasha Youth - Požega] 1942.

⁸ HDA, ZS – 907/96/162, “Zimska pomoć Ustaške mladeži,” [The Ustasha Youth Winter Relief], 1941.

⁹ HDA, ZS – 907/96/2, “Ustaška mladež Velike Župe Gora Petrinja,” [The Ustasha Youth of the Grand Duchy of Petrinja] 1941; HDA, ZS – 907/96/128 “Gradjani,” [Citizens] 1941; HDA, ZS – 907/96/2 “Stožeri Ustaške Mladeži Velike Župe Vinodol i Prigorje u Senju,” [Districts of the Ustasha Youth of the Grand Duchy Vinodol and Prigorje in Senj], 1941.

Exactly we, the Ustasha Youth, the youth of Croatia's future, have to understand poverty and misery; we have to know how to righteously evaluate the value of work and money.¹⁰

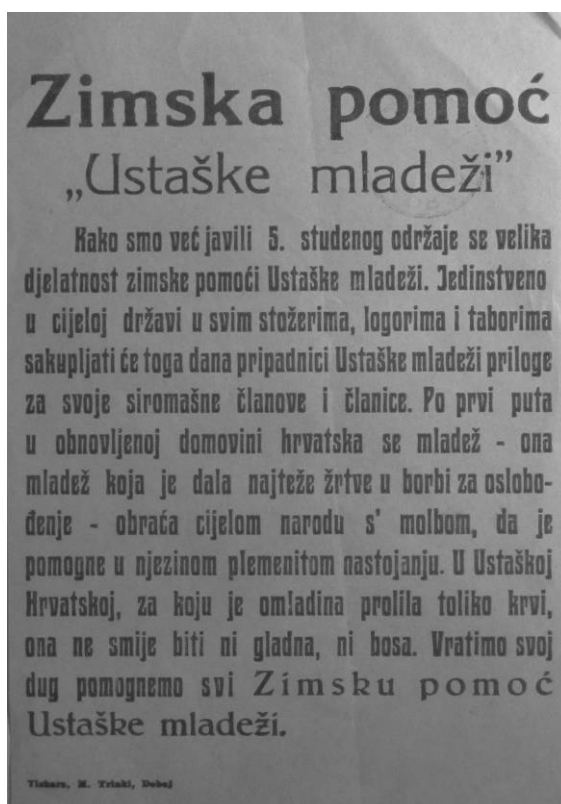


Figure 5.2. "The Winter Relief of the Ustasha Youth" – the Ustasha Youth leaflet calling the citizens to help them in collecting donations for their winter relief program.¹¹

As mentioned before, this idea of the nation as a whole, of the youth whose everyday work and actions now had the task of caring for the national community, found its reflection through collective welfare youth actions. As the same student noted:

The Ustasha movement is not just a political, but also a societal movement. It carries relentless demands for the final showdown with the amoral liberal-capitalist social-economic and political system.¹²

Furthermore, the youth was also engaged in helping their poorest members obtain clothes and food. For example, in the city of Otočac, in the city of Travnik in

¹⁰ Vjekoslav Šišul, "Ustaška mladež i društvo pitanja," *Ustaška mladež*, November 9, 1941, no. 15, 13.

¹¹ HDA, ZS – 907/96/162.

¹² Ibid, 13.

central Bosnia,¹³ and in the city of Dubrovnik,¹⁴ they gathered donations and managed to provide clothes and shoes for sixty of their members.¹⁵ Obtaining clothes and shoes presented serious financial problem for parents, and poverty was widespread in certain areas. A memo written by a Dubrovnik female Ustasha Youth branch stated that:

Since we have a significant number of poor members who are unable to obtain shoes for winter [...] we ask you, if possible, to send several pairs of shoes for our members with wooden or rubber soles, which can be obtained from the “Bata” factory without coupons.¹⁶

Although the Ustasha Youth Administrative Command distributed uniforms to its poorest youth members, as described in the previous chapter, this proved to be insufficient with an increasing number of poor children. This was especially the case in the southern regions of the Independent State of Croatia, where the security and economic situation worsened rapidly since mid-1942.

As the economic and social situation deteriorated, more and more youth actions were organized with the purpose of helping their colleagues in the southern regions. This time the help also included food, especially in more remote towns and villages. The youth was instructed to collect beans, corn, meat, fat and other food since the idea was that “we, who have plenty of food, who do not know what it means to be hungry, must not close our hearts to those who suffer”.¹⁷ However, even when food was collected or donated from factories or wealthier citizens, another problem occurred, that of transport. With the strengthening of the Partisan movement and their increased actions, transporting food across the Independent State of Croatia, especially

¹³ A., “Rad Ženske Ustaške mladeži u Travniku,” [The Work of Female Ustasha Youth in Travnik] *Ustaška mladež*, December 25, 1941, no. 21, 15.

¹⁴ “Zimska pomoć u Dubrovniku,” [Winter Relief in Dubrovnik] *Ustaška mladež*, February 8, 1942, no. 6, 16.

¹⁵ K.M., “Uspješan rad Ustaške mladeži u Otočcu,” [Successful Work of the Ustasha Youth in Otočac] *Ustaška mladež*, December 25, 1941, no. 21, 15.

¹⁶ DAD, UM – 44/119/43, “Stožeru Ženske Ustaške Mladeži,” [To the District of Female Youth] October 3, 1943.

¹⁷ “Skupljanje za Ustašku mladež,” [Collecting for the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatska riječ – Ustaški glas Požeške kotline*, March 13, 1943, no. 10, 3.

from northern to southern regions, became almost impossible. Several documents testify to the sabotage on railroad infrastructure.¹⁸ Food shortage within the Independent State of Croatia presented a serious problem since late 1942 onwards. According to Tomasevich, on several occasions in 1944, Nazi Germany had to organize shipments of grain and sugar in order to provide food for soldiers and the civilian population. Another major problem was that food distribution was unequal, with territories south of the Sava River suffering major food shortages.¹⁹ In order to salvage such a harsh situation, the Ustasha Youth organization encouraged their members to gather as much food as possible, as well as to organize public kitchens for their members. A memo sent by a female youth district leader of Vukovar, Kaja SeniĆ, is indicative of how food gathering was to occur and when. She stated that the youth need to be aware of the need to help their poorer members in order to show “that the Ustasha Youth is sensitive with regard to one of our hardest questions and problems, the social problem”.²⁰ Since the region of Slavonia was mostly agricultural, with numerous farms and cultivated lands, the idea was that “exactly we, from the richest areas have to work hardest on the development of unselfishness and social awareness towards others”.²¹ The instructions provided in this document, stated that the Ustasha Youth members were to go from house to house, farm to farm and “explain to people that they were doing a good and noble deed with this little help”.²² To achieve this

¹⁸ DAD, UM – 44/222/44, “Kuhinje za obćinu Kuna,” [Kitchens for the Community of Kuna] April 12, 1944, also HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 206/460, “Nabava živežnih namirnica za kuhinju ustaške mladeži tabora Siverić,” [Procurement of Food Provisions for the Ustasha Youth Kitchen of the Siverić County] October 27, 1942.

¹⁹ Jozo Tomasevich, *Rat i revolucija u Jugoslaviji: okupacija i kolaboracija, 1941-1945* [War and Revolution in Yugoslavia: Occupation and Collaboration, 1941-1945] (Zagreb: EPH, Novi Liber, 2010), 794-796.

²⁰ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 202/5, “OKRUŽNICA SVIMA TABORIMA NA PODRUČJU OVOG STOŽERA,” [Circular to all Counties on the Territory of this District] July 13, 1942.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

aim, they were asked to start collecting grains and beans already during the harvest, since then those donating would hardly feel the amount donated.²³

Food collected in such manner was to be distributed to the public kitchens of the Ustasha Youth, which were organized throughout, and especially in the areas south of the Sava River. The youth public kitchens were set up across the state. According to a newspaper report the Great County of Cetina had “15 of such kitchens, of which each feeds 250 people”.²⁴ Twenty three public kitchens were also opened in the territory of the Great County of Dubrava which “on a daily basis provided food for 1731 children [...] an average of meals distributed monthly was 35 809”.²⁵ The gravity of the food shortage and hunger demonstrates the fact that even hospitals often could not provide proper food necessary for wounded soldiers. According to a report from the town of Ogulin, in the Lika region, “members of the female Ustasha Youth took care to provide wounded with soup and milk”.²⁶ A telegram sent in 1942 by Nikola Jarišić, Commissioner of the Main Ustasha Headquarters in Bugojno to Andrija Artuković, Minister of Interior, attests to the growing problem of hunger, stating that residents “are hungry and there are cases of death resulting from hunger”.²⁷ He further explains that the situation became even more dangerous since for the past two months the population had been given only two kilograms of corn per person, and at least five wagons of food need to be sent immediately.²⁸ While the youth collected food on voluntary basis by appealing to the citizens to donate, the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “JAVNE KUHINJE USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Public Kitchens of the Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1942, no. 11, 15.

²⁵ “Iz naše organizacije – Dubrovnik – Društvenni rad Stožera muške Ustaške mladeži,” [From Our Organization – Dubrovnik – Societal Work of Male Ustasha Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, July 1, 1943, no. 12, 14.

²⁶ “Iz naših organizacija – Ogulin – Briga za naše ranjenike,” [From Our Organizations – Ogulin – Taking care for our Wounded] *Ustaška mladež*, March 1, 1943, no. 4, 17.

²⁷ HDA, Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova Nezavisne Države Hrvatske – MUP NDH – 233/Box no. 44/215, “Brzjavka gosp. doktoru Andriji Artukoviću,” [Telegram to Mister Doctor Andrija Artuković].

²⁸ Ibid.

state apparatus simultaneously introduced strict control over prices and food distribution.²⁹

Another activity through which the Ustashas intended to show the youths' social awareness was by visiting wounded soldiers. Caring for wounded showed another aspect of social engagement whereby the youth paid their gratitude for those fighting and protecting them. It also served as an encouragement to soldiers, showing that their sufferings had a higher goal and that people working behind the front lines were there for them. As mentioned before, caring for wounded soldiers was mostly expected of the female members of the Ustasha Youth, especially in the larger urban areas, as shown by various reports. Female youth was going into shops and individual houses, collecting groceries and supplies for wounded soldiers. This consisted of cigarettes, fruit, food, newspapers, and books which once collected were distributed to soldiers in need.³⁰ The youth also collected money,³¹ and baked cakes, as was the case in the city of Pakrac.³² Although such acts occurred throughout the year, Christmas holidays were especially important, and it was during this period that the youth was most engaged.³³ In May 1943, a Circular was issued in *Dužnostnik* stating that "the Ustasha Youth must not forget those wounded. Therefore all our counties shall take great care of the wounded, if they have not done so yet".³⁴ The youth was to form small groups visiting the wounded as well as to actively participate in all

²⁹ Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918-2008*, 272-277.

³⁰ "Skrb za nemoćne," [Concern for Helpless Ones] *Ustaška mladež*, March 15, 1942, no. 11, 15, also "Iz naših organizacija – Mostar," [From Our Organizations – Mostar] *Ustaška mladež*, April 10, 1944, no. 6, 32.

³¹ "Ilidža – Ustaška mladež pomaže ranjenike," [Ilidža – the Ustasha Youth is Helping the Wounded] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1943, no 2, 14.

³² "PAKRAC – posjet ranjenicima," [Pakrac – Visit to Wounded Ones] *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1943, no. 10, 14, also "Viesti ustaške mladeži," [News of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, September 10, 1943, no. 9, 15.

³³ J. P., "Iz naših organizacija – Bihać," [From Our Organizations - Bihać] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1942, no. 2, 17.

³⁴ "Svima stožerima, logorima i taborima Ustaške mladeži," *Dužnostnik*, May 1943, no. 5, 6.

manifestations and activities devoted to this cause.³⁵ All these undertakings, served the purpose of implementing the idea put forward by Blažeković in his book. When he elaborated on the need for a new generation, its conduct, activities, and the purpose of establishing a state-wide youth organization, he stated that:

Therefore, preparation of new generation for future life and for active work within its nation is a life's need, and the condition of advancement and survival of a nation [...] the upbringing of new generations is a public, national, and general issue.³⁶

As seen, the youth was to show sensitivity, understanding, gratitude and humility towards those in needs, and towards those safeguarding the Croatian state.

Unfortunately, it is hard to determine from available sources how much of these youth activities the citizens welcomed and supported. Ads printed and posted across cities, towns, and villages by the Ustasha Youth members stating: "It is the duty of citizens to help our work with contributions", certainly had some impact.³⁷ Citizens did help financially by donating money to the youth organization, either for its own need or for the purpose of food gathering or helping wounded citizens and soldiers. Each citizen who donated financially or helped in any other way was issued a thank you letter stating how much he/she donated and to what purpose.³⁸ Since such youth actions started even before the statewide organization of *Pomoć* was established, it can be assumed that welfare work was envisioned as one of the key elements within the youth education and upbringing. Also the idea that their children might receive food and clothes for free certainly had an impact on parents' decision to enroll their children into the Ustasha Youth. With the economic situation deteriorating rapidly in certain areas, by enrolling their children into the Ustasha Youth

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Blažeković, *Mladež i država*, 18.

³⁷ HDA, ZS – 907/96/128 "Gradjani", 1941.

³⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 200/332, "Zahvalnica," [Letter of Thanks] April 27, 1943.

organization parents hoped for and expected that this organization will be able to provide their children with clothes, food, and perhaps even a safe shelter during conflicts. Such expectations are evident from a letter written by a father of a young female Ustasha Youth member from the city of Dubrovnik. In his letter, the father complained that his daughter was promised to receive a pair of shoes as a Christmas gift from the Ustasha Youth organization. However, since she did not attend the scheduled youth event where distribution of clothes and shoes took place, she did not receive them. Thus, in his letter father asked whether she could get them now, since “I have six children, it is impossible for me to buy”.³⁹

5.2. *Immortal Youth – Sacrifice for the Homeland*

Sacrificing one’s life for a higher goal, for nation and state, presented one of the key aspects within the Ustasha ideology and practices. From the beginning, those joining the Ustasha movement had to be willing and ready to sacrifice their lives for this cause if needed. Those who did so were seen as heroes, as martyrs. Early on the Ustashes created their pantheon of martyrs. After the assassination of Toni Schlegel in March 1929, the police arrested several members of the *HSP*. Two of them, Matija Soldin and Marko Hranilović, were sentenced to death in 1931, while Stipe Javor was kept in prison, where he was tortured and eventually died in 1936. A description of his torture was first published in 1931, and was highlighted during the Ustasha regime,⁴⁰ for example in the text of Zvonimir Korenički in which he brought forward Javor’s description of tortures he endured while imprisoned. In his foreword, Korenički

³⁹ DAD, UM – 44, “Stožeru Ženske Ustaške Mladeži,” [To the District of Female Ustasha Youth] 1944.

⁴⁰ See Jareb, *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941*, 86-87, and Zvonimir Korenički, “Ličnost i žrtva Stipe Javora,” [Character and Sacrifice of Stipe Javor] *Ustaški godišnjak 1942* (Zagreb: Naklada Glavnog Ustaškog stana, 1942), 71-76.

argued that the Croatian nation always stood on the frontier of Europe and was always ready to sacrifice lives in order to safeguard it. He argued that Croatian history is a history of:

[...] a determined struggle, struggle for life and death, struggle which knows no yielding [...] the centuries-old struggle of Croatian people for their freedom and independence decorated their own temple of victims with the blood of their martyrs.⁴¹

He further argued that while sacrificing one's life for homeland was persistent throughout the Croatian history, it was exactly throughout "the last decades of Croatian fight, that the blood of martyrs has soaked the native soil".⁴² He finished the description of Javor's tortures by saying: "Stipe Javor is the nicest flower in the wreath of Croatian national martyrs."⁴³ Stories of such sacrifice continued during the regime, especially in the youth publications and through public performances which were emphasized through memorial services held during the regime period.⁴⁴ For example, *Ustaška mladež* brought an article entitled *Mladež u borbi za slobodu* [The Youth in the Fight for Freedom], in which the torture of Hranilović was described. The article stated that "today, the Ustasha graves speak best, blood has remained eternal [...] Yes, the eternal blood of our martyrs is our eternal connection with them".⁴⁵ Journalist Ivo Balentović stated in his article that:

Today's times asked for belligerent youth [...] today's times ask for great sacrifices in blood and graves [...] it asks from Croatian youth the sacrificing of the contemporary generation for Croatia.⁴⁶

When Mijo Babić, who executed Schlegel in 1929 and then joined the *Poglavnik* as one of the first Ustashas, died on July 3, 1941, his obituary stated:

⁴¹ Zvonimir Korenički, "Ličnost i žrtva Stipe Javora", 71.

⁴² Ibid, 71-72.

⁴³ Ibid, 75.

⁴⁴ HDA, MUP NDH – 223/Box no. 44/2857, "Ministarstvu unutrašnjih poslova," [To the Ministry of Internal Affairs] March 27, 1942.

