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Shadow Commander: The Wartime Biography of Velimir Terzić, 1941 – 1945

Based on published documents and relevant secondary sources, this paper presents a biography of Velimir Terzić in the period from 1941 to 1945. Terzić was a pre-war officer in the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia who became a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1941, after he had joined the People's Liberation Movement. Terzić held several high-level posts in this movement's military wing, of which the most important was deputy chief of the Supreme Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, i.e., the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army. In this position, Terzić signed many major decisions that significantly influenced the development of the military in socialist Yugoslavia. Besides the documents that he signed, another important aspect of Terzić's wartime biography is the fact that he appointed officials who, like him, had been born in Montenegro to senior positions in the units of the People's Liberation Movement in Dalmatia. Terzić's personnel and organizational policies created a situation in which a group of Montenegrin officials established their own system of authority through the military bodies of the People's Liberation Movement in Dalmatia. In addition to Dalmatia, this same system was also set up in eastern Bosnia. Besides Terzić, the primary exponents of this system were Arso Jovanović and Jovo Vukotić.

Introduction

The army of socialist Yugoslavia was formed during the Second World War as the military wing of the People's Liberation Movement (*Narodnooslobodilački pokret* – NOP), a political movement under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* – KPJ). For the most part, the manner in which this army emerged has still not undergone historiographic scrutiny. Besides the lack of availability of numerous crucial documents, a factor that further impedes the study of this subject matter is the lack of written biographies of its leading figures.

This absence of biographies of the relevant individuals has most notably come to the fore in the case of Arso Jovanović. During the period from 1941 until his never-explained death in 1948, he held the post of Chief of Staff of the Army. His official function was Chief of the Supreme Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (*Narodnooslobodilačka vojska Jugoslavije* –

NOVJ), and then of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army (*Jugoslavenska armija* – JA).[1] Jovanović's role in the development of socialist Yugoslavia's army has been marginalized to such a degree that one may conclude, stated somewhat colourfully, that his biography had literally been "clipped out".[2] The erasure of Arso Jovanović from Yugoslav society's collective memory was done in the same manner as in the Soviet Union in the case of Leon Trotsky, the founder of the Red Army, who had been "acclaimed as the father of victory" and considered "the leader of the revolution second only to Lenin." However, after his defeat by Joseph Stalin in a power struggle, Trotsky's name was "assiduously and systematically expunged from all official histories of the revolution".[3]

Like the role of Arso Jovanović, the importance of his deputy in the post of Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters (i. e., the JA General Staff), Velimir Terzić, has also been minimized in Yugoslav history books. Based on Terzić's biography published in the Yugoslav military encyclopedia, *Vojna enciklopedija*, as well as documents published by the Military History Institute of the Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija* – JNA), it is apparent that he served in this position from November 1942 until the end of the war.[4] From these documents, it is evident that the influence of Terzić, like Jovanović, on the development of the NOVJ, or JA, was not simply declaratory, but rather genuine and quite intense. An unambiguous argument in favour of this conclusion is the fact that some of the most important documents issued by the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and the JA General Staff bear Terzić's signature.

With regard to the minimisation of the importance of Terzić's wartime role, it is necessary to underscore that – as opposed to Jovanović – he did not die under unexplained circumstances in the immediate post-war years, rather he was a prominent member of that period's political elite in socialist Yugoslavia. This situation must be emphasized, because on this basis one may conclude that the deemphasis of his wartime role was not contingent upon the post-war power struggle, rather it was by all indications a consequence of Tito's cult of personality. Specifically, attempts were made in Yugoslav history books to prove that Josip Broz Tito, as the Yugoslav Communist Party's general secretary, was the creator of all NOVJ/JA military plans, even though available documents point to an entirely different conclusion.

It is noteworthy that the approach of Yugoslav historiography to Terzić's wartime role did not essentially differ from the approach later adopted by Croatian historiography, which in this context generally passes over Terzić in silence. This

1 GUTIĆ 1982: 224.

2 VUKELIĆ I ŠUMANOVIĆ 2018: 161–180.

3 DEUTSCHER 1977: 120, 156–157, 191.

4 TRGO 1957a: 440; GUTIĆ 1982: 449.

is clearly indicated by the fact that in most Croatian history books dealing with the Second World War in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, Terzić is only mentioned as the author of the book *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [Collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia]. The reason for stressing this book is Terzić's assertion that one of the reasons for the military defeat and fracturing of the Yugoslav kingdom was the betrayal of the Croats.[5] However, the exclusive focus on this assertion by Terzić (and the responses of a portion of the Croatian public to it) while overlooking the prominent posts that he held in the People's Liberation Movement may be deemed controversial because it creates an erroneous impression of both Terzić (who is solely portrayed as a chronicler of the wartime period) and the NOP (i.e., a movement in whose structures he played a vital role).

Contrary to the aforementioned approach, Terzić's assertion as well as the entirety of his historiographic work can only be comprehensible insofar as they are placed within the context of the functions that Terzić performed during the war. Based on documents from the Yugoslav People's Army Military History Institute and the data published in its military encyclopedia, *Vojna enciklopedija*, it is apparent that in the course of the military defeat and subsequent collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Terzić held the rank of captain in the Yugoslav army.[6] He joined the NOP with this rank, but he advanced considerably in a rather brief period.

Besides the post of Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and General Staff of the JA, which he held from November 1942 until the war's end, Terzić also performed two other exceptionally important military functions whereby he directly influenced the development of the NOP in the territory of today's Republic of Croatia. Firstly, from August until November 1942, he was the Chief of the 4th Operational Zone under the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army (NOV) and Partisan Detachments (*Partizanski odredi* – PO) of Croatia, and then, parallel to serving as the Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, he was the Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia.[7] Taking these facts into consideration, it is obvious that by holding these posts Terzić participated in making decisions crucial to the development of the NOP in Croatia. Therefore, the minimization of Terzić's influence on the development of the NOP in Croatia's territory is extremely questionable, because the NOP in Croatia cannot be understood without an objective evaluation of his role.

Given this, as well as the fact that a wartime biography of Velimir Terzić (with the exception of the encyclopedia entry from the socialist Yugoslavia period) has still not been written, Velimir Terzić's wartime career from 1941 to 1945 will be described in this paper based on available documents. Particular attention shall

5 MARIJAN 2017: 62; KALINIĆ 2008: 185.

6 BRANICA 1982: 206–207; TRIFUNOVIĆ 1975: 775.

7 BRANICA 1982: 179, 207; TRGO 1957a: 438; TRGO 1955e: 280–281; TRGO 1960b: 39–40.

be accorded to the role that Terzić played in the development of NOP units in Croatia's territory.

Primary Features of Velimir Terzić's Wartime Biography

According to the data from *Vojna enciklopedija*, Velimir Terzić was born in Golubovci, near Podgorica, Montenegro on 26 April 1908. He became a member of the KPJ in 1941.[8] Given that only the year is cited without any specification of the precise date on which Terzić joined the party, it may be presumed that this occurred after he had joined the NOP, that is, no earlier than the summer but perhaps even in the autumn of 1941. In the reports that Terzić submitted to Josip Broz Tito in mid-January 1943, he addressed him as 'Old Man' ("*druže Stari*"), thus in a manner used in communication with Tito by only his closest associates (such as Aleksandar Ranković or Milovan Đilas).[9] Within the context of Terzić's wartime biography, this manner of address is important first and foremost as evidence that at the time Terzić was certainly in the KPJ's top leadership, even though his ranking in the party hierarchy remains unclear.

In any case, the fact that until 1941, specifically the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in April of that year, Terzić had not been a member of the KPJ is important not only for his biography but also for the formulation of general conclusions about the emergence of socialist Yugoslavia's army. Namely, Terzić was one of the members of a group of officers in the army of the Yugoslav kingdom who assumed exceptionally vital posts in the NOP's military wing, even though they had not been members of the KPJ prior to joining the NOP.[10] Besides Terzić, the group included Arso Jovanović, Rade Hamović, Franjo Pirc, Velimir Škorpik and Jovo Vukotić. Jovanović was the Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, later General Staff of the JA, while Hamović was the chief of this military body's Operational Zone. Škorpik was the first commander of the NOP navy, while Pirc was the first commander of socialist Yugoslavia's air force. Vukotić was the first commander (commandant) of the People's Defence Corps of Yugoslavia (*Korpus narodne obrane Jugoslavije* – KNOJ), special units formed to pursue opponents of the regime.[11]

The circumstances under which Terzić became a member of the KPJ are further important when considering the role that he played from March to December 1944, during which time he was in Soviet territory as the commander of the NOVJ Military Mission to the Soviet Union. The period during which Terzić was in the

8 TRIFUNOVIĆ 1975: 775.

9 BRANICA 1983: 52–54; TRGO 1959a: 360–361, 426–433, 445–447.

10 PETRANOVIĆ 1988: 96–97.

11 FUĆAK 1974: 507; JOKSOVIĆ 1973: 689; JOKSOVIĆ 1975a: 630; ŠEGRT 1972: 389–390.

Soviet Union has only been partially covered by historiography. Yugoslav history books, among which the most authoritative study was written by Nikola Popović, clearly state that the aim of Terzić's mission was to secure assistance whereby the NOVJ would be supplied and thus reorganized into a modern army. Such assistance entailed arms, ammunition, medical supplies, radio equipment, food, clothing and footwear, but also the formation of military units. Until the commencement of Soviet assistance, the NOVJ was dependent on supplies provided by Great Britain. Taking these circumstances into account, one may conclude that the post of commander of the NOVJ Military Mission to the Soviet Union not only had a military but also a distinctly political character as well.[12]

The latter fact alone indicates that Terzić was clearly regarded as a highly trusted individual, not only by leadership of the NOP, but also by the Soviet authorities. If this had not been the case, he would neither have been sent on nor could he have successfully carried out this assignment. Like his admission to the KPJ, this facet of Terzić's wartime biography is essential for some general conclusions about the NOP. Based on this component of Terzić's wartime career, it follows that pre-war membership in the KPJ was not deemed crucial for the performance of vital duties by either the leadership of the NOP or the Soviet party and state. Besides Terzić, another notable figure who confirms this point is Rudolf Primorac. Like Terzić, he had been an officer in the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia born in Montenegro, who became a member of the KPJ only after joining the NOP. However, as opposed to Terzić, according to *Vojna enciklopedija* he became a member of the KPJ only in 1943. Despite this, after Terzić's return from the Soviet Union, he was appointed as his successor to the post of commander of the Military Mission.[13]

Like the circumstances surrounding his membership in the KPJ, the time and circumstanecs under which Terzić and Josip Broz Tito first became acquainted remain unknown. This historiographic lacuna is significant it remains unclear who proposed that Terzić be appointed Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters – a post until then held by Arso Jovanović – in November 1942.

