

The background of the cover is a monochromatic, reddish-orange illustration. At the top, a large, dark silhouette of a soldier's head and shoulders dominates the frame. The soldier wears a helmet with a red and white checkered crest on the front. Below the soldier, the title 'THE UTOPIA OF TERROR' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath the title, the subtitle 'Life and Death in Wartime Croatia' is written in a smaller, white, italicized serif font. At the bottom of the cover, there is a group of five people. From left to right: a man with a mustache in a light-colored shirt; a woman in a headscarf and light-colored dress, holding a long, thin object; a man in a light-colored shirt and a fedora-style hat, holding a scythe; and a man in a light-colored shirt and glasses. The overall mood is somber and historical.

THE UTOPIA OF TERROR

Life and Death in Wartime Croatia

Edited by

RORY YEOMANS

THE UTOPIA OF TERROR

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LIFE AND DEATH IN WARTIME CROATIA

Edited by Rory Yeomans



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ABBREVIATIONS

DIPU	Državni izvještajni i promičbeni ured (State Information and Propaganda Office)
DRGP	Državno ravnateljstvo za gospodarstvenu ponovu (State Directorate for Economic Regeneration)
GIL	Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (Italian Lictor Youth)
GRP	Glavno ravnateljstvo za promičbu (Main Directorate for Propaganda)
GUS	Glavni Ustaški stan (Main Ustasha Headquarters)
HSS	Hrvatska seljačka stranka (Croatian Peasant Party)
<i>HURIS</i>	<i>Hrvatski u rieci i sliči</i> (Croatia in words and pictures)
NARGOS	Ministarstvo narodnog gospodarstvu (Ministry for National Economy)
NARPROS	Glavno ravnateljstvo za opće narodno prosvjećivanje (Main Directorate for Mass National Enlightenment)
NDH	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
NOP	Narodnooslobodilački pokret (People's Liberation Movement)
ODSLIK	Slikopisni odsjek (Section for Film)
PTB	Poglavnikova tjelesna bojna (Poglavnik Bodyguard Battalion)
PTS	Poglavnikov tjelesne sdrug (Poglavnik Bodyguard Brigade)
UHRO	Ustaša hrvatska revolucionarna organizacija (Ustasha Croatian Revolutionary Organization)
UNS	Ustaška nadzorna služba (Ustasha Surveillance Service)

INTRODUCTION

Utopia, Terror, and Everyday Experience in the Ustasha State

Rory Yeomans

The beginning of April 1942 witnessed a week of festivities the state media wrote about for days afterward. In the mornings, there were marches by the student units of the Poglavnik Bodyguard Battalion (Poglavnikova tjelesna bojna—PTB) and the Ustasha Corps; processions by members of the Ustasha Youth, Ustasha students, and peasant and worker organizations; masses of thanksgiving; sports events; lectures; and the singing of the state hymn and Ustasha anthem in schools across the state. In the evenings there were concerts of the Croatian Philharmonic Orchestra and speeches and performances by members of the Zagreb State Theater and Ustasha cultural organizations. There were more raucous celebrations, too. Away from the sedate evening galas, streets and squares were packed with boisterous students, shop girls, factory workers, and militia men, some of them clearly inebriated. Nonetheless, whoever they were, wherever they came from, and whatever condition they were in, those who turned out on the streets of Zagreb and other Croatian cities in chilly spring weather were determined to make the most of the first anniversary of the founding of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska—NDH), or Ustasha state, the “resurrection” of national independence, and the triumph of the liberation struggle.¹

In a special edition, the newspaper *Nova Hrvatska* recited the achievements of the Ustasha state in statistics: the number of new homes built for workers, the millions of kunas spent on the construction of new hospitals, the thousands of square meters the new student accommodation and scientific laboratories comprised, the miles of new railway track built, the number of frequencies and coverage of the planned new radio hall, the millions of hectares of agricultural land

irrigated and reclaimed, and the percentage rise in the nation's birth rate. The impression was of a state that was modern and dynamic, leaving the oppression of the Yugoslav past behind and committed to the construction of a utopian society fit for a reborn nation-state.²

Among the features in *Nova Hrvatska* on the modernization of the Croatian university in Zagreb and the activities of students in the first year of independence was one in which the newspaper drew attention to the numerous young Ustasha students who had joined the Thirteenth Shock Student Unit of the PTB militia. It praised them as the "bravest warriors" of the PTB, who had "shed their young blood and given their lives" in "cleansing the homeland from dangerous enemy elements." The mass construction of new facilities was, it continued, a reward for their role in the "purification" of the University of Zagreb from "undesired foreigners and perverts, hostilely disposed toward the Croats and the Ustasha movement," thereby enabling its "regeneration" as the "Ustasha University."³ While the feature did not explain who these unwanted populations were, how numerous they were, or how they had been removed, it represented perhaps the most striking statistical achievement of the state. In the space of twelve months, its militias, death squads, and security services had managed to deport or liquidate perhaps as many as 250,000 Serbs, Jews, and "internal enemies." By September 1942, the state's fifteen thousand Gypsies had been added to the list. A few hour's journey from Zagreb, countless thousands of racially or ideologically "unworthy" citizens had disappeared into the state's archipelago of concentration camps to be set to hard labor or to be "reeducated" or murdered. Journeying by train to celebrate a national festival, listening to a philharmonic orchestra, traveling for days on a stifling cattle truck en route to death in a concentration camp: these were the contradictions of the Ustasha state.

In an article of 1995 about cultural politics in the Independent State of Croatia, Dubravko Jelčić criticized Yugoslav-era historians and academics for interpreting cultural life in the state through the prism of Yugoslav, socialist, and "Greater Serbian" ideology and for conflating the Independent State of Croatia with the Ustasha regime. He argued that the Ustasha regime was "not the same as the Independent State of Croatia and is not the same as Croatia." Maintaining that the Independent State of Croatia was the expression of the Croatian nation's yearning for independence—something for which the majority of Croats had been prepared to sacrifice their lives, he added—Jelčić wrote that the authentic "European, idealistic, and creative" values of Croatia were embodied in the state and its cultural politics. This not only proved that Croatian culture during the early 1940s was an "authentic expression" of the Croatian soul and consciousness through the centuries, but it also demonstrated that the Ustasha regime, while repressive in its national politics, was "visibly tolerant" in the cultural sphere. He called for greater research of the state's cultural policy because it had helped to shape "the politics

of the Ustasha movement and the culture of the Croatian people, revealing in its essence that the Ustasha movement not only did not repress but actually encouraged a free spirit in this respect.” Arguing that, to a certain extent, the “tolerant” cultural politics of the regime aimed to “rectify or at least ameliorate their mistakes in the political field” and noting the wide diversity of opinion in the state’s cultural journals and artistic milieu, he asked whether there was more artistic freedom in the Independent State of Croatia than in Communist Yugoslavia or whether artists and writers were simply more courageous in the former than in the latter. He concluded, “Even if we answer affirmatively to the second question, we still cannot deny that their courage was enabled and even motivated by the high degree of freedom that prevailed in the Independent State of Croatia in the sphere of literature and cultural life.”⁴

