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**PART I
HISTORICAL REVISIONISM
AND ROBBERY**

WASTELANDS OF HISTORICAL REVISIONISM: REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST IN LAST YEARS OF YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM 1988–1991

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The article discusses last several years of socialist Yugoslavia, the period from 1988 to 1991, as a tipping period when started formation of one new social-political context that will also cause breakout of the country, and within which the Holocaust became liable to some new ways of explanation. In order to present different standpoints that existed in multinational Yugoslav society, the article is based on two key issues – increase of anti-Semitism and attempts to revitalize the Holocaust among Croatian political elite, while the second one was founding and activity of Društvo srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva (The Serbian-Jewish friendship society) as a symbol of attempts by Serbian intellectual elite to, through building of memory on the Holocaust based on the narrative of joint ordeal of Serbs and Jews, promote their image of current situation in the country.

Key words: The Serbian-Jewish friendship society, Holocaust, culture of remembering, Franjo Tudjman, Yugoslavia, Jews, anti-Semitism

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IN THE LAST YEARS OF EXISTENCE OF SOCIALIST Yugoslavia, memories of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism became instruments of fight for political power in the country. Historical remembering that in Yugoslav socialism always was politically functionalized, towards the end of 1980s became, according to opinion of participants of the Conference of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia held in 1989, closely connected with a process of democratization and transition towards multi-party system (Gordiejew 1999, 372). The strengthening of new national political options in the country brought about new interpretation of the history of Yugoslav nations that, to a large extent, was contrary to most important ideological narratives on which socialist Yugoslavia was based upon. According to the opinion of Dejan Jović, demolition of the myth of national-liberation movement had four basic elements: 1. challenged was key idea of socialist narrative that Yugoslavia offered radically different type of socialism than the one developed by Soviet Union, 2. Interpretation of the role of partisan movement shifted from the image of partisans as the only anti-Fascist movement towards understanding they were just one of the sides in a civil war, 3. As a consequence of such an interpretation of the war, many authors in Slovenia (Spomenka Hribar), Croatia (Franjo Tuđman) and Serbia (Dobrica Cosic) proposed national reconciliation within their own nations, with a goal of erasing differences between Chetniks/Ustashe/Belogardejci and partisans and 4. Tito's politics and his personal lifestyle now started to be publicly criticized (Jović 2003, 337–338). The change of remembering culture regarding WW II inevitably brought some new views of the Holocaust that mostly depended on national and nationalist perspective of their makers.

1. TUĐMAN'S ANTI-SEMITISM AND RELATIVIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN CROATIA

In that new spectrum of political pluralism, the biggest differences and contrasts in understanding past, and by that also in the attitude towards the Holocaust, existed between new Serbian and Croatian nationalist narratives. On one hand, in Serbian collective consciousness increased significance was given to memory of Ustashe genocide over Serbs in so-called NDH, and concentration camp Jasenovac as that fatal point became a symbol of all Serb victims killed by Ustashe hands all over Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During 1980s in Serbian intellectual

elite developed a new interpretation of history of Yugoslav nations that promoted new theses on Chetnik movement as the first anti-Fascist movement in Europe and Serbs being a nation that from both Yugoslavias received nothing although for it they gave more lives than others in both world wars. Croatian side tried to answer such claims first in “orthodox” socialist manner, so party ideologists like Josip Vrhovec and Stipe Suvar organized a series of consultations with leading Croatian intellectuals where they revised topics like Cominform, historiography in Croatia and Yugoslavia and demystification of the past (Jovic 2003, 342)

