

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHORITIES OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA TOWARDS THE REFUGEES IN SARAJEVO DURING 1941 AND 1942\*

Ajdin Muhedinović

Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za historiju  
muhedinovicajdin@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) produced a period of extreme interethnic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting in forced population migrations, both temporary and permanent. In eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily from insurgent and later predominantly Chetnik attacks, thousands of Muslim refugees fleeing from death sought refuge in ‘safer’ parts of the NDH. Sarajevo, as the closest and, in a wider circle, the biggest city quickly became refugees’ central gathering and rescue point. This paper aims to track the main course of attitude primarily of the local NDH authorities towards the Muslim refugees from autumn 1941 until mid-1942, and the establishment of the Alipašin Most refugee camp.

**Keywords:** Sarajevo, refugees, Alipašin Most, Great county of Vrhbosna, Merhamet, NDH, Office for Refugees

**Apstrakt:** Uspostavom Nezavisne Države Hrvatske (NDH) na prostoru Bosne i Hercegovine nastupio je period ekstremnog međunacionalnog nasilja, što je dovelo do prisilnih migracija stanovništva, privremenih i trajnih. Na istoku Bosne i Hercegovine, najprije od ustaničkih, a kasnije

---

\* This article was created as part of the project *Sarajevo – Center or Periphery?* which was realized in the period from 2019 to 2021 at the University of Sarajevo – Institute of History with the financial support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Sarajevo Canton.

dominantno četničkih napada, hiljade muslimanskih izbjeglica bježeći od smrti tražile su spas u “sigurnijim” dijelovima Nezavisne Države Hrvatske. Sarajevo kao najbliži, a u širem okruženju i najveći grad, vrlo brzo postaje centralno mjesto okupljanja izbjeglica koje u njemu traže zaštitu. U ovom radu nastoji se prezentirati i analizirati glavna crta odnosa prvenstveno lokalnog nivoa vlasti NDH prema muslimanskim izbjeglicama od jeseni 1941. do sredine 1942. godine, odnosno do osnivanja logora Alipašin Most.

**Ključne riječi:** Sarajevo, izbjeglice, Alipašin Most, Velika župa Vrhbosna, “Merhamet”, NDH, Ured za izbjeglice

After the occupation, Sarajevo and its inhabitants had to quickly adjust to the new, wartime, everyday life. The first days after the capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia provoked mixed feelings, and fear and concern certainly prevailed, given the military regime that ruled the streets of Sarajevo. Authorities in various ways propagated complete control and subjugation of the population, promising in return security, peace, order, and progress. In his memoirs, Avdo Humo described the situation in Sarajevo as an “atmosphere of unrest” where Serbs and Jews whose property was heavily looted, were fired in large numbers, and “normal supply to the city was interrupted. There was a serious sense of food shortages. Food speculation was starting to take hold.”<sup>1</sup> Such circumstances in the spring of 1941, however, did not emphasize strongly enough all the war horrors and difficulties that would befall the citizens of Sarajevo in the Second World War. As early as the autumn of 1941, Sarajevo would face the problem of refugees, mostly Muslims from eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, who sought to find refuge in this city. In this paper, the aim is to outline how Sarajevo turned into a “refugee centre” and to point out the attitude of the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) towards this population.

---

<sup>1</sup> Avdo Humo, *Moja generacija*, Zenica: Vrijeme, 2019, 347.

## Sarajevo as a refugee centre

Developments in eastern Bosnia since the establishment of the NDH were extremely detrimental to the Muslim population of this area. Adherence to the NDH by part of the Muslim political elite and intelligentsia is an extremely complex issue. When looking at the causes of such a relationship, it can be concluded that certain elements of Muslim citizenship from national and political beliefs accept the NDH and the Ustasha regime of which they are an integral part or cooperate with it. However, for the most part, these are political groups that after the “Cvetković-Maček” agreement developed complete animosity towards the previous state legal framework, the collapse of which must have caused positive feelings, and the establishment of any new state legal framework, in this case, NDH, provided a certain opportunity for Muslim politics to find a new, more favourable position for itself. The promises that came to the Muslims and their position in the Ustasha ideology, at the very beginning, were tempting and gave them hope that the new state legal framework could be more favourable.<sup>2</sup> However, it quickly turned out that the circumstances of the emergence of the NDH, as well as the Ustasha policy towards Muslims, had nothing to do with the earlier state legal frameworks and regimes in which Muslims had to find their political position. The NDH was a totalitarian and extremely nationalist creation in which an “Ustasha utopia” was sought with extreme violence.<sup>3</sup> The Ustasha’s extreme nationalist policy toward the Serb population manifested itself in Chetnik’s revenge in eastern Bosnia against the Muslim population, and the NDH proved completely incapable, not only

<sup>2</sup> More on the Ustasha view of Muslims in: Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna država Hrvatska 1941–1945*, Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber – Školska knjiga, 1977, 196–201; Nada Kisić-Kolanović, *Muslimani i hrvatski nacionalizam 1941–1945*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2009, 19–58; about the impact of the Cvetković-Maček Agreement on Muslim politics, see: Dana Begić, “Pokret za autonomiju Bosne i Hercegovine u uslovima sporazuma Cvetković-Maček”, in: *Prilozi*, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju radničkog pokreta Sarajevo, 1966, no. 2, 177–191; Adnan Jahić, *Vrijeme izazova. Bošnjaci u prvoj polovini XX stoljeća*, Zagreb – Sarajevo: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju – Bošnjački institut, 2014, 326–329.

<sup>3</sup> Xavier Bougarel, *Nadživjeti carstva. Islam, nacionalni identitet i politička lojalnost u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2020, 109.

of maintaining power in all segments, but also of protecting the civilian population.<sup>4</sup>

In the autumn of 1941, and especially at the beginning of 1942, a large number of Muslims from eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina were forced to flee due to the Chetnik attacks. One of the examples of the suffering of the Muslim civilian population of this area is the case of Foča, which was handed over to the Chetniks by the Italians at the beginning of December 1941.<sup>5</sup> This case, as well as many others in this area, caused large waves of forced migration of Muslims, who remained completely unprotected and left at the mercy of Chetnik detachments.

Considering that in this paper we follow the attitude of the Ustasha authorities towards Muslim refugees in the area of Sarajevo, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the first large group of refugees came to Sarajevo on July 2, 1941, due to insurgent activities in eastern Herzegovina.<sup>6</sup> From that time until the end of the war, Sarajevo would be a central place for Muslim refugees, mainly from eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was severely affected by Chetnik crimes and the persecution of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Daniela Simon, *Religion und Gewalt. Ostkroatien und Nordbosnien 1941–1945*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019, 150.