Although it is impossible to answer this question using available sources, his appointment to this post may be interpreted in two ways. The first may be defined as the classic approach in socialist Yugoslavia's historiography, according to which the promotion of an official in the NOP was understood as the result of a decision made by Josip Broz Tito. The second way to interpret Terzić's promotion may be called a prosopographic approach, such that Terzić's promotion was part of the process in which a group of Montenegrin cadres assumed key positions in the NOP's military wing.

[12] KRSTIĆ 1971: 245, 271, 346; VUJOŠEVIĆ 1981: 357; PETRANOVIĆ 1992: 587; POPOVIĆ 1988: 125–200.

[13] Primorac was born in the village of Sutomore near Bar. JOKSOVIĆ 1974: 321.

Within the context of the NOP, the concept of "a group of Montenegrin cadres" pertains to NOP officials born in Montenegro who held prominent posts in units that had the term 'Montenegrin' in their designations. From the cessation of activity of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Partisan Detachments (*Narodnooslobodilački partizanski odredi* – NOPO) for Montenegro and Boka in the summer of 1942 until the formation of the 6th and 7th Montenegrin Brigades in the autumn of 1943, NOP units with the adjective 'Montenegrin' in their designations were the 4th and 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigades and the 1st and 2nd Montenegrin Battalions of the 1st Proletarian Brigade.[14]

According to the available sources, from the establishment of the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade in June 1942 until the end of August that same year Terzić served as its deputy commander. From there Terzić was first transferred to the post of Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, after which he was promoted to Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters in November 1942. The first appointment occurred at the end of August 1942, and the second in mid-November 1942.[15]

Six more prominent members of the aforementioned Montenegrin NOP units were promoted at the same time as Terzić. They were: Radomir Babić and Jovo Vukotić, the political commissar and chief of staff of the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade, Peko Dapčević and Mitar Bakić, the commander and political commissar of the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade, Momčilo Poleksić, the commander of the 5th Battalion of the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade, and Pero Ćetković, the commander of the 1st Montenegrin Battalion of the 1st Proletarian Brigade. Babić was appointed to the post of political commissar of the 3rd Montenegrin Division, while Vukotić was appointed Chief of Staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division. Dapčević and Bakić were appointed to the posts of commander and political commissar of the 2nd Proletarian Division. Ćetković was named commander of the 3rd Montenegrin Division.[16] As opposed to these five, Poleksić was not appointed to the leadership of any of the divisions formed at the time, rather he was sent to the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters to serve as Chief of the armaments sector, formally known as the "First Section of the Supreme Headquarters Economic Department".[17]

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[14] Of these two brigades, the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade was formed from parts of the Durmitor, Kom, Lovćen and Zeta Detachments and the 'Bijeli Pavle' Detachment, while the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade was formed from three battalions of the Nikšić Detachment and one battalion of the Zeta Detachment. BRAJUŠKOVIĆ 1974: 375; VUJOŠEVIĆ 1974a: 374; VUJOŠEVIĆ 1974b: 370.

[15] BRANICA 1982: 179, 207; TRGO 1955a: 479, 489; TRGO 1957a: 440; TRGO 1957b: 280–281.

[16] HOTIĆ 1971: 340; JOKSOVIĆ 1975a: 630; LONČAREVIĆ 1970: 424; ŠILJEGOVIĆ 1970: 439; VUKANOVIĆ 1970: 15; VUKIĆEVIĆ 1971: 297.

[17] TRGO 1957a: 439; TRGO 1959a: 242–243.

Besides these institutions in the NOP's military wing, prominent members of the aforementioned Montenegrin contingents also assumed key posts in the NOP brigades formed in Dalmatia. Specifically, in as many as four of the five Dalmatian brigades organized during the latter half of 1942, the commander was from Montenegro, while in two of these five brigades the deputy political commissar was from Montenegro. The commanders of the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Dalmatian Brigades were Pero Ćetković, Ljubo Vučković, Savo Drljević and Vojin Popović. The deputy political commissars of the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian Brigades were Vlado Šćekić and Jovo Kapičić.[18] Drljević and Vučković came to these posts from the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade, Kapičić and Šćekić from the 1st Montenegrin Battalion of the 1st Proletarian Brigade, while prior to this appointment Popović had been part of the NOP detachments from eastern Herzegovina.[19] Furthermore, in addition to the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian Brigades, the KPJ organization was also under the supervision of Montenegrin cadres in the 5th Dalmatian Brigade, because Vladimir Rolović was appointed the head of its Political Department. Like Ćetković and Šćekić, he had been a member of the 1st Proletarian Brigade's 1st Montenegrin Battalion.[20]

The appointment of these Montenegrin officers to leadership posts in Dalmatian brigades was exceptionally important, not only for the development of the NOP in Dalmatia's territory, but also to the movement's overall organizational structure. Until that time, all units with regional (local) appellations in their designations generally had members in their command staffs who had been born in the area in which such units were formed. A prominent official and post-war Yugoslav military writer, Nikola Anić, originally from Dalmatia, described this practice by noting that "in a multiethnic community like Yugoslavia (...) the national question was also resolved" through staffing policies.[21] However, in the case of units formed in Dalmatia, there was some deviation from this practice.

The further importance of this personnel structure in the Dalmatian brigades is tied to the organizational context of these units within the NOVJ. Specifically, the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian Brigades were placed within divisions that were entirely administered by Montenegrin cadres: the 1st Dalmatian Brigade became part of the 3rd Montenegrin Division, while the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade became part of the 2nd Proletarian Division.[22] By becoming components of these divisions, the two oldest

[18] BRANICA 1982: 219, 329, 345; BRANICA 1983: 28, 122, 175; TRGO 1959b: 100; TRGO 1961b: 412.

[19] JOKSOVIĆ 1974c: 170; JOKSOVIĆ 1975b: 626; JOKSOVIĆ 1975e: 487; MATUNOVIĆ 1971: 542.

[20] JOKSOVIĆ 1974: 206.

[21] ANIĆ 2005: 93.

[22] BRANICA 1983: 808–811, 819–821, 840, 853, 865–867, 873–876; TRGO 1955c: 11; VUKANOVIĆ 1970: 10, 103.

and best organized Dalmatian brigades were incorporated into units administered by the group of Montenegrin cadres at both the military and political (party) levels.

To understand the importance of these events, it would be worthwhile to note that at the time, besides the 4th and 5th Proletarian Brigades, the adjective 'Montenegrin' in the immediate vicinity of the NOP leadership could be found in three more proletarian brigades, while the 2nd Proletarian Brigade was considered Serbian because it was composed of troops from Serbia.[23] However, there were virtually no promotions from these units to other comparable posts. With the exception of Pero Ćetković from its 1st Montenegrin Battalion, only two members of the command staff of the 1st Proletarian Brigade were promoted, its commander Koča Popović and political commissar Filip Kljajić, who were appointed commander and political commissar of the 1st Proletarian Division. Not a single prominent officer was promoted from the 2nd and 3rd Proletarian Brigades.[24]

Alongside these events, an integral component of the promotion of Montenegrin cadres was the departure of the Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters for Slovenia. According to available sources, Jovanović went there to organize NOP units. With his departure, his duties as Chief of Staff at that time were assumed by Terzić (even though he nominally remained deputy chief), a role that the latter performed until Jovanović's return to the Supreme Headquarters in July 1943.[25]

Terzić held this post during the period when German forces were organizing Operations Weiss and Schwarz with the objective of breaking the NOP. During these battles, Terzić assumed command of the divisions that were part of the tactical groups under the direct leadership of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. The fact that Terzić was in command of these formations is apparent from the orders that he signed, but also from the correspondence sent to him by the remaining members of the Supreme Headquarters and the members of the command staffs of these divisions.[26]

Once Jovanović returned to the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, Terzić was assigned to a new post. He was appointed Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. He held this post until March 1944, when he was appointed commander of the Military Mission to the Soviet Union. Upon returning from the Soviet Union in December 1944, he was once more appointed Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, where he remained until the end of the war. When analyzing these facts, it becomes apparent that Velimir Terzić's influence inside the institutions of the NOP's military wing was considerable.

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23 LEKOVIĆ 1982: 66–67; TRGO 1957a: 203–204.

24 TRGO 1957a: 320.

25 ANIĆ 2005: 112, 165; TRGO 1956c: 335; TRGO 1960a: 158.

26 BRANICA 1983: 828–832, 853, 876–877; TRGO 1959b: 357.

Specifically, Terzić was not only a participant but also the creator of the most important decisions that led to the victory of the NOP and the consequent establishment of the socialist Yugoslav regime. Taking this into account, one may conclude that without understanding his biography in the period from 1941 to 1945, it is impossible to explain the primary features of the military wing of the NOP or the emergence of socialist Yugoslavia's army.

Velimir Terzić's Wartime Orders

As noted previously, in November 1942 Terzić was promoted to the post of Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. However, due to the absence of the chief of this military body, Arso Jovanović, he in fact assumed the former's role. Besides the post itself, Terzić's influence on the NOP leadership is reflected in the documents bearing his signature.