Anyway, its own interpretations also offered Croatian right wing, and those were interpretations that dominantly meant relativization of the Holocaust and Ustashe crimes, and the best example for that was the book of Croat historian, former general of Yugoslav National Army and future president of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tudjman, published under the title *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti* (Wastelands of historical reality) in Zagreb in 1989. As far as relations towards the Holocaust were concerned, Tudjman’s book had two obvious goals: first one, negation and minimization of crimes committed in Jasenovac followed by total relativization, not only of Ustashe crimes but also of Nazi politics altogether, and second one, strengthening of usual anti-Semitic stereotypes. Similar to German revisionists like Ernst Nolte, Tudjman also tried to explain the Holocaust and Ustashe genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in WW II as one, in no way special or authentic, variant of crimes that repeated myriad of times in human history. That is why in his book Tudjman devoted one whole chapter to issues of genocide and crimes in history, and there he cited various historical examples starting from episodes from the Bible, to crimes of Roman army over Parthians, Gauls, Illyrians, Celts, Germanic peoples, to crusades against Muslims, Huguenots, Bogomils, Albigensians and Hussites, all the way to wars in 19th and first half of 20th century, with intention to present historical continuity that would relativize proportions of Ustashe genocide (Tudjman 1989, 128–147). By ignoring totally different general context of different crimes in human history, Tudjman put them in same historical plane and therefore entered the zone of revisionism and justifying of Nazism. According to Dominick LaCapra, major problem in comparing the Holocaust with other crimes is contained in the fact that such type of comparisons, in most cases, leads first towards equalizing, and then towards total negation of the Holocaust as unique event, and that was, as emphasized LaCapra, already the case with certain authors such as Arno Mayer (La Capra 1994; Mayer 1988). In that way in times when the

whole world understood authentic nature of the Holocaust, Tadjman joined those who attempted to totally negate one of the biggest 20th century crimes. As far as position towards the Holocaust is concerned, the most disputable part of the book is the one in which Tadjman verbatim and uncritically cited testimony of Vojislav Prnjatovic, Serb from Sarajevo and Jasenovac prisoner who, after release from the camp in March 1942, gave statement to Commissariat for refugees of Nedić's government on situation in Jasenovac camp, and in which he responsibility for crimes partly directed towards Jewish inmates. Prnjatovic claimed that in the camp existed prisoners' administration, independent of Ustashe, that was mostly made of Jews since "they arrived earlier and managed to grab all important places in the prisoners' hierarchy" (Tudjman 1989, 317–318). Also, repeated were Prnjatovic's claims that "Ustashe had more faith in Jews"; that Jews "incessantly and skilfully made intrigues against Serbs"; that "Serbs, besides being victims of Ustashe were also victims of Jews"; and that "Jew remains a Jew, even in Jasenovac camp" (Tudjman 1989, 318). Tadjman commented that such Prnjatovic's qualification "gives impression of exaggeration, or one can say anti-Semitic mood", but despite that later on, referring to some more sources like testimony of Branko Popovic and Croatian communist Ante Ciliga, he anyway concluded that "some of Jewish prisoner functionaries were armed, so they also took part in killing"; and also, "they held in their hands quite a bit part of *choosing*, i.e. selecting inmates for execution, and even to some extent performed executions themselves" (Tudjman 1989, 318). Referring to testimony of Ciliga, Tadjman also incriminated Jews for participation in execution of Roma prisoners (Tudjman 1989, 319). Besides, he challenged a total number of six million Jews that perished in the Holocaust, expressing his belief that real number should be decreased to most probably one million (Tudjman 1989, 156–158).

Politics based on such apprehensions had their practical consequences. In August 1991 in the building of Jewish community in Zagreb reverberated the explosion caused by planted explosive device (Радивојша 1991), a year before, in 1990, in old Jewish cemetery on Marjan in Split were broken several artistically and historically valuable tombstones,¹ and increase of anti-Semitism was experienced first-hand by many individuals, such as Croat actress of Jewish origin Mira Furlan who, together with her Serbian husband, was forced to leave Croatia in

26 | 1 „Još iz Jugoslavije.” *Jevrejski pregled* 1–2, 1990, 26.

