



“What Really Happened”

Translated by Annemarie Gerhardt



Part V: The North and Middle Batschka turns into a bloodbath

Part 5 of the translation series from the book “Völkermord der Tito-Partisanen”. The book is a collection of sworn statements and accounts from our fellow Donauschwaben who lived through these nightmares and survived.

The Germans that lived in the large, mostly German communities of the middle Batschka were descendants of the settlers from the Josefian Time (Kaiser Franz Josef’s time). The twin communities of Werbaß, “Old- and New-Werbaß”, formed the intellectual and financial center of the region. Werbaß was surrounded by the large, German-Lutheran communities of Sekitsch, Feketitsch, Alt- und Kleinker, Tschervenka and Torschau. Kula was a predominantly Catholic community. In the fall of 1944, this region became the showplace of the most horrific, gruesome, cruel mass-executions in the entire Batschka.

Werbaß

Once the military administration had been established in Werbaß, the slaughter of the German population began. Within a few weeks, about 600 men were executed in Werbaß alone. In New-Werbaß, the most prominent and educated people were arrested and shot, either individually or in groups. Among the victims were Prof. Geza Stetzik, the owner and manager of the Werbaß-Student Housing, Prof. Jakob Lotz, the last Director of the Hungarian elementary schools and Old-Werbaß High School, Pharmacist Schuch, teacher Mensch and numerous other personalities well-known throughout the region.

Before each execution, their fellow Werbaß denizens were forced to dig the graves. The victims were then led (or pushed) to the edge of the holes, and killed with a shot through the neck. One local Serbiam for-ester (Jagdhüter), shot 80 fellow Werbaßers. For this “national feat” he was rewarded and installed as District Cap-

tain in Kula. He held this office for many years, despite the fact that he was completely illiterate.

In Old-Werbaß, the executions proceeded much the same as in New-Werbaß. Many German men and women were shot, either in the yard of the Notary’s residence, next to city hall (Gemeindehaus), or at the Schinderplatz. It is estimated that the total number executed was approximately 370. Since clothing was a valuable commodity, the victims were made to strip before being murdered. In the spring of 1945, the remaining population of Werbaß was temporarily herded into a camp at the silk factory. From there, they were moved to camps Gakovo and Kruschevlje.

Kula

In the fall of 1944, only 200 people were executed in Kula, but the murders were noticeably more brutal and cruel. Entire families were simply beaten and hammered to death. This is what happened to Dr. Sauer, his wife, and their two small children. Here, too, the first people to be liquidated were the prominent and prosperous citizens. Among the many victims were the attorneys Dr. Gustav Fammmler and Dr. Heinrich Betsch.

Klein-Ker (Backo Dobropolje)

Klein-Ker was a community with 4,000 Germans. On November 9, 1944, the Partisans blockaded all houses in the community and arrested 82 of the most respected and influential citizens. Half of those arrested were women and young girls. Dr. Wilhelm Liebmann, his mother, and Prof. Georg Dietrich and his wife were among them. They were all herded into the local city hall (Gemeindehaus), locked into small, overcrowded rooms, beaten, and threatened.

On November 10th, at 3 a.m., everyone was disrobed. Their hands were tied with wire and they were driven to the railroad tracks. There they were forced to lie down,

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