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# THE SMALL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF YUGOSLAVIA<sup>1</sup>

by Rudolf Grulich

## The Old Catholics

The Croatian bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer of Djakovo was the most outspoken opponent of the dogma of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council, and also the last bishop to accept the council's decrees in 1873, three years after the meeting. There was, however, no Old Catholic movement in the Croatian dioceses at that time, although the situation was different in the German-speaking areas of middle Europe. This was because the imperial government in Vienna was against the Old Catholic movement. Nevertheless, there were circles in Croatia dating from Strossmayer's time which had Old Catholic sympathies. Only after the First World War was an Old Catholic Church able to exist in the kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, which was founded in 1918. Similar to factions in Bohemia, groups of priests who were disappointed in their demands for church reforms, subsequently seceded from Rome. Their new church was recognized by the state in 1923, because the Old Catholics permitted divorce, among other things, and this was an attraction to Catholics who were able to remarry in the Church. In 1924 these priests elected the former canon of Split, Marko Kalogjera, as their bishop. He was consecrated in the Old Catholic center of Utrecht and led the Croatian Old Catholic Church into the Union of Utrecht, the Council of all the Old Catholic churches.

Church membership increased quickly. Just before the Second World War there were as many as 68,000 Old Catholic parishioners in 23 parishes. The new church tried to align itself with Strossmayer. "Even if the Old Catholic Church organization exists among our people dating from this year, it was actually founded in 1870 at the time of the so-called Vatican Council. Its first founder and champion was the great son of the Croatian people, the national bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer." This is what can be read in one of the proclamations of the Old Catholic Church in 1924. It explains that only the threat of the Emperor Franz Joseph had forced Strossmayer to capitulate to Rome,

since, considering the good of the Croatian people, Strossmayer wanted no "bloody enemy of the Croatians" as his successor in the bishopric of Djakovo. The Emperor would surely have appointed such a person had Strossmayer removed himself from the bishopric. "The Croatian Old Catholic Church is the realization of the dream, the idea and the wishes of Bishop Strossmayer," wrote the publication Preporod [Rebirth] at that time about the church. This newspaper also published falsifications of Council speeches made by Strossmayer, against which numerous Catholic authors protested.

As early as 1933 the first split of the Old Catholics in Yugoslavia took place. Strong opposition to Kalogjera arose because of his machinations in connection with the remarriage of divorced people. Opponents elected their own bishop, who became a member of the Union of Utrecht, which then in turn excluded Kalogjera. Next to the Croatian Old Catholic Church [Hrvatska starokatolička crkva] there was now also a Croatian National Old Catholic Church [Hrvatska narodna starokatolička crkva]. The newly elected bishop never received an exit visa to Utrecht and died in a concentration camp in the Second World War. In fact, the Old Catholics as a whole in the Independent State of Croatia suffered very greatly in the years between 1941 and 1945. Only in 1974 did the Old Catholics reunite. Until then the Croatian Old Catholic Church had an archbishop in Zagreb, three churches, three parishes, four priests and a deacon. The other Croatian Old Catholic Church consisted of one bishop, three parishes, a single church and four priests. Both churches published mimeographed church newsletters [Starokatolički Glasnik and Starokatolik respectively]. Since the successful unification, the newly named community of Old Catholics, the Croatian Catholic Church, consists of six parishes.

In 1946 a Slovenian Old Catholic Church [Slovenska starokatoliška cerkev] came into being because of the state-mandated separation of the bishop's curacy in Slovenia. The seat of the bishopric is in Ljubljana. Under this bishop are a church and two retreat houses, three parishes and an affiliated institution. In 1954, a separate Old Catholic Church of Serbia and Vojvodina (Starokatolička Crkva Srbije i Vojvodine) was

founded with a seat in Belgrade. It has only three parishes. The Old Catholic Church for Bosnia and Hercegovina, which originated in 1965, has only one parish. It is not a member of the Utrecht Union, nor does it belong to the union of the Old Catholic Church in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia [Savez starokatoličkih crkava u SFRJ]. In spite of the Old Catholic Church's appeal to the memory of Strossmayer (but also to other defenders of Croatian independence from Rome, like the bishops Gregor of Nin and Markantonio de Dominis) this denomination in Yugoslavia probably does not exceed five or six thousand people.

#### The Pentecostals

According to its own figures, The Pentecostal Church in Yugoslavia numbers more than 5,000 members. Known as the Pentecostal Church of Christ in the SFRY [Kristova Pentekostna Crkva u SFRJ], it is one of the recognized religious communities on federal soil. Aside from the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, the Pentecostals are represented in all of the Yugoslav republics. Seat of the church governing body is Zagreb, while the Secretariat is located in Novi Sad.

