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Life of the Partisans





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How did the Partisans organise life in the liberated territories?





The topic is based in the period of the entire WW2 in Yugoslavia (1941/1945) in the area of the complete country, thus being relevant to every country in the project. The topic was once quite present and extensively studied in the curriculum of old Yugoslavia but was eventually reduced in the post 1991 curriculums. The actions of partisans in the territories they hold during WW2 are very controversial until this day.

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- The critical understanding of the complexity of events in the past
- Developing empathy
- Recognition of the role of women in war
- Understanding the cause effect connection

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- 1. The students will analyze historical sources.
- 2. The students will learn about the partisan movement and life in the territories they controlled during WW2.
- 3. The students will learn about the life of women in the partisan movement during WWII

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The teacher opens the workshop with a brainstorming activity.

- 1. Who were the partisans?
- 2. What was their ideology?
- 3. Do you know anything about the partisans in your region?

The teacher continues with the introduction. The pupils read the introduction text, analyze the map. The teacher asks them to answer the questions at the end of the introduction. .



45 minutes

Activity 1.

Role play

The teacher separates the pupils into 4 groups and gives them the sources. Using the sources students need to give fictional reports.

Group 1: Life and organization

Students in this group are a political body which needs to make a fictional report about the organization on the newly freed territory and the progress of organizing institutions.

Group 2: Sacrifice

Students in this group are representatives from a partisan unit that has just returned from fighting the enemy. They need to make a fictional report about the battle.

Group 3: Women

Students in this group need to make a story about a fictional partisan woman. Her background, where and when did she join the party, where did she fight in the war?

Group 4: Mistakes and Crimes

Students in this group belong to an internal investigation body, giving a fictional report about problems and crimes which have recently happened in their unit.

After reading the reports the teacher asks the students to compare and discuss other groups' reports.

For the closure, the teacher asks the conclusion questions and starts a debate.

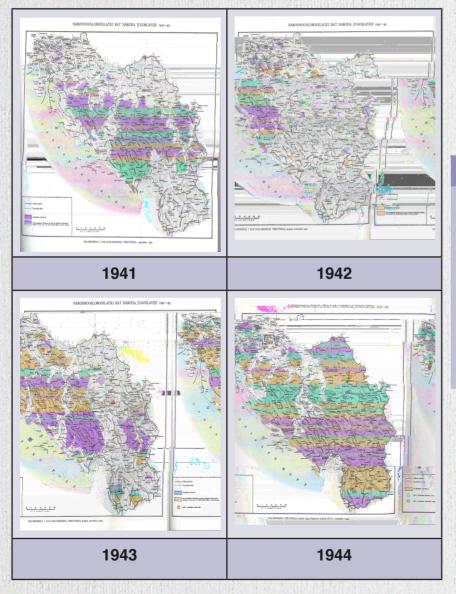
INTRODUCTION

After starting of fights by the partisans in occupied Yugoslavia (June-July 1941), the liberated territory was constantly expanding, so in December 1942 it was larger than surfaces of some European countries. New organs of administrative power on liberated territories, so called Narodnooslobodilacki Odbori (NOO) were swiftly established, along with economy, education and health structures. The final goal of fighting was liberation of Yugoslavia from the invaders, but also establishing of new, communist state and social organization. These goals brought the partisans, apart from the occupators, into the

STATE	SURFACE (in km²)
BELGIUM	30.000
SWITZERLAND	41.000
DENMARK	43.000
YUGOSLAVIJA (liberrated territory in 1941)	48.000

conflict with fractions loyal to the old regime and the newly formed nationalistic groups. The new formed authorities on liberated territories attempted to make discipline and control over its troops, but it did not prevent various abuses and incidents.

M PLF* 1941 1944
* PLF - Peoples Liberation Front - in other words Partisan mouvement



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- 1. What were the areas first liberated by the partisans?
- 2. Where and on what kind of terrain the partisans moved the most?
- 3. Can you name some of the areas of Yugoslavia the partisans controlled in 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944?

^{*}National Liberation Boards - Units of administrative power on partisan controlled territories (interpreter's remark)

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The NOO were the organs of revolutionary people's authorities in Yugoslavia, grown during the National Liberation War (NOR) 1941-1945. They were created (elected or appointed) from the beginning of armed resitance in 1941 on freed territories, and later also on occupied territories, and since their creation they were a core of the new social system. The NOOs had a character of state administrative bodies ever since they were first formed. They were making decisions and guidelines, solving mutual relations among population, establishing rights and liabilities, prescribing behavior, organizing aid to partisan troops and defending the grains of the new order. Apart from liberated and semiliberated areas of Yugoslavia, they also worked behind enemy lines, as a uniform national liberation front, mainly performing economic, political and propaganda functions, which caused a certain duality of power between the occupiers and the national liberation movement. Since July 1941 there were village, municipal, city, regional and state level NOOs.

