



ŠTEFAN NIKOLIĆ

(Bistra, Austro-Hungarian Empire /Republic of Croatia, December 11, 1918 – unknown)

On March 10, 1952, Roma Štefan Nikolić gave a **witness statement in the criminal case against Andrija Artuković** at the District Court in Zagreb.

Nikolić was born on December 11, 1918, in Bistra. From 1937, until the middle of May 1942, he lived with his family - his wife and three-year-old daughter - in Zagreb, where he worked as a transportation worker. In mid-May 1942, together with his family and other Roma, he was deported to the Jasenovac concentration camp. Nikolić was transferred from Zagreb to the camp in livestock carriages. In the camp he met his relatives, who had been previously deported:

“That same day or the next one, I met my kinsmen Nikolić Janko and Antun from Pušća Bistra, who had been in that camp for two weeks. They were so skinny and unshaven that I didn’t even recognise them. They told me that **they were supposed to have been killed in that camp**, that they had already dug the pits into which they were supposed to have been thrown, but were eventually spared and sent to join the group doing hard physical labour. Nikolić Janko told me that the Ustašas killed Gypsies on the other bank of the Sava and that he had buried some of the killed victims, finding among them his own wife and children.” (Testimony of Štefan Nikolić)

Nikolić worked in the camp digging pits and saw numerous corpses of murdered detainees. Fearing that he would be killed, he decided to flee the camp:

“Since working in the camp was very stressful, and we received very little food, I soon began losing strength and saw that I wouldn’t be able to work like this for much longer. Since it was known in the camp that those unable to work anymore would be killed, a group of Gypsies and I, who had been digging pits, decided to flee from the camp at the first opportunity. One night, on the fourteenth day of my stay in the camp, I managed to crawl under the barbed wire and escape.” (Testimony of Štefan Nikolić)

Nikolić managed to escape from the Jasenovac camp to Slovenia, where he was **arrested by German authorities in July 1942 and sent to the Austrian concentration camps** in Garmisch and Salzburg. He was then transferred to the Dachau concentration camp, where he was released (Testimony of Štefan Nikolić).

Sources:

1. Testimony of Štefan Nikolić, Croatian State Archives, sign. HR-HDA-421, Javno tužilaštvo SR Hrvatske [Public Prosecutor's Office of the Socialist Republic of Croatia], Box 128.

This biography has been written by Daniel Vojak