

Policies

The purpose of this first chapter is to provide readers with a particular framework, since, unlike all the other chapters, most of the selected documents belong to political history. The descriptions of a few eminent political leaders of the time are introduced in the beginning. This provides valuable insights into the subjects of the descriptions as well as the authors. The material is therefore considered to be relevant and of analytical interest. These outlines are followed by some distinguishing ideological statements used by governing structures to try to justify their actions and/or their actual existence, as well as some ideologically-coloured statements belonging to resistance movements.

The subchapter *Armies and soldiers* is, understandably, somewhat large. This is due to the fact that in some countries, numerous armies (occupying forces, collaborationist armies, resistance movements) met in comparatively small areas. We tried to clarify, to a certain degree at least, their activities, their ideological backgrounds, their aims and their (often very complicated) mutual relationships. Further to this, there are documents which deal with the relationships among the different sides in the war and the neighbouring countries.

The concluding sub-section to chapter I, *Religious organisations*, sets out documents which deal with the activities of the religious organisations during the war, how openly and clearly the religious organisations showed their attitude towards the war itself, towards the parties involved, towards the members of the other nation/religion, towards wartime suffering and war crimes etc.

Ia. Leaders and ideologies

I-1. Fitzroy MacLean, Churchill's delegate to the Partisans, about Tito in 1943

Tito is of medium height and carefully shaved. His face is sunburnt and his hair is steel-like grey. His mouth is very firm and his eyes are lively and blue. (...) I was wondering what impression I would get of this man when I compared him to a communist that I met in Russia. (...) One thing struck me immediately: his readiness to consider the problem from all sides and, if necessary, to make an immediate decision. He seemed to me quite confident. That man is a senior, not a junior. It was completely new for me – to discover such confidence and self-reliance in one communist.

Fitzroy MacLean's conversation with Tito in Partisan Belgrade in 1944¹

On that occasion I informed Tito what anger he provoked in the Allies when he secretly left Vis. (...) I told Tito that Churchill was very offended by the manner he had left. I also informed him of the unreasonable behaviour of some of his subordinates, as well as of the disagreements and the numerous small difficulties we had during his absence.

It obviously made him sincerely sad. He told me

¹ Their first meeting after Tito's secret visit to the island of Vis (where he was protected by the British forces) in order to meet Stalin.

he was sorry to hear that his subordinates had treated us unreasonably but he added that everything would be made right immediately. (...)

I replied I was glad. "However", I added, "it seems that you don't understand that the main cause to all was your disappearance and the fact that you didn't tell us where you were going... But Tito either couldn't or didn't want to understand it, so he innocently said: "Not long ago Churchill went to Quebec to meet president Roosevelt and I was informed of that only after his return. However, it didn't make me angry".

MacLean, pp. 14-15, 240-241.



Josip Broz Tito was born in Kumrovec near Zagreb in 1892. He learned a trade and worked as a locksmith and a factory worker. The start of World War I, saw him drafted into the Austria-Hungarian army and sent to the Eastern frontline. Taken prisoner by the Russians, he spent a couple of years in Russia where he became acquainted with Bolshevik ideas. He then returned to his homeland, the newly-founded state of Yugoslavia, in 1920. He joined the Communist Party; and spent several years in prison after being arrested on a couple of occasions. In 1937, he took over the head of the Yugoslav Communist Party. From 1941, he became the main coordinator of the resistance movement, and later on, "Commander-in-chief" of the Partisan forces. After the war he became the President of Yugoslavia and ruled in a totalitarian manner until his death in 1980.



What did MacLean like about Tito? What did he dislike about him? Why did Tito make a good first impression on MacLean? (What was his reputation as a communist?) What soured their relations? In your opinion, did Tito behave incorrectly towards his British allies? Tito's 'rascal' behaviour at the last meeting with MacLean is appreciated by his fans because they look upon it as a confirmation of the enduring spirit of Yugoslav independence. What do you think? Were the British asking for a relationship based on an equal footing or did they want to dominate the alliance with the Partisans?

- **v1. Leader of the Partisan "People's Liberation Movement"; Josip Broz - Tito, and Commander of "The Yugoslav Army in the Homeland" ("Chetniks"), General Draža Mihailović**



National Library of Serbia, Belgrade.



Translation: "100,000 gold Reichsmark award! 100,000 gold Reichsmarks will be awarded to the one who brings communist leader Tito dead or alive."

"100,000 gold Reichsmark award!

100,000 gold Reichsmarks will be awarded to the one who brings gang leader Draža Mihailović dead or alive."

I-2. Pavelić's photographer gives evidence of his personality in 1961

Taking Pavelić's photo portrait was nothing but trouble, as in all photographs he came out just as he really was: gloomy and with that well-known gangster-like expression. Of course, his wife, 'Pharaoh's wife Mara', didn't like the photos so the shooting was repeated indefinitely on her explicit orders. (...) Finally, she arrived at a solution about how best to make her husband look gentle in front of the photographers; she ordered that jokes be told to him while posing.

Vojinović, p. 16.



Ante Pavelić was born in Bradina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1889. He was a lawyer by training and a member of the Party of Right from a young age. After the establishment of a dictatorship in Yugoslavia in 1929, Pavelić emigrated and with his Ustaša movement argued strongly for the overthrow of the dictatorial regime and the dissolution of the state of Yugoslavia. He gained sympathy from the fascist leaders, most of all from Mussolini who thought that through helping Pavelić he could annex the coastal parts of Croatia to Italy. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, Mussolini and Hitler enabled Pavelić to set up a puppet state, the ISC (Independent State of Croatia; hereafter: ISC). At the very end of the World War II, Pavelić fled abroad (Argentina, Spain). He died in 1959.



Study the photograph. Did the photographer tell the truth? Is it possible to gather information on one's character by using photographs? What does the fact that he couldn't smile tell us about Pavelić as a person? (Did he think of himself as a very serious leader?) The photographer gave his evidence long after Pavelić's fall; would this evidence have been different had it been given to the photographer at the time when Pavelić was in power? What did the photographer want to say about Pavelić when he spoke of his relationship with his wife? Can gossip be considered a historical source?

v2. Ante Pavelić



www.pavelicpapers.com



Refer to the questions connected with the testimony of Pavelić's photographer (text I-2).

I-3. Descriptions of Mehmet Shehu and Enver Hoxha

Some days later McLean returned and we received the first of many visits from Shtab - the General Staff of LNÇ², of whom the two leading members were

² LNÇ – Levizja Nacional Clirimtare (National Liberation Movement) was the organisation led by the communists during World War II in Albania. It organised the biggest armed resistance in the country. Having eliminated all the other political groups during and after the war, they took all the credit for the liberation of Albania and, as a result, became the leading force in the country after the war.

Mehmet Shehu³ and Enver Hoxha⁴. Mehmet Shehu was a short, wiry, dark, sallow-faced man of about thirty who seldom smiled except at other people's misfortunes. He spoke good English, was very capable, and had far more military knowledge than most other Albanians.

Enver Hoxha was an entirely different character – a big man with too much flesh and a flabby handshake. He was not a military man although he had military pretensions, but he was more sociable than Shehu, and spoke with us in fluent French. He may have disliked us, but at least he concealed his feelings, whereas with Shehu you could feel the hostility. Hoxha was about thirty-five years old. He had been educated in Gjirokaster Grammar School, the *lycée* in Korçë, and at University of Montpellier in France, which he was compelled to leave for failing his exams. He went on to Brussels and Paris to study law, though he never graduated, and returned to Albania to become a French teacher at the State Gymnasium in Tirana; he was later transferred to the *lycée* in Korçë, still as a teacher of French. We always knew him as 'Professor' Enver Hoxha – presumably he derived this title from his teaching appointments. He gave up teaching in 1940 to run a tobacconist's shop in Tirana which became a Communist cell and ren-

³ Mehmet Shehu was born on 10 January 1913 in Çorush, South Albania. From 1937 to 1939 he fought in the Spanish Civil War in the Garibaldi International Brigade. From 1944 to 1945 he was a member of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation (the provisional government). After the liberation, Shehu was regarded as Enver Hoxha's right-hand man and held in esteem as the "second person" of Albania. It is claimed that in 1981 Shehu opposed Enver Hoxha's isolationism and, following this, he was accused of being a Yugoslav spy. On 17 December, 1981 he was found dead in his bedroom with a bullet in his head. After his death, it was claimed that Shehu was an agent of, not only the Yugoslav secret services, but also both the CIA and the KGB.

⁴ Enver Hoxha was born in Gjirokastër on 16 October 1908. From 1930 to 1936 he studied and worked in Paris and then in Brussels. In 1936, he returned to Albania and taught in the middle school of Tirana and then in the *lycée* of Korça. In 1939, he was fired with the reason given as "subject against the regime". On 8 November 1941, when the communist party of Albania was founded, he became First Secretary of the party's Central Committee and Political Commissar of the Army of National Liberation (LNÇ). He became Prime Minister in 1944 and ruled Albania as a dictator until his death on 11 April 1985.

devious for anti-government elements; after the founding of the Albanian Communist Party in 1941 he became the Secretary-General to the Party Central Committee which was probably the position he still held when we first met him.

Smiley⁵, p. 56.



What differences can you see between the two leaders described above? Do you think that their differences in character were related to their success? How does the author give the reader clues about his feelings towards Shehu and Hoxha?

I-4. An English spy on the leader of the political opposition in Romania - Iuliu Maniu

Maniu (...) was one of the least flamboyant heroes any country has ever produced—honest, prudent, too often right and completely lacking the fashionable bombast of war. Slightly built with mild, intelligent eyes, rather formally dressed, he had the air of a provincial notary, rather than the popular idea of a wartime resistance leader. He must have been sixty-eight in 1938, but looked younger (...)

From the start he set himself and his party high standards of conduct. Measures were taken to prevent any anti-Semitic demonstrations. He encouraged foreign investments and although some of his colleagues undoubtedly lined their pockets, the idea of Maniu himself taking a bribe of any kind was inconceivable. He and his close collaborators - men like Ion Mihalache and the economist Madgaru - were among the most distinguished Romanians of the century.

Porter, pp. 18, 20.

⁵ David Smiley was a captain of the British Army who volunteered to join the Special Operations Executive in the Balkans and particularly in Albania. He gives a vivid account of World War II and his assignments with the communists, and then the royalists, in organising the Albanian antifascist resistance.

