

= Pavle ?uri?i? =

Pavle ?uri?i? ( Serbian Cyrillic : ????? ??????? , pronounced [ pâ?vle d ? ??ri?it ? ? ] ; 9 July 1909 ? April 1945 ) was a Montenegrin Serb regular officer of the Royal Yugoslav Army who became a Chetnik commander ( vojvoda ) and led a significant proportion of the Chetniks in Montenegro during World War II . He distinguished himself and became one of the main commanders during the popular uprising against the Italians in Montenegro in July 1941 , and later collaborated with the Italians in actions against the Yugoslav Partisans . In 1943 , his troops carried out several massacres against the Muslim population of Bosnia , Herzegovina and the Sand?ak , and participated in the anti @-@ Partisan Case White offensive alongside Italian forces . ?uri?i? was captured by the Germans in May 1943 , escaped and was recaptured .

After the capitulation of Italy , the Germans released ?uri?i? and he began collaborating with them and the Serbian puppet government . In 1944 , he created the Montenegrin Volunteer Corps with assistance from the Germans , Milan Nedi? , and Dimitrije Ljoti? . In late 1944 , the German commander in Montenegro decorated him with the Iron Cross 2nd Class . ?uri?i? was killed following the Battle of Lijev?e Field , after being captured by elements of the Armed Forces of the Independent State of Croatia near Banja Luka in an apparent trap set by them and Montenegrin separatist Sekula Drljevi? . Some of ?uri?i? 's troops were killed either in this battle or in later attacks by the Partisans as they then continued their withdrawal west . Others attempted to withdraw to Austria ; they were forced to surrender to the Partisans and were killed in the Ko?evski Rog area of southern Slovenia in May and June 1945 . ?uri?i? was a very able Chetnik leader ; his fighting skills were respected by his allies and opponents alike .

= = Early life = =

Pavle ?uri?i? was born on 9 July 1909 in Podgorica , Principality of Montenegro , where he was raised until the death of his father Ilija . According to some sources he was born in 1907 . ?uri?i? was educated up to lower secondary school . Following his father 's death , he moved to Berane , where he lived with his uncle Petar Radovi? , a judge and former Chetnik who had been a member of the band of Vuk Popovi? during the Macedonian Struggle . ?uri?i? attended a teacher training college in Berane for almost two years .

In 1927 , ?uri?i? entered the 55th class of the Military Academy ; he was commissioned as an infantry potporu?nik ( second lieutenant ) in the Royal Yugoslav Army ( Serbo @-@ Croatian : Vojska Kraljevine Jugoslavije , VKJ ) in 1930 . He began his service in Sarajevo with the 10th Infantry Regiment Takovska and attended infantry officers ' school . ?uri?i? remained in Sarajevo until 1934 when , upon his own request , he was transferred to Berane where he served first as a platoon commander and later as a commander of the 1st Company of the 48th Infantry Regiment . On 7 April 1939 , after the Italian invasion of Albania , ?uri?i? 's company was sent to Plav near the Albanian border to gather intelligence . He established contact with individuals in Albania and obtained intelligence , but the information he obtained was not very useful for the defense of Yugoslavia and he returned to Berane with his company . Contacts ?uri?i? made during this period would become important a few years later .

= = World War II = =

= = Axis invasion and Italian occupation of Montenegro = = =

In April 1941 , Germany , Italy and Hungary invaded and occupied Yugoslavia . Montenegro was captured by the Germans , who soon withdrew , leaving the Italians to occupy it . The Montenegrins quickly developed grievances against the Italians related to the expulsion of Montenegrins from Kosovo and Vojvodina , the influx of refugees from other parts of Yugoslavia , and those fleeing Usta?e terror in the regions along the borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina . The Montenegrins also

had grievances against the Italian annexation of important food producing territory in Kosovo and a salt producing facility at Ulcinj to Albania , and the economic damage inflicted on many Montenegrins by the temporary removal of Yugoslav banknotes of 500 dinars and above from circulation . By the time of the invasion , ?uri?i? had been promoted to the rank of kapetan prve klase ( captain first class ) .

= = = = Uprising in Montenegro = = = =

In mid @-@ July 1941 , the Communist Party of Yugoslavia ( Serbo @-@ Croatian : Komunisti?ka Partija Jugoslavije , KPJ ) initiated a general uprising against the Italian occupiers . The uprising was triggered by the proclamation of a restored Kingdom of Montenegro headed by an Italian regent and led by the Montenegrin separatist Sekula Drljevi? and his supporters , known as " Greens " ( zelena?i ) . The insurgents also included large numbers of Montenegrin Serb nationalists known as " Whites " ( bjela?i ) , who " stood for close ties to Serbia " . About 400 former VKJ officers , many of whom were willing to work with the communists , also took part . Some of the officers had recently been released from prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camps by the Germans and Italians , having been captured during the invasion . The VKJ officers assumed command , while the KPJ organised the revolt and provided political commissars . When the uprising commenced , ?uri?i? joined the committee that had been organised to lead military operations in the Berane district .