The historiographically most well-known document signed by Terzić in this period is the consent whereby, on behalf of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, he granted Koča Popović the right to conduct negotiations with a German delegation in March 1943.[27] Although the context of these negotiations has still not undergone thorough historiographic examination, from the available sources it is apparent that they were aimed at halting the German attack on NOVJ formations. In this regard, the three NOVJ negotiators, Milovan Đilas, Koča Popović and Vladimir Velebit, declared in the document which they had signed that "in the situation as it stands there is absolutely no reason for the German army to conduct military operations against the NOVJ".[28] The objective of the negotiations was only partly achieved, as German forces attacked NOVJ formations very soon afterward (in Operation Schwarz in mid-May 1943). The importance of this document, over and above the described context, lies in the fact that it was deemed the most controversial NOP document by Yugoslav historiography. Besides granting consent to Koča Popović to conduct negotiations with German envoys, during this period Terzić signed several exceptionally important documents.

The order on the restructuring of the NOVJ intelligence service was the first and most important document in this group. The order was forwarded to the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia on 7 December 1942. The order specifies that the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters had already forwarded "our order with instructions for the organization of an intelligence service in our territory, and in our mobile units," and that it was therefore necessary "to proceed in the spirit of this order and instructions and organize an int.[elligence] service as soon as possible".[29] This order remained in effect until 13 May 1944, that

[27] LEKOVIĆ 1985: 70.

[28] SIMIĆ I DESPOT 2010: 104.

[29] TRGO 1959a: 26.

is, until the establishment of a consolidated intelligence and counterintelligence service for the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters under the designation Department for the People's Protection (*Odjeljenje za zaštitu naroda* – OZN-a).[30] Consequently, this order is significant because in all preceding historiographic studies the operations of the NOVJ's intelligence service are generally, and mistakenly, simplified such that they are equated exclusively with the operations of the OZN-a. However, Terzić's order to the Main Staff of Croatia of 7 December 1942 serves as direct evidence that the NOVJ intelligence service was exceptionally well organized even before the formation of the OZN-a, and that Terzić oversaw its operations.

Parallel to the above order, Terzić signed yet another vital document. This was a letter sent by the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters to the leadership of the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) on 25 December 1942. This letter is important for the history of NOP institutions because it refers to "the overview of the Supreme Headquarters' reorganization, which was recently carried out by decision of the Supreme Commandant of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia," i.e., Josip Broz Tito.[31] Pursuant to the reorganization of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters recorded in this letter, seven departments were established (intelligence, economic, military-judicial, technical and medical, as well as military administration in rear positions) and a commission ("Commission to Combat Spies and the Fifth Column"), which was subsequently reorganized in September 1943 into a department ("Department for the People's Protection").[32] The content of this letter indicates that this reorganization, just as with the operations of the NOVJ intelligence service, was entrusted to Terzić. Only by taking this fact into account does the importance of Terzić's role in the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters during this period become apparent.

As in the case of the operations of the intelligence service in NOVJ units, during this period Terzić directly influenced yet another department of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. This was the Department for Military Administration in Rear Positions. Terzić's influence in this department is reflected in the orders that he forwarded to the 3rd Montenegrin Division on 29 March 1943 with instructions on how to organize the NOP's authority in the territory of the Nevesinje and Gacko Districts. According to Terzić, the command of these two districts (under the designation 'regional command' – "*komanda područja*") was supposed to be established in Nevesinje. Local commands ("*komande mesta*") would be subordinate to this command, and they were to be established in Nevesinje, Ulog, Plužine and Gacko. As stated further in the document, a command for the "Foča region," i.e., the Foča District, was supposed to be organized in the same manner.[33]

30 BRAJUŠKOVIĆ 1984b: 90–93.

31 ODIĆ I KOMARICA 1988: 413.

32 DŽELEBDŽIĆ 1987: 27, 30.

33 TRGO 1959b: 357.

The organization of the NOP's authority in eastern Herzegovina was further reinforced by the role Terzić played in Montenegro during the subsequent period, namely, during April and the first half of May of that same year. The most important document that demonstrates Terzić's importance during this period is the letter that he sent to Josip Broz Tito on 21 April 1943. Based on this letter, the role that Terzić played in Montenegro as well as the name of his closest associate at the time are quite apparent. In this letter, Terzić proposed that Momčilo Poleksić, a member of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters in charge of supplying NOP formations with military gear should be sent to Šavnik and Žabljak, settlements in Montenegro taken by the NOP in that period, so that he could "assume responsibility for unfettered recruitment and the formation of new units." In a footnote to Terzić's letter, the editors of the collected documents pointed out that "new units had not been formed," rather approximately 1,600 persons from the Šavnik area were sent to the 2nd, 4th and 5th Proletarian Brigades.[34] The unit through which Terzić, with Poleksić's assistance, implemented recruitment in this area was the NOVJ's 2nd Proletarian Division. This fact is apparent from Tito's letter sent to this division's leadership on 23 April 1943, two days after Terzić's own letter, in which Tito sought a report on "how recruitment is proceeding." To understand the role that Terzić played in this period, it is noteworthy that Tito and the remaining members of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters were not with him in Montenegro, rather they were in the village of Govza near Foča in eastern Bosnia.[35]

Given the fact that Terzić signed these documents when Jovanović was absent from the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, the documents that Terzić signed in the same context at the very end of the war, i.e., when Jovanović was absent from the JA General Staff, are part of the same group of documents in a substantive sense.[36] These are two documents that pertain to the status of prisoners of war.

The first of these two documents is an order dated 9 April 1945 that defines the operating methods for prisoner-of-war camps. The most important part of this order specifies that "the establishment and organization of camps" were entrusted to "military-territorial commands, local commands and city commands," while the "verification of the identities" of internees and their "recording and registration" were the responsibility of "the organs of the OZN-a of those federal units in whose territory the camps are located".[37] This document is exceptionally important for understanding the repressive system implemented by the Yugoslav authorities at the war's end and during the initial post-war period. The content of this document

[34] TRGO 1960a: 150.

[35] BOJIĆ 1982: 22, 39, 44.

[36] GUTIĆ 1982: 396.

[37] GUTIĆ 1982: 349–350.

clearly indicates the jurisdiction of the institutions that organized prisoner-of-war camps and ascertained the identities of the prisoners interned in them.

The second document from this period is Terzić's radiogram (dispatch) sent to the command of the 3rd Yugoslav Army on 16 May 1945. In an exceptionally brief dispatch, Terzić warned this army's leadership that particular care must be taken to ensure that their prisoners, among whom there was a certain number of "notorious villains" as Terzić expressed it, do not flee. Terzić thus warned that the guard around these prisoners had to be reinforced.[38]

This document is significant primarily because it sheds light on the circumstances surrounding the execution of persons who had been captured by the detachments of the 3rd Yugoslav Army. Among the names cited in the report sent by this army's leadership to the JA General Staff on 24 May 1945 was that of Franjo Sudar, a colonel in the army of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* – NDH).[39] Given that available sources show that Sudar had never been taken before a Yugoslav court after his capture, it may be assumed that he was executed without trial. The basis for this assumption is the memoir of a high-ranking officer in the 3rd Yugoslav Army, Ivan Mišković. He wrote that he had interrogated Sudar, during which he told the latter: "Your fate is death".[40] This statement was mentioned by Croatian historian Ivo Goldstein in one of his texts about the post-war crimes perpetrated by the Yugoslav Army as evidence that Sudar had been executed afterward.[41] However, there is little likelihood that Mišković could have made this decision on his own, which suggests that this was a decision made by the members of the 3rd Yugoslav Army's command staff.[42] Besides Mišković, who very likely did order Sudar's execution, Terzić may also be considered culpable for this crime because, as indicated by his radiogram, he was this command staff's immediate superior with regard to the security assigned to important prisoners of war.

The documents cited in this section are clear indicators that Josip Broz Tito, as the supreme commander of the NOVJ and JA, delegated a major portion of his authority to Velimir Terzić. This circumstance must be stressed because in Yugoslav historiography Tito is often portrayed as the originator of such orders, even though the above-cited documents show a substantially different picture.

38 GEIGER 2005: 115.

39 KRSTIĆ 1976: 647; GEIGER 2005: 137.

40 MIŠKOVIĆ I BADER 2019: 181.

41 GOLDSTEIN 2019: 92.

42 The three leading figures in this command staff at the time were Kosta Nađ, Branko Petričević and Vukašin Subotić. The conclusion that they made the key decisions in this body follows from Tito's commendation to the 3rd Yugoslav Army of 15 May 1945, in which he mentioned their names. GUTIĆ 1982: 466.

By way of conclusion on the matter of the role played by Terzić in the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, based on the cited documents it is apparent that the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters would not have issued any important orders without his decision (virtually to the same degree as without a decision by Josip Broz Tito).

Velimir Terzić's Personnel and Organizational Policies in Dalmatia

A separate thematic component of Terzić's wartime career is the personnel and organizational policies that he implemented in Dalmatia. Terzić conducted these policies from three different posts: first as Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, then as Deputy Chief the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and finally as Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. These policies were implemented from the end of August 1942 to mid-March 1944, that is, until Terzić's departure for the Soviet Union.

Given the organizational structure of NOP formations, this part of Terzić's wartime career may be divided into two periods. The first period lasted for roughly one year, from August 1942 to August 1943. The second period was considerably briefer, from August 1943 to March 1944. In the first period, the basic organizational unit in the NOP was the brigade, while during the second it was the division. During the first period, five brigades were established with the adjective "Dalmatian" in their designations, while during the second period four "Dalmatian" divisions were established.