I-6. Hitler's Directive No. 26 (3 April 1941)

Cooperation with the Allies in the Balkans

1. The tasks of the Southeast European States in the military campaign against Yugoslavia are given by the following political objectives:

Hungary, which shall get the Banat, will likewise have to occupy this region, but has made the commitment to provide additional assistance to destroy the enemy.

Bulgaria shall get back Macedonia and therefore will most likely direct its attention to the attack of this region, without putting special pressure from the German side. Additionally, the Bulgarians will be in charge of providing backing, supported by the German tank division, against Turkey. For this operation, Bulgaria also will call in the three Divisions posted at the Greek border.

Romania will limit its task in its own, as well as in German interest, to the safeguarding of the Yugoslavian and Russian borders. The Head of the German military mission has to arrange that the readiness to provide defence against Russia has to be enlarged and that the Romanian Forces situated around Temesvar are to be brought further East, in order not to disturb the connection between the Hungarian Second Army and the German forces.

The mutual movement of Hungarian and German Missions has to be able to cross the Romanian/Hungarian border without difficulties.

2. Concerning the military cooperation and the organisation of the Commando for the up-coming Operation, the following guidelines will be in force:

The corporate Guidance of the military campaign, as far as the operative setting of targets for the Italian and the Hungarian Forces are concerned, will remain within my responsibility. It has to be done in a manner which takes into account the sensitivities of the Allies and which enables the heads of the Italian and Hungarian States to appear in front of their nation and their military forces as independent military leaders.[...]

Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegsführung 1939-1945
(ed. W. Hubatsch), pp. 108-109.

I-7. Ion Antonescu⁶ about the "Jewish problem"

1940, September 17

Propaganda, the press and radio will work in perfect harmony, both on internal and external levels. The action must be unitarian and problems are to be avoided.

On an external level, it should be made known that our only point of support from the perspective of external politics is: the Axis. General Antonescu will not lead the politics lead by his predecessors; General Antonescu has chosen a single road he will walk on. Romanian politics are one hundred percent with the Axis. We will maintain a loyal, total correctness to the powers of the Axis...

The Jewish problem is a vital problem. I will try – with civilised means – to gradually remove the Jews from the Romanian economic structures. All Jews who have come clandestinely and installed themselves after the Union in the country, in any form and under any pretext, will be invited to liquidate their belongings and leave. Ignoring the Jewish problem or concealing it with apparent solutions would mean betraying the notion of being Romanian. As the violence of the gesture or the word does not solve this problem, but degrades the one who practices it, General Antonescu took the responsibility of solving this problem methodically and progressively, so that it does not misbalance economic life. The removal of the alien element is conditioned by its replacement with autochthonous forces.

Evreii din România între anii 1940-1944, vol. II, doc. 44.



These are the directions to the press, the radio and the telegraph agency. Specifications were made concerning the „Jewish problem“. This was how the political censorship on press, installed by the former regime, continued.

⁶ Ion Antonescu (1882–1946), military man and politician. He held important positions in the Romanian Army. Prime Minister (4 September 1940 – 23 August 1944). Leader of the State (1940–1944). Allied with Hitler's Germany. Convicted and executed as a Criminal of War in 1946.



Who was Romania's main ally from Antonescu's perspective, in 1940? What were the means of solving the "Jewish problem" in Romania, in Antonescu's opinion? Compare this situation in Romania with that of other States during the same time. Do you think that the "Jewish problem" was really "a vital problem" for Romania in 1940 (when it had already lost 1/3 of the territory and was on the way to being dragged into the war)?

I-8. The Proclamation of King Mihai⁷ to the Country (August 23, 1944)

Romanians,

In the most difficult moment of our history, I consider, together with my people, that there is only one way to save the country from a total catastrophe: and that is for us to get out of the alliance with the powers of the Axis and to stop the war against the United Nations immediately.

Romanians,

A new government of national union was charged with accomplishing the country's decided will, to conclude peace with the United Nations. Romania accepted the armistice offered by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America. From this moment on, any fight or act of hostility against the Soviet army has to stop, as well as the state of war against Great Britain and the United States of America. Please receive the soldiers of these armies with trust. The nations have guaranteed our country's independence and are not interfering in our internal concerns. They have recognised the injustice of the Vienna dictate, by which Transylvania was taken away from us ...

Romanians,

The dictatorship has come to an end and, together

⁷ Mihai I (1921 –) King of Romania (1927–1930; 1940–1947). On 23 August 1944, sustained by the political opposition, he arrested Ion Antonescu, and decreed the war against the United Nations over. In 1947, he was forced, under threat, to abdicate, and Romania was proclaimed a popular republic.

with it, all oppression ends. This new government is the beginning of a new era, in which the rights and liberties of all citizens of the country are guaranteed and will be respected."

Istoria României între 1918–1944 (culegere), p. 261.



What are the main items on the new Romanian Government's agenda? How is the former Government regarded? At first, King Mihai supported the pro-fascist leader Antonescu. Why did he change his mind? Was he sincere or just opportunistic? Compare him with another leader who also changed his political orientation.

I-9. The communist ideology of the LNC, displayed by Sejfulla Malëshova⁸

"Until today, the Albanian people, fighting the occupiers and the reactionary clans, are becoming politically educated, gaining the consciousness of their interests, and understanding that there is no other true way except the one that leads to the Peoples' Democracy. The nature of the future regime in Albania and the people's democratic movement are in direct relation to the activity and the contribution of our people in today's war. Today, in the battles of the National Liberation War, is decided the fate of tomorrow's Albania. The fact that the majority of Albanians are gathered around the National Antifascist Liberation Front; the fact that we could organise free elections in the most developed regions and hold a Congress with representatives from all over Albania; the fact that today we have an Antifascist Council that represents the political power of the people and Albanian State; the fact that today we

⁸ Sejfulla Malëshova was born in Malëshovë near Përmet in 1900. When he was 24 he began to write poetry and his first articles. Later, he went to Moscow as a member of the Comintern. He participated very actively in World War II. After the war, he was appointed Head of the Writers League and later Minister of Education in Albania. He translated works of Gëte, Nekrasov, etc. He imprisoned by the communist regime for these liberal political views and was sent to jail for 20 years. Sejfulla Malëshova died in 1971 in Fier where he was sent in exile.

have an army made of brigades and divisions, an army of peoples, able to resist the German divisions and the reactionary bands and destroy them, are the first guarantees for the triumph of a democratic peoples regime in Albania. (...) Our people, actually together with the whole progressive world, will not let the others, who oppressed and exploited them until now, collect the harvest of its blood. What has happened until now will not be repeated; that people are killed and that the others, who work against its interests, take the leading positions.”

Bashkimi (The Unity), June 1944.



Sejfulla Maleshova was one of the most prominent communist leaders of the Albanian antifascist resistance. The communist ideology of the LNC, displayed in the source, puts forward their manifesto for leading the country after the war, framing their statement within a rationale that paints all the other political groups as collaborators and traitors. One can gain a realistic view of the communist propaganda during the war by reading this article.



Analyse the language being used in this extract. Which elements of this article could be considered as propaganda?

I-10. A leaflet of the District Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for Macedonia to the Macedonian people

1941, November

...The Bulgarian government has committed massacres in Kumanovo, there were seven to eight dead people, among them some women, (...). Our cities have been surrounded and occupied and the peo-

ple have been held at their homes for days. In Prilep (and some other places), there have been hundreds of people arrested, spat on, beaten in the streets. In the streets you can very often see honest Macedonians being taken into prison by the Bulgarian fascist police - the best sons of the Macedonian people.

Who is doing all this, Bulgarians? No. The Bulgarian people have nothing in common with this; it has been done by the traitors of the Bulgarian people, who are selling themselves for a hand full of the dirty fascist's silver. These traitors are doing everything in their power to obey the monster Hitler and to get us Macedonians to fight and hate the Bulgarians, the Russians, the Serbians and the other Slavic people. Bloody Hitler wants to clear up the Slavic people and to make them feudal slaves who will plough and dig the land for the German counts and barons. Mindless, Hitler yells that four to five million Slavic people should leave, so as to create a place for the German plough, and that's why he goes against Soviet Russia, the land of socialism, the protector of all the people without rights, especially to the small Slavic people.

Today, the heroic battle of the Soviet people is a battle of all the Slavic people against a mutual evil. Their victory is our victory too, a victory which will put an end to the slavery, the hunger and the terror that the fascism has brought.

Sources for the liberation war and revolution in Macedonia,
pp. 28-29.



What were the aims of this leaflet? What is the attitude of the DC of CPY for Macedonia towards the Bulgarian people? Explain the role of the USSR in the struggle of the Macedonian people. Compare the language being used with that used in the previous source.



Overall questions on subchapter Ia.

Do the sources present the political leaders realistically? What similarities can you find in the descriptions of the leaders? What differences can be seen in the descriptions of the leaders?

Find descriptions of leaders in your country from the same period. Can you identify similarities between them? Find different descriptions of the same leader. Why do you think the same person is described in different ways?

What could you conclude about the propaganda pictures, what do they show? What did they want to say to people? Try to find out for each source: What ideology did it support? Why was propaganda so important during the war? Can you identify the main political and ideological conflicts in each country? Can you find common trends in all of the countries?

Ib. Armies and soldiers

I-11. American report on the activities of the Albanian resistance

The Ballists⁹ have shied from fighting either Italians or Germans. Their principal policy in their early days has been, "Let the Allies do our fighting for us". Now that the LNC¹⁰ has strengthened its position to a point where it looks as though it stands a fair chance of dominating the country at the end of the war, the Ballists are becoming skittish and call in the Germans to do their fighting for them in an attempt to wipe out the LNC without doing any fighting themselves. Whatever happens, it looks as though the Gentlemen Ballista, as he is called by the LNC, is determined to do no honest-to-goodness fighting. They will do some refined sniping, and fancy assassinations, probably, and some folks will call it civil war, but they are not going to stand up and fight. At least all the signs point that way.

Costa, p. 166.



This extract is part of an official report, dated 23 December 1943, sent by the American representative of the Office of Strategic Services and those of the Special Executive to his command headquarters, concerning the activities of the Albanian resistance. It makes it easy to create an idea of each group's war strategy and it gives a comparative perspective.

I-12. Allies' representatives in the Balkans on guerrilla strategies in Albania

BK says, in effect, "Let us organise now but fight later"
Or as an additional report put it,
"We will go into action when the British land at Durazzo"

The LNC said, in effect "Let us organise now and fight now. Let us keep on fighting as long as there is an Axis soldier on Albanian soil"

Costa, p. 167.

⁹ Ballista: members of the Balli Kombetar.

¹⁰ National Liberation Movement, led by the communists.



