

SOURCES

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Cover symbol taken from the book: Not Nazis but Germans, by Dimitri J. Tosevic.

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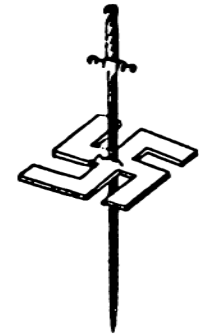
SERBIAN HERITAGE MUSUEM

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Serbian Heritage Museum

Windsor, Ontario



World War II

1941 - 1991

Exhibit Open:

April 14 - October 18, 1991

WORLD WAR II

During the confrontation between the dictatorship of Nazi Germany and the Democracy of the Western allies, the Serbian people made a firm stand for Democracy.

It was a suicidal choice, made at a very dangerous moment. Half of Europe was already obliterated by the powerful Nazi war machine. The mighty French Republic had surrendered and Britain had suffered great losses at Dunkirk and in the Battle of Britain.

By the Spring of 1941, Hitler felt assured that Balkan presented no threat to him and was preparing for his important attack on the Soviet Union. On March 27, 1941, the Serbian people took to the streets and firmly and decisively said no to the Yugoslav government's treaty with Germany. Hitler responded quickly and severely. During the so called "Operation Punishment", German "Stuka" planes bombarded Belgrade on April 6th without a declaration of war. German tanks and artillery entered Yugoslavia from the west, north, and south. The country was overrun in 11 days.

It was a suicidal choice indeed, one which cost Serbian people a staggering number of over one million lives. It was an honourable stand for Democracy, in which they firmly believed that Hitler could not win and that freedom would prevail in the end.

Ironically, when the war ended, in the sweep of large scale politics, the three big leaders, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, unjustly placed all of Eastern Europe into the Communist influential zone. The Serbian quest for freedom was lost in the shuffle.

THE EXHIBIT

Background History

Chronology of events in Europe, leading up to Yugoslavia's confrontation with Germany. Chronology of events in Yugoslavia and the coup d'etat on March 27, 1941.

The April War

On April 6, 1941, Belgrade was bombarded by Germany without a declaration of war. The German army attacked from all directions. Defeated by an overwhelming force, Yugoslavia surrendered on April 17, 1941.

"Magnum Crimen"

On April 10, 1941, under the protection of Nazi Germany the Independent State of Croatia was established, and the systematic extermination of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies was carried on in the territory of the newly found state.

The National Resistance Movement

Following the capitulation of Yugoslavia, a group of Serbian officers led by the Colonel Dragoljub - Draza Mihajlovic, gathered in the unconquered Serbian mountains and organized resistance against the occupying German forces.

Cenotaph

A list of names of families and close relatives of Windsor Serbs, killed by Ustasi in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia, and the locations of the killing grounds.

Milan Nedica & the Serbian State Guard

To fill the vacuum created after the capitulation of Yugoslavia, and to establish some law and order in the occupied Serbia, General Milan Nedic agreed to lead the puppet government during the war. The Serbian State Guard, under his leadership, secretly cooperated with the Resistance fighters and supplied them with arms and ammunition.

Tito's Partisans and the Civil War

Following the German attack on the Soviet Union the Communist guerilla was organized under the leadership of Josif Broz Tito.

Exhibit Cases

1. Yugoslav and German Aircraft
2. German Weapons, German Decorations and Insignia
3. Windsor Serbs in the National Resistance
4. Chetnik's Memorabilia
5. Yugoslav Decorations and Insignia
6. Windsor Serbs in Canadian Army
7. U.S. airman, saved by General Mihajlovic's troops
8. Yugoslav Officers' Uniforms
9. Yugoslav Weapons