

**Mario Jareb, Mediji i promidžba u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj [Media and Propaganda in the Independent State of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2016)**

**Summary**

The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska – NDH*) belonged to the Axis “New Europe”, and on its soil various German and Italian institutions, as well as military forces, were strongly present. It is, therefore, not unusual that its internal structure rested on similar settings. Ruling Ustaša Movement led by Ante Pavelić sought to transform Croatia into a totalitarian state by implementing solutions that had been previously developed by National Socialism in Germany and Fascism in Italy. Totalitarian movements and regimes in general treated media and propaganda as a powerful weapon to promote their ideological and political goals and to win supporters and faithful followers. So most of them invested a lot of energy and substantial funds in the building and operation of powerful media and propaganda systems. The NDH authorities looked similarly on media and propaganda, and it is precisely the NDH to be considered as the first state formation on Croatian soil which devoted considerable attention to them. That state attempted to build a special system under state control and supervision of the ruling Ustaša Movement. The key element of the policy within that system was the strengthening and building of media to turn them into a powerful and effective media and propaganda machine. Its task was the promotion of ideas and goals of the government and ruling Ustaša Movement, as well as the suppression of any hostile action.



The activities related to the establishment of new media and propaganda system and to the transformation of media had been extensively conducted from the first day of the existence of the state. Even then it was clear that the establishment of new system was going to be a radical break with what had existed before. All the newspapers, primarily daily newspapers, which were not desired by new Ustaša rulers were abolished, and instead new titles were founded. New newspapers, daily newspapers, and informative weekly newsmagazines, were set up with the primary aim of promoting the ideas and goals of the government and the ruling Ustaša Movement. The most

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important among them was Zagreb's daily *Hrvatski narod* (*Croatian People*), which became the main herald of the government. That newspaper inherited the tradition of the former eponymous nationalist and pro-Ustasha Zagreb's weekly, which was issued from spring 1939 to be banned in March 1940. Just like other newspapers, that newspaper had to abide to the guidelines that were regularly issued by the central body of the new system. In addition, all newspapers and other publications were subjected to strict censorship. The above-mentioned binding guidelines show how the media in the NDH was orchestrated and did not have the freedom to create content of their media products.

At the head of the whole system from April 1941 to May 1945 was always one supreme and central authority that led it. Although during the four years of existence it repeatedly changed names, position, and to a lesser extent the authority, there was a continuity of that body during the entire four-year period. It was never an institution at the level of a ministry, but in many ways it was an independent institution in relation to other administrative bodies within the government of the Independent State of Croatia.

Already on April 10, 1941 the first institution of media and propaganda system of the new state was established – Croatian State Press Office (*Hrvatski državni novinski ured*, later *Hrvatska izvještajna služba* - Croatian Information Service) – with Ivo Bogdan as its commissioner. At the same time, the creation of its own media was initiated. On the same day, the control over Zagreb's Radio Station was established and special issue of the above mentioned daily *Hrvatski narod* was published. In some places, new newspapers were launched or the former continued to be published by expressing loyalty to the new government. Certainly, the most important among those newspapers which continued to be published after the establishment of the NDH was Osijek's daily newspaper *Hrvatski list* (*Croatian Journal*). The new authorities devoted considerable attention to other media – radio and film.

What was done during the first days of existence of the new state in terms of building its media and propaganda system was the foundation on which it developed in the next four years. Its purpose was to organize and control the entire media and propaganda activities on the territory of the NDH, so it can be tentatively called the state system of media and propaganda or the state propaganda as it is often referred to in contemporary historical sources. The system was controlled by the ruling Ustasha Movement, and at the same time leading figures of the system were prominent members of the Movement.

Yet from the beginning somewhat special media and propaganda system was developed within the Ustasha Movement. At this point the permeation of the state propaganda system with the institutions of the ruling Ustasha Movement should be emphasized. In addition, one of the main tasks of the state propaganda was to promote Ustasha ideas and interests of the ruling Ustasha Movement. It could hardly be otherwise in a totalitarian dictatorship in which everything was subjected to the authority of Ustasha *Poglavnik* (the head of the Ustasha Movement and of the state) and the Ustasha Movement. Therefore, it would not be wrong to mark all the forms

of propaganda activities in the NDH as Ustasha, or reduce them under the term of Ustasha propaganda.

In this monograph, however, such an approach would be more than inappropriate. The ascription of the term “Ustasha propaganda” to all forms of media and propaganda activities in NDH would hide real differences that existed between different institutions that were active in that field, but with special tasks to impact different layers of the society. In any case that approach does not put in question the fact that the overall propaganda activity in the NDH was at the service of Ustasha ideology. Nevertheless, it is more appropriate to use the term “Ustasha propaganda” in the strict sense of the word exclusively in terms of media and propaganda of the institutions and bodies of the ruling Ustasha Movement. Those media and propaganda activities were primarily directed towards the membership of the Movement. Thus, the Zagreb’s daily newspaper *Hrvatski narod* was marked as “The Herald of Croatian Ustasha Movement”, but was issued and the public perceived it as a major news and political journal. So, it should be viewed as a newspaper published within the state propaganda system. The main herald of the Ustasha Movement in the narrow sense of that word was Zagreb’s weekly *Ustaša*, which also served as the Movement’s official gazette.

As a special system primarily intended to impact certain layer of the population or social group, in that case to the members of NDH’s armed forces, was the system which can be tentatively called military media and advertising system.

The special media and propaganda system was the one built within the German People’s Group in Croatia (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien* in German), which was designed to impact exclusively its members, Ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) living on the soil of the NDH. German and Italian propaganda activities should also be mentioned. Some institutions of the NDH’s government also established special departments and services, primarily those within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, intended for the execution of media and propaganda activities. All those special media and propaganda systems were formally submitted to the control of the state media and propaganda system and in many ways permeated with it. However, at the same time those systems were in many ways able to act independently of the state media and propaganda system. So therefore, there was no clear boundary between state media and propaganda and other mentioned systems, especially those of the Ustasha Movement in the strict sense of the term. This permeation was more pronounced in the initial months of the existence of media and propaganda systems, especially at the level of greater counties (*velike župe* in Croatian – regional administrative units) and districts.

Thus, the issue of media and propaganda activities in NDH is complex and cannot be understood if the state media and propaganda system is exclusively taken for consideration or the activities of various systems and institutions are neglected. However, it should be noted that the state media and propaganda system was pivotal and without it the activities of other systems would not be possible at all. Its main purpose of acting towards all the inhabitants made it the most important within the overall media and propaganda activities in the NDH.