This is an excerpt from reports on the Guerrilla war and the war strategies of Balli Kombetar¹¹ and LNC during 1943, written by the Allies' representatives in the Balkans.



Do you approve of the tactics described in previous sources? Are "small nations" really supposed to remain hidden while the Great Powers fight? Explain your position.

I-13. Croatian military deputy in Sofia about the situation in Macedonia

[...] The relations between the Bulgarians and the Germans are good. Some time ago, an incident of a political nature took place in a night club in Skopje, and on that occasion some German officers intervened. In that same club, the music band played the Macedonian anthem, to which one Bulgarian lower officer applauded. Then a higher-ranked Bulgarian officer approached him and asked why he was applauding, to which he replied: "What is Macedonian is also Bulgarian." Upon hearing these words, the Bulgarian officer slapped him. This event was noticed by some German officers, also sitting in the same club, and they asked the Bulgarian officer why he slapped the other one but he did not answer and left the place. The German officers followed him and beat him up outside. This incident caused a certain dissatisfaction among everybody who was there and who loved Macedonia. [...]

Dokumenti za borbata na makedonskiot narod za samostojnost i nacionalna država, pp. 308-309.

¹¹ Balli Kombetar (The National Front) was a political and military organisation during World War II in Albania. It wanted to establish a republic after the liberation. It fought the occupiers but, at a certain point in the war, collaborated with the Germans in order to destroy the communists. This was used by communist propaganda to discredit them among the Albanians.



The following is a fragment of a wider report about the situation in occupied Macedonia, submitted by the Croatian military deputy in Sofia to the Ministry of Defence of ISC. This somewhat bizarre story shows some aspects of the relations between the Bulgarian and the German army personnel in Vardar Macedonia, which was officially Bulgarian territory at the time.



Describe relations between the German and the Bulgarian army personnel in Macedonia.

► **v4. The replacement of the German armies with Bulgarian armies, after the fascist occupation of Yugoslav Macedonia (April 1941)**



**I-14 and I-15.
Declaration (tract) of the National Liberation Front (EAM), Committee of Sterea Ellada**

PROCLAMATION
To the People of Roumeli

Brothers,

The mask has fallen and the true face of the EDES organisation is revealed. Sections of this organisation made a cowardly attack from behind against our own forces in Epirus, and captured higher members of the National Liberation Front without provocation. Their aim is clear: in co-ordination with their German partners [...], to disband the National Liberation Front, the pioneering organisation of the Greek people which struggles to liberate Greece.

Brothers,

We knew the EDES organisation. We knew they collaborated with the traitorous scoundrels [...]. We knew of their aim: to massacre Greece, to break down the national liberation movement, to subdue the Greek people and impose a dictatorial regime. We knew it all. Yet we did all we could to preserve unity as much as we could, because it was in the interest of the Greek people, because that was what the struggle for freedom demanded.

But now that the EDES organisation is openly collaborating with the Germans [...]; now that they organise joint operations against the Greek people in order to slaughter them and divide its fight for freedom, we declare, in the name of the interests of the Greek people, that we shall break them and render them unable to harm the gigantic task the Greek people have undertaken for freedom and which they have nurtured and still nurture today with their blood.

Brothers,

Have total faith in EAM-ELAS.

Join its Ranks.

Only EAM was born from the people and fights for the people.

We call upon any persons who may have been led astray by the unpatriotic EDES organisation, to open their eyes and join us in the sacred struggle for FREEDOM. Long live EAM. Long Live ELAS.

Death to the invaders, the traitors and the killers of their own nation.

EAM COMMITTEE for STEREA HELLAS

Fleischer, Stemma kai svastika, 2, p. 229.

Declaration (tract) of the National Democratic Greek Union (EDES) 1943

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
GREEK UNION [EDES]
PROCLAMATION

The Communist Party, having sacrificed this country, having masterly and craftily usurped its sacred and holy traditions, having needlessly created vic-

tims upon victims, having organised assassinations and terrorist attempts everywhere, having extorted the good citizens, having exploited everyone and everything, is now surpassing all limits of affront and shamelessness by daring to accuse EDES, saying that it consists of Germanophiles, Gestapo agents and murderers!!! [...]

EDES stands too high for this wretched libel to reach and affect it. EDES includes, in its ranks, the entire military glory of modern Greece, all moral political figures and every progressive element in this country.

The banner of EDES is Popular Socialist Democracy, and this banner it holds high and firm and will continue to hold it until Popular Socialist Democracy is established and becomes the source of happiness for all Greeks.

EDES is the genuine torchbearer of genuine patriotic spirit. Its origins and long tradition, the personal history of its members make it a sworn enemy of all the enemies of Greece and the bloodthirsty wolves from Sofia. [...]

Greek Democrats and Patriots!

Stay away from the traitors and the slanderers. Away from those who want to poison the joy of our liberation. Away from those who denounce the bloodied Northern Epirus and continue to flirt with the bears of Bulgaria. Away from the enemies of your peace and happiness. In one word, away from the Communist Party. Join EDES, the Noah's ark of purity and superiority. Join EDES, the powerful tidal wave of genuine Popular Power.

Fleischer, *Stemma kai svastika*, 2, p. 230.



By the beginning of June 1941, the whole of Greece was under a tripartite German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation. The Germans imposed a harsh occupation regime, plundering the country's agricultural resources, its industry, and requiring Greece to pay for the costs of the occupation. A devastating famine followed during the winter of 1941-1942, which claimed hundreds of thousands of victims. The communist party moved to establish the National Liberation Front (EAM)

in September 1941. It had two declared aims: the organisation of the resistance and a free choice as to the form of government after the eventual liberation of Greece. Other small agrarian and socialist groups were also parties in the establishment of EAM. A military arm (ELAS) was created shortly after. The inability of the traditional "political world" to offer leadership was perpetuated under the occupation. The political void that had been created during the Metaxas dictatorship was aggravated by the fact that a large segment of the country's liberal leadership was in exile. The communists, a marginal force during the inter-war period, were quick in filling this vacuum. They were offering a vision of a better and more just future. Besides, having survived earlier persecution, especially under the Metaxas dictatorship, they had gained experience and ability in operating underground. Although the party leadership kept a firm grip on the leadership of both EAM and ELAS, the overwhelming majority of the rank and file was not communist. A number of non-communist resistance groups also came into existence, the most important of which was the National Democratic Greek Union (EDES) set up by former liberal officers. In 1943, large areas of mountainous Greece were under resistance control.



Compare the previous two sources. What ideologies do the two proclamations represent? What kind of arguments do they use? Do you think that choosing a side was merely a matter of ideology? Was it easy for the majority of the population (bearing in mind the average level of education of the people of that time) to choose a side?

► v5. Photo of partisans (men and women) of the left wing resistance in Greece



Athens, War Museum; British Collection (IEE-IST, 16-17, 21).



ELAS forces marching. EAM/ELAS was reinforced by large numbers of Greeks who sought to resist the invaders, and it was the strongest opponent of the occupation forces in Greece throughout the country's occupation by the Axis powers.

I-16. Basic points of the Osvobodilna Fronta (OF) - The Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation

1st of November 1941

1. A merciless armed battle against the enemy is to be carried out.
2. This activity represents the foundation for the liberation and unity of all the Slovenians.
3. Understanding the community of Yugoslav nations as a natural and historic one, the Liberation Front (OF) does not recognise the break-up of Yugoslavia. It will use all its efforts to fight for the understanding and unity of all Yugoslav nations. At the same time, it strives towards a union of all the Slav nations under the leadership of the Great Russian nation on the grounds of the right of self-determination of every nation. (...)
5. All the groups participating in the Liberation Front have agreed to be loyal to each other. (...)
7. After the liberation, the Liberation Front will consequently introduce a people's democracy. All the questions exceeding the national liberation will be solved in a democratic way. (...)

Repe, *Sodobna zgodovina*, p. 187.



Shortly after Germany, Italy and Hungary occupied Slovenia in April 1941, the Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS) organised an Anti-Imperialistic front, whose aim was to liberate Slovenia with the help of the Soviet Union. Such an organisation did not extend to the other parts of Yugoslavia. In addition to the CPS, other founding groups of the Anti-Imperialistic front were the Christian Socialists, a liberal group named Sokol (Falcon) and various left and liberal oriented cultural intelligentsia groups. After Germany's attack on the Soviet Union (22 June 1941) the organisation was renamed the Liberation Front of the Slovenian nation (Osvobodilna fronta slovenskega naroda – OF). In the summer of 1941,

OF called for an armed resistance against the occupiers. Many people of different political persuasions joined the Partisans. In the autumn of 1941, it drew up a statement of ideals, called the "basic points of the OF". Although the OF included political groups of different ideologies, the CPS had taken control. Beyond liberation, the goal of the CPS was also revolution, and this was what repelled many people and provoked a civil war in parts of Slovenian territory. But, in general, the majority of Slovenians supported the OF, which joined the Antifascist Council of the Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), and together they laid down the basic principles of the new federal Yugoslavia. In October 1944, at the OF Congress, attended by delegates from all over Slovenia, a National Liberation Committee was elected. A year later, it was renamed in parliament, and became part of the provisional government. The OF, as part of the People's Front of Yugoslavia, seized power during the first elections after the war in 1945.



Look closely at point 7. Was this aim reached?

I-17, I-18 and I-19.

Extract from the Diary of a Partisan Commander

1 November (1941)

A few nights ago, fighting broke out with 500 Chetniks from Draža Mihailović's units. They were defeated and about 140 of them were arrested. Our forces have liquidated the Chetniks in Požega. Our Partisans sustained enormous casualties in this battle. The commander of the battalion, Comrade Kapelan, was killed, and so were two company commanders and many partisans. (...)

It so happened that instead of fighting against fascist aggressors, we fight against our brothers; instead of spilling enemy blood, we feud among ourselves. Instead of Draža Mihailović's people intercepting enemy trucks and looting them, they intercept our trucks and loot what the Serbian people have pinched and scraped to donate to the people's struggle; instead of intercepting Germans and killing them, they intercept our people and kill them in ambushes.

Dudić, pp. 230, 231.

Extract from the minutes of a meeting between D. Mihailović and representatives of the German command in the Serbian village of Divci

11 November 1941

Draža Mihailović: As a soldier, I am not ashamed of being a nationalist. In this capacity, I only want to serve the people. In doing this, I have not put myself on the side of those who want to drive the Germans out. But, I will not permit, taking into consideration weak German forces in the country, Serbia becoming communist. Struggle was under way with certain commissioned and non-commissioned officers, but only a minor number are involved. Our duty as soldiers is that we do not surrender as long as we can endure. Therefore, we cannot be criticised for not surrendering.

