

## THE PROFESSION OF A JOURNALIST IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA

### ZANIMANJE NOVINAR U NEZAVISNOJ DRŽAVI HRVATSKOJ

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#### *Abstract*

Based on a part of an archive material and the testimony of the contemporaries, the author examines how, to what extent and through which institutions Ustasha authorities in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) controlled the work of journalists and influenced the content of newspapers from 1941 to 1945. The model of the multi-layer censorship of newspapers and professional, financial and social status of journalists in the NDH are specifically analyzed by using documents from official correspondence between the newspaper editorial staff and the authorities. This article focuses on the fate of some of the journalists, their uncertain status and position as journalists and the function that Ustasha policy determined for this profession. It also pays special attention to the importance of forming the State Reporting and Promotion Office, Croatian Journalists' Association and Ustasha Publishing Institute since these institutions significantly predetermined the position and the role of journalists in the Independent State of Croatia.

#### *Sažetak*

Na osnovi dijela arhivske građe i svjedočanstava suvremenika, autor razmatra na koji je način, u kojoj mjeri te preko kojih institucija, ustaška vlast u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj 1941. – 1945. kontrolirala rad novinskih redakcija i utjecala na sadržaj novina. Pri tome posebno analizira model višeslojnog cenzuriranja novina te profesionalni, materijalni i društveni položaj novinara u NDH, koristeći kao izvor dokumente iz službene korespondencije novinskih redakcija i organa vlasti. U fokusu ovoga članka novinarske su sudbine dijela novinara, nesiguran status i položaj novinara, kao i funkcija koju je ustaška politika nadjenula tom zanimanju. Posebna pažnja posvećena je važnosti formiranja Državnog izvještajnog i promidžbenog ureda, Hrvatskog novinarskog društva i Ustaškog nakladnog zavoda kao institucija koje su bitno predodredile položaj i ulogu novinara u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj.

#### **Introduction**

The Independent State of Croatia (ISC) was established as a part of German and Italian military and political plan during the April war in 1941 in the southeast of Europe, which is today part of Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The obligation towards Germany and Italy assumed by Ante Pavelić put the ISC in a weak position with a questionable sovereignty, not to forget the presence of the German forces in the ISC from 1941 till 1945 and the Italian forces from 1941 till September 1943. Furthermore, bearing in mind the civic war between Ustashes, Chetnics and the People Liberation Movement (PLM) led in

ISC from 1941 till 1945, it is obvious that the puppet Ustasha government was working under harsh conditions.

*Ustasha – Croatian Liberation Movement*, the only political organisation that had the right to operate in the ISC, created the government on the German and Italian model. In the ISC the Ustasha organisation was the government. The leader of the ISC had all the power, as did Führer in Germany or Duce in Italy. He was the head of the state and the Ustasha organisation that controlled administration, judiciary and legislation. He himself issued legal regulations, even at the time of the Croatian State Parliament in the period from February 23 till December 28, 1942 he adjudicated and made deci-

sions about positions. The media in the ISC, as a means of the broader marketing instrument, was managed alike. Marketing was put under the jurisdiction of the highest body of administrative authorities in summer of 1941 (on June 24, 1941 the State Secretariat for Marketing was put under direct jurisdiction of the Presidency of the Government) /1/ and thus assumed a very important position in Ustasha government. However, it was not made a ministry as it was in the Third Reich or in the Kingdom of Italy nor was it so influential /2/.

In the first months of the ISC, Croatian Informing Service (CIS) had a quite complex task. To stop issuing all the newspapers which were not pro-Ustasha, to employ its own censors in the newspapers, to ensure the *right* intelligence of the foreign journalists on the situation in the country, to follow the foreign press and radio with the emphasis put on the news on the ISC, to ensure that the Ustashes assume leading positions in the press, but most importantly, to ensure that the wanted information reaches the reader. Such complex tasks caused a rather divergent organisation of the CIS' offices. Beside the manager's office, there was also *Department for Local Printing* that consisted of *Intelligence Office*, *Subsection for Surveillance and Organisation*, *Foto Department*, and *Department for Foreign Printing* that consisted of *Radio Wiretabs Office* and *Subsection for Foreign Journalists*. With the help of *Velebit*, that is the Croatian News Office (CNO) *Croatie*, CIS assumed the position of the information center that supervised the radio news, press and foreign agencies' information, such as German *DNB* (German News Service (GNS)) and Italian *Stefania*, but also the press and agencies' information from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the neutral countries of Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey /3/. However, all the news of the diplomatic importance, international relationships, and negotiations of the ISC with the foreign countries as well as the news on national minorities in the ISC, could not be published by the *Croatian Informing Service* and its offices unless approved by the *Political Department* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs first /4/.

Based on the telegrams received from the foreign agencies, CIS created a newsletter that was delivered to editorial boards during the day, the newsletters were of secretive information character and were delivered to the heads of the boards, editors and political editors as well as to the higher politicians. The Head of the Marketing Department had a final saying in deciding whether some news will

appear in the newsletter or not. The *Croatian Informing Service* was initially led by Ivo Bogdan and Stipe Tomičić, and later Colonel Josip Mrmić /5/. On January 25, 1942 *Department for Journalism* as a part of the *The State Office for Reporting and Propaganda* (SORP) assumes the responsibilities of the CIS. Simultaneously the *Committee for Journalism* was also abolished and all its tasks regarding the marketing and the control over the media were taken over by the SORP /6/.

A legal regulation of October 29, 1941 established the *Croatian News Office* (CNO) *Croatia*, as an external press intelligence agency directly controlled by the SORP, and abolished the agency *Velebit*. The agency's task was to inform on all cultural, political, economical, and sports news from country and abroad. It mainly received the information from the German News Service (GNS), Italian *Stefani*, French agency *Havas*, English *Reuter* and Soviet *Tassa*, and based on that information the newsletter was created /7/. The Agency was connected to all the SORP's offices and reporters abroad with the help of wireless Hell-printers, but there was also a permanent connection with other news offices and authorities. The CNO *Croatia* issued news for Zagreb and the surroundings as well as the state radio stations, and in was in charge of preparing news in foreign languages for the German and Italian journalists. Secret news were issued for a limited number of users, and the editorial boards were given orders how and where to issue the news. *Secret News* washed picked information from alien agencies and neutral countries, and they were put together in three newsletters daily. The first one was political news, the second one military reports on Ally war operations, a the third newsletter called *Special service* contained mainly the whole shows by the Telegraphic Agency of New Yugoslavia (TANY) as well as the news from the other ally agencies in case they referred to the ISC /8/. The CNO *Croatia* was organised as follows: *Newspaper Office*, with subdivision of *Iternal*, *Foreign* and *Confidential Office* /9/. The first head of the CNO *Croatie* was the writer Antun Nizeteo /10/, and after him Daniel Uvanović was appointed the head, and he will remain at that position till the end of the war /11/.