Jelčić’s theoretical model has been challenged by other Croatian writers on both methodological and ethical grounds. For example, in a 2010 review of a photographic collection depicting everyday life in the Ustasha state, the writer Slavko Goldstein accused it of “never offering a complete picture nor a critical one but instead a distorted one.” While images of festivals, athletics competitions, military processions, and chic young women were not falsified, the collection as a whole was distorted. It relied, Goldstein wrote, on a “tendentious selection of images” and “misleading commentary” since it ignored or minimized the terror that was just as much, if not more, a part of the “everyday” life of the state’s citizens as ceremonies, exhibitions, and cultural events.⁵ Nevertheless, Jelčić’s argument for a strict division between the state and the regime and between cultural politics and terror continues to have an important influence on discussions about wartime Croatia. In fact, the notion that a “good” Independent State of Croatia in which cultural life flourished can be separated from a “bad” Ustasha regime that “repressed” Serbs, Jews, Roma, and antifascists remains a dominant feature of history textbooks in Croatia. Moreover, even a number of textbooks that cautiously acknowledge the crimes of the Ustasha movement ascribe its genocidal program to “Great Serb hegemony, violence and the economic exploitation of Croatia.” Elsewhere, they refer to a common Chetnik-Partisan agenda to destroy the Independent State of Croatia and recreate Yugoslavia, thereby reinforcing the state’s implicit legitimacy as distinct from that of the Ustasha movement.⁶ However, as Ljiljana Radonić has pointed out, the curators of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum—located at the site of the largest Ustasha death camp complex, Jasenovac-Stara Gradiška, where an estimated hundred thousand inmates perished—have signaled a break with the state-regime paradigm by placing the former’s cultural achievements in the framework of the terror and repression that structured it.⁷

For the state’s zealous young ideologues, however, there was no distinction between the movement and the nation-state. They articulated the view that the

Ustasha movement was bringing into being a regenerated state and individual modeled on a set of revolutionary ideas. The end result would be the refashioning of Croatian citizens as new Ustasha men and women, inculcated with Ustasha principles, living in an Ustasha state. The expression “the Ustasha state,” routinely used by the movement’s ideological cadres, expressed the profound ways in which they believed that the life of the state, its citizens, and the movement should be synthesized into one mass shared existence. For them, the Ustasha state’s racial and cultural politics were not only inseparable but intimately connected. When commentators wrote approvingly of the role of student militias in liberating the state from the influence of unwanted populations, they were not simply arguing that these groups should be removed to create a racially purified state but also expressing their belief that these “undesired elements” would present an obstacle to the modernization of the nation and creation of a new citizen imbued with Ustasha values. Only after the external “revolution of blood,” as the movement termed its violent program of national purification, had been completed could a “second revolution” of internal regeneration be launched. As such, the defining program of the Ustasha movement to purify the nation through terror ultimately informed every aspect of cultural, social, and economic life. This does not mean that the social and cultural visions outlined by social planners, economic experts, or cultural advisers were simply functional. Nevertheless, many of these transformative projects were connected to wider racial plans and demographic concerns. In a nation-state in which the practice of terror and utopian processes were interdependent, the Ustasha state constituted a utopia of terror.

The essays in *The Utopia of Terror* provide new perspectives on the relationship between the Ustasha state’s politics of construction and destruction. Bringing together established historians of the Ustasha regime with an emerging generation of younger historians, *The Utopia of Terror* explores various aspects of everyday life and death in the Ustasha state that until now have received only peripheral attention by historians. The contributors argue for a more complex consideration of the relationship between mass terror and utopianism in which both are seen as part of the same process rather than as discrete phenomena. In so doing, they aim to bring new perspectives, generate original thinking, and provide enhanced understanding of both the Ustasha regime’s attempts to remake Croatian society and its campaign to destroy what it perceived as “enemy” and alien group identities.

While interdisciplinary and comparative approaches have long been a feature in studies of European fascism and the radical right, they have rarely been systematically applied to the Ustasha regime—and, in fact, have sometimes been actively resisted.⁸ If the essays in this collection are united by a common approach, it is their commitment to the imaginative use of interdisciplinary methodologies and primary sources to construct a more complex picture of the Ustasha state. Like some recent studies of other European fascist movements, *The Utopia of Terror*

aims to move away from totalitarian conceptual models, exploring how ordinary people at all levels of society negotiated their place in the state. The essays challenge prevailing interpretations of the Ustasha state in which resistance has been given a privileged status and the complexity of social support and public opinion pushed to the margins. By viewing citizens as active agents of historical events, this volume provides a more nuanced understanding of how society functioned under Ustasha rule with respect to the relationship between the party-state and ordinary citizens; between economics and racial politics; among intellectuals, institutions, and the regime; and between mass terror and everyday culture from the “inside out.”

In view of the long-standing historiographical marginalization of the Ustasha regime, the contributors share the belief that it is only through the application of comparative and interdisciplinary approaches that it can be transformed from marginal interest to mainstream research, thereby becoming an integral part of the discussion on European fascism. In so doing, these essays contribute to a better understanding of what was unique to the Ustasha state and what was common to other fascist states and movements. In addition to contributing to scholarship on the Ustasha state, therefore, these essays aim to provide context for the ongoing debate about the troubling nature and legacy of European fascism.

Mass Terror and Fascist Modernity

The brutal contradictions of mass killing and high culture have been characteristic of most states in the twentieth century structured by terror; in that respect the resources the Ustasha state devoted to the incarnation of a new national culture legitimating new cultural, racial, and ideological orthodoxies is hardly unique. What makes the Ustasha state different from other fascist states in Hitler's new Europe is the extent to which the evolution of cultural policy reflected the course of the state's terror against minorities. The campaign of economic destruction, terror, and mass killing unleashed by Ustasha militias in the countryside and economic ministries in the cities to purify the nation of “undesired” elements was a necessary precondition, according to Ustasha ideologues, for the construction of a national community founded on the principles of discipline, work, social justice, and the transformation of the individual into an Ustasha subject imbued with the principles of “Croatian socialism.” Many scholars now agree that the Final Solution of the European Jews by the Third Reich (as opposed to their marginalization and increasing persecution) emerged gradually. By contrast, the destruction of the Serbs and the Jews was intrinsic to the Ustasha goal of constructing a “national community” (*narodna zajednica*). A nationally regenerated, culturally autarchic state characterized by social mobility and a new consciousness could

not be realized until the nation had been purified. By the time the campaign of terror was aborted in the summer of 1942, it had embedded itself in the patterns of daily life and culture, impacting citizens' everyday activities: the shops they visited, the people they talked to, the concerts they attended, the films they saw, and the books they read. While the state was never able to realize its totalizing vision of a national community, it nevertheless used the promise of cultural revolution and social mobility as a means of compensating radical, hard-line factions of the movement disillusioned by the failure fully to realize the purification of the state from community "aliens."

Despite the fact that historians have long debated whether the Ustasha movement and the state it built were genuinely fascist, many key ideological, cultural, and economic aspects of the state clearly drew on the ideas of Italian Fascism and other European fascist movements. The desire to build a "new man" (*novi čovjek*) who would not only be physically merciless but intellectually and spiritually purified, the vanguard of the regeneration of the nation, was a central element of Ustasha thinking. Similarly, Ustasha ideologues interpreted the foundation of the Ustasha state not just as the liberation of the Croatian nation from colonial oppression but, like other fascist movements, as a national temporal revolution, the beginning of "new time." Like most fascist movements, too, the discourse of the Ustasha state was highly sacralized, shot through with allusions to sacrifice, martyrdom, and the afterlife of dead warriors. Fundamentally utopian, Ustasha ideologues wanted to refashion society from within, transforming Croatian citizens into Ustasha subjects through the remaking of aesthetic, cultural, economic, and social relations. Since the emergence of the groundbreaking scholarship of George Mosse on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy more than four decades ago, scholars looking for comparative models to understand the Ustasha state have long been able to draw on a rich and diverse collection of studies exploring the terms of the temporal, palingenetic, and sacralized cultural revolution fascism seemed to promise.⁹ From the perspective of understanding the symbiotic link of the promise of cultural revolution, the building of a national community, and mass terror, however, the Ustasha state was arguably much closer to Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia than other major European fascist states, most of which either did not engage in systematic terror or, in the context of occupied Europe, lacked the power or resources to implement their plans. Fascist states such as Italy and Spain might have sought to inculcate their citizens with a new fascist consciousness and incarnate a national temporal revolution, but only in the Ustasha state was its realization predicated on mass terror, economic destruction, and the violent removal of "aliens" from the national community.¹⁰