The beginnings of this church go back before the First World War, when religionists in the German populated area of Bačka (in the Hungarian part of the empire of the Danube monarchy) attached themselves to the Pentecostal Movement. In the newly-created Yugoslavia in the year 1933 in the Prekmurja area of Slovenia, a Pentecostal Church was founded when a Slovenian woman, who had emigrated to America and had joined a Pentecostal community, returned with her Hungarian husband, and began to win converts in her old home. In the year 1938 came the first establishment of contact with other Pentecostal communities.

After a suspension of the church in the war, during which the Pentecostals mostly joined other Protestant congregations, the church organized in Yugoslavia under the name "Christian Pentecostal Church in the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia." It is divided according to republic and has in addition its own Rumanian group in Banat as well as a further group for the Hungarian minority in the Backa. The number of communities totals 73: of those, 20 communities are in Croatia; in Serbia, including Vojvodina, there are 28. In Bosnia-Hercegovina there are only two communities; in Macedonia, one. There are nine Rumanian

communities, seven Hungarian and six communities in Slovenia--namely, Ljubljana, Maribor, Novo Mesto, Murska Sobota, Veščica and Kuzma.

There has been a biblical-theological institute of this church in Zagreb since 1972. It offers a three-year course of theological study. In 1976 this institute joined the newly-founded "Protestant Theological Institute Mathias-Flaccius-Illyricus" in Zagreb. Also in Zagreb there appears monthly a newspaper in Croatian entitled Pentekostna Vijest [The Pentecostal Messenger]. In Ljubljana Golgotska vest [Message from Golgotha] is published and appears every other month. Beyond that, numerous brochures and books have also been published.

Aside from this Pentecostal Church, there are a number of Pentecostal communities which have not joined the umbrella organization in this country. The best known is the Christian Pentecostal Church of the Foot Washers with its center in Vrđnik near Vinkovci. This group washes each other's feet when celebrating communion in an imitation of Christ. The independent Pentecostal Church in Subotica also baptizes children, which the other Pentecostals do not do.

The Pentecostal Church in Yugoslavia engages in an active ministry, particularly in the field of ecumenism. In June, 1981 the Canadian evangelist Oto Kokoski and co-workers visited several communities in Yugoslavia. In early July, 1981 Slovenian Pentecostals took an active part in a tent ministry in neighboring Trieste. A Sicilian group which was active there also visited Ljubljana in connection with the Trieste ministry. In mid-July, 1981, the American exegetical professor Dr. Gordon Fee held lectures in Veščica near Murska Sobota and in Osijek, where the local community conducted an ecumenical service in a building which was formerly a synagogue. The Pentecostal Church is most actively engaged in the ecumenical movement in Slovenia.

#### The Seventh-Day Adventists

Although the Seventh-Day Adventist creed was preached in the region which is Yugoslavia today as early as the 19th century, especially in the South--which belonged to the Ottoman Empire until 1912--the founding of a central organization of parishes did not take place until the year 1925 on the occasion of a conference in Novi Sad. This organization, the Yugoslav Union of Seventh-Day Adventists, has four administrative areas,

called "assemblies." Later the seat of the Union was moved to Belgrade. Between 1905 and 1925 churches were founded in Belgrade, Kumane, Mokrin, Novo Milosevo, Zagreb, Maribor, Niš and Novi Sad.

Today the Yugoslav Union is divided into four assemblies. The Northern Yugoslav Assembly with its seat in Novi Sad includes the autonomous province of Vojvodina. The Southern Yugoslav Assembly in Niš is for the autonomous province of Kosovo as well as Macedonia and Serbia. Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro comprise the Southwestern Yugoslavian Assembly with its seat in Sarajevo. Croatia and Slovenia are administered by the Western Yugoslavian Assembly in Zagreb.

The Seventh-Day Adventists have about 300 organized congregations at their disposal today with more than 10,600 baptized members (1980 figures) and 120 ministers. Eighty-six churches are located in Vojvodina, 81 in the Southern district of Yugoslavia, 21 in Bosnia-Hercegovina and the rest in Croatia and Slovenia.

Furthermore, the Adventists in Yugoslavia support two presses. Znaci Vremena [Sign of the Times] in Zagreb publishes primarily periodicals, the publishing house Preporod in Belgrade mostly books.

