

# THE PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARTISAN RETALIATIONS IN MAGYARKANIZSA AND ITS AREA

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## “PARTISAN FILES” IN THE VOJVODINA (VAJDASÁG) ARCHIVE

### Introduction

The Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia held its first meeting in Jajce on November 29th and 30th, 1943. Apart from the dethronement of the king and the establishment of the people’s government, the council also established the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators, who were given the task of investigating and seeking out those who had committed war crimes during WWII and holding them accountable for what they did.<sup>1</sup>

Translation of the decision:

*“Decision to establish the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators:*

*1. In addition to the Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, as the means of determining, finding and bringing to justice those who are responsible for the war crimes perpetrated by the occupiers and their supporters during wartime in Yugoslavia, the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators is established.*

2. *The Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia will appoint the members of the Commission and lay down the regulations.*

3. *This decision is immediately in effect.*

*November 30th, 1943, Jajce, Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia,  
Secretary: Rodoljub Ćolaković<sup>2</sup>  
President: Dr. Ivan Ribar<sup>3” 4</sup>*

The set of regulations comprising 13 points was finalized on the May 6th session (1944) of the Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia.<sup>5</sup> An excerpt from the regulations:

*“Article 9: The State Commission works independently or with support from the commissions of federal units, who will immediately appoint their executive commissions (boards) to this aim, who will then establish the necessary implementing bodies.*

*The State Commission unites, coordinates and controls all federal commissions. The federal commissions must provide all collected material at the State Commission’s disposal for further measures.”*

*“Article 11: The State Commission is accountable for its work in determining the crimes of the occupiers and their collaborators to the Council for National Liberation, which they are to inform during their work process.”*

The document was signed by Josip Broz Tito, President of the Commission.

After the regulations were completed, Dr. Dušan Nedeljković,<sup>6</sup> a Belgrade University professor was named president of the Commission. The secretary became Dr. Vlada Jokanović, a lawyer from Sarajevo and the members were Dr. Svetozar Rittiga, Dr. Maks Snuderla, Jakova Avsić, Pero Krstajić, Pavel Sateva and Pero Mijačević.<sup>7</sup>

The commission operated from the island of Vis and only after October 20th, 1944, (after the liberation of the capital) did it move its seat to Belgrade. After this date it was able to expand its power as well as become fully operational, which resulted in 439 people working for the Commission by the end of 1945. Operation was implemented within the framework of sub-commissions serving legal, investigative, notification, executive, registration and personnel related purposes.<sup>8</sup>

The federative units of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators were formed in the constituent territories between February and November, 1944 in accordance with the Council for Liberation’s decision and the regulations laid down on May 6th, 1944. The Slovenian was the first on February 19th, 1944, then the Crna Goran (May 19th), after that the Croatian (May 19th), followed by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian (July 1st), the Macedonian (August 14th), Vojvodinan (September 18th) and finally, the Serbian (November 18th). The State Commission, the federative units and other investigative bodies collected a countrywide total of 938 828 allegations of war crimes committed by the

occupiers and their collaborators. After questioning the witnesses and the defendants 550 000 records were taken, photographs of the crimes and posters were collected, victims were exhumed and approximately 20 000 original documents were found that had been left behind by the seceding army and administration. Based on these, the State Commission made 120 000 decisions and registered 66 420 war criminals and collaborators.<sup>9</sup>

The Vojvodina Federative Unit was founded on September 18th, 1944 in Miškovci, Syrmia. Its members were Spasoje Čobanski, Petar Mijačević, Andrija Kardelis, Milan Gavranov, Milka Mijatov, Stevan Ilić, Milorad Balač, Aleksandar Jovanović, Stevan Pavlekić and Isailo Ivančević. Work regulations were completed on November 21st, 1944. Local, regional and district sub-commissions operated under the Commission.<sup>10</sup>

The Subotica Regional Commission had three district statistical councils working under it: the Councils of Szabadka (Subotica), Zenta and Topolya.<sup>11</sup> The Topolya Statistical Council was in charge of Topolya, Bajsa, Bácsfeketehegy, Kishegyes, Pacsér, Bácskossuthfalva and Csantavér. Aside from the local Szabadka Commission, there were 21 local commissions<sup>12</sup> working under the Szabadka Statistical Council. The Zenta Council had, apart from the Zenta Commission, Ada, Mohol, Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos under its jurisdiction.

## **Fonds 183**

Among the researchable material of the Vojvodina Archive several fonds attest to the anti-Hungarian atrocities committed between 1944 and 1945, as well as providing us with insight into the early days of the Tito Era. The documents of Fonds 183 reflect the process how the partisan powers created their enemies (war criminal or enemy of the people) and created an ideology for their retaliation. The fonds also provides insight into the crimes committed by Tito's partisans throughout Vojvodina.

The fonds' title: State Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators. Little has been written about the documents it contains. Merely a few researchers, among them Aleksandar Kasas, were given access to the documents, and only a small number of Serbian books, among them, the works of Drago Njegovan, contain the lists of people declared war criminals based on reports filed against them (the original documents). Unfortunately, these documents were adopted by the writers without criticism, implying that everyone who was accused at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 was indeed a war criminal. Thus, these works do not count as milestones of objective historical research. However, we cannot equate the work of these two researchers because while Kasas's work – although one-sided – contains true academic research, Njegovan does not even attempt objectivity.

We must mention the work of Zsuzsanna Mezei, who is an employee at the Vojvodina Archive and is occupied with the collection and analysis of the list of the names of the victims.

The above mentioned fonds of the Vojvodina Archive contains the documents of the commissions investigating war crimes, which are at present available for historians to research. Aside from the documents of the commission examining the Novi Sad war crimes, we can find material, although somewhat incomplete, from the municipalities in the region. We can also find several lists of persons liquidated listed by municipality among the fonds' documents. It can be considered a serious deficiency that the list of people liquidated from Novi Sad is missing. The situation is similar regarding some other municipalities as well. A portion of the documents, mainly the liquidation registers, have been transferred to the Museum of Vojvodina. During our research into this subject, we have been able to find a good number of such lists. The list of victims from, for example, Palánka,<sup>13</sup> Szilbács,<sup>14</sup> Verbász<sup>15</sup> and Torzsa<sup>16</sup> are available here. There surely are, or were, lists of people liquidated from Novi Sad and its area among the documents kept in the museum. An entry (K-3008/111) which suggests that the document still exists was found, the document, however, was not in its place.

There are other interesting and valuable documents apart from the registers, such as the files dealing with the issue of war criminals. Upon examining the documents we can determine that the categorization of war crimes and "*enemies of the people*" were done in a similar manner throughout the whole region. From the documents it becomes obvious that the process of partisan judgment showed tendencies contrary to modern normal European practice. In the majority of the cases liquidation preceded any proceedings to prove guilt, so we can certainly say that innocent people, and those who should have been given the assumption of innocence, were victims of the retaliation.

The Commission divided the alleged crimes into the following categories:

1. marching in/arrival (ulazak) – crimes committed by the local Hungarian population at the time of the Hungarian army's arrival;
2. army (armija) – criminal acts committed by the Hungarian army;
3. raids (racija) – crimes committed in Novi Sad and its vicinity in 1942;
4. camps (logori) – crimes committed in different internment camps;
5. forced mobilization (prisilno mobilisanje) – crimes committed during military mobilization;
6. forced labor (prisilni rad) – crimes in relation to forced labor;
7. displacement (iseljivanje) – crimes relating to displacement;
8. crimes against property (protiv imovine).

Enemies of the people were regarded as a separate category. The list of those 8640 individuals who were declared enemies of the people can be found in the Register of Enemies of the People.<sup>17</sup> Names and data (the person's name, remarks and possibly the sentence) were all written up in one file; the formerly mentioned two-volume work was compiled based on these.

Those who were found in the autumn of 1944 to have held office during the Hungarian era could easily find themselves on the list of war criminals as enemies of the people, along with levente instructors, members of the Arrow Cross Party (regardless of whether they were guilty or not), Turanian Hunters, those who served in the Hungarian military or those who simply welcomed the arrival of the Hungarians in 1941. Apart from this, many became victims of the personal vengeance of their Serbian compatriots.

The partisan power's retrospective self-justification began with collecting reports and drawing up lists categorized by the crimes "*committed*". This was followed by records being drawn up and people being declared war criminals (F-Decision); in some cases trials were also conducted in court.

## Reports

The majority of the fonds' documents are the reports – 284 boxes by locality in alphabetical order.

The commission investigating war crimes collected allegations from almost all townships in the Southern Region based on which they declared local residents war criminals or enemies of the people. Fonds 183 consists largely of these documents. The majority of the allegations can be found in it listed according to townships. A part of the documents are missing. Some have been lost, another portion of them could be found attached to other documents during the course of our research, for example, they were placed in the sub-fonds of judicial decisions and verdicts.

Since war crimes were recorded based simply on "*say so*", it was enough to simply accuse someone with a crime. In many cases the contents of the reports would have normally fallen under the category of petty civil disputes. Such are the property disputes arising in large numbers among the Martonos and Magyarkanizsa allegations in which reporters resented the fact that their livestock and movable assets were purchased at reduced prices by the reported individuals. Since these allegations also served as the basis for the determination of the reparations that Hungary would have to pay, and due to the whole ordeal being seen by many as an opportunity to easily gain money, it is entirely possible that the data in the documents was intentionally exaggerated.

The majority of the local Hungarians who were named in the lists did not commit crimes that warranted death penalty. This is proven by the fact that the accused

who could not be found during the days of the atrocities were not held responsible later or only received sentences of a few months, possibly a few years.

Examining the documents pertaining to the matter of Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos, we can ascertain that the reports were often written without any basis at all.

Reports could be filed by filling a form provided by the commission investigating war crimes. The majority of the documents were filled in on a typewriter; there are only a few handwritten forms. The forms contained the following data:

- Perpetrator:
  - name;
  - father's name and mother's maiden name;
  - age, nationality, place of birth;
  - position, occupation;
  - last known place of residence;<sup>18</sup>
- The injured party:<sup>19</sup>
  - name;
  - father's name and mother's maiden name;
  - age, nationality, place of birth;
  - religion, nationality, marital status;
  - place of residence;
  - number of dependents;
- Where the crime took place:
  - region, district, municipality;
- The crime:
  - type;
  - time and place the crime was committed;
  - method and means used in committing the crime;
  - evidence;
- Material damage caused:
  - type;
  - value in Dinar;
- Remarks;
- Signature of reporter.

In Martonos, between December 6th, 1944 and November 5th, 1945 there were a total of 843 reports received by the commission investigating war crimes. (Considering the population, this is quite a high number. According to data from 1948, the residents of the township numbered 3361, whilst Magyarkanizsa, from where 577 reports were received, had a population of 11 139 at the time, Horgos, which had a larger population than Magyarkanizsa, counted 432 reports.)