⁴⁵ "Mladež u borbi za slobodu," [The Youth in the Fight for Freedom] *Ustaška mladež*, September 15, 1942, no. 36, 15.

⁴⁶ Ivo Balentović, "Mladež u borbi," [The Youth in Battle] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1943, no. 2, 3.

[...] the Ustasha, fighter follows its comrade to his grave in the Ustasha way, quietly and with dignity [...] struggling with this great pain of a lost comrade, while simultaneously envying him that he had the honor and luck to, in noble and honest loyalty to the Poglavnik in executing his Ustasha duty, die before him.⁴⁷

His death, although portrayed as a tremendous loss for the Ustashas, was seen as an exemplary model to which every Ustasha should give a vow that he/she shall work “as he worked, to conduct all that, which he, as a complete Ustasha had to and wanted to conduct”.⁴⁸ His funeral as well as those of other fallen Ustashas was used by the regime to strengthen the idea of martyrdom. For example, Mijo Babić’s coffin was presented throughout the Independent State of Croatia and was accompanied by the Ustasha youth members with torches lit.⁴⁹ When in December 1942 Jure Francetić, leader of the Black Legion, was killed by the pro-partisan peasants after an airplane crash, another contemporary Ustasha martyr was created. Francetić was described as:

[...] the greatest among the last martyrs and heroes [...] his sacrifice shall hover in front of the eyes of new generations leading them into new fights and new victories.⁵⁰

As these two examples show, and there were many other similar martyrdom stories in the Ustasha journals and propaganda materials, one’s blood and his/her inner will for sacrifice were the cornerstone of the Ustasha ideology. These came to represent something which every ‘real’ Croat – the Ustasha – had to accept as an integral part of his/her life. Thus every Ustasha had to become aware of the *Poglavnik* and of the older Ustashas generation’s sacrifices made for Croatian state and nation, and this awareness was to be demonstrated, if required, in sacrificing one’s life. According to Yeomans:

⁴⁷ “Ustaška smrt Mije Babića,” [The Ustasha Death of Mijo Babić] *Hrvatski radio list*, July 13, 1941, no. 4, 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ For a detailed description of this see Yeomans *Visions of Annihilation*, 319-320.

⁵⁰ Nikola Šabić, “Smisao i veličina žrtve – u spomen smrti Jure Francetića,” [The Meaning and the Greatness of Sacrifice – in Memory of Jure Francetić’s Death] *Hrvatski Krugoval*, April 4, 1943, no. 14, 4.

[...] martyrdom was presented as the mystical and essential source of the nation's power. Without the sacrifice of the martyrs, Ustasha theoreticians reasoned, an independent state would have been impossible: only through death was the nation reborn and regenerated.⁵¹

In a similar way a journalist Zdenko Savljak stated that:

Sacrifice for homeland has its enchantment, which invigorates and strengthens. In fact it pours hope and tells us that by our sacrifice, by the loss of our lives not all is doomed, but that on our sacrifices springs the luck of homeland, happiness of our inheritors, parents, brothers and sisters, daughters and sons of many future generations [...] Victims have sustained us for centuries, they are sustaining us today, and only they shall sustain us in the future.⁵²

The idea of sacrifice and one's inner will to give up his/her life if so required in order to safeguard the state and to secure the future for the coming generations was also to become an essential aspect within the Ustasha Youth organization and its members. As the first generation educated in the Ustasha spirit, according to their vision of future society and state, the youth was to find role-models within the Ustasha pantheon of martyrs. In a way, the youth was to embody the courage and deeds of Javor, Hranilović, Babić, Francetić and other Ustasha members who gave up their lives for the homeland. As Milivoj Karamarko stated in his article, youth had to become ready to "sacrifice themselves as a gift to one holy thought".⁵³

This idea that every Croat should be ready to sacrifice one's life for the homeland, for the Ustasha idea, and for the *Poglavnik*, can be traced in the songs intended for the youth. Even in the journals dedicated to the youngest of the Ustasha Youth members, poems depicting sacrifice and willingness to give up their young lives for something higher and mystical were present. For example, a 4th grade pupil, Antun Dobošević wrote a poem entitled *Mi* [We]:

Uzdanica mi smo
Hrvatskoga roda
Najmilija nam je

⁵¹ Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 312-313.

⁵² Zdenko Savljak, "Pojam žrtve," [The Notion of Sacrifice] *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1943, no. 10, 4.

⁵³ Milivoj Karamarko, "Raditi i stvarati," *Ustaška mladež*, August 3, 1941, no. 5, 5-6.

Njegova sloboda

Za Dom, dragi, mili
Hrvatski nam sveti
Pripravni smo uvijek
Ustaški umrijeti.⁵⁴

[Mainstay we are
Of the Croatian people
Dearest to us
Is the freedom
For Home, dear and lovable
Always we are ready
To die the Ustasha way]

Another poem, written by an Ustasha member, published in the same journal, and devoted to the youngest members stated:

Ja sam mladi Ustaša,
Domovine sin,
Volim našeg Poglavnika,
Sve Hrvate s njim

Ako treba život dati
A i krvcu liti,
Za Poglavnika i za Dom
Ja ću spreman biti.⁵⁵

[I am the young Ustasha
Son of the homeland
I love our *Poglavnik*
and all the Croats with him
Should I give my life
And to shed my blood
For the *Poglavnik* and for home
I shall be ready]

While poems intended for the youngest group, children from ages 7 to 11, emphasized the need to be ready and willing to give up their lives in future if necessary, poems dedicated to or written by the members of Ustasha Hero, ages 11 to 15, or Ustasha Starčević Youth, ages 15 to 21, already portrayed the loss of life and

⁵⁴ Antun Dobošević, "Mi," [We] *Ustaška uzdanica*, November 15, 1942, no. 6, 13.

⁵⁵ Ivica Krasnić, "Mladi ustaša," [Young Ustasha] *Ustaška Uzdanica*, June 1, 1943, no. 19, 14.

the youth's sacrifice for a higher goal. As a poem written by a high school pupil Andjelko Sabljak entitled *Nad grobom ustaše* [Over the Ustasha Grave] shows:

Kraj Zagreba na brdašcu
Mrtvih leži stan,
Mlad ustaša tu počiva
Sniva slatki san.

»Snivaj slatko, brate mili,
Snivaj slatki san,
Hrvatska je tvoja sretna,
Narod Slobodan.

Vjerna seka cvijećem kiti
Humak brata svog,
Tiho moli, da mu pokoj
Duši dade Bog.

Život svoj si položio
Za slobodu rodu svom,
Oči ti se zaklopile
Za Hrvatsku i za Dom!⁵⁶

[Next to Zagreb on a small hill
The apartment of the dead lies,
A young Ustasha lies there
Dreaming a sweet dream.

Dream sweetly dear brother,
Dream sweet dreams,
Your Croatia happy is
And people free.

A faithful sister with flowers decorates
Her brother's grave
Silently praying that
God rests his soul.

You gave your life
For the freedom of your people
Your eyes closed
For Croatia and for Home]

A poem titled *Zadnji ustaša* [The Last Ustasha] written by a member of Ustasha Hero from Hrvatska Mitrovica and published in the youth local papers stated:

⁵⁶ Andjelko Sabljak, "Nad grobom ustaše," [Over the Ustasha Grave] *Hrvatska Mladost – list za srednjoškolsku mladež*, February-March 1942, no. 6-7, 181.

Po suncu oružje nam blista
 I trube svud ori se zvuk
 Svi uvijek spremni smo braniti
 Naš ponosni, naš Hrvatski puk.

Brda i rijeke, gore i dole
 Hrvatske, naše, Ustaške će biti
 Za njih ćemo u svako doba
 Našu krv, mladu, sviježu liti.

I kad se oči ustaše zadnjeg sklope
 Kada nas pogodi smrtni grom,
 Ustaške usne prozborit će tada:
 “Za tebe Poglavniče i za Dom”!⁵⁷

[Under the Sun our weapons shine,
 And the trumpet's sound is heard,
 Always ready to defend,
 Our proud Croatian nation.

Mountains and rivers, hills and valleys,
 Croatian, ours, shall be Ustashi,
 At any time we shall for them
 Our young, fresh blood pour.

And when the last Ustasha's eyes are closed,
 When the deadly thunder strikes us,
 Ustasha lips shall utter then:
 “For you, *Poglavnik*, and for Home”!]

Zdravko Marušić, also a member of the Ustasha Hero from Hrvatska Mitrovica wrote a poem *Palim omladincima* [To the Fallen Youth] dedicated to his comrades where he described their sacrifice and loss of their lives with the following words:

O, mladi borci, pala je Vaša glava,
 Za stara naša hrvatska prava,
 Ali spomen na Vas uvijek živi,
 Pao je kao sjeme, na našoj njivi.

Iz njega, iz krvi Vaše
 Niknut će temelj budućnosti naše,
 A mi kličemo: “Vječna Vam, slava!”
 Jer zalud Vaša, nije pala glava.

Živote svoje položiste na oltar domovine,

⁵⁷ “ZADNJI USTAŠA,” [The Last Ustasha] *Zidne novine Ustaškog Junaka*, April 1943, no. 1.

Ljubav svoju dokazaste time.
 A lovor vienac kruni Vam glavu mladu,
 Jer Nezavisnost, Sloboda došle su na vladu.⁵⁸

[Oh, young fighters, whose heads have fallen,
 For our old Croatian rights,
 But memory of you lives forever,
 It fell like seed, on our field.

From the seed, from Your blood,
 The foundation of our future shall spring,
 And we cheer: "Eternal Glory to You!"
 'Cause your heads did not fall for nothing.

Your lives you laid on the altar of the homeland,
 Thus proving your love,
 And your young heads are laurel-crowned,
 For Independence, Freedom came to govern.]

Within all these listed poems we observe the occurrence of certain themes and notions: Homeland, the *Poglavnik*, the youth's courage and sacrifice of their lives for a higher cause. Using such poems, the youngest members were told that sacrificing their lives was their prime duty to their homeland. Members of the Ustasha Hero were instructed not only to be willing to give up their lives if asked, but also to be ready to go to battle and leave their lives on the battlefield if needed. Such vocabulary and ideas presented served the purpose of creating and establishing a certain youth 'behavioral norm' within their collective experience. According to Brkljačić such norm can have a twofold function: "normative (prescribing orientation points for acting) and formative (defining the group identity)".⁵⁹ In order to emphasize such expectations and create a perception of commonality among the youth from its earliest years, all the youth sections were instructed and presented with a notion of sacrifice for the *Poglavnik* and homeland, in an exalted manner. Death was to become an

⁵⁸ Zdravko Marušić, "PALIM OMLADINCIMA," [To the Fallen Youth] *Zidne novine Ustaškog Junaka*, May 1943, no. 3.

⁵⁹ Maja Brkljačić, "Popular Culture and Communist Ideology: Folk Epics in Tito's Yugoslavia," in John Lampe and Mark Mazower, *Ideologies and National identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest, New York: CEU press, 2004), 182.

essential part of an Ustasha life, a life whose purpose was to safeguard the Croatian nation and the homeland. In fact, it could be argued that the youth was presented with the notion of life as of secondary importance, preceded by the notion of death as primary with regard to the idea of safeguarding nation, homeland, and their *Poglavnik*. As professor Kolinski stated while addressing the youth upon their enrollment into the Ustasha Youth organization:

You work, create, live and die for Croatia because that is your duty. The one who expects a reward is neither a Croat nor Ustasha, because the demand of our new age is sacrifice and not profit.⁶⁰

The journalist Zlatko Gujić, when writing about the memory of fallen youth soldiers who “have shown the path to the Croatian youth” stated that:

Sacrificing their lives is the best guarantee to the youngest of Croatian generations’ happy and blessed future. In the fight and sacrifice for those who are yet to come, for future generations of the Croatian nation, the light of the Ustasha movement idea and its youth is to be found.⁶¹

As the war continued and the security situation deteriorated, so the role and purpose of the Ustasha Youth organization within the Ustasha discourse changed. While in the beginning the main purpose of the organization was the education of the ‘new’ Croats – the Ustashas, towards 1944 this dramatically changed and primacy was given to the role of sacrificing lives in order to safeguard and maintain the Ustasha state. In 1944 Skrbinić described this by saying that those who spilled their blood and gave their lives for the homeland are to be seen as examples and justification of the role and purposes for the existence of the Ustasha Youth organization. He further stated that the youth “must give itself [...] And even lives for the happiness and

⁶⁰ V. Kolinski, “Hrvatska mladeži! Hrvatskim mladićima povodom svrstavanja u redove ‘Ustaške mladeži’,” [Croatian Youth! To Croatian Youth on the Occasion of Alignment into the Ranks of the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatske novine – Glasilo hrvatskog Ustaškog pokreta za Veliku župu Gora – Sisak*, Christmas 1941, no. 47, 2.

⁶¹ Zlatko Gujić, “Borba i žrtva naše mladeži,” [The Fight and Sacrifice of Our Youth] *Bilogora – političko-prosvjetni tjednik – Bjelovar*, September 26, 1942, no. 69, 3.

greatness of our Croatia”.⁶² Although the discourse of sacrificing one’s life for the homeland was present from the outset, by the end of the regime it became the youth’s reality. The youth organization no longer emphasized the coming, new Ustasha generation, but the generation which now sacrifices their lives so that the coming generations could fulfill the role of regeneration initially assigned to them. This was clearly stated by a female youth official, Dolores Labaš, in 1944, when she talked about the dead youth officials, whose:

[...] graves scattered across Croatia speak stronger than any other proof about the determination of the Croatian youth to preserve its state under any cost necessary [...] By giving up their lives they wish to preserve the one more valuable – the life of Croatia.⁶³

In honoring their fallen comrades, the Ustasha Youth, besides organizing memorial services,⁶⁴ also established May 23 as the Day of the Ustasha Youth Victims.⁶⁵ This day was dedicated to the youth, with memorial services and various commemorations organized in their honor.⁶⁶ Besides memorial services commemorations, the youth also organized an Academia where lectures on “the meaning of sacrifice for the homeland” were explained and elaborated. This day was also chosen as the day on which the youth members were promoted from a lower section of the Ustasha Youth organization into the higher one. In addition, various sport competitions were organized especially competitions in track and field sports.⁶⁷ As seen from the above, the youth was supposed to be grateful and respectful not only

⁶² Janko Skrbin, “Naš prilog državi,” [Our Contribution to the State] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, August 1944, no. 8, 122.

⁶³ Dolores Labaš, “Vjerni svojim drugovima,” [Fateful to Our Comrades] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, May 1944, no. 12, 1.

⁶⁴ DAD, UM – 44, “Svečane zadušnice,” [Ceremonial Mass] May 20, 1943.

⁶⁵ HDA, ZS – 907/17/233, “Dan žrtava ustaške mladeži,” [The Day of the Ustasha Youth Victims] May 1944, also Ivan Oršanić, “Svima stožernicima, logornicima i tabornicima Ustaške mladeži,” *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, June 1943, no. 6, 3.

⁶⁶ “HRVATSKA MITROVICA – PROSLAVA DANA ŽRTAVA USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Hrvatska Mitrovica – Celebration of the Day of the Ustasha Youth Victims] *Ustaška mladež*, June 15, 1944, no. 11, 21.

⁶⁷ “PRIREDBE,” [Events] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, November 1942, no. 9, 508.

to the older generation of the Ustashas, but also to pay respect and to follow in the footsteps of their fallen comrades. Thus a pantheon of youth martyrs was created with the purpose of emphasizing the youth's prime role within the Ustasha regime. Youth members who lost their lives in battles were equaled with those of the older generation of the Ustasha martyrs who died during the initial movement phase; and gave their lives for the homeland and for the *Poglavnik*.

Such a propaganda campaign emphasized that, throughout history, Croats were ready to give up their lives for freedom and the well-being of Croatia. Since this freedom was now achieved, this task should become even more important and to an extent natural, in order to safeguard this freedom. As stated in an article: "In sacrifice of each individual Croat lie the happiness, salvation and eternity of our agonized, but eternally young nation."⁶⁸ The youth's awareness of sacrifice and death became ever present, and death was presented as an act of courage, an essence of the 'new' Croat – the Ustasha, an act which secures "future foundations of the Independent State of Croatia".⁶⁹ Luka Puljiz argued in his article that these sacrifices should be seen as "a contribution in suffering and pain for the redemption of a happy and safe future".⁷⁰ It comes to attention that, among the articles published in the youth journals and magazines, female youth martyrs were especially emphasized as examples of a real female Croat/Ustasha, future mother, and comrade. Although male sacrifices were present, there were only few of them such as that of Jozo Križanac, who, as stated in articles, was burned alive and that of Jakov Šimunović.⁷¹ Such discrepancy was connected with the already mentioned patriarchal gender division within the Ustasha

⁶⁸ Mirko Juraga, "Žrtvama se dolazi do pobjede – Put žrtve jest snaga ustaštva," [Through Victims Victory is Achieved – The Path of Victim is the Strength of Ustashism] *Ustaška mladež*, August 9, 1942, no. 31, 4.