During the first of these two periods, Terzić was the Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia and then Deputy Chief the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. Terzić implemented personnel and organizational policies in Dalmatia at these two posts. The objective of these policies was to separate organizationally the 4th Operational Zone from the command system of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, and place the brigades formed in this territory under the oversight of an officer from Montenegro.

As previously, in the latter half of 1942, five Dalmatian brigades were formed in which NOP officers from Montenegro assumed leading posts. The commanding officers of the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Dalmatian brigades, as well as the deputy political commissars of the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian brigades, were Montenegrin. In addition to the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian brigades, Montenegrin influence was also evident in the party organization of the 5th Dalmatian Brigade, because the head of its Political Department was from Montenegro. Terzić directly participated in the formation of the first three of these five brigades. Besides the fact that he was the Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, an additional argument supporting this

claim is that he signed the decision on the formation of the 1st and 3rd Dalmatian brigades. By contrast, no document on the establishment of the 2nd Dalmatian brigade is known, but it may be presumed that Terzić directly participated in this unit's establishment (given the post that he held at the time).[43]

As opposed to the three previously noted units, the 4th and 5th Dalmatian Brigades were formed after Terzić's promotion, during the period when he was the Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. These two brigades were formed on the basis of an order issued by the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters on 25 December 1942,[44] which supports the conclusion that Terzić had influenced the personnel policies of these units to a great degree. Although this order was signed by "Comrade Veljko," meaning Pavle Ilić, who was the assistant Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters at the time, it was very likely Terzić's decision. Besides the latter being Ilić's direct superior in the hierarchy of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, an additional reason for this conclusion is the fact that Savo Drljević is cited in this decision as the future commander of the 4th Dalmatian Brigade. Based on the available sources, it is apparent that Drljević and Terzić were personally acquainted, because Drljević was the founder and first commander of the Bijelo Polje Partisan Detachment, to whose leadership Terzić was appointed in the spring of 1942.[45] Thus, in the case of appointing Drljević to this post, one may presume that Terzić's personal influence was crucial.

Of these five Dalmatian brigades, the first two became part of divisions that were led by Montenegrin cadres. By contrast, the remaining three Dalmatian brigades formed the 9th Dalmatian Division which was led by local cadres, i.e., NOP officials from Dalmatia. The commander of this division was Vicko Krstulović, the political commissar Ivica Kukoč and the chief of staff Josip Škorpik.[46] This division functioned for a relatively brief time, because it was disbanded on 12 April 1943. According to available sources, the proposal for its dissolution was in fact put forth by Terzić, as in a letter he sent to Aleksandar Ranković on 9 April 1943, he suggested the dissolution of the 9th Dalmatian Division.[47] The brigades that were part of this division, the 3rd, 4th and 5th Dalmatian Brigades, were also disbanded as an integral component of this decision.[48] Consequently, following the decision to dissolve the 9th Dalmatian Division, three of the five Dalmatian brigades were similarly dissolved.

43 BRANICA 1982: 222; TRGO 1955e: 113.

44 TRGO 1959a: 165–166.

45 ŽIVKOVIĆ 2022: 245.

46 BRANICA 1983: 13, 87, 851.

47 TRGO 1960a: 57.

48 TRGO 1960a: 83–85.

A new unit under the designation 3rd Dalmatian Brigade was organized from the disbanded Dalmatian brigades. Its designation was the only aspect this unit had in common with the former third brigade, as the key posts (commander and political commissar) were held by Montenegrin cadres. As opposed to the newly formed 3rd Dalmatian Brigade, the former unit that functioned under that designation had NOP officials from Dalmatia in all of its top posts. Its commander was Branko Duda, its political commissar was Mate Ujević, its deputy commander was Stanko Parmač and its deputy commissar was Ante Roje. Even though Montenegrin cadres did not hold any of the commanding posts in this brigade, one prominent member of the NOP from Montenegro was in its leadership: Branko Petričević Kađa, who was appointed subsequently as a member of the brigade's Political Department in charge of "cultural and political activity".[49] Because he declared support for the Cominform Resolution in 1948, *Vojna enciklopedija* did not include a biographical entry on Petričević and his importance was systematically downplayed in Yugoslav history books (similar to the case of Arso Jovanović). However, the few available sources about him indicate that he had been born in Montenegro and that he had an exceptionally notable career in the NOVJ and Yugoslav Army. At the war's end, Petričević was the political commissar of the 3rd Yugoslav Army, to which the leadership of the Independent State Croatia surrendered on 15 May 1945.[50]

The Montenegrin cadres appointed to the posts of commander and political commissar in the new 3rd Dalmatian Brigade were Vojin Popović and Milija Stanišić. Besides these two, Petričević was also appointed to this unit's leadership. Even though his name was not specified in the decision on this unit's establishment, the circumstances that led to his placement in this brigade's leadership derived from a section of the decision by the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters on the dissolution of the 9th Dalmatian Division, which stipulates that "the political department of the previous 3rd Dalmatian Brigade will be incorporated as the political department of the newly-formed 3rd Dalmatian People's Liberation Shock Brigade".[51]

The new 3rd Dalmatian Brigade functioned for a relatively short time, as it was shattered during Operation Schwarz, less than two months after its formation. This event is largely neglected in Yugoslav history books, although vestiges of it are reflected in the fact that a unit under this designation was formed on 8 September 1943,[52] which supports the conclusion that the brigade established under this designation following the dissolution of the NOVJ's 9th Dalmatian Division. Besides the fact that the third successive unit under the designation "3rd Dalmatian Brigade" had been established, further evidence that the brigade formed on 12 April 1943

[49] BRANICA 1983: 175; TRGO 1955: 113.

[50] BANAC 1990: 160; KRSTIĆ 1976: 647.

[51] JOKSOVIĆ 1971: 142; TRGO 1960a: 83–85.

[52] TRGO 1957c: 198.

had ceased to exist is the letter that Vaso Jovanović sent to Koča Popović on 10 June 1943. When this letter was sent, both Jovanović and Popović were members of the command staff of the 1st Proletarian Division. The letter is a first-class source for insight into the fate of the 3rd Dalmatian Brigade, because it contains the statement that the "1st Bat[talion] of the former 3rd Dalm[atian] Brigade" was situated "somewhere at a position in the deep left".[53] Based on this observation, one may conclude that Vaso Jovanović did not know where this battalion was, but he was entirely convinced that the 3rd Dalmatian Brigade had ceased to exist.

With reference to the deaths of members of this unit, it is noteworthy that the three above-mentioned NOP officials from Montenegro who held its leading posts, Vojin Popović, Milija Stanišić and Branko Petričević, were promoted after these events. Petričević was appointed political commissar of the NOVJ's 17th Eastern Bosnian Division on 2 July 1943, Popović was appointed political commissar of the 26th Dalmatian Division on 7 October 1943, and at roughly the same time Stanišić was appointed political commissar of the 3rd Proletarian (Sandžak) Brigade.[54]

Although not destroyed, the 1st Dalmatian Brigade also suffered heavy losses in this period. In addition to battlefield casualties, many losses in this unit resulted from harsh treatment by superior officers. Specifically, the members of this unit were starved and subjected to a variety of ailments. A document that clearly confirms this is a report submitted by Vlado Šćekić, then the 1st Dalmatian Brigade's deputy political commissar, to the KPJ Central Committee on 23 May 1943. In it, Šćekić stated that the brigade had "left a poor impression" among the populace of Montenegro. He explained his assessment by noting that the brigade was in the rearguard of NOP units and was left with meager rations. By contrast, "the 4th Montenegrin Brigade, which marched at the forefront, fed [itself] by voluntary contributions, the 2nd Proletarian, right behind it, by requisition, while those of us in back were left with hardly anything." Moreover, in his report Šćekić stated that the brigade "had a pathetic physical appearance," noting that the members of the disbanded 9th Dalmatian Division, who had been deployed to the brigade as reinforcements, were particularly enfeebled and exhausted. By the time the report had been written, "a fifth of these personnel had died," and Šćekić added that in the opinion of a physician, whose name he did not mention, "over two thirds" would die.[55] Šćekić's report is an exceptionally valuable historical document because it indicates that the 1st Dalmatian Brigade had suffered exceptionally high losses even prior to Operation Schwarz and that these losses had not been the consequence of prior battles. Culpability for the high mortality of the 1st Dalmatian Brigade's members rested not only with its own command staff, but also with the command

53 TRGO 1956a: 42.

54 KRSTIĆ 1969: 309; TRGO 1956b: 123–124; TRGO 1962: 287, 353.

55 TRGO 1955d: 260.

staff of the 3rd Montenegrin Division, to which the brigade belonged. At the end of May 1943, that division's command staff consisted of Radovan Vukanović, Radomir Babić and Rudolf Primorac.[56]

However, as in the case of hardships suffered by the 3rd Dalmatian Brigade, none of the superior officers were held accountable for the 1st Dalmatian Brigade's losses; instead, they were promoted. For example, less than two months after this report, Šćekić was promoted the political commissar of the 1st Proletarian Brigade. His former post was assumed by Mirko Novović, who was until then the deputy political commissar of the 1st Montenegrin Proletarian Brigade, thus a member of the unit to which Šćekić had originally belonged. Alongside Šćekić, the commander of the 1st Dalmatian Brigade, Gligo Mandić, was also promoted. Like Novović and Šćekić, he was one of a series of Montenegrin cadres in the leadership of NOP units in Dalmatia. He had been born in the village of Kameno near Herceg-Novi and was transferred from this brigade to the post of commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade. Already in July 1943 he was promoted to the post of commander of the 17th Eastern Bosnian Division of the NOVJ. After Mandić was promoted, the post of commander of the 1st Dalmatian Brigade was once more filled with a NOP official from Montenegro: Miladin Ivanović from the village of Lalevići near Danilovgrad.[57]

The reason why these casualties suffered by the 1st and 3rd Dalmatian Brigades are important to note within the context of Terzić's wartime biography is that all of the NOP officials culpable for the losses in these two units were appointed to their posts under Terzić's purview. The decision to form the 1st Dalmatian Brigade was signed by Terzić, while the 3rd Dalmatian Brigade was formed as a result of Terzić's proposal to dissolve the 9th Dalmatian Division of the NOVJ. Also, when promoting command staff members of the 1st and 3rd Dalmatian Brigades, Terzić was the acting Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, thus the second most important figure in the NOP's military wing (immediately after Josip Broz Tito). On this basis he may therefore be deemed accountable, because he failed to conduct an investigation into these events (or he did but then failed to sanction those responsible for the losses). Taking these facts into account, a plausible conclusion is that together with the command staffs of these two brigades, Terzić was the NOP official who bore the most accountability for the heavy losses suffered by their members.

