

*Ponekad nam se dešavaju stvari kojenismo mogli predvidjeti, ponekad, prosto neobjašnjivo, nabasamo na informacije o nama poznatim osobama, o događajima i epizodama iz njihovih života koje nam nisu bile dostupne desetinama godina. I na žalost, ponekad su te epizode dramatične, pa i tragične. Desilo se nešto tako našem članu Dejanu Stojniću koji je neočekivano naišao na ispovijest svog djeda Monija Altarca, koju je ovaj davne 1955 i 1956 g. ispovijedao u pisaču mašinu Dejanovog oca Slobodana Bode Stojnića. Redakcija SaLona je uz Dejanov pristanak odlučila da objavi ova sjećanja u četiri nastavka, kako su i zabilježena. Žestok razlog za ovu odluku redakcija je imala u činjenici da se radi o ličnom svjedočenju preživjelog jedne od najsuroviji zločinačkih epizoda II Svjetskog Rata, epizoda kada se čovjek najviše udaljio od humanizma, možda i više od onoga kuda je zagazio njemački nacional-socijalizam. Ovo zbog toga što ovdje zločin, masovni zločin, nije bio industrijaliziran, već je bio ličan i pojedinačan, unatoč svojoj masovnosti. Ta epizoda se zove **Jasenovac**. Za one koji ne znaju ili koji su premladi, pa im niko nije ispričao, Jasenovac je gubilište nezamislive surovosti, koje su hrvatski ekstremni nacionalisti – rukama svojih dželata – Ustaša, ustanovili i u kome su počeli svoju zločinačku rabotu još 1941 g, dakle prije mašinerija nacističkih logora istrebljenja, sa ciljem konačnog razračuna sa Srbima, Jevrejima, Ciganima, ali i rodoljubivim Hrvatima. Ukupni broj žrtava se izražava 6-to cifrenim brojkama. Ove priloge treba shvatiti kao protest protiv svih onih pokušaja koji su dolazili i koji će vjerovatno dolaziti sa samog vrha nove države Hrvatske, da se veličina tragedije umanji, pa čak i da se izjednače zločinac i žrtva.*

SALOMON MONI ALTARAC: SJEĆANJA IZ JASENOVCA

- TO SE NE MOŽE ZNATI -

SALOMON MONI ALTARAC: SJEĆANJA IZ JASENOVCA 4. TO SE NE MOŽE ZNATI

Jedan sam od onih rijetkih ljudi koji su preživjeli tragediju Jasenovca, a ostali su u njemu od početka do kraja.

Do samog kraja.

Bio sam mlad čovjek kada sam ušao u njega. Mlad i snažan. Automehaničar po zanimanju, šofer. Imao sam ženu i dijete od četiri godine. I dva brata. Jedan

od njih postao je kasnije grobar u Jasenovcu. Drugog brata su ubili. Prvog, grobara, nisu. On je umro iscrpljen od teškog i napornog rada.

Bio sam star kada sam izašao iz logora. Star, slab i bolestan. Nisam imao više ni žene ni djeteta. Ni braće.

A bile su prošle svega četiri godine.

Možete misliti da sam za to vrijeme doživio teške stvari.

Takve stvari o kojima je bolje i ne govoriti - i ne sjećati ih se. Ali, moji mi nekada dođu u sjećanje. A s njima i logor. Tada sam očajan.

Jer, počelo je sa najgorim. Sa ubistvom.

Bio je mart kada je naš transport stigao u logor. Bilo nas je u tom transportu nešto oko stotinu Jevreja. Kada su se otvorila željezna vrata vagona, počelo je

bjesomučno batinanje, zaglušno su se drali i psovali ustaše, a mi smo letjeli preko glave.

Postrojili su nas pred logorsku kapiju.

Čekali smo.

Tada smo ugledali kako sa lijeve strane dolaze oni. Bilo ih je četvorica. Ljubo Miloš vodio je sa sobom na lancu vučjaka. Izanjega, Pero Brzica, poručnik. Zatim pop Filipović Majstorović, satnik, i Zrilušić Ante, zastavnik. Tada još nisam znao ni ko su ni šta su. Kasnije sam ih upoznao kao i ostali iz ovog transporta. Osim jednoga. To je bio Jakob Maestro, profesor teologije iz Sarajeva. Jer, njega su tu, odmah ubili. (nedostaje jedna stranica teksta)

Bila je nizbrdica gdje smo stajali. Nizbrdica prema Savi. Profesorova glava se otkotrljala prema rijeci.