⁶⁹ Ivona Latković, "Borba današnjice," [The Battle of Today] *Novo pokoljenje*, March 10, 1943, no. 3, 2.

⁷⁰ Luka Puljiz, "NAŠ PUT," [Our Path] *Novo Borovo*, August 27, 1943, no. 33, 1.

⁷¹ "Naše žrtve," [Our Victims] *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1943, no. 10, and I. Balentović, "Mladež u borbi," [The Youth in Battle] *Ustaška mladež*, February 1, 1943, no. 2, 3.

worldview, where men were seen as warriors and guardians of the state and thus their death was presented as one possibility from the outset due to their call and duty to fight and safeguard the Ustasha state. Women on the other hand, were mostly pictured within the family, doing charity and educational work, but those killed in action provided an additional role assigned to women, that of a warrior.

Throughout the regime period, five female members were presented as examples of the female Ustasha courage and their unquestionable belief in the Ustasha idea: Anđelka Šarić, Anka Šimunović, Dinka Peraica, Emilija Nagoda, and Jelena Šantić, whose characters were given “laureate status of greatest martyrs”.⁷² Each of these female members was given her heroic story, a story of suffering at the hands of enemies. Their stories of courage and sacrifice were used to emphasize the essence of every Ustasha, of something of an inner nature which every youth member and real Croat must possess. For example, a female youth journal *Novo pokoljenje* wrote about the description of alleged tortures of Anđelka Šarić, the commune leader of the Ustasha Starčević Youth section in the city of Prijedor. The description stated that she was “tortured in the most horrible way” with her father watching, and enemies carving the letter “U” on her chest and palm of her hands.⁷³ For Ustashes, she became the example of courage and the ideal-type of female Ustasha since “the most horrible tortures did not work [...] Beaten up, bloody, tortured by hunger and various sadistic methods, Andja was executed”.⁷⁴ Her courage was elevated to such a level that even those who captured her asked her to join their ranks since “we need such great

⁷² Ivona Latković, “Dužnostnice-mučenice Ustaške mladeži,” [Female Officials-Martyrs of the Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, November 1942, no. 9, 421.

⁷³ “Smrtovnica za Anđelku Šarić – logorna zapovjednica Starčevićeve mladeži – Prijedor,” [Obituary for Anđelka Šarić – Commune Commander of Starčević Youth – Prijedor] *Novo pokoljenje*, July 10, 1942, no. 4, 4.

⁷⁴ “Kako umire ustaškinja,” [How the Female Ustasha Dies] *Ustaška mladež*, July 12, 1942, no. 28, 12.

heroes”.⁷⁵ It is interesting to see how female courage was presented and what the expectation was. The same acts of courage and love for the homeland and the Ustasha ideas can also be found in the description of Jelena Šantić’s capture. An article describing this stated that she was captured by the Partisans while leaving the church, when she answered to the words of her enemies with the Ustasha salute *Spremni* [Ready].⁷⁶

Whether such acts really occurred is unknown. However, one thing becomes clear from all this; women/girls, besides being described as gentle, future wives and mothers were now given an additional characteristic, that of courage and sacrifice for their homeland. As stated by Ivona Latković: “Their sacrifice shall remain ever alive, always among us, memory of them shall remain a guideline in the work of the Ustasha Youth.”⁷⁷ There is no doubt that such statements and glorifications of youth martyrs had a clear propaganda purpose. However, notions of blood, sacrifice, courage, knightly acts, and the will to die for the Ustasha cause were present in the Ustasha Youth discourse from the outset. How much the youth member actually believed in all this remains undetermined. Nevertheless, it does inform us what was expected from the youth, and what sort of discourse the Ustasha Youth organization used in emphasizing its ideas and what this new generation was to gain from it. Such discourse asked from the youth to realize and come to terms with the fact that they had “sworn that their life goal is only to give their lives on the altar of their homeland as soon as possible”,⁷⁸ and that “the youth shall never give up, sacrifices shall encourage

⁷⁵ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁶ “Jelena Šantić,” *Novo pokoljenje*, November 10, 1943, no. 11, 4.

⁷⁷ Ivona Latković, “Dužnostnice-mučenice Ustaške mladeži,” *Dužnostnik – službeni list Ustaške mladeži*, November 1942, no. 9, 421.

⁷⁸ “Ustaški grobovi neugasive baklje,” [The Ustasha Graves as Never Dying Torches] *Ustaška mladež*, July 1, 1943, no. 12, 5.

it to fight again and again”.⁷⁹ Thus death was presented as an accomplishment of one’s existence, as seen from a statement on the death of Emilija Nagoda who “had won, she outdid herself in her death [...] because she lived and died in a battle – the Ustasha way”.⁸⁰ During the memorial service for female martyrs Oršanić stated:

Today we bow to the examples and role-models of female officials of the Ustasha youth who gave their young lives for the eternity of Croatia. Their death to us is our life, to us it is strength and impulse; on us lies the responsibility to endure and win completely.⁸¹

The main idea presented here was that of accomplishing one’s life task by death. By giving up their young lives, the youth was giving life to future generations and to the Ustasha state. Since the youth and its actions presented the key factor within the movement since its establishment in 1930s, the youth within the regime was to learn and follow these examples, especially since the state in which they now live, as stated by Ante Brkljačić, was built on “bones, blood and sacrifice of martyrs”.⁸² Therefore, it was expected from the youth to pay respect to those comrades who “with their shattered blood and loss of their young lives gave safe and eternal pledge of subsistence and happy future of Croatian nation”.⁸³ The role of sacrifice for a higher cause was best summarized by Luka Puljiz when he stated: “Those generations, who shall come on an immense trail of national life after us with rightful voices, ask for our own blood.”⁸⁴

⁷⁹ “Smrtovnica za Anđelku Šarić – logorna zapovjednica Starčevićeve mladeži – Prijedor,” *Novo pokoljenje*, July 10, 1942, no. 4, 4.

⁸⁰ “Osmrtica za Emiliju Nagodu – logornica Ženske Ustaške mladeži u Livnu,” [Death Certificate for Emilija Nagoda – Commune Commander of Female Ustasha Youth in Livno] *Novo pokoljenje*, September 10, 1942, no. 6, 3.

⁸¹ “Andrija Ilić, “Nadgrobnni preludij,” [Tombstone Prelude] *Novo pokoljenje*, November 10, 1942, no. 8, 4.

⁸² Ante Brkljačić, “Za našu izgradnju. Izgradnja ličnosti postizava se kontrolom dnevnoga života,” [For Our Building. By Building Personalities the Control of Everyday Life Can be Achieved] *Starčevićeva mladež*, January 1942, no. 2, 42.

⁸³ HDA, ZS – 907/17/233, “Dan žrtava ustaške mladeži,” May 1944, II, 3.

⁸⁴ Luka Puljiz, “Ustaška mladež temelj države,” *Novo Borovo*, February 11, 1944, no. 6, 1.

This idea can be summarized in a sense that, if the sacrifice given by the older Ustas has brought independence, the youth's sacrifice was now given the task to safeguard it for future generations.⁸⁵ The youth was to accept and embrace the notion of death as normal, with a broader meaning and purpose. As Miljenko Barbarić stated in his letter published in *Ustaška mladež*:

Mother, death is always with us and never separates from us...But be not afraid my old one! We are not afraid of it. We look it in the eyes indifferently and we laugh at it.⁸⁶

The same theme is encountered in the poems of Pero Kojaković, who died at Stalingrad at the age of 30, whose poems were published in 1943 to serve as examples of a courageous young Croat. In his poem *Pozdrav umirućega* [Greeting from the Dying One] written in January 1942, he writes:

Na strtoj travi od mnogieh borba
Leži teško ranjen junak mlad;
Zadnju snagu napinje, da može
Pogled bacit', gdje je rodni kraj

Potomak je hrvatskoga roda:
Grb na miški kazat će nam htjet';
Rana smrtna, ali lice mirno:
Narod njegov navik'o je mriet!⁸⁷

[On trampled grass, after many fights,
A young heavily-wounded hero lies;
With his last strength, turning to see
Where his birthplace lies.

From Croatian people he stems:
Showing us emblem on his arms,
With deadly wound, but calm face,
His people are used to die!]

⁸⁵ J. P., "Ustaški pokret i hrvatska mladež," *Ustaša – vjesnik Hrvatskog ustaškog revolucionarnog pokreta*, July 19, 1941, no. 4, 2.

⁸⁶ Miljenko Barbarić, "Pismo majci s bojišta," [A Letter to a Mother from the Battlefield] *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1944, no. 8, 7.

⁸⁷ Pero Kojaković, *Pjesme legionara* [Songs of a Legionary] (Dubrovnik: Logor mužke ustaške mladeži, 1943), 25.

In his poem *Ustajte!* [Rise Up] written in July 1941 he touched on the idea about the fight of the Ustashas and the need of the youth to join this fight and safeguard the established state against the enemies:

Ustajte, braćo, drugovi naši,
 Napried pod barjak svet!
 Što će nam kuća, rodbina, žena,
 Kad bi zavladao boljševik klet?

Evrope ciele vitezi mladi
 Prezreli su smrt
 Kulturu braneć', naciju svoju,
 Što dušman htio bi strt.

Potoci krvi već su potekli,
 Strašan bije se boj;
 I Hrvat sada borit' se mora
 Dajući udio svoj!

Uviek je Hrvat branio pravo,
 A zar da sada ne,
 Kada je stek'o državu svoju
 Slobodu, pravo i sve!?⁸⁸

[Rise up brothers, our comrades,
 Come under the holy flag!
 What use the house, relatives, wife
 If Bolshevik cursed would rule?

Young knights of whole Europe
 Have despised death
 Defending their culture, their nation,
 Which the enemy would like to destroy.

Rivers of blood have already flown,
 A tremendous battle is being fought,
 And Croat also now must fight,
 Giving his share to the cause.

Always have Croats defended the right,
 And should now not do the same,
 When his own state is here,
 Freedom, right, and everything!?!]

⁸⁸ Ibid, 11.

Another poem, *Vodja zove!* [The Leader Calls!] also written in July 1941, described the idea of Croats as ancient warriors, as people who were always willing to sacrifice their lives for their homeland and their Leader is brought forward with these words;

Vodja zove, moram poći:
Zar ću doma stat?
Dok se bori Domovina,
Zar ću mirno spat?

Slidili smo dosad Njega,
Zar da sada ne,
Kad je doš'o Domovini
I dao joj sve?

U tu borbu još me vuče
Pradjedova krv;
U žilama vri mi ona,
Nuka me k'o crv,

Da u borbi uztrajemo
Čvrsto kao zid.
Da ostanem kod kuće,
Bilo bi me stid.

Zato, zbogom, ženo moja,
Zbogom, otče moj!
Ja odlazim za naciju
Dati život svoj!⁸⁹

[The Leader calls, I must go:
How could I stay at home?
While homeland fights,
How could I sleep tight?

We have followed Him so far,
How could we not now,
When he came to the homeland
And gave her everything?

In this fight I am drawn,
By my great-grandfather's blood,
In my veins it boils,
Like a worm it nudges,

⁸⁹ Ibid, 12.

To persevere in fight,
As strong as a wall,
And to stay at home,
I would be ashamed.

Therefore, goodbye my wife,
Goodbye my father!
I leave for this nation
To give my life!]

In the same way as Kojaković praised and described death and sacrifice for the nation, for the homeland, and for the leader, so Nada Fogadić in her poem *U spomen Ustaškinji* [In Memory of Female Ustasha], dedicated to deceased female Ustasha members writes:

Da, tako se mre Ustaškinjo vrla
Žrtvo i primjeru svetih ideala,
Ponosni smo na te, mi suborci
Tvoji!
Bez suza i plača, kličemo Ti –
Hvala!
Dušmanin se digo da Ti satre krila
Ustaštva i pravde, al si bila jača,
Šutke im pokaza kako se umire
Sa prezirom smrti, bez suza i plača...

Ti ćeš vječno živjet u srcima našim
Jer što si imala Hrvatskoj si dala,
Zahvalna domaja i suborci tvoji
Odaju Ti počasti i vječiti – hvala!⁹⁰

[Yes, that is the way to die, you worthy Ustashi woman,
Victim and example of holy ideals,
Proud we are of you, we comrades of
Yours!
Without tears and crying, we cheer to You-
Thank you!
The Enemy has risen to shatter Your wings
of Ustashism and justice, but stronger you were,
Silently showing them how to die
With contempt towards death, without tears and cry...

In our hearts You shall live for eternity
For all you had you gave to Croatia,

⁹⁰ Nada Fogadić, "U spomen Ustaškinji," *Novo pokoljenje*, November 10, 1942, no. 8, 4.

Grateful homeland and your comrades
Pay their respect, and an eternal – Thank you!]

As mentioned, the Ustasha Youth members, the ‘new’ Ustashas, were to follow in the footsteps of the older generation Ustashas who, according to their discourse, gave up everything they had so that the Croatian youth could live in a free state. For the older generation of the Ustashas reasoning behind this was simple: if they were ready to sacrifice everything they had, including their lives for the idea of future state, then the youth was to pay their respects to them, their deeds, and achievements by sacrificing their lives for the continuation and preservation of the established state and for the future generations to come. Such ideas and expectations were further presented as something not specific to the Independent State of Croatia only, but rather as a that time Europe-wide reality. In order to connect the two, they embarked on the process of connecting their youth with other fascist youth organizations in that time Europe, which either stood as role-models or partners. In order to achieve this, they accentuated the youth’s transnational character and future role in this ‘new order’, “new Europe”. Also, for them, connection with other fascist youth organizations served as justification of their policies and ideas, but also as an example of the Ustasha Youth’s importance as being part of this “new Europe”, of being its carrier and defender.

CHAPTER VI: The Ustasha Youth and the “New Europe”

“Young nationalist nations have placed on their youth the ideal of duty [...] According to this principle the leaders of nationalistic nations have confined to their youths the task of biological, ethical and political regeneration of their nations.”¹

Introduction

This chapter investigates the relations which the Ustasha Youth organization established on an international level with other fascist youth organizations, especially with the Slovak Hlinka Youth. As mentioned, drawing widely on the organizational and structural principles of the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth, the Ustasha officials saw these two organizations as role-models according to which their youth organization was to be structured and organized. Due to these organizations' educational and organizational capacities and experiences, the Ustasha Youth officials saw it acceptable to transfer some of their institutional and practical components. They saw them as role-models concerning the education of future Ustasha Youth officials who were to spend their time at various schools and academies where they were trained by their experienced officials. All this had a twofold purpose. On the one side, it served to show that this ‘new order’ is the order of the European youth, based on similar youth policies and ideas. On the other, it served the purpose of transferring organizational and educational knowledge, especially segments deemed suitable for transferring and implementation in the Ustasha Youth organization. Both the Hitler

¹ Milivoj Karamarko, “Ideja mlade Europe – Uz Kongres europske mladeži u Beču,” [The Idea of Young Europe – Congress of European Youth in Vienna] *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske*, September 27, 1942, no. 31, 2.

Youth and Lictor Youth were seen as role-models, with the difference that ideas and practices of the Hitler Youth served more as an exemplary case of how the youth organization is structured, while connections established with the Lictor Youth were given a more institutionalized form. This was especially evident with regard to the Ustasha Youth members attending various courses at the Lictor Youth academies, but also in their leaders and officials providing a more practical help by visiting and conducting courses regarding the Ustasha Youth education, organization, and practical matters.

In order to further enhance and present their idea of this ‘new youth’ for the “new Europe”, the Ustasha officials emphasized the Ustasha Youth role on the international level. This served to present their importance within this established ‘new’ order, but also to present their youth policies as belonging to something bigger, to some future “new Europe” and new international community. Thus the Ustasha Youth emphasized not only the importance of the established contacts, but also the establishment of the *European Youth Alliance* in September 1942. They presented this *Alliance* as a confirmation of their youth policy and as something which clearly showed the importance and justification for the existence of such all-embracing, state/party controlled youth organization. It can also be argued that the Ustasha Youth officials used this as an opportunity to further enhance and strengthen their international connections, but also to become engaged and more present in fascist international policies through youth diplomacy. However, this soon proved to be a wishful thinking, since the security situation deteriorated rapidly, and the Ustasha Youth representatives did not attend the second congress held in Madrid in December 1942.

The majority of the interwar and Second World War fascist youth organizations were primarily structured and organized on the same principles as the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth. However, these were massive youth organizations, with well developed youth facilities, infrastructure, and massive membership. While they served as role-models, comparison with them presented a problem in a sense that no other fascist youth organization could claim to have achieved what these two had. Therefore, in order to justify and present their youth policies as a success, the Ustasha Youth found a more suitable partner with which they could compare and measure their youth organization as successful: the Slovak Hlinka Youth. Intensive mutual interactions between these two youth organizations provided a platform upon which the Ustasha Youth officials could justify and accentuate the success of their youth policies. Not only that, it seems that the Ustasha Youth officials also used this relation in positioning and presenting the Ustasha Youth no longer as a ‘pupil’, but rather as an equal partner, and in certain aspects also as a teacher and an educational model for the Hlinka Youth members. This was especially connected with the fact that members of the Hlinka Youth attended courses in the specially established Ustasha Youth schools, such as the one in the town of Borovo.