Locality	Number of identified victim	Number of reports
Magyarkanizsa	72	577
Horgos	66	432
Martonos	33	843

Among the accused, there were many residents of Martonos who were liquidated on November 21st, 1944. In light of this, the veracity of the documents is questionable, since the judgment preceded the reported crime. In an example of tragic irony, on December 10th, 1944 in the case of local police officer, Kálmán Sáfrány, attached to his report was an order to have his case further examined by the Military Court of Szabadka (Subotica).<sup>20</sup> Said police officer had already been liquidated 19 days earlier. Since the mentioned documents were written after the murders, it is possible that reports on certain people were drawn up only to justify murders after the fact.

173 of 843 documents are missing; however, there is a recapitulative document set up by the local commission of Martonos<sup>21</sup> which contains the list of all the accused as well as the serial number of the report which was filed against them. Based on this information we can accurately determine who was accused of different crimes in the village. Most of the reports, a total of 309, were against Mátyás Fehér, notary-in-chief of the village. We must note that in the original documents, in many places, the perpetrator was not named. For example, the indications “*occupier*” and “*Hungarian army*” were used in 58 cases. The many allegations against the notary-in-chief were, quite probably, due to the fact that he was second central official in charge after the vice lord-lieutenant (vice-ispán). These forms were corrected in accordance with a February 26th,<sup>22</sup> 1945 order. The following quotation is from the Zenta Statistical Office’s order sent to the local commission of Martonos: “*We are sending you back the reports attached with the requirement that in the cases where the perpetrator is listed as occupier, army, etc. the document must be corrected so that the individual giving the order should be named, possibly along with the names of the notary or other public officials*”. On most of these corrected reports, we can read the name of Mátyás Fehér. Besides him, the document often names township judge János Sörös, notary Kálmán Katona and Sándor Szél. Thus, the people named above received the most reports against them: Kálmán Katona (87), János Sörös (63), Sándor Szél (60), János Werner, physician (43) and Gábor Nagy, township treasurer (22).

152 people received only one report, and in the case of 22 people, a total of 2 reports were filed. Of all the people liquidated in Martonos, 14 had reports against them. János Sörös had 63, Gábor Nagy had 22, János Gruik 8, Sándor Sörös 7, Kálmán Sáfrány 5, Pál Varkulya, Károly Józsa and Mihály Werner each received 2 reports, whilst in the cases of János Kéri, Ferenc Fejős, Lajos Forró, Antal Szabó, János Török and Péter Ószvár only one report was registered each. None of the later recorded allegations against those who were liquidated are severe enough to merit the death penalty.

Compared to how the reporting documents were handled in Martonos, management of the documents was quite chaotic in Magyarkanizsa. There was a total of, as we have mentioned before, 577 reports registered.<sup>23</sup> The reports up to number 176 are not in chronological order. The report bearing serial number 1 is dated December 8th, 1944, number 2 is dated October 22nd, 1944, and number 3 is dated December 12th, 1944, etc. According to the date the first two reports in Magyarkanizsa occurred on October 19th, 1944 serial number 13 and 14). Two local Hungarians were reported at this time: István Cseszkó and Péter Remete. Cseszkó's name is on the list of those liquidated in Magyarkanizsa. According to the date, the last report (serial number 558) was filed in Magyarkanizsa on December 10th, 1945. It can be ascertained about Magyarkanizsa, too, that the majority of the reports were filed after the murders have already taken place.

The most reports, 194, were filed against Oszkár Kulay, Pál Lehel, Sándor Mály, Péter Nagy, Károly Szommer, Lajos Bata (all 6 names are present on one form). Apart from these, there are 31 distinct reports against Pál Lehel, mayor. Similarly to Martonos, in many cases they have also revised "*occupier*" to the names mentioned above. Out of the currently known 127 persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa,<sup>24</sup> 16 had reports filed against them, a total of 24. János Almási, 5, István Cseszkó, Ferenc Kossányi, Pál Takács, József Vajda 2 each, Antal Bagi, János Bicskei, József Bicskei, István Koncz, Antal Kostyán, János Kovács, György Nagy, János Rekecki, Sándor Remete-Rajics, István Szecsei each had 1 report filed against them. János Almási, a farmer, received the most, 5 reports against him, all of which cited forcible purchase; according to the allegations, the reported individual had paid below market price for a farm animal.

It is an interesting fact that there was only one report received, on November 4th, 1944, against István Apró, who was tried and convicted by a court in 1945. He allegedly physically abused an arrested individual on the way from his home to the prison on April 13th, 1941. István Apró's case will be discussed further on in a separate chapter.

There were 432 reports filed in Horgos. The first one was registered on December 19th, 1944. In the first days reports against individuals were common, however, later on (apart from a few exceptions) reports were filed against the Hungarian state, the occupiers and the local occupying power. The largest number of reports (42)



was filed against István Tillinkó, township president. Many reports in Horgos are accusations of murder. According to the available documents, such atrocities against the Serbian population did indeed occur after the regime change.

We can find data regarding the Horgos case in a separate sub-fonds, Victims and Injured Parties. The list of victims between 1941 and 1944 has been compiled and broken down by localities in these documents.

The regional commission of Szabadka (Subotica), in a report on June 15th, 1945, informed the Novi Sad people's commission that during the exhumations carried out on April 28th and 29th, they had excavated six graves in Királyhalma<sup>25</sup> in which they found 24 bodies out of which they were able to identify 16.<sup>26</sup> In fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Historical Archive there is a document entitled List of Victims and Injured parties in the Zenta District (Spisak žrtava i oštećenika Srez Senta), which notes 13 victims in connection with Magyarkanizsa, (12 Serbians, one Jewish). These victims are documented by name. This same document does not mention victims in connection with Martonos but according to the document Aleksandar Brankov<sup>27</sup> went missing on the battle field following forcible conscription. A recapitulative list at the end of the document mentions 7 victims in Martonos, without names. Out of these 4 people (one man, two women and one child) fell victim to the bombings, whilst two men and one woman were executed.<sup>28</sup>

According to the documents and personal accounts, there were no bombings in Martonos. The locals, however, related, and it was later published in a summarizing work about the victims of World War II, that during the advancement of the Soviets, the Red Army attacked the village with rocket launchers. Mátyás Böröcsök, Verona Böröcsök, Emília Luncz and Mihály Luncz<sup>29</sup> were victims of these attacks. It is probable that they are the ones listed as bombing victims. We have no further data on those, two men and one woman, who were allegedly executed. According to the report of the Martonos commission for investigating war crimes,<sup>30</sup> notary Mátyás Fehér was responsible due to forcible conscription for the deaths of Radomir Rajić<sup>31</sup> and Kajica Petrić,<sup>32</sup> who were sent to the front lines, because of mandatory Hungarian mobilization, from where they disappeared. The notary's name was added to the list of war criminals.

According to later examinations there were some cases of excessive measures taken by the Hungarian army but the local Hungarian population only slightly took part in these. The majority of those who had taken part in similar war crimes had left with the seceding Hungarian army.

Research verifies that liquidations preceded allegations in other places, too, not only in those we have mentioned. Post liquidation an "L" was marked for last known place of residence on the person's form to indicate that the individual had been liquidated. This is apparent on many documents.

The correspondence concerning these documents is quite interesting. In these letters the Martonos commission for investigating war crimes informs the Zenta Statistical Council that they do not have the reports against all those who were executed (marked “L” for *likvidirani*, i.e. liquidated persons, in this document as well); these persons were probably reported to the OZNA.<sup>33</sup> However, what is truly interesting is the answer, which states that those persons who had been executed had already been declared war criminals anyway, and if there was no report against them, it was not important because their case was closed accordingly. The document virtually admits that there was no report filed at all against a number of people who were executed.<sup>34</sup>

As regards the form used to file reports, it is also a true document of the period. The partisan document management of the time does not recognize the concept of “*suspect*”. The field where the name of the person should be written was labeled “*criminal*” (zločinac), assuming that the person who had been reported must necessarily be guilty.

In the examined area we can find citizens from practically all layers of society among the reported. However, the largest portion of reports was filed against town officials and police officers. The allegations themselves seem to follow a certain template. I would like to note that there were only a very small number of reports against priests in the area I have examined. This is interesting in itself because the retaliation in general did not spare clergy.

### **Determining war crimes**

After collecting the reports, the local commission compiled the list of alleged war criminals grouped according to the type of crime they had allegedly committed and sent the list to the superior body, in the case of Martonos, Magyarkanizsa and Horgos this was the Zenta Statistical Council. Aside from collecting reports, the commission for investigating war crimes also conducted interrogations, collected witness testimonies, carried out exhumations (mostly Serbian victims who were executed between 1941 and 1944), took into account all events that took place against the Serbian population, collected (sometimes greatly exaggerated) lists of victims from 1941 to 1944, compiled all the photographs taken at ceremonies held during the Hungarian era (for example that which was held to commemorate the arrival of the Hungarian army) in order to identify persons who took part in them; they searched for party lists, took into account defaced cultural values, etc.

The local commissions for investigating war crimes in Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos also compiled a list of alleged war criminals categorized by the nature of the crime. The documented material is most certainly incomplete, especially in the case of Horgos, since in some cases only a supplementary list was found.

**1. Marching in/arrival**

There are 54 names on the Magyararkanizsa report pertaining<sup>35</sup> to alleged war crimes committed during the arrival of the Hungarian army, as well as another 43 on a supplementary list.<sup>36</sup> Among the crimes are arrest, robbery, assault, battery, torture, murder, attempted murder, use of force, (false) reporting and use of threats. The list contains not only the names of locals but those who were with the Hungarian army, such as Lieutenant Colonel Oszkár Kulay, military commander of the city. 6 people were accused of murder or conspiracy to commit murder: József Beszédes, Antal Bagi, János Gubás, Lajos Bata, Ferenc Kocsis and Kálmán Mihaljkovity. There are 44 names in the Martonos document<sup>37</sup> and an additional 7 on a supplementary list.<sup>38</sup> Since the names of Sándor Sörös and Lajos Kabók are on both lists, there are 49 persons accused of all manner of crimes in regards to the arrival of the Hungarian army: robbery, abuse of power, confiscation of assets, arrest, battery, torture, (false) reporting, offending people based on ethnicity, arson and shooting, rape, internment and masterminding the arrest and internment of Serbians. According to the documents, nobody is accused of murder. Out of the persons listed 10 have already been liquidated on November 21st, 1944.

The Horgos report incriminates<sup>39</sup> 28 people, among them 13 – including one woman – were accused of murder or incitement to murder.

Further crimes included in the documents are (false) reporting, arrest, battery, theft, rape and destruction of property. Almost all people who were alleged to have committed murder were said to have acted alongside the Hungarian army. We have already indicated regarding the Serbian victims that there were indeed excessive measures taken by the Hungarian army in Horgos but whether the local population took part in these cannot be unequivocally proven.

**2. Army**

In connection with crimes committed by the Hungarian army 45 year-old László Körmöczi<sup>40</sup> of Magyararkanizsa was accused reporting Nevenka Trnajićo, who led the protest against the Pact on March 27th, 1941. This is why he was held hostage by said Hungarian military officials. We have found no documents citing crimes of this category in Martonos or Horgos.