Krvnik se digao. Nije nikako obrisao kamu. Onako krvavu stavio ju je u korice. Prišao je meni:

- Ti ?

- Automehaničar - odgovorio sam.

- U krug !

- Ti ?

- Ti ?

- Ti ?

Nas sedam izašlo je u krug. Od stotinu, nas sedam smo bili zanatlije. Povelili su nas pred zapovjedništvo. Tu smo se opet poredali.

Prišao mi je Miloš.

- Fali li tebi koji zub u glavi ?

- Ne, gospodine.

- Zini !

Zinuo sam. Imao sam i u gornjoj i u donjoj vilici četrnaest zlatnih zuba.

Zatim je prilazio ostalima.

- Zini !

- Zini !

- Zini !

Otišao je u zapovjedništvo.

Mi smo stajali nepomično,

otvorenih usta. Svaki od nas imao je po nekoliko zlatnih zuba.

Kada se vratio, nosio je u rukama kovačka kliješta. Prišao je prvo meni i kliještima mi izvalio pola gornje i pola donje vilice.

Meni su od bola udarile suze na oči.

Počela je na njima da mi se hvata neka mrena. Bilo je strašno. Padoše mi na um riječi jednog bojadžije iz Osijeka koji mi je tiho rekao kada smo prolazili kroz logorsku kapiju:



- Ovo je pakao iz koga se više ne izlazi.

Tako je počelo.

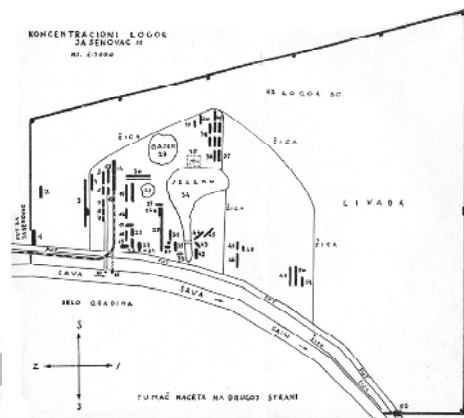
Mislio sam da se nešto gore ne može doživjeti.

Ali, prevario sam se.

To gore desilo se kada sam sa nasipa bio prebačen u mehaničku radionicu. Ona se nalazila u krugu gdje je bilo smješteno ustaško zapovjedništvo.

Mi, zatočenici, koji smo radili u radionici, morali smo da je napustimo predveče, po završetku rada, da ne bismo posmatrali šta se događa pred zapovjedništvom.

Jedne večeri zadržao sam se



malo duže u radionici. Svi ostali zatočenici već su je bili napustili. Radio sam na jednom motoru. Već je počeo da se hvata mrak i ja sam se spremao da krenem. Tada su ustaše pred zapovjedništvo dotjerali jednu grupu žena i



SALOMON MONI ALTARAC

SVJEDOČENJA

djece. Mislim, sa Kozare. Odlučio sam da ostanem u radionici i posmatram šta se događa pred zapovjedništvom.



Krug je bio osvijetljen, a ja sam bio u mraku. Bilo me je nemoguće primijetiti spolja. Vrijeme je prolazilo. Dolazili su ustaše i odlazili, prozivali su, preslušavali. Pala je već duboka noć. Konačno, dosla su dvojica ustaša i poveli čitavu grupu sa sobom. Krug je ostao prazan.

Ali, ne. Neka žena ostala je da leži tamo na drvima. Pogledao sam bolje. Ona je spavala. I, bila je noseća. Mislim, pred samim porođajem.

Tada su iz zapovjedništva izašla dvojica ustaša. Zastali su tu, u krugu. Smijeli su se. Zatim su spazili zaspalu ženu. Primakli su se bliže.

Sada su bili bliže i meni. Jasno sam čuo razgovor.

- Šta misliš? - upitao je jedan pokazujući rukom u pravcu žene.

- Šta? - ovaj nije razumio pitanje.

- Šta misliš, muško ili žensko?