6.1. Interactions and Transfers

Fascist youth organizations had a common idea of organizing their youth within the ranks of state- or party-controlled and governed youth organizations. While some were established as mandatory from the beginning, such as the Ustasha Youth, others were first voluntary but became mandatory with time, such as the Hitler Youth

or Lictor Youth.² Another difference between these youth organizations was regarding minimum and maximum age requirement either for entering or for leaving their respected youth organizations. While in Nazi Germany the youth was incorporated from the age of 10, and in Fascist Italy from the age of 8, in that time Slovakia and Croatia it was obligatory for the youth to join from the age of 6 and 7, respectively. Another major difference is the year when they became adults and could no longer be part of the youth organization. While in Nazi Germany this age was 18, in Fascist Italy and the Independent State of Croatia it was 21, and in Slovakia 20.³

From the outset the Ustasha officials were engaged in the examination of the structure and practices of both the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth organizations. On July 13, 1941 an article entitled “ORGANIZACIJA RADNE SLUŽBE U NJEMAČKOJ” [Organization of Labor Service in Germany] appeared in *Hrvatski narod*. The article described how this service was introduced in June 1935 by Adolf Hitler and that it “starts upon leaving school and prior to the military service, that is, between ages 18 and 20”.⁴ The article translated the Clause 1 of the law on labor service in Nazi Germany and described its impact and benefit for the German society. It further elaborated on its territorial division, on the structure of this service and its leadership, which was conducted by the State Leader for Work from his office in Berlin, via various offices and branches. Three weeks later, Ferdo Halla, the Ustasha State Leader for Work gave an interview in *Hrvatski narod* in which he stated:

Recently I have spent a month and a half in Germany where I traveled more than 5 000 kilometers, and saw camps of the German Labor Service (Arbeitsdienst).

² Koch, *The Hitler Youth – Origins and Development, 1922-1945*, 111.

³ Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 149; Milla, *Hlinkova mládež, 1938-1945*, 69; Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich*, 37-38.

⁴ “ORGANIZACIJA RADNE SLUŽBE U NJEMAČKOJ,” [Organization of Labor Service in Germany] *Hrvatski narod*, July 13, 1941, no. 149, 11.

Once again I was convinced in the perfection of German organization and excellent educational effect of this institution among the German youth.⁵

When asked whether this same principle will be used and applied as such in the Ustasha state, he responded by saying yes, with a difference that:

[...] our State Honorary Labor Service will be organized according to our needs and our circumstances. For example, the duration will be one year [...] With regard to the technical side of organizing this service here we shall in many aspects be able to model ourselves on our great German neighbor.⁶

Another article from July 1941 emphasized the importance of Labor Service and sport, as one of its main components, in Nazi Germany. According to this report, presumably sent by a delegation headed by Ferdo Halla, it was stated that “who had the opportunity to even once see these exercises’, had to be amazed with the successes and abilities of female and male youth”.⁷ Admiration for what the Nazis were doing with regard to their youth culminated in August 1941 when the Ustasha Youth sent their representatives to attend the summer sport games which were being held in Breslau.⁸ Having in mind that the Ustasha Youth was established less than two months prior to the games, the main purpose of this visit was to see and become acquainted with “organizational offices, homes, sports halls and sport fields which for us are mere perfections”.⁹ Ustasha Youth representatives even participated in the games, and we know this from a newspaper article where it was stated that, in spite of the organizational issues, there shall be a “demonstration competition of the Ustasha youth in swimming, athletics, and archery”. Winners of this preliminary competition were to attend a special camp in Zagreb where they would be preparing for their “first

⁵ “DRŽAVNA RADNA ČASTNA RADNA SLUŽBA UJEDINITI ĆE HRVATSKU MLADEŽ U RADU I SLUŽBI NARODA,” [State Labor Service will Unite Croatian Youth in Work and Service Towards its People] *Hrvatski narod*, August 2, 194, no. 169, 6.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “ŠPORTSKI ODGOJ NJEMAČKE MLADOSTI,” [Sport Education of German Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, July 24, 1941, no. 160, 5.

⁸ Milla, *Hlinkova Mladež*: 117. The games were held from 29 August till 3 September.

⁹ Janko Skrbín, “Uz sportske igre u Breslavi,” [With Sport Games in Breslau] *Ustaška mladež*, September 14, 1941, no. 7.

performance ever”.¹⁰ The significance given to this is best seen from the fact that the youth was led by their leader Ivan Oršanić.¹¹ The reason for Oršanić’s visit was to establish firmer and closer relations with the representatives of the Hitler Youth organization, but also to position the Ustasha Youth organization on the map of fascist youth organizations. That the purpose of this visit was more than mere participation as can be concluded from the presence of Fabijan Knežević, leader for physical training of the Ustasha Youth, Janko Skrbin, Head of the Propaganda Office, Josip Blažek, Head of the Social-Economic Office, Mira Dugački, leader of the female section of the Ustasha Youth, and other officials. The presence of the Ustasha Youth delegation, which numbered altogether a delegation of twelve high ranking youth officials, showed that this visit was given bigger importance than the youth’s sport participation. In fact, it can be argued that this visit had a more practical purpose of the Ustasha Youth officials becoming acquainted with the Hitler Youth organization, but also a political and diplomatic one in establishing firmer and closer contacts and relations between the two youth organizations. According to the same article, Ivan Oršanić and members of his delegation were invited by the Hitler Youth to visit Berlin after Breslau “with the purpose of deepening friendly relations between the German and Croatian youth”.¹² Hitler Youth members and their activities were seen as something to which the Ustasha Youth members should aspire and take them as their models. One article described the activities of the Hitler Youth in the war context stating that “youth immediately applied for voluntary [military] service. First in line

¹⁰ “Nastup ustaške mladeži u Njemačkoj,” [Performance of the Ustasha Youth in Germany] *Ustaška mladež*, August 17, 1941, no. 7, 46, and “Sudjelovanje Hrvatske Ustaške mladeži na športskom tjednu u Breslau,” [Participation of the Croatian Ustasha Youth at the Sports Week in Breslau] *Novo Borovo*, August 1, 1942, no. 3, 3.

¹¹ “Hrvatska »Ustaška mladež« stigla u Breslau,” [Croatian Ustasha Youth Arrived at Breslau] *Hrvatski narod*, August 20, 1941, no. 195, 5.

¹² Ibid.

were the leaders and members of the Hitler Youth”.¹³ The article further emphasized the importance of youth education within the Hitler Youth organization since:

[...] the circumstances that this young people have lived under the discipline of self-education and consciousness of responsibility made them capable to take into their own hands and further continue the deed of youth upbringing.¹⁴

The same article also described the importance of the youth during harvest, their help in hospitals, the civil protection service and other youth activities which all show that:

When fathers of these children return from war, they will be convinced that their children had replaced them with great dignity in jobs they were previously considered unable to perform.¹⁵

After this first international appearance in Breslau, the Ustasha Youth officials continued their activities on an international level. For example, while some members of the Breslau delegation left for Berlin, six of them, headed by Juraj Haraminčić, commander of the Ustasha Youth Labor Service, visited Slovakia where they were to become acquainted with the “work and life of youth organization »Hlinka Youth«”.¹⁶ The visit to Nazi Germany and Berlin, as well as participation at the Hitler Youth sport competition in Breslau, did not produce, as to my knowledge, any official agreement which would further elaborate on the cooperation between the two youth organizations. In fact, it seems that when it comes to the youth officials’ education and training, it was the Lictor Youth which was considered as a more suitable model for the Ustasha Youth members and the officials’ education and training.

On July 3, 1941, nine days before the official establishment of the Ustasha Youth organization, an article entitled *ORGANIZACIJA TALIJANSKE LIKTORSKE*

¹³ “HITLEROVA OMLADINA ZAMJENJUJE KOD KUĆE STARIJE; KOJI SE BORE ZA DOMOVINU,” [Hitler Youth is Replacing their Elders at Home, who are Fighting for their Homeland] *Hrvatski narod*, November 20, 1941, no. 204, 14.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Of the relations between the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth organizations I will talk more in the following segments of this chapter.

OMLADINE [The Organization of the Italian Lictor Youth] appeared in *Hrvatski narod*. In it was stated that this organization:

[...] has a task to educate the youth physically, spiritually, and intellectually, from gentle years to their masculinity and to provide physical and moral help to all its members.¹⁷

The article further stated that the Lictor Youth abandoned the old comprehension of youth educational methods and that through premilitary education, physical exercises, education of the youth officials, health activities, institutions of child care and other activities it shows that “fascism, by coordinating both physical and spiritual education, can rely on its youth”.¹⁸ Admiration for Fascist youth policies regarding education is evident in an article published in Croatian and written by Giuseppe Bottai, in which he described his idea of educational reform as presented in his *Carta della Scuola*.¹⁹

The high-point of official connections and cooperation between the Lictor Youth and the Ustasha Youth organization came in September/October 1941. On September 17, 1941 an *Agreement* was signed between the Lictor Youth and the Ustasha Youth organization and on October 3, 1941 the Ustasha Youth delegation, led by Ivan Oršanić went on a return visit to Fascist Italy where they visited cities of Rome, Venice, Milan, Bologna and others.²⁰ The *Agreement* was signed by Eugenio Coeleschi, Leader of the National Fascist Party Delegation at the Ustasha movement, Lictor Youth representative Salvatore de Sole, and Ivan Oršanić. The *Agreement* emphasized the need for closer youth cooperation based on the presumption of:

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Osnovna načela fašističke reforme škole,” [The Basic Principles of the Fascist School Reform] *Hrvatski narod*, August 28, 1941, no. 195, 3.

²⁰ “SUTRA ODLAZI U ITALIJU IZASLANSTVO USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Tomorrow the Ustasha Youth Delegation Leaves for Italy] *Hrvatski narod*, October 3, 1941, no. 231, 5; “IZASLANSTVO USTAŠKE MLADEŽI U RIMU,” [The Ustasha Youth Delegation in Rome] *Hrvatski narod*, October 6, 1941, no. 234, 1.

[...] complete compatability of spiritual views of Fascist and Ustasha revolutions and the purpose of these movements within the framework of a new order; [r]ecognizing consensually the need for close cooperation between the Italian and Croatian people in a new world period [...] comprehending, that such reciprocity for the building of new Europe can best be achieved between the youth of both countries and that therefore youth cooperation needs to be given practical, constant and real content.²¹

The idea was that both the Fascist and the Ustasha revolution share the same ideas with regard to their nations' past and future, and that such ideas can only be achieved through their youth organizations. Further on, in order to create this 'new' order their youth organizations need to cooperate more closely and be educated on the similar, if not the same, principles of national wellbeing. The *Agreement* further stipulated mutual efforts for the building of the "new Europe" and exchange of thoughts. In the document, the Lictor Youth was presented as a model for the organizational principle in establishing the Ustasha Youth, and was to provide the support to the Ustasha Youth.²² In fact, the Clause 2 of the *Agreement* stated:

The Ustasha Youth organization shall be happy that it can take the deep experience of the G.I.L. as an example for its organizational activities, which just started, and the G.I.L. shall be happy to put all its strength and experience at the disposal of the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth.²³

Furthermore, the Lictor Youth put its institutes and academies at the disposal of the Ustasha Youth free of charge so that the Ustasha Youth members could "take regular courses on organizational and official questions, and be especially trained in physical education".²⁴ The Ustasha Youth members were allowed to attend courses of various durations, and Lictor Youth was to provide the Ustasha Youth with a certain number of its female and male instructors for the purpose of educating Ustasha Youth

²¹ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 59/2222, "UGOVOR IZMEDJU G.I.L. I HRVATSKE MLADEŽI," [The Agreement between the G.I.L. and Croatian Youth] September 17, 1941. See also "SURADNJA HRVATSKE I TALIJANSKE MLADEŽI," [Cooperation between Croatian and Italian Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, September 19, 1941, no. 217, 2.

²² Ibid, and "Suradnja hrvatske i talijanske mladeži," *Hrvatski narod*, September 19, 1941, no. 217, 2.

²³ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 59/2222, "UGOVOR IZMEDJU G.I.L. I HRVATSKE MLADEŽI".

²⁴ Ibid.

officials. That the Lictor Youth actually did serve as a model and as an organization which not only helped to educate the Ustasha Youth officials, but also in providing practical assistance in the youth education, as stated by the Clause 5 of the *Agreement*, is best seen from a summer colony established in Zagreb in July 1942. The colony was organized for members of the Ustasha Mainstay and was based “on the model of summer colonies of the Italian Lictor Youth (GIL)”.²⁵ Not only was the colony organized according to that in Fascist Italy, but was also headed by the Lictor Youth female official Maria Furci Lanni.²⁶ The colony lasted for three weeks, during which courses on how to organize and run such a youth colony were held for female youth officials.

As mentioned, one of the provisions of this *Agreement* was also to send Ustasha Youth members to Fascist Italy in order to attend various courses and trainings provided by the Lictor Youth. In December 1941 thirty-seven male members of the Ustasha Youth were sent to Fascist Italy to gain training at the Lictor Youth Academy. They were to gain knowledge from physical training and exercises so that they become skilful and trained “to take over the physical education of the Ustasha Youth”.²⁷ In one of its clauses, the *Agreement* stipulated that in the summer of next year “a certain number of the Ustasha Youth shall be welcomed as guests in the summer camps of the G.I.L.”.²⁸ In August 1942 Ustasha Youth members traveled to Italy, where they spent their time at the camp in Forli with the Lictor Youth members.²⁹ Also, there were one hundred members, fifty boys and fifty girls attending

²⁵ “Ljetna kolonija Ustaške mladeži u Zagrebu,” [Summer Colony of the Ustasha Youth in Zagreb] *Nova Hrvatska*, July 22, 1942, no. 169, 3.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Ustaška mladež na Academia della GIL,” [The Ustasha Youth at the Academia della GIL] *Hrvatski narod*, December 3, 1941, no. 291, 3.

²⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 59/2222, “UGOVOR IZMEDJU G.I.L. I HRVATSKE MLADEŽI”.

²⁹ *Nova Hrvatska*, August 4, 1942, no. 180, 3.

courses at the Lictor Youth *Academy* in Rome.³⁰ This was a two-month course during which they attended courses on Fascist culture, physical education, organizational principles, health, singing, and others. At the end of their course, female and male Ustasha Youth members were taken by their Fascist peers on a twenty-day journey across Italy.³¹ This delegation was led by Dragutin Gjurić, Ustasha Youth commune leader from the city of Požega.³² Two months later, in October 1942, another group of Ustasha Youth members went to Italy. The purpose of their education was to “to become acquainted with the work and organization of the Italian Lictor Youth, as well as to exchange mutual thoughts and observations”.³³ Another major point of the *Agreement* was that the Lictor Youth was to put at the disposal of the Ustasha Youth its various books and publications and especially that it will “take care to print and distribute for free in Croatia, in all centers of the Ustasha Youth, the Croatian edition of a journal named “Il ‘Ballila’”.³⁴

There were two major differences in relations established with the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth. One was that, while the Hitler Youth served also as a model, this was more confined towards reception and transfer of the basic ideas and institutions connected with the education and activities of Hitler Youth members. It was more as an observational transfer of certain practices and institutional arrangements as developed by Nazi Germany and its youth organization. On the other

³⁰ “Vijesti Ustaške mladeži,” [News of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 15, and HDA, ZS – 907/105/46, “Stožer Ženske Ustaške mladeži u Varaždinu,” [District of the Female Ustasha Youth in Varaždin], also “USTAŠKA MLADEŽ U ITALIJI,” [The Ustasha Youth in Italy] *Hrvatski narod*, September, 1942, no. 521, 3.

³¹ “ŽENSKA USTAŠKA MLADEŽ NA POVRATKU IZ ITALIJE,” [Female Ustasha Youth on its Way back from Italy] *Hrvatski narod*, September 29, 1942, no. 228, 3.

³² For more on the description of this trip and memory of it see Yeomans, “The Adventures of an ustasha Youth Leader in the Adriatic: Transnational Fascism and the Travel Polemics of Dragutin Djurić,” *Journal of Tourism History* vol. 6, no. 2-3, (2015): 158-173.

³³ Ibid. and also Slavica Auguštin, “Ljetno naselje Ustaške Mladeži,” [Summer Colony of the Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, September 10, 1942, no. 6, 10.