1991 (Gordiejew 1999, 351, 403–406). Because of his political pragmatism Tudjman later, in 1990s, distanced himself from his anti-Semitic qualifications and publicly excused himself for challenging number of Jews perished in the Holocaust, so in a letter sent to Kent Schiner, a president of American Jews organization B'nai B'rith, he described some of paragraphs of his own book as “offending”.² Tudjman’s book was not the only instance where Croats attributed Ustashe crimes over Serbs to Jews. In Split weekly *Slobodni tjednik*, issue 3 of March 14, 1990, published an interview with Ivo Omrchanin who in the times of so-called NDH was chargé d'affaires of Croat embassy in Berlin, where he presented claims that for carnage of Serbs in the Orthodox church in Glina guilty were Jews, same as for bloodbath in Kerestinec, while for crimes in Jasenovac he also blamed Jews who “made there Hollywood, so they lived comfortably in the camp”.³

Despite the fact that for relativization of the Holocaust towards the end of 1980s and in early 1990s most interested was Croatian political elite, Serbian side also uncritically used testimony of Vojislav Prnjatovic. In his book *Velikomučenički Jasenovac* (Great martyrs of Jasenovac), published for the first time in 1990, future Episcopo of Banat, and later on of Zahumlje-Herzegovina, Atanasije Jevtic presented that testimony without any critical explanation, including the part where was cited that Jews Dijamantstajn, Viner, Feldbauer and Begovic were at the top of prisoner’s hierarchy that was “fully trusted by Ustashe” (Jevtic 2016, 48–49). To repeated publishing of that testimony reacted Lavoslav Kadelburg, president of the Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia (SJO), who in a newspaper article observed that despite noble intention of the author, something he did not challenge, and obvious need to repeatedly refresh memory of Fascist crimes, it is still unacceptable to uncritically repeat anti-Semitic clichés on negative Jewish nature (L.K. 1990). As especially problematic Kadelburg marked parts where Prnjatovic said: “Jew remains a Jew, even in Jasenovac camp. In the camp they stuck to their shortcomings, only now those were more visible. Selfishness, lack of solidarity, avarice, insidiousness, cunning and denouncing are they major characteristics,” or “Since Ustashe had more confidence in Jews, intrigues they spread were successful. So Serbs, besides being victims of Ustashe, were also victims of Jews” (Jevtic 2016, 106).

2 „Покушај приближавања.” *Вечерње Новостии*, March 27, 1994.

3 „Саопштење.” *Jevrejski pregled* 1-2, 1990, 26–27.

2. THE SERBIAN-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY AND MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

In remembering WW II numerous were episodes, from Jasenovac to Novi Sad raid, in which Serbs and Jews shared the role of victim, so in late 1980s joint ordeals became basis for building new forms of cooperation. As a consequence of this convergence on the social scene appeared one more, new, subject for remembering the Holocaust – the Serbian-Jewish friendship society. The Society was founded on May 28, 1988 in Belgrade, and as said on founding assembly, main goal of the Society was to “starting from existing historical connections... strengthens and develops friendship and supports and enriches cultural cooperation between Serbian and Jewish people”⁴ In article 7 of the statute of the Society it was clearly described what is the basis for cooperation: “traditional friendship”, “several centuries of joint life of Serbian Jews and Serbs”, “similarity of historical destiny, especially in a tragic genocide”, and “awareness of need for permanent fighting racial, national, religious and political exclusiveness and hatred” (Simić 1989). It was obvious, therefore, that main pillar of activities of that society were history and remembering of the past.

Among founders and those who gave their support from the beginning were many prominent names from spheres of art, science, journalism, including both Serbs and Jews, like Marko Anaf, Andrija Gams, Andreja Preger, Enriko Josif, Dobrica Cosic, Ljubomir Simovic, Matija Beckovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Predrag Palavestra, Nikola Milosevic, Borislav Pekic, Dragoslav Mihajlovic, Vuk Draskovic, David Albahari, Filip David, Egon Savin, Brana Crnchevic and many others. Soon afterwards were founded local committees throughout Serbia, for instance in Valjevo, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Nis, Lazarevac, Sabac, Smederevo, and in December 1990 founded was a committee in Los Angeles, California, with intention to get closer with American Jewry, while major goals of that branch of the Society was “to enter data on genocide over Serbian people into Jewish museums of the Holocaust that are founded all over America”, and to gather money for printing a book that would provide scientific data on “the Holocaust of Serbs and Jews in the territory of Yugoslavia” (Mancic 1990).

