

Investigation of post-war massacres in Slovenia and the search for information on the victims in the Central Alphabetical Records (CAR)

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The investigation of the post-war massacres which led to the deaths of an unknown number of people after World War II - certainly many tens of thousands -, has been a (more or less) hot topic in the Republic in Slovenia for twenty years and still raises diverse opinions. The crimes being committed under the then authority were forbidden topics, and evidence was being destroyed (by the responsible persons) for fear of the consequences of disclosure. The method of investigating massacres is specific, particularly in this case, when several decades have passed between the act and the (beginning of) investigation. Prior to the investigation, a dilemma as to whether the acts were criminal offences and whether prosecution was possible had to be resolved. The beginnings of the investigation coincided with the formation of the sovereign state of Slovenia; in 1994, an investigation called 'Conciliation Action' was instigated with the aim of undertaking an intensive and systematic investigation. Despite being well-prepared, the police soon encountered obstacles in the process of discovery; the crime had been concealed, suppressed and protected by the state. Consequently, people refused to testify in fear of the (former) authority, or failed to remember events due to their age or for personal reasons; many were dead and those who had managed to escape from the camps did not know the participants. Although more than a thousand informative interviews were carried out, 600 burial sites recorded, and the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia and individual regional archives examined, no conclusive evidence proving the guilt of a living person was found, due to the absence of documentary records. Despite the destruction of the material and despite the fact that the archives have been well consolidated, it was never completely clear which data the secret service had on the victims of post-war massacres, which data were destroyed and which preserved. Therefore, we decided to verify whether and until when the State Security Service had kept the data on victims of post-war massacres. The study performed on the sample of known victims was intended to establish whether their data were still kept in the Central Alphabetical Records (CAR) of the State Security Service in 1991. Among 217 persons listed whom the police presented as victims of post-war massacres in their criminal complaints against a known person, 151 were confirmed to have been registered in the CAR (69.6 per cent), and 29 persons (32 per cent) of 88 persons listed as killed in Brezno pri Konfinu I. When the data found on each victim in the CAR was verified, it became clear that what had been preserved could not significantly contribute to advancing the investigation of criminal offences; nevertheless, it is important to know the location of at least some data on the victims.

Key words: post-war mass killings, investigation, Central Alphabetical Register, archives.

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