<sup>5</sup> Sanela Schmid, *Deutsche und italienische Besatzung im Unabhängigen Stadt Kroatien 1941 bis 1943/1945*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019, 162; on the crimes that took place after the Chetnik occupation of Foča, but also other places in the east and southeast of Bosnia and Herzegovina, more in: Vladimir Dedijer – Antun Miletić, *Genocid nad Muslimanima 1941–1945*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990, 60–145; Smail Čekić, *Genocid nad Bošnjacima u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Sarajevo: Udruženje muslimana za antigenocidne aktivnosti, 1996; Enver Redžić, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Sarajevo: OKO, 1998; Enver Redžić, *Muslimansko autonomaštvo i 13. SS divizija*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987, 35–39; Safet Bandžović, *Ratne tragedije Muslimana*, Novi Pazar: Sandžački odbor za zaštitu ljudskih prava i sloboda – Udruženje pisaca Sandžaka, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Miloš Hamović, *Izbjeglice u Bosni i Hercegovini 1941–1945*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 1994, 237; Also, Avdo Humo states in his memoirs that the first groups of refugees began arriving in Sarajevo immediately after the war broke out. Humo states that on the second day of the war, “Sarajevo (began) to be filled with refugees.” However, without a more detailed description of these refugees, we can assume that this is a movement of a very heterogeneous group, partly caused by the well-known flight of King Peter II with the Government of General Dušan Simović, but also people who headed for Sarajevo due to war, fleeing uncertainty and hoping for better happiness in the city itself. A. Humo, *Moja generacija*, 345.

Muslim population throughout the war where the total population in the city reached up to 115,000 inhabitants.<sup>7</sup>

From a memo by the county executive of the Great County of Vrhbosna, dated November 18, 1941, we have information that the number of refugees in the entire county was higher than 15,000.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the epidemiological report of the Institute of Hygiene (*Higijenski zavod*) for December 1941 contains information that between 13,000 and 14,000 refugees stayed in Sarajevo during that period.<sup>9</sup> This data shows that refugees, even in this period, made up a significant percentage of the total population of Sarajevo, which, according to estimations, in 1941 had about 80,000 inhabitants.<sup>10</sup> Such circumstances must, in any case, have had a strong effect on the local government. The population of Sarajevo also had to deal with the new situation because the streets of the city were flooded with refugees. What we do know is that a large number of citizens approached to assist refugees, especially through humanitarian societies such as “Merhamet” (Turkish: ‘for Mercy’) among Muslims. However, the documents also record certain abuses of the situation, where the local population, at the expense of refugees, sought to obtain some benefit from the city institutions that were supposed to help refugees with food, clothing, and other necessities.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Marko Atilla Hoare, *Bosanski muslimani u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zenica: Vrijeme, 2019, 368. Muslim refugees from western and northern Bosnia came in very small numbers to Sarajevo, mostly to places north of the Sava and to Zagreb.

<sup>8</sup> Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine (hereinafter: ABiH), Fund: Velika župa Vrhbosna (hereinafter: VŽV), box 18, sig. 11.288.

<sup>9</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 1, sig. 83/42.

<sup>10</sup> The data that Sarajevo has 87,000 inhabitants was reached by the City Appropriation Office, which issued consumer cards to the inhabitants of Sarajevo to better regulate the distribution of food products. As stated, “according to the completed consumer cards, based on the submitted applications, it was established that Sarajevo has 87,000 consumers”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 28. juni 1941, 4; See also: *Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31. marta 1931 godine knjiga II*, Beograd: Opšta državna statistika, 1938; and on general demographic trends more in: Seka Brkljača, “Bosna i Hercegovina u prvim godinama Drugog svjetskog rata od 1939. do 1941. godine”, in: *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: Novi pogledi, zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2012, 14-16.

<sup>11</sup> In a letter dated September 2, 1941, sent to the City Government, the county executive of the Great County of Vrhbosna explicitly emphasizes that he has information that individuals use a difficult

During 1941 and 1942, refugees stayed in Sarajevo, mostly in groups, in facilities designated by the authorities.<sup>12</sup> These are mostly abandoned buildings, schools, student dormitories, and other suitable premises, but a number of refugees, due to the catastrophic conditions in collective housing, tried to organize private accommodation for themselves.<sup>13</sup> This way of life in Sarajevo was possible only for those refugees who had enough funds to afford it or acquaintances and relatives who provided them with additional assistance; therefore, it is a small part of the refugee population. Accommodation problems were not the biggest challenge for either the refugees or the local government. By the spring and summer of 1941, Sarajevo was in big trouble when it came to feeding the city's population.<sup>14</sup> The arrival of refugees made this problem even greater. The chronic lack of food caused a number of other problems, deepening the existing ones, especially when it comes to the health condition of refugees who had great problems with ordinary diseases, but especially typhus and other infectious diseases that ruled Sarajevo in certain periods. During 1941 and 1942, two waves of the typhus epidemic were recorded in Sarajevo. The first lasted from September to February 1942, and the second began very intensively in March 1942.<sup>15</sup> The epidemiological report states that at this time in Sarajevo, 253 people were infected with typhus, and of that number, 184 were

---

moment to obtain a certain benefit and visit institutions and private houses. In that sense, the City Government was asked to "take care of these refugees, and to put this unfair work as successfully as possible, so that certain institutions are instructed on the work of the committee that will take care of supply and the needs of these refugees." Historijski muzej (hereinafter: HM), Fond Nezavisne Države Hrvatske (hereinafter: NDH), box 6, sig. 2063; *The Sarajevski novi list* reports that the Great County of Vrhbosna has noticed that an extremely large number of beggars who have nothing to do with refugees have been spotted on the streets of Sarajevo, pretending to be and taking alms from citizens. "Obavijest Velike župe Vrhbosna Uredu za bjegunce", *Sarajevski novi list*, 27. novembar 1941, 4.

<sup>12</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 246.

<sup>13</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 1, sig. 83/42.

<sup>14</sup> Minela Radušić, "Proljeće u znaku promjena: Sarajevo 1941. godine", in: *Između rata i mira. Sarajevo u prelomnim godinama 20. stoljeća*, zbornik radova, ed. Husnija Kamberović, Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2020, 63.