Founding of the Society came within context of general social events in Yugoslavia that were, among other, marked by revision of former policy towards

28 | ⁴ „Друштво српско-јеврејског пријатељства.” *НИН*, June 5, 1988.

Israel and increasingly frequent invitations for re-establishing diplomatic relations between two countries that Yugoslav side severed back in 1967 because of Six-Day War. Opening towards Israel started by establishing relations between Socialist union of working people of Yugoslavia and those persons from Israel that advocated peace and negotiations with Palestinians, among which one of the most prominent was Mattityahu Peled, a member of Knesset and former general and military commander of Jerusalem, who visited Belgrade on several occasions in that period (Petkovic 1988). Warming between two countries had visible effects in Yugoslav society: established were regular flights to Tel Aviv, significantly increased a number of Yugoslav tourists visiting Israel, in domestic press and in television more and more appeared interviews with prominent figures of Israeli political scene and, of course, started was initiative for founding Serbian-Jewish friendship society. Anyway, besides these indications that suggested improvement of Israeli-Yugoslav relations, official policy of Yugoslav administration did not depart from former position that there is still no basis for revising relations with Israel, so Committee for foreign affairs of SFRY assembly announced that, as long as Israel does not change its policy towards its Arab neighbours Yugoslavia sees no reason to change its position (Petkovic 1988). In accordance with that, still official position of the state, many officials in the administration structure, it seems, were not in favour of founding an organization that would advocate bringing together Serbs and Jews and opening towards Israel, so both Municipal and Republic office for internal affairs denied permit for registering Serbian-Jewish friendship society, but still in December 1988 the Supreme Court brought verdict that annulled all previous decisions of those offices and permitted registration of mentioned association, full seven months after it was actually founded (A.Ђ. 1988).

One of the best examples showing how Society linked Serbian moment with Jewish history, i.e. the Holocaust, was one of its first announcements, addressed to Socialist union of working people of Slovenia with a protest over use of Jewish national symbol, Star of David in a meeting held in Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana on February 27, 1989, where position of Albanians in Kosovo was compared with position of Jews in 1941. Among other things, the announcement said this: “We do not impute anti-Semitism to Albanian people, but if there is some comparison to ordeal of Jewish nation, that can refer only to Serbs, Montenegrins and progressive Albanians who are in so many ways in the same position as were Jews in Hitler

times”⁵, and such a position of Society was supported by the Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia. Therefore, deterioration of interethnic relations, especially in Croatia and Kosovo, was often interpreted through making historical comparisons with turbulent times of WW II and victimization of one of the sides in a conflict, and in case of Serbian-Jewish friendship society that side was Serbian.

That was the reason why then Croat part of Yugoslav public considered the activity of the Society mostly negative, and with war approaching, animosity reached its peak, just as did tensions in Serbian-Croat relations. Extremely huge reactions in Croatian public caused one event from August of 1991, when one of the commandants of Serbian paramilitary formations in Croatia, Dragan Vasiljkovic better known as captain Dragan, appeared in one press conference in Kragujevac with prominent Star of David around neck, so Croatian press described that as “another attempt of Serbian propaganda that is trying to sneak into Croatia a mistrust towards Jews”, and actions of captain Dragan, due to his friendship with Klara Mandic, were right away linked with very Serbian-Jewish friendship society that Croatian media marked as “notorious” (De Prato 1991). Also, Croatian media published information that captain Dragan is actually a Jew whose real name is Daniel Stern, and that during onset of conflict Serbian-Jewish friendship society organized dispatch of food, medicines and weapons to Knin.⁶ Because of this and similar incidents, the activity of Serbian-Jewish friendship society was and remained limited mostly to territory of SR Serbia.

In addition to active social action in the context of contemporary events on the eve of the breakup of the state, remembering the Holocaust was another important task of the association. This could be clearly seen at the first assembly held on March 5, 1989, at the premises of the Association of Serbian Writers in Francuska Street No. 7 in Belgrade, before which the participants of the Assembly laid wreaths on the monuments to the victims of the Holocaust and Jews who had been killed in the Balkan and World War I, at the Sephardic cemetery (Vojnovic 1989). From the very beginning, the Assembly of the Association launched initiatives to remind victims of war and war crimes. Some of the first ideas were to raise a monument to Serbian, Jewish and Roma victims of the Ustasha genocide, proclaiming the day of the dead, as a state and church holiday for all victims of Ustasha

5 „Zloupotreba simbola.” *Večernje novine*, Sarajevo, March 1, 1989.