Source 3

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Borba (Serbia), Pobjeda (Montenegro), Omladinski pokret (Montenegro), Osvobodilna fronta (Slovenia), Slobodna Vojvodina (Serbia), Reč naroda (Serbia), Vesti (Serbia), Mlad Borec (Macedonia), Nova Makedonija (Macedonia)...

Source 5

W

Source 2

S

The KPJ (Communist Party of Yugoslavia) considered the fight for national culture and national enlightment an integral part of revolutionary fight. Hence the slogans: 'With education to freedom' and 'weapons are not only guns and cannons, airplanes and tenks, but knowledge'. Also known is the slogan 'A book helps us to win the freedom, freedom will help us to master the book'. The cultural, education and artistic work was ongoing within partisan military units, on liberatd territories and as part of activities of administrative bodies and anti-fascist organizations of women and youth. The principles and contents of cultural policy were the same in all areas of Yugoslavia, differing only in specific forms that were an expression of different circumstances of development of a particular Yugoslav nation and the laws of inequality of Yugoslav revolution.

Source 4

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Fighters with a gift for cultural-propaganda work were withdrawn from battling units to art units. A company of Uzice partisan unit turned into a drama group and performed four theatre shows on liberated territory. Along with drama crew, on free territory of 'Užička republika' there were active performances of singers and musicians. The grand orchestra had about 30 members. It had about 60 founding members, many of which were already affirmed and famous actors who had left the occupied territory.

'Užička republika' is a name for a territory in West Serbia and partly in East Bosnia, that the partisans held under control from September to December 1941. (with center in the town of Uzice)

In freed Uzice a weapons factory was restored in 1941, and in 67 days it produced 21.040 guns, 18.000 hand grenades, 2.700.000 pieces of ammunition, etc. On Ozren mountain partisans were making hand grenades made of pipeline tubes, with the wooden holder, and they were named 'cobs', for they resembled the look of a corn cob. In the mid September 1941, the factory production of hand grenades started in Drvar, and they were just like those made in Army factory in Kragujevac. The model was created by a mechanic, Milos Bauk, so they were named after him 'Bauk's' bombs, while the fighters from Lika region called them 'Drvar's' since they were made there. It is believed that some 6.000 pieces of these bombs were made in total. On Grmec Mountain, at the spring of Suvajcine, the largest partisan weapons factory in BiH was organized, and it was operational until January 1943. On Petrova Gora, in October 1941, a workshop for repair of rifles, production of bombs and similar, was opened. In resistance area of Montenegro (in Rudine), partisans workshops were also active: Shoe making, tailor and sawing, weaponsmith, carpenter. In some areas of Yugoslavia, on freed territory, there were cattle farms established and owned by the NOO. In Montenegro, in the area of Piva river, cattle farms were organized in May 1942, which produced milk and meat to soldiers, wounded and sick. Total number of these farms, created mostly by requisition or as a war prey, was 19. Total number of cattle on these farms was: 174 milking cows, 264 livestock pieces for meat (food), 1.497 milking sheep, 2.158 barren sheep, 392 milking goats and 311 barren goats. The partisan farm ('struga') in Prekaja, was founded in Spring of 1942, from sheep provided by rich owners. After capitulation of Italy, in September 1943, shipyards started to work on the islands: In Vela Luka, Korcula island, and on Brac, Dugi Otok, Kornati, IZ, Vis and Lastovo islands. From October 1943 to December 1944, some 600 smaller ships were brought to docks of those shipyards for repairmen.

Source 1,2,3,4,5 and 6: B. Petranović, Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988, knj. 2, Beograd 1988; Vojna enciklopedija, tom 5, Beograd 1973; Z. Lakić, Duhovni otpor fašizmu – Jugoslavija 1941-1945, Istorijski zapisi, br. 2/1995; Z. Lakić, Poslijeratni razvoj kulture u Crnoj Gori (1945-1980), Bibliografski vjesnik, br. 1/1983;

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PLA

Partisan units were formed into brigades. On photo 1 (left end) the Supreme Commander, Tito, is inspecting the 1St 'proletersku' brigade. Photo 2 (right end) shows the lining of the 4th Montenegro 'proleterska' brigade.