**3. Raids**

No-one from Magyararkanizsa, Martonos or Horgos was attributed with any of the crimes committed in Novi Sad and its area in 1942. We must note, however, that in the case of Ferenc Holló, the Ledger of Executed War Criminals<sup>41</sup> indicates taking part in the raids. According to current research Ferenc Holló had not taken

part in any sort of anti-Serbian acts, there was no filed report or incriminatory record against him. It is obvious in his case that false accusation was made to justify his murder. The Ferenc Holló case will be discussed later in a separate chapter.

#### **4. Camps**

There is a supplementary list<sup>42</sup> of different crimes committed in camps in Magyarkanizsa which names 7 people (4 from Hungary and 3 local persons). There are no such reports from Martonos or Horgos.

#### **5. Forced military mobilization**

Crimes committed during military mobilization. The documents from Magyarkanizsa and Horgos do not accuse anyone, whilst in Martonos, notary-in-chief Mátyás Fehér and Kálmán Katona are on the list.<sup>43</sup> According to the document Mátyás Fehér fled to Hungary, while Kálmán Katona committed suicide before the partisans marched in.

#### **6. Forced Labor**

No perpetrators of crimes in connection to forced labor were found among the documents of the local commission in Magyarkanizsa. There are 9 names listed in regard to Martonos.<sup>44</sup> The list contains the names of Martonos locals as well as people from Hungary, such as Imre Simonyi of Baja, commander of a forced labor unit. There are no reports in connection to Horgos.

#### **7. Displacement**

There were 4 persons accused of the crime of theft on a supplementary list<sup>45</sup> from Magyarkanizsa, stating that they had stolen the assets of displaced persons. There is no list of crimes in connection with displacement in the case of Martonos. There is a supplementary list<sup>46</sup> containing 4 names from Horgos. Two people were accused in connection with displacement and the other two Hungarians were indicted in the document for morally supporting the authorities.

#### **8. Crimes against property**

15 were accused in a supplementary list from Magyarkanizsa,<sup>47</sup> 12 of them were local Hungarians, and their crimes were forcible purchase of livestock, destruction of property and robbery. There is no-one accused of such crimes in Martonos. In Horgos 8 people were named in the document,<sup>48</sup> however, instead of specific crimes there are only references to further documents.

A portion of the documents were drawn up using the filed reports, whilst a few other documents contain lists based on records as well as the reports.

The Zenta Commission for Investigating War Crimes examined the documents and wrote a new list which – compared to the local list – had further names added to it as well as some names taken off. In this case the material was transported from Zenta to Szabadka, and was then taken to Novi Sad during the course of similar document transportation. It is interesting to note that some of the liquidated persons are without any reports against them, only to appear later on higher-up lists with absurd, sometimes “*stock*” accusations against them. Several liquidated persons’ crimes were exaggerated in the higher administrative levels in order to justify the murders of these people who originally only had reports of trivial offenses filed against them.

The so-called *elaboratums*, which contained the names of all persons declared guilty of crimes in any category in the whole of Vojvodina, were drawn up as a summary of the documents above, as well as the reports from other regions in Vojvodina. While the reports against those victims who were liquidated were often marked with the letter “*L*” (indicating that said person had already been liquidated) on the lists of war criminals, on the *elaboratums* and the ledger of enemies of the people, this was indicated by “*presuđen*”. We must note that in the ledger of enemies of the people, contrary to previous findings and publications, the word “*presuđen*” does not necessarily mean that the individual was liquidated.<sup>49</sup> Two of these *elaboratums* have been published in the form of books.<sup>50</sup> Publication of the source<sup>51</sup> is in process under the editorship of Drago Njegovan. However, here we can only speak of document publication because these works lack any critique of the source. In addition, the volumes may give the false impression that everyone whose name the list includes is guilty when, in fact, many individuals have since been exonerated.

## Records

During the mentioned process, if a person’s case was found to require additional investigation, *zapisnik*, i.e. records were drawn up based on witness testimony, which examined the actions of the reported citizens in greater detail. Often, not all of the reported names were present, so they pertain to fewer people than against whom reports had been filed. Occasionally, we can find names of people in the records against whom no report was filed at all.

Fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Historical Archive consists largely of these documents.<sup>52</sup> Part of the records numbered 1 to 33 904 (from 1944 to 1947) is missing but even so, there are 94 boxes of researchable material. There are two systems of numbering on the documents, which makes research even more difficult. One type of numbering was the registration number, the other was according to date, so some documents are quite difficult to find. A list broken down by municipalities aids the research.

By examining the records in connection to Magyarkanizsa, Martonos and Horgos, we can ascertain that like the reports, these were also drawn up post-liquidation. We can also find persons among the witnesses who previously – either directly or indirectly – took part in the liquidations. In these cases we cannot rule out the possibility that certain individuals were only entered into the records as perpetrators in order to justify a murder after the fact.

Between March 8th and 31st, 1945 6 records were drawn up in Martonos in which Hungarians – András Gruik, Sándor Szél, Boldizsár Betyák, Ferenc Habi, János Sárfány and Vendel Kassai – give their testimony about the period following the regime change of 1941.

Those named in the records<sup>53</sup> do not give account of crimes as much as they present the post regime change situation, as well as naming the members of the local administration and police force. According to the record Dr. János Werner was elected local commander on April 12th, 1941, his deputy became Gábor Nagy, and then after a few days Gábor Nagy was appointed commander. After 8-10 days János Sörös became president of the municipality and Ferenc Gubi his deputy. The jury were: Péter Kiss, János Sáfrány, Ferenc Habi and others, whilst the national guardsmen were: István Mészáros, Mátyás Dömötör, András Dömötör, Márton Dencs, Károly Józsa, Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók, Frigyes Túrú, József Berényi, Ferenc Barany, Mihály Mészáros, Péter Szarapka, Antal Lendvai, and József Dani.

According to the records Lajos Kabók, Illés Dukai, Károly Józsa, Lajos Csikós, Ferenc Tót and Pál Galgóczi took part in beating the Serbians. Vendel Kassai claims that all anti-Serbian actions originate from Mátyás Fehér. Apart from him Kálmán Katona and József Németh are responsible as well as Gábor Nagy, municipality treasurer, who blocked financial aid that was due to the Serbians.

Of the mentioned perpetrators, Lajos Kabók fled the regime change in 1944 along with Pál Galgóczi, Lajos Csikós and Mátyás Fehér; Kálmán Katona committed suicide. So it is characteristic of Martonos as well that perpetrators of smaller or greater crimes left with the seceding Hungarian army with innocent people perishing instead of them.

The veracity of these witness testimonies is still questionable, though, because those named in the documents probably gave their testimonies under a considerable amount of pressure. Of the witnesses, we know that András Gruik and Boldizsár Betyák, along with those who were later liquidated, were locked in the town hall's basement, where captives were brutally abused.<sup>54</sup>

However, records which were made with local Serbian residents later on also contain names of local Hungarians who had allegedly taken part in the abuse of the Serbian population. Comparing these two records, we find that there are certain names which are present in the majority of the documents. These are: Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók and Sándor Sörös. Several also mention Kálmán Bagi, Lajos Csikós and Károly Józsa.

It is worth examining separately Veljo Šećerov's testimony of March 29th, 1945 in Martonos, because the tried case had been previously brought before a military court in December of 1944. We will discuss this trial further on. Why it was necessary to draw up a new record four months after the trial remains a mystery to us.

The record shows<sup>55</sup> that Šećerov stated that while he was returning from the Yugoslavian army István Koncz<sup>56</sup> and Ferenc Fodor, two fugitive national guardsmen, attacked him just outside the village. He fought them off but 15 more people came to their aid from the village. Márton Dencs beat him the hardest, and then they threw him into the Tisza from where János Török<sup>57</sup> rescued him. They escorted him to a prison cell where he was detained with 20 other Serbians, who were beaten by Sándor Sörös, Illés Dukai, Lajos Kabók but most of all by Lajos Csikós.

Živoljin Putnik, who according to several accounts took part in the retaliations against Hungarians, gave his testimony on April 1st,<sup>58</sup> 1945, in which he tells of 64 Serbians being forcibly conscripted during the occupation.<sup>59</sup> Those who were the city leaders at the time, János Sörös municipality president, Mátyás Fehér notary-in-chief, Kálmán Katona notary and József Németh, military rapporteur were named responsible for this. The advisors were Mihály Werner, Dr. János Werner, Sándor Szél, István F. Kovács, István Jakab Kovács and Lajos Salamon.

The most credible source of facts about the atrocities committed against the Serbians is perhaps Ferenc Dongó. According to him, post-arrival, the Hungarian National Guard made arrests in order to investigate the earlier atrocities against Hungarians. Dongó, who was later reported three times, said there were national guardsmen who protected the captives as much as they were able to, such as Mátyás Dömötör, András Kukkli, József Berényi. There were those who sought revenge for past grievances and some who "*gratified their desire to harm others by abusing the captives*". Such were Károly Farkas, Sándor Csikós and Pál Galgóczi.<sup>60</sup> Among the filed reports there are two against Károly Farkas, three against Pál Galgóczi, whilst there are none against Sándor Csikós. We cannot find his name in further documents, however, a man named Lajos Csikós is mentioned several times in the documents as well as the records, as someone who took part in the atrocities against the Serbians; there were two reports filed against him. It is possible that there was an accidental switching of names.

The report of the local commission<sup>61</sup> for investigating war crimes in Martonos gives an account of war criminals who have fled. By name they are: Orbán Gruik, István Takács, Ernő Kapás, Lajos Csikós, Péter Bata, István Bite, István Kovács, Károly Szárics, Dezső Kriszt, István Gubi, István Szarapka, Kálmán Bagi, Gyula Betyák, Ferenc Dongó, Lajos Kabók, Pál Galgóczi, Károly Farkas, Frigyes Túrú, Lajos Bite and József Döringer. Of those mentioned, Galgóczi, Farkas, Csikós, Kabók and Bagi took part, according to accounts and the records, in the abuse of the Serbians.

When examining the documents, we can see that similarly to other municipalities, in Martonos, the majority of those who had committed some sort of crime, were likely to leave with the Hungarian army.

In a record from Magyarkanizsa dated April 11th, 1945, 10:30, Stefanović Andrija, 55 year old restaurant<sup>62</sup> owner gives an account of the mass arrest and abuse of Serbians. He claimed that Milovan Savelić and Bogdan Radivojević died in prison as a result of the abuse. According to the witness, apart from the officers, Lajos Bata, commander of the National Guard and József Koncz took part in the abuse. Tibor Cseres mistakenly calls him Lajos Barta in his work *Vérbosszú Bácskában* (Vendetta in Bácska), in which he names him as a perpetrator of atrocities against Serbians.<sup>63</sup> According to several personal accounts from locals, the mentioned persons did indeed abuse Serbian captives and fled Magyarkanizsa after the partisan arrival; Bata went on to live in Szeged, Koncz in Monor.<sup>64</sup> Later partisan documents cite Lajos Bata as a war criminal who had fled and sentence him to 3 years of forced labor.<sup>65</sup> The sentence cannot be found and we do not know whether he was sentenced in absentia or if he was eventually captured.

