



“What Really Happened”

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This is the 4th installment of the “What Really Happened” 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. (As most of you know, I had to put the continuation of this series on “hold” last April, due to my mother’s illness.)

The German population of Novoselo, Obrowatz, Tscheb, Towarisch, Wekerledorf and Plavna suffered much the same fate as the people of Palanka. In every town or village, the beatings, tortures and mass executions began as soon as the Russian troops moved out and the Partisans took charge. Beginning around the middle of October 1944, “mobile execution commandos” began entering the communities in the Banat and Batschka, arresting leading, respected and prosperous Germans – oftentimes over the objections of local Slavic citizens.

Novoselo

Novoselo, with its 3000 souls, was one of the oldest, all-German communities in the Batschka. The atrocities against our people began in the fall of ’44. The first person being (literally) dragged from his home one evening was Doctor Josef Fath. He was executed the very same night. His two sons found death in the nearest concentration camp. Erwin, the younger son, was only 15 years old when he was beaten to death at Camp Palanka.

On November 19, 1944 all German men between the ages of 16 to 60, were brought to Palanka. They were kept locked in the gym of the local school for several days. The men from Wekerledorf and 70 men from Plavna were brought to join them. Altogether, there were more than 200. They were beaten, kicked and grossly mistreated; many were separated from the group and without cause or legal process, simply shot to death. Those that survived were “brought” to Camp Neusatz on November 24.

They had to cover the 42-Km at a trot, running alongside the wagons in which the Partisans rode. Those that could not keep up, were shot and left at the side of the road. 9 men from Novoselo met their death that way.

At Christmastime, all the girls and young women were carried off to Russia. The rest of the population was driven from their homes and marched to various labor camps including Camp Batschki-Jarek.

Obrowatz

Immediately after the Partisans took control of the mixed community of Obrowatz, 34 Germans were executed. The victims included women and young girls, 6 Magyars and 2 locally well respected Serbs. The two Serbs wanted to prevent further senseless killing and defended the Germans. They explained that they had lived peacefully together and were on the best of terms. For their efforts, they were shot to death.

The executions began on October 30th with 3 women. The oldest was 84 years old and, due to an impairment, could hardly walk. The second woman was her daughter and the mother of Franz Reinhardt, a businessman who had fled to Germany. The third was a servant girl. Why were these 3 women executed? Prior to his flight, Franz Reinhardt had hidden some food for his family. This food was found and became the death sentence for these 3 women. They were lined up in the yard at city hall and shot to death.

The second execution took place on November 3 – and so it went the entire month of November. The last recorded execution day was November 24, where a majority of men, and also some women were killed.

The residing German doctor, Michael Köpfer, a man well-liked and respected by the local Serbian community, was cruelly mistreated and sent to concentration Camp Jarek, where he died. The rest of the German men were sent to Camp Neusatz or other concentration camps. As in Novoselo, the girls and young women were herded

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