For 25 years the parish newspaper Glasnik [Echo of the Advent] has been published in eight languages: Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Slovak, Rumanian, and Albanian. For ten years Znaci Vremena and Život Zdravlje [Life and Health] have been appearing four times a year in Croatian and Serbian, with an occasional special issue in Slovenian and Hungarian.

Pastoral education takes place in the Theological Seminary [Visoka Teološka Škola] in Maruševac near Varaždin. Of importance is the mission of the Radio Ministry of the Adventists, its social engagement (above all, its caritas activities and emergency relief) as well as the activities for the benefit of freedom of religion and conscience which result from the publication of Savjest i sloboda [Conscience and Freedom] in a Croatian and a Serbian edition.

Aside from the Seventh-Day Adventists, there are several splinter groups with an insignificant number of members in this country. For example, in Belgrade there is the Reform Movement of Seventh-Day Adventists and in Cerna near Zagreb, the Vegetarian Adventists.

### The Baptists

In the year 1923 a Union of Baptist Churches in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was founded. It has been called the Union of Baptist Churches in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia since the Second World War, and today it has 54 congregations. Twenty-four of them are located in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, another 24 in Serbia, including the autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina, four in Slovenia, and one congregation each in Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Aside from the four official congregations in Slovenia, Ljubljana, Kranj, Trbovlje and Murska Sobota, there are also two free, independent Slovenian Baptist congregations in Celje and Jesenice. Each congregation has its own sphere of mission work.

The Baptists are part of the Protestant Mathias-Flaccius-Illyricus Faculty in Zagreb, founded in 1976, and they also have their own theological school in Novi Sad. They published a monthly newspaper in Rijeka entitled Glasnik (not being published presently). They publish the bi-monthly Glas evandjelja [Voice of the Gospel] in Zagreb. In the Slovak language they publish a monthly called Novy rod [New Generation] which comes out in Bački Petrovac, the chief location of the Slovak minority in Yugoslavia. A monthly, the newspaper Iskre [Sparks], is published in the Serbo-Croatian language and Latin script. It is brought out by the Baptist press Dobra vest [Good News] in Novi Sad. Beyond this, several larger congregations have mimeographed congregational newsletters.

The Union of Baptist Churches in the SFRY is a member of the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

### The Methodists

The Methodists are counted among the most active denominations of the smaller religious groups recognized by the state in the SFRY. In the area known as Yugoslavia today they have been represented since the end of the 19th century in the former Austrian and Hungarian parts of the country and also in Macedonia. Until the First World War the Methodists in Macedonia were administered by the church in Austria.<sup>2</sup> In 1922 a unification of all congregations took place, including Macedonians, Serbs, Croats, and today also Hungarians and Slovaks. Until the Second

World War there was also a relatively large number of Germans.

The Methodist Church of Yugoslavia today has a Superintendent as its chief administrator. Presently he is the Macedonian Krum Kalajlijev, who has his seat in Skopje.<sup>3</sup> The church Secretariat is located in Novi Sad. The church is divided into a Northern and a Southern district. The Northern district has four divisions: Bačka, Srem, Banat, and a separate Hungarian area for this strong national minority. In the Southern district there are four areas of Skopje, Strumica, Murtino, and Prilep in Macedonia, as well as Kosovska-Mitrovica for the Autonomous Area of Kosovo, with about 20 congregations and their own churches.

There are two monthly periodicals Put života [Way of Life] and Glas Jevandjelja [Voice of the Gospel], which are duplicated in the Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Slovak languages. The Methodist Church in Yugoslavia belongs to the Annual Conference for Western, Southern and Southeastern Europe, and through these is connected to the World Methodist Conference and the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

#### Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses have been recognized in Yugoslavia only since 1953. Presently they number around 10,000 adherents in 104 congregations, but they have a prolific press, which far exceeds the number of church members. Their Watchtower appears in a Croatian edition of 14,000 copies, in a Serbian edition (with Cyrillic characters) of 8,000 copies, and also in Slovenian (10,000) and Macedonian.

In Yugoslavia they are divided into 7 regions, which are led by a "Servant." The regions are broken down, in turn, into church districts.

#### The Church of the Brethren

Even before the First World War some Slovaks in Bački Petrovac had joined the Church of the Brethren. They spread quickly in the years between the world wars so that on the eve of the Second World War there were already 15 established congregations. Today there are 24; 17 of them in the Socialist Republic of Serbia (for the most part in Vojvodina), five in Croatia and two in Slovenia. They have no professional ministers or priests. Their newspaper, Eternal Life, appears in the Serbian and Slovak languages every other month, as does the Bratski Vjesnik [Messenger of the Brethren] in the Croatian



language.