On the above mentioned day, Andrija Stefanović testified in front of the same commission at 2 pm.<sup>66</sup> He mentioned the displacement of the Serbians, accusing 21 local Hungarians, among them several who had already been liquidated. Next to a few of the names is the word “*umro*”, meaning deceased.

A record from Szabadka dated July 2nd, 1945 gives an account of the events that took place in Oromhegyes.<sup>67</sup> 44 year-old farmer Dane Basarić, who had arrived as a settler to the village in 1924, tells the story of displacement involving 27 local Serbian families. On April 24th, 1941 Hungarian authorities locked the Serbian men of age 16 and older in a barrack in Magyarkanizsa, where they were often abused. Later on they were taken to Sárvár along with the other members of their family, where they were held captive until the liberation. By his account military commander Oszkár Kulay signed the displacement order.

The witness tells the story of several murders in the records, thus the story of the murders of Đuro Polovina and Jovo Ciganović, who were – according to him – murdered by the national guardsmen of Adorján. The witness knows that the Hungarian authorities also investigated this case, and also has written documentation, which is attached to the record.<sup>68</sup> According to Basarić, resident of Felsőhegy, Mile Teslić was murdered by local national guardsmen. In Oromhegyes 19 year-old Magyarkanizsa student Savo Maravić was murdered along with 55 year-old farmer Milan “*Pilje*” Mandarić, and a man named Nikola, who originated from Bosnia. The witness’ testimony states that the village’s entire Hungarian population was hostile toward the settlers and endeavored to drive them away. The document lists the names of 75 alleged criminals. Up to number 34 there is a note beside each name detailing



their crimes, the rest are merely listed and at the end of the document it is noted they were either national guardsmen or Turanian Hunters or Arrow Cross Party members, possibly all three at once. Among the guilty, he emphasizes Dezső Koncz, minister, who was said to have persecuted the Serbians.

Ignjat Borisavljević, a 48 year old farmer testified on July 3rd, 1945 giving an account of the deportation of the Zimonić settlers.<sup>69</sup> He claimed that on April 14th, 1941 local Hungarian national guardsmen escorted men above 12 years of age to Magyarkanizsa and locked them into a basement. Physical abuse was common. 24 families, a total of 123 people were deported first to Zenta, then to Begecs and from there to Serbia and Hercegovina. The witness claims that he himself was taken to Serbia and his family to Croatia. He mentions that Lukács Faragó, József Koncz, Lajos Bata and Antal Kostyán assisted in carrying out the internment order. Koncz and Bata are cited in several places as perpetrators of the atrocities against the Serbians. At any rate, neither of them stayed for the regime change since they left with the Hungarian army.<sup>70</sup> An interesting fact about this record is that the text is perfectly composed using colorful expressions even though the person filing the report is illiterate and signed his name with a cross.

Another noteworthy element of the records is when a portion of the witnesses try to make the measures carried out by Hungarian authorities (e.g. displacement) seem to be the crimes of the local population. This phenomenon is common in other similar documents as well. In many cases the whole town/village administration is accused of the state's measure taken against Serbian nationals. As we know, the Serbians who settled after October 31st, 1918 were displaced on state orders<sup>71</sup> and the local authorities did not have much of a say in the matter. Yet, many were liquidated because of this and they were later added to the registry of war criminals.

### **Commission Decisions**

The next group of documents is the so-called *F-odluka* documents, i.e. decisions. There are 7900 of these commission decisions in 19 boxes kept in the Vojvodina Archive. These documents basically declare people to be war criminals based on the filed reports and the records. Often not every name cited in the record will have a commission decision next to it, so there was some selection made when declaring someone a criminal or not. Retroactive documentation is common here as well; commission decisions regarding persons liquidated were made after their murders. The people named were entered into the Register of War Criminals with the same serial number as the number of the decision.<sup>72</sup> In the two books there are a total of 7739 names.

## Files/Cartons

Among the archived material there are the so-called “*karticas*” meaning the files kept on war criminals. These are 10×7 centimeter carton pages containing the names and possibly the data of the war criminals of Bácska, Bánság and Szerémség (Syrmia). They are divided into three groups. “*I*” means under investigation (*pod istragom*), “*O*” means convicted (*osuđen*) and “*P*” means liquidated without trial (*presuđen*)<sup>73</sup>. Generally, the cartons of those who were liquidated without a trial do not contain any data besides the name and place. In rare cases the number of the F-decision is indicated. The cartons of those who were under investigation contain more data, in fact, in most cases the verdict number is also present.

## Enemies of the People

Enemies of the people are a separate category. The expression “*enemy of the people*” originates from Stalin. In theory those who committed smaller crimes were added to the list of enemies of the people. War criminals were usually sentenced to death, whilst enemies of the people received prison sentences, however, as time went by the number of years spent in prison decreased.<sup>74</sup> In any case, even though the “*enemies of the people*” did not commit capital offenses, they still had to be stigmatized in some way because they did not fit into the ideology of the power elite. Thus, former Chetniks and Ustashas were added to the list en masse. The term enemy of the people has more of a political meaning: “*who is against us, that is, against communism, is an enemy of the people*”. They also used this term against those who committed lesser crimes so that they could begin to confiscate their assets just as they had done with the war criminals. Apart from this, many people became enemies of the state as retroactive justification for their liquidation. There was a fine line between the two categories of war criminal and enemy of the people. This is underlined by the fact that many were placed into both categories. Denoting people as war criminals and confiscating their assets was a common practice on Serbian territory, among Serbian nationals, especially against those who were supporters of the king.<sup>75</sup> The registry of the enemies of the people can also be found in fonds 183 of the archives. Just as with war criminals, there were cartons on the enemies of the people as well.<sup>76</sup> There are a total of 8640 names on the list out of which 371 were names of Magyarkanizsa residents. Several names can be found twice under a different serial number in the material. Unlike the war criminals’ cartons, where we did not find any specific correlation with other summarizations, the names on the cartons of the enemies of the people were entered into the Register of Enemies of the People<sup>77</sup> (Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja) with the same serial numbers. These cartons and ledgers generally contain the name, age, occupation and alleged crime of those who were declared enemies of the people. In a few cases it indicates that the person had already been liquidated.

**Verdicts**

There were some further persons who were tried before a court in accordance with the commission decisions, or had court proceedings against them in absentia (due to having already been liquidated). In the majority of these cases no court decision was made, the matter simply ends at this point. Only in a few cases was there a verdict, often the trial documents are unavailable only the verdict, which in many cases is just a reference to the conviction of the person. We know of only two death sentences in connection to the municipality of Magyarkanizsa. One is István Apró, Magyarkanizsa merchant who was sentenced to death by the Szabadka Military Court Council acting in the first degree on February 26th, 1945.<sup>78</sup> Apró's sentences can be found in the Zenta Historical Archive. We will discuss his case in detail later. The other was Pál László Kiss of Martonos. Our persistent research into his case did not bring any result. We could find neither the verdict nor any other documents relating to his trial in the material on Magyarkanizsa. It is possible that Kiss was born in Martonos but later moved and was convicted in his new place of residence. In the case of Veljko Šećerov, who we have mentioned and introduced when first discussing the records, there was also a trial before a court. The verdict was reached on December 27th, 1944,<sup>79</sup> which sentences József Bús, Károly Kovács and Károly Kaszermajer to 3 months of forced labor each, Mátyás Sörös and István Holló to 4 months each, whilst Antal Sáfrány was given 6 months. The names of perpetrators István Koncz and Pál Galgóczi can be found in the verdict's text but the court determines that they are fugitives and thus, cannot be convicted. Let us note that István Koncz was liquidated on November 21st, 1944. We can be certain that the court knew this, since the trial documents contain the report in which the gendarmerie of Martonos gives its account to the Szabadka Military Court that István Koncz was convicted by the OZNA.<sup>80</sup> This leads us to conclude that the partisan powers sometimes attempted to destroy evidence of unlawful liquidation. In the documents of the same trial we can find the name of Márton Dencs; his name is not mentioned, however, in the verdict. There is only an indictment in connection to him.

From a later report we can determine that Dencs was also held in prison. According to a report sent to the courts written from Sremska Mitovica, Márton Dencs was discharged from prison on September 21st, 1945, after serving 9 months of forced labor.<sup>81</sup> Earlier research – mainly conducted with the means of oral history – mentions in regards to Adorján that several of the local murderers were convicted. The court material indeed contains the verdict in which Aleksandar Oluški, Nikola Radaković and Svetozar Knežević are convicted by the court for taking part in the Adorján massacre.<sup>82</sup>

Translation of the document:

*“Verdict*

*In the name of the People of Yugoslavia!*

*The Military District Council of Bácska and Baranya, president: Major Pavle Gerenčević, members: Brankov Lazar and Opačić Milan as well as Potkonjak Milka, stenographer. The criminal court case against Zenta resident, Oluški Aleksandar, Radaković Nikola of Móric and Knežević Svetozar of Magyarkanizsa based on the indictment of court-martial attorney Starčević Svetozar with the charge of grievous abuse of power. The verdict subsequent to the trial of February 5th, 1945 is the following:*

*Verdict*

*Oluški Aleksandar defendant I. former Magyarkanizsa police official, 36 years old, Serbian [national], born in Zenta, married with two children, no criminal record*

*Radaković Nikola defendant II. former municipality day laborer, born in 1914 in the village of Móric, municipality of Medak, district of Gospići, Serbian [national] married with one child, has no assets, has no criminal record*

*Knežević Svetozar defendant III. former municipality clerk, born in 1921 in Magyarkanizsa Serbian [national], follower of the Russian Orthodox Church, unmarried, no criminal record*

*are found guilty.*

*Oluški Aleksandar defendant I.,*

*who, as an enemy of the people’s liberation movement, infiltrated into Magyarkanizsa directly after the liberation, where by exhibiting despicable hypocrisy he gained a position of responsibility and wickedly abused the trust that was afforded [in advance] during a search in the village of Adorján carried out by the Magyarkanizsa squad of the gendarmerie, which was bestowed with the task of searching the [village] in order to find hidden weapons and to arrest wrong-doers. The defendant, although it was not his duty, joined this squad of the militia and before the task was carried out he had convinced defendants II. and III. to feign an attack against themselves so that they could kill the arrested persons immediately on the spot in retaliation instead of escorting them to Magyarkanizsa as per the commander’s orders. Based on his evil plan they carried out a feigned attack, shot at Radaković, defendant II. after which they arrested 50 local Hungarians, who they killed in a fascist manner on a road beside the Tisza, while escorting them to Magyarkanizsa;*

*Radaković Nikola, defendant II.*

*as the political commissioner of the Gendarmerie in Magyarkanizsa and the [person] entrusted to carry out the task, he allowed defendant I., Oluški to convince him to commit the crime, in which he himself took part despite having orders to escort the arrested wrong-doers to Magyarkanizsa;*