30 6 „Tajna ljubav srpskog komandosa.” *Globus*, August 16, 1991.

crimes, and to publish a book with victims' data, as the number of victims would no longer be arbitrarily interpreted.⁷ Nevertheless, the most important action of the association regarding the preservation of memories of the Holocaust and one of their most important initiatives was collecting of funds for the construction of *Menora u plamenu* (*Menor in flames*) monument on Dorcol's coast of Belgrade, which would be dedicated to all Belgrade Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

One of the most significant results of this effort and one of the most impressive examples of Yugoslav memorials dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust is the monument *Menora u plamenu* by Nandor Glid, discovered in 1990 in the Danube Quay in Belgrade. A monument to Jewish fighters and victims of fascism, which was erected in 1952 at the Belgrade Sephardic cemetery, was dedicated to Jewish victims from all over Serbia, and there was also another monument at the Jewish cemetery in Zemun, built in memory of 573 members of the Zemun Jewish municipality, killed in the Second World War. However, over the years, the question was asked about raising a new monument dedicated exclusively to the suffering Jews of Belgrade, as a memorial to the largest pre-war Jewish community in Yugoslavia and most likely to be placed in the part of the city where Jews once had lived. Dorcol, the old part of Belgrade, bounded by the Kalemegdan Park on one side and Skadarska Street on the other, which from today's Student Park, down the slope descends towards the Danube, was part of Belgrade, where about 80% of the Jewish population lived in Belgrade until the Second World War. Ever since the time when Belgrade was under the Ottoman rule, the Jewish mahals were formed in the lower Dorcol area, between today's Cara Dusana Street and the Danube River, so that from the end of the 19th century the Jews began inhabiting the area of the upper Dorcol, closer to the city. There were also the most important Jewish institutions in Belgrade: the Sephardic Synagogue Bet Izrael in Cara Urosa Street, the building of the Sephardic municipality of Belgrade in Kralja Petra Street, the Oneg Shabat Society building in Jewish Street, the Old Synagogue (*El kal vjež*) in lower Dorcol and the Jewish female society building, which was used as a Jewish hospital during the war and today is the Faculty of Defectology. It made Dorcol the center of Jewish life in the town. After war, the number of Jews was drastically reduced, and under the influence of new socialist urbanization, old Dorcol began to taking a new shape, which was less of what resembled the Jewish history of this

7 Arhiv Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja (AJIM), Hemeroteka, S. Jelić, *Gest dostojanstva*

part of the city, so there was a need to preserve the memory of Belgraders which were no longer alive.

The first ideas for monumentalising Belgrade's Jews, victims of the Holocaust, appeared within the Jewish community in the second half of the 1970s, induced by a new momentum of urbanization that threatened to erase the latest traces of Jewish heritage at Dorcol. The Jewish Historical Museum launched an initiative, within the framework of the new urban reconstruction of Dorcol, of taking care and marking of Jewish cultural and historical monuments. In 1977 representatives of the Museum and the Jewish heritage of Belgrade together with the leaders of the Belgrade municipality *Stari grad*, The Directorate for Building and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Belgrade agreed to place plates in the places of worn-out buildings planned for demolition, in which the deserving individuals lived. It meant excluding from demolition the former buildings of the Jewish Female Society and The *Oneg Šabat* Society, but also that the names of Braća Baruh Street and Jevrejska Street remain and to build a monument for Jews perished in war in the part of Solunska Street, between Braća Baruh Street and Cara Urosa Street, which was to be transformed into a pedestrian zone according to the new urban plan (Kapon 1977, 22–23). As this urban plan has never been realized until the end, the same thing happened to the planned monument in Solunska Street. Individuals also pointed out the need to raise a monument at Dorcol in the late 70's. About the same time as the Jewish Historical Museum started an initiative for this, Rafailo Blam, a famous composer, conductor, one of the first Belgrade jazz musicians and the then vice president of the Jewish municipality of Belgrade, wrote a short text about Dorcol of his youth in which he concluded: "I often think about that somewhere at Dorcol a monument should be raised, as a memorial to the Jews, where the stone text would have been carved: *Until 1941, there were peaceful citizens of Belgrade-Jews who were killed innocent by infernal fascism*. The initiative for such a monument should come from us, and that would be our debt to Belgrade's Dorcol and our killed brothers." (Blam 1976/1977) In July 1977, he sent a public invitation through "Među nama" column in the *Politika* newspaper, that all of the Belgrade Jews victims should have a monument in any location at Dorcol (Blam 1977). One of the first to publicly support the proposal of Rafailo Blam was the painter Zuko Dzumhur, also growing up in this part of the city, who pointed out that such a monument should be "a warning that pogrom, hatred and racism must never be again." (Dzumhur 1977) However, despite the