<sup>15</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 8, sig. 2710.

refugees.<sup>16</sup> It is for these reasons that refugees were labelled as the main source of infection and as the main problem in solving it.

The local authorities had a big problem with supplying refugees with clothes and shoes from the very beginning of their arrival in Sarajevo. Authorities urged residents to donate clothing and footwear voluntarily, but the response was not so great as to meet the needs of refugees who were mostly barefoot, facing a winter they were not prepared for.<sup>17</sup> The need for clothing in October 1941 was best shown by the instruction of the County executive of Vrhbosna to the City government that in order to provide for the poor and vulnerable population, he had the right to access “measures for forced collection, i.e., redemption”.<sup>18</sup>

These conditions and environment were extremely difficult for the refugees and it is only natural that they tried to take care of themselves. In an epidemiological report from the Institute of Hygiene in early 1942, trying to point out the indiscipline of refugees, it was stated that a large number of them left their accommodation without permission, even those who were isolated due to the infection, all in order to go to work.<sup>19</sup> Such actions of refugees unequivocally indicate that they were dissatisfied with what was offered to them and the way they were treated, especially in collective accommodation where unbearable hygienic conditions prevailed. What further affected the indiscipline of the refugees was the incompetence and frivolity of the institutions in charge of caring for them. In the epidemiological report for March 1942, it is stated that “in one dwelling there was a case of 100 new refugees, among whom there were six cases of spotted

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 18, sig. 8482.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* The city government responded to this letter with a letter stating that such an action will not produce the wanted result for several reasons, and as the key reason, it stated that the Sarajevo Bazaar is poor and that, in addition, a series of actions for collecting clothing items were launched in Sarajevo, for many refugees, and those who have donated what they had, use it to the last possibilities. Also, the City government did not agree with the method of forced confiscation and considered that this must first be legally regulated in terms of exactly how many items of clothing an individual may possess so that the surplus can be confiscated. ABiH, VŽV, box 18, sig. 11.060.

<sup>19</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 3, sig. 991.

fever, while that dwelling had been under quarantine for a full four months, and the quarantine period was just those days”.<sup>20</sup> This example is not the only one that illustrates the level of disorganization of government institutions, especially at the local level, which certainly contributed greatly to the growing dissatisfaction of refugees and their desperate position in Sarajevo during this period.

### **The attitude of the NDH authorities towards refugees until the establishment of the Alipašin Most camp**

For the newly established NDH government in Sarajevo, the intensified arrival of refugees represented an enormous problem that local levels of government were unable to solve on their own. Upon the arrival of the first groups of refugees, the City government tried in an elementary sense to ensure food and temporary accommodation.<sup>21</sup> An article was published in the *Sarajevski novi list*, on September 3, stating that this was the first group of refugees “received by the Sarajevo city municipality” and that these “Muhajir families (Urdu: ‘Muslim immigrants’), when they rest, will return to their homes, since the action to calm down the areas they come from is in full swing and will be completed as soon as possible.”<sup>22</sup> This information is important because it indicates that there was an opinion that refugees from eastern Bosnia needed only temporary help and that their return home was believed to be very soon. However, it was only a poor understanding of the situation or a lack of desire for refugees to stay in Sarajevo for longer. The return of refugees to their homeland was difficult to imagine because the NDH could not return the territories occupied by partisans and Chetniks so quickly under its control. In addition, the refugees were to return to an area that had suffered severe material destruction, where their homes and farms had been severely damaged.

---

<sup>20</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 8, sig. 2710.

<sup>21</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 239.

<sup>22</sup> “Sarajevska občina prima muhadžire iz istočnih krajeva”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 3. septembar 1941, 4.



It turned out very quickly that refugees would not be a temporary phenomenon in Sarajevo, and the City government cast the problem adrift, dealing with refugees from group to group and calling on the citizens and humanitarian societies such as “Hrvatski radiša” and “Merhamet” to get involved in their care.<sup>23</sup> This way of working did not bring much success. The associations could not act to the extent necessary to take care of all the refugees who, without clothes and shoes, and mostly without accommodation, survived the winter of 1941/1942, when the temperature exceeded –25 degrees Celsius.<sup>24</sup> The establishment of the Committee for Refugees at “Hrvatski Radiša” did not contribute to the improvement of the situation with refugees either, whereas the Committee itself could not take any decisions and did not have sufficient financial resources to carry out the tasks entrusted to it.<sup>25</sup> This move proved to be just a way for the local government to shift the burden and responsibility for the refugee situation to someone else, and on September 24, the city council informed the Committee that their refugee care would end on October 1 and that it would be fully transferred to it.<sup>26</sup> Such (dis) concern by the local government institutions had an extremely bad effect on this population, so a certain part of the refugees decided to go to work in Nazi Germany as the only option that kept them away from inhumane

---

<sup>23</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 239-240; Historijski arhiv Sarajevo (hereinafter: HAS), fund: Merhamet (hereinafter: M), box 4, sig. 220. It should also be noted that since the appearance of the first refugees, the Islamic Community has been involved in the collection and distribution of aid on its initiative, where through its highest bodies, Reis-ul-ulema and Ulema-Majlis, encouraged local imams to collect aid for Herzegovinian refugees who were among the first casualties of insurgents. “Sabirna akcija za stradalnike muslimane koje su četnici napali u Istočnoj Hercegovini”, *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice*, 1941, no. 8, 242-243.

<sup>24</sup> Samija Sarić, “Zapisnik Ureda za izbjeglice Velike župe Vrhbosna u Sarajevu od 1. ožujka 1942. godine”, in: *Glasnik arhiva i Društva arhivskih radnika Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo: Društvo arhivskih radnika Bosne i Hercegovine, 1993, no. 32, 65.

<sup>25</sup> Through humanitarian work, the Committee for Refugees at Hrvatski radiša managed to assist around 600,000 HRK during 1941. “Skrb ustaškog odbora za postradale”, *Osvit*, no. 5, 22. 3. 1942, 5.

<sup>26</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 240.

living conditions, but also their return to their homeland.<sup>27</sup> The NDH authorities did not prevent such a move by the refugees, on the contrary, it can be said that they used it as one of the mechanisms for resolving the refugee problem and the humanitarian crisis they found increasingly difficult to deal with. This is confirmed by the instruction of the Ministry of the Association to the local authorities in Sarajevo, which states that “refugees and foreign citizens can, regardless of age and gender, go to work abroad.”<sup>28</sup> It is important to point out that refugees and foreign nationals are the only two categories of population that could leave the NDH without any conditions and restrictions, and the fact that refugees are placed on the same level with foreign nationals in the NDH speaks of the government’s perception and attitude towards this category of society, that is, about how much hindrance and burden the Ustasha regime was.