*Knežević Svetozar, defendant III.*

*Because he agreed to defendant I., Oluški's evil plan and took part in carrying it out with which they committed serious abuse of official power stipulated in Section 15 of the order on courts-martials, because of which the military court sentences defendant I., Oluški Aleksandar to die by gunshot, lose his honor as a citizen and have his assets confiscated, Radaković Nikola, defendant II. is sentenced to a year of forced labor and Knežević Svetozar, defendant III. to 6 months forced labor.*

*Explanation:*

*Based on confessions from the accused we determined that the Magyarkanizsa squad of the Gendarmerie received an order from their commander to search the village of Adorján in order to find hidden weapons and capture criminals, who were to be escorted to Magyarkanizsa. The Political Commissioner of the Gendarmerie, Radaković Nikola was made responsible for carrying out the task. Oluški Aleksandar, defendant I. (who at the time was head of the housing department) joined them. Upon reaching Adorján, Oluški hatched an evil plan unworthy of the fighters of the liberation movement, by means that were only used by fascist evil-doers, [and] succeeded in convincing defendants II. and III., Radaković Nikola [and] Knežević Svetozar to assist him. During the search of the [village] they feigned a shooting attack against Radaković, which gave the evil-doer, Oluški motive for revenge, murdering 50 arrested Hungarians. The plan was carried out: en route to Magyarkanizsa, on a road beside the Tisza, all 50 arrested persons were massacred. In the process of evaluating the crime and determining the punishment the court considers in the case of Oluški, defendant I., the bad reputation he gained among the people as a former police officer and his hostile attitude toward the people's liberation movement, due to which he perpetrated this crime, to be aggravating circumstances. The court did not find any attenuating circumstances. In the [case] of Radaković Nikola, defendant II. the court considers the fact that he did not want to fully admit being guilty to be an aggravating circumstance, the fact that he was deceived by the evil-doer defendant I., Oluški, an attenuating circumstance, along with his previous good behavior; and in the case of Knežević Svetozar, defendant III., that he admitted being guilty and conceded that Oluški, defendant I. convinced him so the determined punishment is justified. Death to fascism, freedom for the people!*

*Stenographer:*  
[signature]  
*Milka Potkonjak*

*Council President:*  
[signature]  
*Major P. Gerenčević*

*Vojvodina Commission for the Determination of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators,*  
[registry] number: 1372  
March 12th, 1945  
*Novi Sad*<sup>83</sup>

This document clearly stated in 1945 that the people of Adorján were liquidated unlawfully, without any court judgment on October 31st, 1944. According to the document there was no way the Adorján victims could have been war criminals, much rather the innocent victims of the war. There is no credible information on the execution of the sentences. The Zenta District People's Tribunal makes an inquiry to the Magyarkanizsa Local People's Commission regarding whether Aleksandar Oluški had been executed by the authorities and if not, then they wanted to know his whereabouts.<sup>84</sup> According to the report from Magyarkanizsa, the Local People's Commission had no knowledge of Aleksandar Oluški Jr.'s place of residence. They only knew that he had been shown on public posters as sentenced to death but they had no knowledge as to whether that sentence was carried out or not.<sup>85</sup>

### **List of Liquidated Persons**

Among the rest of the documents to be examined the reports which list liquidated persons can be found. There are many and many kinds of such reports, which were handled with the already known kind of chaotic document management, bearing many spelling mistakes and factual errors, which was characteristic of the initial partisan period. These documents were probably not made for posterity but to serve as a basis for confiscating the assets of those who were murdered.

The lists of liquidated persons of Magyarkanizsa municipality (the region we have examined) went through several stations before arriving to Novi Sad. The Novi Sad Province Commission urgently requested on October 15th, 1945 that the Szabadka Regional Commission for Investigating War Crimes send them the list of people who had been liquidated or otherwise sentenced to death.<sup>86</sup> After this, the data was collected by Szabadka from Zenta and from the local commissions by Zenta.

The Magyararkanizsa report was drawn up on October 18th, 1945 and reported 96 disappearances<sup>87</sup> from the municipality.<sup>88</sup> The local commission of Martonos drew up its list on October 19th naming 24 liquidated persons<sup>89</sup> in the document.<sup>90</sup> On the same day the local commission of Horgos reported 37 disappearances<sup>91</sup> adding that *“these persons were probably liquidated after the liberation from the fascist occupation. There is no real proof of this. Most of the persons were from Horgos, whilst a number of them remain unidentified based on the above mentioned names. There will be a detailed investigation into this at a later time and we will provide more accurate data.”*<sup>92</sup> The Zenta Statistical Office, curiously enough, began writing the list meant for Szabadka on October 17th, 1945, more accurately, this is the date on the document. However, it is obvious that the document has been covered, rewritten and expanded in several places. It is probable that it was corrected based on the local reports arriving in the meantime and the list of 391 names was only sent to Szabadka later.<sup>93</sup> The document contains a list, most certainly incomplete, of 391 names of persons liquidated from Mohol, Zenta, Magyararkanizsa (including Adorján, Tóthfalu and Oromhegyes), Martonos and Horgos.<sup>94</sup> The list of liquidated persons from the Szabadka region was sent to the Novi Sad People’s Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Committed by the Occupiers and their Collaborators on December 4th, 1945.<sup>95</sup> The document mentions a total of 829 names.<sup>96</sup> Besides the lists from different reports, fonds 183 of the Vojvodina Archive contains the ledger of executed war criminals from between 1944 and 1945,<sup>97</sup> which lists the names of 1105 liquidated Hungarians.<sup>98</sup> Most places include the date of the murder but research into local history shows that in many places this is erroneous. Since most of the documents were written after the executions, it is probable that the goal was not accuracy but registration.

## **DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION TO THE RETALIATIONS FOUND IN THE ZENTA HISTORICAL ARCHIVES**

### **Introduction**

The archival material in connection to the region I have examined, i.e. today’s Magyararkanizsa and its area, can be found partially in the Zenta Historical Archive. The fact that the administrative division of the region was different at the time than it is today makes my research a bit more difficult because, for example, the material regarding Adorján is among the Magyararkanizsa documents, whilst the Martonos and Horgos material is separate.

## **The Magyarkanizsa, Horgos and Martonos People's Liberation Councils' Documents**

After the implementation of military administration<sup>99</sup> the people's liberation councils assumed only advisory roles. The documents do not contain very much exact information about the retaliations. However, we did find a few interesting documents when searching through the Magyarkanizsa Municipality People's Liberation Council's materials. The vast majority of these are discussed in connection with the mentioned areas.

### **Documents of the Zenta Town Headquarters**

The town headquarters set up military bases in the areas that belonged under their jurisdiction. The gendarmeries were established as local armed forces, and were led by the commander of the gendarmerie. The gendarmerie was positioned directly under the authority of the military headquarters acting as its armed executive body.<sup>100</sup>

The Zenta Town Headquarters began its work on October 20th, 1944. Its jurisdiction extended to the whole of the Zenta District, including the towns of Zenta and Magyarkanizsa as well as the municipalities of Ada, Mohol, Horgos and Martonos.<sup>101</sup> Documents regarding Magyarkanizsa, Horgos and Martonos, most of which I discuss in connection to the individual townships, do not contain specific liquidation lists, though they do contain documents referencing war crimes, and indeed, some allude to liquidation. The following report of Janković Đorđe,<sup>102</sup> gendarmerie commander of Martonos is such a document. He informed the Zenta Town Headquarters on November 22nd, 1944 that the raid of the village had come to an end and that during the course of the *punitive expedition*, 25 murderous Hungarians were destroyed.

We know from the documents that during this period several people from the Hungarian population were being held in prison. This was often reported to Zenta in connection with Martonos and Magyarkanizsa, which I discuss in the chapters about the individual municipalities. Tibor Molnár's work, *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948* (Selected Documents of the Zenta Town Headquarters 1944–1948) in which he publishes 80 original documents along with their Hungarian translations is a very valuable source for researchers.<sup>103</sup>

### **Documents of the Zenta District People's Council**

The disappearance reports found in the Zenta district people's council's material are a specifically interesting type of documents. The Szabadka Regional People's Liberation Council sent the following order on April 30th, 1945<sup>104</sup> to the township and district commissions operating in the region:



“...Based on the orders received from imperative inspection of The Commission [operating] in the [Democratic] Federative Yugoslavian Government’s Presidency, we order [you] to hear the complaints received about persons who have gone missing from the time of the liberation and remain missing to this day according to the following criteria:

*Regarding the missing person: personal data, data in connection to the circumstance of his or her disappearance, arrest or execution, who carried out the arrest and/or execution, the exact date of the event, place of residence and exact address of the missing person.*

*A separate official must be entrusted with the task of entering the reports into the records. Disappearances can only be reported by descendants or family members, if they do not have any, then neighbors may report them missing. The data must be collected from the local commission in the region and should be sent with indication to our reference number...”*<sup>105</sup>

It was brought to the attention of the citizens of Magyarkanizsa in a public notice that they could report their relatives missing. “... We call on everyone who has had a relation missing since the liberation to report this to the Liberation Council during office hours at the town hall, Room no. 1.”<sup>106</sup>

Between May 14th and 29th, 1945 Alfréd Friedmann, head of the criminal investigation subdivision, compiled 80 records which reported missing 22 Magyarkanizsa residents, 44 people from Adorján, 10 from Oromhegyes and 3 from Tóthfalu as well as one victim from Zombor<sup>107</sup> who disappeared from Magyarkanizsa.<sup>108</sup> Compared to the number of victims, the fewest reports were filed in Magyarkanizsa. It is quite probable that many, fearing some sort of sanctions, did not dare to report their liquidated relations missing. These reports serve as an especially valuable source material for researchers. The person filing the report would describe the circumstances of their relative’s disappearance on a form on the record. Many times they also mention who took the victim.

The first report was filed by the wife of Gyula Körmöczi, née Ilona Czérna of Adorján, on May 4th. An excerpt from the record: “...because we live in Adorján – on the bank of the Tisza to be exact – I saw, on October 31st, 1944, at around 3:30pm, that Oluški Aleksandar and another unknown partisan came for him [and] took him out to the Tisza embankment. I do not know what happened after that, I did not see. I have not heard from him after this point. His hat was found on the Tisza shore by Adorján resident, Péter Takács.”<sup>109</sup>

The records of missing persons from Magyarkanizsa, besides the circumstances among which the person was taken, often also contain the circumstances of detention as well as the date of liquidation. The first Magyarkanizsa resident was reported missing on May 14th, 1945. Mrs. Antal Bagi, née Piroška Vadas reports her husband, restaurant owner Antal Bagi missing. “On October 15th, 1944 members of the local

*gendarmerie, Nikola Radaković, Svetozar Knežević and an unknown person came for him and escorted him to the town hall. They held him there until October 27th, 1944 when he disappeared and I have not heard from him since. I later heard that he was shot and buried in a vineyard on the bank of the Tisza.”<sup>110</sup>*

The testimony of Erzsébet Körmöczi, the wife of Magyarkanizsa victim György Takács is quite shocking: *“On October 17th, 1944 two military officers came for him and escorted him to the town hall and on October 18th, 1944, at the town hall, I was told he was already dead. On the 19th of the same month I heard stories of him being brought out with severe head injuries, beaten dead. From this point forward I never heard from him again.”<sup>111</sup>*

We can determine from this record, as from other archival documents<sup>112</sup> and personal accounts that those who were held captive in the Magyarkanizsa basement were subject to very brutal physical abuse. It is a contradictory fact that in the case of Magyarkanizsa some family members, for example, Mrs. Antal Bagi and Erzsébet Körmöczi, speak openly about the disappearance of their husbands, whilst many are afraid to even report missing loved ones.