³⁴ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 59/2222, “UGOVOR IZMEDJU G.I.L. I HRVATSKE MLADEŽI”.

hand, relations with the Fascist Lictor Youth were institutionalized through the *Agreement* which defined the relations and mutual exchanges between the Lictor Youth and the Ustasha Youth organization. The second major difference was regarding the youth education. While Nazi Germany was seen as an exemplary case in youth organization and education, it was more confined towards their description and admiration than practical usage.³⁵ On the other hand, as shown, the Lictor Youth served as a practical model in educating and training of the future Ustasha Youth officials. Thus relation between the Lictor Youth and the Ustasha Youth was given a more practical co-operation in a sense of the former providing organizational and educational assistance and support. This was also emphasized by the Ustasha newspapers and magazines, which stated that the Ustasha Youth was cooperating with other youth organizations “of friendly European nations and allied nations, and especially cordial co-operation exists between the Ustasha Youth and the youth of Mussolini’s Fascist Italy”.³⁶

Newspaper reports, describing the Ustasha Youth connections with these two organizations, were mostly confined to the aspects of the Ustasha Youth education and training, especially with regard to Fascist Italy. This should not come as a surprise since these two massive youth organizations were first and foremost seen as role-models and their youth institutions as places where future Ustasha Youth officials were to gain training and knowledge on how to organize, educate, and run their respective youth sections.

³⁵ See for example a description of a trip taken by Professor Aleksandar Seitz in which he described his admiration for the Adolf Hitler Schools and their role in youth education “ŠKOLE ADOLFA HITLERA,” [The Adolf Hitler Schools] *Hrvatski narod*, April 20, 1943, no. 712, 3.

³⁶ “SURADNJA USTAŠKE MLADEŽI,” [Co-operation of the Ustasha Youth] *Hrvatski narod*, January 1, 1943, no. 621, 3.

6.2. 'Equality' Among Future Leaders – The European Youth Alliance

A culmination of the Ustasha Youth's international participation came during the summer of 1942. First in line of the two events was a cultural meeting of 'new' European youth, Weimar – Florence, which took place from June 18 to July 3, 1942.³⁷ The purpose of this cultural meeting, according to a newspaper article was "that this young generation meets each other and comes to love each other".³⁸ It was during this manifestation that the decision to hold a European fascist youth meeting came to light.³⁹ In September 1942, with the participation of the Ustasha Youth delegation, the *European Youth Alliance* was established in Vienna.⁴⁰ This meeting was organized by Arthur Axmann, leader of the Hitler Youth, Baldur von Schirach, former leader of the Hitler Youth and at that time *Gauleiter* of Vienna, and the Italian youth leader, Aldo Vidussoni.⁴¹ Youth representatives of fourteen countries attended the meeting. Hitler Youth leader Arthur Axmann became president and Fascist youth leader, Vidussoni, the Head Secretary of the Alliance.⁴² The *Alliance* comprised several working communities, each run by a member of a different youth organization, such as for example the *Community for Sport* headed by Reich Sports Leader

³⁷ Ib, "Velika kulturna manifestacija europske mladeži u Weimaru i Florenciji," [The Great Cultural Manifestation of European Youth in Weimar and Florence] *Suradnja*, [Cooperation] September 28, 1942, no. 18, 12-15.

³⁸ Zdenka Bogner, "Ustaška mladež u Weimaru," [The Ustasha Youth in Weimar] *Novo pokoljenje*, August 10, 1942, no. 5, 5.

³⁹ "Zajednica europske mladeži," [Community of European Youth] *Ustaška mladež*, July 19, 1942, no. 29, 2, and "STVARA SE SAVEZ EUROPSKE MLADEŽI," [The European Youth Alliance is Being Formed] *Hrvatski narod*, June 23, 1942, no. 144, 5.

⁴⁰ "STVARANJE SAVEZA EUROPSKE MLADEŽI," [Formation of the European Youth Alliance] *Hrvatski narod*, September 15, 1942, no. 216, 2.

⁴¹ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 235, and Milla, *Hlinkova mládež*, 123-124.

⁴² Wayne H. Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany, Collaboration in the New Order* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 145-146; Milla, *Hlinkova mládež*, 124, and Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 235. Present were the representatives of the Italian *GIL*, the German *Hitlerjugend*, the Spanish *Frente de Juventudes*, the Flemish *Vlaamsche Jeugd*, the Wallon *Rexist Youth*, the Danish *National-Socialist Youth*, the Dutch *National-Socialist Youth*, the Norwegian *Nasjonal-Samlig Youth*, the Finnish Youth movement, The Bulgarian *Branik*, The Rumanian *State Youth*, the Croatian *Ustaška mladež*, the Slovak *Hlinkova mládež*, The Hungarian *Levente*, and Japanese youth leaders.

Tschamer und Osten, or the *Community for Official Youth Upbringing*, led by Oršanić.⁴³



Figure 6.1. Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth, Ivan Oršanić, during his speech in Vienna.⁴⁴

While the Ustasha press followed this event at great length, the Nazi press was less eager in emphasizing its relevance and role. According to Koch “the German press gave it very little coverage, while in Axis countries and those occupied by Germany it received the treatment of a major news item”.⁴⁵ The Ustasha press gave it coverage because it was considered that this conference was a clear sign that the youth organizations are “led by the ideal of a new, just order, of firm national community which shall secure the life worthy of its past and its national rights to each nation”.⁴⁶ During the meeting, Oršanić gave a speech in which he stated that this *Alliance* guarantees the success of European revolution in spite of the existing differences among nations and their movements. He also emphasized that:

⁴³ “Savez europske mladeži,” *Nova Hrvatska*, September 16, 1942, no. 217, 2.

⁴⁴ *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 5.

⁴⁵ Koch, *The Hitler Youth*, 235.

⁴⁶ Ivona Latković, “Europska mladež na putu stvaranja,” [The European Youth on the Path of Creation] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 6.

[...] the Ustasha Youth is a generation of the Croatian state, a generation of a new order, a generation of European revolution and it is with joy that it marches into alliance with European youth, because it shall find itself in company with those who are fighting for the same goals, and who think alike.⁴⁷

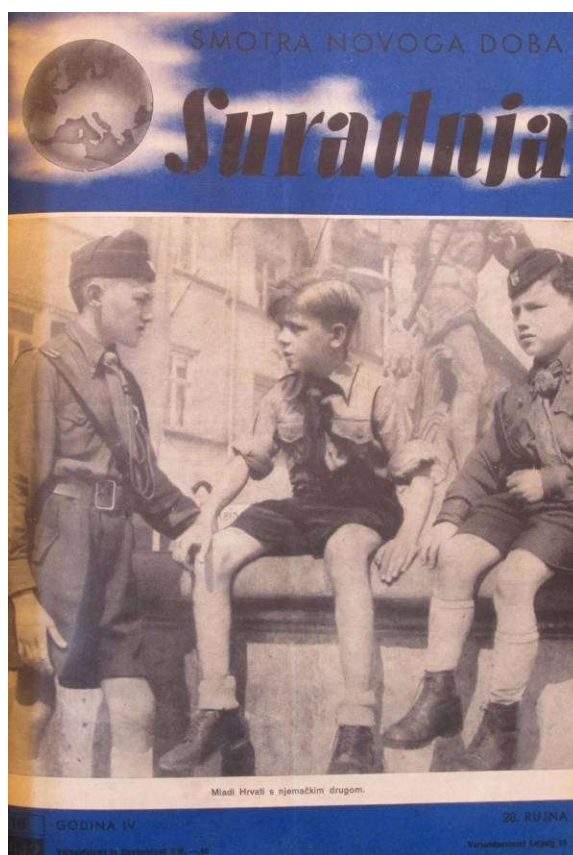


Figure 6.2. The front page of *Suradnja* showing the Ustasha Youth members with their Hitler Youth peer.⁴⁸

Milivoj Karamarko stated that the *Alliance* had a historical meaning and that it represented the idea of European fellowship.⁴⁹ An Ustasha female youth journal, *Novo pokoljenje*, reflected on this meeting by providing a list and a short description of all youth organizations in Europe which participated at the Congress.⁵⁰ Another journal, *Suradnja* [Cooperation], dedicated a whole issue to this event in which it brought

⁴⁷ "Poruka ustaške mladeži Novoj Europi – Ivan Oršanić," [The Message of the Ustasha Youth to New Europe – Ivan Oršanić] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 3.

⁴⁸ *Suradnja* [Collaboration], September 28, 1942, no. 18, 1942.

⁴⁹ Milivoj Karamarko, "Ideja mlade Europe – Uz kongres europske mladeži u Beču," *Spremnost – misao i volja ustaške hrvatske*, September 27, 1942, no. 31, 2.

⁵⁰ "Pregled organizacija europske mladeži," [Survey of the European Youth Organizations] *Novo pokoljenje*, October 10, 1942, no. 7, 14-15.

descriptions and photographs of all youth organizations present.⁵¹ Although the Ustasha journals and youth officials gave a lot of significance to this, presumably since it served as justification of their youth policy and organization, it is questionable how much all of this was successful and how much it influenced the general public. Perhaps the fact that the Ustasha Youth representatives did not participate in the second youth meeting held in Madrid in December that same year, is indicative of the problems with which the Ustasha Youth organization and the Ustasha regime were faced with. In fact, only eight nations were present at this next meeting dedicated to *Youth and Family*.⁵²

It seems that this fascist youth alliance, of which the Ustasha officials spoke highly and were trying to present it as a culmination of fascist youth policy, was conceived and established in haste. So why was this *Alliance* established in the first place? Perhaps an answer can be found in the fact that in September that same year the United States president, F. D. Roosevelt gave a speech in front of the members from 56 countries which gathered in Washington D. C. for the *International Student Assembly*.⁵³ In his speech Roosevelt harshly attacked fascists' youth policy and depicted it as being deadly for the youth of whole Europe and that:

[...] the Quislings have organized youth movements too – but these are only movements of youth by the tens of thousands to [be sent to] the slaughter of the Eastern Front, where the Nazis need cannon fodder.⁵⁴

Roosevelt also emphasized that throughout Europe:

[...] the unconquerable people still strike at their oppressors [...] When the time comes for these peoples to rise, Hitler's New Order will be destroyed by the hands of its own victims.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Suradnja*, September 28, 1942, no. 18.

⁵² Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany*, 146.

⁵³ Eckelberry, R.H. "Review of Neilson, Allan William, ed. Proceedings of the International Student Assembly," *Educational Research Bulletin* no. 5 (1946): 138.

⁵⁴ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/dex.php?pid=16300&st=&st1> = *The Public Papers and Addresses of F. D. Roosevelt*, Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Address to the International Student Assembly*, (Last accessed on February 23, 2015).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (Last accessed on 27 February 2015.)

That Roosevelt's words were heard by fascists, and that they were perhaps worried, can be concluded from the fact that one Ustasha newspaper reflected on his speech by saying that his words mean "war for the youth", a war which, according to them, will be victorious for the nations of 'New Europe'.⁵⁶ Ivan Oršanić reflected on Roosevelt's speech by saying that these were merely "false phrases and hypocrisy" and that today it is the youth in America which is "without any ideals and completely disregarded as such".⁵⁷ That Roosevelt's speech had an impact on fascist youth leaders, and perhaps even hastened their idea of creating a joint fascist youth platform which could serve as a counter measure, can also be seen from the fact that Baldur von Schirach also reflected on Roosevelt's speech during the opening ceremony of the youth congress. According to the Ustasha newspapers report, he criticized the "irresponsible cowboy-like and scout education of the youth in America" and compared it with contemporary European youth education which aims at educating "a responsible factor in life of its nations and states, and the whole continent".⁵⁸

6.3. *In Search of Better Suited 'Comrades' – Hlinkova mládež*

During their international activities and events where fascist youth members came together, members of the Ustasha Youth often emphasized their close and 'brotherly' relations established with members of the Hlinka Youth organization. This should not come as a surprise having in mind the amount of articles published in the Ustasha journals and magazines on the Slovak Republic which described similarities

⁵⁶ "Stvaranje saveza europske mladeži," *Nova Hrvatska*, September 15, 1942, no. 216, 2.

⁵⁷ "HRVATSKA USTAŠKA MLADEŽ U SAVEZU EUROPSKE MLADEŽI," *Hrvatski narod*, September 10, 1942, no. 525, 3.

⁵⁸ "Ustaška mladež u Savezu europske mladeži," [The Ustasha Youth in the European Youth Alliance] *Hrvatski narod*, September 24, 1942, no. 537, 3.

of these two nations' history, their ideas of statehood, cultural similarities, and the similarity of the two languages.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, Croats and Slovaks shared many similarities when it comes to their political and social history. Both were part of the Habsburg Monarchy, that is Austro-Hungarian Empire during the nineteenth century, and during the interwar period they found themselves as parts of multi-ethnic states. State independence presented an important factor in these nations political thought during the interwar period, especially among those who argued for the historical rights of their nations. The predominant view on the interwar period among the more radical groups within these two nations was described by a Croatian writer, Josip Andrić, who described the interwar Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as artificially created states which were “dungeons for nations which fell into them”.⁵⁹ Already in 1925, according to Perčević's testimony, Hlinka and Pavelić met several times in Vienna.⁶⁰ When the Independent State of Croatia was established, Slovakia's independence was used so as to justify its establishment under the Nazis, since Slovakia was “the first messenger of the new order and New Europe in the making”.⁶¹ Jere Jareb, editor of the Ustasha Youth journal *Ustaška mladež* stated that after 1939 “Slovakia became a symbol of our awaiting freedom”.⁶² Once established, both the Independent State of Croatia and the Slovak Republic's protagonists often emphasized similar paths in their fight for independence. Although the political and economic ties were first intense (1941-1942), they later, i.e. after 1943 came to a complete halt. The reason for this is the progression of the Second World War, and Nazi foreign policy

⁵⁹ Josip Andrić, “Hrvatska i Slovačka,” [Croatia and Slovakia] *Hrvatski krugoval*, November 1, 1941, no. 20, 14

⁶⁰ HDA, SDS RSUP RH – 013.7., *Dosje Ivan Perčević*, [Dossier Ivan Perčević] 11.

⁶¹ I. B., “Nezavisnost Slovačke,” [The Independence of Slovakia] *Spremnost – misao i volje ustaške Hrvatske*, March 15, 1942, no. 3, 3.

⁶² Jere Jareb, “Bratstvo Slovačke i Hrvatske,” [The Brotherhood of Slovakia and Croatia] *Ustaška mladež*, December 1, 1942, no. 41, 4.

which often intervened and directed the foreign policies of the two states. It could be argued that, to an extent, the Slovak state and the Independent State of Croatia were restricted in their actions and ability to act independently, which certainly influenced their political cooperation.⁶³

The Slovak Republic was among the first states to recognize the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia. In fact, it did so on April 15, 1941, the same day as the Third Reich and the Kingdom of Italy.⁶⁴ A month later, various Ustasha newspapers started publishing articles on Slovakia and its cultural, political, and economic achievements. For example, they admired the Slovak film industry and regarded it as the model for the future Croatian film industry.⁶⁵ Slovak newspapers also wrote extensively on the Ustasha regime and its activities as well as on its administrative organization and social legislation.⁶⁶ One of the first organized visits took place in June 1941, when a delegation of Croatian journalists, attended by Slovak journalist Viliam Kovár, visited Bratislava where they were received by Tido J. Gašpar, head of the Propaganda Office in Slovakia.⁶⁷ In June that same year Dragutin Toth assumed a position as the ambassador in Bratislava. During his audience, Toth stated that: “Croatian and Slovak people are participating in the building of the new

⁶³ See Jan Rychlik, “Odnosi Slovačke i Nezavisne Države Hrvatske, 1941-1945,” [Relations between Slovakia and the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* vol. 36, no. 3 (2004): 939-957. This was especially related to their attempt to halt Hungarian territorial expansion.

⁶⁴ Rychlik, “Odnosi Slovačke i Nezavisne Države Hrvatske”: 942.

⁶⁵ “Putovi, koje nam prikazuje Slovačka,” [Paths which Slovakia is Showing to Us] *Novi list*, May 4, 1941, no. 6, 20.

⁶⁶ “Srdečne priatel'stvo slovensko-chorvatske,” [Cordial Slovak-Croatian Friendship] *Gardista*, May 17, 1941, no. 112, 3; “Chorváti stoja za Pavelićom,” [The Croats Stand with Pavelić] *Gardista*, May 24, 1941, no. 117, 2; “Draga braćo Hrvati,” [Dear Brother Croats] *Gardista*, May 31, 1941, no. 123, 8; “Slovák medzi Chorvátmi pred 50 rokmi,” [Slovak Among the Croats Fifty Years Ago] *Gardista*, Pentecost, 1941, 3; “Nové sociálne zákonodavstvo v Chorvátsku,” [New Social Legislation in Croatia] *Gardista*, June 5, 1941, no. 126, 2.