From the year 1942, editorial boards in the ISC were managed by *The State Office for Reporting and Propaganda* (SORP), i.e. by the *Main Directorate for the Promotion Marketing* (MDPM) with the Presidency of the Government. *Department for Journalism* under the MDPM issued daily orders to the

heads of the newspapers, who then forwarded the messages to editors and journalists in the field, which resulted in a monotone and predictable tone of the wholesome journalism. Prior to printing, the content had to pass a detailed control, i.e. censorship in order to remove all information that was not in favour of the political establishment of the ISC allies. Pre-censorship was conducted on the information that was received in the form of the agencies' news, weekly, semi-monthly and monthly reviews of the foreign press in order to prevent the unwanted information to reach the editorial boards and then the newspapers. Besides, a strict selection of the contents of the foreign newspapers was conducted as to fit the published information to the political recommendation of the ISC press. The MDPM was not the only body that controlled the journalists. *Department for Journalism* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in charge of supervising the foreign politics in the newspapers and the Ministry of Internal Affairs supervised the newspapers with the help of their censors who took positions in the MDPM offices. The presence of the USS agents caused discomfort and fear in the editorial boards as they had power and were a physical threat to the journalists.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs reserves the right to supervise the whole marketing. In case the state censorship missed something or failed to check, the MIA officials could have prevented the printing. Dr. Leopold Bjelobrajdić had the role of the

main supervisors till the end of the year 1943. Franc Perše was his successor and he kept this position till the end of the war. One of the *Department for Journalism* with the MDPM employees spoke about the MIA's censorships:

*All I know about these people is that we were afraid of them and what they might say about a book before it was published. Especially Bjelobrajdić, who was very diligent and accused me of promoting democratic literature such as the Nobel Prize winners. When the book "Introduction to Sociology" was published in 1944 with some pictures of foreign sociologists, such as Marks and Engels, without the principal's approval, I was kicked out of the censorship department and was assigned to sorting out the mail, where I remained till the very end. Dr. Bjelobrajdić was appointed commissary as we, the younger ones, took culture too broadly. /12/*

Enormous amounts of energy and money were invested in the censorship all in order to convince the citizens of the validity of the Ustasha regime, the victorious war led by Germany and the realisation of the project *New Europe*. The published content of the newspapers in the ISC in the period between 1941 and 1945 was by no means the result of free journalist work, but the result of the inland political censorship and ally dictate of Germany and Italy.

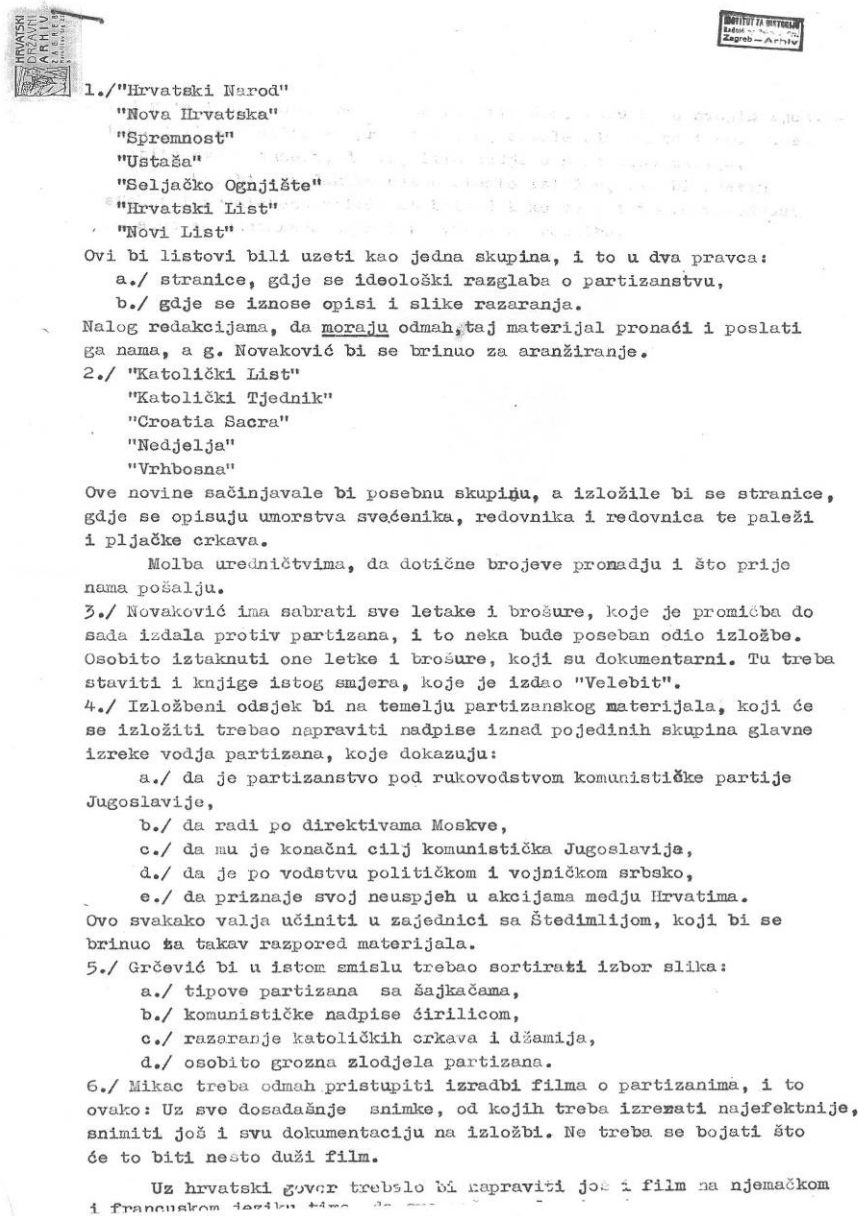


Figure 1. – Daily orders to editorial boards from the SORP/ MDPM

### Journalist as a Target of Policy

When the Independent State of Croatia was established in the spring of 1941, the Ustasha government was aware of the fact that not all journalists shared their point of view. Many of them did not appreciate the intolerance towards other ethnic groups, religious communities and above all the racial laws passed. Firstly, the government issued legal acts and legal regulations to create the assumptions, and then it took repressive steps to remove those who opposed and thus assumed utter control of the whole media sector.