The first central organizational and supervisory institution of the state system was the State Secretariat for People's Enlightenment, which was founded at the end of April 1941 with the task of further work on the building and the organization of the system. By the summer of 1941, there were more changes that impacted the position of that body and its title, in which the term propaganda was finally emphasized. During that period, Croatian Information Service (HIS) kept its independent position in relation to the Secretariat, but it was only a matter of time before that service would lose its autonomy and authority in the field of journalism.

At the same time, it became clear that the new authorities viewed media and propaganda as particularly important. Finally, the decree on the division of ministries and departments and on the scope of the departments adopted on 9 August 1941 envisioned the establishment of the State Information and Propaganda Office (*Državni izvještajni i promidžbeni ured* or *DIPU* in Croatian) within the Presidency of the Government. The same decree of August 1941 determined the scope and authority of the new office. That act also allowed the transformation of the former Department of State Propaganda into the DIPU, which started under that name in September 1941. At the end of October 1941 journalist and writer Vilko Rieger became DIPU's chief. Soon thereafter the decree of 29 October 1941 abolished the Velebit Agency and instead established Croatian communication office [agency] "Croatia" as an institution fully subjected to DIPU.

The adoption of the decree on State Information and Propaganda Office on 24 January 1942 regulated the organization of the state media and propaganda system NDH. It placed under the authority of one central institution all the institutions and fields of work within the framework of media and propaganda system. DIPU was designed "as an independent office and as supreme information and propagandist authority for the entire country." Croatian Communication Office "Croatia" continued to exist as special institution under the supervision of DIPU, while the specificity of radio and film also dictated the establishment of two specialized institutions under the supervision of DIPU: The State Establishment for Radio Service "Croatian Radio" (*Državni zavod za krugovalnu službu "Hrvatski krugoval"* in Croatian) and the State Film Establishment "Croatian Film" (*Državni slikopisni zavod "Hrvatski slikopis"*). Already during the war publicist, journalist and diplomat Ernest Bauer Ernest marked DIPU as the institution that had virtually all the features of the ministry of propaganda. At the same time a high level of cooperation between the press, radio, film, and other media was established, which had not existed in Croatia by then. In the fall of 1942, DIPU was transformed into the Main Directorate for Propaganda (*Glavno ravnateljstvo za promidžbu* or *GRP* in Croatian) of the Ministry of People's Enlightenment, but its structure and competencies remained roughly the same as they were established per the decree of 24 January 1942. Parallel to its founding the GRP got a new person on its forehead since on 21 October 1942 Matija Kovačić was appointed to the duty of the Main Director for Propaganda. Finally, in late January 1944, Main Director for Propaganda became Ivo Bogdan. Leading officials of the system were leading members of the Ustasha Movement, while their political beliefs determined the direction of information and propaganda activities. Certain differences were present in their

approach, but none of them questioned the Ustashism as the basis of existence of the NDH and the position of poglavnik Ante Pavelić as the absolute leader. NDH's Media and propaganda system was developed in the context of the belonging of that state to the Axis and due to the large impact of Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany on its internal conditions. That impact reflected more in the content and principles of propaganda than in the structure of the organization of media and propaganda system. Zagreb's headquarters of DIPU / GRP were the central body of the state media and propaganda system, so as such they were the centre of its concrete action. DIPU/GRP was constantly present in public, but its appearance in public as the main institution on the field of propaganda was the most emphasized by the organization of three major exhibitions. Propagandist in nature, two of them were prepared and presented to public in 1942, while the third one took place in spring 1944. Exhibitions "A year of work of the Independent State of Croatia" and "Jews: The Exhibition on the Development of Judaism and its Destructive Work in Croatia before April 10. 1941: Solution of the Jewish Question in the NDH", were held in 1942, while the exhibition "Three Years of Croatian Literature and Journalism" took place in April 1944. At the same time, anti-Jewish exhibition was the culmination of anti-Jewish propaganda activities in the NDH in general.

Central bodies of the state media and propaganda system of the NDH (state propaganda) in Zagreb were responsible for the organization and execution of its work on the entire territory of the NDH. Since they were in Zagreb and because of severe restrictions on the staff, they were not physically able to organize actual work on the entire territory of the state. Therefore, local offices of DIPU/GRP were established on the level of greater counties and districts, which were responsible for the action on the field. Local offices were subordinated to the headquarters in Zagreb, but their actions as institutions in the field whose officers have better insight into local conditions were not confined to the mere implementation of instructions from headquarters. At the beginning of 1942 in Karlovac, Sarajevo and Zemun three branches of DIPU were established as a kind of interim bodies. Except for Zemun, each branch controlled the areas of several greater counties. The activities of the institutions of media and propaganda system shared the fate of other authorities of the NDH, so local conditions significantly affected the manner and scope of their work. Nevertheless, throughout entire period of the WWII NDH authorities devoted considerable attention to media and propaganda, so there are almost no examples that any kind of propagandist or media activities would not be present on areas under the control of the NDH authorities throughout the period from 1941 to May 1945.

Despite all the shortcomings and difficulties those activities relied on local offices of DIPU/GRP in greater counties and districts. The conditions in which they were operating and the difficulties they were facing depended greatly on circumstances prevailing in those parts of the NDH in which they were located. Generally, General, military operations and the ravages of war had a significant impact on the activities of local offices throughout the territory of the NDH. During almost the entire period of its existence the activities of NDH's media and propaganda system were strongly and continuously affected by the power of Tito's partisan movement. At the same time,

partisan media and propaganda were the main opponent and challenge for NDH's media and propaganda.

From 1941 to September 1943 Italian military authorities had a significant impact on the functioning of local offices branch in the zones of Italian military presence (military occupation) in the NDH, especially in the second Italian zone. In the latter Italian forces had almost complete authority from August 1941 to the Italian surrender in September 1943, so all the institutions of NDH's media and propaganda system were also under their control.

The structure and activities of the Ustasha media and propaganda system leaned on the decree on the composition of the Ustasha Movement of 24 June 1941, which ordered the establishment of special educational office (propaganda office) within the organizational and political branch of the Ustasha Movement. Therefore, it should be seen as the base on which soon thereafter the Office for propaganda of the Main Ustasha Headquarters (*Glavni ustaški stan* or *GUS* in Croatian) was organized. That was not the last change that affected the organization and structure of leading bodies of Ustasha media and propaganda system. Ustasha media and propaganda activities and appropriate bodies for their implementation existed in all branches and at all organizational levels of the Movement throughout the territory of the NDH. It should be repeated that many Ustasha officials who were responsible for media and propaganda, especially those in the province, were at the same time also closely related to state media and propaganda. In addition, Ustasha officials and organizations of the Ustasha Movement on the ground were in direct contact with the population and, as such, could act directly to residents. Therefore, that kind of propaganda activities should be understood as a kind of supplement and support of the system of state propaganda.