Parallel to the appointment of Montenegrin cadres to leading posts in Dalmatian brigades, an integral component of Terzić's personnel and organizational policies

[56] TRGO 1955b: 216; TRGO 1956a: 24; VUKANOVIĆ 1970: 10, 20, 103.

[57] NOVOVIĆ I PETKOVIĆ 1986: 207, 466, 468. According to Mandić's biography in *Vojna enciklopedija*, the fact that he was a member of the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade is not cited. KLJAKOVIĆ 1973: 253; KOVAČEVIĆ 1972: 724.

in Dalmatia was the removal of the 4th Operational Zone from the command system of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. This removal was based on a decision of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters dated 2 December 1942. Pursuant to this decision, the 4th Operational Zone was placed under the direct control of the Supreme Headquarters.[58] When this decision was made, Terzić was its Deputy Chief, thus the second highest-ranking figure in the hierarchy of the NOP's military wing.

A component of this decision was the subordination of the 4th Operational Zone's intelligence service to the leadership of the 2nd Proletarian Division, i.e., to a unit fully overseen by Montenegrin cadres. This is demonstrated by the report that the command staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division submitted to the Supreme Headquarters on 20 January 1943. In this report it is stated that "the intelligence service in the division" has been organized "in compliance with received instructions," wherein the "int.[elligence] centre of this division [is] connected" to the "int.[elligence] centres of the 4th Operational Zone, the Bosansko Grahovo Command Sector and the Livno area." With reference to the operations of the intelligence services of these institutions, the report contains the statement that these services "deliver to us all reports that they receive from their own int.[elligence] organs".[59]

The commander of this division's intelligence service was Rade Janićijević, a member of the division's leadership whose work was directly supervised by Terzić. The nature of their relationship is evident in the report that Janićijević submitted to the Intelligence Department of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters on 4 February 1943. In it, he stated that this report, "in line with a verbal agreement by telephone with Comrade Terzić," was sent "via the command staff of the Livno area".[60] The influence which Terzić exercised through Janićijević on the 4th Operational Zone's intelligence service is apparent from the letter that Terzić sent to the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia on 13 January 1943 and to Josip Broz Tito on 17 January 1943. In these letters, Terzić cited the information that he had received from the 4th Operational Zone's intelligence service,[61] thereby providing direct evidence of its subordination to him and indicating that the leadership of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia was unfamiliar with its work except via Terzić.

The 4th Operational Zone's intelligence officer was Maks Baće Milić,[62] meaning that Terzić, via Janićijević, exercised control over the intelligence service

58 DŽELEBDŽIĆ 1988: 109–110.

59 DŽELEBDŽIĆ 1988: 56–57; TRGO 1954: 225–226.

60 BRANICA 1983: 148.

61 BRANICA 1983: 46, 52.

62 BRANICA 1982: 43, 63, 129–130.

through him. Based on available documents, it is apparent that Baće was never in physical contact with the leadership of the 4th Operational Zone, either during Terzić's reorganization of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters' intelligence service or in the period immediately preceding it. Furthermore, in this period Baće received instructions for his work directly from the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, with the leadership of the 4th Operational Zone being bypassed or notified subsequently. For example, pursuant to a decision of the Supreme Headquarters on 13 September 1942 signed by Arso Jovanović, it was determined that Baće, as the commander of the North Dalmatian Partisan Detachment, together with the 1st Proletarian Brigade and the 4th Krajina Brigade, would participate in the attack on Bosansko Grahovo. Less than two months later, on 10 November 1942, the Supreme Headquarters ordered the 4th Operational Zone's leadership to send Baće to the command staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division. On this occasion, besides the blockade of Bosansko Grahovo, the division was supposed to extend its influence into northern Dalmatia, specifically the areas of Drniš, Sinj and Knin. The fact that Baće was generally absent from the 4th Operational Zone's command staff is further indicated by the order that the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters issued to the leadership of this military body on 25 December 1942. This order stipulated that the 5th Dalmatian Brigade should be formed, with the formal act of its establishment to be held in Bosansko Grahovo. This task was supposed to be carried out by "Comrade Milić," i.e., Baće. Besides forming this brigade, under this same order Baće was charged with receiving intelligence reports from that area, with the stipulation that "one copy" of each report should be "forwarded directly to us in [Bosanski] Petrovac".[63]

The cited documents are a clear indicator that Baće generally resided in Bosansko Grahovo from mid-September to the end of December 1942, indicating that during this entire period he was also physically distant from the leadership of the 4th Operational Zone, and that he was not communicating with the members of that military body. Consequently, one may conclude that regardless of his nominal post as intelligence officer of the 4th Operational Zone he did not in fact perform this duty, rather he functioned as an operative for the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. Taking this fact into account, as well as the fact that in chronological terms the order to send Baće to Bosansko Grahovo was issued by Arso Jovanović, it follows that the role that Terzić intended for Baće was a concept initially conceived by Jovanović already in September 1942. However, due to his absence from the Supreme Headquarters from November 1942 to July 1943, Jovanović's concept in practical terms was implemented by Terzić via Janićijević.

The second phase of Terzić's personnel and organizational policies in Dalmatia was considerably shorter, lasting from August 1943 to March 1944. During this

63 TRGO 1959a: 108, 162, 387.

period, besides serving as Deputy Chief of the Supreme Headquarters, Terzić was also the Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. Although very few documents signed by him in this phase of his wartime career have been preserved, their content indicates that he signed them as Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. This suggests that this was his primary function.

The primary feature of the NOP in Dalmatia at this time was the organization of NOP units into four divisions which (under the designations 9th, 19th, 20th and 26th Dalmatian Divisions) operated under the aegis of the 8th Dalmatian Corps. These units were established by decisions of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters on 7 October 1943.[64] Among the members of these command staffs, Terzić's influence was clearly evident in the appointment of the 26th Dalmatian Division's commanding officer. A direct source for this is the radiogram (dispatch) that the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia sent to the command staff of the 8th Dalmatian Corps of the NOVJ on 3 March 1944. According to this radiogram, "Chief of Staff Terzić is coming to you on the 4th of this month," at which point "he (...) will also arrange with you the question of the NOVJ 26th Div. commander".[65] From available sources it is apparent that after Terzić's visit to the leadership of the 8th Dalmatian Corps, Božo Božović began to sign his name as commander of the 26th Dalmatian Division,[66] which, given the above-cited radiogram from the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia dated 3 March 1944, indicates that Božović's appointment was a result of Terzić's decision. According to the biography of Božović published in *Vojna enciklopedija*, he was born in the village of Rogami, near Podgorica, thus in Montenegro,[67] indicating a shared geographic origin with Terzić. Consequently, it is quite likely that this latter factor was crucial to Božović's appointment to the aforementioned post.

A fact that supports this conclusion is that the village in which Božo Božović was born was also the birthplace of Radovan Vukanović, a prominent NOP official who had cooperated closely with Terzić in the preceding period.[68] A source which clearly illustrates the relationship between Terzić and Vukanović is the order that Terzić sent to the command staff of the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade on 6 March 1943. In the order, Terzić specified that he had held a conversation with Vukanović and that the brigade's command staff would receive precise instructions for further action from Vukanović. The importance of this order lies in the

64 TRGO 1962: 353.

65 TRGO 1959c: 603.

66 TRGO 1961a: 261, 197, 440, 641.

67 KLJAKOVIĆ 1970: 786.

68 JOKSOVIĆ 1975d: 628.

fact that afterward this brigade was temporarily removed from the 2nd Proletarian Division and became part of the 3rd Montenegrin Division, i.e., the unit in which Vukanović was appointed commander roughly three weeks later.[69] Taking into account the above-described relationship between Terzić and Vukanović, as well as the fact that Božović and Vukanović had been born in the same village, it may be presumed that Božović proposed to Terzić by Vukanović himself.

Božović's appointment as commander of the 26th Dalmatian Division is important because it was the largest division in the 8 Dalmatian Corps[70] and it was tasked with safeguarding the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters during the latter's stay on the island of Vis owing to its reputation for exceptional political reliability.[71] During the time when the Supreme Headquarters was on Vis, two other high-ranking NOP officials born in Podgorica besides Božović were also on the island: Mitar Bakić, Tito's chief of staff, and Arso Jovanović, who once more assumed the duties of Chief of the Supreme Headquarters after returning from Slovenia.[72]

It was probably the three of them who played a crucial role in organizing the departure of Josip Broz Tito on 19 September 1944 from Vis to Romania, i.e., to territory under Soviet control at the time. Bakić did so from the position of a leading figure in Tito's office, Jovanović as the Chief of the Supreme Headquarters and Božović as the commander of the NOVJ unit handling Tito's security. This trip was important because it prevented British diplomatic pressure on Tito to reach an agreement with Yugoslav King Peter II Karađorđević under conditions that would have been unfavourable to the NOP's interests. Tito's departure for Romania aroused considerable consternation among the British leadership. Bakić was explicitly cited as the NOP official who was a direct participant in carrying out this operation.[73]

In addition to Božović's appointment, Terzić had very likely participated in bringing two other prominent Montenegrin officials into leading posts in these NOP units: Vlado Ćetković and the previously mentioned Vojin Popović.