- Ne znam, - rekao je ovaj. - Odakle se to može znati.

- Ja znam. Uvjeran sam da je muško.

- Odakle možeš da znaš?

- Tako

- Onda sam i ja uvjeren da je žensko.

- Nije nego musko!

- Žensko!

Onaj koji je počeo razgovor, na trenutak je učutao. A zatim je rekao riječi od kojih se meni digla kosa na glavi.

ON SEKLADIO!

U hiljadu kuna!

To je bila najstrašnija opklada koju sam ikada čuo u životu. I, - bila je prihvaćena.

Žena je mirno spavala.

Onaj koji sekladio došao je do nje. Zatim se mašio za desnu čizmu.

U tom času, valjda nagoni, žena se probudila. Ugledala je ustašu više sebe i nešto sjajno u njegovoj desnoj ruci.

Učinilo mi se kao da je htjela da vrisne, ali nije uhvatila daha. Progovorila je slabo, povlačeći se unazad preko drva.

- Ne ne

Ustaša se smijao.

Ja sam prekrpio oči rukama.

U trenutku kada je nadljudski vrisak potresao crnu logorsku noć.

Zatim je jedno vrijeme vladala potpuna tišina.

Onda se čuo glas:

- Hajde, štasi se ukupio, pomozi mi do Save

Onda šum, kao da se drva taru jedno o drugo.

Zlikovci su koračali. Lagano, sasvim lagano.



Tada se začuo glas onog drugog:

- Vidiš, ipak nisi imao pravo ... to se ne može znati

Šum koraka se udaljavao, dok se sasvim nije izgubio u laganom žuboru Save.

Krug je ostao prazan.

Potpuno prazan.



TESTIMONIES

5

*Sometimes things we could not predict happen to us; inexplicably sometimes we come upon information about persons known to us and about events and episodes from their lives not accessible to us for decades. Regretfully also, these episodes are sometimes dramatic and even tragic. One such thing happened to our member, Dejan Stojnić, who unexpectedly discovered the recollections of Moni Altarac, his grandfather as told into the typewriter of Slobodan Bodo Stojnić, Dejan's father back in 1955 and 1956. The editorial board of SaLon has decided, with Dejan's consent, to publish these memories in four instalments, reflecting the way they were recorded. A compelling reason for our decision was the fact that it is a personal testimony by a survivor from one of the most brutal criminal episodes of World War Two, where the distance of man from humanity was the greatest, probably even greater than the distance to which the German National-Socialism stepped in. It is because the crime, the mass crime, was not industrialized here but personal and individual in spite of its immensity. The name of that episode is Jasenovac. For those who do not know what it means or for those who are too young and nobody has told them yet: **Jasenovac** is a place of execution of unimaginable cruelty established by Croat extreme nationalists – by the hands of their executioners – the Ustashas, where they started their criminal actions already in 1941, namely before the Nazi extermination camps machine started;*

The purpose of Jasenovac was the final face-off with Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and patriotic Croats. The total number of victims is stated in six figures. The episodes published in SaLon should be understood as a protest against all the attempts that have been coming from the very top of the new state of Croatia to diminish the size of the tragedy and even to equate the criminal with the victim.

SALOMON MONI ALTARAC RECOLLECTIONS FROM JASENOVAC -IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO KNOW-

I am one among the few who survived the tragedy of Jasenovac staying there from the beginning to the end.

To the very end.

I was a young man when I got in. Young and strong; an auto mechanic and a driver by profession.

I had a wife and a four years old child. And two brothers. One of them became later a gravedigger in Jasenovac. They killed the other brother. They did not kill the first one, the gravedigger. He died of exhaustion

brought upon him by hard work. I was an old man when I came out of the camp. Old, weak and ill. I did not have a wife, a child or brothers any more.

And only four years had passed.

It is clear that I went through numerous brutal experiences. These events are better not mentioned – and be forgotten. But the memories of my family occasionally come back to me; with them the memories of the camp. At such times I despair. My stay there started with the worst thing – with a killing.

It was March when our transport came to the camp. About one hundred Jews were in that transport. When the iron door opened the wild beating started whilst the Ustashas were deafening our ears with their shouting and curses and we were fall

TESTIMONIES

6

ing over our heads.

They lined us up before the camp gate.

We were waiting.