In Slovenia there are two congregations of Christ's Church of the Free Brethren located in Kranj and Maribor. Also in Kranj, there is an Autonomous Church of Christ of the Free Brethren.

#### Other Religious Communities

In addition to these groups there are also other less visible church groups in some parts of the SFRY, like the Spirit Church of the Evangelical Brethren in Christ (Belgrade), the Seven-Day Church of God (Novi Sad), the Mormons (Zadar), the Church of Christ of Bethany (Zagreb), the Church of God (Vinkovci), the Free Catholic Church (Zagreb), and the Independent Baptist Church (Padej), among others.

#### The Jews in Yugoslavia

In comparison with their number in neighboring countries such as Hungary and Rumania, Jews in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, established in 1918, later Yugoslavia, were numerically weakly represented. In Yugoslavia, in the interval between the two world wars, there were 121 Jewish communities, of which 72 were Ashkenazi, 36 Sephardic and 13 Orthodox groups. The total number of Ashkenazi in 1931 was 47,244; there were 26,459 Sephardic Jews and 2951 Orthodox. Only after World War I and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was a union of Jewish religious communities established (1921) with headquarters in Belgrade. Until that time the Jewish communities had reflected the history of the individual parts of the countries out of which Yugoslavia was formed in 1918.

#### Slovenia

In the region of the present-day Socialist Republic of Slovenia there is evidence of medieval Jewish communities in Ljubljana, Maribor, Ptuj, Ormož, Celje and other locations. Their cultural, religious, and economic center was Maribor, the old Marburg in the Lower Steiermark, where the Jews in the ghetto had self-government. Their most prominent leader was the rabbi Israel Isserlein. In 1496 in the Steiermark and in 1519, also in Carniola, all Jews were expelled. They subsequently settled in the Hungarian Burgenland, but also in Italy and Dalmatia. Only under Emperor Josef II were Jews permitted to settle temporarily in Carniola and in the Lower Steiermark. But until the twentieth century,

except in the former Hungarian Upper Mura Region (Prekmurje: Murska Sobota and Donja Lendava); no Jewish community was established in Slovenia, not even after the First World War. Only in Communist Yugoslavia after World War II was a Jewish congregation established and organized in Ljubljana.

#### Croatia

Archeological discoveries testify to the presence of Jews along the Adriatic coast as early as Roman times. The oldest Jewish center in Dalmatia was Split, in whose Jewish cemetery individuals lie buried who played an important role in the history of the city. There were also large Jewish communities in the Middle Ages in Dubrovnik and in Rijeka; also in Northern Croatia, especially in Zagreb, Varaždin and other localities. The fact that Croatia was part of the Habsburg empire led to the persecution and expulsion of Jews also in Inner Croatia, while in Dalmatia under the rule of Venice and in the republic of Dubrovnik the Jews were able to live without interruption.

#### Serbia

In the region of present-day Serbia Jews have been present from Roman and Byzantine times, but later the majority of Jews in Serbia came from Spain, settling in Turkish times after their expulsion from Spain (1492); in fact, mostly after the Turkish conquest of Belgrade (1521). Organized communities, having cultural and economic ties with Constantinople, Salonika, Sofia, Bitola and Sarajevo, existed not only in Belgrade, but also in Niš, Smederevo and Požarevac. In the year 1845, 1087 Jews lived in Belgrade.

#### Vojvodina

Judging by the number of communities, the present-day autonomous region of Vojvodina was the area with the largest concentration of Jews in Yugoslavia. The history of the Jews in Vojvodina is part of the history of the Hungarian Jews, who were granted the same civil rights in 1868 as all other citizens.

#### Montenegro

In the former kingdom of Montenegro there was no Jewish minority. In the coastal region, which now belongs to the Socialist Republic of Montenegro. There is evidence of Jews in Ulcinj, where the leader of a

pseudo-messianic movement, Sabbataj Zvi, lived in Turkish times, and where his presumed grave is still exhibited. In Kotor, which was Austrian until 1918, there was also a Jewish cemetery.

#### Macedonia

From Acts of the Apostles we know that there existed Jewish communities in Macedonia at the time of the apostle Paul. In Byzantine times there were communities in present-day Skopje, Bitola, Štip, Resen, Ohrid and Struga. The modern Jewish communities in Macedonia were Sephardic and spoke Spanish.