Media activities of Ustasha media and propaganda system had largely relied on the numerous publications that were published within its framework. At first glance it may seem confusing that some publications (newspapers and journals) that were explicitly marked as heralds of the Movement and whose owner (in some cases also a publisher) at the end of 1942 became Ustasha Publishing House (*Ustaški nakladni zavod* in Croatian) as a company owned by the Ustasha Movement should not be listed as Ustasha publications in narrower meaning of that term. Among them was Zagreb's *Hrvatski narod* as informative daily intended for the general reading public, and not only or primarily to members of the Ustasha Movement. Due to the nature of its content *Hrvatski narod* can easily be marked as Ustasha publication. However, the marking of such issues simply as Ustasha press would erase the boundaries between Ustasha issues in terms of releases that were issued by Ustasha Movement for its members and other issues aimed at the general public or some social groups and layers. In many cases, it is still difficult to pull a line to separate 'real' Ustasha publications from those which were published primarily within the framework of state media and propaganda system.

Among undoubtedly Ustasha publications stood out for its role and importance the weekly *Ustaša*. Along with its editor-in-chief Mijo Bzik, the *Ustaša* represented a special phenomenon within the Ustasha Movement. It was considered to be a continuation of



the Ustasha emigrant bulletin *Ustaša: Vjesnik hrvatskih revolucionaraca revolucionaraca* (*Ustaša: The Herald of Croatian Revolutionaries*), whose first number appeared in 1930. It was the official gazette of the Ustasha Movement used for the publication of various orders and decisions of Ustasha bodies, but at the same time even more a propagandist weekly journal which content was primarily determined by Ustasha ideas and goals.

Since Ustasha Movement was the ruling political organization in the NDH, it could be assumed that its media and propaganda system was superior to the state system. Yet the products of the Ustasha media and propaganda system were subjected to the supervision of institutions of the state system. Thus, the state censors examined Ustasha editions, and DIPU/GRP had the authority to grant or deny permissions for the publication of Ustasha newspapers and periodicals, books, and brochures. Examples of the impact of one system to another indicate that it is often not possible to set a clear boundary between them, so the basic line of division lay in the purpose of their activities. The Ustasha media and propaganda system had in fact acted primarily to the membership of the ruling Ustasha Movement. Its main purpose was ideological and political education and building of members, as well as to inform them about the activities of Ustasha organizations and the Movement as a whole.

The specificity of military media and propaganda system was reflected in the fact that it acted primarily to the members of the armed forces of NDH. The structure and organization of that system in part followed a pattern set in the building of similar system of the German armed forces. In the period from spring 1941 to late 1942, the military system was developing within the framework of the Ministry of the Croatian Home Guard (*Ministarstvo hrvatskoga domobranstva*). The formal inclusion of the Ustasha militia into the ranks of NDH's armed forces during the year 1942 and the transformation of the said Ministry to the Ministry of Armed Forces (*Ministarstvo oružanih snaga* or *MINORS* in Croatian), military media and propaganda system embraced the appropriate institutions already established within Militia. It is not known to what extent German patterns were followed in the Home Guard (*Domobranstvo* in Croatian), later in the NDH's armed forces in general, but it is certain that the co-operation with German side was established. The probable reflection of that cooperation was the establishment of Enlightenment's Battalion (*Prosvjetnička bojna* or *PB* in Croatian) as a special unit responsible for educational, media and propaganda activities among the members of the armed forces. Its establishment and organization started early in 1943. At the same time, Educational Department was established within the MINORS as the central body of the military media and propaganda system. Home Guard and the Ustasha militia (and Ustasha military units in general) retained their particularity, so there continued to exist differences among their media and propaganda institutions. That claim can be illustrated by the existence of the Ustasha department within Educational department of MINORS. In general, it can be said that in the Home Guard (in Ground Forces, Air Forces and in the Navy) system rested on the activities of Enlightenment's Battalion (PB), while in various units have continued to exist various propaganda (or educational) departments. It is certain that at the same time in the Ustasha units existed propaganda sections.

The activities of military media and propaganda system also largely rested on their own printed media (primarily press), while a leading military newspaper was the weekly *Hrvatski Domobran* (*The Croatian Home Guardian*; from the end of 1942 it was published under the title of *Vojnik* or *Soldier* in Croatian), launched in the summer of 1941. Since its inception, it was apparent that on the pages of *Hrvatski domobran* a special role in preserving the NDH was attributed to the virtues of Home Guard led by Field Marshal Slavko Kvaternik. This was an indication of some sort of competition, which strained relations between Kvaternik and Pavelić and reflected in the relationship between Ustasha Militia and the Home Guard. Changes from October 1942 overnight erased all mention of the previously ubiquitous Field Marshal Kvaternik in *Hrvatski domobran* and in other military publications. Poglavnik Pavelić survived as the only leader whose cult of personality was constantly nurtured, while military and other media were portraying him as the only guarantor of the unity and survival of the Croatian people.

The echo of NDH's media and propaganda abroad relied largely on appropriate media and propaganda activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Croatia.

These activities were in the competence of Ministries' Department for press and cultural links through diplomatic and consular missions of the NDH. The Department closely collaborated with the appropriate authorities of the state of media and advertising system. Publications in foreign languages were needed in order to expand the content of NDH's propaganda and media among those who were not familiar with the Croatian language, so it is not surprising that the Croatian publishers issued a number of publications in foreign languages. In this sense, the existence of Zagreb's *Naklada Europa* (*Europa Verlag* in German or *Europe Editions* in English) was of major importance since its publishing was largely precisely in the service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In some sources and in the current literature, *Naklada Europa* was branded as a German company or a company under strong German influence. It was primarily in the service of NDH's authorities, which had a major impact on its publishing policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also encouraged and assisted the issuance of titles in foreign languages by other publishers. Probably the best evidence of that claim is luxuriously furnished journal *Croatia* published by *Hrvatski izdavački i bibliografski zavod* (Croatian Publishing and Bibliographic Institute), which first issue was published in autumn in 1941. That journal mainly presented Croatian art, history, and culture in general. The special attention deserves edition in French, its sixth number published in 1944, in which attention was focused on the Croatian Adriatic. Due to its content, that edition in French was apparently intended for the public and political circles in neutral countries, and probably also in Allied countries. That was not the only edition intended for the public of neutral and allied countries behind which at least indirectly stood NDH's authorities. Also in 1944, in Lausanne, Switzerland was published a book in French entitled *La Dalmatie et les problemes de l'Adriatique* (*Dalmatia and the Adriatic Problem*), whose foreword was written by the famous Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović.



