

**GEORGE TOMASHEVICK**  
**BORN: YUGOSLAVIA**  
**1927**

George Vid Tomashevick was born 1927 in Yugoslavia into a very cosmopolitan Serbian family. In their home was a multilingual atmosphere without animosity toward any group. The Serbs settled in the area in the 16th century and are orthodox while the Croatians are Roman Catholics and there always were tensions between these groups. The family lived in Vocin in Northern Croatia and he attended the high school in the nearby town Virovitica close to the Hungarian border. He shows a map of Yugoslavia.

The Germans occupied the Country in 1941 and divided the land into eleven parts. They persecuted particularly the Jews, Serbs, Gypsies and "other undesirables" while the Croatians cooperated with Germans. Jews had to wear a Yellow star and the Serbs a red arm band, while the Gypsies could be recognized by their appearance.

The Government tried to force the Serbs to become Catholics which would make them indistinguishable from the Croatians but most refused and even conversions did not prevent their murder in all cases. For Jews, it did not help at all. There were a number of decent Croatians who warned their neighbor of impending arrests but could not really help at all. He reads sections from a booklet he wrote about the Balkan Jews and their neighbors 1940-1945 and shows some material signed by Artucovich, the Minister responsible for many of the atrocities that were committed.

His family, mother, grandmother and six children were arrested in the Fall of 1941 and spent six weeks in a concentration camp. After their release they were shipped to Serbia proper. All of his immediate family survived the war but all except one of their Jewish friends perished in Auschwitz. Antisemitism was inspired mostly by the Nazis but it had always been latent in the regions that were part of the old Austrian - Hungarian Empire until after World War I.

Croatia was quite antisemitic and instituted many restrictions for Jews even before the war, but these laws were abolished when it became clear that they would not preserve the independence of the Country. The King was opposed to the Nazis and fled to Great Britain to establish a government - in - exile. In Serbia the Nazis established three concentration camps. They killed 100 civilians for every German killed and 50 civilians for every wounded German. They took the Jews first and by 1942 there were practically no more Jews left.

He reads passages from his booklet about the atrocities that were committed, such as crowding people including children into a church and burning them alive. He stresses that the Catholic Church was very antisemitic, a fact that is now often denied. The Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia was smuggled out of the Country. Of the 76000 Jews in Yugoslavia before the war, 60000 were killed and of the survivors 10000 went to Israel, so that only a few thousand are now left.

Artucovich, now old and sick, lives in the United States. He entered with an Irish passport and should be brought to trial. Dr. Tomashevich states that there is no appropriate penalty for a war criminal responsible for hundreds of thousand deaths but suggests the death penalty be commuted to life in prison.

A U. S. Court ruled that he could be deported, but there are continuous legal maneuvers to keep him here. Apparently, he still has powerful friends in the Church who help him. There are several photographs of Artucovich and of victims.

During the Nazi occupation of Serbia, he received no regular schooling. He worked in a glass factory and his mother worked in a textile factory. His grandmother was sick with cancer but was kicked out of the hospital to make room for a wounded German soldier. She died in 1943. Everyone took great risks by listening to the broadcasts by the BBC and the voice of America. There was so little food that they were forced to steal, also at great risk. During the civil war between the Royalists and the communists, the family moved to Belgrade. His brother, who was born in 1921, was taken to Germany for forced labor, but in 1943 he fled to the Allies and became a pilot. His brother and one sister now also live in the United States while the rest of the family is still in Yugoslavia.

As a summation, he reads the abstract of his booklet and emphasizes that no human group is immune to inhumanity. It is most important that there should be no collective blaming or praising of any group of people.