Kobsa, Ljubljanović, Rastić, ILUSTRIRANA POVJEST NOBa U JUGOSLAVIJI 1941-1945, Stvarnost, Zagreb, 1973.





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27 J

1942.

The reconissance came to the foot of Igman Mountain at 22:00 hours. They needed just a bit more time for the line to reach the woods of Igman, leaving all the threats for the brigade while passing by enemy outposts behind. As soon as the head of the line reached the road Sarajevo – Blazuj, the 1st battalion sent the 2nd company to secure the route towards Sarajevo, and a part of the 3rd company the route towards Blazuj. At the foot of the Mountain Igman, the brigade farewell from its guides – soldiers of Semizovac company of the 'Crni Vrh' battalion. The brigade was no longer in danger, but they were. They had to go back the same way. The brigade continued upwards to Igman. Within reach of a complete success, the brigade came to another obstacle. The path up Igman led aslant up one side, and then some 300 meters from the road, there was a steep, almost vertical uphill part. On that slope the path was frozen, and ice was covered by thin layer of snow. Many have slid-off, fell, and then again, at the end of their forces, often crawling, managed to conquer that part. The most difficult thing was make it there with burdened horses. Their small Bosnian horse shoes, with small head nails, or old horse shoes, were 'helping' horses to slid rather than to cross the icy path. The line on that dangerous place was stand-still and pilled with people. The danger was increasing. The whole line, cramped in a small surface, found itself on a part of the road along Igman Mountain, on the route Sarajevo – Blazuj. The road was cleared from snow and enemy motorized units may have appeared there.

The brigade Commander, Koca Popovic, came to see what caused the delay. After realizing the problem, he ordered that ice be broken by axes, and burden to be taken off the horses. The soldiers took the heavy machine guns, mortars and other equipment and carried it themselves, helping the horses up the terrible hill. People endured more than horses on that path! The stoppage at the foot of Igman, on rarely seen coldness, was the reason of freezing of a large number of soldiers. It was getting colder and colder. Buttonning up and hopping while standing was not helping anymore. Some soldiers from the back of the line, who were still in a village, could not bear the coldness anymore so they went in the houses to warm a bit. They paid high price for that. The snow on their shoes melted, and the shoes turned into block of ice as they went out again. Soldiers who fell on the slope and those who carried the burden taken off the horses, they got their hand fingers frozen. The march up Igman was hard and it was getting harder the further they went. The snow drift was getting higher, and the path through deeper. If someone was not carefull in walking, he would have fell into a deep snow. Up there, on Igman, the soldiers were looking at he lights in Ilidza, Rajlovac and Sarajevo. They knew it was warm there, but also that the enemy was there as well. The higher they climbed, the coldness became worse. The worst was before the dawn. The partisan line was marching for 10 hours without a break, tired, and hungry. People were loosing their strength and the Mountain was becoming more and more cruel and cold. Soldiers in weaker clother were feeling cold despite the marching. They hold on to a hope they will succeed, just like they evaded the enemy during the march.

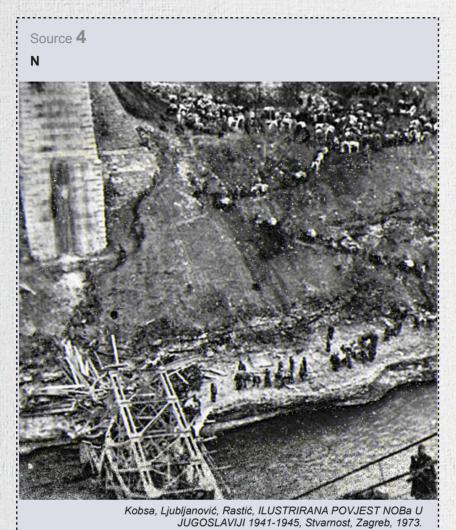
The head of the line reached Veliko Polje at 08:00 hours. There was a quite large mountain house with two floors, the HQ of Igman partisan-chetnik company. Chetniks and partisans were still cooperating at that time in fight against Germans. They gave a warm welcome to the brigade, they shared the food they had and helped the frozen ones to take off their shoes. It was very difficult to take off the shoes to those who stepped into water and those who went indoors to warm up at the foot of Igman. Nurses, those who went better through the march and their hosts, all with no exception, were massaging the frozen ones.