Certainly, the most famous edition in foreign languages, “processed and issued by the order of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, was famous “Grey Book”, published at the end of 1942 or early in 1943 under the title in Croatian *Odmetnička zvjerstva i pustošenja u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj u prvim mjesecima života hrvatske narodne države* (*Rebellious Atrocities and Devastation in the Independent State of Croatia in the First Months of the Life of Croatian People's State*). Besides edition in Croatian, editions in German, Italian and French were also published, which leads to the assumption that it was foreseen as edition intended for foreign public. Its propagandist character is obvious, but I believe that documents which were published in it contain a lot of information about real war crimes committed by Tito's Partisan and Chetnik units against Croats and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims. Probably the best proof of that claim are mass graves on Pašinci near Prijedor in north-western Bosnia, where were buried hundreds of victims murdered by partisans during their rule in that town and its surroundings in spring 1942.

Finally, it has to be briefly summarized that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Croatia was responsible for the promotion and propaganda of the NDH. A lot of energy and funds invested in doing so confirm that such activities were treated as very important for the prestige of the state abroad. Not surprisingly, those activities were primarily oriented towards Axis countries as well as to some neutral European countries.

The content of NDH's media and propaganda were known to Allied services and institutions, and to a minor extent also to a public of Allied countries. The NDH press was available in some neutral countries, so the local representatives of Allied diplomatic and intelligence services, both British and American, could easily acquire it. Istanbul became particularly important point for such activities of Allied representatives. Local Allied representatives, especially the US Consul General in that city, were regularly reading and analyzing NDH's newspapers easily available on local newsstands. In general, it can be said that the Allied services and institutions were well acquainted with what could be found in NDH's press and media in general, so they treated them as source from which they could draw valuable information.

The media and propaganda of its 'great allies' Germany and Italy were strongly present in the NDH during entire war. Mainly through its diplomatic missions, other states with which the NDH maintained diplomatic relations also attempted to present to the Croatian public the politics, culture and economy of their countries.

German influence was strong, but many aspects of German media and propaganda activities were hidden from Croatian public, so Croatian population could therefore experience German media and propaganda products as the products of NDH's media and propaganda. A kind of deliberate cover-up of German origin of German media and propaganda products is one of their main characteristics, which reflected the desire of appropriate German institutions and services to be as efficient as possible in approaching local population. Major roles in the terms of organization and implementation of German media and propaganda activities towards domestic (Croatian) population were played by German Legation in Zagreb and the German

military propaganda. By the end of 1942 most of German media and propaganda activities in the NDH were mainly in the hands of the German Legation in Zagreb. During that period, in cooperation with other German institutions the Legation was involved in the preparation and setting of several grand German exhibitions. At the same time the Legation was working on the distribution of propaganda material from the Reich. By stimulating and providing financial support it was also involved in the publication of numerous German editions in Croatian language.

At the same time, numerous German publications, including informative and illustrated newspapers, journals and magazines, were available to the public on the Croatian newspaper market. Their circulation on the Croatian market was not associated with the activities of the German institutions or services in the NDH. Many of them were available to the Croatian public long before the establishment of the NDH. Before April 1941, most were present in their original editions in German, although there are some examples of some editions that were adapted to the Croatian public. Probably the best-known example is the illustrated semimonthly magazine *Signal*, whose Croatian edition was launched in May 1941. This edition was published only in the Croatian language, and its content adapted to the Croatian public although to a lesser extent. *Signal* was a very popular magazine, owing its popularity, in part, to the fact that each issue contained several attractive photos, particularly those in color, taken primarily on all European fronts. Mass distribution of the German press in the NDH is indirect evidence of a significant number of its inhabitants having been exposed to the direct influence of the German propaganda.

At the very beginning of 1943, through the *Propaganda Staffel Kroatien* (PSK – *Propaganda Squad Croatia*) the German military propaganda acquired the status of the most important German media and propaganda service in the NDH. In the last two years of the War, PSK's activities were definitely as important to the local population as were the comparative media and propaganda activities of the institutions of the NDH. PSK was present in the public primarily through its numerous printed propaganda materials, especially its large and attractively designed posters. Although in this monograph the activities of the German military propaganda in the NDH are only superficially mentioned, there is no doubt that this issue has been under-researched and poorly understood. This is, in part, the result of the unavailability of original historical sources, although part of the answer lies in the very character of its propaganda activities. It is evident that the PSK did everything it could to conceal the German character and origin of its media and propaganda products. It can be assumed that PSK's intention was to present its products to the public as the products of "domestic", non-German propaganda.

One of the aspects of the German media and propaganda activities in the NDH was the media and propaganda of the German People's Group in Croatia (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien – DVGK*) as a special body of the German minority in the NDH. Due to its nature, this propaganda bore a striking resemblance to the way in which the German propaganda in the Third Reich affected Germans in the Reich itself. Owing to this feature, it differed from all the other means of German propaganda

activities in the NDH, which were organized by institutions from the Third Reich so as to affect the non-German population of a foreign country. The media and propaganda activities of the DVGK were extensive and diversified, and were in the hands of the appropriate authorities in the leadership of DVGK and in the leaderships of its numerous organizations. The DVGK's media and propaganda activities were based on printed media, primarily on the weekly *Slawonischer Volksbote* (later *Grenzwacht*) from Osijek as the main news and political magazine of the Group.

In terms of its content, the main purpose of DVGK's propaganda was to promote National Socialism and to foster the cult of personality of the Führer, Adolf Hitler. There were some locally infused specifics, such as, for example, emphasizing the role of the Danubian Germans as the guards of sorts of Germanness in the Southeast.

DVGK's media and propaganda functioned until October 1944, when – due to the advance of the Red Army and the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia towards the eastern regions of the NDH – a decision was made to evacuate the local German population and transfer them to the territory of the Third Reich. This led to the institutions of DVGK almost immediately ceasing all their activities, including all their media and propaganda activities. The fate that befell DVGK's media and propaganda in the fall of 1944 was a harbinger of sorts of what was about to happen half a year later with all the other aspects of the German media and propaganda activities in the NDH.

Between April 1941 and September 1943, the Kingdom of Italy dominated in the NDH as one of its "great allies", whose armed forces held a considerable amount of Croatian territory under military occupation. The very presence of several Italian services and institutions in the NDH is a basis for a comparison with the German media and propaganda activities. There were Italian media and propaganda activities, but they are incomparable with the scope of similar German activities. The Croatian public accepted very well some Italian media products, such as the Croatian edition of the semimonthly illustrated magazine *Tempo*. This indirectly leads to the conclusion that the anti-Italian sentiments of a considerable number of Croats were not an obstacle to possible large-scale Italian media and propaganda activities in the NDH. Accordingly, it must be assumed that the main reason why the intensity and scope of the Italian media and propaganda activities in the NDH remained rather poor lies primarily in the fact that the Italian services and institutions on its territory did not pay more attention to this type of activity.