The large influx of refugees from the autumn of 1941 immediately showed to all levels of government that humanitarian societies, though able to do a lot, could not be the backbone for resolving the refugee crisis. Therefore, the higher authorities began to look for a new solution and found it in the establishment of the Office for Refugees at the Great County of Vrhbosna on November 5, 1941.<sup>29</sup> Thus began the second phase in the care of refugees in which the NDH authorities had far more participation, i.e., the focus shifted from humanitarian societies to the level of the Greater County of Vrhbosna, which should have contributed to a faster, more efficient, and systematic way to resolve the crisis. This, however, did not materialize in practice. The chronic lack of funds could not be compensated even by the Great County of Vrhbosna, which asked the Government for additional funds and proposed to introduce the payment of small contributions on all postal items, train tickets and tickets to cinemas and theatres, and to transfer all donations to the Office for Refugees of the Great County of Vrhbosna because the funds at their disposal “are so small that they are not enough for

---

<sup>27</sup> Emily Greble, *Sarajevo 1941–1945*, Sarajevo: University press – izdanja Magistrat, 2020, 158.

<sup>28</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 15, sig. 15.816.

<sup>29</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 19, sig. 10.069.

any part of the diet, let alone accommodation, firewood, clothes and shoes for refugees.”<sup>30</sup> In response, the Government stated all the aid and finances that had been approved until that moment and explained that there would be no new contributions.<sup>31</sup> To such a negative response, the Office for Refugees had to devise a way to obtain additional funds and contributions that would ensure the survival of refugees during the winter of 1941/1942. Therefore, in December 1941, a large action was launched to collect humanitarian donations in Sarajevo, which was presented to the population “not as charity, but as a duty.”<sup>32</sup> This approach had a partially positive impact, as the city’s population responded to the request for assistance, but in the long run, it had an unfavourable effect on the population’s attitude towards refugees. Due to the incompetence of the authorities, the citizens of Sarajevo had to give refugees a part of their scarce resources which over time necessarily led to the creation of negative emotions and perceptions concerning refugees. Also, the fact that the local government returned to cooperation with humanitarian societies through the mentioned actions of collecting humanitarian aid, partially relieved higher levels of government that gave incentives to various organizations and humanitarian societies to work even harder on this issue.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 1, sig. 11.568.

<sup>31</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box1, sig. 23.049.

<sup>32</sup> “Akcija prikupljanja ‘Pomoći’ u Sarajevu”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 11. decembar 1941, 4. Such actions were also supported by various Muslim social organizations in the way they organized various religious activities which refugees would also attend and where believers would be encouraged and reminded of their obligation to help the vulnerable. The “El-Hidaje” District Committee, in Sarajevo, organized mevlud for gathering and bringing together refugees and the local population. “Posjeta muhadžirima”, *El-Hidaje*, 28. januar 1942, 124.

It is also worth noting that the people of Sarajevo were almost forced to participate and help other actions in which the Ustasha government called for the collection of material and financial resources. In December 1941, when the fundraising campaign for refugees was in full swing, Sarajevans had to give part of their resources to the wounded homeland, Ustasha, and German soldiers, and in the *Sarajevski novi list*, the inhabitants of Sarajevo were publicly called to help equip the newly formed Ustasha unit and contribute all the material means they do not need. “Sarajlije su se pokazali”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 20. decembar 1941, 5; “Sarajlije jeste li odpočeli sa sakupljanjem starih stvari?”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 12. decembar, 1941, 5.

<sup>33</sup> E. Greble, *Sarajevo*, 160. The Ulema Majlis, “El-Hidaje”, and other Muslim organizations and individuals gathered around the Committee of National Salvation, had close cooperation with the

One of the biggest donations made by the Ustasha regime for Muslim refugees in Sarajevo and “Merhamet” as the organization that took the most care of them is the transfer of the textile factory “Šik (Chic)”, which was previously owned by Avram Levi Sadić.<sup>34</sup> The news about the awarding of this factory to the company “Merhamet”, presented in the media as “a great gift, (is) the greatest recognition of the work that has wiped out and that will wipe away many tears of the poorest of our beautiful Šeher (Persian and Turkish: ‘city’).”<sup>35</sup> However, in practice it looked a little different, the factory worked on supplying refugees with clothes and other textile products, but rarely at full capacity because it often lacked raw materials.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, even these moves of the highest levels of government of the NDH, which were presented as a “rare and rich gift”,<sup>37</sup> and as a great help to society, cannot be considered as an organized, structured, and thoughtful way of acting in resolving the refugee crisis given the reach they had.

In order to motivate and ultimately succeed in terms of involving Sarajevans in numerous humanitarian actions, the authorities in NDH used propaganda texts in the local press. In one of such texts, the information was used that in Germany, citizens collected four billion Reich marks in voluntary contributions to help their homeland in the war, and of the size and importance of the funds raised “what is even greater is their ideal value and indestructible faith that the entire nation is connected with all layers by

charity “Merhamet” and thus had the greatest importance. Xavier Bougarel, “Islam, a ‘Convenient Religion’? The Case of the 13th SS Division Handschar”, in: *Combatants of Muslim Origin in European Armies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Xavier Bougarel – Raphaëlle Branche – Cloe Drieu, London – New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, 139.

<sup>34</sup> “Sarajevska tvornica tekstila ‘Šik’ dodijeljena dobrotvornom društvu ‘Merhamet’”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 23. 12. 1941, 4; “‘Merhamet’ – Izrabljivanje naše radnice u prošlosti – ‘Merhamet’ za našu gradsku sirotinju i za muhadžire – Dar poglavnika i nova uprava”, *Osvit*, 8. 3. 1942, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> The shortage of raw materials was more pronounced as the war progressed. Materials were becoming increasingly difficult to access, and there were more and more homeless refugees. That is why, for example, in the middle of 1944, this factory worked with “barely 10% of its normal work, capacity, although it should work even more.” HAS, M, box 3, sig. 1201.