great response and the extraordinary support by the citizens, it was necessary more than a decade to have accomplished it.

At the end of 1980s, the initiative was re-launched, just as Rafailo Blam had wanted - by the Belgrade Jewish municipality and as a debt to the dead Jews and the old Belgrade Dorcol. The initiative was soon adopted also outside of the Jewish community, supported by the Association of Serbian-Jewish Friendship, as well as a larger group of Serbian intellectuals, among others Vladimir Dedijer, Radovan Samardzic, Matija Beckovic, Ljubomir Tadic and Mira Trailovic, who spoke to the president of the City assembly at the time, Aleksandar Bakochevic, asking for a commission for raising a monument to be formed and to have it done exclusively at Dorcol.⁸ It was soon supported by Purisa Djordjevic, Gorica Mojovic, Stojan Celic, Enriko Josif, Desanka Maksimovic, Ljubomir Simovic, Milic od Machve, Mira Stupica, Jovan Cirilov and many others. It was concluded that the money should also be collected by ordinary citizens through a wide social action that would include auctions of paintings by Mica Popovic, Stojan Chelic and Milic Stankovic, as well as theater performances organized by Ljubomir Tadic and Mira Stupica (Almuli 1989). Belgrade Theater “Dusko Radovic” donated all the income from a single performance of the popular play *Šovinistička farsa*, directed by Egon Savin according to the text of Radoslav Pavlovic, and the similar action was announced by the “Yugoslav Drama Theater” with the play *Dibuk* and “Atelje 212” with the play *Čudo u Šarganu*, according to the text of Ljubomir Simovic.⁹ Soon, by the decision of the Belgrade City Assembly, a Committee for the Elevation of Monuments was formed¹⁰, headed by academician Radovan Samardzic.¹¹ Therefore, this was an example of action of memorialization initiated by the Jewish community and the Society of Serbian-Jewish friendship, but financially and

8 „Заслужили су споменик.” *Полиџика*, April 28, 1989.

9 „Шовинистичка фарса за споменик јеврејским жртвама.” *Полиџика*, January 12, 1990.

10 In committee composition, besides the president Radovan Samaržić, also entered: Ljubomir Tadić, Veljko Guberin, Ljubiša Ristović, Jaša Almuni, Nisim Konfino, Miša David, Aleksandar Demajo, Leposava Milošević, Aleksandar Zarin, Dragan Dragojlović, Boško Novaković, Aleksandra Banović, Borivoje Cvejić, Branka Ješić, Milosav Bojić, Ratko Marić, Slobodan Vučković, Branislav Ivković, Željko Eror, Lucija Spirović Jovanović, Miodrag Prodanović, Vujo Vukmirica, Viktor Pris.

11 „Апел за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геноцида.” *Јеврејски преглед* 1–2, јануар-фебруар 1990, 4; „Апел одбора за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геноцида.” *Борба*, January 17, 1990.

organically implemented by the state, and, as can be seen from the composition of the commemorative committee, the extremely high esteem of attitudes and opinions of Jewish representatives.