Miloš Vuksanović "Prva proleterska brigada"; "Narodna knjiga" Beograd, "Pobjeda" Titograd; 1981. godina



Source 3

The 2nd Dalmatian brigade was ordered by T Da5(2)]TJ/F13.0 1 Tf 0.0002 Tc32(



MG -I G K čć

In the dark mountain my grave will be, Wolves roar above it, and murmur of black branches.

Eternal wind in Summer, high snow in Winter, But for my grave's silence, no escape.
High may it stand, as a cloud and throne,
Unreachable for low bell-tower tone,
Unreachable for the repentant voice,
Proselyte's fear, prayers for salvation.
May it grow in grass and thorny bushes,
Steep road with no path to it.
No one to come, but a dear friend to find,And as he leaves, to leave no trace behind.

Moj grob - Ivan Goran Kovačić (My grave – a poem by Ivan Goran Kovacic)

Source 6

Regretfully, it is a fact we sent practically no aid by sea for 222.000 Tito's fighters. (...)These enduring fighters tied more Germans to Yugoslavia than joined Anglo-American forces in Italy, south of Rome. Germans were confused after the fall of Italy, so Partisans took control over the large parts of (Adriatic – interpreter's remark) shore. Despite that, we did not size the opportunity. The Germans recovered quickly and pushed back the Partisans, step by step. The main reason for that is the unnatural line of command on the Balkans. (...) Considering that the partisans have helped us generously, with practically no costs from our side, it was very important to ensure the continuation of their resistance. "

Viniston Čerčil, Memoari, 24. novembra 1943

In the Yugoslav NOO army there were over 100.000 women, from which about 25.000 died in a war. From 40.000 women wounded during the NOB of 1941. More than 2.000 women became officers of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army. Women fighters were: Delegates, political commissaries, commanders, medical workers, nurses, fighters, machinegun operators, bombers, communist party activists and leaders, and Board members to the NOO. From about 1.700.000 Yugoslavs who got killed during the WW2, about 620.000 were women, and only in camps more than 282.000 of them were killed.

From 91 women proclaimed National Heroes, 73 of them died during the NOB, while only 17 were decorated during their life. The first one proclaimed for National Hero, on 15 October 1943, was Marija Bursac, a bomber of the 10th Krajina brigade. The first 'living' woman decorated as National Hero was Spasenija Cana Babovic, on 5 July 1952.

- * NOB comes from National Liberation Fight, a term used for WW2 on the territory of Yugoslavia.
- * * Partizanska spomenica (Partisan memoir) high decoration of SFR Yugoslavia awarded to distinguished fighters and leaders of the National Liberation movement.

Narodni heroji Jugoslavije, "Mladost", Beograd 1975. godina

Source 2

R B ć

Rajka was born in a rich family of an emigrant from Brac island, Frane Bakovic, in a Bolivian city of Oruro, where her father and his brother owned a hotel and a store. The family returned to Yugoslavia in 1921, to provide education to children (Zdenka, Jerko, Rajka and Mladen). After the primary school completed on Brac island, Rajka moved to Zagreb with her family, where her father bought a house (three floor house at 25 Gunduliceva st.). During gymnasium Rajka came close to left oriented youth, so she was admitted to SKOJ (Association of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia) in 1938. The same year she enrolled the Faculty of Philosophy at Zagreb University and continued her political activity, she was particularly active in election preparations of 1939. Her whole family, sister Zdenka and brothers and mother, was left oriented and active in all organizations fo the classical labor movement. Rajka soon became known to all Zagreb communists. Her flat became a meeting point for left oriented youth, workers and intellectuals. After death of the father, Bakovic family fell into financial difficulties, and decided to buy a kiosk at 7 Nikoliceva st., next to the movie theatre at that time (Zagreb youth theatre today).

At the breakout of the war, their kiosk became a communication point for all party illegal activists, and provided material to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia, where her brother Jerko worked. Rajka was a courier of confidence to the resistance movement, she carried messages to Belgrade and other places, and she participated in actions of SKOJ groups – setting the wooden stadion in Maksimir on fire. However, their illegal work did not go unnoticed, so in the night of 20 Dec. 1941 the agents of Ustasha



Rajka Bakovic was proclaimed National Hero of SFR Yugoslavia on 24 July 1953.

police (UNS) came to inspection and arrested Zdenka, Rajka and their brother Mladen. Both sisters were unhumanly tortured to reveal their contacts. They were tortured during the night, and taken back to kiost for work during day, in the attempt to catch the illegals who might show up, but it did not help the police. The sisters did not reveal anyone, despite the heavy beatings. After a five-day torture, Rajka was taken to the hospital on 24 December, and Zdenka, after seing her sister

was missing the next day, in desperation, used a moment of divided attention of her guards and jumped from the 4th floor of the UNS headquarters in Zvonimirova street and died instantly. Rajka Bakovic died from consequences of torture on 29 December 1941.