A source that describes the manner in which Ćetković was appointed to the post of commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps is the radiogram that the NOVJ

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69 TRGO 1959b: 247; VUKANOVIĆ 1970: 93–103.

70 In September 1944 this division had a total of 6,878 members. The remaining three divisions in that corps had an average of "less than 2,500" members. TRGO 1964: 86, 460.

71 ANIĆ 2005: 210. Besides its protection of the members of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, the 26th Dalmatian Division was also known for a war crime perpetrated in February 1945 when seizing Široki Brijeg. At that time, many war crimes had been perpetrated against captured soldiers and civilians, such as Franciscan friars from a local monastery. The order to attack the monastery in Široki Brijeg was, besides the political commissar Dušan Korać and division chief of staff Bogdan Stupar, signed by Božović. ŠUMANOVIĆ 2016: 411–430.

72 ŠILJEGOVIĆ 1970: 439; POPOVIĆ 2018: 154; VUKELIĆ I ŠUMANOVIĆ 2018: 170.

73 BIBER 1981: 322.

Supreme Headquarters forwarded to the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia on 15 December 1943. In this document, it is noted that the commanders of the corps and the 19th Dalmatian Division were posted at "your suggestion." Since Vlado Ćetković and Milan Kuprešanin were appointed to these posts, it follows that both of them were the choice of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, while the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, i.e., Josip Broz Tito, merely confirmed the decision.[74] Available sources indicate that the leadership of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia included, besides Terzić as its Chief, Ivan Gošnjak as commander and Rade Žigić as political commissar.[75] This proposal was thus most likely put forth by all three of them. Even though there is no direct confirmation of this in the sources, in the case of Ćetković it may be presumed that this was Terzić's personal proposal. The basis for this presumption is the fact that Ćetković was born in the village of Crnci, near Podgorica, making him another NOP official from Montenegro.[76]

Besides Ćetković's birthplace, an additional fact supporting the conclusion that he was appointed to this post due to Terzić's influence is that on 1 January 1944, only two weeks later, Tito appointed Terzić commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps. This decision was important primarily as an indicator that Tito considered Dalmatia within Terzić's sphere of influence, and it may be considered grounds for the conclusion that Terzić's influence in key personnel and organizational matters concerning NOP units in this region had already been decisive in the preceding period. However, besides being an indicator of Terzić's influence in Dalmatia, the decision was important for an additional reason. Specifically, it was never implemented, because on that same day a query regarding which post Ćetković should assume was submitted by the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia. Following this query, Tito withdrew his decision, and both Ćetković and Terzić remained in their existing posts. Thus, Ćetković remained commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps, while Terzić remained Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia.[77] Although it is difficult to identify a concrete reason for the withdrawal of this decision without insight into the correspondence between the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, one possible explanation is that the implementation of the decision was blocked by Terzić himself.

74 TRGO 1963: 258.

75 TRGO 1958b: 194, 544.

76 ŠILJEGOVIĆ 1971: 297.

77 BRAJUŠKOVIĆ 1984a: 134, 310.

Two compelling arguments can be made in support of this interpretation. Firstly, Terzić exerted considerable influence on NOP units in Dalmatia despite the fact that he was not the commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps, as clearly indicated by the fact that he had appointed the commander of the 26th Dalmatian Division and the fact that Ćetković was very likely appointed commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps as a result of his influence. In other words, Terzić had influence on these two NOP units in Dalmatia without being a member of their command staffs. Taking this circumstance into account, it may be assumed that Terzić, given his previously described personnel and organizational policies in Dalmatia, preferred Vlado Ćetković, as a member of the group of Montenegrin cadres, to retain his current post rather than assuming a third post (commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps) in addition to the two posts he already held (Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia). Secondly, Tito's decision on Terzić's appointment as commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps was not the only case in which Tito's orders dealing with staffing matters were not implemented by NOP officials from Montenegro. A very similar case occurred in roughly the same time frame. On 21 August 1943, Tito issued an order to the leadership of the 2nd Proletarian Division to name Ljubo Vučković commander of the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade. However, Tito's order was not carried out. Vučković remained commander of the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade, while Savo Burić was appointed commander of the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade – in line with a decision made by that brigade's own leadership. A record of this event is not only preserved in NOP documents but was also recorded in a monograph about the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade during the war in which Mate Ujević, one of its prominent officers, stated that on 20 August 1943 an order had arrived "from the division Command Staff on personnel changes in the brigade's Command Staff" and that "Savo Burić, the previous commander of the 5th Montenegrin Brigade" was appointed its commander. According to Ujević, besides Burić, yet another prominent NOP official from Montenegro, Mirko Šćepanović, was appointed chief of the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade's command staff.[78] Despite the fact that Dapčević and Bakić did not implement Tito's order on that occasion, this fact did not negatively impact their position in the NOP's military wing. Moreover, both were promoted soon afterward, as early as 9 September 1943 they were appointed commander and political commissar respectively of the then newly-formed 2nd Proletarian Corps.[79] Bakić additionally became Tito's chief of staff less than a year later. Taking this fact into account, it is apparent that the leading members of the NOP's military wing from Montenegro, such as Bakić and Dapčević, did not always implement Tito's orders pertaining to personnel matters, for which they

[78] OBRADOVIĆ 1982: 204; TRGO 1956b: 255–258; TRGO 1962: 222.

[79] TRGO 1962: 280.

were not sanctioned. The aforementioned example, besides being an indicator of the influence that the group of Montenegrin cadres wielded in the NOP's military wing, in this case primarily supports the conclusion that it was Terzić who countermanded Tito's decision to appoint him commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps.

As opposed to Ćetković's appointment as commander of the NOVJ 8th Dalmatian Corps, Terzić's influence is not apparent in the case of Vojin Popović's appointment as political commissar of the NOVJ 26th Dalmatian Division. Popović was appointed to that post pursuant to Tito's order on the formation of the NOVJ 8th Dalmatian Corps of 7 October 1943,[80] i.e., in the period when Terzić was not present in the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, thus, there is no evidence that he had personally interceded with Tito to appoint Popović. However, the fact that Popović was appointed commander of the 3rd Dalmatian Brigade after the acceptance of Terzić's proposal on the dissolution of the 9th Dalmatian Division supports the conclusion that Popović and Terzić were connected, and that consequently Terzić very likely supported Popović's promotion. Thus, one may presume that Popović was appointed political commissar of the 26th Dalmatian Division due to Terzić's influence.

The second possibility is that Popović's appointment was due to Arso Jovanović. In addition to the fact that at the time of Popović's appointment Jovanović was once more at his post as Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, making him the second highest-ranking figure in the hierarchy of the NOP's military wing, supporting this conclusion is that Jovanović and Popović had been born in the same area: Jovanović in the village of Zavala, and Popović in the village of Stijena, both near Podgorica.[81] Given that Terzić had also been born in this area, one may conclude with considerable certainty that Popović was brought to that post by either Jovanović or Terzić.

The reason why Popović's birthplace may be considered a crucial factor in his appointment is that since the formation of the 8th Dalmatian Corps, all NOP officials from Montenegro who assumed leading positions in Dalmatian NOP units had been born in the Podgorica area. Besides Popović, the previously mentioned NOP officials such as Bakić, Božović, Ćetković and Terzić (who was appointed commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps but did not assume the post), there were also Dragiša Ivanović, Blažo Jovanović and Ilija Mugoša. Ivanović was born in the village of Sjenice and Jovanović in the village of Velje Brdo, both near Podgorica, while Mugoša was born in Podgorica. Ivanović was appointed political commissar of the NOVJ Navy, while Jovanović and Mugoša were posted to the Political Department of the 19th Dalmatian Division.[82]

[80] TRGO 1962: 353.

[81] JOKSOVIĆ 1974c: 170; VUKELIĆ I ŠUMANOVIĆ 2018: 170.

[82] ANIĆ 2005: 172; BOJIĆ 1982: 336; KRSTIĆ 1975: 973–982; ĆUIĆ 1973: 649; HOTIĆ 1972: 724; JOKSIMOVIĆ 1972: 75.

It would be erroneous to interpret the fact that all of these NOP officials were born in the same town (or in a village in its immediate vicinity) as a coincidence. One may instead conclude that they had been appointed on the basis of a shared regional identity in order to more easily administer NOP bodies in Dalmatia.

Velimir Terzić's Organization in the Military Wing of the People's Liberation Movement

The Montenegrin officials in the NOP's military bodies exercised considerable influence. As described above, this influence came to the fore during the latter half of 1942, and it was directed at three types of institutions in the NOP's military wing: the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, the central command body, the command staffs of the 2nd Proletarian and 3rd Montenegrin Divisions, and the command staffs of the Dalmatian brigades. Velimir Terzić was the protagonist at all three levels of influence exercised by the group of Montenegrin cadres, as he directly participated at the first and third levels, i.e., in the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and in the NOP's military institutions in Dalmatia, while exerting indirect influence at the second level over the figures who held the leading posts in those two divisions.

Even though the influence that the group of Montenegrin cadres secured in the NOP's military wing was largely a result of Terzić's personnel and organizational policies, it would be mistaken to conclude that this was due to the actions of a single individual. Indeed, the group's influence stemmed precisely from its organization and the placement of its prominent members in key bodies within the NOP's military wing. In this regard, it may be concluded that this group had its own internal hierarchy. The top of this hierarchy made decisions that were thereafter implemented via the NOP's military bodies. In certain cases, the decisions made by this group ran contrary to those of the NOP leadership, including decisions made by Josip Broz Tito himself. Two cases presented above clearly show that prominent NOP officials from Montenegro ignored Tito's orders pertaining to personnel. In the first case this was done by Peko Dapčević and Mitar Bakić with regard to the appointment of the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade's commander, while in the second by Velimir Terzić and Vlado Ćetković pertaining to the appointment of the commander of the 8th Dalmatian Corps. That such situations were even possible, and that their protagonists were not sanctioned in any way clearly indicates the power that this group of Montenegrin cadres had in the NOP's military wing.