<sup>37</sup> “Sarajevska tvornica tekstila ‘Šik’ dodijeljena dobrotvornom društvu ‘Merhamet’”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 23. 12. 1941, 4.

a common better destiny.”<sup>38</sup> These actions, but also the homogeneity of the German nation in which “the thought *one for all, all for one!* settled in every single German”, justify the military “successes” of Germany.”<sup>39</sup> Such texts aimed to achieve the homogenization of the population and to motivate further aid of all the activities of the Ustasha army and civilian authorities. However, Sarajevans were also forced to help refugees in other cities, such as Mostar.<sup>40</sup> Particular attention was paid to the role of Muslim women in the care of refugees, primarily the acceptance of orphans, which was often pointed out in a negative sense. That is, it was pointed out that Muslim women in this aspect must make a much greater contribution, which individuals considered insufficient.<sup>41</sup>

When, already in the winter of 1941, found themselves in an extremely difficult situation, left to solve the refugee problem on their own, the Office for Refugees launched several moves aimed exclusively at the Muslims of Sarajevo. Before Eid, an appeal was sent to the “Muslim citizens” to hand over their sacrifices and sacrificial meat to the Office for Refugees, which will also direct them to the kitchens where meals are prepared for refugees.<sup>42</sup> A conference was held, in the organization of the great executive of the Great County of Vrhbosna, Ismet-beg Gavrankapetanović, where wealthy Sarajevo citizens were invited. Considering that the list of all those who responded to the county executive with the number of their contributions was presented in the *Sarajevski novi list* it is evident that this is almost exclusively the Muslim elite of Sarajevo, in which Gavrankapetanović

---

<sup>38</sup> “Njemački je narod žrtvovao dobrovoljno u osam zimskih pomoći preko 4 milijarde RM”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 12. 12. 1941, 8.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> The citizens of Sarajevo were required to donate a certain amount of clothing, food, and ultimately money for refugees in Mostar, although for several months they have been intensively and regularly donating material and funds to refugees in Sarajevo. In the end, in addition to material funds, 9,000 kuna was collected in this action for Mostar refugees. “Skrb za nemoćnike u Mostaru”, *Osvit*, br. 4, 15. 3. 1942, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Adnan Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini (1908–1950)*, Zagreb: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju, 2017, 390-391.

<sup>42</sup> “Apel muslimanskom građanstvu”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 28. decembar 1941, 4.

obviously had the highest hopes to provide any additional finances to help refugees.<sup>43</sup>

At the beginning of 1942, the Office for Refugees of the Great County Vrhbosna, in addition to the lack of finances, also encountered the demand for debts incurred with various institutions with which they cooperated in assisting refugees. The funds available to the Office for Refugees from its establishment until February 10, 1942 “amounted to exactly 2,300,000 kuna, of which 1 million kuna were paid to the Appropriation Office immediately upon receipt of these funds.”<sup>44</sup> The same report from the Office for Refugees stated that the indicated amount of money covered about 2 kuna per day, per refugee, although they calculated that they needed 11 kuna without heating.<sup>45</sup> This is perhaps the best indicator of the gap between the available and necessary means to ensure the minimum living conditions for refugees. Due to the accumulated debts, the City Appropriation Office requested, from the Office for Refugees, an urgent payment of a part of the total debt of 1,477,253 kuna.<sup>46</sup> Given that the debt could not be paid, and that the City Appropriation Office threatened to suspend all groceries, there was a real possibility of interruption of work and the provision of any form of assistance to refugees. A commission that was formed at the end of February 1942 tried to solve the problem by visiting all the refugee settlements and determining the key problems that existed. For this difficult situation between the Office for Refugees and the City Appropriation Office, the commission tried to solve it by sending the Ministry of the Association 3,000,000 kuna to the Office for Refugees, which would immediately pay the debt of 2,058,188.10 kuna, and depositing the rest in the current account of the City Appropriation Office while, at the same time, Ministry of Crafts, Wholesale and Trade provided the Appropriation

<sup>43</sup> “Uspjela konferencija u velikoj župi u svrhu pomaganja naših stradalnika”, *Sarajevski novi list*, 18. 12. 1941, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Bošnjački institut (hereinafter: BI), Drugi svjetski rat – ratni zločini (hereinafter: DRS-RZ), 3/VII-17.

<sup>45</sup> BI, DSR-RZ, 3/VII-17.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

Office with the procurement of all these basic materials and food supplies that were spent on refugees in order to rehabilitate the poor supply situation and provide food for the population of Sarajevo.<sup>47</sup>

Precisely because of this policy towards refugees, the period of the first half of 1942 was one of the most difficult stages for refugees in Sarajevo. The epidemiological situation in the city deteriorated dramatically, and a large number of people on the streets posed an increasing security threat to local authorities, primarily the German military. In such circumstances, the German military authorities decided to remove the refugees from Sarajevo and sent such an order to the NDH authorities.<sup>48</sup> German interference in the internal affairs of the Independent State of Croatia, as a rule, introduced a certain dynamic into the process of resolving any issue. It was the same with the refugees in Sarajevo. It was unacceptable for the Germans to welcome another winter with streets full of refugees and an unrestrained epidemic of typhus and other infectious diseases. For this reason, the NDH authorities started implementing certain measures. One was to encourage and help refugees to return to their homes, thus trying to get rid of some of the refugees, but also to gain a double benefit by organizing agricultural activity in an area that was completely devastated at the time.<sup>49</sup> This measure was more of an “ideal option” for the Ustasha regime than it was actually feasible, possible, and useful for refugees because even those who decided to return found only devastated and destroyed homes and looted properties in late spring when they could hardly provide themselves with food for the coming winter.<sup>50</sup> The NDH authorities completely failed when it comes to supplying returnees to the affected areas. After the recapture of Foča, the return of refugees was intensified by the Ustashas and the occupying forces, and the population of the town was provided with 9,200 kg of corn.<sup>51</sup> This

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 256.

<sup>49</sup> HM, NDH, box 16, sig. 4231.

<sup>50</sup> BI, DSR-RZ, 1/IV-15

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*



problem was pointed out by the local authorities in Foča, who wrote to the Ministry of the Association that “all hope has been placed in higher authorities who knew that, this attacked and afflicted population has been starving for six months and that after the establishment of the Croatian government in Foča it will be possible to get at least the most necessary thing – and that is a piece of bread. It must be honestly admitted that this population – and especially the refugees – were terribly disappointed and all foreboding for the future when it is seen that after a month of establishing Croatian rule, just a single wagon of corn per 25,000 souls arrived ... Thus, the amount of food arrived for this month would be 0.2 dkg of corn per person – and for cash.”<sup>52</sup> This situation particularly affected refugees whose condition was “so desperate that the first cases of starvation began.”<sup>53</sup> This example supports the opinion that the main and basic goal was to relieve Sarajevo of refugees in all possible ways, without paying attention to the consequences of certain actions for the civilians.