In the early phase of the uprising the rebels seized control of small towns and villages . ?uri?i? fought alongside communist insurgents and led a successful attack on Berane . During the heaviest fighting he distinguished himself and emerged as one of the main commanders of the uprising . After nearly two days of house @-@ to @-@ house fighting to capture Berane , he was involved in negotiating the surrender of the surviving Italian troops . Following the Italian surrender , he objected to the instructions he received from the communists regarding the handling of Italian prisoners . During the uprising , ?uri?i? also fought against Drljevi? 's forces . Following the Italians ' removal from the Lim valley , ?uri?i? urged rebels to march on Ro?aje and Kosovska Mitrovica and attack the Muslims and Albanians there , whom he considered " anational " . The leaders of the uprising made it clear they considered such an action unacceptable .

The other main commanders of the uprising included the former VKJ officers Colonel Bajo Stani?i? and Major ?or?ije La?i? . Within six weeks , a force of 67 @,@ 000 Italian troops , assisted by Muslim and Albanian irregulars from border areas who provided flank security , regained control of all towns and communication routes in Montenegro . General Alessandro Pirzio Biroli , the Italian military governor of Montenegro , issued orders to crush the revolt but directed his forces to avoid " acts of revenge and useless cruelty " . Nevertheless , dozens of villages were burned , hundreds were killed , and between 10 @,@ 000 and 20 @,@ 000 inhabitants were interned in the revolt 's suppression . For a while , the Muslim and Albanian irregulars were permitted to pillage and torch villages . As soon as the Italians launched their offensive , politicians in Berane abandoned their support for the uprising and began criticising it . Former VKJ officers deserted their units and ?uri?i? left the military committee organising the uprising in the Berane district . The politicians and officers formed their own committees and approached the Italians to express their loyalty and denounce the communists .

A division developed between the uprising 's communist leadership and the nationalists participating . The nationalists recognised the uprising had been crushed and wanted to stop fighting , while the Partisans were determined to continue the struggle . In late 1941 , the nationalists contacted the Italians and offered to help them fight the communists , who had since been renamed Partisans . The nationalists ? including ?uri?i? , who was popular in his own Vasojevi? clan of northern Montenegro ? subsequently withdrew into the hinterland . They sought to avoid provoking the Italians and protect the mountain villages if they were attacked . In northern Montenegro , there was a marked distinction between the communists and nationalists . The nationalists had closer ties with Serbia and possessed a frontier mentality towards Muslims . The communists wished to continue the uprising by turning against their class enemies . Usta?e manipulation of the Muslims in the Sand?ak and the expulsion of Serbs from areas annexed by Albania made ?uri?i? and his

Chetniks impatient to continue fighting the Italians . They subsequently turned on the Muslims and Albanians in the region . The uprising continued with reduced intensity until December 1941 . In 1941 , ?uri?i? was awarded the Order of Kara?or?e 's Star by the Yugoslav government @-@ in @-@ exile on the recommendation of Chetnik leader Dra?a Mihailovi? .

= = = Mihailovi? 's instructions = = =

In October 1941 , Mihailovi? appointed ?uri?i? as his commander for all regular and reserve troops in central and eastern Montenegro and parts of the Sand?ak . In early November , the nationalist leaders in Montenegro quickly became aware of the split between the Chetniks and Partisans in Serbia ; later that month they sent ?uri?i? to visit Mihailovi? . During this visit , ?uri?i? received verbal orders from Mihailovi? and was appointed as the commander of all Chetnik detachments in the Sand?ak . La?i? was appointed commander of all Chetnik forces in Old Montenegro . ?uri?i? 's appointment was also included as part of instructions dated 20 December 1941 that were received from Mihailovi? . The instructions included the following objectives :

- the struggle for the liberty of our whole nation under the sceptre of His Majesty King Peter II ;
- the creation of a Great Yugoslavia and within it of a Great Serbia which is to be ethnically pure and is to include Serbia [ meaning also Macedonia ] , Montenegro , Bosnia and Herzegovina , Srijem , the Banat , and Ba?ka ;
- the struggle for the inclusion into Yugoslavia of all still un @-@ liberated Slovene territories under the Italians and Germans ( Trieste , Gorizia , Istria and Carinthia ) as well as [ of areas now under Bulgaria ] , and northern Albania with Scutari ;
- the cleansing of the state territory of all national minorities and anational elements ;
- the creation of contiguous frontiers between Serbia and Montenegro , as well as between Serbia and Slovenia by cleansing the Muslim population from the Sand?ak and the Muslim and Croat populations from Bosnia and Herzegovina .