In the background of the taken measures was the Ustasha government decision to:

*...prevent the Jews and Yugo masons, who not only served the torturers of the Croatian people but also took pleasure in assaulting Croatian sanctities, from having any kind of an influence on our journalism, our press. It cannot be further tolerated that those who became rich by our Ustasha fights to clear our market from Serbian press and newspapers. /13/*

During spring 1941, as the editorial boards of the ISC were formed, it was obvious that there are more opposing parties who fought for the control over the published media. One group consisted of the journalists who gathered around Ivo Bogdan, Tias Mortigjije, Daniel Uvanović, Stjepan Hrastovec and Stipe Tomičić. The second group was formed around Ante Oršanić from the stu-

dents' society *August Šenoa*. The third was around the first editor of the *Hrvatski narod* (*Croatian People*), D. Bumbera and the Minister M. Budaka. The fourth group, which can politically be defined as a party lobby of Ustasha emigrant officers supported by the Head, was formed under the leadership of the colonel Josip Mrmić. The group of journalists led by Matija Kovačić and Mia Tolj Potonja supported this group and in time they will prove to be the most influential /14/. J. Grbelja emphasised the colonel Josip Mrmića, as an exponent of the aggressive Ustasha policy towards the editors and journalists. /15/

The group gathered around colonel Mijo Bizak, a special commissioner for journalism, confirms the fact that the Ustasha leadership had a very clear goal of controlling the journalists' work. It was demanded that the whole tone of the newspapers be pro-Ustasha, that they glorify the Head of the state, and that they use the translations from the Italian and German newsletters when reporting on foreign affairs /16/. Although this was impossible to do in reality, the repression towards the journalists was as strong till the end of the war. Nonetheless, even the smallest mistakes, such as shortening the text or showing the slightest hostility towards the allies, could have been fatal for the editors and the journalists /17/.

The ISC government removed all the journalists that used to work in once most influential newspaper, such as *Jutarnji list*, *Novosti* etc. Younger people, often not very experienced, took over their positions. From the journalist's point view, there was a clear decadency and stagnation, and the new policy asked for an Ustasha tone in all areas of reporting. The same source reports that Tias Mortigija was appointed the commissioner for the CPP's newsletter *Hrvatski dnevnik*, where the source was working and the newsletter was promptly abolished. All the journalists were told that they have to keep appearing at the editorial board. Soon after a meeting was held by Matija Kovačić in the room of the former *Jutarnji list*, and all the journalists of the abolished newspapers were obliged to come. Matija Kovačićas, a government commissioner, explained to them that the new state needs them, but they need to be reorganised under his leadership first. On that occasion a group of journalists was chosen for the main political newspaper *Hrvatski narod* (*Croatian People*) and *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia*). Among the journalists who were not chosen was Mirko Glojnarić, a prominent CPP member who then returns to his

home town Mače nearby Zlatar. Later he and his sister were killed by the Ustasha. /18/

On the first Conference of journalists of the ISC held on July 16, 1941 out of 147 journalists on the list, eighty one was chosen as eligible. About 40% of journalists became unwanted and some of them even fired first those who used to lead the editorials in Yugoslav press. The memo of the June 7, 1941 sent to the Journalists Society of the Banovina of Croatia, is also one of the proofs that journalists were threatened at that time. Twenty five of them begged the authorities to be intervened in their case as they had not been accepted on the lists and that despite the law they had not received their salaries in five months. It also says: *We as professionals cannot be responsible for the newspaper's political point of view as the owners and not we made those decisions*. This document concludes that Božidar Novak clearly speaks of relationships between the governing politicians and the journalism: *the journalists paid a very high price the change of the regime – firstly with their salaries and then with their freedom and lives*. /19/ Thinking of the last April days of Yugoslavia, Ivo Mihovilović, the then director of the Zagreber *Novosti*, said: *Do you have any idea what our work looked like in those days? As if all of us were writing our joint resignation. At that time I knew that was our last joint job*. /20/

However, some of the journalists embraced the new regime and were at disposal to it. /21/ Although it was clearly that only a minority of them shared the Ustasha ideals, and the others hoped that the cooperation with the governing regime would ensure them a better status. Daniel Uvanović, who was deported to the authorities of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY), similarly argued his way of writing and propaganda in favour of German war accomplishments, Nazi doctrine, Ustasha ideology and anti-Bolshevik fights. When asked about glorifying Hitler and his war accomplishments, he replied:

*This question arises from my writing style. However, it was neither my personal belief nor intention to justify Hitler's plans or actions let alone glorify them. This article was written according to the directives of the Main Directorate for the Promotion Marketing (MDPM) that demanded a special addition was written to give a special meaning to the German government and its Nazi beliefs.*

When later asked why he glorifies the Ustasha movement, Uvanović said:

*The mentioned style of writing approves all Ustasha activities, including its fights and was entirely written*

in the spirit of the Ustasha propaganda. However, it was neither my intention nor my conviction that there were any arguments to support the many Ustasha atrocities... /22/

The membership in the Croatian Journalists' Association, the roof organisation of all journalists, was a main condition to be able to perform the job of a journalist in the ISC. The first leadership of the CJA were: Matija Kovačić, the president, the Ustasha prominents dr. Ivo Mrakovčić, Antun Šenda, Franjo Dujmović, Ante Jedvaj and Josipom Blažina. Mile Budak was appointed an honorary president. CJA's rulebook, that was in power from September 23, 1942 (later known as a part of the *Law on Journalists and Journalism*), had strict rules and conditions on who can become a member of

CJA. The occupation of a journalist was declared a public occupation and it was to be acquired by being added on the *List of Journalists and Journalist Trainee*. The condition was being of full age and passed Matura test. The applied person had to have a citizenship of Aryan heritage and not married to a non-Aryan person based on the law regulation on protection of blood and honour of the Croatian people, which was taken from the German *Law on editors* from 1933. /23/ The journalists' role was to work on Ustasha well-being, which is also confirmed by the article 29 of the CJA's rulebook: *The Ustasha supporter is invited to destroy all attempts against homeland and state as determined as he can, if necessary with blood.* /24/