Since the return to their homes was not possible to the extent that Sarajevo would be free of refugees, at the beginning of 1942, more and more work was done on moving refugees to “more peaceful areas.” This also turned out to be a bad solution, because in other large counties they did not want to accept this kind of problem. Thus, those from Bosanska Gradiška informed the Great County of Vrhbosna not to send new refugees because “everyone will return from where they were sent.”<sup>54</sup> The problem was that local refugees were quite sufficient in smaller communities and that the small number of refugees in places like Bosanska Gradiška caused major problems for local authorities. However, the situation in Sarajevo had to be resolved in a certain way, and in the spring of 1942, with increasing pressure from the German military authorities, it was decided to start building a refugee camp. In the epidemiological report of the Hygiene Institute for April, the idea of building a refugee camp in the area of Alipašin Most is

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 14, sig. 20.417.



mentioned for the first time.<sup>55</sup> The reason why the eviction of refugees from Sarajevo did not start earlier is the extremely difficult winter, which made it impossible to build barracks anywhere in the vicinity of the city. After the German and Croatian representatives visited the location of Alipašin Most, it was marked as suitable, for several reasons. First of all, near the camp, there was a railway station through which material for the construction of barracks would be brought from Zavidovići. In addition, there was a large Jewish agricultural land in the immediate vicinity on which it was planned for the refugees to perform certain agricultural activities.<sup>56</sup> The entire campaign for the eviction of refugees from Sarajevo was positively assessed and encouraged in the press as one of the basic ways to resolve this issue. In *Osvit*, it was propagated that “it is urgent to displace all unemployed refugees from the city to Ilidža and further west from *Sarajevsko polje* ...”, and the main reasons for this procedure are “... the sudden spread of infectious diseases among them.”<sup>57</sup>

The construction of the Alipašin Most camp began on April 11, when the first wagons with materials for the construction of barracks intended for the accommodation of refugees arrived from Zavidovići.<sup>58</sup> Simultaneously, with the start of the construction of the camp, the Office for Refugees organized a list of refugees via private houses to check their health and prepare them for deportation.<sup>59</sup> The deadline for the construction of the planned 30 barracks, June 16, could not be met, but that did not prevent the Germans from starting the eviction of refugees from Sarajevo towards Alipašin Most on May 20.<sup>60</sup> At that time, only nine barracks and basic support facilities were ready, which caused considerable overcrowding in the camp itself. Since certain places in eastern Bosnia were again placed under Ustasha control, large numbers of refugees went to their homes. More precisely,

<sup>55</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 8, sig. 2710.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> “O.Z: Srž izbjegličkog pitanja”, *Osvit*, br. 6, 29. 3. 1942, 4.

<sup>58</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 2, Sig. 1231.

<sup>59</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 9, Sig. 6952.

<sup>60</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 2, Sig. 1231.

8,474 refugees returned to their homes, while in May, 3,241 refugees were housed in the Alipašin Most camp.<sup>61</sup> By the end of the relocation process, which continued in the first days of June as well, the number rose to 4,445 refugees in the camp.<sup>62</sup>

These moves by local authorities, aided by German military authorities, “cleansed” Sarajevo of refugees. On June 1, 1942, only 406 remained out of 12,121 refugees that were present at the end of April.<sup>63</sup> However, the situation did not improve for the refugees who were transferred to the Alipašin Most camp. A letter sent by the deputy of county executive to the Ministry of the Association on May 28, 1942, shows all the incompetence and disorganization of the Ustasha authorities in resolving the refugee issue. Namely, the letter states that the newly opened camp in Alipašin Most and the refugees in it, but also about 2,000 refugees in Sarajevo who need to go to the camp, have not “received a single piece of bread except soup for more than eight days” and “... if the requested food does not arrive by Saturday 30. in May, the refugee camp in Alipašin Most will be disbanded.”<sup>64</sup> In addition, the staff and management of the camp, at the very beginning of its work, were not equipped as intended, which prevented them from providing the refugees with the services they needed. The situation continued to depend heavily on “Merhamet” and other Muslim societies and organizations such as “El-Hidaje” and “Mladi muslimani” (‘the Young Muslims’).<sup>65</sup> The attitude towards refugees in the camp did not improve significantly either. They were still credited with indiscipline and cultural backwardness, and it was not uncommon for refugees to be evicted from barracks to temporarily house the army.<sup>66</sup> The difficult situation persisted when it

---

<sup>61</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 16, sig. 13.597.

<sup>62</sup> M. Hamović, *Izbjeglice*, 257.

<sup>63</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 16, sig. 13.597.

<sup>64</sup> BI, DSR-RZ, 3/VII-17.

<sup>65</sup> Armina Omerika, *Islam in Bosnien-Herzegowina und die Netzwerke der Jungmuslime (1918–1983)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014, 94.

<sup>66</sup> Hajra Marjanović, “Teški uslovi snabdijevanja građana”, in: *Sarajevo u Revoluciji III*, ed. Nisim Albahari et al., Sarajevo: Istorijski arhiv Sarajevo, 1979, 725.

comes to the nutrition of refugees as well. From the camp ambulance, Dr. Isak Samokovlija informed the Great county of Vrhbosna that the situation with the nutrition of refugees is extremely dramatic because an increasing number of elderly people and children are ill and that they are going to die of starvation if something is not done soon because as explicitly stated, “nutrition of children is slightly better, but it does not exceed one-third of the required calories.”<sup>67</sup> A similar letter was sent by the camp manager to the Office for Refugees, focusing on about 1,500 children under the age of 15, whose condition he describes in these words:

“In addition to 5–10 dkg of bread given to them according to the sent flour, they used to get three, now two soups a day, made of greens, which, when put in 25 children’s pots cannot have any meaning or give colors, let alone density and taste, and a huge number of children’s guts cannot tolerate it at all, as during the months of exile they had to spoil the delicate digestive organs from lean food and corn. Under such conditions, any care is of little help, and the weakness of children, mortality, and disease rise sharply and take away more and more young lives who were on the verge of benefiting their community. In the crowds, they lie motionless, on the corners of the barracks, in the mothers’ laps, in the numb bodies roams the apparition of hunger and death, at a time when the entire nature around them is green, luring them from their mothers who silently bury them one by one.”<sup>68</sup>

Such letters to the local authorities of the Independent State of Croatia show that their primary interest was for the refugees to be removed from the streets of Sarajevo. Their relocation to the Alipašić Most camp did not improve the general situation. On the contrary, in certain segments, it has significantly worsened. Those refugees who returned home very quickly had to flee again and seek new refuge due to Chetnik’s attacks. Overall, the opening of this camp gave the NDH authorities only an illusion of an improved situation, but in reality, it further deepened the problem, especially in the later period when the influx of refugees reached its peak and

<sup>67</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 26, sig. 73/42.