F KČ C Ć

She was born on 27 July 1927, in the village of Lavci near Bitola, in a poor Macedonian family. After the occupation of Yugoslavia, in April 1941, there was a strong party organization in Lavci village. Under their auspicies there was a SKOJ cell, and young Kocevska was its member. Bulgarian fascists managed to capture one member of SKOJ who did not sustain police interrogation and told on the work of organization and its members. Fana managed to hide before the police, who came to the village to find her, searching the house and molesting her mother and grandmother.

Fana continued her illegal work. Soon after she went to a partisan unit 'Goce Delcev'. She was not yet 15 at the time. In the Spring of 1944, Fana was a member of the group of seven, who were supposed to cease the production in the lead mine of Zletovo, by destroying its machinery. The task was to attack the bunkers guarded by German and Bulgarian fascists. The task was completed, but Fana was wounded. Her camarades barely saved her from enemy fire. The brigade HQ decided to leave her for recovery with other wounded. Fana refused to stay in the village and remained in the brigade.



She was also noticed during the battles around Slavci village in 1943, when commander of the unit, Toso Angelovski Daskalot, young bomber Pande Hajze and a few more got killed. Hiding around Lavci with a group of partisans for about a month and a half, Fana once stayed alone for four days, surrounded by Bulgarian patrols wandering around, knowing that partisans were somewhere near. Fana was a member of a twenty-day February action in 1944, from Kozuf to Kozjak. She was the youth leader of 'Stiv Naumov' battalion at the time.

"Narodni heroji Jugoslavije", "Mladost" Beograd 1975. godina.

Source 4

/ T šć

She was born on 26 June 1913, in Ljubljana. She completed primary and secondary school (gymnasium) there. She enrolled Faculty of Philosophy in 1931, but later on she switched to Faculty of Law, where she graduated in 1941. During the studies she joined the advanced students' movement and participated in many strikes.

She became the member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1934. The same year she met her future husband, Anton Tone Tomsic, a National Hero. In November 1934 she was arrested and sentenced before the County Court in Ljubljana to nine months in prison. After serving the prison punishment, she continued the illegal work in a party cell and in students' movement. She took part in printing and dissemination of illegal and legal papers and brochures. For some time she worked as an instructor in Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia (CKKPS) in Dolenjska and Bela Krajina region.

In June 1940 at a Provincial conference she was elected for a member of the CK KPS, and then she was in party school of CK KPJ (Central Committee of Communist Party of Yugoslavia) in Makarska. On the fifth state conference of KPJ, in October 1940. She was elected member to the CK KPJ.

She participated in preparations for armed uprising since the first days of occupation of Kingdom of Yugoslavia and worked on strengthening of party organizations in the area of Ljubljana province. In the beginning of 1941, she took part in establishing of the legal party paper for women 'Nasa zena' (Our woman). In August of that year, as an illegal activist with a police warrant issued on her, she gave birth to a son. After a tip from a traitor, the Italians arrested her on 10 December 1941, along with her husband Tone, under her party alias Marija Pevec. She was tortured in prison to tell on her illegal work and of her husband, for they knew he was one of the leaders of the resistance. She confessed nothing, not even her real name. After that she was taken to Gestapo prison in Begunjani, Gorenjsko, along with her husband, Miha Marinko and Papca Kardelj. The Gestapo, however, returned them to Italian authorities after two months.

16. maja In 1942, the Italian Court Marshall sentenced her to 25 years in prison, in a process against Tone Tomsic and others. Her husband was shot and in June 1942 she was taken to a prison in Venice, then to Ancona, and eventually to Campobosso and Trana.

After capitulation of Italy, together with other inmates, she was taken to a camp of Anglo-Saxon military HQ in Carbonara,

near Bari. There she organized a party organization in the camp and she was among the founders of the 1st oversea brigade, and she was a deputy political commissary there for a while.

She returned to Slovenia in January 1944. From April to October 1942 she was an Editor of a party paper 'Ljudska pravica' and she performed organizational activities in the CK KPS. At the beginning of 1945 she was sent to Primorska, to do the political work in the army units. As a member of Plitbureau of CK KPS, from 18 January she was helping the work of a

Regional Committee for Slovenian Adriatic and units of the 9th Slovenian Corps.