There were 21 reports filed in connection with Martonos from August 27th to September 1st, 1945.<sup>113</sup> *“... We are sending you the recorded statements of the wives of the 24 missing Hungarians from Martonos. [Of] the mentioned 24 missing people three cases are lacking statements: Mihály Werner, as he has no relatives to give a statement like in the case of the others. Furthermore, [regarding] László Takács, whose wife is not residing in Martonos and has no other relations who could give statements about his disappearance. The last missing person is Péter Ózsvár, whose wife remarried and he has no other family member to give a statement about his disappearance. Thus, we are enclosing 21 statements regarding disappearances, however, there are 24 missing persons but we have provided an explanation as to why in the case of three persons there is no statement...”<sup>114</sup>*

From a report sent to Zenta by the People’s Liberation Council of Martonos, we can ascertain that these were not voluntary reports but rather the partisan powers took their tasks all too seriously and summoned the family members for questioning. In spite of this, there were wives who spoke very explicitly about the circumstances of their husbands’ disappearance. For example, the wife of Sándor Sörös, police officer, from whose testimony it becomes clear that the Martonos detainees were also subjected to abuse. *“My husband, who was a municipality police officer, left on October 7th, 1944 with the gendarmerie and returned on October 24th, 1944. The next day, as his wife, I went to the town hall and reported his arrival. This time two guards<sup>115</sup> came (to our home) and arrested my husband. The cause of the arrest is unknown to me. While my husband was here<sup>116</sup> in prison, I brought him food. I was able to speak to him once in the presence of a guard. That was when I saw he had been badly beaten and*

*was covered with wounds from the beatings. On his left hand I saw a bandage, which had just been reapplied by another captive. As always, on November 21st, 1944, I was taking him breakfast but the guard said they had been transported to Becse for interrogation. I would like to know whether my husband, Sándor Sörös is alive or not. I have nothing else to say in the matter. The testimony was read aloud and translated to Hungarian.”*<sup>117</sup>

It is clear from the personal accounts that Sándor Sörös was subjected to severe physical abuse. His son, Péter Sörös was, as a small child, a witness to this: *“My father came up the stairs. By this time he had been beaten up severely. Bajić Miloš had punctured his hand with the barrel of his rifle. Later on, he was battered so relentlessly that he could not stand up. He had been whipped. At this time he was taken to the post office building where a Russian (female) doctor attended to him. While the Russians were here, they were not beaten much but when the partisan powers took over, they beat them up. They beat up the minister awfully. It was medieval torture what they did.”*<sup>118</sup> The difference between the Magyarkanizsa and the Martonos reports is that whilst in the case of the former, the reporters identify quite a few individuals by name, the latter contain no such references. The Horgos reports, if there were any, cannot be found neither in the Zenta Historical Archive nor the Vojvodina Archive.

### **Asset Confiscation Documents**

The partisan powers kept quite a precise (even if sometimes incomplete) list of liquidated persons from the Magyarkanizsa municipality area. The reason for this is quite probably that they extended the asset confiscation law to the assets of the unlawfully liquidated. After the end of the war, on June 9th, 1945, the presidency of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia passed the law on asset confiscation and its execution.<sup>119</sup> The law made complete or partial confiscation possible. Only the property, objects, tools and clothing that were necessary for the survival of the convict's immediate family were exempt from confiscation. In accordance with the law the district's people's commission had to send the district courts an inventory of the assets of people who were liquidated, executed or had fled. This applied to courts-martial as well, who were obligated by law to send the list of convicts. The law itself basically records an existing situation because the liquidated persons' property had, in many places, already been seized by the partisan powers.

Based on reports from municipalities under their jurisdiction, the Zenta District People's Council's Department of Internal Affairs compiled a list of 271 names of people who, in accordance with law, could be sentenced to asset confiscation. The document dated September 12th, 1945, lists, besides the Zenta, Mohol and Ada war criminals, the names of 67 residents of Magyarkanizsa municipality.<sup>120</sup> 22 from

Magyarkanizsa – János Almási, István Balázs, Mihály Bicskei, Imre Csanádi, József Csiszár, Kelemen Filiszter, János Gajda, Lajos Gyalús, Péter Harmath, Tamás Hartman, Miklós Kávai, Miklós Kiss, Zoltán Kocsis, István Koncz, István Medgyesi, Gábor Lonti Milutinovics, Ferenc Muhi, György Nagy, József Nagy, Sándor Remete, János Szilágyi, Ferenc Törteli – 32 people from Horgos – Géza Ábrahám, Vilmos Almer, János Báló, Mátyás Berényi, József Bojnik, János Bordás, Mihály Cocek, Lajos Csehák, Ferencné Csikós, Géza Farkas, János Fazekas, István Fehér, Erneszt Hauk, Mihály Herceg, Valéria Herédi, János Kabó, Ádám Katona, Mátyás Krekuska, Sándor Lajtár, Ferenc Lengyel, Mihály Mnyilinszki, Antal Pataki, Antal Pokal, György Radics, Mihály Radics, István Szabadi, Mátyás Takács, Ferenc Tillinkó Sr., Ferenc Tillinkó Jr., István Tolani, Pál Túri, István Virág; and 13 names from Martonos – Géza Balázs, Mátyás Janucsiki, Imre Gaál, János Gruik, Ferenc Holló, Miklós Horváth, Károly Józsa, János Kéri, Gábor Nagy, Kálmán Sáfrány, János Sörös, László Takács, Pál Varkulya.

The list of those sentenced to asset confiscation in the Municipality of Magyarkanizsa was most likely extended later on because of the 176 liquidated persons listed in the Zenta Archive's document material, 145 had asset confiscation proceedings pending against them.

The authorities drafted the financial state of those whose assets were to be confiscated, based on which they began the proceedings. The proceedings were initiated in the case of 80% of the persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa municipality, however, in most cases it was discontinued or only partial confiscation was carried out. Their house and some property essential for carrying on with everyday life was not taken from the family but larger lands, shops and pubs were indeed taken. The reports sent to Zenta by local authorities (Magyarkanizsa, Martonos, Horgos) contain some discrepancies. The forms used for this purpose, in which alleged war criminals were marked "*missing*" (nestao),<sup>121</sup> "*fled*" (pobegao) or "*left their property*" (napustio imanje), were sent by all local commissions. Aside from this only the Martonos commission considered it important to send detailed reports of the real or alleged war crimes of the listed persons. We must note here that these reports, based on present day research, are exaggerated (most often) forgeries lacking any basis whatsoever.

The documents drawn up during the course of the asset confiscation proceedings are very important historical sources for researchers because these also cite personal accounts from the period. Relatives appealing the confiscation proceedings sometimes speak of the circumstances under which their family member went missing, and resent the fact that no court order was brought to prove the person a war criminal. Mrs. István Medgyesi's March 1st, 1946 appeal is also a valuable document of the period. Excerpt from the document:

*“The Szabadka Regional Commission<sup>122</sup> acting as appellate court under number P/70/1946 made another decision, of which I was sent a notice numbered Vp. 960/1946 from the Zenta People’s Tribunal<sup>123</sup> dated February 18th, 1945. The decision was to confiscate my husband’s (who, according to them, is a war criminal and an enemy of the people) assets. I am appealing the Zenta District People’s Tribunal’s decision within the given deadline, and I am requesting that my complaint, along with the other documents pertaining to the matter, be handed over to the Szabadka Regional Commission, so that they can annul the above mentioned decision and discontinue the asset confiscation proceedings due to the following reasons:*

*The above mentioned decision determines that my husband, István Medgyesi, is a war criminal and an enemy of the people, who fled/disappeared during the war. I would like to note that during the liberation my husband was in Magyarakanizsa, so he could not have fled. I have no knowledge of my husband being convicted by any court but such a decision probably does not even exist. Immediately following the liberation, when public circumstances were in disarray, my husband was kidnapped by irresponsible elements, by whom [he] was treated cruelly, after that he went missing from prison. Today’s people’s power cannot be in congruity with the [past] actions of those irresponsible elements, this has been established by the fact that a number of such people have been convicted by the [courts] and their [past] actions could not have taken place with knowledge of the people’s power. My husband was a bricklayer, so a physical laborer, he supported his family through his work. He was not a member of any political party neither in the old Yugoslavia nor during the occupation. The one house that is in my husband’s possession is necessary to sustain our immediate family. There are four families, so fourteen people living in this house. These are my daughters’ families, so they belong to my family. There are a number of children among them (from 1 week old to 7 years old), who would be left without a place to live if the house would be confiscated. It is thus clear that my husband’s assets, i.e. that one house, are essential to my family’s preservation. I am a 64 year old woman unable to earn a living, unable to perform hard physical labor. All the people residing in my house (my daughters’ families) are physical workers of low financial status who live on the wages of their labor, one of my sons-in-law is a member of the Yugoslavian Army, which means I support his wife and their daughter, too.*

*In accordance with paragraph 1. of section 1. and paragraph 1. of sections 2. and 3. of the Asset Confiscation Law, which stipulates that land belonging to the home, residential buildings and tools for performing a trade, which are absolutely [necessary] to sustain the missing [person’s] family, are exempt from the confiscation law. I am convinced that the people’s power will not allow, will not decide to throw 4 families with 16 members out onto the street, just because irresponsible elements took my husband. I know of no such verdict reached by a people’s tribunal that declared my husband*

*guilty of war crimes. Based on these, I request that the Szabadka Regional People's Commission<sup>124</sup> make a decision that acquits my husband of these charges of being a war criminal and an enemy of the people and discontinue the confiscation proceeding against his assets. I await the court's order with hope that the Szabadka Regional People's Commission,<sup>125</sup> acting as appellate court, will make a decision in [my] favor."*

The court disregarded the appeal and made the decision to confiscate István Medgyesi's assets.

## Declared Dead

The Yugoslavian courts, following the war – mostly at the request of the victims' families – declared persons gone missing during the war dead. These proceedings were conducted from 1945 to 1952 according to the law on out-of-court cases. After 1952, in accordance with the law passed on March 31st pertaining to declaring missing persons deceased and proof of death,<sup>126</sup> they were handled by the district courts.<sup>127</sup>

Despite the fact that the partisan powers drew up quite precise lists of liquidated persons, in cases where people were to be declared dead, they did not use these probative documents. Aside from hearing witness testimonies, they conducted these proceedings as if they had absolutely no knowledge of the victims' identity.