<sup>68</sup> ABiH, VŽV, box 26, sig. 26.616.

when the camp became a place of extremely difficult living conditions.<sup>69</sup> For these reasons, but also the suffering of the Muslim population as a whole, a “Committee of National Salvation” was organized in Sarajevo on August 26, 1942, which included mostly prominent Muslim politicians and intellectuals, and the main goal was to contribute to the protection of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslims.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

The arrival of the first groups of refugees in Sarajevo in 1941 was not taken seriously enough by the local authorities of the Independent State of Croatia, who in that period focused on organizing and strengthening local government bodies and the started Uprising. With the first groups of refugees, the local authorities dealt with individual cases, taking care of each new group of refugees separately. However, in the autumn of 1941, the influx of refugees, caused by Chetnik’s crimes in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, was extremely large. At that time, the local authorities, in the absence of funds for significant undertakings, transferred the resolution of this issue to humanitarian associations. This very quickly proved to be completely inefficient because the humanitarian societies could not accommodate and take care of thousands of refugees, so the problem was returned to the local government bodies of the Independent State of

---

<sup>69</sup> The situation of refugees in Sarajevo was described by Esad Čengić: “Refugees who arrived in Sarajevo were housed in ruins and unfinished houses, in barracks that were not intended for housing, in abandoned apprenticeships and dormitories, as well as in scarce spaces in private houses. A large number of the children of these refugees were often placed outside Sarajevo, which separated the children from their parents. In addition to the general insecurity and hunger, the culmination of the troubles that these victims went through were epidemics of various diseases.” Esad Čengić, “Ponovo na partijskom radu u Sarajevu”, in: *Sarajevo u Revoluciji III*, ed. Nisim Albahari et al., Sarajevo: Istorijski Arhiv, 1979, 587.

<sup>70</sup> Rasim Hurem, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu 1941-1945*, Zagreb – Sarajevo: Plejada – BNZG – University Press, 2016, 271. More on the “Committee of National Salvation”, in: N. Kisić-Kolanović, *Muslimani i hrvatski nacionalizam*, 340-348; Adnan Jahić, “Bilješke o djelovanju bosanskohercegovačke uleme u Drugom svjetskom ratu (1941-1945)”, in: *Historijska misao*, 2015, no. 1, 181-206.

Croatia in Sarajevo. The first serious move of the Ustasha regime was the establishment of the Office for Refugees at the Great county of Vrhbosna in mid-November 1941, which aimed to keep total records and all affairs related to the refugee population.

However, even the Office for Refugees failed to involve the highest authorities of the NDH in resolving the refugee issue, which was necessary to create long-term solutions for thousands of people who could not return to their homes. Therefore, representatives of the Ustasha regime took various measures, such as sending refugees to work in Nazi Germany, emigrating them to “safer” places in the NDH, or returning home to places that were again placed under the control of the NDH. In order to overcome the humanitarian crisis of late 1941 and early 1942 in Sarajevo, the Office for Refugees and the Great county of Vrhbosna increasingly relied on humanitarian societies and the charity of citizens. The resources available to the Great county of Vrhbosna were not sufficient for the needs of refugees, which at certain stages brought the local level of government into conflict with higher levels, however, no significant results were achieved. The long-term inability of the Ustasha regimes, and especially the local level of government, to cope with the refugee crisis in Sarajevo forced the German military authorities to react at the very beginning of 1942 because, in their eyes, refugees became an increasing risk factor for general health and security.

Then the idea of establishing a refugee camp on the location Alipašin Most entered the sphere of solutions, as a place where refugees should be collectively relocated, removed from Sarajevo and accommodated in controlled conditions, and organized a place to live. With the establishment of the camp, the situation of refugees did not improve. The camp only served to move the refugees out of the city, and very quickly the food supply chain fell into a huge crisis, which meant mere survival for the refugees in the camp and extremely inhumane living conditions.

## SOURCES AND LITERATURE

### Archival sources

Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine (ABiH), Sarajevo, Fond: Velika župa Vrhbosna (VŽV)

Bošnjački institut (BI), Sarajevo, Zbirka: Drugi svjetski rat – ratni zločini (DRS-RZ)

Historijski arhiv Sarajevo (HAS), Sarajevo, Fond: Merhamet (M)

Historijski muzej (HM), Sarajevo, Fond: Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (NDH)

### Published sources

Dedijer, Vladimir – Miletić, Antun, *Genocid nad Muslimanima 1941–1945*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990.

*Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31. marta 1931. godine*, knjiga II, Beograd: Opšta državna statistika, 1938.

Čekić, Smail, *Genocid nad Bošnjacima u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Sarajevo: Udruženje muslimana za antigenocidne aktivnosti, 1996.

### Newspapers

El-Hidaje

Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice

Osvit

Sarajevski novi list

### Literature

#### **Books**

Bandžović, Safet, *Ratne tragedije Muslimana*, Novi Pazar: Sandžački odbor za zaštitu ljudskih prava i sloboda – Udruženje pisaca Sandžaka, 1993.

- Bougarel, Xavier, *Nadživjeti carstva. Islam, nacionalni identitet i politička lojalnost u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2020.
- Greble, Emily, *Sarajevo 1941–1945*, Sarajevo: University press – izdanja Magistrat, 2020.
- Hamović, Miloš, *Izbjeglice u Bosni i Hercegovini 1941–1945*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 1994.
- Hoare, Marko Atilla, *Bosanski muslimani u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zenica: Vrijeme, 2019.
- Humo, Avdo, *Moja generacija*, Zenica: Vrijeme, 2019.
- Hurem, Rasim, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu 1941–1945*, Zagreb – Sarajevo: Plejada – BNZG – University Press, 2016.
- Jahić, Adnan, *Vrijeme izazova. Bošnjaci u prvoj polovini XX stoljeća*, Zagreb – Sarajevo: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju – Bošnjački institut, 2014.
- Jahić, Adnan, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini (1908–1950)*, Zagreb: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku županiju, 2017.
- Jelić-Butić, Fikret, *Ustaše i Nezavisna država Hrvatska 1941–1945*, Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber – Školska knjiga, 1977.
- Kisić-Kolanović, Nada, *Muslimani i hrvatski nacionalizam 1941–1945*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2009.
- Omerika, Armina, *Islam in Bosnien-Herzegowina und die Netzwerke der Jungmuslime (1918–1983)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.
- Redžić, Enver, *Muslimansko autonomaštvo i 13. SS divizija*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987.
- Redžić, Enver, *Bosna i Hercegovina u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Sarajevo: OKO, 1998.
- Simon, Daniel, *Religion und Gewalt. Ostkroatien und Nordbosnien 1941–1945*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019.