(...) Struggle against the occupiers was a necessary evil to prevent popular masses from siding with the communists. To me, as a soldier, the situation is quite clear. I would never engage in attacks unless communist attacks occurred and the Germans surrendered cities and villages.

Branko Petranović, Momčilo Zečević, pp. 529-530.

Extract from the instructions of Draža Mihailović to Major Djordje Lašić and Captain Pavle Djurišić

20 December 1941

(...) The goals of our units are:

- 1) To struggle for the liberation of our entire nation under the sceptre of HRH King Petar II.
- 2) To create a Greater Yugoslavia and, within it, a Greater Serbia, ethnically homogenous within the borders of Serbia – Montenegro – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sirmium – Banat and Backa.
- 3) To struggle for the incorporation into our State of all occupied Slavic territories under the Italians and the Germans (Trieste – Gorizia

– Istria and Carinthia) as well as Bulgaria and northern Albania including Skadar.

- 4) To clear the state territory of all ethnic minorities and non-national elements. (...)

There can be no cooperation with the communists or Partisans because they are fighting against the dynasty and are carrying-out a social revolution. (...)

Procedure: concerning the Albanians, Muslims and Ustashas, they will be treated according to their merits - for their loathsome crimes towards our population, i.e. they should be left to the "People's Court". As for the Croats, who are under the Italian occupation, they should be treated according to their attitude at the given moment.

Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o NOR naroda Jugoslavije, XIV, book 1, doc. nr. 34.



These three sources are attempts to shed light on the role and position of the Chetniks and their relationship with the Partisans and the Germans. The Chetniks were led by the Colonel of the defeated Yugoslav army, Dragoljub Mihailović. The summer of 1941 saw the Chetniks and the Partisans cooperating, and together they succeeded in liberating some towns in western and central Serbia. From the very beginning of the uprising, the Partisans and Mihailović's units fought for the control of the towns they liberated. By the start of November 1941, the conflict between the two movements grew into an open civil war. Both armies claimed that they were the only real fighters against the occupying forces, and that their rivals were collaborating with the occupiers. Up until the conference in Teheran, the Allies had looked upon the Chetniks as their allies and it was only after this, that the Partisans started receiving some help from the Allies.



How did Mihailović explain the Chetniks' attacks on the Germans, to the German Commander in the first months of the occupation? In your opinion, did he really believe that the Partisans were a greater threat than the Germans?

Notice the attitudes and prejudices towards other nations in source I–19. Which parts of the instructions are, in fact, an invitation to commit war crimes?

► v6. Serbian poster



Nicolić, p. 37.



Translation: Serbia is a part of the anti-communist front

I-20. Collaboration between the Ustashes and the Chetniks

Testimony by Savo Predja

Under the pressure of the Germans, the Ustasha's authorities have begun to change their policy towards the Serbian inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the German occupiers, it was very important for there to be peace in order for them to be able to exploit the natural resources and use them for the front. Pavelić's government has brought in a series of measures. They have introduced some Serbian representatives into the "Croatian State parliament"; they have established the "Croatian Ortho-

dox Church" and some of the young Serbian recruits were called in to join the Croatian army. Ustasha's leadership has accepted the policy of collaboration with the Chetniks. The first agreements with the Chetnik commanders were made by the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) at Ozren and Trebava. With this agreement, the Chetniks have recognised the ISC and expressed their loyalty to the head of the Croatian state. All hostilities towards the military and civil authorities of the ISC have ended; this will be recognised by the whole territory where Chetnik units are present. In order to lead a common fight against the Partisans, the Chetniks will keep their fighting formations, arms and commands and, in actions against the Partisans, they will be supplied by military units of the ISC. Wounded Chetniks will be treated in hospitals which belong to the military forces of the ISC.

Albahari et al, pp. 398-399.



Although the forces of the Independent State of Croatia were in a state of war with the representatives of the Serbian ultra-nationalists (the Chetniks), resulting in many victims among innocent civilians, in 1942, under German pressure, the Croatian and Serbian nationalists were brought together to lead a common fight against the communists.



What made the enemies (the Chetniks and the Ustashes) cooperate? In your opinion, was it only due to German pressure?

I-21. Beginning of the insurrection in Bosnia

Testimony by Žarko Zgonjanin¹²

We were enthusiastic about the creation of the first

¹² Žarko Zgonjanin, a Bosnian Serb, was born near Prijedor (northwest Bosnia) in 1916. He was one of the organisers of the insurrection in the Kozara mountain and in Bosanska krajina in 1941. After World War II, he was one of the leaders of the state police in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He died in Zagreb in 1970.

Partisan group, and very satisfied with our efforts, but suddenly there was a change of situation in the whole of Kozara¹³. Between 28-30 July¹⁴, there were many appearances of well-informed messengers who spread the news of the beginning of an insurrection and who called on everybody to rise.

Rebels from Dubica's¹⁵ district, probably self-initiating, have attacked and liquidated the police station at Knezica, the approximate geographical centre of Kozara, so the word spread all over the mountain that the insurrection had started. We have the task of advising people to return to their houses until we ask the leadership¹⁶ what should be done. Some people have agreed, some not. I have gone there and found Shosha¹⁷. I have informed him of the present situation and have asked him if there is a new directive. Shosha has responded that neither he knows what is going on. The folk just arise massively and fire on all sides.

Albahari et al, p. 101.



After World War II, the communist authorities insisted that the insurrection began as a movement inspired only by the Yugoslav Communist Party. However, this source shows that the insurrection was inspired by the instinct for survival as well.



Why did the Partisan leaders of the Kozara region suggest that the people return to their houses and remain there until further notice? Why was it important that they (the communists) organise the insurrection? How and why does the interpretation of the historical event(s) sometimes differ from the event itself?

¹³ Mountain in northwest Bosnia.

¹⁴ 1941.

¹⁵ City in northwest Bosnia.

¹⁶ Communist leadership.

¹⁷ Famous partisan hero from Kozara.

I-22. The foundation of the SS -“Handžar division”¹⁸

Testimony by Džemal Bijedić¹⁹

That is the period in which the enemy leads the propaganda-mobilisation action in Sarajevo with the goal of forming the XIII SS-division, called the “Handžar division”. That is the reason why the German agent El Huseini, Palestine’s religious leader, has come to Sarajevo. He has established contacts with the group of reactionary Muslims. We have had information about the objects of their discussions, because one of our infiltrated men was present during their meetings. El Huseini has insisted that the Muslims give their contribution to the German victory and intends to form the aforementioned special SS-unit, the “Handžar division”, along with another division. The most reactionary Muslims, oriented towards an Independent State of Croatia and Germany, have said that such a unit can be the force for Muslim calculations during the time.

Taking advantage of the already extremely difficult position of the Muslim refugees, the enemy has succeeded in its attempts to involve a large number of them (refugees) in this SS-division. The “Handžar division” was formed in number and organisation like the other German troops and the Nazis sent divisions on training exercises to France and Germany. In the beginning of 1944, this unit arrived in Srem first and, after that, in the eastern part of Bosnia, where they committed numerous crimes. The division was composed of bloodthirsty Ustashas and a rabble, and was supported by the most reactionary Muslims towards fascist oriented circles.

¹⁸ Handžar is the name for a long battle knife used during the Ottoman period.

¹⁹ Džemal Bijedić was born in Mostar in 1917. He was a member of the Yugoslav Communist party from 1939 onwards, and a member of the communist partisan movement from 1941 onwards. During, and after World War II, he was one of the key people in the Yugoslav political hierarchy. Although he was a Bosniak-Muslim, he never hesitated to write about examples of Bosniak collaboration with the Nazis (for example, a story about the Bosniak SS-division “Handžar”). He died in an airplane crash near Kreševo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1977. At the time of his death, he was still one of the main Yugoslav political leaders.

We can see what kind of milieu members of this division were recruited from, from the preserved data of the Third Reich's military and police institutions in the Independent State of Croatia. When recruiting "volunteers" into the Muslim SS-division, a certain amount of money and food, equivalent to the amount which German soldiers received during the war, was "guaranteed" to every family with at least one "volunteer". However, this was never fulfilled because the relatives (of the volunteers) – wives, parents or children – had to fill out certain forms, which they were not able to do because they all were illiterate.

Albahari et al, pp. 398-399.



What, in your opinion, were the motives for joining the SS? Do you think that the food and money promised to the volunteers' families was never given due to the reason given in the text?

I-23. Darko Stuparić writes about the establishment of the first Croatian Partisan unit near Sisak (Croatia) in June 1941

That night, about ten communists and the members of the League of Young Communists gathered in the yard of the Lasic's family house in Žabno. They walked about a hundred metres from the village and under an oak tree they had a meeting. They talked until midnight. Then the members of the Party from the nearby villages left in order to complete some tasks that same night. Capo and Marijan stayed alone under the oak tree, spread a tent and lay down. It was their first Partisan night. They were the first Yugoslav Partisans.

In the first days of the Partisan war ... everybody wanted to know how long the war would last. That is, how long we would fight, if there was any chance for a rebellion, etc. (...) Some asked: "If we hide in the barn and stay there for five to six weeks, will it be over?" We used to reply that it was not likely to finish so soon, that the most important thing for us was to oppose with arms, that it was now our decision and that such a decision would be made by the whole Party.

Dedijer, p. 397.



What was Partisan reality in the first days of the resistance movement? What do you think of the "barn" aspiration?

I-24. Testimonies about how Ohrid saw the coming of the Germans, the Italians, the Bulgarians and the Partisans during the Second World War

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GERMANS IN OHRID, 10 APRIL 1941

On Thursday evening, at around five o'clock, all of the bells began to ring, because that was when the German units started to arrive... Some people waited for them in the centre and they were offered bread, salt and water by Panto Rilkoski. Because they were afraid that it might be poisoned, Panto would try it first, and then they would eat it as well. Afterwards, a Serbian navy officer led them to the navy and handed it over to them. He knew German and was probably a Croat. After taking a walk through the city, they sat to eat their dinner, and it was canned food... The shops were closed. Only two coffee-bars were working, but were not offering drinks, coffee or tea, because there was no sugar...