After the first such proposal<sup>128</sup> the court called on the Vojvodina Executive Commission in a letter to ask if they should pursue the matter at all.<sup>129</sup> *"...Mrs. András Kovács, Magyarkanizsa [resident] propositioned the court regarding her husband<sup>130</sup> being declared dead, who disappeared after the liberation on November 22nd, 1944 [when] the mass liquidations carried out by the OZNA [occurred] in Magyarkanizsa, a fact confirmed by the Magyarkanizsa Local People's Council in certificate number 8383/1946. The court inquires if it may, (like some other matters are handled) prove the death in a regular extra-judicial procedure or are there specific orders, stipulations or regulations for these cases."*<sup>131</sup>

The Regional Department of Internal Affairs, with its headquarters in Szabadka gave the following instructions in the matter: *"...we inform you that the procedure for declaring a person dead must be initiated at the responsible District Court, in accordance with the law on out-of-court proceedings, regardless of the circumstances and time of the persons' disappearance. The cited law allows the missing person to be declared dead. The proposal to initiate such a procedure may be handed in by the relations of the missing person."*<sup>132</sup>

Even though the court practically handled the liquidations as a taboo subject, the matter of declaring a person dead becomes quite clear from a few witness' testimonies.

During the course of the procedure to declare victim Miklós Vajda dead in 1952, the witnesses essentially describe the Adorján murders: *"Witness, Antal Bata of Adorján*

*residing at 85 Marshal Tito Street, farmer, 59 years old, married, father of two, no relation, disinterested, warned, states: I knew the missing Miklós Vajda well, because he lived in his parents' house in my neighborhood, directly opposite my house. On the last day of October, that is on October 31st, 1944 some sort of military arrived in Adorján and after they had held an assembly in the square, the soldiers dispersed in groups among the houses and rounded up several hundred citizens. Among them they chose fifty and led them in an unknown direction. I remember well that the next day was the catholic holiday All Saints Day and five of these people's dead bodies were seen on the Tisza bank that the water had washed ashore. I only saw them in the cemetery where they brought them in order to be buried. Miklós was not among these persons. I attest to the fact that Miklós has not come home since and I have not heard from him either. I have nothing else to say and I am willing to swear to my testimony."*

*"Witness, Béla Bognár of Adorján residing at 1. Dohány Street, farmer, 39 years old, married, father of four, no relation, disinterested, warned, states: I know the missing Miklós well because we were neighbors. On October 31st, 1944 someone's army came to our village and gathered many people in the square, based on a registry, out of which they selected 50 citizens and led them in an unknown direction. I was there in the square at the time. According to several people's account, the next day, which was All Saints', 5-6 dead bodies from among those [persons] who were led away in an unknown direction, were seen on the shore of the Tisza. I did not see these bodies but I know for sure that Miklós was among the citizens who were taken away. Because Miklós has not, [from] this day forth, returned and has not been heard from since, I am certain he is dead. I have nothing else to say and I am willing to swear to my testimony."*<sup>133</sup>

Most often, however, such detailed witness accounts were not written up and the cause of death was composed in a much more nuanced manner, many times making the liquidations seem like accidents. A common description is the one used in connection to the Adorján cases stating that – *"...On the afternoon of October 31st, 1944, around 15:30, although it was forbidden, (Sándor Bognár, Gyula Horváth, Antal Lackó, Gyula Milutinovics, János Pásztor, József Pásztor, József Remete, István Sarnyai and Ferenc Vörös) went out to the Tisza shore in Adorján, where he fell due to an accidental gunshot then disappeared..."*

In Magyarkanizsa the following definition was often used, such as in the cases of István Cseszkó, István Koncz, Imre Kossányi, Ferenc Muhi, János Reckecki, Dezső Sóti as well as in the cases of Pál Szabados and József Gajda – *"...in October [...] 1944, even though it was forbidden, (the victim) went out into the street, where he fell due to an accidental gunshot then disappeared..."*<sup>134</sup>

Of the 176 persons mentioned as victims in the documents of the Zenta Archive, proceeding were carried out in 96 cases to declare them dead.<sup>135</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Miodrag Zečević – Jovan P. Popović (ed.): *Dokumenti iz istorije Jugoslavije*. Beograd, 1996. (Henceforth: Zečević – Popović, 1996) p. 21.
- <sup>2</sup> Rodoljub Čolaković (Bijeljina, 1900 – Beograd, 1983), Yugoslavian revolutionary and literateur. From 1919 he was a member of the Socialist Party of Yugoslavia, then a member of the JKP, he took part in the Spanish Civil War and the Yugoslav People's Liberation War. After the war he held several important social-political offices.
- <sup>3</sup> Ivan Dr. Ribar (Vukmanić, 1881 – Zágráb, 1968), Yugoslavian politician. Earning a law degree in 1904, he was already involved in politics during the time of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy: he was in favor of a united Yugoslavia. After WWI, he was one of the founding members of the Democratic Party. Advocated for the uprising. He was chosen to be president of the AVNOJ on November 26th, 1942. He was a member of the JKP from 1943 and the president of the Yugoslav Assembly of Peoples' presidency.
- <sup>4</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. p. 445.
- <sup>5</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. pp. 445–446.
- <sup>6</sup> Dušan Nedeljković (Isakovo, Čuprija, 1899 – Beograd, 1984) Earned a doctorate in philosophy in Paris. A member of the communist party and the Yugoslav People's Army from 1941. An editor of the newspaper called Borba. Professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Humanities. Decorated with a gold star by the OZNA.
- <sup>7</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. p. 21.
- <sup>8</sup> Srđan Cvetković: *Izme u srpa i cekica. Represija u Srbiji 1944–1953*. Beograd, 2006. (Henceforth: Cvetković, 2006) p. 250.
- <sup>9</sup> Cvetković, 2006. p. 250.
- <sup>10</sup> Zečević – Popović, 1996. pp. 27–28.
- <sup>11</sup> Vajdasági Levéltár [The Vojvodina Archive] (Further on referred to as: VL.) F. 183. Kut.: 501. 1945. Prepiska. 1–100. Broj: 1.
- <sup>12</sup> The names of the municipalities according to Serbian spelling: Subotica, Ludaš, Bajški Vinogradi, Zapadni Vinogradi, Majšanski vinogradi, Zobnatica, Radanovac, Gornji Tavankut, Dolnji Tavankut, Zapadne ugarnice, Istočne ugarnice, Kelebija, Hajdukovo, Čavolj, Šebešić, Čikerija, Palić, Đurđin, Pavlovac, Verušić, Bikovo, Žednik.
- <sup>13</sup> Vajdasági Múzeum Újvidék (Henceforth: VM.) The Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad (VM). K-3001/2.
- <sup>14</sup> VM. K-3001/3.
- <sup>15</sup> VM. K-3001/17.
- <sup>16</sup> VM. K-3001/19.
- <sup>17</sup> VL. F. 183. Box #65. and #66. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja.
- <sup>18</sup> In the data of the persons against whom a report had been filed in the region I have examined, if an "L" was put at the last known place of residence it meant that the person had already been liquidated.
- <sup>19</sup> In most cases the filer of the report is the injured party.
- <sup>20</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 320. Prijave Martonoš. Broj: 146.
- <sup>21</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Azbučni spisak i br. prijave.
- <sup>22</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 22.
- <sup>23</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 421, 422. Prijave Stara Kanjiža.
- <sup>24</sup> Oromhegyes (called Uzunovićevo at the time) Tóthfalu and Adorján belonged to this area.
- <sup>25</sup> Királyhalma belonged under Horgos' administration.
- <sup>26</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 502. 1945. Prepiska. 111–217. Broj: 168.
- <sup>27</sup> Sándor Brankov, officer of battalion 17/III. Born on March 25th, 1920 in Martonos, his mother was Olga L. Disappeared on May 18th, 1943 (HIM, VI.) In: Tibor Molnár: *Zenta és Magyarkanizsa községek II. világháborús hősi halottjai*. [The WWII victims of Zenta and Magyarkanizsa districts] 2003. p. 139. (Henceforth: Molnár, 2003)
- <sup>28</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 546–548. Žrtve i oštećenici.



- <sup>29</sup> Nestor G. Vukov: *Žrtva fašizma sa teritorije opštine Kanjiža 1941–1945*. (Manuscript from the Zenta Historical Archive), 1975. *Žrtve fašizma iz Kanjiže 1941–1945*. The manuscript contains the data of all localities belonging to the municipality.
- <sup>30</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Masovna grupa “*prisilna mobilizacija*” V. grupa.
- <sup>31</sup> In the army’s casualty register he is listed as Bajić Rado (correctly: Radomir), who died July 24th, 1942 on the Eastern Front as a result of being hit by schrapnel. In: Molnár, 2003. p. 133.
- <sup>32</sup> In the army’s casualty register he is listed as Károly Petrics. He died at Peczenizyn on April 28th, 1944. Molnár, 2003. p. 156.
- <sup>33</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. *Veće Statističara za srez Subotica*. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 13.
- <sup>34</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. *Veće Statističara za srez Subotica*. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 17.
- <sup>35</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta. Mesno povereništvo St. Kanjiža, grupa I.
- <sup>36</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa I.
- <sup>37</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Martonoš, grupa I.
- <sup>38</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Naknadni spisak zločinaca Martonoš, grupa I.
- <sup>39</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Horgoš, grupa I.
- <sup>40</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo St. Kanjiža, grupa II.
- <sup>41</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 73. Knjiga evidencije streljanih ratnih zločinaca 1944–45. Here we must note that the mentioned book is listed under another title in the archive. According to the summarni inventar, that is the inventory book, *likvidirani* (liquidated war criminals) is indicated as the title. The book, however – apparently well after the events –, has a sticker on it, which indicates that the title has been changed to *executed war criminals*. From here on, despite the fact that we consider the term liquidated to be the correct one, for researchability purposes we will use the formula specified on the book.
- <sup>42</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa IV.
- <sup>43</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak zločinaca srez Senta, mesno povereništvo Martonoš, grupa V.
- <sup>44</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 541. 1944–1948. Mesta: K–M. Martonoš. Spisak ratnih zločinaca koji se pojavljuju u zapisnicima Expoziture Anketne komisije u Subotici, grupa VI.
- <sup>45</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa VII.
- <sup>46</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Horgoša, grupa VII.
- <sup>47</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 544. 1944–1948. Mesta: Sremske Laze–T. Stara Kanjiža. Naknadni spisak zločinaca iz Stare Kanjiže, grupa VIII.
- <sup>48</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 545. 1944–1948. Mesta: U–Š. Horgoš. Spisak ratnih zločinaca koji se pojavljuju u zapisnicima Expoziture Anketne komisije u Subotici, grupa VIII.
- <sup>49</sup> An example of this is the case of Lajos Bata, citizen of Magyarkanizsa, who is listed as *presuđen* with the serial number 647 in the Ledger of Enemies of the People, however, number 2340 is also Lajos Bata, who was sentenced to 3 years of forced labor. The case of Vince Bagi, a butcher’s assistant from Magyarkanizsa, is similar, who despite the word “*presuđen*” was “*only*” sentenced to 3 months of forced labor.
- <sup>50</sup> Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. III. grupa masovnih zločina, Racija (Ubistvo i pokolji; sistematski teror; mučenja građanskih lica; silovanja; pljačke). Novi Sad, Pokrajinska komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini, 1945; Saopštenja o zločinima okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini 1941–1944. Knj. 1. Bačka i Baranja. Knj. 2. Srem. Novi Sad, Pretsedništvo Narodne skupštine Autonomne pokrajine Vojvodine, 1946.