An interesting detail worth paying attention to is that the most commonly used name of the monument was “The Monument to Jewish Victims of Nazi Genocide”, while in its decision to build the monument it was called “The Monument to the Jewish Victims of the German Genocide”,¹² while the term Holocaust was not used at all when it came to the construction of this memorial, which suggests that even in 1990, before the very beginning of the break-up of the state, this notion was not in wider use of the Yugoslav public. Unlike the first decades of the existence of socialist Yugoslavia when, in the inscriptions on monuments to the victims, literature, works of art, etc., mainly used expressions such as fascist, terror against Jews or the crimes of the occupiers of the Jews, it was noticeable that in the late 80s and early 90s this concept evolved in a more pronounced expression of Nazi or German genocide against the Jews, which, more accurately, pointed to the nature of the crimes committed by the Germans and their associates over the Jewish people, but also the rule the distinction between the concepts of fascism and Nazism. Nevertheless, the term Holocaust would become more frequent in the domestic public, press, and scientific works only after the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Already at the first session of the committee, the decision was made that the construction of the monument should be made by Nandor Glid, who at that time had a great reputation and an extremely important work of monuments and sculptures dedicated to Holocaust victims, including monuments in the Dachua and Mauthausen camps. Glid proposed an interesting solution: a monument called the *Dorcol Menor* or *Menor in Flames*, 5.5 feet tall with a stand, should be a stylized Jewish seven-pointed candlestick, Manorah, captured by a flame that could simultaneously be interpreted and an open hand made of interwoven human bodies who want, like Phoenix, to rise from the flames and escape from death. (Subotić 2012, 142) The Members of the Expert Commission of the Committee for Monument Rising visited Nandor Glid in his studio on 02. 04. 1990. At that time, they noted that this had been the most successful Glid’s solution for a monument of

12 Istorijiski arhiv Beograda (IAB), Zbirka Boška Novakovića (1595), K-4, *Odluka o podizanju spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama nemačkog genocida*.

the kind so far.¹³ According to his own admission, Glid was particularly fond of this project, first of all because he managed to reconcile an art form with a theme of starvation and dramatic lyricism through it, but also because for Glid, who himself was a Holocaust victim, this monument was a symbolic tomb for his parents, he said: “I can not imagine that my father and mother whom I can not find the grave lie beside the Ustashes and the SS ... To me it is also a crime. This call to oblivion is not human, it is cynical, it is unsustainable”. (Grubach 1990) By its symbolism and used motifs such as phoenix, intertwined dying human bodies and flames, the monument represented a kind of sublimation of the previous Glid’s works. Later, another version of the sculpture, Menorah 2, was made, which was set up in Thessaloniki in 1997, in memory of the local Jewish community, one of the largest in Europe, which had disappeared completely in the Holocaust.

The monument was set on the Dorcol coast of the Danube at the very end of the Jevrejska Street and it was, according to the urban plan, supposed to be a central part of a wider historical, cultural and economic area, which has never been realized completely.¹⁴ It was one of the most important monuments of the kind built up to date in the territory of Serbia and Yugoslavia. It was also an example of the joint involvement of the state and the Jewish community in preserving memories of the Holocaust, which at the same time recognize the Jews as victims of a special genocidal policy, The third Reich, which was not a frequent example in the memorial architecture of socialist Yugoslavia. On October 21, 1990, the monument was revealed by the mayor of Belgrade, Milorad Unkovic. The speech was also given by the speaker of the Israeli parliament, Dov Shilansky, which at the time was an extremely important act, since the diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Israel had been interrupted in 1967 and had not been renovated yet. On that occasion, he also expressed the hope for the diplomatic relations of the two countries soon to be re-established.