These instructions stated that the objectives of the Partisans meant that there could be no cooperation between them and the Chetniks . They also appointed ?uri?i? as a Chetnik vojvoda . Some historians have challenged the authenticity of these instructions ; they say the document was a forgery made by ?uri?i? after he failed to reach Mihailovi? . Other historians either do not mention any controversy about the provenance of the instructions , mention evidence supporting their authenticity , or explicitly state they consider them to be authentic .

= = = Collaboration with the Italians against the Partisans in Montenegro = = =

In January 1942 , ?uri?i? met with representatives of Generale di brigata ( Brigadier ) Silvio Bonini , the commander of the Italian 19th Infantry Division Venezia . ?uri?i? 's brother Vaso was responsible for liaising with the Italian division and was stationed at their headquarters in Berane . At this meeting , ?uri?i? was granted freedom of action against the Partisans in the division 's area of responsibility ; an agreement between ?uri?i? and the Italian representatives was signed by Vaso on ?uri?i? 's behalf . That March , ?uri?i? again met with the staff of the division . In the same month , he assembled a group of former VKJ officers , politicians and other non @-@ communists , and passed on Mihailovi? 's instructions . Mihailovi? codenamed ?uri?i? 's headquarters " Mountain Staff No. 15 " ; ?uri?i? selected the village of Zaostro for its location . In January , a Chetnik force led by La?i? conducted successful operations against the Partisans in the Andrijevisa district , but La?i? suffered a severe head wound during the fighting . La?i? 's wounding meant ?uri?i? soon became the most prominent and important Chetnik commander in Montenegro . By 5 January , ?uri?i? assumed command over the Berane district and established seven Chetnik detachments in the area . Soon after , a district political committee with responsibility for organising propaganda and finding recruits was formed . ?uri?i? soon gained control of all anti @-@ communist militia groups of 500 members in the Berane district and two smaller groups from Kola?in and Bijelo Polje totalling 120 men . On 13 January , after a week of preparation , he launched attacks on two Partisan battalions operating in the Berane district . After four days of fighting , ?uri?i? succeeded in almost completely

clearing the district of Partisans with the help of Italian troops and Muslim militias . By 24 January , ?uri?i? 's forces captured the remaining Partisan @-@ held village in the district , killing 15 Partisans and executing 27 who had been captured . This effectively erased the remaining Partisan presence in Berane .

By March , ?uri?i? had demonstrated to the Italians that he was uncompromising towards the Partisans and his detachments were expanding beyond the division 's area of responsibility . An agreement was negotiated between ?uri?i? and General Biroli , the military governor and commander of Italian troops in Montenegro . This agreement , signed by ?uri?i? , also related to the area of operations of the 19th Infantry Division Venezia . The Italians agreed to supply ?uri?i? and his troops with arms , food , and wages . The agreement obliged ?uri?i? to :

- lead the fight against the communists and their supporters ;
- maintain contact with the Italian military authorities , so that his actions were carried out in accordance with Italian instructions . North of Lijeva Rijeka , ?uri?i? agreed to clear his actions with Bonini , and south of Lijeva Rijeka he was to coordinate with Biroli ;
- maintain order and guarantee the safety of roads in his area of operations ;
- never attack Italian troops and limit his activities to fighting against the communists ;
- return all arms provided by the Italians , except for those needed to maintain order , after the destruction of the communists .

Despite his possession of Mihailovi? 's instructions , ?uri?i? initially had minimal influence on the non @-@ communist elements of the Montenegrin resistance and was unable to develop an effective strategy against the Italians or Partisans in the months after his return to Montenegro . In early 1942 , his Chetnik detachment became more active against local Muslims , especially in eastern Montenegro and the Sand?ak . The Partisans occupied Kola?in in January and February 1942 , and turned against all real and potential opposition ; they killed about 300 people and threw their corpses into pits they called the " dogs ' cemetery " . Because of this and other examples of communist terror , some Montenegrins turned against the Partisans . On 23 February , ?uri?i? captured Kola?in and held it as a Chetnik bastion until May 1943 . Chetnik terror against political opponents intensified following the town 's capture and manifested in show trials and mass executions that lasted until late June .

In May 1942 , ?uri?i? attacked and defeated the last significant Partisan detachment in Montenegro . In June 1942 , ?uri?i? collaborated with the Usta?e in Fo?a in south @-@ eastern Bosnia . After being forced out of Serbia by the Germans , Mihailovi? arrived in Montenegro as the Italians and Chetniks were fighting the Partisans . Mihailovi? was accompanied by his staff and a British Special Operations Executive ( SOE ) liaison officer . He eventually established his base in the village of Gornje Lipovo , a few miles from ?uri?i? 's headquarters at Kola?in . Mihailovi? and his staff had few troops and relied on ?uri?i? for protection . Soon after Mihailovi? arrived in Montenegro , ?uri?i? told Mihailovi? 's SOE liaison officer that he was available to act independently and in defiance of Mihailovi? . ?uri?i? and the other Chetnik commanders in Montenegro nominally recognised Mihailovi? as their supreme commander but they rarely obeyed him .