Most Italian publications were adapted to the Croatian public in the sense that they were translated into the Croatian language, although many of them were not adapted in terms of their content. In addition, some could arouse hostility by, for example, triumphantly emphasizing the inclusion of some parts of the Croatian Adriatic in Italian territory as in the book entitled *Prva godina rata Italije (The First Year of Italy in War)*. This points to the naïveté of those responsible for the creation of Italian propaganda with regard to impacting the Croatian public effectively.

All this is an indirect indication of those responsible for conducting the Italian propaganda having been indifferent in a way to exploiting propaganda as a powerful

tool for the promotion of Italian interests in the NDH, or to gaining the sympathy of the Croatian public. However, as a “great ally” of the NDH, Italy could not remain completely inactive in this respect, which is evidenced by the existence of publications issued throughout the period of the Italian presence on Croatian soil from the spring of 1941 to the summer of 1943.

At the same time, the Italian media and propaganda activities in Dubrovnik differed substantially from the same type of activities conducted in the other parts of the NDH. They were based on the promotion of an alleged Italianness of this Croatian city, partly under the guise of the appropriate services of the Italian armed forces intended for their members and almost exclusively in the Italian language. The diversity of the activities and the energy invested in this type of propaganda indirectly shows how much the Italian institutions cared about achieving this goal.

The state media and propaganda system of the NDH encompassed all the Croatian media, but it was still based on printed media, particularly the press. Still, during April 1941, many newspapers, particularly the leading dailies in Zagreb and the province, remained in the ownership of different institutions and were printed by different printing offices. However, already during this period, the efforts to centralise both management and publishing of the press became clearly visible. The establishment of a press publishing and printing trust (or business group) was accordingly envisioned for this purpose. This trust was to gradually take control of all the main newspapers on the entire territory of the NDH. The groundwork of this enterprise was the former Yugoslav one.

The Yugoslav Press Corporation (*Jugoslavenska štampa d. d.* or *Jugoštampa*) from Zagreb was transformed into the Croatian State Printing Establishment (*Hrvatski državni tiskarski zavod*) shortly after the establishment of the NDH. Since the beginning, this institution was the largest publishing and printing company in the country, but its operations under this name were limited to the publication of newspapers and magazines from Zagreb. Similarly to efforts in journalism, an integration of the publishing of propaganda books and brochures was planned. And so, in mid-1942, the “Velebit” Publishing House and Bookstore (*Nakladna knjižara “Velebit”*) was founded in Zagreb, which soon took over the publication and distribution of a good portion of such titles. The next step in unifying the publication of printed media was the founding of the Ustasha Publishing Institution (*Ustaški nakladni zavod – UNZ*), which took over and continued the business activities of the said Croatian State Printing Institution in late 1942. The UNZ gradually included into its ownership leading Zagreb and provincial newspapers and magazines, as well as printing offices. So, after a while, almost all the major newspapers and magazines in the NDH came under its umbrella, that is, those that were published as part of the state media and propaganda system, such as *Hrvatski narod*, as well as the main Ustasha weekly *Ustaša*. This was possible due the fact that the UNZ was primarily involved in the business management of the media in its portfolio, rather than in the publishing policy of newspapers or magazines. The UNZ was owned by the Ustasha Movement, but operated under the control of the state media and propaganda system. This is another indicator of the intertwining of

the two systems, and the Movement having supreme control over all aspects of public and social life in the NDH. By taking ownership of the "Vebebit" Publishing House and Bookstore, the UNZ established control over the publication of propaganda brochures and books, and was gradually transformed into a giant publishing and printing trust in whose hands was the publication of the vast majority of printed editions.

However, some of the media remained outside the control of the UNZ, one of which was the military media. Of course, the most important publisher to have continued to act independently after the establishment of the UNZ was the above-mentioned *Europa Editions*, which was mainly orientated towards publications in foreign languages, mostly in German. Amongst its publications, there are a few in Croatian, as well as the biweekly magazine *Pokret*, which was published on a regular basis in the Croatian language from 1942 to 1945. However, the presence of publications in the Croatian language did not alter the basic purpose of its activity, which was publishing in foreign languages. The circulation of its journals and magazines, primarily the news and political weekly in German *Neue Ordnung* and the popular illustrated weekly *Alarm*, were huge throughout the Axis-dominated and neutral European countries. The content of *Alarm* was mainly in German, although a significant portion of its content was brought in numerous other languages (particularly captions explaining numerous photos and other illustrations). Although a large share of newspapers and magazines published by *Europa Editions* was sold on the territory of the Third Reich, numerous copies could also be found on the stretch from Oslo and Stockholm in the north and Ankara in the south, as well as from Lisbon in the west to Crimea in the east. There is no doubt that *Europa Editions* deserves one's attention since it was one of the largest publishing companies in the NDH. However, the presence of its issues in large circulations on the newspaper markets of most European countries deserves considerably more attention. It is difficult to compare wartime conditions in which extraordinary attention was paid to the media and propaganda with peacetime conditions before or after World War II. I believe, however, that the case of *Europa Editions* is an unprecedented and unequalled feat in the entire history of Croatian journalism and publishing.

Besides *Europa Editions*, there were a few other publishers that operated outside the control of the UNZ, and clearly the majority of their issues were not propagandist in character. The Croatian Publishing and Bibliographic Institute (*Hrvatski izdavački i bibliografski zavod*) and Matrix Croatica (*Matica hrvatska*) were amongst the major publishers.

There is also a special group comprising religious press and other religious publications. It is not surprising that, given the number of publications and their circulation, Catholic issues dominated, although there were also Islamic, Lutheran, and even Orthodox editions.

Even before April 1941, on the territories of what became the territory of the NDH, several Catholic publishers had been publishing several Catholic newspapers and magazines, as well as numerous books and brochures (some of them were secular in character). Most such publishers survived the entire period of WWII with more or

less difficulty. There is no doubt that Catholic publications contained some texts which were propagandist in character, which were published during the War and written in this way because their authors adhered to the ruling Ustasha Movement in their political attitudes. It is also clear that the number of such texts published in Catholic newspapers, as in all other newspapers and magazines published in the NDH, is the result of obedience to the binding directions and rules that were set by the institutions of the media and propaganda system of the NDH. Had they ignored binding directions and rules, publishers would most certainly have risked heavy penalties, including the stopping of the publishing of their newspapers and magazines, and in some cases even the imprisonment of editors-in-chief. It is important to add that permissions for the publication of newspapers and magazines issued by DIPU and later by GRP were regularly conditioned by the publishing of propagandist texts. Even a quick glance at the content of the majority of titles shows that such contributions occupied an insignificant part of their content during the entire period of the War, 1941 included. A significant and rather revealing example which tells us about the character of the relationship between the Catholic press and publishing and the NDH authorities is the fate of numerous editions published by the Croatian Literary Society of St. Jerome (*Hrvatsko književno društvo sv. Jeronima*), which was targeted by censorship throughout the entire period of the War. Until the end of the War, the Society had to suspend further publication of its newspapers and magazines, while censorship affected heavily the publication of the popular folk Catholic calendar *Danica*.