⁶⁷ “Chorvátski novinári na Slovensku,” [Croatian Journalists in Slovakia] *Gardista*, June 8, no. 152, 1941, and HDA, Slovačko poslanstvo u Zagrebu, SPZ – D – 2852, “Državni ured propagande,” [State Propaganda Office] June 27, 1941.

order in Europe [...] we Croats view Slovak people as our brothers.”⁶⁸ Connections continued throughout and were often described as natural and happening between two brotherly nations which shared the same injustice in the past.⁶⁹ The high-point of cultural cooperation occurred in 1942 with the establishment of the Croatian-Slovak society on March 13 in Bratislava, followed by its establishment in Zagreb, “with the purpose of broadening mutual relations”.⁷⁰ The society produced a bilingual journal *Tatre i Velebit* which published various literary works, poems, short stories, and articles regarding political issues.⁷¹ In July 1942, Slavko Kvaternik visited Bratislava, where he stayed for two days and was received by the president Jozef Tiso.⁷² On the anniversary of the first year of independence of the Independent State of Croatia, the newspaper *Slovak* printed the *Poglavnik*’s picture on the cover,⁷³ and on April 30 the same newspapers printed excerpts from his book *Strahote zabluda*, which were translated by Karol Študent as *Hrozy Omylov*.⁷⁴ There was also the agreement on reciprocity regarding student exchange, which was signed in November 1941 and continued in 1942 and 1943.⁷⁵ As Rhychlik points out, the exchange contained political criteria, i.e. only those students who were members of either the Hlinka Youth or the Ustasha Youth organization prior to their studies could take part, “which meant exclusion of politically unsuitable students”.⁷⁶ While relations between the two states were manifold, one relation deserves special attention and was rarely researched as

⁶⁸ “Obnovenie starého chorvátsko-slovénskeho bratstva,” [Renewed Old Croat-Slovak Friendship] *Gardista*, August 2, 1941, no. 174, 3.

⁶⁹ “Slovensko – ukážka novej Európy,” [Slovakia – An Example of New Europe] *Gardista*, September 14, 1941, no. 210, 2.

⁷⁰ Rhychlik, “Odnosi Slovačke i Nezavisne Države Hrvatske”: 950-952.

⁷¹ See for example *Tatre i Velebit* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni tiskarski zavod), March 14, 1942.

⁷² Rhychlik, “Odnosi Slovačke i Nezavisne Države Hrvatske”: 952.

⁷³ “SLOBODNÉ CHORVÁTSKO SVÄTÍ,” [Free Croatian Saints] *Slovak*, April 10, 1942, no. 81, 1.

⁷⁴ “Diktatúra proletariatu,” [The Dictatorship of Proletariat] *Slovak*, April 30, 1942, no. 98, 5.

⁷⁵ HDA, SPZ, D – 2851, “Poslanstvo Republike Slovačke,” [Embassy of the Republic of Slovakia] July 19, 1941,

⁷⁶ Rhychlik, “Odnosi Slovačke i Nezavisne Države Hrvatske”: 951.

such. That was the relation between the two youth organizations, the Hlinka Youth and the Ustasha Youth.

The Hlinka Youth organization was established in December 1938 and in February 1939 Alojz M. Macek, former functionary of Slovak Catholic Scouts, became the assembly leader of the Hlinka Youth, while Vojtech Tuka, main captain of the Hlinka Guard, became the head of the organization.⁷⁷ The organization was given its name by Andrej Hlinka, who was then considered and described as the role-model and father of contemporary Slovak nation. The youth members were often designated as Hlinka's children.⁷⁸ The same as in Fascists Italy and Nazi Germany, the organization consisted of both male and female branches, each with their own sections according to age. The male branch was divided into *vĺčatá* [Wolves] from ages 6 to 11, *orlov* [Eagles] from ages 11 to 16, and *junákov* [Heroes] from ages 16 to 20. The female branch was equally divided into *vily* [Nymph] from ages 6 to 10, *tatranky* [tatra] from ages 10 to 15, and *devy* [Girls] from ages 15 to 20.⁷⁹ The idea was, as in all other fascist youth organizations, that the youth was to become the new elite, the guardian of the newly established state, and therefore in this organization "word, duty and joy must govern".⁸⁰ The membership became obligatory in December 1938 and by mid-1941 it had more than 100,000 members.⁸¹ Their official salute *Na stráž!* [On Guard!] was taken from the Slovak Catholic Scout group.⁸² The youth training and education in Slovakia was based on the same principles as that in Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. The youth organization was seen as a natural, organic development through which the youth was being prepared for their social, civil, and military life in

⁷⁷ Milla, *Hlinkova mládež – 1938-1945*, 33-36.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 47.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁰ As quoted in Milla, *Hlinkova mládež – 1938-1945*, 48.

⁸¹ Ibid, 54.

⁸² Ibid, 61.

the newly established Slovak state.⁸³ As stated by Macek, the idea was to educate devoted patriots in Christian spirit, to provide new forces for the defense of the state, and to nurture physical training, sport and the spirit of comradeship.⁸⁴

By the time the Ustasha Youth was established, in mid-July 1941, the Hlinka Youth already had a clear organizational structure, youth camps, and youth training schools. Thus, already in August 1941 the first delegation of the Ustasha Youth traveled to Slovakia. The delegation visited a small city of Chtelnice where they got acquainted with the Hlinka Youth female section activities, especially the courses and their organizational structure, after which they visited the city of Trenčianske Toplice as well as the grave of Andrej Hlinka in Ružemberok.⁸⁵ In the report published in *Ustaška mladež* it was stated that “each year they have camps organized, the female ones are called *osade* and the male ones *tabori*”. The same report stated that “their entire contemporary education is pointed towards preparing the youth for the defense of the homeland from the enemies”.⁸⁶ In another article it was stated that “to us who have exactly this task, to create a new female generation for new Croatia, observing their work gave us new incentives”.⁸⁷ In October 1941, a Hlinka Youth delegation, headed by Alojz Macek, visited the Independent State of Croatia in order to “strengthen as much as possible friendship contacts among the youths of Slovakia and Croatia”.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid, 48.

⁸⁴ Alojz Macek, “PRÁCA HM MUSÍ BYŤ SAMÝ SKUTOK,” [The Work of Hlinka Youth Must be Real] *Nová Mladež*, December 1941, no. 4, 3.

⁸⁵ “Zastupcovia ustaše na ceste po Orave,” [Ustasha Representatives on the Road to Orava] *Gardista*, August 28, 1941, no. 125, 2, and M. B., “Medju Slovacima,” [Among Slovaks] *Ustaška mladež*, November 2, 1941, no. 14, 15.

⁸⁶ Maca Mimič, “Osada Hlinkove Mladeži u Chtelnici,” [Osada of the Hlinka Youth in Chtelnice] *Ustaška mladež*, September 21, 1941, no. 8, 14.

⁸⁷ M. B., “Medju Slovacima,” *Ustaška mladež*, November 2, 1941, no. 14, 15.

⁸⁸ “Hlinkova mládež v Chorvátsku,” [Hlinka Youth Goes to Croatia] *Gardista*, October 15, 1941, no. 236, 3.



Figure 6.3. The Hlinka Youth members during their audience with the *Poglavnik*.⁸⁹

The Slovak delegation arrived to Zagreb on October 16 when, according to the report published in the Slovak newspaper *Gardista*, they were welcomed by Oršanić and thousands of people.⁹⁰ As when the Ustasha delegation had visited in August, the Slovak delegation also traveled across the Independent State of Croatia visiting numerous cities (Varaždin in the north, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Osijek and others in the east, and Banja Luka in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina).⁹¹ On their nine-day travel, according to newspapers articles, Slovak representatives were welcomed and greeted by numerous delegations and youth members. When they visited the city of Požega they were greeted with their salute *Na straž!*.⁹² The delegation also visited the town of Borovo and the Ustasha Youth School for Officials.⁹³

⁸⁹ *Nova Hrvatska*, August 22, 1942, no. 196.

⁹⁰ "Srdečné privítanie HM v Záhrebe," [Cordial Welcoming of the Hlinka Youth in Zagreb] *Gardista*, October 17, 1941, no. 238, 3.

⁹¹ "Delegácia HM na ceste do vlasti," [Delegation of the Hlinka Youth on the Road to Homeland] *Gardista*, October 24, 1941, no. 244, 3.

⁹² "Izaslanstvo Hlinkine mladeži u Požegi," [Delegation of the Hlinka Youth in Požega] *Hrvatski list*, October 20, 1941, no. 291, 5.

⁹³ "Delegácia HM na ceste do vlasti," *Gardista*, October 24, 1941, no. 244, 3, and "Vodstvo Hlinkine mladeži posjetilo je Borovo," [The Hlinka Youth Leadership Visited Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, October 23, 1941, no. 14, 1.



Figure 6.4. The Hlinka Youth delegation during their visit to Borovo.⁹⁴

Upon his return Macek gave an interesting interview in *Gardista* reflecting on his visit by saying that what they came across in the Independent State of Croatia “is something rarely found in a newly-born state. During this short period the Ustasha Youth organization has moved forward with great promise”. On October 29, *Gardista* published another article in which Macek once again stated his admiration for the Ustasha Youth organization and the ability of the Ustashes to organize such a massive youth organization within a few-months-time.⁹⁵ That same month the Hlinka Youth journal *Nová mládež* published an article by Oto J. Matzenauer, leader of the international section of the Hlinka Youth, dedicated to the Ustasha Youth organization and its similarities with the Hlinka Youth. In it he described the visit of the Ustasha Youth who came to Slovakia “to see and become acquainted with how we organize and see the youth in Slovakia”.⁹⁶ The article further described in detail the organizational structure of the Ustasha Youth, emphasizing its similarities with the

⁹⁴ *Novo Borovo*, October 23, 1941, no. 14, 5.

⁹⁵ “HM sa vrátila z Chorvátska,” [The Hlinka Youth Returns from Croatia] *Gardista*, October 26, 1941, no. 246, 3, “Obetavost Chorvátov za svoj štát nepozná hranic,” [Croats Sacrifice for their State Knows no Boundaries] *Gardista*, October 29, 1941, no. 248, 4.

⁹⁶ Oto J. Matzenauer, “Ustašská mládež,” [The Ustasha Youth] *Nová Mládež*, October 1941, no. 2, 4.

Hlinka Youth, since the Ustasha youth *stožernik* [district leader] is equivalent to their *stotinár*, *logornik* [commune leader] to their *dozorník*, and *tabornik* [county leader] to their *táborník*. Matzenauer also emphasized the similarities of uniforms and insignias on them. The article concluded: “From all this we see how many analogous elements the Ustasha Youth organization has with our Hlinka Youth”,⁹⁷ and ended with a sentence comprising both salutes: “brothers Croats be on guard, we the Slovaks are ready!”.⁹⁸ Such inversion of salutes, emphasizing their equality in meaning, is also interesting having in mind that *Na straž!* and *Za Dom Spremni!* are also found in most of the official documents exchanged between the two regimes.

An article entitled *Hrvatska i Slovačka* [Croatia and Slovakia] dedicated to these mutual visits and connections described many similarities and connections among the two nations’ histories and culture, also adding that:

Besides these connections there is one other between the Croats and Slovaks, a guarantee of brotherhood among the two nations which shall not be compromised in the future, and that is the youth of both nations. Croatian and Slovak youth went down the same path of Golgotha in their earliest age, they felt the bitterness of slavery, and shall therefore best preserve the hard-won freedom.⁹⁹

In December that same year, the Croatian delegation led by Ivan Oršanić went on a return visit to Slovakia which lasted for ten days in order to “become acquainted with the hierarchy and organization of the Hlinka Youth and the Hlinka Guard”.¹⁰⁰ The delegation visited numerous cities and once again paid their respect to Andrej Hlinka on his grave in Ružomberok.¹⁰¹ On December 12, an official ceremony in honor of Oršanić took place during which he stated: “The youth is the carrier of revolution against the old democratic and plutocratic order [...] Slovaks and Croats

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Hrvatska i Slovačka,” [Croatia and Slovakia] *Hrvatski Krugoval*, November 1, 1941, no. 20, 14.

¹⁰⁰ “Reprezentanti chorvátskej mládeže na Slovensko,” [Representatives of Croatian Youth in Slovakia] *Gardista*, December 10, 1941, no. 282, 4, and “Izaslanstvo Ustaške mladeži u Slovačkoj,” [The Ustasha Youth Delegation in Slovakia] *Nova Hrvatska*, December 28, 1941, no. 237, 3.

¹⁰¹ “Izaslanstvo Ustaške mladeži u Slovačkoj,” *Nova Hrvatska*, December 28, 1941, no. 237, 3, and “Reprezentanti chorvátskej mládeže na Slovensko,” *Gardista*, December 10, 1941, no. 282, 4.

are reliable harbingers' of the new European order.”¹⁰² Ustasha newspapers and officials argued that the two youth organizations are engaged in the same project of educating and upbringing of their new youth. An article in *Nova Hrvatska* summarized this by saying that:

The work of the Hlinka Youth is the same as in our organization, of an educational and physical nature, directed towards the development of a new man, a man of a new spirit and new comprehensions.¹⁰³

Although by the end of 1941 we can trace the decline of official leadership contacts between the youth organizations, at the same time low-scale visits continued. These visits had the purpose of establishing firmer connections between the two regimes, and they also served the purpose of becoming acquainted with each other's youth organizations. Furthermore, they had a more practical role in exchanging various books and newspapers. For example, in April 1942 Boris Kregar, Ustasha Youth official, traveled to Slovakia in order to become acquainted with the military education of this organization, but also to bring back “rule book and handbook on the structure of the Hlinka Youth, and especially handbook for physical education and military preeducation”.¹⁰⁴ Another example of exchange with regard to handbooks and rule books for the youth is the fact that the Ustasha handbook dedicated to the youth officials for camp organization was sent to the Hlinka Youth.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² “Mládež je nositel'kou revolucie proti starému poriadku,” [The Youth is the Carrier of the Revolution against the Old Order] *Gardista*, December 13, 1941, no. 285, 4.

¹⁰³ “Izaslanstvo Ustaške mladeži u Slovačkoj,” *Nova Hrvatska*, December 28, 1941, no. 237, 3.

¹⁰⁴ HDA, NDH, Poslanstvo Bratislava – 229, “Preklad listuu-vyžiadanie”, April 25, 1942.

¹⁰⁵ Although there exists no document to support this, the fact that this book can only be found in the national library in Prague makes it possible to conclude that the book was sent to Hlinka Youth organization by the Ustasha Youth officials.



Figure 6.5. Leaders of the Hlinka and Ustasha Youth: Alojz Macek (left) and Ivan Oršanić (right).¹⁰⁶

Contacts of a more practical nature between the youth members themselves intensified during the summer and autumn of 1942. In fact, this was the high-point of their mutual cooperation and visits. The first of such member-based contacts occurred in July 1942 when the Hlinka Youth organization invited members of the Hitler Youth, Lictor Youth, and the Ustasha Youth to participate in their summer camp, which was organized in the city of Párnica and started on July 6.¹⁰⁷ There were twenty-eight Ustasha Youth members present.¹⁰⁸ The youth was accommodated in wooden houses with four rooms; with one Croat and one Slovak placed together in order to “get to know each other better and to learn each other’s languages more

¹⁰⁶ *Novo pokoljenje*, May 10, 1942, no. 2, 14.

¹⁰⁷ “Ustašská mládež na tábore HM,” [The Ustasha Youth at the Hlinka Youth Camps] *Gardista*, July 5, 1942, no. 150, 3.

¹⁰⁸ “Odsunutie termu započatia Slovensko-nemecko-chorvatskeho Tabora,” [Soon starts Slovak-German-Croatian Camp] 30 June, 1942, HDA, NDH, NDHPB - 229/2; “Ustaška mladež stigla u Slovačku,” [The Ustasha Youth Arrives to Slovakia] *Nova Hrvatska*, July 8, 1942, no. 157, 3, and “Chorvátska ustašská mládež u nás,” [Croatian Ustasha Youth Arrives] *Nová Mládež*, September 1942, no. 1, 9.

easily”.¹⁰⁹ Upon their arrival, the Ustasha Youth members were welcomed in Bratislava, where a small reception was organized the next morning in front of the Hlinka Youth headquarters, after which they were given free time for sightseeing. After lunch, the youth members were transferred to the camp in Párnica, where they were given uniforms and an allowance. According to a report, “the reception of our youth in Bratislava was very cordial from all sides”.¹¹⁰ The camp itself lasted for three weeks, during which the first two weeks were dedicated to exercises, singing, swimming and other activities, while during the third week the Hlinka Youth members accompanied their comrades from Croatia across Slovakia.¹¹¹

A month later the Ustasha Youth organization invited twenty-seven members of the Hlinka Youth to a joint Croatian-Slovak summer camp near Ozalj, which started on August 5 and lasted for thirty days.¹¹² The Hlinka Youth members left Bratislava on August 2 carrying with them a photo album of Oršanić’s visits in December 1941 as a gift from Macek.¹¹³ The purpose of this camp was to educate boys “so that they become qualified to take over the [leadership] duty which will be assigned to them”.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ “Ustaška mladež na logorovanju s Hlinkinom mladeži u Slovačkoj,” [The Ustasha Youth at the Camp with the Hlinka Youth in Slovakia] *Nova Hrvatska*, July 23, 1942, no. 170, 3.