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ITALIANS, 11 APRIL 1941

On Friday night, the Italian units came with cars full of soldiers and armaments... The Italians were quite hungry and were asking the population for eggs, chicken, bread and such. The children were selling their food, receiving money – liras and Albanian leks.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BULGARIANS, 12 MAY 1941

On 12 May, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the Bulgarian police came. They were received by the President of the municipality, Ilija Kocareski. Fifteen days later, the rest of the Bulgarian troops came as well. The German General Lindeman gave a speech, which was translated, saying that he had handed over the town to the Bulgarians because it had been theirs and that they should govern it. Then the Bulgarian general gave a speech saying that we had been the slaves of the Serbian people and expressed gratitude to the German liberating army.

That is how Ohrid changed masters three times in one month...

THE ARRIVAL OF THE PARTISANS, 15 OCTOBER 1944

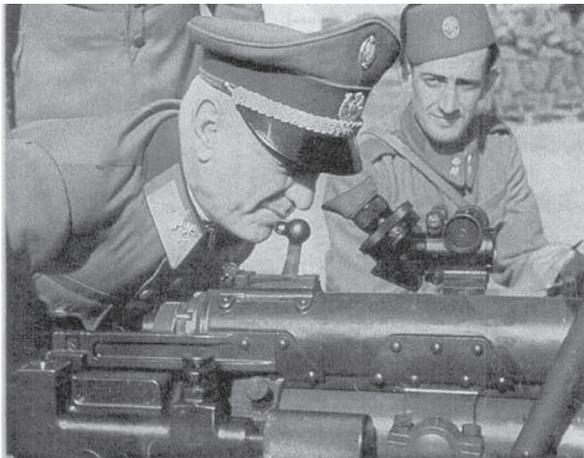
On 15 October (1944), Sunday morning, the Partisans came. The people knew they were coming. When they came, they were riding horses. The people gave them a magnificent reception. There were many people, young and old (...). The next day more partisans came. Amongst them were women armed with bombs, machine guns, bullets and wearing trousers, which was quite new...

Mitreski, pp 230-232, 280.



What are the similarities and differences between these descriptions? Is it possible to discern the author's attitude towards the different armies that went to Ohrid?

► v7. Bosniaks in the Ustasha forces



Krišto, p. 257.



Ustahas paid special attention to Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims). Pavelić used to explain that the figures of 7,5 million Serbs and only 2,5 million Croats were wrong; there were 5,5 million "Catholic and Muslim Croats". In order to get the Bosniaks on their side, the Ustahas called them "the flowers of the Croatian people". Bosniaks formed separate units in the Ustasha forces. They differed from other units by the "fez", a traditional Muslim cap.

I-25. A child about the rivalry of the political groups in Albania

"The next trick they tried was to have the Partisans, dressed in German soldiers' uniforms, visit us and denounce the communists to us, to see if we would agree with them. The German sympathisers pulled the same trick on everyone in Arza. The three factions pulled the same trick on everyone in Arza. The men who came to the houses were always from some other section of the country, and no one knew them in Arza. In this way they found out how everyone felt about each faction."

Hysolli, p. 58.



How were the factions trying to discover who really supported them and who did not? What does this extract tell you about the everyday life of civilians? In your opinion, what would have been the best way of answering the questions about the different armies/factions?

I-26. LNC Central Council circular letter to all the regional committees in Albania (dated 9 September 1943)

"In case of an Allied landing, the National Liberation Council must be the real power. They must mobilise the whole people around them and should not allow other forces, such as the Balli Kombetar, to exert any influence over the people (...). The National Liberation forces must begin, from now on, to as-

sert themselves everywhere and, when the landing takes place, they must present themselves to the Allies, through the National Liberation Councils, as the only power of the Albanian people (...) The administration of Albania should be entirely in the hands of the Liberation Councils.”

Smiley, p. 89.



What kind of behaviour, in the case of an Allied landing in Albania, does this letter propose? How they should try to avoid the representation of other political forces? What was the attitude of the LNC towards the rival political groups in Albania? Was the final, or even the main goal of the resistance movements, to come to power?



Overall questions on subchapter Ib.

Make a table with three columns. Write the names of the occupying armies in the first, the names of the communist armies in the second, and in the last column the names of the anticommunist armies from each source. Describe the relations between the communist and the anticommunist armies operating in the same country. Make a list of the armies that existed in your country. Find out more about their leaders and their aims. How were the Partisan armies organised? What kind of problems did they have? Resistance armies didn't fight only for freedom but for several other aims as well. What were these aims?

Ic. Relations with the two coalitions and with the neighbouring countries

I-27 and I-28.

News report on the military coup and overthrow of the pro-Axis Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This took place on 27 March 1941, following Yugoslavia's entry into the Tripartite Pact

Coming from peripheral streets, processions merged with one another, growing into a mighty river. The procession included a mixture of workers, employees, youth, citizens, peasants and women. State flags were carried in front of the procession... All the time, people were demonstrating their mood. They cheered: "Hooray for the people's government!", "Hooray for the people's army!", "The military is with the people!", "We demand democratic people's rights!", "Amnesty for political convicts!".

(...) Representatives of youth and workers, as well as Dr. Dragoljub Jovanović²⁰, spoke on Slavija square. They all voiced their content at the fact that the former government had been overthrown and stressed Belgraders' desire not to stop halfway, to preserve peace and to preserve the nation's independence.

²⁰ Dr. Dragoljub Jovanović (1895-1977), a University Professor, was the leader of the left wing of the Farmers' Party. After World War II, Tito's regime sentenced him to a long imprisonment for his activities in the opposition.

(...) Several speeches were delivered in front of the monument to Vuk Karadžić. University Professor Sima Milošević, Ph.D., was among the speakers. The Yugoslav people, according to Mr. Milošević, want to preserve the nation's independence, freedom and to secure democratic rights.

Politika, 28 March 1941.

The report by the chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia, Dr. Isak Alkalaj, to the Yugoslav government in exile on the events between the end of March and the end of June 1941

On that day (26 March), riots broke out in all secondary schools simultaneously... Chanting: "Better war than pact, better grave than slave" could be heard from all the classrooms... Classes in all schools have been called off and in the evening, demonstrations erupted in Kalemegdan and in Slavija ... The Greek Consulate was swarmed by young people between 17 and 20 years of age who wanted to transfer to Greece and fight there as volunteers. (...)

As soon as the people heard the news about the turnaround, all the streets were decorated with flags and many also with flowers. Already at six o'clock in the morning (on 27 March), the streets were filled

with people, peasants in festive clothing coming from nearby villages, workers, intellectuals, students and citizens, young and old. They all came out to express their joy; they all hugged, cried, sang and chanted. The greeting on that day was: "Long live the King, hooray for Yugoslavia" (...). The English, American, Russian and Greek embassies were practically besieged. Groups of people went from one embassy to another, made their way to the yards and danced in "kolo", welcomed by deeply moved heads and staff of these missions. (...) Processions were preceded with flags, Yugoslav flags and those of the Allies, heading towards the center of the city, cheering for the King, Fatherland and the army, shouting against Hitler and his mercenaries. (...) Around noon, massive demonstrations occurred in front of the German Traffic Office... A man stood at a window holding a large portrait of Hitler's which he then set on fire. The picture burned slowly while the frantic applause of the crowd below roared and could be heard even in remote parts of the city. Then two men pulled out a German flag with a swastika and tore it apart with their teeth."

Tokovi istorije, 1-2/1997, pp. 181-182.



What was the population's reaction to the signing of the Tripartite Pact by the Yugoslav Government and the military coup that followed? Which detail shows us the awareness of the demonstrators that the events could cause a German attack on Yugoslavia?

► v8. 27 March 1941 - Mass anti-Axis demonstrations in Belgrade



Petranović-Žutić, 27 March 1941.



Hitler's fierce reaction to the military coup, organized by a group of Yugoslav officers as a reaction to the accession of the Yugoslav government to the Tripartite Treaty on March 25, consisted of an attack on the Yugoslav capital on 6 April 1941 and the destruction of the first Yugoslav State.

I-29. Extract from the memoirs of Konstantin Katsarov²¹, a famous Bulgarian lawyer, on the first year of World War II

During this phase of "drôle de guerre" the war could hardly be felt in Bulgaria, at least on the surface, both in a political and military sense. The internal situation was under the Czar's authority, which depended on the army cleared of officers dealing with politics, and on the ministers, who were not members of any party. The external policy of the country was one of waiting, of "passing unnoticed"(...)

Bulgaria was neutral.

This word held a special fascination for the Bulgarians. We had waged three wars and suffered two national catastrophes, which had buried the national ideals inspiring our generation. The Bulgarians did not believe that through a war or by participating in a big international combination, they would improve their living conditions.

A typical example of their loss of faith on their success in the international politics at the time can be seen in the following joke, which was very popular:

"Pizho meets the village teacher and asks him:

"Teacher, we are going to stay neutral this time, aren't we?"

"No, no", replies the teacher, who was a specialist in international politics, "this time Bulgaria won't be Germany's ally. Now we are going with England."

"That's good! Let England be beaten for once as well!"

Katsarov, pp.547-548.

²¹ Konstantin Katsarov was born in Sofia in 1898, he was a Professor at the Law Department of Sofia University (1931-1953), unjustly convicted in 1953. He was released from prison, because his sentence was later found to be a miscarriage of justice. Following the overturn of his conviction, he emigrated to Switzerland.



Why did the majority of the Bulgarians want to avoid a new war? Did they expect to receive any benefits for themselves from the subsequent world conflict?

I-30. A famous Bulgarian journalist Danail Krapchev about the accusation against Bulgaria of not offering resistance to the German army

Why Didn't They Stop the German Army?

Some countries criticise Bulgaria for allowing the German army, its ally in the World War, to pass through its territories. We must point out that these countries are Great Powers. We, the Bulgarians, have every right to ask them:

Why did those, who criticise Bulgaria for letting the German army pass its territories, not stop the same army in their march last year or the year before? (...) Why didn't they go to the lower part of the Danube to stop the Germans? They want the seven million Bulgarian people, who were allies of Germany during the World War and shared its fate, to prevent them from crossing the big river?

After all, it should not be forgotten that Bulgaria is a victim of the Versailles system that started in Bucharest and ended in Neuilly. Why should the seven million Bulgarians be obliged to stop the eighty million Germans in their onset to build a new Europe? Bulgaria and Germany are both victims of the victors in the War two decades ago and we are waiting for the victory of justice (...)

The 'Zora' Newspaper, Sofia, 6 March 1941.

Krapchev, pp. 210-211.



What are the author's arguments? Are they convincing? What is Krapchev's attitude towards Germany and the German people?