For all the many insights and innovations that the culturalist school has brought to our understanding of European fascism, its methodological lens of cultural revolution has tended to focus on "from above" phenomena such as public

culture, festivals, spectacle, propaganda, intellectualism, and literature.¹¹ In his defense of the cultural approach, Mosse, writing in an often-quoted essay of 1996, argued that viewing fascism as a cultural revolution meant “seeing fascism as it saw itself and as its followers saw it, to attempt to understand the movement on its own terms.” Cultural history, he continued, considered the perceptions of men and women and how these were shaped and enlisted in politics at a particular place and time. Since fascism addressed people’s perceptions of their situation in life and their hopes for the future, it was essential to understand how fascist self-representation was “so successful in taking up and satisfying these perceptions if we want to gauge the depth of the movement’s appeal.”¹² Thus, while the culturalist approach pioneered by George Mosse, Emilio Gentile, and others was enormously important in constructing a fuller picture of how those actively engaged with the fascist project from the top or just below the top—ideologists, artists, novelists, architects, party and youth leaders, social theorists, scientists—viewed society and the place of fascism within it, this perspective was inevitably based on public expressions of opinion, whether in journals and newspapers or in novels, theoretical treatises, designs, or exhibition guides. By contrast, the new cultural history provided relatively little insight into the views of low-level bureaucrats, grassroots party activists, ordinary people, or regional leaders; the inner workings of ministries, agencies, and institutions; or the interplay among victims, beneficiaries, and supplicants under fascism. However, as Christian Gerlach pointed out in his recent groundbreaking study of “mass violence,” terror is often driven by pressure from below rather than orders from above.¹³ Therefore, it can only be fully explored if it is approached through an interdisciplinary framework that includes social history and the history of everyday life, aspects that English-language scholarship on fascism, at least, has tended to pay less attention to.¹⁴

In an article of 2002 proclaiming the emergence of a “cultural consensus” in fascist studies, Roger Griffin, a leading member of the culturalist school, nevertheless took the opportunity to acknowledge its empirical and methodological weaknesses. He argued that the cultural approach needed to evolve in a more empirical direction that would engage fully with human experience so that its experts were no longer able “to get away with focusing on leaders, elites, propaganda, social engineering and national *Sonderwege*, or with revelling in abstruse hermeneutic model-building.”¹⁵ In his reply to Griffin, David Roberts countered that the culturalist approach demonstrated an inability to take fascism seriously, in particular its economic and social ideas, despite their centrality to the Italian fascist vision. Ideas of national rebirth were important, Roberts conceded, but their overemphasis tended to obscure the fact that the fascists did not believe that they were simply recovering a lost equilibrium. “Rather the nation was positioned to step to the international forefront by addressing, in radically new ways, inadequacies of the modern western liberal-positivist-materialist mainstream that had come to light

through recent experience but that the complacent democracies lacked the will to address.” More important, perhaps, the cultural turn implied a “complacent ‘anything goes’ relativism,” leaving Italian Fascism as one culture among others to be taken on its own terms and forgetting that the fascist regime was “vicious, cruel and a failure.” The culturalist approach then “tends to preclude drawing the essential ethical lessons from historical experience.” Elsewhere, he argued for an interdisciplinary approach to fascism that would combine from-above and from-below approaches; synthesize cultural, social, and economic history as well as the history of everyday life; and draw on comparisons not just with Nazi Germany and fascist states but also with the Soviet experiment up until the end of the Stalinist era at least.¹⁶ Alexander de Grand, meanwhile, argued that the cultural approach revealed little about how fascist regimes functioned in practice, how they were structured, or the various interest groups and factions within them competing for power and influence, from radical to reactionary. Hence, it missed the “element of coalition politics” with which fascism sought to accommodate the desires of traditional elites and the utopian visions of revolutionaries.¹⁷ This echoed Robert Paxton’s admonition that those studying fascism needed to “observe it in daily operation using all the social sciences” to comprehend the four-way power struggle “among the leader, his party (whose militants clamour for jobs, perquisites, expansionist adventures, and the fulfilment of elements of the early radical programme), the regular state functionaries such as police commanders and magistrates and the traditional elites—churches, the army, the professions and business leaders.”¹⁸ But if this approach was still too top-down, emphasizing what was happening in the bureaucracy and party over the lives of ordinary people, then Sergio Luzzatto memorably proposed that, to properly understand fascism, historians could no longer rely on “the slogans of rabble-rousers, the theories of ideologists and the rhetoric of journalists” but would increasingly have to “rake through the school libraries of the *Ventennio*, attend the country fairs, visit the farmhouses, study carefully the posters in the streets, follow pregnant mothers into the delivery rooms, and turn up at scientific conferences,” rushing like the ogre in Marc Bloch’s fable “everywhere they get the slightest whiff of human flesh.”¹⁹

The sanguinary character of the Ustasha state was unusual but not unique among major fascist states of the 1940s. Like Croatia, wartime Romania, including the short-lived National Legionary state led by the Iron Guard, for example, engaged in systematic and widespread terror and violence against minorities, especially Jews and Roma. In the period between 1940 and 1945, as many as four hundred thousand Jews were murdered either in mass executions, during deportations to the East, or in concentration camps.²⁰ Ideas about national regeneration and social justice clearly played an important role in legitimating the Holocaust in Romania, as they did in many other wartime fascist states in Europe. Seen from this perspective, the study of the Ustasha state is helpful in understanding wider

European experiences of fascism. That said, given the intensity of the relationship between Ustasha terror on the one hand and cultural revolution, economic transformation, and social engineering on the other, it is arguable that scholarship about Stalinist terror and the Final Solution provides an equally useful comparative framework for considering how Ustasha terror intersected with wider social processes. In her groundbreaking 1979 study about the interdependence of terror and cultural revolution, *Education and Social Mobility in Soviet Russia*, Sheila Fitzpatrick, a pioneer of the “revisionist” historical school of the Stalinist period, argued that the Great Terror was partly driven by pressure from below for a cultural and generational revolution. The purges of the 1930s, she noted, produced many beneficiaries as well as victims, in particular a young generation of technocrats called the *viydvizhenie*, who had been able to access education at workers’ technical colleges at the time of the first five-year plan and had thereafter been promoted into positions in industry, administration, and political leadership on the principle of “proletarian advancement.” Fitzpatrick also sought to demonstrate that the cultural revolution of the late 1920s, which had resulted in sweeping changes in academia, literature, the arts, industry, and economics, was not a simple “from above” process but a response to pressure from below on the part of the emerging *viydvizhenie* involved in a class struggle against executives, bosses, and the intelligentsia whom they believed were blocking their path to promotion. Factory workers were also tapping into the culture of denunciation of the “Great Turn,” denouncing “corrupt” powerful factory bosses, administrators, and local secretaries. In Fitzpatrick’s view, the era of the Great Terror represented a consensus between the Soviet leadership and wider society in which the violent removal of “bourgeois specialists” ran parallel to a second campaign of affirmative action to create a new “worker and peasant intelligentsia.” Terror, social mobility, and cultural change were thus closely connected.²¹ In the same period as the Great Terror, the state was also promoting “normality” and middle-class values as part of this culture of consensus. As literary scholar Vera Dunham showed in her study of popular fiction in the 1930s, *In Stalin’s Time*, Stalinism offered the aspiring emergent middle classes a “Big Deal” involving social mobility, greater material rewards, and a glimpse of the good life in exchange for loyalty to the system. It was this agreement, she wrote, rather than terror, that explained the persistence of both Stalinism and the Soviet system.²²

History “from below” has also long been a characteristic of writing about the Third Reich. The emergence of social history as an important historiographical methodology in the late 1960s as well as the need to explain why so many ordinary Germans had acquiesced to the rule of the Nazi regime and, ultimately, the Final Solution led some social historians and political scientists to understand the appeal of National Socialism in its modernizing aspects. According to the modernization theory, pioneered in studies such as Ralf Dahrendorf’s *Society and Democracy in*