The NDH subjected to censorship not only Catholic, but all printed materials (newspapers and periodicals, books, and pamphlets). In turn, what determined the final content of all publications in large measure was the outcome of censorship.

In addition to the censorship conducted by the institutions of the state media and propaganda system, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also censored texts that were dealing with international and foreign policy, and there was also military censorship. From the beginning of 1943 up to the end of the War, German military censorship was also present, which acted as the supreme instance of censorship in many regions of the NDH.

The media and propaganda system of the NDH relied primarily on printed media, daily and weekly newspapers in particular.

The daily newspaper *Hrvatski narod: Glasilo hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta* (*Croatian People: The Herald of the Croatian Ustasha Movement*) from Zagreb was published regularly from its very first issue in the new state published on 10 April 1941 to the last printed on 6 May 1945. Given its subtitle, it may be treated as a bulletin of the ruling Ustasha Movement, yet it was published as a newspaper within the framework of the state media and propaganda system and not as a party organ of the Movement. It was the main daily newspaper in the country and the government's herald of sorts.

In addition to the above, numerous other dailies and weeklies were published during the entire period of the War in Zagreb and throughout the territory of the NDH.

Just like *Hrvatski narod*, other leading newspapers from Zagreb, the daily *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia*) and the weekly *Spremnost* (*Readiness*) in particular, were



also present all across the territory of the NDH. The weekly *Spremnost: Misao i volja ustaške Hrvatske* (*Readiness: The Thought and Will of Ustasha Croatia*) was a magazine for the intellectual elite, but its content was distanced from official policy and the ruling Ustasha ideology.

In Zagreb as the centre of Croatian journalism, several other newspapers were published, mostly specialised weeklies. The daily newspaper *Gospodarstvo* (*Economy*) and such weeklies as *Šport* (*Sports*, later *Sports Newspapers*) were amongst them.

Besides a few dailies, most provincial newspapers were weekly newspapers. A substantial portion of their content was dedicated to the life and problems of the places and regions in which they were published. The largest number of such newspapers was published in north-western Croatia and in Slavonia (including Sylvania), while the number of local newspapers in other regions of the NDH was significantly smaller.

One of the most distinguished provincial dailies was *Hrvatski list* (*Croatian Paper*) from Osijek, a journal intended for readers in Slavonia (with Sylvania) and parts of northern Bosnia. *Sarajevski novi list* (*Sarajevo's New Newspapers*, later *Novi list*) was the central provincial daily newspaper in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was first published in May 1941 and continued being published regularly until the beginning of April 1945.

The importance of the media and propaganda for the authorities of the NDH can be illustrated with the fact that, following the Italian surrender in September 1943, two new daily newspapers were launched on the Adriatic coast that were previously annexed or occupied by Italy. The daily *Novo doba* (*New Age*) from Split started in early October 1943, while *Hrvatska* (*Croatia*) was launched in April 1944 in Dubrovnik. Despite numerous difficulties, both dailies were published almost regularly until the fall of the NDH in these two cities in the second half of October of the same year.

The media and propaganda system of the NDH also used other printed media, especially leaflets as the cheapest means of mass communication to transmit information and propaganda. Leaflets were particularly suitable for reaching members of enemy forces. By contrast, posters were often used in regions controlled by the authorities of the NDH. These were attractive large-format editions intended to catch the attention of passers-by in public places. They were published by the institutions of the media and propaganda system of the NDH, although the German military propaganda (*Propaganda Staffel Kroatien - PSK*) was an important publisher publishing many particularly attractive posters.

The publication of the media and even the spreading of propaganda are inconceivable without the existence and activities of news agencies. After the establishment of the NDH, the pre-war Zagreb branch of the Yugoslav agency Avala was transformed into the new Velebit Agency, which began to operate in modest circumstances. Over time, however, a lot was invested in its development with a view to ensuring that it can act as the main news agency in the country. In the fall of 1941, the Velebit Agency was transformed into the Croatian Information Office "Croatia", under the name of which it operated until the end of the War.

The functioning of the entire media and propaganda system relied on journalists as the cornerstone of human resources. Journalists were members of the Croatian Journalists' Association, which set up strict control over its members. Journalists were obliged to become members of the said Association in order to keep their jobs, and to do so, they had to satisfy the criteria set by the Association. It is, however, not clear whether or not and to what extent such criteria were also used to eliminate ideologically undesirable individuals from the ranks of journalists. The leading positions in the media and in the institutions of the media and propaganda system of the NDH were occupied by those journalists who were supporters of the ruling Ustasha Movement, and some even prominent members of the Movement. Most journalists were not politically engaged and were doing their jobs professionally as journalists. Yet, after the War, the new Communist authorities drastically persecuted many journalists, including those who were not involved in politics and did not support either the NDH or the Ustashes. Some were sentenced to death, and many were banned from working in journalism. Some journalists did not wait for the arrival of the new regime, and went into exile to find salvation.

From amongst those who worked in the system of the media and propaganda, there were also some individuals and groups opposed to the Ustashes and the NDH, and some even collaborated with Tito's partisans illegally. It is not surprising that the authorities of the NDH strove to hunt out and eliminate them, so some journalists were executed for their political views.

The desire of the authorities to exploit them as a powerful means of mass communication for the transmission of information and propaganda resulted in the rapid and vigorous development of the radio and film. And so, by having invested significant resources, the authorities supported the establishment of well-organized and effective networks of Croatian radio and film.

The process of transformation of the former Zagreb radio station to a state radio station that was to become a powerful information and propaganda tool started almost on the same day that the NDH was established. It was envisioned that the new radio station would act in the Ustasha spirit and on the propaganda of the ideas and goals of the Ustasha Movement. Changing the program and adapting it to the new goals and principles was quite simple, but the objective was achievable only if the content of the program reached as many listeners as possible throughout the territory of the new state. Many things were done within a short period of time, and this could happen because the works which had already been conceived and initiated at the time of the Banovina of Croatia were simply resumed in new circumstances. The Zagreb radio station was significantly improved, and four local stations established during 1942 and 1943 – radio stations in Dubrovnik, Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Osijek.