I-31. Danail Krapchev commenting on Germany's swift victory over Yugoslavia in April 1941

Ruined is the country, which, in 1885, attacked the Bulgarian Principality because South Bulgaria had joined the Northern one. Ruined is the country,

which in 1913, perfidiously renounced the allied treaty between Bulgaria and Serbia and caused the War between the Allies (the Second Balkan War). Ruined is the country, which at the peace negotiations in Bucharest wanted to have Tsarevo Selo as well to "break our teeth in Sofia" as the Serbian representative Spalaikovich declared. Ruined is the country, which had given to the Greeks the motherland of St. Cyril and Methodius. Ruined is the country, which inspired the murder of the Austrian Crown Prince, thus, starting the World War. Ruined is the country, which helped Bulgaria to be thrown out of the Aegean region. We say the country, and not the Serbian people, because the people are not guilty; it is their governing intelligentsia who is guilty and who has always hated Bulgaria...

Not only did this country oppress more than one million Bulgarians by separating them from us and by trying to take their hearts, souls and mother tongue, but it also undermined Bulgaria from the inside...

Jesus Christ rose from the dead! From now on, every Bulgarian citizen will breathe more freely. Be happy!

Krapchev, pp. 145-146.



What are Krapchev's reasons for being joyful at this event? Does his joy concern the whole of Yugoslavia, or only a part of it? Why? What does this article tell us about the author?

► v9. Romanian newspaper: King Michael, General Antonescu, Mussolini, Hitler (1941)



„Universul”, no. 130, 15 May 1942.

► **v10. Romanian newspaper: King Michael and Generalissimo Stalin (1945)**



„Universul”, 26 October 1944



Compare this illustration with the previous one. What is your opinion on the Romanian Army and on politicians changing sides? Do you think the new “comradeship” was a sincere one? Explain your answer.

I-32 and I-33.

Extract from the Mnemonio to the British (18/10/1941) of the then Prime Minister Emmanouil Tsouderos - formerly a banker known for his liberal views and his opposition to the Metaxas regime - on the official Greek government in Cairo

The return of the King and his Family to our country is a matter of honour, not only because he followed a correct and brave policy but also because it is in our best interests and those of our allies. Any question of regime, which might arise after the war would throw Greece into controversy and anarchy with no end. If our friends are looking forward to a post-war Greece capable of continuing her foreign policy and remaining a useful political influence in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, they must already prepare the ground which will make it impossible for such anomalies to happen in Greece.

Fleischer, *Stemma kai svastika*, vol. 1, p. 181.



How is Tsouderos trying to persuade his allies that the return of the King is in their best interest? What do you think of his arguments?

Message from the British Foreign Office to the British Minister in Cairo 14 August 1944

“What would better serve our interests would be for the surrender of the Germans to be arranged once the British forces are ready to move to Greece, on condition that they also hand over all German weapons and supplies in such a way as not to fall into the hands of EAM, and so that there will be no hiatus from which EAM might benefit. This would be undoubtedly better achieved if the material could be handed over in ports, which we can reach easily. Of course, the Field-Marshal for the Middle East is considering various ways and means and will take into account the above considerations”.

latridis, p. 227.



The German army’s invasion of Greece was launched in April 1941 and both the Greek and British forces were rapidly overcome. Three days before the fall of Athens on 23 April, General Tsolakoglou, without government authorisation, negotiated an armistice with the Germans. The King and his government withdrew to the Middle East. In Greece, a collaborationist government was established. In March 1944, EAM established the Political Committee of National Liberation, which constituted a direct challenge to the government-in-exile. A new Prime Minister of the government in exile, George Papandreou, under British aegis, set about constructing a government of national unity. He finally gave five secondary ministries to EAM in the new government. The Papandreou government returned to liberated Athens in October 1944, accompanied by a small British force. Demands for the punishment of the collaborators were not given priority by Papandreou. But the main problem was the demobilization of the guerrilla armies and their replacement by a national army. EAM’s nominees resigned from the cabinet and a few days later, on 3 December 1944, EAM organised a mass demonstration. The police fired, leaving about 15 dead. ELAS units attacked police stations and there was furious

street fighting between the ELAS units, and the British and government forces in Athens. Ultimately, the British troops won the upper hand in the battle.



What kind of a hiatus was the British Foreign Office afraid of? Why?

I-34. Brigadier E.C.W. Myers, Commander of the British Military Mission to Greece, assesses the impact of the resistance against the Nazis on the overall evolution of the war

Soon after its occupation, Greece became of considerable strategic importance to the enemy. Not only was the country bled white to provide the maximum local produce, but its ports, in particular Piraeus, were used both to supply the enemy's island air bases in the Eastern Mediterranean and to slip supplies across by sea to North Africa.

In the autumn of 1942 just as we broke out of the El Alamein line, the destruction of the Gorgopotamos viaduct resulted in the only railway to Athens being cut for six critical weeks²², during which the enemy was unable to use Piraeus to reinforce his troops in North Africa with more than such small reserves as already happened to be in Southern Greece. The widespread sabotage of communications in June and July, 1943, temporarily diverted two German divisions from the main battle-front in Sicily. It contributed to no small extent towards the overall cover plan, the success of the landings and the capture of the island. It has been estimated that between 1941 and 1944 over twenty-five thousand casualties were inflicted upon the enemy by the andartes²³. It is known that over one hundred and fifty locomotives were damaged or destroyed. Over a hundred bridges were blown up. Over two hundred

²² The destruction of the Gorgopotamos railway viaduct in November 1942, which carried the Salonica-Athens railway line, was one of the most spectacular acts of resistance in occupied Europe. It was achieved by guerrillas drawn both from ELAS and EDES and saboteurs parachuted into Greece by the British Special Operations Executive.

²³ Partisans.

and fifty ships of about sixty-eight thousand tons in all were sunk or damaged by sabotage. During 1943 andante action necessitated the retention of thirteen Italian divisions in Greece. After the Italian capitulation, the Germans were forced to keep six divisions there. Had the enemy weakened his army of occupation before civil war broke out in the mountains, they would have run serious risks of a nation-wide Greek rising against them.

Myers, pp. 280-281.



Why was Greece of strategic importance to the Germans? What was the importance of the destruction of the Gorgopotamos viaduct?

► v11. Romanian newspaper photo: comradeship between Romanian and Red Armies: officers at the Front



„Universul”, Bucharest, 6 October 1944.



What year might this photograph have been taken? Explain why.

I-35. The treatment of the English prisoners, Romania (1944)

Antonescu informed Chas that, although I had come here as an enemy, he will protect us against the Germans. They did not need to offer the Germans any pretexts to take us under their protection and this is

why, professor Mihai Antonescu... will help us set up our declarations. We were by no means to admit that we were sent to sabotage the oil, since such an act against strategic merchandise would have offered to the Germans a valid argument to take us over ... This is how one of the closest allies of Hitler — a Quisling — would arrest 3 British parachutists, then offer them his protection, send his own minister of External Affairs to instruct them how to do at the interrogation of the Germans. How many of those back home — used to judge war in the most general and less equivocal terms — would have thought something like this to be possible?"

Porter, p. 161.



This account was written by Ivor Porter, an English spy sent to Romania with the mission of contacting Iuliu Maniu²⁴, the leader of the democratic opposition. The treatment that the prisoners were subjected to grasps the Antonescu government's attitude, which, in spite of the official declarations of fidelity towards Germany, looked for the sympathy of the powers within the United Nations.



What, in your opinion, is the explanation for the unusual treatment of the prisoners of war?

I-36. Extracts from the minutes of the talk between J.B. Tito and W. Churchill in Naples, 12 August 1944

(...) MARSHALL TITO said that (...) as far as Serbs are concerned, he was not in a quarrel with them, but only with Mihailović's group, who turned its rifles against the Partisans at the most critical moment.

²⁴ Iuliu Maniu (1873–1953). A Romanian politician, he was an important leader of the Romanian National movement in Transylvania in the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. During the inter-war period, Maniu was one of the main political figures, constantly promoting democratic ideas. He was the leader of the democratic political opposition during the Antonescu government. Convicted and imprisoned by the Communists in 1947, Maniu died in Sighet prison.

(...) THE PRIME-MINISTER said that the true solution for Yugoslavia would be a democratic system which would rely on peasants, as the conditions on farm households would gradually improve.

MARSHALL TITO said that, as he had already said several times in public, he did not want to introduce the communist system in Yugoslavia, if for no other reason than because it was expected that most European countries after the war would live in democratic systems from which Yugoslavia must not differ.

Tito – Churchill: Strogo tajno, p. 277.



Was Tito honest with Churchill?

I-37. Order of the Italian King Victor Emanuel III, dated 3 May 1941 on the annexation of the Province of Ljubljana to Italy

KING'S ORDER DATED 3 MAY 1941 - XIX, NO. 291

The foundation of the Province of Ljubljana

VICTOR EMANUEL III

(...) Article 2. By an order of the King, and issued upon the proposal of the Duce of Fascism and the Minister of the Interior, the Province of Ljubljana will - due to the serried Slovenian population - enjoy an autonomous status, which will take into account the ethnic characteristics of the population, the geographical situation of the country and its special local needs.

Article 3. Administrative power will be in the hands of the High Commissioner appointed by King's order, upon the proposal of the Duce of Fascism, the Prime Minister, as well as the Minister of Interior.

Article 4. The High Commissioner will be assisted by a council consisting of 14 members, chosen from the productive groups of the Slovenian population.

Article 5. There will be no compulsory military service for the residents of the Province of Ljubljana.

Article 6. The instruction in primary schools will be carried out in Slovenian. In secondary and tertiary level schools there will be an optional instruction

of the Italian language. All official decrees will be issued in both languages. (...)

Ferenc, p. 33.



Italian troops occupied the western and southern parts of Slovenia. After a short military administration, the Italian occupiers transformed their occupied territories into the so-called Province of Ljubljana (Provincia di Ljubliana). It was governed by a High Commissioner. A few days after the occupation, a Slovenian body, called the National Council, was in operation, but only for a few months and it didn't have any real power. Legally, the Province of Ljubljana was one of the Italian provinces. It gained an autonomous status which manifested itself in a different name for the person in charge (High Commissioner as opposed to Prefect used in other parts of Italy), in bilingualism, in a formal co-administration by the advisory committee for the Province of Ljubljana whose members were Slovenians and, finally, by the fact that Slovenian citizens did not have to serve in the army. After the Italian capitulation, the former Italian occupational territory was taken over by the Germans.



Comment on article No. 4.



Overall questions on subchapter Ic.