Germany and David Schoenbaum's *Hitler's Social Revolution*, National Socialism inculcated a social revolution characterized by the breaking up of social hierarchies and transformation of society, albeit as a by-product of National Socialist rule rather than its aim.²³ The concept of a Nazi social revolution was then developed by a younger generation of historians, such as Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen, who combined it with an interest in everyday aspects of Nazi rule. Broszat, in particular, a pioneer of the *Alltagsgeschichte* approach to the study of the Nazi period, called for the "historicization" and "normalization" of the Nazi era, arguing that it should be integrated into wider German history rather than be seen as an exceptional parenthesis. Only by doing so, he argued, could historians assess in what ways Nazism represented continuity and in what senses a break with the national past. Pointing to commonalities in Nazi social welfare policy and those of democratic postwar West Germany, Broszat argued that the "still-evident tendency even, in part, in historical research to interpret all cases of change in the National Socialist era, especially in the area of economics and law, solely from the viewpoint of their function in the stabilization of the regime" served to "hermetically seal" National Socialism in its entirety from mainstream German history, hindering understanding.²⁴

Among the many studies addressing Nazi modernization, one of the most controversial was Michael Prinz and Rainer Zitelmann's 1991 *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung*, which argued that social and economic revolution was an intentional aim of Nazi policy, rather than an incidental outcome. Strongly influenced, as the editors wrote, by Broszat's contentious historicization arguments, the book looked at diverse aspects of the Nazi modernization program such as social planning, economic policy, town planning, communal education, and economic reform. *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* argued, as Zitelmann set out in the opening essay/first chapter, that the driving aim of National Socialism was to modernize German society and transform Germany into a highly developed, industrially advanced technological society, an endeavor that was hindered by a cautious bureaucratic class. Zitelmann wrote that the Nazis envisaged a society in which an idle bourgeoisie would be replaced by upwardly mobile workers with opportunities for social advancement in a planned economy modeled on the Soviet economy. More provocatively still, Zitelmann maintained that, rather than a means to achieving *lebensraum* in the East, racial purification was a functional means of transforming and modernizing German society. Anticipating the criticisms that followed in the wake of their book, he emphasized that the Nazi modernization program should not be viewed from the contemporary liberal understanding of the concept. Rather, since there were numerous examples throughout history of modernization programs being implemented by violent antidemocratic governments, it should be understood as "value-free." Drawing a parallel with the revisionist school of Soviet history, like Broszat, he noted that the Nazi modernization project had remained

underresearched because of ethical, not empirical, barriers, despite the fact that it was central to understanding the appeal of Nazism.²⁵

Prinz and Zitelmann's book attracted strong criticism from other historians of the Third Reich. Critics like Jens Alber and Norbert Frei, for example, contended that, in linking National Socialism so closely to modernization, the authors had presented a dishonest, distorted picture of life in Nazi Germany in which the impacts of the modernization process and the politics that informed it were divorced from society and everyday life.²⁶ For his part, Hans Mommsen criticized the authors for taking too much of Nazism's claims at face value and failing to acknowledge the uses to which it put its modernization program.²⁷ At around the same time, the research of two young scholars, Suzanne Heim and Götz Aly, linking Nazi economic modernization to racial purification in the East, proved even more contentious. Their study *Vordenker der Vernichtung*, asserting that the Holocaust in the East was driven by National Socialist plans for economic modernization and social transformation, not racial ideology, provoked a lively debate that quickly became rancorous, as accusations of Holocaust relativism reverberated.²⁸

The modernization debate also had a direct impact on the study of cultural aspects of the Third Reich. In contrast to fascist studies where a "from-above" cultural history separate from ideology or politics began to emerge, the emphasis that Third Reich studies placed on social history also meant that cultural history stressed "from-below" methodologies. Owing to the enormity of the Final Solution, study of the everyday culture of Nazi Germany was less often divorced from the ideological context in which it had emerged. Studies of consumption, travel, leisure, and advertising aimed to better understand its racial politics and the genesis of the Final Solution through an analysis of Nazism's "dream spaces." In an overview of scholarship on Nazi modernism ten years after the publication of Prinz and Zitelmann's volume, Paul Betts argued that, while analysis of advertising, entertainment cinema, industrial design, television, sex culture, and autobahns might appear of marginal importance, they were central to exploring "how 'trivial culture' related to the broader Nazi campaign to intensify the identification of the people with the government by dissolving all political resistance, cultural distance and racial difference in an aesthetic ideal of unified purpose and imperialist mission." Studies of the "happy illusion" of Nazi modernism not only challenged prevailing Cold War views of Nazi culture but represented a move away from "moralizing narratives of mass manipulation toward fuller descriptive accounts of the emotional linchpins of fascist everyday life" and how consent for Nazi terror was built.²⁹ A pioneering work in this regard was Peter Reichel's 1992 *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reichs*, which explored social relations in Nazi Germany through an examination of its leisure, holiday, festival, and entertainment worlds. From the outset, Reichel conceded that his undertaking might not

be popular, but it was important because examination of the way in which the Third Reich “aestheticised” reality contributed to the ongoing deconstruction of the “totalitarian” image of Nazi Germany. Reichel argued that the Third Reich, like all fascist states, possessed an inherent duality combining visions of utopia and terror. Exploring the “beautiful glitter” of the Third Reich did not mean relativizing its crimes; on the contrary, along with violence and brutality, “the aesthetic, permanent depiction of a beautiful reality was an absolute necessity for the stability of the regime,” a means of avoiding class conflict and postponing difficult social questions. However, the longer this process lasted and the less the official depiction of “reality” was taken to be true, the more it developed a systemic dynamic of its own.³⁰

More recent cultural histories of the Third Reich have similarly shown how ideas about pleasure, luxury, and consumption were connected to the joys of genocide. *Pleasure and Pain in Nazi Germany*, for example, argued that, unless the pleasurable aspects of the Third Reich were understood, the pain of the Nazi state could not be understood either, since they were integrally linked. The idea of “strength through joy” made pain and pleasure mutually reinforcing. “Strength came through joy and joy came through strength,” the authors wrote. “A contented people were a more productive people and thus stronger people; and only a strong people could expect to achieve lasting contentment in the eternal struggle between the races.” Furthermore, Nazism saw pleasure not as a private concern but as a social and communal experience; it could consist in making sacrifices and experiencing pain for the good of the state or the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the people’s community, a dynamic expressed in organized social solidarity actions such as Winter Help and One-Pot Sunday. Both of these, as with territorial conquest in the East or the Final Solution, required Nazi citizens to make sacrifices on behalf of the German nation. But, rather than see these as forms of manipulation and control as a totalitarian model might, the book considered how ordinary people responded to and subverted these pleasures, illustrating the limits to the power of the Nazi state. As a result, like Reichel, they deconstructed the totalitarian model of a manipulated population, highlighting the discrepancy between the grandiose mind-shifting claims of Nazism and the ambiguous reality.³¹ In her study of the mass tourism and leisure organization Strength through Joy (Kraft durch Freude), Shelley Baranowski persuasively argued that not only does study of the activities of the Strength through Joy illuminate the economic and social policy behind the alluring promises of a taste of luxury and the good life, but it illustrates how such organizations served the racial aims of the *völkisch* state by separating ethnic Germans from racial outsiders, offering them a glimpse of a future characterized by cultural enlightenment and economic prosperity once racial living space had been acquired.³² In his *Creating the Nazi Marketplace*, meanwhile, S. Jonathan Wiesen explored Nazi Germany’s attempt to create an

“ethical marketplace,” focusing on the challenges the state faced in the development of a new kind of economy that would provide ordinary German consumers with goods they wanted to buy while simultaneously dissuading them from purchasing goods associated with “Jewish materialism.” National Socialist consumer experts hoped that this would create a consumer consciousness in harmony with the demands of constructing the racial *Volksgemeinschaft*.³³

