



STEVAN ĐORĐEVIĆ NOVAK

(Radičevac, Serbia, 1919 – Donja Bela Reka, Serbia, July 10, 1943)



Photo published in the book: Popović, Slobodan. "Đorđević Jovana Stevan Novak." In: *Narodni heroji Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (A – M), edited by Petar Kačavenda, Dušan Živković, Beograd: Partizanska knjiga, Narodna Knjiga / Titograd: Pobjeda, 1982., p. 223.

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Stevan Đorđević Novak is **considered one of the most prominent Roma partisans in Serbia**. He was born in 1919 in the village of Radičevac. Although he began to study the craft of trough-making, he was distracted by his work as a village servant. Following the end of his army duty and at the beginning of World War II he joined the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia.

In October 1941, Novak joined the Zaglav-Timok partisan detachment. He distinguished himself as a fighter and became a sergeant, and at the beginning of 1942 he joined the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. From the summer of 1942, he commanded the Timok partisan troop.

Writing in one of the partisan newspapers, Novak wrote, **"Neither a Serb nor a "Gypsy" is excluded in the Detachment, everyone here is equal, and I will give my life for that equality..."** (Popović 1982., 223)

Most of Novak's family were killed by the Germans. Due to frequent injuries, he was withdrawn to "party-political work in the background." However, he died on July 10, 1943, near Donja Bela Reka. Novak was **proclaimed a national hero in November 1953, and was the only Roma to carry such recognition**. The following was written about him, "In terms of modesty, personal honesty and great courage, he is an example of reputation." (Босилъчић 1988, 273, 289; Спомен Књига Девета 1995, 415).

In memory of the partisans a monument was erected in Topla (Prevodski potok), near Novak's place of death. Carrying his name, each year it is a site of commemoration for the partisans who gave their lives.

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This biography has been written by Daniel Vojak