Fter liberation of Yugoslavia, Vida Tomsic held significants functions. She was a Minister of social policy of the People's Republic of Slovenia (NR Slovenia), chairman of the Control commission of NR Slovenia and a member of the Executive Board (government) of NR Slovenia.



Crimes and mistakes

Source 1

Regretfully, lately there are such things happening in our units that are unbecoming of anyone who is a member of that army. By means of forceful taking of the food and cattle from the peasants, by individuals as well as responsible bodies, rating of our army as peoples' army is decreased, and it also creates unfriendly mood towards us among the people, which can have catastrophic consequences for us in no time. Such actions are doing good to our sworn enemies and help them to achieve their goals that they were not able to achieve with weapons thus far.

I ORDER

- 1. Every violence and robbery must be thoroughly investigated, and in the case of unquestionably determined guilt, the guilty ones must be shot in front of the line.
- 4. Every measure must be taken to restore such discipline in our units that existed before, and all orders of authorized commanders must be executed without any questions.

Source 4

On July 17, 1942, at 21:30 hrs, 15 armed partisans came to the village of Sreser, some 4km north of Janjina, and took away from the peasants there various objects and money, as follows:

From Tomislav Matijasevic Stjepanov, from Sv. Marija, municipality of Draskovac, Varazdin county, travelling agent, temporary residing in Sreser, the partisans took cash in the amount of 34.070 Kunas, 4 handkechierfs, 5 pairs of sox and other petty items he could not describe precisely in the value of 3.000 Kunas, and then left his place.

From Tomislav (son of Vlaho) Nozica, a trader from Sresar, the partisans took 20 kg of potatoes, one potato sack, 2 litres of oil, 1 whole ham, 1 dish of 6 litres, 30 meters of rope, 2 toothpaste, 2 tooth brushes, 10 shaving razors, 800 cigarettes 'Rama', 2.000 Kunas of cash, all in the value of 6.000 Kunas. They asked for 100.000 Kunas of cash, but he did not have it, so they left.

From Pero (Ante) Kucera, from Sreser, the partisans took 20kg of wheat flower and threathened him that they will shoot him if he gets into the service of Italians. They threathened all three of them not to say anything, for they will be killed otherwise.

A group of ten partisans requisitioned two oxen from Herzegovina catle breeder Misko papac, on 27 August, in the hill of St. Ilija, east from Nakovanj village. Papac reported this event to the authorities in Orebic.

Sve naše Dakse, Joška Radica, Dubrovnik, 2003. str 69.

Source 2

The fact a certain number of soldiers, even Party members, treats the population badly (reflecting the weakness and inactivity of party organization and leadership), and if it is connected with earlier cases of deserting, shows that we still have not lived through all the weaknesses of our party organization.

Source 3

These days Petar Krnjajic, former commander of our company and the 1st Batallion, was shot in front of the line... After the action on Prekop, he was called to the HQ of the 1st Operational zone, to stand trial for his decision that the village be burned and all men above the age of 16 to be executed.

Source 1.,2. and 3.: D. Lazarević, P. Damjanović, O partiji i ulozi komunista, Knjiga 2 Institut za savremenu istoriju u Beogradu, Narodna Knjiga, Beograd, 1984.

Source 5

Two communists who managed to escape from Chetnik prison were liquidated in April (Radomir Jovancevic and Miodrag Medo Culafic), because they allowed, as partisans, to be captured alive by their class enemy! In Crnica, a Medical General, Milo Ilickovic, together with his Russian spouse, was liquidated, along with Bosa Plamenac, a member of KPJ, because she did not want to give up her family. In Piva, Political Commissary of Piva company, Tadija Tadic, was liquidated together with three cousins, because he did not want to betray his uncle... Many other, similar murders, that had a character of liquidations after a 'verdict' was brought, created an atmosphere of fear and terror, and nobody knew who was next. The shown atavism and cruelty was hard to explain by ideological phrases. Besides, such things practically did not happen in other parts of Yugoslavia, regardless from the fact that the directive of the Central Committee was implemented through all party organizations.

> Živko M. Andrijašević-Šerbo Rastoder, Istorija Crne Gore, CZICG, Podgorica 2006., str. 413-414

Q

- 1. Which activities did the Partisans carry out on the liberated territories?
- 2. What did they want to achieve on the liberated territories?
- 3. What consequences, positive or negative, could their actions produce?