On 24 July 1942 , Bla?o ?ukanovi? , senior commander of all Chetnik forces in Montenegro , signed a comprehensive agreement with Biroli which officially organised and recognised three Chetnik " flying detachments " as Italian auxiliary troops for use against the Partisans . These detachments were supplied , armed , and paid by the Italians ; they included 4 @, @ 500 Chetniks , 1 @, @ 500 of whom were under the command of ?uri?i? . The Chetniks became an important part of the Italian occupation regime in Montenegro . The existing " Montenegrin Chetnik committee " , which was led by the Brigadier General ?ukanovi? and to which ?uri?i? was aligned , was recognised by the Italians as the " Nationalist Committee of Montenegro " , whose only political aims were to combat the communists and others opposed to the Italian occupation , and " maintain law and order " . Arrangements were to be made by mutual understanding for pay , rations , weaponry , and aid to the families of Chetniks .

During the rest of 1942 , Italian operations in conjunction with their Chetnik auxiliaries forced the remaining Partisans out of Montenegro , after which the Italians used the Chetnik auxiliaries to police the countryside . For most of this time , ?uri?i? operated fairly independently in northern

Montenegro ; he was described as " a law unto himself " . In December 1942 , Chetniks from Montenegro and the Sandžak met at a conference in the village of Čahovići near Bijelo Polje . The conference was dominated by Đurić ; its resolutions expressed extremism and intolerance , and its agenda focused on restoring the pre - war status quo in Yugoslavia implemented in its initial stages by a Chetnik dictatorship . It also laid claim to parts of the territory of Yugoslavia 's neighbours . At this conference , Mihailović was represented by Major Zaharije Ostojić , his chief of staff , who had previously been encouraged by Mihailović to wage a campaign of terror against the Muslim population living along the borders of Montenegro and the Sandžak . One outcome of the conference was the decision to destroy the Muslim villages in the Čajniče district of Bosnia .

= = = Case White and cleansing actions = = =

In December 1942 , concerned about the possibility of Allied forces landing in the Balkans , the Germans began planning an anti - Partisan offensive in Bosnia and Herzegovina codenamed " Case White " . The size of the planned offensive required the involvement of both the Croatian Home Guard and the Italians . Late in the planning , the Italians began to prepare and equip Chetnik detachments , including that of Đurić , for involvement in the operation . In early January 1943 , the Chetnik Supreme Command ordered Montenegrin Chetnik units to carry out " cleansing actions " against Muslims in Bijelo Polje county in north - eastern Montenegro . On 10 January 1943 , Đurić reported that Chetniks under his command had burned down 33 Muslim villages , killed 400 Muslim fighters & members of the Muslim self - protection militia also supported by the Italians & and had also killed about 1 , 000 Muslim women and children .

As Italian auxiliaries , Đurić 's detachment was so dependent on the Italians for arms and transport that it had not left Montenegro until 18 January 1943 , two days before the first phase of Case White was to begin . On 3 January 1943 , Ostojić issued orders to " cleanse " the Čajniče district of Ustaše & Muslim organisations . According to the historian Radoje Pajović , Ostojić produced a detailed plan that avoided specifying what was to be done with the district 's Muslim population . Instead , these instructions were to be given orally to the responsible commanders . Delays in the movement of Chetnik forces into Bosnia to participate in Case White alongside the Italians enabled the Chetnik Supreme Command to expand the planned " cleansing " operation to include the Pljevlja district in the Sandžak and the Foča district of Bosnia . A combined Chetnik force of 6 , 000 divided into four detachments and commanded by Vojislav Lukačević , Andrija Vesковиć , Zdravko Kasalović and Bajo Nikić was assembled . Mihailović ordered all four detachments to be placed under the overall command of Đurić .

In early February 1943 , during their advance north - west into Herzegovina in preparation for their involvement in Case White , the combined Chetnik force killed large numbers of Muslims in the targeted areas . In a report to Mihailović dated 13 February 1943 , Đurić wrote that his Chetniks had killed about 1 , 200 Muslim combatants and about 8 , 000 women , children and the elderly , and destroyed all property except livestock , grain and hay , which they seized . Đurić reported that :

The operations were executed exactly according to orders . [ ... ] All the commanders and units carried out their tasks satisfactorily . [ ... ] All Muslim villages in the three above mentioned districts are entirely burnt , so that not one of the houses remained undamaged . All property has been destroyed except cattle , corn and hay . In certain places the collection of fodder and food has been ordered so that we can set up warehouses for reserved food for the units which have remained on the terrain in order to purge it and to search the wooded areas as well as establish and strengthen the organization on the liberated territory . During operations complete annihilation of the Muslim population was undertaken , regardless of sex and age .