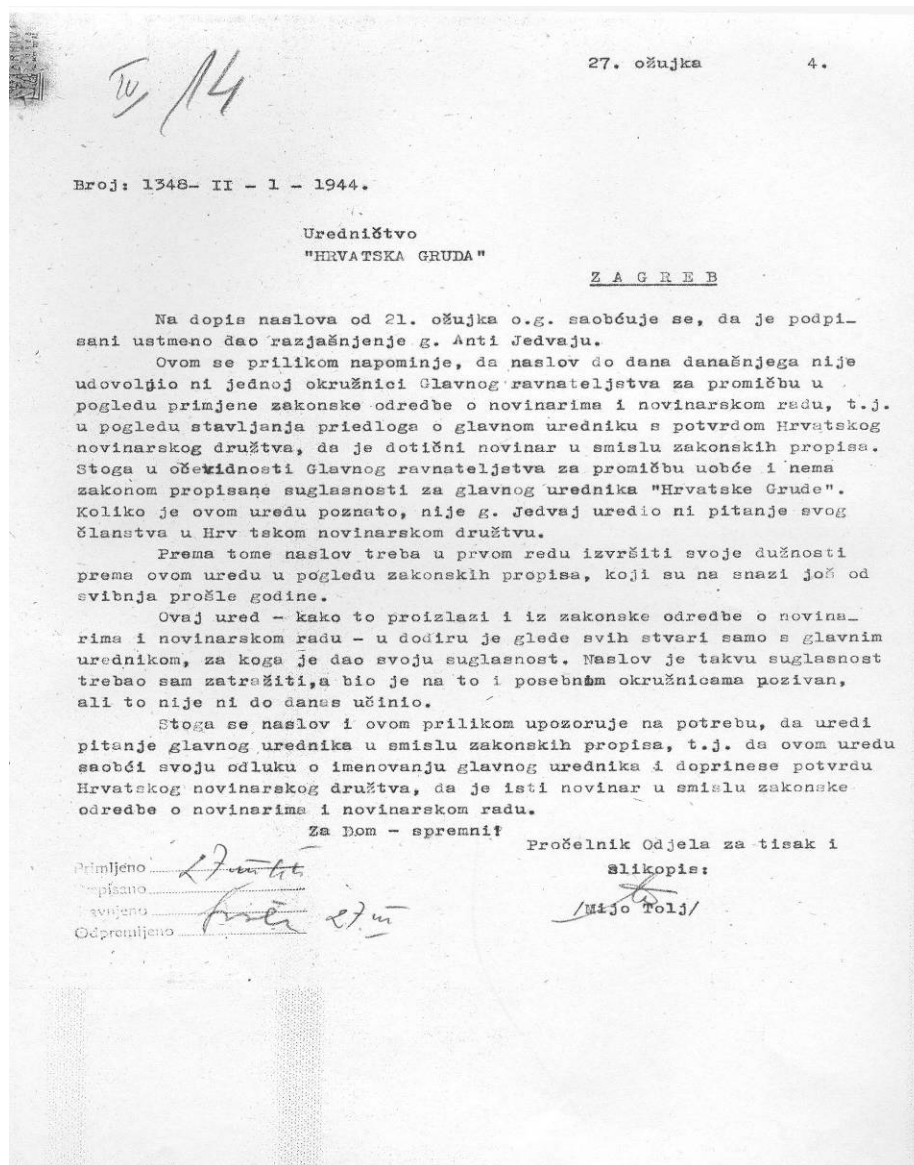


Figure 2 – Being a member of CJA was a licence to work in the editorial boards of the ISC

In order to become an associate, assume a permanent position or an editor in the ISC, beside the

membership in the CJA, they also had to fill in a questionnaire on personal data that looked very



much like a police file. It asked for not only personal data like name, address, qualifications, but also religion, membership in the *Ustasha-Croatian Liberation Movement*, hair colour, form of the forehead as well as a picture as a proof. /25/ This is also confirmed by the statements made by the imprisoned journalists in the ISC, Danijel Uvanović,

Vilim Peroš, Tijasa Mortigije, that all the journalists were under strict control of the regime in the period from 1941 till 1945 and in order to be able to survive, they had to fully obey all the goals of the Ustasha propaganda. /26/

MINISTARSTVO NARODNE PROSVJETE  
GLAVNO RAVNATELJSTVO ZA PROMIČBU  
NOVINSKI URED

**OSOBNI PODATCI:**

O OSOBAMA, KOJE RADE I SURADJUJU NA IZDAVANJU NOVINA I ČASOPISA U NEZAVISNOJ DRŽAVI HRVATSKOJ

Broj spisa pod kojim se vodi kod nas: .....

Ime i prezime: Zvonimir Mikao

Ime roditelja: Zvonimir i pok. Marija rođj. Agrež

Nadimak (pseudonim): .....

Stalno zanimanje: } student Hrvatske ekonomsko-komercijalen visoke škole

Svojstvo rada: } .....

Datum i godina rođenja: 9. ožujka 1920.

Narodnost: hrvatska

Zavičajnost: .....

Boravište: Zagreb

Državljanstvo: N. D. P.

Vjeroispovijest (sadašnja i prije 10. IV. 1941.): katolička

Uzrast: srednji

Oblik lica: dugoljast

Kosa: tamna

Čelo: visoko

Obve: tamne

Oči: tamno smeđe

Nos: pravilan

Brkovi: brije

Usta: pravilna

Zubi: zdravi

Brada: brije

Posebni znakovi: nema

Oženjen: neoženjen


Koliko djece: ./.

Jesu li djeca namještena: ./.

Zena namještena i gdje: ./.

Služio vojsku: služi obvezatno djelatno razdoblje

Položaj u uredništvu: odgovorni urednik



Koju rubriku uredjuje ili suradjuje: .....

Koliko godina radi kao novinar i gdje je radio: godinu dana radi i suradjuje u urednistvu "Vojnika"

Mjesečna plaća: Kn 12.000.-

Učlanjen u Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo: .....

Da li je sudbeno ili redarstveno kažnjavan: nije

Odgovara li za koje kažnjivo djelo: ne

Posjeduje li putnicu od koje vlasti i kakvu: ne

Kvalifikacije: cand.ing. ekonomije

Govori strane jezike, čita i piše: njemački i francuzki

Član znanstvenih ustanova i prosvjetnih društava: .....

Književni i znanstveni rad: .....

Proputovao zemlje: Italiju

Poznaje brzopis: ne

Vozi motorna vozila: samovoz

Slikar, crtač, karikaturista: .....

Bio sam osiguran: .....

Član ustaškog oslobodilačkog pokreta: /

Prije 10. IV. 1941. bio učlanjen: /

Primjedbe: .....

ZA DOM SPREMNI!