Then we saw *them* coming from the left. There were four of them. Ljubo Miloš led a German shepherd dog on a chain; fol-

- Open your mouth!

I did it. My upper and lower jaws contained fourteen golden teeth.

Then he approached the others.

- Open your mouth!

- Open your mouth!

- Open your mouth!

He went into the command house. We stood motionless with our mouths open. Each of us had a few golden teeth. When he came back he held blacksmith pliers in his hand. He approached me first and pulled out half of the teeth from my upper jaw and half of the teeth from my lower jaw.

The pain made the tears come to my eyes and I started losing my sight. It was awful. I recalled the words of a decorator from Osijek who said to me in a low voice when we passed through the camp gate:

- This is hell from which no one comes out.

That is how it began.

I thought that nothing worse can happen, but I was wrong.

The worse thing happened when I was moved to the mechanical workshop. It was close to the Ustasha command building.

We, the prisoners working in the workshop, had to leave it after finishing our work in the evening, so that we might not see what was taking place in front of the command building. One evening I stayed a bit longer. All the others had left already. I was working on an engine. It was turning darker and I was getting ready to

leave. Then the Ustasha brought a group of women and children. I think they were from Kozara.

I had decided to stay in the workshop and watch. The area was lighted up and I was in the dark. Nobody could see me from the outside.

The time was passing. The Ustasha were coming and going; they were roll calling, interrogating; and so it went deep into the night. Finally, two Ustasha came and led away the whole group. The area was empty.

But, not. A woman was laying there on the pile of wood. I looked again. She was pregnant. Just about to give birth I think.

Then two Ustasha came out from the command building. They stopped in front of it. They were laughing. And then they saw the sleeping woman and

The woman was sleeping quietly.

The one who proposed the bet approached her. Then he reached for his right boot.

At that moment, by instinct I presume, the woman woke up. She saw the Ustasha above her and something shining in his hand.



SALOMON MONI ALTARAC
with granddaughter Svjetlana

lowing him was Pero Brzica, a lieutenant; then there was the priest Filipović Majstorović, a captain and Ante Zrilušić, a sergeant major. At that time I did not know yet who or what they were. Later on all of us got to know them, except for one man. It was Jakob Maestro, professor of theology from Sarajevo, because they killed him immediately there and then.

(one page of the text is missing)

The place that we were standing on was on a slope. The head of the professor rolled down to the river.

The murderer got up. He did not wipe the knife. He put it back in the sheath covered with blood as it was. He faced me then:

- You?

- Auto mechanic – I replied

- To the circle!

- You?

- You?

- You?

Seven of us came out into the circle. Among the one hundred, seven of us were craftsmen.

They took us to stand in front of the command building. We were lined up again.

Miloš approached me.

- Is any tooth missing from your head?

- No, sir.



came closer.

They came closer to me as well and I could hear them talking.

- What do you think? – One of them asked indicating to the woman.

- What? – The other one could not understand.

- What do you think, is it a boy or a girl?

- I do not know – he said – How one can know?

- I know. I am sure that it is a boy.

- How can you know?

- Well ...

- Then I am sure that it is a girl.

- No, it is a boy!

- A girl!

The one who started the whole thing stopped silent for a moment. And then he uttered the words that made hair stand up. HE WAS BETTING!

One thousand kunas!

That was the most horrifying bet that I had ever heard of – and it was accepted.



It looked as if she wanted to shout, but she could not catch her breath. She spoke out weakly, drawing back over the woodpile.

- No ... no ...

The Ustasha was laughing. I covered my eyes with my hands. At that moment a superhuman scream shook the black camp night.

After that the silence was complete for a while. Then a voice was heard:

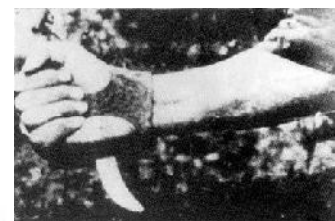
- Why are you standing like that? Come help me ... to Sava River ...

Then a noise as if a wood log is rubbing against another wood log.

The villains were pacing slowly, very slowly.

Then the second Ustasha spoke:

- You see, you were not right ...



it is not possible to know.

The noise of the steps faded away and then completely disappeared.

The area around the command building was empty. Absolutely empty.