About 500 Muslims , mostly women , children and the elderly , were killed in Goražde in March , and several women were raped . An estimated 10 , 000 people were killed in the anti - Muslim operations commanded by Đurić between January and February 1943 . The casualty rate would have been higher if many Muslims had not already fled the area - most to Sarajevo - when the February action began . Chetnik casualties during the operations were reported as 36 killed and

58 wounded . The orders for the " cleansing " operation stated that the Chetniks should kill all Muslim fighters , communists and Ustaše , but that they should not kill women and children . According to Pajović , these instructions were included to ensure there was no written evidence for the killing of non @-@ combatants . On 8 February , one Chetnik commander made a notation on his copy of written orders issued by Đurić that the detachments had received additional orders to kill all Muslims they encountered . On 10 February , the commander of the Pljevlja Chetnik Brigade told one of his battalion commanders that he was to kill everyone in accordance with the orders of their highest commanders . According to Tomasevich , despite Chetnik claims that this and previous " cleansing actions " were countermeasures against aggressive Muslim activities , all circumstances point to it being Đurić 's partial achievement of Mihailović 's previous directive to clear the Sandžak of Muslims .

By the end of February 1943 , Đurić 's Chetniks were resisting Partisan attempts to move east from the Neretva river . After the Battle of Neretva , during which the Partisans forced a crossing of the river against faltering Chetnik opposition , Đurić 's detachment of about 2 @, @ 000 fighters fell back to Kalinovik , where they were almost defeated by the Partisan 2nd Proletarian Division in late March . Falling back further towards the Drina river , Đurić had assembled about 4 @, @ 500 Bosnian and Montenegrin Chetniks around Foča by April but was in desperate need of supplies . Shortly after this , the Italians withdrew most of their troops from Foča and abandoned most of the Sandžak . For the rest of April 1943 , Đurić fought a holding action against the Partisans along the Drina river with his 3 @, @ 000 remaining fighters .

= = = Capture = = =

The Germans followed up Case White with a further offensive , codenamed " Case Black " , whose objectives were the " disarming of all Chetniks and the destruction of all Partisans in Montenegro and Sandžak " , to secure important bauxite , lead , and chromium mines . According to Tomasevich , the main reasons for the offensive were the threat of an Allied landing in the Balkans and the need to eliminate resistance groups that could assist the Allies . In early May 1943 , the Germans entered the Sandžak and eastern Montenegro area . Đurić withdrew to Kolašin with about 500 fighters and joined forces with Serbian Chetniks commanded by Dragutin Keserović .

On 10 May 1943 , Oberstleutnant ( Lieutenant Colonel ) Heinz , commander of the 4th Regiment of the Brandenburg Division , met Đurić at Kolašin with the intent of engaging him to help the Germans against the Partisans . Đurić said he was willing to do this , and once the Partisans were defeated he said he would be ready to fight alongside the Germans on the Russian Front . During the meeting , Đurić told Heinz that Mihailović had left Kolašin at the end of 1942 and that he refused to accept Mihailović 's current policy . Đurić said Mihailović had been distracted by propaganda and was over @-@ rated , and described him as " an unsteady visionary wandering through the land " . Đurić also said Josip Broz Tito and his Partisans were the only serious enemy . On 11 May 1943 , Heinz submitted a proposal to General der Infanterie ( Lieutenant General ) Rudolf Lütters , the German Commanding General in Croatia , regarding the Chetniks who had been " legalised " by the Italians . He suggested the Germans also " legalise " Đurić 's Chetniks and use them to disarm " non @-@ legalised " Chetniks groups . Heinz also proposed that after the Partisans had been destroyed , the Germans " legalise " only weak detachments of Đurić 's Chetniks . Subsequent events indicate Heinz 's approach to Đurić may not have been authorised by his superiors and that his suggestions were not acted upon .

On 14 May 1943 , a forward detachment of the German 1st Mountain Division entered Kolašin and seized Đurić by deceiving the Italian troops who were guarding his headquarters . Đurić and the Chetniks did not resist their capture and there were no casualties . The Italians vigorously protested Đurić 's capture but the Germans overruled them . With the capture of Đurić 's Chetniks and another Chetnik group west of Kolašin a few days later , Case Black became an almost entirely anti @-@ Partisan operation . Đurić was driven away in a vehicle carrying Red Cross markings ; he was then flown from Berane to a prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camp at Stryi in the Lviv region of Galicia which formed part of the German occupation area of the General Government . He escaped

three months later and was recaptured by the authorities of the Serbian puppet government in October 1943 while attempting to cross the Danube near Pančevo in southern Banat . He was handed over to the Germans and held in the Gestapo prison in Belgrade .