*Zorica Stika*

Figure 3– The questionnaire the journalists had to take prior to working in the editorial boards

Croatian Journalists' Society had a key role in ensuring the basic needs and social security of the journalists in the ISC. Since, as reported by a contem-

porary journalist, the war circumstances made the life in Zagreb extremely difficult for all people living on their monthly salaries, and not participating in some



*illegal activities*. The CJA helped its protégés to find firewood but it also helped them with loans. The *Society's* incomes were accumulated with membership fees and surtaxes on advertising in local newspapers. The surtax was implemented by the Ustasha government upon CJA's request to ensure financial basis for autonomous retirement insurance. In the end of the year 1941 an agreement was reached between big daily newspapers *Hrvatskog naroda* (Croatian people), *Nove Hrvatske* and *Hrvatskog lista* to stop issuing all Sunday's issues and thus a medium room was created for *Nedjeljne vesti* (Sunday News) published by *Croatian Journalists' Society* (CJA).

When the weekly newsweekly *Nedjeljne vesti* (Sunday News) appeared on the market, the journalists got a day off weekly, and the ICA an extra income. Beside the informative character, this newsweekly was also a union newsletter. At first, journalists of different editorial boards wrote articles for *Nedjeljne vesti* (Sunday News) without any pay. However, for the year 1943 the newspaper became very professional and changed its name to *Novine* (The News). At the beginning of 1942, this newsweekly came out on three pages, then on eight during 1943, then ten and twelve during 1944. Till the end of the year 1942 the editor was Antun Šenda, and then Josip Blažina. According to the MDPM decision in 1943 abridged versions of the newsweekly were being published in Osijek and Sarajevo. This newsweekly was especially significant for a better understanding of the journalists' position in the ISC, which was understandable as the newsweekly was created by CJA.

A large number of articles were dedicated to journalists and their work, as well as their social status /27/. The surtax on all daily issues and its own newsweekly were a certain favour the Ustasha government did for the CJA in order to improve the journalists' position in the ISC but also to make them even more dependent on benefits of marketing the ISC state. The creating of the side fond was of essential importance for many journalists in the ISC from the middle of 1942 when due to paper shortage 72 newsweekly, biweekly news, news monthly and bimonthly newspapers were abolished by a SORP's decision /28/.

Starting from the spring 1943 and by the decision of the Ustasha government, all the newspapers in the ISC were under direct control of the *Ustasha Publishing Institute* in order to strengthen the Ustasha influence in editorials boards. The first director of the *Institute* was dr. Edo Bulat, who was

responsible for the reform in the business of the newspaper editorials and all the journalists were laid off in order to ensure the closing of new deals but not with the editorial boards but with the *Ustasha Publishing Institute*. In the middle of the year 1944, the minister Mirko Puk takes over the *Institute* abolishing the Law on Journalism and issuing an order on mandatory membership in the Ustasha movement. According to an anonymous contemporary, this was a very difficult period for many journalists. Many of them lost their jobs, some were politically persecuted and some of them feared for their lives due to strong repression by the Luburićevac group (Vjekoslav Max Luburić, the commander Jasenovac concentration camp and the head of the third department of the USS, the so-called Ustasha Defence) and the military supporters of Josa Rukavina. Despite the enormous pressure, only an insignificant number of the journalists gave in /29/. All these measures had a unique goal – to insure the unified model of informing promoting the Wellbeing of the ISC, Ustasha principles and higher political interests that were clear only to the policy makers. In the last few months of the war in 1944 and 1945, the ISC was no longer in charge of its territory and state institutions /30/, as reported by some Swiss reporters. The Head tried to conduct the Ustasha policy in all segments of the Croatian society and ensure the monolithic of the alignment with Germany and Italy till the end of the war, no matter what the end result was. Hence the journalists as well. The journalists who did not want to join the Ustasha movement, was fired in a month without the right on separation pay. So thirty to forty journalists, eight of which from the *Hrvatskog naroda* (Croatian people) and fifteen from *Nove Hrvatske* (New Croatia) were not only fired but also automatically enlisted. Dr. Mirko Puk, the minister, had to remove that was not Ustasha, so the journalists who did not pledge to the Ustasha regime were included /31/. Vilim Peroš, the principal of the *Nove Hrvatske* (New Croatia), after being deported from Rome in 1947 to the authorities of the FPRY, explained why he forced the staff to join the Ustasha organisation: *In December of 1944 Dr. Puk, who was the Head of the Ustasha Publishing Institute, asked me to give him an declaration of each member of the editorial board whether he is or is not a member of the Ustasha editorial board. I presented this dr. Puk's memo to each member and then sent their declaration to dr. Puk officially. Afterwards, based on these declarations, he asked me to fire almost all the members of the editorial board who*

declared that they are not the members of the Ustasha movement. They then suggested I fire those who were less diligent and professional. Then I asked the members of the editorial board to write a short summary of their jobs, tasks and articles they wrote in the last two months. I then presented those elaborates with my opinion to dr. Puk. Based on this, all the journalists who were serving the civil duty were fired: Katičić, the city reporter, Svoboda, Betanik, who later was kept and Maruševski was fired, Mlinarić, Djunio, Ožegović, Ivan Ambrozić and Salih Alić. I do not think anybody else was fired. /32/

In the ISC there were journalists who did not fit their ideological profile, but nonetheless were not fired due to their academical respect in the community, influence in the society and their reputation were used to promote Ustasha principles. So, in 1941 Ante Ciliga /33/ a famous publicist of the communist orientation ended up in the concentration camp in the period between the two wars. However, the Ustasha regime recognised his influence and importance in the promotion of their propaganda in the ISC, so he was rehabilitated under constant supervision and political control. In the beginning of the year 1943 on the initiative of Ivo Bogdan, the principal for the main political daily newspaper in the ISC (soon after the head of the MDPM in the ISC) and Aleksandra Seitz, the chief of the Head's office, Ciliga was dismissed from the concentration camp Jasenovac, as the political Ustasha influential considered his erudition and eloquence, and above his knowledge of the USSR, could serve in their anti-communist actions. /34/ Hence in Zagreb *Spremnosti (Readiness)* during 1943 and 1944 a series of columns was dedicated to the criticism of the communist regime in the Soviet Union. Ciling cooperated with a divergent group of intellectuals in the *Spremnosti (Readiness)* as the Ustasha regime, with the press context taken over from the Axis press, needed on the pages of the political and cultural magazine a con-

vincing content by an accomplished Croatian author. An anonymous author, interrogated in 1947 by FPRY, described this as follows: *Some of the Spremnosti (Readiness)' associates were the University Professor Grga Novak, Kus Nikolajev, dr. Ante Ciliga and the above mentioned Magdić (op. a. Milivoj). /35/ An awkward combination of clerofashists, „trockists“, „social-democrats“, and the Yugoslavs! For the Ustashes, this was the need of the times. They needed to elaborate to some of the famous names the reason why some articles were written /36/. Hence Spremnost (Readiness) was somewhat different than the rest of the daily newspapers and periodicals since the Teheran conference /37/.*