On this basis, it may therefore be concluded that the group of Montenegrin cadres inside the NOP's military wing established its own system of authority. This system was established by the planned and organized actions of the group's leading figures, among whom was Velimir Terzić, who implemented this group's personnel and organizational policies.

The military institutions through which the system was established and maintained in Dalmatia were the 4th Operational Zone and the 1st and 2nd Dalmatian Brigades from August to November 1942. From then until August 1943, specifically during the period in which Terzić served as acting Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, the central institutions of this system were the command staffs of the 2nd Proletarian and 3rd Montenegrin Divisions. From August 1943 to March 1944, when Terzić was the Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, the primary institutions of this system were the command staffs of the 8th Dalmatian Corps and the 26th Dalmatian Division. During this period the system's leading figures, besides Velimir Terzić, were (from August to October 1943, until the formation of the 8th Dalmatian Corps) prominent members of the three Montenegrin NOP units, the 1st Montenegrin Battalion, the 1st Proletarian Brigade and 4th and 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigades, followed, after October 1943, by prominent NOP officials born in the Podgorica area. Thus, in the period prior to the formation of the 8th Dalmatian Corps, the basic criterion was membership in the aforementioned units, while afterward the criterion was common geographic origin.

Besides Dalmatia, this personnel policy can also be observed in eastern Bosnia as well. NOP officials from Montenegro established their own system of authority there in July 1943, immediately prior to Terzić's transfer from the post of Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters to the post of Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia.

Based on available sources, it is apparent that the Montenegrin cadres sent to eastern Bosnia had one or two important traits. They had either, like Gligo Mandić, Branko Petričević and Jovo Vukotić, closely collaborated with Terzić in the preceding period or, like Vladimir Popović, Vladimir Rolović and Radovan Vojvodić, been born in the Montenegrin town of Bar or in nearby villages. Mandić and Petričević were respectively appointed commander and political commissar of the then newly-formed 17th Eastern Bosnian Division, Rolović was appointed head of this division's Political Department, while after the formation of the 38th Eastern Bosnian Division he was appointed its political commissar. Popović and Vukotić became members of the command staff of the 1st Bosnian Corps, with Popović appointed as its political commissar while Vukotić was appointed its Chief of Staff. Vojvodić was first appointed political commissar of the Birač area and then promoted to the post of political commissar of the officer training school of that corps. Popović and Rolović had been born in the village of Brčeli, and Vojvodić in the village of Gluhi Do, both near Bar.[83] Only one of the three

[83] JOKSOVIĆ 1974a: 170; JOKSOVIĆ 1974b: 206; JOKSOVIĆ 1975c: 589; KOVAČEVIĆ 1962: 490; TRGO 1956b: 123; TRGO 1962: 62; TRGO 1967: 213; TRGO 1968: 349; TRGO 1969: 422.

divisions operating in this region remained outside of the system of authority which the group of Montenegrin cadres had established. This was the 27th Eastern Bosnian Division, in which there were no NOP officials from Montenegro, rather local cadres held all of its top posts.[84]

Besides the territories in which it established its system of authority, the other major feature of the group of Montenegrin cadres was its internal structure. It is apparent from the available sources that the group consisted of both NOP officials who had become members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) only after joining the NOP and pre-war Party members, i.e., members prior to 1941. With regard to the NOP officials who became KPJ members via the NOP, it may be concluded that these were generally officers in the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The available NOP documents suggest that the leading role inside the group of Montenegrin cadres was played by former officers in the Yugoslav royal army, while those who had been KPJ members prior to 1941 were subordinate to them. This conclusion follows from four NOP documents all closely associated with Terzić.

The first document of this type is the report that Terzić submitted to the Supreme Headquarters on 6 September 1942. Terzić was Chief of the 4th Operational Zone and Jovanović Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters at the time this report was compiled. The report was accompanied by the notation "For the Chief of Staff".[85] Based on this, it is apparent that the report was intended solely for Arso Jovanović and not for the other members of this military body, namely, Josip Broz Tito, Aleksandar 'Marko' Ranković or Pavle 'Veljko' Ilić (who was assistant Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters). Therefore, it is apparent that Jovanović and Terzić had a line of communication separate from the remaining members of the NOVJ's leadership. Moreover, the report is also significant because it contains a description of the structure of the 1st Dalmatian Brigade, i.e., a unit in which two prominent officials from Montenegro, Pero Ćetković and Vlado Šćekić, served on its command staff. Besides the fact that Ćetković and Šćekić, like Jovanović and Terzić, were born in Montenegro, an additional link between Ćetković, Jovanović and Terzić is that all three had been officers in the army of the Yugoslav kingdom.

Besides Jovanović and Terzić, the third prominent officer from the Yugoslav kingdom's army in the group of Montenegrin cadres was Jovo Vukotić. He was born in Nikšić and only became a member of the KPJ in 1942.[86] The high status that Vukotić had in this group is reflected in two documents: the report that the

[84] These were commander Pero Kosorić, political commissar and also secretary of the KPJ District Committee for eastern Bosnia Hasan 'Aco' Brkić and chief of staff Rudolf Petovar. KRSTIĆ 1974: 618.

[85] BRANICA 1982: 236–237.

[86] JOKSOVIĆ 1975a: 630.

Chief of Staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division submitted to the Supreme Headquarters on 7 March 1943[87] and the letter Terzić sent to Tito on 11 June 1943 during Operation Schwarz.[88]

Vukotić's report to the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters was addressed to Terzić, to "Comrade Terzić." Based on this, it may be concluded that Vukotić communicated with Terzić in the same manner as Terzić did with Jovanović, i.e., independently of the remaining members of the military bodies to which they belonged. In this vein, it is noteworthy that besides Vukotić, Terzić had a similar style of communication with yet another prominent member of this division: Rade Janićijević, the commander of the 2nd Proletarian Division's intelligence service. As noted previously, the report that Janićijević submitted to the Intelligence Department of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters on 4 February 1943 clearly demonstrates that he and Terzić were in verbal contact with each other.[89] Therefore, it may be concluded that Terzić exercised exceptionally great influence over that division's leadership because he closely collaborated with two of its leading members.

Like Vukotić's report to Terzić, the letter sent by Terzić to Tito during Operation Schwarz is also a particularly valuable source for insight into the relationship between Terzić and Vukotić. In the letter, Terzić stated that he was forwarding the report by Jovo Vukotić, who had been appointed commander of the "right column".[90] The cited passage of Terzić's letter to Tito is vital for three reasons. Firstly, the letter indicates that Tito and Vukotić were not in direct contact (instead, they communicated via Terzić). Secondly, the letter demonstrates that Vukotić received orders directly from Terzić (while he did not communicate with Tito). Thirdly, the letter supports the conclusion that since June 1943 Vukotić was not a member of the command staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division, but rather of the interim tactical group which Terzić called the "right column."

The question of the duties that Vukotić performed during June and early July 1943 is significant because he was only appointed to a new post, Chief of Staff of the NOVJ 1st Bosnian Corps, by decision of Josip Broz Tito on 11 July 1943.[91] The question therefore remains as to whether Vukotić was, until that date, the Chief of Staff of the NOVJ 2nd Proletarian Division or held a different post. Besides the letter Terzić sent to Tito, the conclusion that Vukotić was no longer a member of that division's command staff as of early June 1943 is supported by this division's documents issued during that June. None of them were signed by

87 BRANICA 1983: 853; TRGO 1955b: 77.

88 TRGO 1960a: 358.

89 BRANICA 1983: 148.

90 This report is undated, so it is difficult to determine when it was written. TRGO 1956b: 58; TRGO 1960a: 358.

91 TRGO 1962: 62.

Vukotić, and the report of 30 June 1943 was signed by Ljubiša Urošević as the division's assistant Chief of Staff.[92]

By all indications, in that period Vukotić was initially in the command staff of the tactical group (which Terzić called the "right column"), and after this group was dissolved, he was directly attached to Terzić in the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters.

Two documents verify this conclusion: the order that was issued on behalf of the command staff of the tactical group under the designation "Group 2" by its respective commander and political commissar, Radovan Vukanović and Milovan Đilas, to the 3rd Montenegrin and 7th Banija Divisions on 4 June 1943; and the letter that Terzić sent to the command staff of the 1st Proletarian Division on 11 June 1943. The content of the order signed by Vukanović and Đilas is vital to understanding the relationship between Terzić and Vukotić, because it records that Vukotić was appointed the tactical group's Chief of Staff.[93] By all indications, "Group 2" was the designation for the tactical group that Terzić referred to as the "right column" in his letter to Tito. Although the available documents shed no light on precisely when and how "Group 2" was formed, it appears that its formation was Terzić's decision. Besides Terzić's letter to Tito described above, this conclusion is also supported by the fact that the orders issued by the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters to the command staff of the 7th Banija Division between 31 May and 1 July 1943 were all signed by Terzić.[94] On this basis, it is apparent that this division's leadership received its orders from Terzić. Consequently, it may be assumed that Terzić ordered this division's leadership to join the tactical group called "Group 2". According to the second of these two documents, specifically Terzić's letter to the NOVJ 1st Proletarian Brigade, a new tactical group consisting of the NOVJ 2nd Proletarian Division and the 7th Banija Division was formed, and it was supposed to penetrate toward central Bosnia. By contrast, the NOVJ 1st Proletarian Division was directed toward eastern Bosnia.[95] The reason why Terzić's letter makes no mention of the 3rd Montenegrin Division is that it had been disbanded as a unit. Besides information contained in Yugoslav history books, a direct confirmation of this is Tito's order to the command staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division of 4 August 1943, in which he declared that Radovan Vukanović and Božo Lazarević were to reorganize the 3rd Montenegrin Division.[96] After "Group 2" had been dissolved, Vukanović joined the command staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division, where he remained until Tito's aforementioned order.[97]

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92 TRGO 1956a: 36–37, 207, 222.