= = = Release and return to Montenegro = = =

In September 1943 , the Italians capitulated and the Germans occupied Montenegro , establishing an area command ( German : Feldkommandantur 1040 ) under Generalmajor ( Brigadier ) Wilhelm Keiper . Soon after , the German Special Envoy in Belgrade Hermann Neubacher , Milan Nedić , and the German Military Commander in south @-@ east Europe General Hans Felber arranged for Đurić to be released . Neubacher had developed a plan to establish a union between Serbia and Montenegro and submitted it to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in October 1943 . Đurić was an important part of this plan . He was well regarded by the Chetniks and pro @-@ Chetnik populace in Montenegro , and Stanić and Vučković had been killed . Neubacher , Nedić and Felber believed Đurić could be used to fight the Partisans in Montenegro and help form closer relations between Serbia and Montenegro . Although Neubacher 's plan did not gain Hitler 's approval , Đurić received supplies including arms and ammunition from the Germans and in November 1943 he returned to Montenegro to fight against the Partisans . At this time he established closer ties with Dimitrije Ljotić , whose Serbian Volunteer Corps ( SDK ) provided him with weapons , food , typewriters , and other supplies . He also worked with Nedić , who promoted him to the rank of lieutenant colonel , and appointed him assistant to the commander of the SDK . According to Pajić , Đurić was promoted in early to mid @-@ 1944 by the Yugoslav government @-@ in @-@ exile on the advice of Mihailović .

= = = Collaboration with the Germans against the Partisans in Montenegro = = =

= = = = Winter and spring of 1944 = = = =

In February 1944 , Nedić sent the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment of the SDK to Montenegro to supplement Đurić 's forces . In the first half of 1944 , the Germans in Montenegro and the Sandžak organised offensives against the Partisans , largely relying on forces under the command of Lakić and Đurić . Because of the weakness of their own forces , the Germans contributed by commanding and supplying the troops involved , and providing smaller mobile armoured units with heavy weapons . The Chetnik leaders provided most of the troops . In February and March , the Germans and numerous Chetnik units undertook a series of operations codenamed Bora , Baumbüte and Vorfrühling around Podgorica .

When the Partisans advanced into Serbia in March 1944 , Partisan forces in northern Montenegro and the Sandžak were reduced to one division . To exploit this weakness , Đurić proposed to the Germans that they launch an offensive operation . Operation Frühlingserwachen was planned for the northern parts of Montenegro and the Sandžak ; its primary objective was the capture of Kolašin through concentric attacks launched from Pljevlja , Prijepolje and Pešter . This would permit them to link up with forces advancing from Podgorica in the south and to drive a wedge through the middle of the Partisan lines . Operation Frühlingserwachen involved an Axis force of about 5 @, @ 000 men comprising some of Đurić 's forces , the SS Polizei @-@ Selbstschutz @-@ Regiment Sandschak , the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment of the SDK , and two reinforced German motorised companies . The operation began on 9 April ; Đurić 's forces briefly seized Berane and Bijelo Polje but were soon beaten back by the Partisans . This reversal consolidated the poor German / Chetnik position in Montenegro ; their forces in the south were completely isolated from those in the north . Chetnik forces and their allies suffered heavy casualties ; the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment of the SDK was reduced from 893 men to 350 .

= = = = Summer 1944 = = = =

In mid May 1944 , Đurić visited Belgrade and asked Nedić , Neubacher , and Generalfeldmarschall ( Field Marshal ) Maximilian von Weichs , German Commander in Chief Southeast , to urgently send arms and other supplies to his unit , which was authorised to a strength of 5 ,000 men . Đurić ? with help from the Germans , Nedić , and Ljotić ? then established the Montenegrin Volunteer Corps ( Serbian : Crnogorski dobrovoljački korpus , CDK ) , which was formally part of the SDK . The CDK consisted of some of Đurić 's former soldiers who had been released from German captivity , but most were Chetniks who had remained in Montenegro and were gathered under the umbrella term " national forces " . By this time , although he still formally owed allegiance to Yugoslavia through Mihailović , he also owed some allegiance to the Germans and to Nedić , who had released , promoted , and supported him . The German 2nd Panzer Army organised Đurić 's troops into three regiments numbered 6th , 7th , and 8th , following the five regiments of the SDK . The CDK was subordinated to the headquarters of 2nd Panzer Army . Đurić was appointed commander ; his corps headquarters were in Prijepolje . Each regiment was planned to consist of two " corps " of 800 men each . The CDK comprised between 7 ,000 and 8 ,000 men . Leutnant Heusz , a former German liaison officer for Lukačević , was assigned to watch Đurić . On 30 May 1944 , Heusz sent a detailed briefing to Đurić instructing him to ensure that joint operations were progressing smoothly . In mid June , with German consent , Đurić moved to the Podgorica area with a group of associates to personally direct the formation of the 8th Regiment of the CDK . He reorganised the Chetnik forces under his command , dividing them into two territorial structures ( one under a command staff for Montenegro and Boka Kotorska and the other under a command staff for Stari Ras ) .