Shmid, Sanela, *Deutsche und italienische Besatzung im Unabhängigen Stadt Kroatien 1941 biss 1943/1945*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019.

### Articles

- Begić, Dana, “Pokret za autonomiju Bosne i Hercegovine u uslovima sporazuma Cvetković-Maček”, in: *Prilozi*, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju radničkog pokreta, 1966, no. 2, 177-191.
- Bougarel, Xavier, “Islam, a ‘Convenient Religion’? The Case of the 13th SS Division Handschar”, in: *Combatants of Muslim Origin in European Armies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Xavier Bougarel, Raphaëlle Branche, Cloe Drieu, London – New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, 137-161.
- Brkljača, Seka. “Bosna i Hercegovina u prvim godinama Drugog svjetskog rata od 1939. do 1941. godine”, in: *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: Novi pogledi*, Sarajevo: Institut za historiju, 2012, 9-29.
- Čengić, Esad, “Ponovo na partijskom radu u Sarajevu”, in: *Sarajevo u Revoluciji III*, ed. Nisim Albahari et al., Sarajevo: Istorijski arhiv, 1979.
- Jahić, Adnan, “Bilješke o djelovanju bosanskohercegovačke uleme u Drugom svjetskom ratu (1941–1945)”, in: *Historijska misao*, Tuzla: Univerzitet u Tuzli, Filozofski fakultet, 2015, no. 1, 181-206.
- Marjanović, Hajra, “Teški uslovi snabdijevanja građana”, in: *Sarajevo u Revoluciji III*, ed. Nisim Albahari et al., Sarajevo: Istorijski arhiv, 1979, 723-730.
- Radušić, Minela, “Proljeće u znaku promjena: Sarajevo 1941. godine”, in: *Između rata i mira. Sarajevo u prelomnim godinama 20. stoljeća*, Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2020, 51-70.
- Sarić, Samija, “Zapisnik Ureda za izbjeglice Velike župe Vrhbosna u Sarajevu od 1. ožujka 1942. godine”, in: *Glasnik arhiva i Društva arhivskih radnika Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo: AUBiH, 1993, no. 32, 63-71.



## ODNOS ORGANA VLASTI NEZAVISNE DRŽAVE HRVATSKE PREMA IZBJEGLICAMA U SARAJEVU TOKOM 1941. I 1942. GODINE

### Sažetak

Dolazak prvih skupina izbjeglica u Sarajevo tokom 1941. godine nije prihvaćen s dovoljnom ozbiljnošću od lokalnih vlasti NDH koje su se u tom periodu fokusirale na organiziranje i učvršćivanje organa lokalne uprave i započeti Ustanak. Prvim grupama izbjeglica lokalne vlasti su se bavile pojedinačno brinući se o svakoj novoj grupi izbjeglica posebno. Međutim, u jesen 1941. godine priliv izbjeglica, uzrokovan četničkim zločinima u istočnoj Bosni i Hercegovini, bio je izuzetno veliki. Tada su lokalne vlasti, u nedostatku sredstava za značajnije poduhvate, rješavanje ovog pitanja prebacile na humanitarna udruženja. To se vrlo brzo pokazalo potpuno neefikasnim, jer ni humanitarna društva nisu raspolagala kapacitetima smještaja i zbrinjavanja više hiljada izbjeglica, pa je problem vraćen na organe lokalne uprave NDH u Sarajevu. Prvi ozbiljan potez ustaškog režima bio je formiranje Ureda za izbjeglice pri Velikoj župi Vrhbosni sredinom novembra 1941. godine, koji je imao za cilj da vodi ukupnu evidenciju i sve poslove u vezi s izbjegličkom populacijom. Ipak, ni Ured za izbjeglice nije uspijevaio uključiti najviše organe vlasti NDH u rješavanje izbjegličkog pitanja, što je bilo neophodno da bi se stvorila dugoročna rješenja za hiljade ljudi koji se nisu mogli vratiti svojim domovima. Stoga su predstavnici ustaškog režima pristupali raznim mjerama, poput slanja izbjeglica na rad u nacističku Njemačku, njihovog iseljavanja u "sigurnija" mjesta NDH ili povratka kućama u mjesta koja su ponovno stavljena pod kontrolu NDH. Kako bi se prevazišla humanitarna kriza s kraja 1941. i početka 1942. godine u Sarajevu, Ured za izbjeglice i Velika župa Vrhbosna su se sve više oslanjali na humanitarna društva i dobročinstvo građana. Sredstva kojima je raspolagala Velika župa Vrhbosna nisu bila dovoljna za potrebe

izbjeglica, što je u određenim fazama dovelo lokalni nivo vlasti u sukob s višim nivoima, međutim, značajniji rezultati nisu postignuti. Dugoročna nesposobnost ustaških režima, a naročito lokalnog nivoa vlasti, da se nose s izbjegličkom krizom u Sarajevu primorala je već na samom početku 1942. godine njemačku vojnu vlast da reagira jer su u njihovim očima izbjeglice postajale sve veći faktor rizika za opće zdravlje, ali i sigurnost. Tada je u sferu rješenja ušla ideja o osnivanju izbjegličkog logora na lokaciji Alipašin Most, kao mjesta na koje bi trebalo kolektivno izmjestiti izbjeglice, udaljiti ih iz Sarajeva i u kontroliranim uvjetima smjestiti, organizirati im prostor za život i prehranu. Osnivanjem logora stanje izbjeglica nije se popravilo. Logor je poslužio samo da se izbjeglice izmjestite iz grada, a vrlo brzo lanac snabdijevanja hranom upao je u ogromnu krizu, što je za izbjeglice u logoru značilo puko preživljavanje i izrazito nehumane uvjete za život.