93 TRGO 1956a: 25.

94 TRGO 1960a: 326, 350–357, 374–378, 425; TRGO 1962: 8–9, 12.

95 TRGO 1960a: 363.

96 TRGO 1962: 117.

97 TRGO 1956b: 154.

In contrast, Vukotić remained by Terzić's side until Tito's decision to promote him to the post of Chief of Staff of the NOVJ 1st Bosnian Corps.

The fourth document from this group was noted in the preceding section, and only its general contours will be mentioned here. This is Terzić's order to the command staff of the 4th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade of 6 March 1943.[98] The text of this order indicates that Terzić held a conversation with Vukanović and that the latter would give the brigade instructions for further operations. After this order, the brigade was temporarily removed from the NOVJ 2nd Proletarian Division and became part of the NOVJ 3rd Montenegrin Division. Subsequently, after the division's commander Pero Ćetković was killed, Vukanović was promoted to commander. Based on this document's context, it may be concluded that Vukanović was directly subordinate to Terzić, and that the relationship between them was similar to Terzić's relationship with Vukotić.

Terzić's relationship with Vukanović was particularly significant for understanding internal relations within the group of Montenegrin cadres. This is because Vukanović, as opposed to Jovanović, Terzić and Vukotić, had not been an officer in the Yugoslav kingdom's army but rather a prominent member of the KPJ. According to his biography in *Vojna enciklopedija*, he had joined the KPJ in 1926.[99] This fact supports the conclusion that within the group of Montenegrin cadres, something of a "party faction" of pre-war KPJ members was active alongside the "officer faction." In line with the information outlined in the preceding section, this faction similarly functioned on a geographic basis, i.e., based on the criteria of the birthplace of its members. The two most notable strongholds of this faction were Bar and Podgorica, with KPJ members from Bar placed eastern Bosnia under their supervision, while the KPJ members from Podgorica did the same in Dalmatia. However, this faction did not operate independently of the "officer faction" but rather depended on and supported it. The relationship between Terzić and Vukanović is clear evidence of this.

Although the available sources do not provide any clear indication of who may have been this faction's leading figure, they give the general impression that it was most likely Mitar Bakić. The reason for this conclusion is that he ignored Tito's order on the appointment of the 2nd Dalmatian Brigade's commander but was promoted afterward to serve as political commissar of the 2nd Proletarian Corps and then became Tito's chief of staff during his stay on the island of Vis. The other possibility is Blažo Jovanović. The arguments supporting this conclusion are that he was the secretary of the KPJ Territorial Committee for Montenegro and thereby the most distinguished Party member in this region but also a cousin of Arso Jovanović.[100]

98 TRGO 1959b: 247.

99 JOKSOVIĆ 1975d: 628.

100 JOKSIMOVIĆ 1972: 75; VUKELIĆ I ŠUMANOVIĆ 2018: 170.

Conclusion

The army of socialist Yugoslavia emerged during the Second World War as the military wing of the People's Liberation Movement (NOP), led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ). At the time it was called the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NOVJ), and then the Yugoslav Army (JA) as of March 1945. Velimir Terzić was an official of the NOP and one of the most influential members of that army having been a pre-war officer in the army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He was born in Montenegro, and up to the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in April 1941, he had not been politically active and therefore had no ties to the KPJ. Available documents provide no information on the year in which he joined the KPJ, although the entry on him in *Vojna enciklopedija* specifies that this happened in 1941.

Terzić's influence on the structure of the NOVJ can be explained on the basis of three factors. Firstly, as of November 1942 he was the Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, and from this post he signed key NOVJ documents from November 1942 to July 1943. Based on the documents that he signed, as well as NOVJ documents which mention his name, it may be concluded that he had been charged with the reorganization of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. As a result of this reorganization, seven departments and one commission were established, the latter of which was later also reorganized into a department in September 1943. When implementing this reorganization, Terzić personally conducted the restructuring of the NOVJ's intelligence service. One of the primary features of this restructuring was the removal of the intelligence service of the NOP's military wing organized in Dalmatia from the jurisdiction of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia and the subordination of this service to the command staff of the NOVJ's 2nd Proletarian Division. During this period Terzić commanded the Department for Military Administration in Rear Positions under the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters, which was responsible for the organization of the NOP's authority in territories taken by the NOVJ. He also organized negotiations with German forces during this period. Direct evidence of the latter is a document whereby Koča Popović authorized him to conduct negotiations.

The other form of Terzić's influence on the NOVJ's development lay in the manner in which, from the three different posts he held during the war (Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters and Chief of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia), he conducted personnel and organizational policies in Dalmatia, i.e., in the territory organized as the 4th Operational Zone up to October 1943, and then as the NOVJ 8th Dalmatian Corps as of October 1943.

The primary feature of Terzić's personnel and organizational policies in Dalmatia was the appointment of NOP officials originally from Montenegro to command posts in the NOP units there, the disbandment of those units (at the brigade and division level) in which the leading posts were held by NOP officials from that region rather than Montenegrin cadres and, as previously stated, the reorganization of the local intelligence service such that it was subordinate to the 2nd Proletarian Division, which was led by Montenegrin cadres. The most obvious successes of Terzić's policies in Dalmatia were the dissolution of the 9th Dalmatian Division and the appointment of Božo Božović to the post of commander of the 26th Dalmatian Division. The importance of Božović's appointment lies in the fact that this division was the largest and best organized NOP unit in Dalmatia.

The third aspect of Terzić's influence on the NOVJ's organization concerns the period when he was in Soviet territory as the commander of the Military Mission to the Soviet Union. He thereby became the key official responsible for organizing the delivery of Soviet aid to the NOP. As a result of this aid, the NOVJ was transformed from a guerrilla force into a modernly equipped military based on the criteria of the day.

These data are particularly important because Terzić had not been a pre-war member of the KPJ. Consequently, it is clear that pre-war membership in the KPJ was not a crucial factor in assuming the aforementioned posts. In order to understand the factor that very likely dictated the described level of Terzić's influence, it would be worthwhile to stress that Terzić was a prominent member of the group of Montenegrin cadres who held considerable sway in the NOP's military wing. This group's influence gained the most strength in the latter half of 1942, during the period when the first divisions were formed in the NOVJ, while NOP officials originally from Montenegro assumed leading posts in four out of five Dalmatian brigades. It was precisely during this period that Terzić achieved the greatest progress in his wartime career, as he was first transferred from the post of deputy commander of the 5th Proletarian (Montenegrin) Brigade to Chief of the 4th Operational Zone of the Main Staff of the People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia, and was then promoted to the post of Deputy Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters. Taking these facts into account, it may be concluded that Terzić's promotions were an integral component of the process of strengthening the influence of the group of Montenegrin cadres in the NOP. Besides Dalmatia, the group of Montenegrin cadres secured their most notable stronghold in eastern Bosnia.

This group was internally divided into two factions. The first consisted of former officers from the army of the Yugoslav kingdom, of whom, besides Terzić, the best known and most influential were Arso Jovanović and Jovo Vukotić. Jovanović was the Chief of the NOVJ Supreme Headquarters until Terzić assumed this post, while

Vukotić was the Chief of Staff of the 2nd Proletarian Division. The second faction consisted of pre-war KPJ members, that is, those who had been members prior to 1941. The best-known member of this faction, who collaborated closely with Terzić, was Radovan Vukanović, the commander of the 3rd Montenegrin Division.

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Zapovjednik iz sjene: Ratna biografija Velimira Terzića 1941. – 1945.

U radu se na osnovi objavljenih dokumenata i relevantne literature opisuje biografija Velimira Terzića u razdoblju od 1941. do 1945. Terzić je bio predratni časnik vojske Kraljevine Jugoslavije koji je član Komunističke partije Jugoslavije postao 1941, odnosno nakon što je pristupio Narodnooslobodilačkome pokretu. U vojnome krilu toga pokreta Terzić je obnašao nekoliko odgovornih dužnosti od kojih je najznačajnija funkcija zamjenika načelnika Vrhovnoga štaba Narodnooslobodilačke vojske Jugoslavije, odnosno Generalštaba Jugoslavenske armije. Na toj je funkciji Terzić bio potpisnik mnogih važnih odluka koje su značajno utjecale na razvoj vojske socijalističke Jugoslavije. Uz dokumente koje je potpisao, druga važna značajka Terzićeve ratne biografije je činjenica da je on na odgovorne položaje u postrojbama Narodnooslobodilačkoga pokreta na području Dalmacije postavljao dužnosnike koji su, poput njega, rođeni u Crnoj Gori. Terzićeva kadrovska i organizacijska politika dovela je do stanja u kojem je skupina crnogorskih dužnosnika preko vojnih tijela Narodnooslobodilačkoga pokreta u Dalmaciji uspostavila svoj sustav vlasti. Isti sustav, osim u Dalmaciji, uspostavljen je i u istočnoj Bosni. Uz Terzića, glavni nositelji toga sustava bili su Arso Jovanović i Jovo Vukotić.

Ključne riječi: Dalmacija u Drugom svjetskom ratu, Velimir Terzić, Kraljevina Jugoslavija, Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, Vrhovni štab Narodno-oslobodilačke vojske Jugoslavije, Generalštab Jugoslavenske armije, skupina crnogorskih kadrova, dalmatinske brigade

Key words: Dalmatia in the Second World War, Velimir Terzić, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Supreme Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, a group of Montenegrin cadres, Dalmatian brigades

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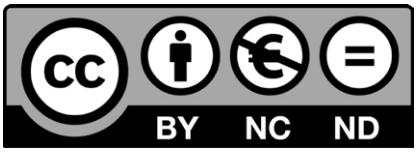
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