



...What Really Happened continued

together and sent off to Russia to work in the coal mines. The old women and children were driven from house and home and brought to Camp Jarek, where most of them soon perished.

Tscheb

It was no different in Tscheb, the home community of the Schwabenführer (leader) Doctor Jakob Bleyer. On November 9, 1944, 20 German men were taken from their home, destined for the coal mines in Vrdnik in Syrmien as replacements for the ones killed on the road from Batschka-Palanka to Vrdnik two days earlier. Just before the marching colony left Tscheb, the Partisans called two of the youngest ones from the group and without cause or reason shot them to death. The young men were Josef Tiefenbach and Ludwig Roth.

The other 18 men began their sorry journey to Vrdnik, subjected to constant harassment. Despite the heavy snowfall on the freshly graveled street, the men were forced to remove their shoes, give away their jackets and coats and walk barefoot, just like the men from Palanka before them. After the two-day march, they arrived in Vrdnik, where two more men died from wounds inflicted during the march.

Beginning in December, the rest of the Tscheb men were brought to Neusatz. During the march to Neusatz, the Partisans killed all those that could not keep up with the group. Many of the others perished later in concentration and labor camps. The young women, seniors, and children suffered the same fate as those in Novoselo.

Towarisch

A third of this community was comprised of Germans who were all Roman Catholic farmers. The remainder of the residents were Serbs. In the fall of 1944, the Russian troops came west across the river Theiß and the Hungarian soldiers left the area. The Catholic priest

of Towarisch, Fr. Peter Bohnert, called all the German families together and, after celebrating mass, suggested that they leave their homeland with him.

Most of them followed this well-meant call. Only 10 families could not separate themselves from their material belongings. They simply could not believe that the Partisans would be so cruel and hurt or kill innocent people. So they remained.

A few days later, another German family named Brandelik joined them. The Brandeliks were originally part of the group that left with Fr. Bohnert, but after a day's journey, they had second thoughts and returned home. In the meantime, however, the Partisans had taken control and had begun with their annihilation of everything that was German. All ten families, including children and old people, as well as the newly-returned Brandeliks, were taken from their homes and driven to the outskirts of the village. There, they were forced to dig a large and deep hole. Then all men, women, seniors, and children were tied together. They were pushed to the edge of the freshly dug grave and were shot. Those that did not fall into the hole, were pushed in.

Convinced that all had been killed, even to the last German child, the Partisans left, leaving the grave open. All this happened at dusk and the grave was to be filled in by others in the morning.

As the shots were fired and the bodies fell into the hole, one woman remained unharmed and was pulled into the depth. This woman was Mrs. Brandelik, who was tied to her now dead husband. She remained quietly under the corpses for a long time and when night descended, she untied herself and crawled out of the grave. Bloody all over, Mrs. Brandelik ran for her life. Toward morning she arrived in Bukin and found cover with some friends. After some time, however, she was recognized as German, arrested again and eventually sent to Russia. After her return many years later, she was able to tell her story.

During Easter week 1945, all Germans still living in the district, were herded together and thrown into various concentration camps, where they perished in masses. Partisans and Slavic colonists were brought from the southern regions of the state and placed in their vacated homes.

Plavna

Plavna or Plawing was located near the Danube and the Germans comprised only a fraction of its population. In the fall of 1944, 70 men were arrested, taken to Palanka,



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