What were the factors that influenced the decisions for certain coalitions? Why did the political actors change the coalitions? Did the activities of certain actors match the proclamations they made at the beginning of the war?

I-38. An anecdote told by Ivan Venedikov, a famous Bulgarian archaeologist, about his relations with the Germans in Macedonia

At that moment, Stamen Mihailov brought in a German soldier, an Archaeologist. He was a typical German, blond, tall, wearing a uniform; he was with his unit in Skopie. He was about 35 and his specialty was the pre-historical period . . .

The last time I saw him, Lange told me a joke about us, the Bulgarians:

“People say that you are twelve million.” He said.

“No, only six”.

“No, twelve. Six of them are with us, and the other six are with the Soviet Union”, he told me.

That made me unhappy, but I did not say anything. Could he have been right?

Venedikov, pp. 238-239.



What is the German's concealed reproach? On what grounds is it made?

Id. Religious organisations

I-39. Declaration of the Archbishop of Ioannina (Greece) to all the Christians under his authority (10/9/43)²⁵

To the Christians of our County:

As of the 9th of this month, the military administration of Epirus has been taken over by the German Occupation Authorities. Officials of these authorities have declared that the German Army undertakes to protect the lawful and peaceful population, but they

consider guerrillas as enemies, not only of the German Army, but also of the peaceful citizens who will bear the brunt of the severe punishment, as it will be necessary for severe measures to be taken indiscriminately against the guilty and the innocent alike.

We take this opportunity to address once again our Christian people and remind them of how critical these times are, and issue a fatherly admonition and advise them to abstain from any unlawful acts and persuade the more naïve among them to also abstain from co-operating with and aiding the guerrillas so as to prevent a holocaust of innocent people.

²⁵ See also sources III-6 and III-7.

We fully realise the anxiety in the souls of everyone, but in the name of our Pastoral duty, in the name of tender love for our flock, in the name of an entire life spent protecting and serving the flock entrusted to us, we call upon all to put aside any personal interest in favour of the general good, in favour of the large numbers of innocent people who are exposed to countless dangers, and we appeal for prudence, for the full realisation of the gravity of the circumstances and for patience.

We expect and hope that this ultimate appeal of ours shall be duly noted and appreciated.

With fervent prayers to God.
Ioannina, 10 September, 1943
Spyridon, Archbishop of Ioannina

Fleischer, vol. 2, p. 222.



What is the Archbishop of Ioannina suggesting to the Christians in his authority? What are the motives behind this suggestion? Is it possible to see from this letter whether he approved of the actions of the German authorities or not?

I-40. Letter by Archbishop Damaskinos and other eminent Greeks to Gunther von Altenburg, German Ambassador in Greece

Archbishop Damaskinos and other eminent Greeks
to Gunther von Altenburg, Ambassador,
the Reich Plenipotentiary for Greece

Athens, 24 March 1943

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned, are not seeking in this letter to interfere in any way with matters of the general tactics of the German Authorities in this country or anywhere else, but simply to submit certain thoughts to you, on the occasion of any issue which, in recent days, has held the entire population of Greece in a state of surmise and emotion, being certain that you will examine them in a spirit of profound good will and, even more, in a spirit of profound understanding.

The issue in question is that of the expulsion from Thessaloniki, of the community of Jews of Greek nationality who, for a very long time, have been entirely lawfully integrated into the institutions of this country, and, not only have they never given any Greeks any opportunity for complaint, but, on the contrary, they have always set an example of serious and co-operative solidarity and, at moments of crisis, proved themselves to be capable of self-denial and self-sacrifice for their country. (...)

It should also be noted that the Jews in Greece have a mentality which differs from that of the Jews in Germany, and that they do not even know the language of their co-religionists in Poland, where they are being sent to live.

Having taken all this into consideration, and, further, bearing in mind that throughout the entire length of Greek history our relations with the Jewish community have always been harmonious and smooth, from the depths of antiquity through the time of Alexander the Great and his heirs, down to all the eras of tolerant Greek Orthodoxy to the framework of our recent life as a nation. We believe that with Your Excellency's high capacity as regulator of affairs in our country during the present war, you will not hesitate to meet our present request and to decide that the expulsion of the Jewish community from Greece shall be suspended, at least on a temporary basis, until the question of the Jews in Greece can be studied in the light of a special and thorough research. (...)

Your Excellency,

In the name of the sublime ideas which the Greek spirit and the high culture of Your homeland have elevated to the status of watchwords of universal prestige and incontrovertible authority, we beg of you that the suspension of the expulsion of our Jewish fellow-citizens, which we have requested, be implemented as soon as possible, and we assure you that the entire Greek people will be in a position to appreciate in due course the magnificent historic gesture you will have made.

Documents on the History of the Greek Jews,
pp. 264-265.



The Orthodox Church, which remained in operation in Athens throughout the occupation, played an important role in religious and political affairs during this period and tried to assist the Jews in fleeing or hiding and thus surviving. After the first deportations of the Jews had begun, Archbishop Damaskinos organised a meeting of leading academics, judges and lawyers as well as presidents and secretaries of trade unions and professional associations. Petitions to the quisling government and the Reich's Plenipotentiary were drafted, signed by Damaskinos and 21 other public figures, expressing the horror of the Greek people at the deportations and demanding that these stop immediately.



What did the authors of this letter write about the Jewish community in Greece? What are they asking the Ambassador to do? Did the respectable public figures put themselves in danger by signing this letter (bear in mind German anti-Semitic policy as well as the brutality of the regime itself)? In your opinion, why did the authors of the letter stress that "...the Jews in Greece have a mentality which differs from that of the Jews in Germany...?"

I-41. The Catholic church of Albania about the Italian invasion of Albania

From the historical day of 7 April 1939, Albania had a lucky fate because of the will of the Great Duce of Fascism, his Excellency Benito Mussolini, The Saviour of Albania, and according to the desire expressed by the Albanian people through the Constituent Assembly on 12 April 1939; Albanians and their brothers in Italy are united in their fates, predestined since ancient times by nature, under the splendid Crown of Savoja and under his Highness Victor Emanuel III, the Great King and three times winner, they became one, as part of the Roman Empire. Since this happy time, Albanians have been free to express their feelings and aspirations on every subject without fear, something they had not dared to do since the time of their legendary leader Gjergj Kastriot Scanderbeg.

"Hylli i Dritës" (The Star of Light), December 1940, p. 601.



This excerpt is from an article from the magazine *Hylli i Dritës* (The Star of Light) which was the public organ of the Catholic religion and one of the most prominent, in general, in Albania.

I-42 and I-43.

Sarajevo Bosniaks about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (at that time, part of the Independent State of Croatia)

On 12 October 1941, a Resolution was drawn up, by about 100 Muslims from Sarajevo, after the proposal of the Main committee of "El Hidaja"²⁶, a society of Muslim clergy. The Resolution recognised the harsh conditions of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, criticised the violence towards the Serbs and the Jews, rejected the responsibility of the Muslims for committing crimes and, at the same time, criticised the Muslims who had taken part in the violence. Signatories of the Resolution stated their requests, and most important among these were: the establishment of "safety of life, honour, property and faith for all citizens of the State without any differences", and the prevention of future "actions, which are, by their nature, capable of implicit insurrections and bloodshed among the people".

Redžić, p. 16.



Some representatives of the Bosniaks were appalled by the crimes committed by authorities of the ISC towards the Serbian and Jewish populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1941. In October 1941, they drafted a resolution in which they expressed their opinions.

The Islamic clergy and the creation of the Bosniak SS-division in 1943

The main role in recruiting men into the SS-division was played by the Islamic mufties and imams.

²⁶ EL Hidaja was a key Islamic organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Particularly active in this role were the imams Mustafa Malkoc and Halim Malkoc, who gathered the people in front of the mosques, made propaganda speeches and called for recruits to join the 13th SS-division. Recruited men were transported to Germany and, after that, to southern France, where they were exposed to special discipline, military training and a political education. The main goal of this kind of education was to develop the fatalistic approach to Islam and to be taught the war goals of the Third Reich by the members of this division. The carriers of the education of the military in the 13th SS-division were young mufties, who were previously educated in a pan-Islamic manner in a special school, founded in Berlin by El Huseini, the great mufti of Jerusalem.

Redžić, p. 120.



Compare these two sources. In what ways do the actions of the various Muslim clergy members differ from each other? Can you find similar examples from your country?

I-44 and I-45.

A speech given by his holiness Nicodim, Patriarch of Romania, at the Law Faculty in Bucharest in 1942

There is only one thing left that we should think of. Our enemies are also the enemies of the Cross, hostile to a civilisation founded on indescribable toil and sacrifice, on the Holy Gospel and on the science in its service. The Bolsheviks utter blasphemies against God and fight to annihilate the Cross and everything that was built under its power, they rummage the land of our forefathers and scatter the graves²⁷ (...)

Deeply rooted in a past filled with blood, we defend such a heredity which also belongs to the entire civilised world. We fight for the Holy Cross and for the Holy Gospel and we pray to God and Jesus our Lord.

„Universul”, 79/2.03.1942, p. 4.

²⁷ This assertion refers to the occupation of Bessarabia and Bukovina by the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940.

Press article: *The sister-churches. Great perspectives of Orthodoxy*, by Mihai Burlacu

Along with the war, that had ended back East, there also fell a black veil that separated the two neighbour Orthodox sister-churches – that is, the one between our older sister, the Patriarchy of the Russian-Orthodox church and its younger sister, the Patriarchy of our Romanian-Orthodox church. (...)

And in the words addressed to the county by His Holiness Nicodim, the Patriarch of the Romanian-Orthodox church, ... he brought his homage to the Russian-Orthodox Patriarchy, our older sister: “Recently, His Holiness, the Metropolitan Alexie of Leningrad and Novgorod,... addressed the Orthodox believers in our beloved country, with brotherly words of stimulus and of invigorating encouragement for the hopes of our beloved people, and for the well-being of our holy church. These thoughts of our older sister in Jesus Christ offered us great joy. Our live wish is to see, renewed and strengthened, together with our older sister in God, the holy Orthodox church of the Union of Soviet and Socialist Republics; in the spirit of Christian and brotherly love, the closest connection”. (...)

But there are great and new perspectives arriving in the future for the Orthodoxy. A new ecumenical synod is awaited with grand preparations by the theologians and the clergy of all Orthodox churches in the Balkans. But there can't be a ecumenical synod without the participation of the older sister, the Russian-Orthodox Patriarchy. Moreover, serious studies and research have been set-up by our theologians regarding the Anglican church, in comparison to the other Orthodox sister-churches. But they could not reach a final conclusion without the ecumenical understanding of all the Orthodox churches. It is hence explicable from our religious point of view as to why the Anglican Church saluted, with a warm prayer and a pious homage, the moment of the reunification of the two Christian-Orthodox people as brothers.