Beside him, the president of the Jewish municipality of Belgrade, Yasha Almulic, also spoke to the audience, and told for the ceremony that for surviving Jews, this is not one common disclosure of the monument, but “the first dignified burial of dead Jews whose bodies were thrown into a nameless tomb”. He added that by

13 IAB, 1595- K-4, *Informacija o idejnom rešenju spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama nacističkog genocida u Beogradu.*

14 „Апел одбора за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геноцида.” *Борба*, January 17, 1990.

this act the present crowd enrolled victims in “our hearts instead of rake, and we put them under the auspices of this monument”. Finally the prayer for the dead was held by Rabbi Cadik Danon.¹⁵ How much the raising of the monument actually had broad social support was testified by the number and variety of organizations attending the ceremonies and laying wreaths on the monument, among which were the Delegations of the Society for Maintaining the Traditions of Serbian Liberation Wars until 1918, the Serbian Democratic Party from Knin, The Serbian Renewal Movement, the Union of Jewish Municipalities of Yugoslavia and even the fans of the Red Star.¹⁶ After *Menora u plamenu* (The Menora in Flame) was revealed, only one memorial was given to the victims of the Holocaust exactly before the break-up of the state began. At the end of 1991 in Vrbas, at the place of the destroyed synagogue, in memory of the Jewish victims of fascism from this city, a monument was risen, which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, and which is also the last monument to the victims of the Holocaust raised in socialist Yugoslavia. Raising the memorial *Menora u plamenu* was the most significant achievement of the members of the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society, whose activity in the coming period would be stagnating and declining.

3. CONCLUSION

With the appearance of a multiparty in Yugoslavia and the beginning of the process of rejecting the former official way of interpreting the past of the Yugoslavs, media space opened up for the advent of various new views on the Holocaust and the Second World War. In the Croatian publicist writings began to appear articles that spoke about the Ustashe movement in a positive way, and the book *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti* (Helpless of the Historical Reality), published in 1989 by Croatian future president Franjo Tuđman, sought to relativise the former way of perception of the infamous Ustasha Jasenovac camp, and the total number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was minimized to one million. These attitudes also had practical negative manifestations that rose in the rise of anti-Semitism as well as increasingly frequent anti-Jewish outbursts, such as the desecration of the Jewish

15 „Откривен споменик београдским Јеврејима.” *Побјега*, Титоград, October 22, 1990.

36 16 „Заборав је издаја.” *Борба*, October 22, 1990.

cemetery at Marjan in Split in 1990 and a bomb attack on the premises of the Jewish municipality of Zagreb a year later.

On the other hand, the Serbian intellectual elite endeavoured to promote its own political goals in the time of confrontation with the Croats about the narrative of the common suffering in the past and the historical connection between the Serbian and the Jewish people. The most obvious expression of such an endeavour was the establishment of the Society of Serbian-Jewish Friendship, which developed a wide range of activities, from attempts to re-establish contacts and official diplomatic relations with Israel by circumventing the federal level of government, but also to intensify the memory of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Serbs in the so called NDH. One of the most important actions of that society was the raising *Menora u plamenu* in 1990 in Belgrade, dedicated to the victims of Belgrade Jews, which, by its form but also symbolic, was a hint that, before the beginning of the break up of the state in Yugoslav society, started to accept the modern understanding of the Holocaust as an authentic phenomenon in the history of the 20th century.

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Bespuća povjesnog revizionizma: sećanje na Holokaust u poslednjim godinama jugoslovenskog socijalizma 1988–1991.

Članak obrađuje period poslednjih nekoliko godina socijalističke Jugoslavije od 1988. do 1991, kao prelomnog perioda kada je počeo da se formira jedan novi društveno-politički kontekst, koji će dovesti i do raspada zemlje, u okviru koga je i Holokaust postao podložan novim načinima tumačenja. Kako bismo predstavili različite vizure koje su postojale u multinacionalnom jugoslovenskom društvu, članak se bazira na dva osnovna pitanja – narastajući antisemitizam i pokušaji relativizacije Holokausta među hrvatskom političkom elitom i drugo osnivanje i aktivnost Društva srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva, kao simbola nastojanja srpske intelektualne elite da gradeći sećanje na Holokaust na bazi narativa o zajedničkom stradanju Srba i Jevreja, promovišu svoju sliku o trenutnom stanju u državi.

Ključne reči: Društvo srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva, Holokaust, kultura sećanja, Franjo Tuđman, Jugoslavija, Jevreji, antisemitizam

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