The Ustasha regime tried to keep the journalists under its control. The fact that the journalists had difficulties trying to obtain the passport to travel abroad also proves the difficult situation and the strict control they were under. They had to undergo a comply and very strict control on several instances. In the case of a prominent regime journalist and a member of the editorial board of the *Hrvatskog narodav (Croatian people)*, Boris Berković, the procedure lasted over a month procedure (April/Mai in 1943), and several levels of decision makings were involved. After preliminary confirm of the Zagreb headquarters of the *Ustasha – Croatian Liberation Movement*, on Berković behalf, *Hrvatski narod (Croatian People)* applied to the SORP and the *Department for Print and Photo* of the MFA, in order to obtain a positive answer, i.e. the possibility of issuing the *passport* at the police, *Department for Passports, Zagreb /38/*. All this makes it clear that a journalist's escape to a neutral country was impossible, except joining the PLM, which many of the Croatian writers and journalists did, like Vladimir Nazor, Ivan Goran Kovačić or *Nova Hrvatska (New Croatia)*'s writer Šime Balena /39/.

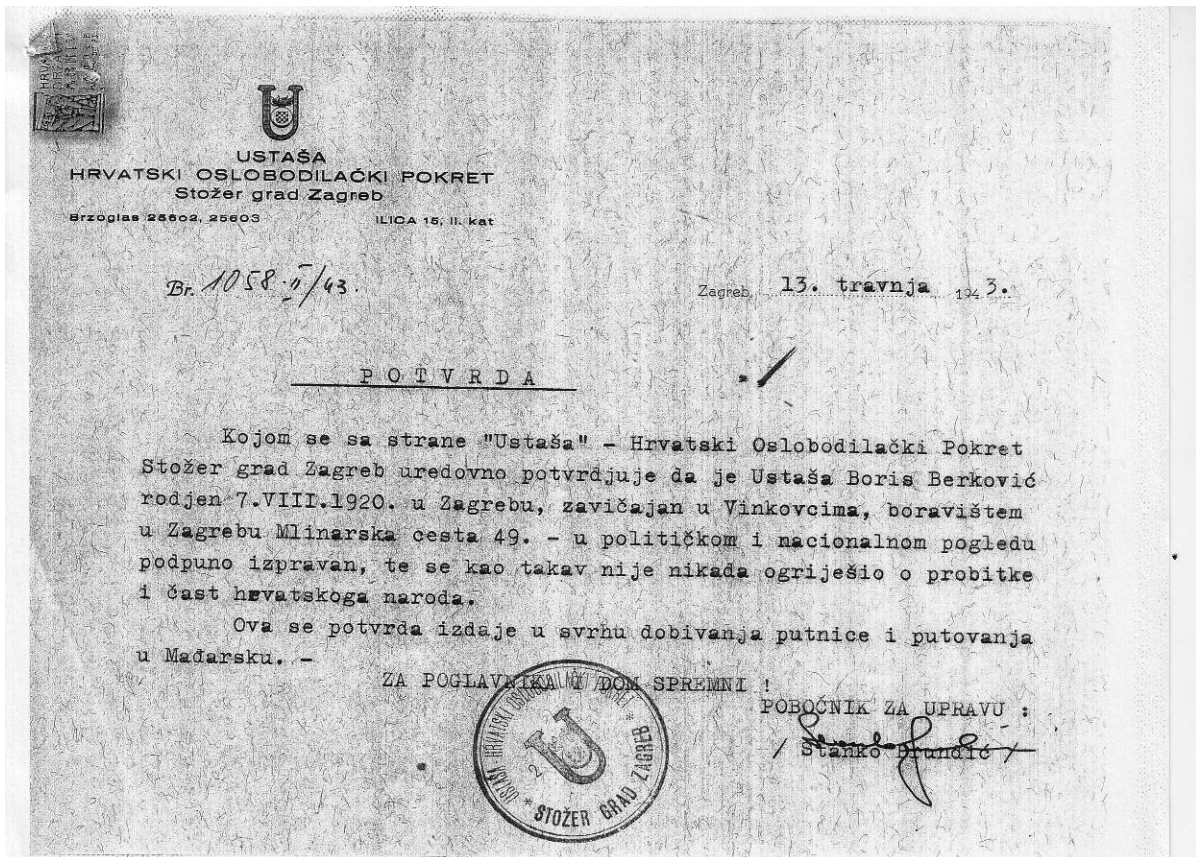


Figure 4– The certificate of the Ustasha organisation that guaranteed issuing of the passport to the journalists in the ISC

Regardless of all the precautions of the Ustasha regime, the journalists did not truly believe all the information given to the public. Since the beginning of the 1942 many journalists secretly listened to the enemy radio stations, and read the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' newsletter *Izveštajni ured (Reporting office)* thus having an access to the neutral journalism, and it became obvious that the Germany's victory on the Eastern front was questionable. A further proof of this was a meeting of newspapers editors, commentators and associates of the external affairs columns and radio held on CHA's invitation early 1942, attended by Ministry of Foreign Affairs' representatives and the minister himself, Mladen Lorković. Some of the journalists openly asked the minister about the current situation on the Eastern front, about the Soviet offensive and the difficult situation of the German forces, and some even asked him what he thought of the neutral journalism of Sweden and Switzerland on the Soviet success /40/. This confirms the thesis that many journalists fearing for their life and survival were forced to think one think, speak the other and write the third.

The pressure on the newspaper editors was enormous. On one occasion on September 5, 1942, USS had to intervene in SORP due to the panicky

fear amongst the responsible journalists who feared political mistakes and radical punishment of the journalists. A memo sent to *Journalist Department* it is clear that some journalists were fired for no obvious reason while others were not punished for mistakes they had made. The memo states:

*A materialistic and moral injustice was made, especially towards the journalist Ambrozić, who is a provider of a family of ten. This brings even bigger hatred of the Ustasha regime, and this is something that should be having a special attention because of the marketing. /41/* This all supports the thesis that the journalists were under strict control of SORP, MFY and USS, and that fear of the sanctions in the editorial boards they made some denunciations. As far as the Ustasha, i.e. state offices were concerned; the journalists' job was closely connected to the political interests, Ustasha movement, whose reputation was seriously damaged at that time according to a memo from the year 1942.