„Universul”, 291/28.10.1944.



In what ways do these two texts differ? What can you infer from the two statements of Patriarch Nicodim in relation to external pressures? In your opinion, did the attitude towards the Bolsheviks change? If so, what might be the reason(s) for this change?²⁸ Explain your answer.

I-46. The arrest of Patriarch Gavrilo by German Gestapo in the Ostrog monastery, 23 April 1941

After the capitulation of the Yugoslav army on 16 April, I remained in Ostrog. My intention was to return to the Patriarchate in Belgrade as soon as possible. However, this was not an easy task. The roads were damaged, there was no petrol nor was there the possibility of procuring it from any side. In addition, the occupier destroyed almost all the roads, which were otherwise in poor condition, with his armored vehicles and tanks. I waited for a suitable moment for my return. Slightly before six a.m. on 23 April, Milutin²⁹ knocked on my door... As soon as... he entered my room, he told me: "Your holiness, the Germans are here and are looking for you". He was upset and very excited. Seeing him in such a mood, I told him: "Please, be calm and do not despair. Nothing will happen to you... The Germans are looking for me." As soon as I finished the sentence, four Germans in military uniforms barged into my room without knocking. They wore the initials SD on their sleeves and lapels, indicating the political police or the Gestapo ...

(...) The colonel said the following: "You are indicted, as the main war criminal, for Yugoslavia's entry into the war against the Axis powers. According to this, I have the order from the Supreme Com-

²⁸ One of the reasons why might be the change of attitude towards the Russian Church by the Bolshevik regime between the time of the two extracts. After being persecuted in the 1930s and early 1940s, in 1943, the Russian Church became legal again. This change in Stalin's policy might also have given hope to the Romanian Church that it could be possible to live with the Bolsheviks. For more information, see: Pospiclovsky: *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime*, vol. I.

²⁹ The Patriarch's steady companion – translator's note.

mander of the military and civil force, Führer Adolf Hitler, to interrogate you on your criminal activities and then forward the case to a higher military court which shall pronounce a fair sentence according to military law... you have... entered pure politics with your actions among your people from that area and are accused of spreading your idea among them and of encouraging them to be united in their revolt against the Axis powers, in particular, since the signing of the Pact on 25 March, when Yugoslavia joined the Tripartite Pact on its free will ... Everything you did fell on fertile soil among the members of your congregation, you imbued them with the notion of revolt and prepared a military coup ... You yourself, pushed Yugoslavia into war and toppled the legitimate Royal Regency and its government ... As soon as war broke out in 1939, you started to visit the Serbian people frequently and, in your speeches, you instigated a belligerent mood among them ... that every form of resistance against the Axis powers, as enemies of the Yugoslav state, should be encouraged.

Memoari patrijarha srpskog Gavrila
(*Memoirs of the Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo*), pp. 291, 299, 300.



The Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Gavrilo Dožić (1938 to 1950), was an opponent of the Axis policy and of Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the Axis. He was interned at the beginning of war in the Ostrog monastery in Montenegro. Sustaining continuous harassment, he was subsequently transferred to Sarajevo and then to a Gestapo prison in Belgrade. German occupation authorities then interned him in the Rakovica monastery near Belgrade and subsequently in the Vojlovica monastery. He stayed there, watched by guards and in complete isolation until September 1944, when he was transferred, together with the Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, to the Dachau concentration camp, where they spent several months. Although an opponent of the new communist regime, he returned to the country in 1946, to try and help the recovery of the war-devastated country and to reestablish the church organization that had been almost destroyed in certain regions (particularly territories that were parts of the Independent State of Croatia).



How did the Patriarch react when he was told that the Germans were looking for him? What was he accused of? Compare Patriarch Gavriilo's faith with that of the Archbishop Stepinac's (next two sources).

I-47 and I-48.

Stepinac's appeal to the Catholic clergy to support the Independent State of Croatia, 28 April 1941

These are no longer the hours of tongue, but of blood, with its mysterious bond to the land in which we saw the light of God and to the nation we were born in. Need it be emphasised that the hearts in our chests started beating more lively, too? (...) And who can reproach us, if we, the spiritual shepherds also contribute to national delight and jubilation by turning to God's highness with deep awe and warm gratitude (...). Addressing you, therefore, as the representative of the Church and the shepherd of souls, I plead with you and appeal to you, to give your utmost for Croatia to become the land of God, because only thus will it be able to fulfil the two important tasks which it, as a state, must accomplish for its members.... Respond, therefore, readily to this appeal of mine for the exalted endeavour to preserve and advance the ISC.

Živojinović, Lučić, pp. 554-556.

Stepinac's letter to Pavelić, dated May 14, 1941

Poglavnik (the Leader)!

I've just received the news that in Glina, the Ustasas shot 260 Serbs without any prior investigation or court ruling. I know that the Serbs committed serious crimes in our country in the 20 years of their rule. But I still find it my duty as a Bishop to raise my voice and say that this is not allowed under Catholic morality; so I'm asking you to undertake the most urgent measures on the whole territory of the ISC, so that not one single Serb is killed unless his guilt is proved to the extent that he deserves death. Oth-

erwise, we can't count on the blessing from heaven, and without it, we are all doomed. I hope you won't reproach me for my honest words.

Krišto, pp. 134-135



One section of the highly-positioned Catholic clergy in Croatia, among whom the Zagreb Archbishop, Alojsije Stepinac had a prominent position, supported the establishment of the ISC in the beginning. However, soon after the establishment of the ISC, Archbishop Stepinac wrote letters on several occasions to the Ustasha officials in which he officially protested against the crimes committed by the Ustasha regime, and later on, he openly criticised them in his sermons. Similar attitudes and mood swings towards the Ustasha regime were characteristics of, not only Stepinac and the majority of the Catholic clergy, but also the major part of the population in Croatia at that time. However, in spite of denouncing some aspects of the Ustasha regime, Stepinac, being a radical anti-communist, did not keep himself at a distance from the ISC as he considered the Partisans (to be more precise: the communists) to be the main enemy. After the war, he was sentenced for being a collaborator to 16 years of prison and forced labour by the communist authorities. During his prison sentence, the Holy See honoured him with the title of Cardinal, to which Yugoslavia reacted by breaking off diplomatic relations. In 1960, Stepinac died while serving his sentence. Pope John Paul II beatified him in 1998.³⁰

³⁰ In Communist Yugoslavia, the historiographic presentation of Stepinac, based on the court ruling for collaboration, was exclusively negative, and no open public debate concerning the matter was allowed. With the fall of communism, the dominating historiographic presentation of Stepinac in Croatia has changed completely. He is now generally portrayed in a positive light, simply as a man and a martyr and as a victim of historic circumstances (this presentation prevails in history textbooks). Between these two extremes, there are a number of historians who take into account his merits (rescuing Jews, protesting against the authorities) but also his failures (the fact that he never completely distanced himself from the ISC). In his book *Croatian history*, a respected Croatian historian, Ivo Goldstein, states, among other things, that Stepinac's fault "...in those complex war events could only be a moral and a political one and he was never to be criminally prosecuted." (Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, Zagreb 2003, p. 309). Serbian historiography, however, did not alter its view of Stepinac, holding him accountable for co-operation with the Ustasha authorities.



What does Stepinac protest against? In what way does he address Pavelić? Analyse the language being used and compare it with the style of the preceding letter.

I-49. Father Zlatko Svirić³¹ about converting Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism

On a nice day in June, about thirty elderly men, all Orthodox Christians, appeared in front of the parish office... (...)

They were gloomy, depressed, full of fear, worry and uncertainty, which impressed me deeply and unpleasantly.

"What is it, my brothers, and my good men, what good brings you here in such a great number?" I asked loudly in order to anticipate their bad and gloomy mood and also, to make it easy on myself.

"Nothing good, Father Zlate." They all shouted as one, "Look! We're asked to change our religion by force in our old age. Who has heard of such a thing nowadays in the twentieth century?" They were saying this with deep sighs and tears, which were running down their cheeks.

I could see that they were oppressed by great misery and a terrible destiny. It occurred to me that probably not one of them had had anything to eat or drink that morning so I invited them to sit down in the deep shade and I told the boy to bring a snack, some brandy and wine. At the same time, I was thinking intensively that they had to get help. I'd falsify the baptism certificates. I somehow felt relief at that moment. I regained my peace and self-confidence. (...)

After refreshing them with some food and drink, and when they had relaxed quite a bit, I turned directly to Lazar and spoke so that everybody could hear me:

"Tell me, Lazar, were you born as a Serb of Orthodox Christianity?"

"Yes, I was, Father Zlatko (...)"

"Do you live in that manner, Lazar?"

"Yes, I do, as God is my witness, Father Zlatko."

"Well, then you'll die as such, Lazar. You won't change your religion as long as I live here, neither will any of you!"

The men raised their heads. They all gazed at me. But doubt, and even fear, appeared at once. They started asking me questions. They asked me what they should do. Understandably, they were frightened. I explained my decision to them. In my parish office there were unfortunately only a few baptism certificate forms. I told them that I would have enough for all of them the next day. I entered the house and immediately started filling in the forms. The first one was for Lazar.

Cvitković, pp. 113-114.



One way in which the Ustasha authorities sought to "solve" the Serbian issue was by converting them to Catholicism³². Although Pavelić's Independent State of Croatia didn't formally support conversion, in real terms it certainly did, as conversion was a common practice in the parishes. Archbishop Stepinac, in his statements, distanced himself from the forced conversions and even protested against the practice, but a number of historians still think that it is questionable whether he had made every possible effort to prevent it. The conversions were carried out with the prevailing explanation that it was the way to save the Orthodox Serbs from the Ustasha terror. However, by doing so, even though the members of the religious minorities might have saved their lives, most of them did not gladly accept such "generosity". As shown in this excerpt, some priests in the parishes were opposed to the policy of converting to Catholicism.



What do you think of Father Zlatko's action? Why did he decide to help those people?



Overall questions on subchapter Id.

Describe the attitudes of the religious leaders towards the occupying forces, the Partisan army and the anticomunist army. What similarities and differences in the statements of the leaders of the different religious organisations can you find? Were priests allowed or obliged to choose sides during the war?

31 A Roman Catholic priest.

32 The other two ways were deportation and extermination.