The study of the *Volksgemeinschaft* has produced arguably some of the most insightful new scholarship on everyday culture and terror in Nazi Germany. The concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* referred to an imagined order, the structure into which Nazi planners aimed to reshape German society. It encompassed an almost limitless field of social action and cultural production and, since the concept was inherently vague, was open to diverse interpretations by officials and citizens alike, achieving a concrete form only once it had become social practice.³⁴ This vagueness meant that while it required all members of the community (*Volksgenossen*) to transcend their individual identity for a national collective one united in purpose, it held out a vision of a future prosperous utopia. As a result, many ordinary Germans were prepared to accept the intrusion of *Volksgemeinschaft* principles into many spheres of everyday life, viewing it as a price worth paying for future material well-being. Moreover, while the *Volksgemeinschaft* had a collective nature, strictly separating members of the national community from racial and social “community aliens” (*Gemeinschaftsfremden*), it consciously sought to appeal to Germans on an individual level, offering them opportunities for social mobility, professional advancement, and a socially equal, racially unified community. However, its ubiquity in everyday life meant that, over time, whether they believed in the concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* or not, German citizens began to speak its language, drawing on its motifs, discourse, and ideas when seeking to further their own interests or appealing to authority. The call to action issued by the *Volksgemeinschaft* involved individuals constructing their individual sense of self through a collective identity. While many citizens who were not convinced National Socialists tried to retain their personal belief structure, this proved to be a “daily struggle.” And, when the promise of future social equality, mobility, and prosperity failed, coercion, repression, and terror could be used instead.³⁵

Recent studies such as Marina Steber and Bernhard Gotto’s *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany*, exploring how the *Volksgemeinschaft* sought to transform everyday life and attitudes, identify insiders and outsiders, and refashion German citizens into Nazi subjects synthesize the terror and modernization of Nazi society in ways that neither reduce the Third Reich to the inevitability of the Holocaust nor artificially separate the Final Solution from National Socialism’s economic and cultural politics. Rather, they enable historians to explore everyday life and ideology in Nazi Germany from the perspective of beneficiaries, victims, supplicants, and subjects—the full range of human experience—and to

explore issues of consent, resistance, and social support. The new scholarship on the *Volksgemeinschaft* represents a methodological synthesis of social history and cultural history, exploring the relationship between political terror and visions of utopia, the interplay between ideology and social practice, and the complexity of individual attitudes under the pressure of collective politics. While the construction of a *Volksgemeinschaft* incarnated a new class of racially conscious citizens who were, on the face of it, beneficiaries of the people's community, they were nonetheless confronted by its "demands, offers, threats and violent practices and had to find their way through the maze this entailed."³⁶

Historians are increasingly attending to the social practices of terror, everyday experience, and cultural revolution in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia from a comparative perspective that moves beyond a totalitarian interpretation.³⁷ Similarly, the social history of the Great Terror in Stalinist Russia and daily life in the *Volksgemeinschaft* provides potential models for historians of European fascism seeking to understand the relationship between everyday culture and terror, especially those studying the Ustasha state. With its pretensions to a new "regenerated" Ustasha subject imbued with an "ethical" consciousness; defined by order, work, and discipline; and nourished through access to education, social mobility, and cultural enlightenment, the promise of a good life extended by the future national community once the obstruction of community "aliens" had been removed provides a path to understanding the culture of the everyday for ordinary people living in extraordinary times under Ustasha rule.

Despite the often sharp differences of opinion that existed among totalitarian and revisionist historical schools of the Third Reich and Stalinist Russia, the emergence of "from-below" approaches to the study of both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia was partly made possible because most historians shared a common view on the basic facts of the Great Terror and the Holocaust, however much they might disagree in their interpretations of its origins and causes.³⁸ This was not the case with historiographical interpretations of the Ustasha state. Following the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the existing consensus about the fundamentally criminal nature of the Ustasha regime disappeared. Instead, with the rise of nationalism, especially in Serbia and Croatia, historiography began to follow a "national" line in which basic facts as much as interpretations were contested. For most of the 1990s, historiography of the Second World War generally and the Ustasha regime in particular demonstrated the continued relevance of historian Mirjana Gross's 1996 observation that in post-Communist Yugoslavia history writing was still governed as much by politics and the present as by historical events and the past.³⁹ During this period, Serbian historians overwhelmingly concentrated on the Ustasha movement's campaign of terror, mass murder, and forced assimilation against Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies and the alleged complicity of the Catholic Church in the mass program of conversion to Catholicism.⁴⁰ Many,

but by no means all, studies either relegated resistance among ordinary Croatians to the margins or ignored it completely, implicitly suggesting that the genocidal policies of the Ustasha movement enjoyed popular support. This argument was made explicit in some studies. In a 1986 article, for instance, Vasilje Krestić wrote not only that the crimes of the Ustasha regime enjoyed popular support but that, throughout its history, the Croatian nation—as opposed to its most extreme element—had entertained fantasies about the destruction of its Serb conationals.⁴¹ Although Croatian historiography followed a very different trajectory, it was similarly informed by ideological agendas. The nationalistic atmosphere that erupted in the early 1990s ensured that many Croatian studies adopted a strongly apologetic discourse that minimized, relativized, or even denied the crimes of the Ustasha regime.⁴² The most egregious examples went so far as to appropriate the language and rationalizations of Ustasha intellectuals.⁴³ Literary studies played a particularly important role in this new historiographical paradigm since they often uncritically examined cultural politics in the Ustasha state largely decontextualized from any reference to the terror that informed it.⁴⁴

Paradoxically, though, these same cultural studies represented an important step forward in research terms since they provided, for the first time, an insight into the worldview of some of the state's most ideologically committed artists and writers, a subject that had been avoided in socialist historiography. Over time, they were also complemented by more critical studies that explored the connections between cultural politics and broader processes of coercion and terror and the tensions, factions, and rivalries that informed the ideological life of the state.⁴⁵ On the one hand, this historiographical trend has intensified in recent years as Croatian scholars have increasingly examined the state's intellectual, cultural, and social projects within the broader framework of its campaigns of racial purification and terror.⁴⁶ On the other hand, scholarship on the Ustasha state, even cultural, micro-, and everyday history, continues to be dominated by narrative-driven, "from-above" perspectives in which comparative, interdisciplinary, and social history methodologies play little role.⁴⁷ Although revisionist and relativist arguments are less dominant than they were, they remain an important element in studies of the Ustasha regime, ironically, sometimes citing interdisciplinary approaches in European and American scholarship on fascism to legitimize their approach.⁴⁸

Western scholarship on the Ustasha regime has experienced a correspondingly evolutionary process. For many years, research on the Independent State of Croatia represented a marginal area of interest for historians of European fascism. With the exception of a few key studies, research tended to be not just limited in scope but also methodologically narrow and, because it was often influenced either by émigré sources or Cold War understandings, frequently empirically questionable or openly partisan.⁴⁹ This picture has only begun to change in the

past decade with the emergence of a younger generation of scholars addressing a range of underresearched topics related to Ustasha rule. These have ranged from local and microhistories to broader analyses covering subjects as diverse as social mobility, gender, urban life and resistance, cultural politics, and the construction of a racially homogeneous society.⁵⁰ Increasingly, comparative approaches have also begun to integrate the Ustasha regime into mainstream discussions of European fascism.⁵¹

Remaking Citizens in the Surveillance State

Looking back at the events of April 1941 from three years' distance, the former mayor of Bjelovar Julije Mekanec remembered the establishment of the Ustasha state not only as an exhilarating national revolution but also as the most exciting period of his life. In his reminiscence about the "uprising," Mekanec, by then the state's education minister, recalled how, in the days between April 8 and 10 when a rebellious army garrison had refused to obey the orders of their Serb commanders, "young Bjelovar Ustashes" were already marching to meet the rebels and offer their support. To assist the uprising, he had ordered the distribution of weapons to high school students and members of local youth groups as well as "respected" older citizens, his mayoral headquarters full of young people "armed to the teeth" and just waiting for the command to go into battle against the Serbs. Consequently, following the surrender of the Yugoslav army in the town, Mekanec proclaimed the resurrection of a Croatian state from the balcony of the municipal buildings before thousands of Croatian citizens and soldiers. "Armed Croatian youth and Ustashes, together with the police, patrolled the city and brought from all sides arrested Chetniks and various other suspicious elements so that in a few hours all the prisons were full," he wrote nostalgically.⁵²

Despite the fact that the new state had been bought into being by the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in March 1941, many ordinary citizens, as Mekanec did, viewed the creation of the Ustasha state as the culmination of a national revolution. It was not just the radical right that perceived the triumphant Ustasha leadership returning to Zagreb as the representatives of a liberation movement, however; this view was more widely shared. In the heady days of April 1941, newspapers captured the ecstatic mood with photographic montages showing citizens embracing in celebration, university students waving flags on the sides of cars and backs of motorbikes, and women presenting newly demobilized Croatian soldiers with bouquets of flowers. The institutions created in the formative period of the state reflected both the desire of the Ustasha movement to transform Croatia through social and cultural refashioning and its commitment to establishing a new nation-state through terror and purification.