- <sup>51</sup> Drago Njegovan (ed): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. III grupa masovnih zločina: racija*. Novi Sad, 2009.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. V grupa masovnih zločina u Sremu: akcija Viktora Tomića i Pokretni preki sud u Sremu, 1942*. Novi Sad, 2009.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini protiv Jevreja (istrebljenje, deportacija, mučenje, hapšenje, pljačka)*. Novi Sad, 2011.; Drago Njegovan (ed.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini. I grupa masovnih zločina: ulazak mađarske vojske u Bačku i Baranju, 1941*. Novi Sad, 2011.; Drago Njegovan (prired.): *Zločini okupatora i njihovih pomagača u Vojvodini 1941–1944. VII grupa masovnih zločina: deportacija*. Novi Sad, 2014.
- <sup>52</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 99–192. Anketne komisije, dokumentacija o ratnim zločinima. Inv. Predmeta.
- <sup>53</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Broj: 43.
- <sup>54</sup> Lajos Forró: *Jelöletlen tömegsírok*. Szeged, 2007. (Henceforth: Forró, 2007.) p. 64.
- <sup>55</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 100. Inv. Broj: 680.
- <sup>56</sup> The statement in the record is incorrect because István Koncz was liquidated in Martonos on November 21st, 1944.
- <sup>57</sup> János Török was liquidated in Martonos on November 21st, 1944.
- <sup>58</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 102. Inv. Broj: 1630.
- <sup>59</sup> Conscriptio affected the Hungarian population also, as this territory belonged to Hungary at the time.
- <sup>60</sup> Ferenc Dongó – József Kovács – Fulgencia Gulyás M. – Zoltán Savelin – Romarika Bagi M.: *A martonosi egyházközösség története*. (ed.: Dr. János Kancsó and Erzsébet Tandari). Martonos, 2011. p. 50. (A preliminary of this volume: Ferenc Dongó – Fulgencia Gulyás M. – József Kovács: *A martonosi egyházközösség története*. Martonos, 1976.)
- <sup>61</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Martonoš. Spisak domaćih ratnih krivaca koji su izbegli u inostranstvo. Broj: 67.
- <sup>62</sup> VL. F. 183. Kutija: 100. Inv. Broj: 683.
- <sup>63</sup> Tibor Cseres: *Vérbosszú Bácskában*. Budapest, 1991. p. 164.
- <sup>64</sup> Forró, 2007. p. 39., p. 88.
- <sup>65</sup> VL. F. 183, Registar narodnih neprijatelja 1–4340.
- <sup>66</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 102. Inv. Broj: 1767.
- <sup>67</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 150. Inv. Broj: 12705.
- <sup>68</sup> Said record could not be found among the documents.
- <sup>69</sup> The township belongs under Magyarkanizsa's administration; its name in Hungarian is Ilonafalu.
- <sup>70</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 150. Inv. Broj: 12706.
- <sup>71</sup> Hungarian troops received orders upon arrival to expel the settlers. The High Military Council's orders contained the general regulations and principles for internment. For more information: Enikő A. Sajti: *Impériumváltások, revízió, kisebbség. Magyarok a Délvidéken 1918–1947*. Budapest, 2004. pp. 187–198.
- <sup>72</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjige: 63–64.
- <sup>73</sup> The word *presudjen* means a person who was liquidated without being convicted, whilst *osudjen* indicated conviction. During the course of my research I have encountered cases where the word *presudjen* did not mean liquidation. In regards to this, see footnote number 48.
- <sup>74</sup> For more information, see: Momčilo Mitrović: *Narodni i državni neprijatelji u Srbiji posle Drugoga svetskog rata*. In: Hans Georg Fleck – Igor Graovac (ed.): *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*. 4. Red. Zagreb, 2002. pp. 249–266.
- <sup>75</sup> For more information see: Cvetković, 2006
- <sup>76</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 589. A–G; Kut.: 590. H–M; Kit.: 591. M–C; Kut.: 592. C–Ž.
- <sup>77</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 65. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja. 1–4340; Knjiga: 66. Registar Narodnih Neprijatelja. 4341–8640.
- <sup>78</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court, Zenta. Vp. 480/1945. Court proceedings against István Apró, Magyarkanizsa resident, for confiscation of assets. Court Martial's verdict 229/44.

- <sup>79</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 593. 1944–1945. Presude vojnih sudova. Broj 176/44.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> On October 31st, 1944 armed men arrived from Magyarkanizsa to Adorján and executed 50 people on the Tisza bank. For more information, see: Forró 2007. pp. 73–78.
- <sup>83</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 593. 1372/45.
- <sup>84</sup> TLZ. F. 127. Zenta District Court K. 406/1945 The criminal trial against Aleksandar Oluški and his cohorts.
- <sup>85</sup> TLZ. F. 127. Zenta District Court K. 406/1945 The criminal trial against Aleksandar Oluški and his cohorts. The Magyarkanizsa Local People's Council's Criminal Department's reply number 812/1945. to the court's request.
- <sup>86</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>87</sup> The list also contains victims from Adorján, Tóthfalu and Oromhegyes.
- <sup>88</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 505. Veće Statističara za srez Subotica. Mesno povereništvo Stara Kanjiža. Broj:171.
- <sup>89</sup> The list is missing the name of József Németh, levente instructor, who was murdered after the arrival of the partisans.
- <sup>90</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>91</sup> The list also contains the names of victims from Királyhalom.
- <sup>92</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 503. 1945: 218–429. Broj: 303.
- <sup>93</sup> Local documents that were drawn up based on the lists from Martonos and Horgos have the registration number of the Zenta document on them written by hand at the bottom of the page and the date of October 22nd, 1945 under it.
- <sup>94</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 504. 1945: 150–247. Broj: 240.
- <sup>95</sup> VL. F. 183. Kut.: 80. 1944–46. Strogo poverljivo. 1946: 1–16. Broj: 3.
- <sup>96</sup> Szabadka 273, Bajmok 26, Zenta 79, Ada 21, Martonos 36, Horgos 42, Magyarkanizsa 103, Mohol 159, Topolya 42, Pacsír 8, Moravica 4, Zsednik 6, Kishegyes 2, Radanovac 9, Királyhegy 8, Hajdúkovó 5, Tavankút 4, Verusic 1, Mélykút 1.
- <sup>97</sup> VL. F. 183. Knjiga: 73. Knjiga evidencije streljanih ratnih zločinaca 1944–45.
- <sup>98</sup> The ledger contains names from the areas of Bácska, Bánát and Baranya. The vast majority of the Hungarian names are from Bácska.
- <sup>99</sup> Josip Broz Tito's regulation was made public on October 17th, which was in effect temporarily until February 15th, 1945. The military administration was divided into the Bácska-Baranya and the Bánát zones, as well as local military headquarters, city and village military bases.
- <sup>100</sup> For more information, see: Tibor Molnár: *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948*. Szeged – Zenta, 2011. (Henceforth: Molnár, 2011)
- <sup>101</sup> Molnár, 2011. p. 5.
- <sup>102</sup> TLZ. F. 109. 3.d. dok. 277. Broj: 11.
- <sup>103</sup> Tibor Molnár: *A zentai városparancsnokság válogatott iratai 1944–1948*. Szeged–Zenta, 2011.
- <sup>104</sup> Lajos Forró – Tibor Molnár: *Tragikus emberi sorsok 1944-ből a partizániratok tükrében*. Szeged – Zenta, 2013. (Henceforth: Forró – Molnár, 2013) pp. 20–22.
- <sup>105</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential 42/1945.
- <sup>106</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945.
- <sup>107</sup> Mirkó Milutinovic's disappearance was reported by his mother, Viktória Vajda of Magyarkanizsa on May 14th, 1945. According to her statement, her son left Zombor for Magyarkanizsa but never arrived and was never heard from again.
- <sup>108</sup> The number of persons liquidated from Magyarkanizsa identified by name, to date, is 49, in Adorján, 57, Oromhegyes, 14 and Tóthfalu, 3.
- <sup>109</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number:117/1945/1.

- <sup>110</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945/10.
- <sup>111</sup> TLZ. F. 115. Municipality People's Commission, Magyarkanizsa. Criminal Department. Reference Number: 117/1945/48.
- <sup>112</sup> See also: District Court, Zenta. Military Court Documents. 1945. S. 1139/45. Criminal proceedings against Milutin Preradović, Magyarkanizsa resident.
- <sup>113</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 21.
- <sup>114</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential. 132/45.
- <sup>115</sup> She is probably referring to two members of the gendarmerie.
- <sup>116</sup> The interrogation took place at the town hall, where the prison also was, that is why Mrs. Sándor Sörös uses the word "there".
- <sup>117</sup> TLZ. F. 132. District People's Commission, Zenta. Presidency, Confidential. 132/45. The records based on Mrs. Sándor Sörös' report filed on August 28th.
- <sup>118</sup> Péter Sörös' personal account In: Forró, 2007. p. 128.
- <sup>119</sup> Zakon o konfiskaciji imovine i o izvršenju konfiskacije. Službeni list, DFJ 40/1945. In 1946 the law was confirmed and complemented: Zakon o potvrdi i izmenama i dopunama Zakona o konfiskaciji imovine i o izvršenju konfiskacije. Službeni list, FNRJ 61/1946, 74/1946. See also: Forró – Molnár, 2013. pp. 26–31.
- <sup>120</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court, Zenta. Vp. 1046/1945. Registry of War Criminals. (Spisak ratnih zločinaca.)
- <sup>121</sup> It was people who had been liquidated that were reported missing.
- <sup>122</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>123</sup> Accurately: District People's Tribunal
- <sup>124</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>125</sup> Accurately: Regional People's Tribunal
- <sup>126</sup> Zakon o proglašenju nestalih lica za umrla i o dokazivanju smrti. Službeni list, FNRJ 24/1952.
- <sup>127</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 32.
- <sup>128</sup> The first proposal was handed in by Mrs. András Kovács, Magyarkanizsa resident, on July 30th, 1946, in the case of her father, István Koncz, who had been liquidated.
- <sup>129</sup> Forró – Molnár, 2013. p. 32.
- <sup>130</sup> The document erroneously contains the name of András Kovács, because the person who handed in the proposal wished to initiate her father being declared dead.
- <sup>131</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. Vp. 1286/1946. The case of István Koncz, Magyarkanizsa resident declared death.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>133</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. R. 711/1952. The procedure to declare Miklós Vajda, Adorján resident dead. The records are dated December 18th, 1952.
- <sup>134</sup> TLZ. F. 127. District Court. Zenta. R. 711/1952. The procedure to declare Miklós Vajda, Adorján resident dead. The records are dated December 18th, 1952.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 37.