The Ustasha leadership denied civic rights and freedom, especially the freedom of speech, which directly disabled the journalists to write based on the truth. The fact that the journalists and editors were arrested because of what they wrote is further supported by the example of T. Mortigija

who was arrested in the fall of the year 1941, as ordered by A. Pavelić, because of a piece of news he wrote about CPP prominents Janko Tortić and dr. Josip Berković. T. Mortigjija also states that Milan Lavicki, the editor of the economy column in *Hrvatski narod (Croatian People)*, was also arrested, and many more who were severely warned /42/.

Terror over the journalists and their work was intensified in the year 1943. Many of the journalists ended up in the concentration camps or were executed, especially those not supportive of the regime. Among the sixteen people hanged in December, 21 1943 for being proven communists, were some journalists of the news agency *Croatia*, dr. Branimir Ivakić, Petar Mihočević, then the journalists Ljubomir Sokolović, Radovan Reicherzer and the distinguished writer Bogdan Ogrizović, as reported by *Nova Hrvatska (New Croatia)* /43/.

### Conclusion

The journalist occupation in the Independent State of Croatia in the period from 1941 to 1945 was brought down to the spokesman of the only allowed political party – *Ustasha-Croatian Liberation Movement*. The social status, the rights and the responsibilities towards the State were determined by the Law on Journalists and journalism, which was taken from the German *Law on editors* from 1933. Upon the establishment of the ISC, the journalists were politically selected and afterwards carefully controlled by the government offices and agencies the CIS, CNO Croatia, SORP/MDPM, but also the police, USS and MFA. The multilevel censorship was conducted in the editorial boards, then by the government through the appointed offices and agencies, followed by the censorship done by the police agents, who spread fear among the journalists from the middle of the year of 1944 when Mirko Puk, the minister and the head of the Ustasha Publishing Institute, declared that in order to be a journalist one had to be a member of the *Ustasha-Croatian Liberation Movement*. Fearing for their life, the greatest number of the journalists was forced to write according to the directives obtained from the *Department for Journalism* in the SORP/MDPM, which is clear from the documents of the Fonds of the Presidency of the Government in the SORP/MDPM, immigrant testimonies of prominent officials of newspaper editorials or government agencies in

the Secretariat for Internal Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (SIA of SRC), Institute for State Security, and the memoirs of the journalists and politicians in the ISC. A part of the prominent intellectuals in the ISC, who by no means belonged to the Ustasha regime, were Ante Ciliga, Grge Novak or Mirko Kus Nikolajev, the columnist of *Spremnosti (Readiness)*, rehabilitated by the Ustasha. This was Ustasha regime's way of showing its openness towards the different political views, its simulation of freedom and its attempts to gain credibility. Because of this the newsweekly *Spremnost (Readiness)* had a special place in the press in the ISC.

On the first Conference of journalists of the ISC held on July 16, 1941 out of 147 journalists on the list about 40% of journalists became unwanted and in the years to come some of them even lost their job, due to financial difficulties and extinguishing of 73 newspapers in 1942, technical error or due to flagrant opponents to the Ustasha regime in the year 1944 when the editorial boards were becoming pro-Ustasha. Some of the journalists were unfortunately executed, like dr. Branimir Ivakić, Petar Mihočević, Ljubomir Sokolović, Radovan Reicherzer and the prominent writer Bogdana Ogrizovića.

In order to become an associate, assume a permanent position or an editor in the ISC, was the membership in the CJA and filling in a questionnaire on personal data, which was a guarantee that the person applying for the job was racially, nationally, confessionally and ideologically right. CJA had a very important social role for journalists in difficult situation, which the Ustasha regime used in promoting purposes. Namely, by implementing surtax on all newspaper issues in the ISC and allowing them to have their own newsweekly *Nedjeljne vesti (Novina)*, the government ensured an income for the CJA, which was partly used as financial basis for autonomous retirement insurance and partly as aid for the poorest journalists.

Since the beginning of the year 1943 administrative and financial jurisdictions for all the press in the ISC was assumed by the Ustasha Publishing Institute, and since then all the journalists were no longer employees of the editorial boards but of the newly found Institute. Their position was even worsened since the Institute was initially established to implement the rationalisation of the press in the time of the war when having paper was considered a wealth, but also to further tie

the journalists to the marketing interests of the Ustasha government. This will become obvious in the end of the year 1945 and the beginning of the year 1945 when the Ustasha government openly tried to make all the journalists pro-Ustasha.