Despite the fact that the Ustasha movement portrayed itself as an organization representing the will of the entire nation, which was leading the citizens toward cultural enlightenment and social justice, like all totalitarian movements, it was inherently unstable and heterogeneous, composed of a multiplicity of factions and interest groups struggling for influence and favor with the leadership. There was also a variety of regional, generational, and cultural conflicts. Consequently, many of the state's policies were challenged from within, subject to sudden reversals, and inherently contradictory. Moreover, from the outset, the state suffered from a crisis of legitimacy. The Ustasha movement portrayed itself as a mass movement for national liberation and the Ustasha state as the successful outcome of the struggle to free the nation from foreign occupation. Yet an "independent" Croatian state had been achieved only through Axis invasion and the new state's stability guaranteed by German and Italian occupation forces. While few states in the Nazi new order enjoyed as much autonomy in regard to cultural, social, and racial politics as the Ustasha state—at least until the end of 1942—the Croatian state was, nonetheless, a condominium state divided into two zones of occupation, with Nazi Germany controlling the western regions and Fascist Italy occupying the Adriatic Coast, for nationalists the "cradle" of Croatian civilization. There were humiliating conditions attached to this arrangement. Following the signing of the May 1941 Treaty of Rome, not only was the Adriatic Coast placed under Italian occupation and local Croats subjected to an enforced campaign of "Italianization," but the treaty imposed an Italian duke as the progenitor of a new "Croatian" royal dynasty.

In the Ustasha state, power was centralized in the hands of the leader of the Ustasha movement, Ante Pavelić, who became the supreme chief (Poglavnik) of the state, and his most trusted adjutants, deputies, and advisers in the Main Ustasha Headquarters (Glavni Ustaški stan—GUS). There were three basic units of authority in the state. The first, civilian section included all registered members of the movement: male Ustashas; female Ustashas who were organized in the Vine of Ustasha Women (Ženska loza Ustaškog pokreta); the Ustasha University Center (Ustaški sveučilišni stožer) for student members; and the youth wing, the Ustasha Youth (Ustaška mladež). In May 1941, a central syndicate, the Main Alliance of Professions and Other Syndicates (Glavni savez staliških i drugih postrojbi), was established. Its director, the philosopher Aleksandar Seitz, developed a corporatist and organic theory of economic production that he termed "Croatian socialism." Its core principles included the state control of industry, the dominant role of the "national community" in regulating economic relations, and social and class harmony. In the summer of 1942 the Main Alliance announced its formal inclusion of the Ustasha workers' organization, the Croatian Workers' Union (Hrvatski radnički savez), which had sections for social welfare, employment rights, and economic policy as well as a dedicated research unit for the development of corporatist theory and a workers' leisure organization, Odmor (Rest).⁵³

The other central institutions of the state were dedicated to the construction, through terror, of a nationally purified state, comprising a network of militias and death squads such as the Poglavnik Bodyguard Brigade (Poglavnikov tjelesni sdrug—PTS), Black Legion (Crna legija), and Ustasha Corps (Ustaška vojnica), modeled on the SS. A Croatian army, commanded by Slavko Kvaternik, was also created, although unlike the movement's paramilitary organizations it played a minor role in the implementation of terror. Perhaps the most important branch of the Ustasha state was the security service, whose activities were overseen by the Ustasha Surveillance Service (Ustaška nadzorna služba—UNS) and a parallel agency, the Directorate for Public Order and Security (Ravnateljstvo za javni red i sigurnost). The UNS consisted of four main bureaus, the most important of which were the first three. Bureau 1, incorporating the Ustasha police, was charged with suppressing dissent. It also operated special departments dealing with Jewish and Serb questions. Bureau 2, headed by Viktor Tomić, comprised the intelligence service (Obavještajna služba), whose network of agents monitored and rooted out antistate and seditious elements. Bureau 3, meanwhile, constituted the Ustasha Defense (Ustaška obrana) led by Vjekoslav Luburić, which administered the concentration camp system. As with the UNS, the Directorate for Public Order and Security contained a network of offices and directorates dedicated to the liquidation of national enemies and political opponents.

Like the Ustasha movement, the state was organized on a system of interdependent revolutionary units.⁵⁴ According to the movement's 1929 constitution, there were four basic organizational levels. Below GUS stood the largest organizational unit, the center (*štozer*), which comprised a number of camps (*logor*). These, in turn, were made up of concentrations (*tabor*). The base unit was the swarm (*roj*). After the founding of the state, regional branches of the movement were organized into centers, camps, concentrations, and swarms. Similarly, the state was divided into twenty-two provinces, the equivalent of centers; these were subdivided into 141 districts, replicating camps; underneath these were 1,037 communes performing the role of concentrations; and at the base level was the swarm, which represented a unit as large as a village or city neighborhood or as small as an individual street or apartment block. One of the aims of this structure was to create a surveillance state in which citizens would be under observation at all times, since even at the most basic unit of the apartment block their activities would be watched by Ustasha activists. The replication of the movement's structure in the state also aimed to ensure that all social classes and professions would be incorporated into the movement's ranks.⁵⁵

Yet this arrangement also had profound implications for efficient administration, since the dual party-state structure meant that rivalry between state institutions and party organizations was endemic. This fact, combined with the high degree of autonomy that regional leaders enjoyed, ensured that power struggles and factionalism between local Ustasha leaders and branches, on the one hand,

and state officials and the central GUS authorities, on the other, were frequent. As a consequence, despite the Ustasha movement's claim to be constructing a new national consciousness and state that would overcome the social and regional divisions of the past, a complex administrative structure resulted in a state characterized by a high degree of regional variation, conflict, and contestation.

At the same time the state was establishing various institutions for the implementation of terror, it created a number of cultural institutions aimed at the mass indoctrination, education, and acculturation of ordinary citizens. Chief among these was the Main Directorate for Mass National Enlightenment (*Glavno ravnateljstvo za opće narodno prosvjećivanje*—NARPROS), originally founded in October 1941 as an institute within the Ministry for National Education. Its mission was to promote education, literature, and art; increase cultural and economic activities in the village; spread literacy; and supervise the creation of a mass national culture that would transform ordinary Croats into active participants in culture imbued with an Ustasha consciousness. As early as April 1941, a propaganda division, the State Secretariat for Propaganda and Youth Enlightenment (*Državno tajništvo za propagandu i prosvjećivanje omladine*), was established. Its name and personnel changed frequently, and in January 1942 it was replaced by a new institution, the State Information and Propaganda Office (*Državni izvještajni i promičbeni ured*—DIPU), which regulated and censored book publishing, newspapers, film, radio, and other forms of propaganda. With regional offices in Sarajevo, Karlovac, and Zemun, it aimed to ensure that the provinces conformed to central censorship regulations. Finally, in October of the same year, DIPU was renamed the Main Directorate for Propaganda (*Glavno ravnateljstvo za promičbu*—GRP), but it retained the same functions.