In 1945, the radio network developed in the NDH vanished, but in terms of technical and human resource development these four years were very important and fruitful for the further development of the Croatian radio, and for the establishment and development of the modern electronic media in Croatia.

Croatian film also experienced rapid and impressive development during the existence of the NDH. Prior to the establishment of the NDH Croatian film production was almost at zero, so after April 1941, it was both necessary to regulate the film market and run a Croatian film production. The activities related to the launch of Croatian film production were focused on the production of newsreels as a form of film intended for informing the public about current events and as an important propaganda medium. By late August 1941, the first issue of a newsreel entitled *Hrvatska u riječi i slici* (*Croatia in Word and Image*) was released, which was a milestone in the development of film production in the NDH. Newsreels developed significantly over time and were, by November 1943, composed entirely of film reports filmed in the NDH. During this period, German and Italian newsreels (the latter to Italian surrender in September 1943) were also on Croatian cinema listings. Since December 1943, Croatian newsreels were released under the title *Hrvatski slikopisni tjednik* (*Croatian Film Weekly*), and by the end of the War, they remained the only newsreels which were screened in Croatian theatres.

The said weekly magazine was established and created by the State Film Establishment "Croatian Film", which was established in early 1942 as an independent state enterprise for the production of films. The continued production of films and substantial investments in personnel and equipment resulted in a growth in the volume of productions and a visible growth in quality. The vast majority of films served the purposes of propaganda, such as the film *Kako se stvaraju izložbe* (*How Exhibitions Are Created*) about preparations for an anti-Jewish exhibition in Zagreb filmed during the spring of 1942. In the spring of 1944, the first Croatian sound feature film entitled *Lisinski* (*Lisinski*) was shown, a film which was not propagandist in character and whose story revolved around the life of the composer of the first Croatian opera, Vatroslav Lisinski.

The State Film Establishment "Croatian Film" ceased to operate once the NDH fell in early May 1945, with the film production of the new Federal State (the People's Republic) of Croatia and the renewed state of Yugoslavia having continued on its foundations and in its stead.

Over the entire period between 1941 and 1945, Croatian cinemas screened films from a range of Axis and neutral countries, although most were German films. Films coming from the countries of the Allies, primarily the US, were banned.

The majority of German films screened during the War in Croatian cinemas were mainly entertaining in character, although there were many of those whose nature was pronouncedly propagandist.

Before April 1941, Italian films were not as present in Croatian movie theatres, but the Italians seized the opportunity and placed an increasing number of films on the Croatian film market, the vast majority of which were entertaining feature films.

Besides the above, throughout the entire period of War, Croatian cinemas also screened films from some Axis and neutral countries (such as the Bohemia, Finland, France and Hungary).

The media in the NDH served the purpose of transmitting news and messages to the public, and the primary purpose of the media and propaganda system of the NDH was the spreading of propaganda with the then Croatian public. Promoting the idea of the ruling Ustasha Movement and highlighting the personality of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić, as well as fighting against all real and imaginary enemies of the Ustasha Movement and the Independent State of Croatia, were the primary tasks of the operations of this system.

From amongst the postulates of propaganda, fostering the cult of personality of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić is to be singled out, which made the media and propaganda of the NDH fit entirely into the patterns of activity of the media and propaganda systems of totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Struggle for the establishment of an independent Croatian state was at the heart of Poglavnik's activities and his Ustasha Movement. Besides Poglavnik, at the forefront of this struggle were fearless Ustasha fighters ready for any sacrifice, and so the fundamental characteristics praised in an Ustasha fighter were Ustasha fearlessness and heroism, sacrifice and martyrdom.

The said propaganda argued that such martyrs as was Commander of the "Black Legion", Jure Francetić, laid down his life so that the Independent State of Croatia could live and prosper, although what was being underscored was that the Ustasha Movement intends to build a happier and better Croatian state. And this could be achieved only by fundamental changes in Croatian society. These changes were to affect the position of each and every Croat, Croatian women included. Women were allocated an important role by the Ustasha Movement in the construction of the Independent State of Croatia, and were, particularly at the beginning, presented primarily as mothers and the very bedrock of home and family.

The Croatian nation was to look for its future as a united nation in a united Croatian state. Accordingly, the unity of the Croatian nation was being emphasised. The existence of historical provinces and their names were not negated, with special attention having been paid to both Bosnia and Herzegovina as the central Croatian province and Bosnian Muslims as part of the Croatian nation.

The Treaties of Rome signed in May 1941 were a heavy blow to the new state, according to which substantial amounts of territory on the Adriatic coast were given to the Italian "great ally". In this, emphasizing the greatness of "Poglavnik's Croatia" was to reduce this painful loss of territory. The establishment of the eastern border of the NDH on the Drina River was depicted as a remarkable success, with the said border having been portrayed as a dividing line between two worlds.

As a result of the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, NDH's alliance with Italy which had thus far been greatly underpinned was replaced by attacks on its hostile policy towards Croatia and Croats, and the Croatian claim on the entire Eastern Adriatic coast was highlighted. At the same time, the public was intimidated by prospects of Croatia and the Croatian nation being maimed and of many Croatian regions becoming part of Greater Serbia in the future communist Yugoslavia should the Independent State of Croatia disappear.

The leading media in the NDH were not even trying to deny the affiliation of most Croats to Catholicism and, generally speaking, wrote very affirmatively about faith, and even the Catholic Church itself. The same was done by the media even prior to April 1941, and the only novelty was that, after the establishment of the NDH, Islam also came to the fore as the religion of Bosnian Muslims, who were considered to be an integral part of the Croatian nation. One can talk about the politics of equal treatment of Catholics and Muslims with a view to highlighting the unity of the Croatian nation regardless of existing religious differences.

Shortly after the establishment of the NDH, Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church were subjected to severe persecution. All that ensued ended up leading quickly to unbearable conditions, and so at the end of 1941 the leadership of the NDH headed by Poglavnik Pavelić were forced to change policy towards Serbs and Orthodoxy as a religion. In turn, up to mid-1942 the Croatian Orthodox Church was founded, with propaganda having highlighted that its establishment allowed the Orthodox to continue to practise their religion and to become aware that they too belong to the Croatian nation. At the same time, the media stressed that, in the Independent State of Croatia, a Croatian Orthodox population lived as part of the Croatian nation enjoying all the rights and protection of state authorities, and sharing the fate of all Croats.

One of the important postulates of the propaganda of the NDH was underpinning the predestined ties and alliance of the NDH with its two “great allies” – Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany, and their respective leaders Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler – who had facilitated its creation and were the guarantee of its survival.