#### Notes

- /1/ Itković Zuckerman, Boško, *Funkcija protužidovske propagande zagrebačkih novina u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj od travnja do srpnja 1941. godine*, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 38, br. 1, 80., Zagreb 2006., 81. Unnamed source, a journalist in the ISC, states the CIS was under the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, most probably thinking of the additional control of the confidential diplomatic information. However, the CIS was not a part of the MFA. CSA, Fond of RSUP SRH SDS (1561), 0131.18.
- /2/ The German Ministry for People's illumination and marketing were also music, theatre, art. Jareb, Mario, *Media and Marketing of the Independent State of Croatia, Independent State of Croatia from 1941 to 1945 – almanac*, Zagreb 2009.
- /3/ After Ivo Bogdan, who initially led the agency, the agency was led by the Ustasha colonel Josip Mrmić. Since January till August of the year 1942 he was the bailiff of the Croatian News Office Croatia, and later he has several duties in the Headquarters of the Ustasha military and the Ministry of Defence. CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government of the ISC – CIS, summary inventory, 2.- 10.
- /4/ On November, 3 1941 special commissioner for journalism with the Presidency of the Government warns that CIS cannot make a diplomatic, i.e. international announcement without the prior approval of the MFA. CSA, Fond of the CIS (1078), 2911/41.
- /5/ CSA, Fond RSUP SRH SDS (1561), 0131.18. After the news about the Belgrade revolution spread in March 1941, Josip Mrmić, Ustasha colonel (1907 - ?) takes part in establishing the radio station *Velebit* in Berlin. After the ISC was established, he was appointed the commissioner for the Petrinja County, and soon after the Head of the Ustasha Headquarters Gora in Petrinja. From January 1942 he was the bailiff of the CNO *Croatia*. From October 1943 till January 1945 he was the head of the Educational department of the Ministry of Defence. After the war he emigrated to the US. *Tko je tko u NDH (Who is who in the ISC)*, 284.
- /6/ The frequent changes of the jurisdiction over the media and the marketing in general since the establishment of the ISC (State Secretary for People's illumination, SORP, MDPM) do not change the fact that there was always a central body that in the period from 1941 to 1945 was competent for all the media in the ISC. Jareb, M., op. cit., 92., 93.
- /7/ CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government of the ISC – CIS, summary inventory, 2.- 10.
- /8/ After being deported to Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY) and during his interviews on March 9, 1947, Daniel Uvanović said *Tajne vijesti (Secret News)* were sent to ministers, some state offices, newspapers' principals and about 50 foreign journalists. Till the end of the war the number was reduced to about 12 to 16 users as ordered by the Minister of the Internal Affairs, dr. Mate Frkovića, CSA, Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18 – Record of the interview conducted with Danijel Uvanović on March 9, 1947.
- /9/ *Spomen knjiga prve obljetnice the ISC*, 46.- 48. *Domaća služba (Interior Office)* was divided into political, county and Zagreb, whereas the *Inozemna (Foreign Affairs)* was divided into correspondence, economic and sports. *Novinska služba (Journalists Office)* received about 100-150 pieces of news and information daily, and during the Parliament sitting record of 357 pages.
- /10/ Antun Nizeteo, a writer (1913. – 2000.) After the establishment of the ISC he finds employment with the MFA and was appointed the ambassador for cultural relations in Rome. After Italy's capitulation he was appointed the Beliff of the Department of the cultural relations with the MFA, and just before the end of the war was transferred to the newly opened consulate in Prague. After the break of fall of the ISC he moved to Munich, and then to the USA. *Tko je tko u NDH (Who is who in the ISC)*, 297., 298.
- /11/ CSA, Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18.
- /12/ Op. cit.
- /13/ *Spomen knjiga prve obljetnice Nezavisne Države Hrvatske*, 40.
- /14/ CSA, Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS, 0131.18
- /15/ Grbelja, Josip, *Uništeni naraštaji*, Zagreb 2000., 18.- 20.
- /16/ Jelić, Butić, F., op. cit., 204., Mortigijija, Tijas, Moj životopis, Zagreb, 1996., 75.
- /17/ Grbelja, J., op. cit, 27.
- /18/ CSA, Fond RSUP SRH SDS, 0131.18.
- /19/ Novak, Božidar, *Hrvatsko novinarstvo u 20.stoljeću*, Zagreb 2005., 313. – 315.
- /20/ Košutić, Ivan, *Rađanje, život i umiranje jedne države. 49 mjeseci the ISC*, Zagreb, 1997., 33.
- /21/ Upon the establishment of the ISC, the Ustasha journalists and editors showed their loyalty by attending a reception bei the Head in July of the year 1941, which was reported on in the *Novi list* July 26, 1941. Itković Z. B., op. cit., 81.
- /22/ Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18 – Record of the interview conducted with Danijel Uvanović on March 9, 1947.
- /23/ The German law from the October 4, 1933 states that the editor can be only the person with German citizenship, of Aryan heritage and married to a person of non-Aryan heritage. CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government CIS (237), A. J. 313.
- /24/ Novak, Božidar, op. cit, 317. – 318.



- /25/ CSA, Fond 237, box 42, 1492/944.
- /26/ CSA, Fond Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18
- /27/ B. NOVAK, op. cit., 291.
- /28/ CSA, Fond 237, box 10, 844/42
- /29/ The source states that they knew of no *old* journalist (from the ex editorial boards) who signed the Ustasha movement membership. CSA, Fond RSUP SRH SDS (1561), 0131.18.
- /30/ In the middle of November 1944, Berner *Der Bund* reports that in Croatia there is no legal authority. Zagreb is completely isolated from the rest of the state and strictly controlled by the Gestapo. Pavelić and his associates would in a case of need be transferred to Germany by a plane. Of all Ustasha units allegedly only four divisions remained faithful to Wermacht. CSA, MVP – Izvještajni ured (*Reporting office*), kut. 27, The review of the Swiss press, No. 789, *Kaos u Hrvatskoj (Chaos in Croatia)*.
- /31/ Grbelja, J., op. cit., 97.-98.
- /32/ CSA, RSUP SRH SDS (1561), 0131.18 – *Zapisnik razgovora od 6. kolovoza 1947*. Record of the interview conducted on August 6, 1947.
- /33/ Ante Ciliga, politician and a publicist (Šegotići nearby Vodnjan, 1898 – Zagreb, 1992). After the ISC was established he was arrested based on an old Yugoslav warrant and imprisoned in Jasenovac. In January of the year 1943 was released and appointed the editor of *Spremnosti (Readiness)*, Where is allowed to publish his analysis of the Soviet communism. During the war he published the books: *Deset godina u Sovjetskoj Rusiji, Komunistička stranka. Nacrt ustrojstva*. *Tko je tko u NDH (Who is who in the ISC)*, 70., 71.
- /34/ CSA, Fond Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18
- /35/ Mirko Kus-Nikolajev, sociologist and ethnologist (Zagreb, 1896.– Zagreb, 1961.).between the wars he was the custodian of the Museum of arts and crafts in Zagreb and the Museum of a south Serbia in Skopje. After the establishment of the ISC he was arrested (Kerestinec), and from the middle of the year 1942 he was the librarian in the MDPM, because of which he was sentenced in 1946 to long imprisonment. During the ISC he cooperated with many magazines such as: *Spremnost (Readiness), Suradnja, Hrvatski krugoval, Hrvatska misao*, itd. *Tko je tko u NDH (who is Who in the ISC)*, 222. Milivoj Magdić, publicist (Koprivnica 1900. – Zagreb 1948.) In his articles he was trying to connect the principles of the social democracy with the Croatian state idea. He greets the establishment of the ISSC, but is very critical towards the regime and its activities. He became an associate of *Spremnosti (Readiness)*, Where he published the brochures *Intelektualci prema marksizmu i liberalizmu, Najstrašnije razdoblje života seljačtva u Sovjetskoj Uniji i Slučaj Vere Wagnerove. Tko je tko u NDH (Who is who in the ISC)*, 249.-250.
- /36/ CSA, Fond Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18
- /37/ Labus, Alan, *Politika i novine u NDH*, Plejada, Zagreb 2011., 65. – 70.
- /38/ CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government SORP /MDPM(237), 3080/43.
- /39/ CSA, Fond Fond RSUP-SRH-SDS (1561), 0131.18
- /40/ Košutić, I., op. cit., 241.-244.
- /41/ CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government SORP /MDPM(237), 1332/42. Ambrozić Ivan was the editor of the second edition of *Nove Hrvatske (New Croatia)*, CSA, Fond of the Presidency of the Government SORP /MDPM(237), 1356/42., Novak, B., op. cit., 310. – 311.
- /42/ Mortigijja T., op. cit., 33., 73.
- /43/ Novak, B., op. cit., 312. – 313.