Mass Terror and Cultural Fronts as Roads to National Rebirth

Purifying the new state of “undesired elements”—Serbs, Jews, political opponents, and, later, Gypsies—was a central element in the Ustasha regime's campaign to regenerate the nation. As early as April 17 1941, the Ministry of the Interior introduced a law for the defense of the nation and the state that gave the state the right to punish with death anyone who had “offended the honor and vital interests of the Croatian people or in any way the existence of the Independent State of Croatia or state powers, by deed or by attempt.” It was accompanied by the establishment of a network of extraordinary and emergency courts to try transgressors; these provided the state security, police, and justice agencies with a legalistic means of arbitrarily arresting and liquidating the Serb elite, the Jewish community, and ideological opponents.⁵⁶ The emergency courts also furthered the aims of the total surveillance state the Ustasha movement aimed to create, reinforced

by legal statutes institutionalizing spying and informing on neighbors, work colleagues, friends, and even family members. During spring and early summer of 1941, local authorities in the major cities instructed Jews and Serbs to register with the Ustasha Police, evacuate their properties, and move to designated parts of the city where they were subject to strict curfews.⁵⁷ One of the first racial priorities of the new state was the segregation of the Jewish community from mainstream society, and in April and May the Ministry of the Interior introduced a series of “Aryanization” laws that barred Jews from marriage or relationships with non-Jews, owning businesses, state employment, or any involvement in culture and sports. All Jews above the age of fourteen were required to wear insignia identifying them as Jewish.⁵⁸ In some cities, Ustasha police chiefs published notices that barred them from parks, cafes, restaurants, pools and bath houses, and shopping at markets, orders that were often applied to local Serbs too.⁵⁹

Economic destruction played an important role in the initial terror against the Serbian and Jewish communities in particular. In May 1941, the Ministry for National Economy (Ministarstvo narodnog gospodarstvu—NARGOS) established the Office for Economic Renewal (Ured za obnovu privrede), which, in partnership with local Ustasha centers, appointed commissioners to Serbian and Jewish businesses in advance of their forced nationalization or sale. One of the primary duties of commissioners was the Aryanization of private enterprises through the arbitrary dismissal of Serbian, Jewish, and politically and nationally suspect employees. At the beginning of July, this office was superseded by the State Directorate for Economic Regeneration (Državno ravnateljstvo za gospodarstvenu ponovu—DRGP). The Office for Economic Renewal, and later DRGP, enjoyed a range of other economic competencies, including the seizure of Serbian and Jewish property and assets. Meanwhile, the Ministry of the Interior, headed by Andrija Artuković, oversaw the mass removal of Serbs and Jews from state industries and the professions. The State Directorate for Regeneration (Državno ravnateljstvo za ponovu—DRP), headed by Josip Rožanković, was tasked with implementing plans for the forced deportation of two hundred thousand Serbs to Serbia and the confiscation of their land, assets, and possessions. A related agency in the Ministry of Health and Social Care, the Institute for Colonization (Zavod za kolonizaciju), organized the settling of landless peasants and émigré Croatians on this empty land. The central directorate of the DRP in Zagreb encompassed a large bureaucracy in order to accommodate the regime’s ambitious deportation plans. It oversaw the establishment of a series of regional DRP branches (*podružnica*) across the state, created a militia that enforced the deportations—often with great brutality—and administered a series of “resettlement” camps in which conditions were appalling.⁶⁰

Throughout the spring and early summer of 1941, party leaders, officials, and ministers had given speeches at rallies across the new state against the Serb

community, personifying them as a racially alien and unstable element without whose removal from Croatian soil the nation could not prosper or even survive. Many speeches made a direct link between the Serbs and the Jews. For Foreign Minister Mladen Lorković, the Serbs and Jews were “our nation’s misfortune.”⁶¹ In the editorial columns of newspapers and journals, the movement’s intellectual cadre and youth activists identified Serbs and Jews with the racial contamination and moral degeneration of the nation. Without the purification of the nation from such elements, society could not be morally regenerated.⁶² In an echo of their comments, in late spring and summer of 1941 Ustasha militias rampaged through the countryside murdering tens of thousands of Serbs. Hundreds of Orthodox priests were also murdered and Orthodox churches, monasteries, and cathedrals destroyed. In the first few weeks of Ustasha rule, the UNS had already erected the first of the state’s twenty-six concentration camps, the Jadovno camp in Gospić; by the autumn, the notorious Jasenovac-Stara Gradiška complex, the largest concentration camp in Southeastern Europe, had been built. The armed insurgency by Serbs that this campaign of terror provoked turned into a crisis for the Ustasha authorities, quickly making many rural areas ungovernable and threatening the very existence of the state. Under pressure from the Axis force and in an atmosphere of bitter factionalism and recrimination within the Ustasha movement itself, in the autumn of 1941 GUS ordered the disbanding of a number of party militias.

It was during this summer crisis, partly driven by German and Italian disquiet, that a new policy for solving the Serb “problem” began to emerge in the form of a mass program of forced conversion to Catholicism—something that had been operating on a limited and informal scale for some time but had not yet been applied systematically. The Ministry of Religion, which developed the program, hoped that ordinary Serbs would convert to Catholicism if it was made clear to them that by doing so and therefore becoming Croats they would be able to save their lives. By contrast, according to the policy framework developed by Radoslav Glavas, a young Franciscan and policy official, the Serb intelligentsia would not be permitted to convert since their identity was too strong; without their influence, he reasoned that the mass of Serb peasants would assimilate more easily.⁶³ The DRP established a special religious section to administer the conversion process, headed by a militant young friar, Dionizije Juričev, later to die in battle as a PTS battalion leader. Juričev’s section sent radical young Franciscan monks and priests, many of whom were committed Ustasha activists, into the countryside to convert the Serb masses. Some of these zealous missionaries became feared by ordinary Serb peasants for their violent methods, and conversion ceremonies were frequently overseen by armed local Ustasha militias. In some cases, Serbs were openly threatened with death by local Ustasha communes if they did not convert; promises of conversion were also used by Ustasha militias as a means of gathering Serb peasants in one place so they could

be killed more easily. In addition, hardline elements in the movement resisted the policy, arguing that the state should continue with its policy of mass terror. When it became clear to Serbs that converting to Catholicism would not save their lives, they began to deploy diverse strategies to avoid conversion, and, by the beginning of 1942, the policy was essentially dead.⁶⁴

In a speech at the newly opened Parliament (Sabor) in February 1942, Artuković announced the establishment of a Croatian Orthodox Church and the redefinition of the state's Serbs as "Orthodox Croats." This was a policy German officials had been urging on the Ustasha authorities for some time as a means of ending the Serbian insurrection in the countryside. The formation of the church and a range of other initiatives connected to it—the creation of seats in the Sabor for "Orthodox Croat" representatives, an order from GUS that they should be allowed to resume employment in state ministries and industries, the founding of an orthodox department in the theology faculty at the University of Zagreb—aimed to demonstrate to the occupation forces that the state had ended its campaign of terror against the Serbs and that they were now being integrated into Croatian society under a new, authentic identity. In reality, the policy aimed to further weaken and eradicate Serb identity. In addition, while it is true that some Serbs were able to reenter society—albeit on a contingent basis—this was not the experience for most Serbs. The policy was not only divisive among the wider membership of the movement but was also viewed by the Ustasha leadership as a temporary measure. At some point, as Artuković noted prophetically in a speech at Sremska Mitrovica in 1942, once the state had "killed the black gypsies" all that would be left "is to kill the white gypsies [the Serbs]."⁶⁵ The only question was when the project of racial purification would be fully reactivated. The summary execution of thousands of Serbian men, women, and children in the Kozara region and Hrvatska Mitrovica by elite Ustasha units in a series of "anti-Partisan" operations in the summer of 1942, along with the ongoing deportations of Serbs of all social backgrounds to Jasenovac and other camps, suggested that it was likely to be restarted sooner rather than later.⁶⁶ If the systematic liquidation of Serbs had come to an end by the middle of 1942, for Jews and Gypsies, the terror incrementally increased. In the same February speech announcing the establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church, Artuković boasted that the Croatian state, "finding itself in a state of self-defense from these insatiable and poisonous parasites," had solved the Jewish question "with healthy and decisive action."⁶⁷ Gypsies, in the meantime, were rounded up en masse in June 1942 and deported to Jasenovac.