¹¹⁰ HDA, NDH, NDHPB – 229/2, no. 80/42, “Izveštaj Malvića Upravnom zapovjedništvu Ustaške Mladeži,” [A Report from Malvić to the Administrative Command of the Ustasha Youth] July 7, 1942,

¹¹¹ “Chorvátska ustašská mládež u nás,” [Croatian Ustasha Youth in Slovakia] *Nová Mládež*, September 1942, no. 1, 9. See also Milla, *Hlinkova mládež*, 122.

¹¹² HDA, NDH, NDHPB – 229/2, no. 21/1942, “Poziv na taborovanje u Kuparima,” [A Call for Camping at Kupari] July 10, 1942. This document stated that this summer camp was to take place Kupari near Dubrovnik. However, due to unknown circumstances the camp was moved to Ozalj, where the first Ustasha youth summer camp took place. Also “Zajedničko logorovanje Ustaške i Hlinkine Mladeži,” [Joint Camping of the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 4, 1942, 3.

¹¹³ “Výprava HM odcestovala do Chorvátska,” [The Hlinka Youth Expedition Went to Croatia] *Gardista*, August 4, 1942, no. 175, 3.

¹¹⁴ “Taborovanje Ustaške mladeži na Ozlju,” [Camping of the Ustasha Youth at Ozalj] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 11, 1942, no. 186, 3.



Figure 6.6.. The front page of *Ustaška mladež* showing fascist youth members raising flags during their joint camp.¹¹⁵

The camp consisted of forty tents encircled by a wooden fence, with the salutes “*Na straž!*” and “*Za Dom Spremni!*” at the entrance. The accommodation arrangement included one Croat and one Slovak per tent. The daily schedule was strict so as to ensure the whole day was full of activities. A special course entitled *Croatian-Slovak Hour* was organized in order for members to become acquainted with each other’s history, language, culture, and youth organization. Attendees were also given practical instructions in military preeducation through which they were taught “how to handle a weapon and conduct improvised attacks on villages, forests, etc”.¹¹⁶ After two weeks, Slovak representatives visited the cities of Osijek and Vinkovci, after which they returned to Zagreb, where they were received by the *Poglavnik*. Hlinka Youth representative Štefan Letko stated in a radio broadcast that “the youth is the

¹¹⁵ *Ustaška mladež*, September 1, 1942, no. 35.

¹¹⁶ “Taborovanje Ustaške mladeži na Ozlju,” *Nova Hrvatska*, August 11, 1942, no. 186, 3.

first in line in elevating our people and state. It is the guarantee of the eternal life and existence of Croats and Slovaks”. After his speech two Slovak songs, *My sme budúcnosť národá* (We are the Future of our Nation) and *Slováci stojte na chotári* (Slovaks Stand at Your Borders) were broadcast.¹¹⁷ During that same month, Hlinka and Ustasha Youth members organized a chess tournament, from August 21 to August 24 in Trenčianske Teplice, as a return for the match that took place in December 1941 in Zagreb.¹¹⁸ That same month Oršanić sent an invitation to Macek for joint participation of Ustasha and Hlinka Youth members in an education and training course, which was to take place in Borovo, where the local Ustasha Youth School for Officials was established.¹¹⁹ Participation was limited to 25 members plus two leaders.¹²⁰ Slovak newspaper *Gardista* announced the invitation on September 4, 1942, stating that it was to be a joint camp for Croatian, Bulgarian, and Slovak youth, with the course lasting for two months.¹²¹ Hlinka Youth attendees were asked to bring various materials with them, including a geographical map of Slovakia, Slovak songs, photos, and various propaganda materials.¹²² That the Hlinka Youth officials regarded this course seriously is evident from the fact that those selected to attend this joint

¹¹⁷ “Hlinkova mladež nosi najljepše dojmove iz Hrvatske,” [The Hlinka Youth Carries Nicest Impressions from Croatia] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 22, 1942, no. 196, 1, and “Poglavnik je primio skupinu Hlinkine mladeži,” [Poglavnik received a Group of Hlinka Youth] *Nova Hrvatska*, August 22, 1942, no. 196, 1.

¹¹⁸ HDA, NDH, NDHPB – 229/2, no. 25/1942, “Poziv H.V.H.M. na šahovski turnir,” [A Call of the Hlinka Youth Administrative Command for the Chess Tournament] July 21, 1942, and “Veliki šahovski susret: Slovačka – Hrvatska 7. i 8. Prosinca,” [Great Chess Meeting. Slovakia-Croatia December 7 and 8] *Nova Hrvatska*, December 7, 1941, no. 221, 12.

¹¹⁹ Milla, *Hlinkova mládež*, 122.

¹²⁰ HDA, NDH, NDHPB – 229/2/43, “Oršanićevo pismo Malviću vezano uz dolazak predstavnika Hlinkine mladeži,” [Oršanić’s Letter to Malvić Connected with the Arrival of the Hlinka Youth Representatives] August 20, 1942.

¹²¹ “HM do Chorvátska,” [The Hlinka Youth to Croatia] *Gardista*, September 4, 1942, no. 201, 2.

¹²² HDA, NDH, NDHPB – 229/2/43, “Oršanićevo pismo Malviću vezano uz dolazak predstavnika Hlinkine mladeži,” August 20, 1942.

course were required to attend a four-day preparatory camp organized for them at Moravského Sv. Jána from September 25 to September 29.¹²³

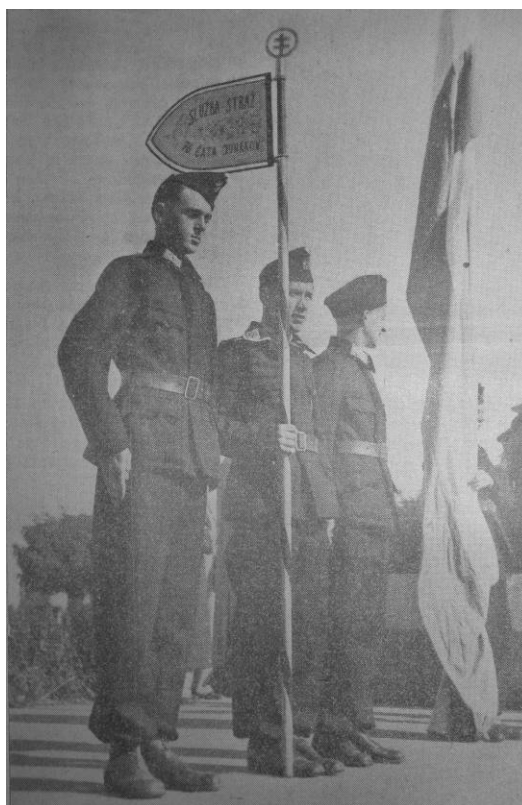


Figure 6.7. Members of the Hlinka Youth during their visit to Borovo.¹²⁴

The members visited Zagreb and other cities during their stay, and were also received by the *Poglavnik* and Oršanić.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, there are no sources which would provide details on the program of education and courses held during their stay, except for newspapers articles. From these articles we know that members of both organizations were dressed in the Ustasha Youth uniforms and that most courses were dedicated to becoming acquainted with the structure and organizational principles of

¹²³ “HM pred cestou do Chorvátska na výcvikové tábory,” [The Hlinka Youth in the Preparation Camp Prior to their Trip to Croatia] *Gardista*, September 26, 1942, no. 220, 5.

¹²⁴ *Novo Borovo*, October 30, 1942, no. 38, 2.

¹²⁵ “HM v Chorvátsku,” *Gardista*, September 9, 1942, no. 205, 3, and “Výprava HM u Poglavnika, Oršanića a Dr. Ciekeru,” [Delegation of the Hlinka Youth at Poglavnik, Oršanić, and Doctor Cieker] *Gardista*, November 19, 1942, no. 266, 2.

these organizations.¹²⁶ Great emphasis was also placed on physical and premilitary education since:

[...] in their physical training they learn what is most needed for the healthy development of the body, so that every graduate can perform his duty as a teacher of physical education in their camps.¹²⁷

By the end of the course, each member was required to pass an exam in order to be awarded with a certificate.¹²⁸ Each member was also given various books, brochures and magazines issued by the Ustasha Youth propaganda office.¹²⁹ The atmosphere during this course was described as one of “comradeship, we saw exemplary discipline, enthusiasm and desire for greater knowledge and greater training for the future”.¹³⁰ The members of the Hlinka Youth returned to Slovakia on November 29, after completing a two-month course. This visit received enthusiastic press coverage. In the description of the eight weeks which their youth had spent in the Ustasha state, *Slovak*, for example, recalled with pride that “wherever we passed through, we were greeted with our salute: *Na stráž!*”.¹³¹

In order to further emphasize the importance of the relations established and this joint course, a special Order was issued in April 1943 regarding the commemorative sign of the course of the Hlinka and Ustasha youth. The sign was made out of bronze, with a triple letter U, double tendril, and double Slovak cross in

¹²⁶ “Odlazak Hlinkine mladeži iz Borova,” [Departure of the Hlinka Youth from Borovo] *Hrvatski list*, December 11, 1942, no. 293, 8.

¹²⁷ “Dva mesiaci v bratskom Chorvátsku,” [Two Months in Brotherly Croatia] *Slovak*, December 12, 1942, no. 285, 5.

¹²⁸ “Odlazak Hlinkine mladeži iz Borova,” *Hrvatski list*, December 11, 1942, no. 293, 8.

¹²⁹ “Završetak tečaja Hlinkine i Ustaške mladeži u Borovu,” [The End of the Hlinka and Ustasha Youth Course in Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, December 5, 1942, no. 43, 2.

¹³⁰ “Oproštaj braće Slovaka sa Ustaškim Borovom,” [A Farewell of the Slovak Brothers with Borovo] *Novo Borovo*, November 27, 1942, no. 42, 1.

¹³¹ “Dva mesiaci v bratskom Chorvátsku,” *Slovak*, December 12, 1942, no. 285, 5.

the middle, and with the inscription *Borovo 1942* on the lower side. The Order stipulated the names of those who had the right to carry this sign.¹³²

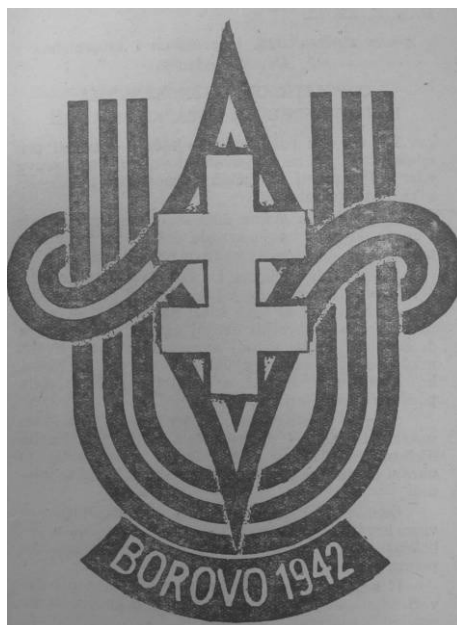


Figure 6.8. Commemorative sign of the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth joint course at the Ustasha Youth School for Officials in Borovo.¹³³

As shown, mutual visits between the two youth organizations were frequent and based on the idea of common history, similar hardships during the interwar period and the idea of developing the new generations of Slovaks and Croats who shall learn to appreciate and safeguard the achieved independence in future times. Another major reason for such close relations was due to language similarity. According to a newspaper article, an Ustasha Youth member admitted that although fraternal visits to the Lictor Youth were welcomed, “it is easiest and most preferable to come to terms with the Slovaks, and therefore most often we spend our time with them”.¹³⁴ Corresponding statements can be found in a description of a time spent in the camp at Ožalj, where one Ustasha youth member stated that he was “[a]mazed how well I can

¹³² “Naredba o spomen-znaku tečajaca Hlinkine i Ustaške mladeži,” [Order on the Commemorative Sign for attendess of the Hlinka and Ustasha Youth] *Dužnostnik*, May 1943, no. 5, 6, and HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199, “U smislu Naredbe o spomen-znaku,” [With regards to the Order on the Commemorative Sign] June 21, 1943.

¹³³ *Dužnostnik*, May 1943, no. 5, 6.

¹³⁴ “S ustaškim Junacima i Junakinjama u Firenzi,” [With the Ustasha Male and Female Heroes in Florence] *Ustaška mladež*, July 19, 1942, no. 29, 16.

understand them and how well they can understand us”.¹³⁵ Similarly, in Slovak newspapers it was stated that “Croats spoke Croatian and we spoke the Slovak language, and there was no misunderstanding among us”.¹³⁶ The language connection was often emphasized on the occasions where representatives of other fascist youth organizations were present, such as during cultural gatherings in Florence and Weimar, or during the establishment of the *European Youth Alliance* in Vienna. For example, in a report from Florence it was stated that:

Most easily and most preferably we come to terms with Slovaks, therefore we spend most of the time with them, but slowly we are coming to terms with others as well.¹³⁷

In 1943, mutual youth visits came to a halt, most probably due to the deteriorating security situation in both countries. However, connections were not completely broken, as we know from a visit of Ante Jakaša in November 1943, or the visit of district officials of the city of Zagreb to Slovakia in June 1943.¹³⁸

The main reason behind such relations was that of presenting the Slovak Republic as an equal partner, and as an exemplary model which served as justification for the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, despite the fact that it was only thanks to the Nazi occupation that it was established. By emphasizing these relations, the Ustasha idea was to show that their regime had its place within the “new Europe”, had its partners within, and had an example that this “new Europe” also embraced ‘small’ nations. Furthermore, the Hlinka Youth served as a comparison point for the Ustashes since it was easier to juxtapose their youth policy, their ideas and achievements with this organization. Both youth organizations were presented as organizations dedicated to the education of future Slovaks and Croats, of future

¹³⁵ “Šatori uz rijeku – iz dnevnika jednog taboraša,” *Ustaška mladež*, September 1, 1942, no. 35, 5.

¹³⁶ J. Matzenauer, “Ustaška mládež,” *Nová Mládež*, October 1941, no. 2, 4.

¹³⁷ “S ustaškim Junacima i Junakinjama u Firenzi,” *Ustaška mladež*, July 19, 1942, no. 29, 16.

¹³⁸ HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549, Group VI/Box no. 199/417, “Ministarstvu vanjskih poslova,” [To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] June 18, 1943.

guardians of their newly established states, and as generations aware of their nations' sufferings in the past. As Luka Halat stated:

This is not just friendship, but something higher and deeper, it is the feeling of fateful connectedness of common benefit and common endeavoring [...] This relations of ours are becoming stronger each day more and more, and they shall be built and refined by our Ustasha and their Hlinka Youth [...] It would be desirable that our movements connect themselves as strongly as possible.¹³⁹

In conclusion, the Slovak and the Ustasha officials discourse presented their youth as cornerstones of their newly established states. The Hlinka and the Ustasha Youth members were to realize and become aware that they are partners in this 'new' fascist Europe being created. In order to fulfill their assigned roles the youth was to further strengthen their mutual connections which served as a "sign of the eternity of this friendship".¹⁴⁰



Figure 6.9. "The Ustasha Youth Leadership in Slovakia."¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Luka Halat, "Vidjeli smo Slovačku," [We Saw Slovakia] *Ustaška mladež*, September 15, 1942, no. 36, 16.

¹⁴⁰ Ivona Latković, "Bratstvo Hlinkine i Ustaške mladeži," [The Brotherhood of Hlinka and Ustasha Youth] *Novo pokoljenje*, November 10, 1942, no. 8, 6.

¹⁴¹ *Nová mladež*, October 1941, no. 2, 25.

Conclusion

When leaving his office of Administrative Commander of the Ustasha Youth in June 1944, Ivan Oršanić appealed to the youth never to forget that it was through them that the idea of statehood had to be secured and that from “your generation’s egoists, exploiters, and idlers must not be born but rather heroes and champions of national consciousness, work and responsibility”.¹ With these words Oršanić summed up the main ideological premise behind the establishment of the all-embracing Ustasha Youth organization. This premise was based on the *Poglavnik’s* idea of the state as something sacred, natural, and historically determined as well as on the idea of the imminent threat of annihilation which Croatian nation was faced with during the interwar period. The discourse presented by the members of the Ustasha movement, and later state officials, was that during the interwar period, the Croatian nation was ruled by a politically foreign and culturally inferior element, the Serbs. In order to save the Croatian nation from oblivion, the Ustashes portrayed and presented themselves as saviors, as the ‘new’ version of the Croats tasked with the salvation of Croatian nation. In such a worldview, this ‘new’ Croat was to become aware of the importance of the state for Croatian nation, and willing to sacrifice everything which he/she has in order to fulfill and protect the *Poglavnik’s* state and nation. By exposing the youth to their worldview based on the deterministic notions of good versus evil, salvation versus destruction, death versus survival, freedom versus slavery, culture versus barbarism, the Ustasha officials assigned to the youth two major tasks: awareness of embracing wholeheartedly the beliefs, ideas, and sacrifices of the older Ustashes and the *Poglavnik* especially, and the realization that their role and purpose was to rebuild Croatian national community and safeguard the existing state for future

¹ Ivan Oršanić, “Dragi dužnostnici i pripadnici Ustaške mladeži,” *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1944, no. 10, 3.