Collaboration between Đurić 's forces and the Germans continued into late 1944 . On 13 July 1944 , Radio Belgrade praised Đurić " for his services to the Axis cause " . The 8th Regiment of the CDK was nearly destroyed in August by the 7th Montenegro Youth Brigade " Budo Tomović " during Operation Rübezahl . The CDK suffered heavy losses in fighting , and the Germans ordered its re formation on 21 September 1944 . Đurić and his forces conducted reprisals against the population in Pljevlja , Prijepolje , Priboj , and Nova Varoš . The Chetniks also raided villages to intimidate and eradicate Partisan sympathisers , notably at Bjelopavlići , where 48 communists were executed . Đurić remained in Montenegro until the end of Operation Rübezahl in late August 1944 , after which he returned to the Sandžak . Following Operation Rübezahl , the presence of Partisan and German forces in northern Montenegro and the Sandžak was reduced and the focus of operations shifted to Serbia . Remaining Partisan units quickly re established domination over temporarily lost territories and the German 181st Infantry Division ordered its three battalions that remained isolated in the Pljevlja area to break through Partisan held territory and reunite with the rest of the division at Mateevo . This plan , codenamed Nordsturm , relied on the substantial participation of Đurić 's units . It fitted well with Đurić 's general orientation to move towards the coast , where an Allied landing was expected . Nordsturm began on 31 August . Đurić and the Germans made progress at first , capturing Kolašin and Berane , but the towns were quickly retaken by the Partisans , who went on the counterattack and proceeded to capture a string of towns in northern and western Montenegro and eastern Herzegovina .

Đurić maintained contact with Lukačević , who at that time had begun to attack the Germans in Herzegovina with his own forces . Đurić considered the possibility of joining Lukačević in fighting the Germans in anticipation of an Allied landing . However , because Lukačević was quickly defeated and no Allied landing occurred , Đurić remained tied to the Germans . German intelligence closely tracked Đurić 's communications and movements , and German commands continued to make use of his forces . The Germans counted Đurić 's Chetniks as part of Army Group E in a survey of available forces dated 16 November 1944 . In the survey , German forces in Montenegro at that time were estimated at 47 ,000 soldiers , including Đurić 's 10 ,000 Chetniks . On 21 October 1944 , the Partisans took the Grahovo garrison after a five day battle . On 6 November , the Partisans surrounded Cetinje , which was defended by the Germans , Black Shirts , and about 600 Chetniks . On 8 November , the Germans and Chetniks in Cetinje were reinforced with a formation of 800 ? 1 ,000 Chetniks led by Đurić , which eventually



succeeded in breaking through the Partisan blockade .

On 11 October 1944 , at the suggestion of von Weichs , Keiper , the German Plenipotentiary General in Montenegro , awarded ?uri?i? the Iron Cross ( 2nd Class ) in the name of the Führer and the German High Command for fighting against the Partisans .

= = = Withdrawal from Montenegro and death = = =

On 14 November , the Germans launched an assault from Podgorica towards Nik?i? to clear a corridor through which the German forces in Montenegro could withdraw towards the Reich . This operation was supported by the Italian 86th National Republican Guard ( GNR ) Battalion . Around 1 @, @ 200 of ?uri?i? 's Chetniks were deployed on the flanks of the attack . Twelve days of fierce fighting resulted in significant casualties , and the Germans made no progress , losing Boka in the meantime . On 25 November , the Germans decided to abandon this line of attack and attack Kola?in . Chetniks under ?uri?i? 's command continued to fight alongside the Germans . After reaching Kola?in , ?uri?i? 's force separated from the Germans to relieve pressure on the German route of march and headed towards Bosnia , marching to the west of the Germans and bypassing Pljevlja . During the breakout and subsequent withdrawal , both the Germans and Chetniks were subjected to frequent attacks by the Allies .

?uri?i? 's forces proceeded to north @-@ eastern Bosnia to join Mihailovi? . ?uri?i? had wanted to withdraw through Albania to Greece but Mihailovi? told him to prepare for an Allied landing , the return of the king , and the establishment of a national government . After ?uri?i? joined Mihailovi? in north @-@ eastern Bosnia , he was critical of Mihailovi? 's leadership and argued strongly for all remaining Chetnik troops to move to Slovenia . Mihailovi? was not persuaded ; ?uri?i? decided to move to Slovenia independently of Mihailovi? and arranged for Ljoti? 's forces , which were already there , to meet him near Biha? in western Bosnia to assist his movement . When he left Mihailovi? , he was joined by Chetnik ideologue Dragi?a Vasi? and the detachments commanded by Ostoji? and Petar Ba?ovi? , and around 10 @, @ 000 refugees . This force was formed into the Chetnik 8th Montenegrin Army consisting of the 1st , 5th , 8th and 9th ( Herzegovina ) divisions .