Until autumn of that year, hardline factions committed to the eradication of the entire Serb population remained dominant in GUS, the security services, the armed forces, and the Ustasha movement itself. However, in September 1942 a number of prominent hardliners, including Eugen Dido Kvaternik, the head of the UNS, were purged. Although this purge was partial, it did nonetheless reflect changes in

the composition of the regime that arose out of the summer crisis of 1941. In the early autumn of 1941 as the movement was engulfed in an atmosphere of recrimination and purges, the leadership had begun promoting professional young technocrats into key positions in state ministries and agencies. The appointment of ambitious young economists, social planners, and cultural experts who became the core of a new state cadre reflected the ostensibly more “moderate” course the state was embarking on. Out of the internal power struggle in GUS, a set of proposals about social and cultural politics emerged, later finding expression in the concept of a “second revolution.” This second revolution intended to popularize the Ustasha movement among the masses, transforming its role from that of vanguard to that of a more broad-based national movement that could imbue the entire nation with its values. The idea of a second revolution faced stern internal opposition, however, particularly from tough working-class hardline factions who feared that transforming the movement into a mass organization would threaten its revolutionary ethos.⁶⁸

One of the most important ideas of the second revolution was the concept of intellectual rebirth. The revolution of blood that had purified the nation needed to be followed, commentators such as Stanko Vitković argued, by a revolution that would refashion the social values and ideological beliefs of the entire nation. In this way, the Croatian citizen would be transformed into an “Ustasha subject.” At the same time, the second revolution aimed at a cultural revolution that Mile Starčević, the director of NARPROS, claimed was at the center of the Ustasha revolution. For him, “being Ustasha,” that is transforming the self into an Ustasha subject, meant first of all being active on the “cultural front.”⁶⁹ An equally important aspect of the second revolution was the idea of worker advancement and increasing workers’ access to culture. Before students and activists could be sent into fields and factories to create an Ustasha consciousness among the masses, ordinary citizens would have to be provided with the opportunity not just to view plays and films and to listen to philharmonic concerts and the radio but to be active participants in culture, staging their own plays and productions, writing novels and short stories, and running their own theater companies. NARPROS led this initiative, establishing cultural and educational competitions for workers and promoting the literary work of established and emerging “worker artists.”

While one aim of the second revolution was to introduce those at the bottom of the social ladder to culture and cultured values, it also represented a policy through which the regime could compensate hardline factions and interest groups for the seemingly abrupt interruption of the revolution of blood. The utopian terms of the second revolution sought to reinvigorate the enthusiasm and ideological zeal of those activists who had become disillusioned by the jettisoning of the movement’s utopian program. This temporary period of relative stability in a profoundly dysfunctional and violent state could not last. By the autumn of 1944, as ever more of the state came under the control of the Partisan-led resistance,

there was building frustration and growing internal pressure for the leadership to return to its original revolutionary values. Internal dissent against the corruption and speculative practices of the elite was also growing. The Ustasha student organization led the way, with its leader, Milivoj Karamarko, calling on students to agitate for a “popular Croatian socialist society” that would “mercilessly liquidate the appearance of all native Jewish traits and capitalism” and “antistate speculation.” Militant Ustasha Youth were in open revolt against official corruption, the perceived indecisiveness of the state leadership, and their own leaders, who, they argued, were preventing them from entering the battlefield.⁷⁰

Radical voices, never properly purged, grew noisy. In September 1944, two high-ranking members of the regime, Ante Vokić and Mladen Lorković, were arrested on charges of attempting to stage a coup against the Poglavnik. After their arrest a wave of terror swept the state as student leaders, young technocrats, and “moderate” ideologues were arrested. Hard-liners were returned to ministries, agencies, and security organs as well as to governing bodies in the cultural and propaganda sphere, a number of them vengeful veterans of the purges of autumn 1942. The wave of terror against their opponents, among them architects of the second revolution, resulted in a relaunch of the revolution of blood, now directed not just against Serbs and other “undesired elements” but also against Ustasha activists and ordinary Croats.

Across the state, terror was being enacted. In the Jasenovac camp complex, the last surviving inmates were liquidated and the camp destroyed; as the Communist resistance advanced to the cities, retreating units of Ustasha militias rampaged through the countryside looting, burning, and killing villagers who refused to join their retreat; in Zagreb members of the PTS militia interrogated and executed imprisoned dissident comrades. In early 1945 Vjekoslav Luburić was appointed the Poglavnik’s supreme representative in Sarajevo, charged with destroying the local insurgency and preventing the Partisan advance. Setting up his headquarters in a villa in the center of the city, he inaugurated a reign of terror, establishing an emergency court while his secret police agents arrested and executed hundreds of workers, officials, and ordinary citizens accused of crimes ranging from treason to price fixing. In March 1945 with Partisan forces closing in on the city, his police publicly hanged dozens of dead prisoners from trees on Marijin Dvor as an example to all those who would contemplate antistate activities. With the return of the revolution of blood, terror was joined once more to utopia.⁷¹

Terror as Everyday Experience, Economic System, and Social Practice

As the essays in this collection show, for both the state’s citizens and the “undesired elements” that constituted its internal enemies, terror quickly became a part

of everyday life in the Ustasha state, woven into every aspect of the economy, social relations, lived experience, and culture. The program to expropriate and nationalize Serb and Jewish businesses provides one example of how a discrete process evolved into a far broader economics of race and social redistribution in which terror and utopian visions proved to be mutually self-sustaining. In his chapter about the workings of the DRGP, the agency that oversaw this process, in Sarajevo, Dallas Michelbacher focuses on the role that its decisions and actions played in the destruction of the Jews. Michelbacher argues that the confiscation of Jewish property should be seen as a stepping stone to the extermination of the state's Jews, much as it had been for the Nazi regime during its economic war against the Jews in the 1930s. However, he also demonstrates that while officially the local DRGP implemented the state's Aryanization and nationalization policies both to generate much-needed revenue and to enforce racial purification, it often made choices dictated by local pressures, the constraints of the market, and the desire for economic stability. This was especially evident in its decisions whether to allow companies to retain Jewish members of staff. Nonetheless, the DRGP remained an economic agency in the service of state terror, complicit in the destruction of the Jews, since the revenue derived from the nationalization and dissolving of Jewish businesses in Sarajevo helped to finance the campaign of terror and extermination against the state's Jews.

The everyday life of ordinary citizens, meanwhile, is the subject of Filip Erdeljac's essay, which examines how the Ustasha movement sought to establish its control and legitimacy in the town of Karlovac and surrounding areas. Moving beyond the narrow focus on the destructive impact of Ustasha violence, it considers how the local leadership legitimized its claim to power, gained compliance and support from the population, and used the Serb insurgency to solidify the rigid national and racial categories of Ustasha ideology. In his study, Erdeljac explores how, in addition to excluding and murdering designated outsiders, the Ustasha movement sought to integrate Croats hostile to the new regime's exclusionary and violent ideology into the newly conceived Croat national community. He details the strategies developed by the local Ustasha leadership to allow even citizens repulsed by its extreme violence to participate in the movement's nation-building project without engaging, or even coming into contact, with the atrocities committed by Ustasha militias. Such an approach required Karlovac's Ustasha leaders, at times, directly to disobey or deliberately misinterpret orders coming from Zagreb. He demonstrates that a key element in gaining compliance was the impact of the Communist resistance, which was initially Serb dominated and which brought violence into the forefront of daily life for Karlovac's citizens. While the resistance may have hurt the local Ustasha movement from a logistical and military standpoint, it helped advance its campaign of national homogenization because it induced many ordinary citizens previously apprehensive about