The European nations included many small nations, the Croatian nation being one of the latter ones. The media and propaganda paid special attention to Bulgaria and Slovakia, which were described as countries particularly close to Croatia and Croats with whom they share a common destiny in “New Europe”.

Bulgarians and Slovaks were written about very affirmatively as friends and allies, which cannot be said of the way in which the media and propaganda treated all those phenomena that were held to be hostile. Accordingly, the said affirmative approach was precisely what was lacking in the anti-propaganda postulates, which were primarily based on disqualifications and defamations of phenomena which the propaganda of the NDH considered to be undesirable or hostile.

The anti-Jewish propaganda, particularly in the first months of the existence of the NDH, is to be singled out due to the method of implementation used, the amount of hate it contained and the incitement to the destruction of an entire community. Jews were depicted as racially unworthy and immoral, whose alleged economic and financial dominance was a threat to the survival of European culture and civilization, and the small European nations. In this sense, Jews or “international Jewry” were proclaimed the originators and controllers of the three alleged grave dangers threatening small nations and humanity as a whole: capitalism (plutocracy), Freemasonry and Bolshevism. In addition, Jews were portrayed as the willing helpers of alien oppressors, and so their alleged close ties with the former Yugoslav rulers was not emphasized.

Serbdom and Yugoslavdom were approached on two levels. The first pertained to the relationship of Serbs to Croats during the two decades of the existence of the Yugoslav state. The second level concerned the relationship of Serbs and Serbdom to Croats and the NDH (i.e., the Croatian state) in the period after the collapse of the Yugoslav state, particularly after the outbreak of the Serbian rebellion on the territory of the NDH in the summer of 1941, and the later operations of the Chetnik movement and the Yugoslav government in exile. In other words, the first level referred to the recent past, while the second to the then current events and processes.

The relationship to the period between 1918 and 1941, as well as to Serbian politics before 1914, was marked by placing emphasis on the Serbian intention of creating a Greater Serbia at the expense of the Croatian nation and the Croatian state. This was done under the guise of Yugoslavdom and a fight for the Yugoslav state, which were equated with Greater Serbdom and Greater Serbia itself.

The collapse of the Yugoslav state in 1941 was depicted as the destruction of the last traces of the Treaty of Versailles in the Southeast of Europe which led to the liberation of the Croatian nation. At the same time, "Greater Serbdom defeated in April 1941" not accepting defeat was stressed, which was reflected in the uprising in the summer in 1941.

This was clearly blamed on the Serbian nationalist circles led by Draža Mihailović, but, at the time when this was unfolding, the picture painted by the media and propaganda of the NDH was not so clean and simplified. From the very beginning of the uprising, the media and propaganda of the NDH labelled it "of a Greater Serbia", having pointed out numerous crimes committed by the rebels against the Croatian population (including Bosnian Muslims). Given their one-sidedness, it is not unusual that there was not a single word in these media about the crimes committed against mainly the Serbian population by the authorities of the NDH, primarily members of the Ustasha Movement, and the Ustasha paramilitary and military units.

Highlighting Chetnik crimes and the intention of the Chetnik movement to create a Greater Serbia were the fundamental features of the relationship of the media and propaganda of the NDH to the part of Serbdom which remained outside the framework of the Partisan movement.

The Partisan movement was portrayed as a blend of sorts of Bolshevism and Greater Serbdom, the goal of which was to eradicate Croats and to, under the guise of creating a Yugoslav state of equality, create a Communist Yugoslavia or, in fact, a Greater Serbia. The close ties between the Partisan movement and the communist Soviet Union were almost regularly placed emphasis on.

Although Partisanship was regularly branded as an anti-Croatian and non-Croatian phenomenon, Croats joining the ranks of the Partisans in large numbers (particularly since 1943) required an appropriate response by the propaganda of the NDH. At the same time, in the Partisan ranks Croats were portrayed as "a tiny minority of the Croatian nation", some of whom were reportedly "village bastards", while others were either "misguided" or taken to join the Partisans by force.



At the same time, the media and propaganda of the NDH fought against yet another “infection”, that is, Bolshevism and the Soviet Union, which were directly associated with the origin of Partisanship. Bolshevism and the Soviet Union were accused of wanting to destroy traditional European values and to ruin European nations economically in the name of “Jewish-Bolshevik” interests. The propaganda of the NDH paid a lot of attention to the Soviet Stalinist terror and the difficult living conditions of the masses in the USSR. Such considerations culminated in a way in the spring of 1943, when the Germans – upon their Katyn Forest discovery – launched a propaganda war of sorts against the Soviet Union and against the Western Allies as Bolshevik allies, which was joined by the media in the NDH.

All this had to be opposed, and so it is not surprising that the focus of interest of the propaganda of the NDH was a struggle against Bolshevism by any means necessary.

One of the underlying ideas of the propaganda of the NDH was the one on the UK and US being states run by Jews and “Jewish plutocracy”, which, in turn, meant that they operated in the interests of “international Jewry” and the collapse of Europe, that is, its culture and civilization. What was underlined was their alleged willingness to betray and deliver small European nations, the Croatian nation included, to Bolshevism as the greatest enemy of Europe. The conclusion was that the small European nations had to persevere in a fight against Bolshevism under the leadership of Germany, whose victory was allegedly the only guarantee of their future and survival.

The first indication of what the collapse of the entire media and propaganda system of the NDH would look like could be seen in the autumn of 1944, when Tito’s troops occupied Dubrovnik and Split as important centers of this system on the Adriatic coast. The fall of the government of the NDH in the said two centers meant the immediate cessation of all operations, with the existing media infrastructure having been used for the operations of the media and propaganda service of the new authorities.

At the beginning of 1945 and even in early April of the same year, this system was still operational in most parts of the Independent State of Croatia despite the difficulties of War. All until Sunday morning, 6 May 1945, there were no public announcements of a possible collapse of the media and propaganda system of the NDH. Nevertheless, it was during that day that the operations of what remained of this system in the Croatian capital were actually terminated.

In parallel with the entry of the units of the Yugoslav Army in Zagreb, the new authorities took over the other media as well, and many of the earlier associates of the media and propaganda system of the NDH who remained in Zagreb were subjected to persecution.

The media and propaganda system of the NDH intended to encompass all the media and to utilize them systematically as a powerful tool in promoting the objectives of the government of the NDH and the ruling Ustasha Movement. This is why, despite the difficulties of War and crises throughout the War, the media were devoted so much attention. The organizers of the system understood the power of the new media, radio

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and film, having paid particular attention to their development. The successes in the technical and personnel development of the media and propaganda system, as well as the fact that the same was being developed to serve the promotion of the objectives of the Ustasha authorities – are unquestionable.