Croatian – Ustasha generations to come. One of the main ideas which they tried to embed into the youth was that being Ustasha meant much more than simply becoming a member of the Ustasha movement. Moreover, the youth had to realize that being Ustasha meant above all being a proper Croat, a reawakened Croat, a Croat of this ‘new’ Europe which violently ends with the old Europe of democracy, individualism, selfishness, and coziness of everyday life. Also, this new Croat, aware of the importance of his/her state and nation as an organic whole, was to be alert to the dangers presented by bolshevism as ideology which strives for the elimination of nations and states in order to achieve the world dominance. This ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha was to become a person unconditionally devoted to his/her state, his/her national community, and to his/her *Poglavnik* as the embodiment of all this, if he/she was to become an equal partner in this “new Europe”.

Virtues and values of this ‘new’ Croat – the Ustasha were demonstrated to the youth as belonging to some inner, mystical roots. The youth was told that it was the *Poglavnik* who revealed these roots and thus he presents a personification and a role-model of this ‘new’ Croat. As shown in this work, early on the *Poglavnik* became the undisputed leader; the leader charismatised by his closest followers, and as such endowed with supernatural, mystical, God-given characteristics. By monopolizing the idea of independence and salvation, and presenting his Ustasha movement and its members as the only viable force able to achieve independence, his close associates and followers accepted him as invested with special powers, special meaning, and a special role assigned to him. The *Poglavnik* became their leader, endowed with characteristics inaccessible to ordinary members of the movement, capable of delivering this independence and thus saving the Croatian nation from complete obliteration. As I have argued in this work, it was during the 1930s that Pavelić, as the

Poglavnik of the Ustasha movement, came to be recognized and acknowledged by his close associates and followers as a charismatic leader. The youth, as the future harbingers of the Ustasha ideas, were to accept the *Poglavnik* as such through a process of *charismatisation* which took place during the regime. This process was initiated by those described as ‘charismatic aristocracy’, the *Poglavnik*’s first followers and believers, who were transferring their beliefs onto the youth as the new generation of the Ustashas. In order for such action to be successful, the Ustasha officials embarked on implementing their idea of a totalitarian state. This was a totalitarian experiment dedicated towards salvation and preservation of Croatian state and nation through an all-embracing social, national, and political regeneration of nation. And nowhere was this experiment more visible and better implemented during the Ustasha regime than within the Ustasha Youth organization.

As shown in this work, the idea of establishing a state-wide youth organization first appeared already in the late twenties, with the establishment of *Hrvatski domobran* in October 1928. However, this act came to a halt due to the political tensions and situation within the Kingdom, which culminated in the proclamation of the dictatorship in January 1929, which made any political activity illegal. The illegality of political life forced Pavelić and his followers to seek different ways and means for their actions. Supported by Fascist Italy and Hungary, Pavelić, by using the notion of state as his ‘mobilizing myth’, managed to gather, organize, and ideologically build his movement during the 1930s. During this period he further radicalized, together with his close associates, the idea of Croatian statehood and nation by adding cultural/anthropological notions of superiority and inferiority of nations, in this case the superiority of western Croatian nation against the eastern, Byzantine, Serbian nation. Pavelić’s success in organizing the Ustasha movement by

giving it basic organizational and ideological foundations, with his idea of independence as historically predetermined, supported, and guided by *Providence*, made him a personification, the embodiment of the state idea. His actions and ideas were pointed towards the establishment of independent Croatia under any cost necessary, an independence seen as essential in order to save the Croatian nation from “the greatest political and national crime ever committed, the proclamation of the dogma that Croats and Serbs are one nation”.² The belief in and recognition of Pavelić as the charismatic leader was most visible after 1934, when in spite of his failure to establish Croatian independent state, his associates and followers further continued their actions and ideas, as demanded by him. As shown in this work, it was exactly during the second half of the 1930s that the Ustasha movement became more active within the Kingdom, and that the ideas and actions of the *Poglavnik* were still obeyed and believed in. This period presented a crucial phase in the movement’s development, since until then the actions were mostly confined to terrorist activities, and smuggling of leaflets and propaganda materials into the Kingdom, amid constant threat of such materials being confiscated. The capacity to promote their movement and its ideas within the Kingdom, combined with the international insecurity in the post-1938 period, had an impact among the more radical sections of the Croatian population. This provided the possibility of influx in membership for the Ustasha movement, especially since it was now able to promote its cause and ideas in more visible, day-to-day, activities. The successfulness of the Ustasha agitation and the increase in membership remains unclear, since research on this topic is still insufficient.³

² Stožernik Mate, “Zločinačku laž treba krvlju ugušiti,” *Ustaša – vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionara*, June 1932, 2.

³ During my research in the Croatian National Archives I came across hundreds of register documents of the *Uzdanica* society. Since *Uzdanica* was formed by the Ustasha members active within the

Despite Pavelić's idea and actions undertaken for the establishment of independent Croatia, this independence did not come as a result of their direct actions but as a result of Nazi Germany's international policy and subsequent occupation of the Kingdom in April 1941. However, this did not stop Pavelić and his associates from accepting this allocated independence and presenting it as an accomplishment of the *Poglavnik's* idea.⁴ Upon assuming power, the Ustasha officials embarked on implementing and setting their ideas in motion. They argued that what was to take place was a 'total' revolution, a revolution which, as shown, consisted of two intersected and connected variables. One variable was based on the idea of an imminent need to cleanse Croatian nation from, as they argued, foreign and inferior elements, Jews, Serbs, Roma as well as those unwilling to support the *Poglavnik*. The second variable was rebuilding, reeducating, and regenerating of Croatian nation, which had for two decades been governed by the foreign, inferior, Serbian nation. These two variables were seen as crucial in order to save the Croatian nation and to reassert it on the map of a 'civilized', more 'superior', "new Europe". With law decrees proclaimed within a month of the regime's existence which established racial superiority, coordinated policies of violence, prosecution, resettlement, and mass murder of Serbs, Jews, and Roma were set in motion. As mentioned, this was only one variable within the Ustasha worldview of imminent, historically necessary, regeneration of Croatian nation. The second variable was that of the youth and the idea that through strict governing, education, and management of the youth they can create loyal and obedient citizens, the 'new' Croats – the Ustashas.

Kingdom, this shows that people did join this society and that they wished to become its members. HDA, ZIG NDH – 1549.

⁴ See for example the text of proclamation in which Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are portrayed as great allies, and thanks to them, Providence, and the *Poglavnik* the dream of independence became a reality. See *Hrvatski narod*, April 10, 1941.

A totalitarian state, which according to the Ustasha vision was to supervise and manage all segments of national life, meant that the youth, as the future generation, represented the key variable of such a future state. Establishment of the all-embracing, total, youth organization presented the core segment in the Ustasha worldview and their idea of the 'new' state and 'new' nation. Within Ustashes' view of a "new Europe", Europe as envisioned and led by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the Ustashes sought their place within and therefore regarded it important to raise and educate new generations in accordance with their worldview. Serving as role-models, the older generation of the Ustashes embarked on a revolution of creating a 'new' Croat – the Ustasha. The new generations were educated so as to place their individual needs and actions to the benefit of their national community as a whole. Following the ideas and practices of older Ustasha generations, the initial *Poglavnik's* associates and followers, the youth were to embrace wholeheartedly their achievements, their way of life, and their sacrifices made for the benefit of the Croatian nation, state, and their *Poglavnik* as the embodiment of all this.

In spite of its swift legal and organizational establishment, within a year of its existence certain branches of the Ustasha Youth organization faced various organizational, practical, and political problems. The report of Ante Brkljačić is indicative of these problems, although it also needs to be taken with some reserve, considering that it was written by a member who was discharged from the organization. Nevertheless, when placed in the context of a deteriorating situation, both politically and militarily, as well as combined with local youth officials reports, it is clear that certain regions faced serious problems in implementing the official youth policy. The problems ranged from lack of trained officials, lack of uniforms, money or facilities for youth performances and education, to parents unwilling to enroll their

children into the youth organization. Most of these problems occurred in regions south of the Sava River, that is, in Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, places where the presence of Italian forces, Tito's Partisans, and Četniks was felt the most thus causing the inability of the Ustasha regime to have a firm grasp and control over these areas. As the war progressed and Partisan movement was gaining strength, problems became present throughout the territory of the Ustasha state. The uncertainty of the final outcome, bad guidance, and corrupted officials all caused a gradual decrease in membership numbers, which was further highlighted by the youth joining the Partisan movement or simply avoiding to be actively engaged in the Ustasha Youth organization. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the Ustasha Youth officials to present their youth policies as a successful and important segment within this 'new' emerging Europe.

While family and school were seen as important segments of the youth education, the Ustasha Youth officials considered that both were influenced by the old ideas and practices. With such a view and attitude, the state, the movement, had to step in to provide 'proper' guidance, 'proper' education for the youth. The idea was that the Ustasha Youth organization presented that segment which could further develop and accomplish "everything that a child needs for a complete life and development".⁵ Since the majority of the older population was seen as possible carriers and supporters of the past ideas, it was the youth which was emphasized as the herald of this fascist 'new order' emerging in Europe. One major problem was the unclear relation between the state school system and the Ustasha Youth organization. By removing teachers deemed unsuitable for such positions due to their political, national, or racial affiliation, the Ustashes created resistance and above all lack of

⁵ Zdenko Blažeković, "Problem ustroja mladeži," *Ustaška mladež*, June 1, 1944, no. 10, 4.

professional cadres within the school premises. Unclear policies toward education often led to conflict between the school officials and the Ustasha Youth officials and members. Since the youth was told that they are the new generation, the generation of the new Ustashas, its members and especially officials wished to exercise their power within the school premises as well. However, due to the aforementioned unclear relation, lack of support among teachers and professors, and the deteriorating situation in general, the movement was unable to impose its educational policy and thus instead kept on balancing between the two. In order to somehow circumvent and ease these tensions, as well as to further emphasize the importance of the youth and its education, the Ustasha officials also established their own youth schools. It was in these schools that members of the Ustasha Youth gained additional knowledge and practice, besides the knowledge gained through the state school system. These schools were first and foremost intended for the education of future youth officials, but also for the courses regarding basic knowledge and practical skills necessary for everyday activities which were held in these schools.

Two additional segments in general youth education were work and sports. These two were seen as crucial by the Ustasha Youth officials, who believed that Croatian youth needed to be saved from the coziness and laziness to which they were exposed during the interwar period. Educational policies of that time, besides blamed for obliterating national feeling among the youth, were also blamed for neglecting the young bodies and minds for developing and encouraging egoism and laziness. By putting the emphasis on work, especially manual work, the Ustasha officials presented it as a cornerstone for building a strong, unique, and healthy national community. The idea was that the urban youth, completely detached from the everyday hardships of life in the countryside, needs to learn the value of work as such. Work in general,

especially manual work, was considered helping to develop their young bodies but also familiarizing with the everyday life of their fellow colleagues working in the factory or in the countryside. It was through Labor Service, both on a national level and as a special segment within the Ustasha Youth organization, that the youth and those wishing to become active members of the community were to learn the values of manual work and its importance. Similarly, sports were seen as crucial in regenerating and developing strong and durable young bodies, capable of performing any tasks placed in front of them. Special emphasis was placed on track-and-field sports and chess which had a task of simultaneous development of a wholesome body and mind. It was considered that, before dedicating professionally itself to one sport specifically, the youth had to develop its whole body synchronically. According to the Ustashes, such synchronic development of the young body was achievable only by practicing athletics, and especially sport-and-field tracks. Such strong and developed young bodies also required a strong mental strength, achievable through practical involvement in playing chess. Chess was viewed as a sport dedicated to the development of the youth's strategic thinking, patience, and organization. The two combined were to produce physically and intellectually superior youth in accordance with the Ustasha view of the 'new' Croat – the Ustasha.

From the outset, the youth, especially the male section of the organization, was given strong premilitary education. Since the Ustashes considered themselves as the embodiment of the centuries-old Croatian military virtues, once forgotten and now reawakened, the youth was to follow these footsteps and thus reestablish these centuries-old military values and virtues as the key characteristics of a proper, 'new' Croat. Besides premilitary education, the youth was also regimented through uniforms, whose purpose was to obliterate social differences and create social

cohesion among the youth as well as the feeling of some higher, national belonging. However, despite the proclaimed unity and the idea behind this, uniforms were neither free nor cheap to obtain, and the organization was in no position to provide them for each member.

Considering their state as part of this “new Europe” and its ideas and practices, the Ustasha officials envisioned and structured their youth organization on the same principles as it was done in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, or the Slovak Republic. The transfers and interconnections between the youth organizations were manifold and ranged from organizational and educational issues to youth exchange and mutual camping, to publication exchanges and joint courses. Nowhere was this more visible than in emphasizing the importance of the establishment of the fascist *European Youth Alliance* in September 1942. This *Alliance* was presented by the Ustasha Youth and state officials as a confirmation of their youth policy and its belonging to a wider, international political alliance dedicated to the establishment of the ‘new’ Europe. How exaggerated this was is best seen from the fact that this *Alliance* never came to life as envisioned, and even more, at its next meeting in Madrid, the Ustasha Youth was not even present.

Although the Ustasha Youth officials and members traveled and connected with all three of the youth organizations, Hitler Youth, Lictor Youth, and Hlinka Youth, it was the Lictor Youth and the Hlinka Youth which were seen from the outset as more suitable role-models, that is, partners. However, there were also some differences in relations with these two organizations as well. While the Lictor Youth served as an organizational and educational model and mentor in educating the youth officials, the Hlinka Youth served more as a partner organization. This stemmed from the fact that the Lictor Youth, as well as the Hitler Youth, was a massive, well-

organized and well developed youth organization, against which the Ustasha Youth organization could not measure or even compare with. On the other hand, the Hlinka Youth, established only a few years before the Ustasha Youth, served as a suitable partner where measurement of success was more plausible, acceptable, and useful for propaganda purposes. Many organizational and structural similarities between these two organizations, between their nations' somewhat similar histories, as well as the similarity of their languages, made their relations much easier. Several factors are indicative of this partnership, and those were their mutual visits, camps and courses attended by both the Ustasha and Hlinka Youth members. While members of both the Hitler Youth and Lictor Youth never attended courses organized by the Ustasha Youth, members of the Hlinka Youth participated in joint camps and courses. It was exactly such joint moments which the Ustasha officials used for emphasis and presentation of their youth policy both as a historical necessity and success, as part of some higher political reshuffling taking place in that time Europe.

The Ustashes guiding principle of state independence as a necessary prerequisite for salvation of Croatian nation became a reality despite its uncertainty during the 1930s. It was exactly on the premise that Croatian state must and will be established, that the Ustashes built their image, and especially image of their *Poglavnik*, as a visionary endowed with some higher knowledge, strength, and purpose. Once their foundational idea of a Croatian state became a reality, the Ustashes as the self-proclaimed elite, used this psychological moment and embarked on implementing their totalitarian experiment in accordance with their beliefs, ideas, and vision. This can best be described as their claim on "a unique capacity to spearhead what it claimed was essential change beyond the liberal mainstream".⁶ Such

⁶ Roberts, *Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth-Century Europe*, 418.

a position, in which the Ustashas gave themselves every right to structure this new state and society according to their views, allowed them to start implementing it from the outset. Already within the first three months, two key components of their experiment, cleansing and rebuilding of Croatian nation, were set in motion. Strict social and political rules set up by the Ustashas had the purpose of getting the entire nation into strict obedience and belief in their experiment. The Ustashas' utopian idea was one of regimenting the whole of society, especially the youth, in order to be able to control and manipulate their society *in toto*. In fact, the idea was that Croatian society, which was on the verge of destruction, needs to be saved and reshaped through extreme measures seen as necessary for its salvation and repositioning on the new map of European nations. In his interesting book, James C. Scott argued that it was exactly the 'high' modernism of the twentieth-century when the idea of "rational engineering of entire orders in creating realizable utopias" became a widespread phenomenon.⁷ To an extent, the Ustashas also embarked on such a social engineering experiment with their attempt to supervise, administer, reshape, and create a 'new' Croatian nation. In conclusion, the Ustashas' totalitarian experiment was based on racial, cultural, and anthropological view of an individual and nation. It was further supported by their belief that they can "reshape their society to create a more suitable population",⁸ and it became most visible within the Ustasha Youth organization and the idea that by reeducating and rebuilding an individual, it is possible to mold the 'new' Croat – the Ustasha.

⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 97.

⁸ Ibid, 92.

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