To reach Biha? , ?uri?i? made a safe @-@ conduct agreement with elements of the Armed Forces of the Independent State of Croatia ( NDH ) and with the Montenegrin separatist Drljevi? . The details of the agreement are not known , but it is thought he and his troops intended to cross the Sava river into Slavonia where they would join Drljevi? as the Montenegrin National Army , of which ?uri?i? was the operational commander . ?uri?i? apparently tried to outsmart them and sent only his sick and wounded troops across the river , keeping his fit troops south of the river . He began moving his command westwards ; harassed by the NDH troops and Partisans , ?uri?i? 's forces reached the Vrbas river north of Banja Luka in late May . Between 30 May and 8 April , the combined Chetnik force was defeated by a strong NDH force armed with German @-@ supplied tanks , in the Battle of Lijev?e Field . This was probably the largest combat action between NDH forces and the Chetniks in the previous two years .

After this defeat and the defection of one of his sub @-@ units to Drljevi? , ?uri?i? was forced to negotiate directly with the leaders of the NDH forces about the further movement of his Chetniks towards Slovenia . This appears to have been a trap ; he was attacked and captured by the NDH on his way to the meeting . Events after his capture are unclear , but ?uri?i? , Vasi? , Ostoji? , and Ba?ovi? were subsequently killed along with others ? including some Serbian Orthodox priests . According to Pajovi? , the Usta?e executed ?uri?i? in late April 1945 at the Jasenovac concentration camp . The website of the Jasenovac Memorial Site says ?uri?i? was killed at the camp by the Usta?e in 1945 . The location of ?uri?i? 's grave , if any , is unknown .

Both the NDH forces and Drljevi? had reasons for ensnaring ?uri?i? . The NDH forces were motivated by the mass terror committed by ?uri?i? on the Muslim population in Sand?ak and south @-@ eastern Bosnia . Drljevi? was opposed to ?uri?i? 's support of a union of Serbia and Montenegro , which ran counter to Drljevi? 's separatism .

= = = Aftermath = = =

Some of Đurić's troops escaped and travelled west . Some were killed by Partisan forces , who were to the south of their intended withdrawal route west to Slovenia . The majority , left without a leader , were integrated into Drljević's Montenegrin National Army and withdrew towards the Austrian border . Portions of both groups were later captured in Slovenia by the Partisans . About 1 @, @ 000 of Đurić's Chetniks crossed into Austria but were forced to return to Yugoslavia , where some were killed by the Partisans near the Yugoslav ? Austrian border . Most were taken to southern Slovenia , where they were killed and their bodies thrown into deep abysses in the Kočevski Rog area .

According to Tomasevich , the killing of the Montenegrin Chetniks by the Partisans at Kočevski Rog was an " act of mass terror and brutal political surgery " similar to that carried out by the Chetniks earlier in the war . It was partly an act of revenge for the mass terror carried out by the Chetniks against the Partisans and pro @-@ Partisan segments of the population and partly to stop the Chetniks from continuing an armed struggle against the communists , perhaps with Western assistance . Less than a quarter of the force that began with Đurić in Montenegro , and other Chetniks who joined him during the journey north and west , survived . A few weeks later , Drljević , who had fled to Austria , was discovered by followers of Đurić and killed . Đurić was one of the most able Yugoslav Chetnik leaders ; his fighting skills were respected by his allies and opponents .

= = Commemoration controversy = =

The Serbian diaspora in the United States set up a monument dedicated to Pavle Đurić at the Serbian cemetery in Libertyville , Illinois . The management and players of the football club Red Star Belgrade visited it on 23 May 2010 .

In May 2002 , plans for a " Montenegrin Ravna Gora " memorial complex to be located near Berane were prepared . The complex was to be dedicated to Đurić , who spent some of his youth in Berane and established his wartime headquarters there . In June 2003 , the Montenegrin Minister of Culture Vesna Kilibarda banned the construction of the monument , saying the Ministry of Culture had not applied for approval to erect it . The Association of War Veterans of the National Liberation Army ( SUBNOR ) objected to the construction of the monument , saying Đurić was a war criminal who was responsible for the deaths of many colleagues of the veterans association and 7 @, @ 000 Muslims . The Muslim Association of Montenegro condemned the construction and stated , " this is an attempt to rehabilitate him and it is a great insult to the children of the innocent victims and the Muslim people in Montenegro " . On 4 July 2002 , the Montenegrin government forbade the unveiling of the monument , stating that it " caused public concern , encouraged division among the citizens of Montenegro , and incited national and religious hatred and intolerance " . A press release from the committee in charge of the monument 's construction said the actions taken by the government were " absolutely illegal and inappropriate " . On 7 July , the police removed the stand that had been prepared for the monument .

In 2011 , the Montenegrin Serb political party New Serb Democracy ( NOVA ) renewed efforts to build a monument ; they stated that Đurić and other royal Yugoslav officers were " leaders of the 13 July uprising " and they " continued their struggle to liberate the country under the leadership of King Peter and the Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia " .

= = = Books = = =

= = = Journals = = =

= = = Websites = = =