#### Bosnia-Hercegovina

In 1966 Jews in Sarajevo celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Spanish Jews in Bosnia. They retained their native Spanish language until the Holocaust of World War II. Since these Sephardic Jews were also settled in Serbia, Macedonia and throughout the Balkans, it is helpful to give an overview of their history.

#### The Sephardic Jews

Elias Canetti, a writer who uses the German language, was distinguished with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1981. Although he writes in German and lives in both Zurich and London, Canetti comes from the city of Russe in Bulgaria. "When I say that my native city is situated in Bulgaria, I am giving an inadequate description, because people of the most diverse background lived there. In one day you could hear seven or eight languages. In addition to the Bulgarians, there were Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, Gypsies, Rumanians and Russians." Canetti's native language, like that of many Jews in Yugoslavia, was Spanish.

Spanish has been spoken for almost half a millenium in the Balkans and in the Near East. In the same year in which Columbus discovered America, 1492, and from the time that Spanish began its triumphal sweep as a world language into Central and South America, Spanish was also being carried eastward. Two hundred thousand Jews, who had been expelled from Spain, sought and found new homes in what was then the Ottoman Empire. Taken in by the Turkish sultans, they settled in Constantinople and Smyrna, in Corfu, Rhodes, Salonika, Sofia, Sarajevo and other localities in the Turkish Kingdom. Recognized as a nation (millet) under

the Millet System of the Sublime Porte, they lived an autonomous life and could thus preserve the Spanish language and culture of their original country into the twentieth century. In contrast to the Jews of the German Eastern territories, the Ashkenazi, they are termed Sephardim or Sephardic Jews after the Hebrew word for Spain, "Sepharad."

Until the First World War their spiritual center was Salonika. Because so many Jewish refugees had settled there, as early as the 17th century there was a Spanish-Jewish majority. This was confirmed by reports of travelers. The situation changed during the Balkan wars when Salonika fell to the Greeks. At that time there were still 70,000 Jews out of 120,000 residents with Spanish as their native language. In 1923 when hundreds of thousands of Greeks from Asia Minor were settled in Macedonia, Salonika acquired a Greek majority for the first time!

#### Sarajevo and Bosnia

Another Jewish center was Sarajevo where Jews settled beginning in 1566. The four-hundredth anniversary of this event was also celebrated in Yugoslavia in 1966 by official state functionaries. Sephardic Jews settled, too, in other cities in Bosnia. The Yugoslav Nobel Prize winner for literature, Ivo Andrić, describes and gives real feeling to the life of Spanish Jews in his novels, short stories and novellas, most vividly in his Chronicle of Travnik, whose German edition carries the title Viziers and Consuls.

On the occasion of the recall of the French Consul in Travnik, which was then the residence of the Bosnian Viziers, in 1813, the leader of the Jewish population in Travnik, Salomon Atijas, says a formal farewell to him. His assessment of the relationship between the strict and unyielding vizier and the Jews is as follows. "Yes, the vizier is actually a strict and difficult ruler. But he only deals with the Jews at one time in history. The Jews have dozens and dozens of viziers in their past... The viziers leave this place, forget what they have done and how they have ruled. New viziers appear and every new ruler begins the old game. But we remain here--remember everything, write down everything which we have endured, how we defended and saved ourselves from it. We pass these dearly-bought experiences from father to son." Salomon keeps the specific experiences, needs and wishes to himself,

without expressing the following private thoughts to the Consul: "Our misery consists in the fact that we can neither love this country, to which we have an obligation, because it has taken us in and protected us, nor have we learned to hate the country which unjustly expelled and banned us like unworthy sons. We do not know which is more difficult for us: that we are here or that we are not there. It really does not matter where we might live outside of Spain, we would still suffer, because we would always have two countries. I know that. But here life has driven us into too narrow a corner and it has humiliated us. I also know that we have changed our character long ago. We no longer remember how we once were, but that we were once different, this we do remember."

And Salomon Atijas says further in his thoughts: "We have the language of our old home in our minds, the way we brought it with us three hundred years ago and the way people there no longer speak it. We mangle the language of the Rajah with whom we share our suffering, and we mangle the language of the Turks, who rule us. So perhaps the day is not far off, in which we will only be able to express ourselves purely and with human dignity in our prayers, for which words are really not necessary anyway. Isolated and small in numbers, we marry among ourselves and see our blood getting thinner and paler... Fortunately and also unfortunately we have retained the picture of our much-loved country in our memory, the way it once was, before it cast us out like a stepmother; thus, our longing for a better world, for a world of order and humanity has never been extinguished. We long for a world in which a person may stand upright, look peacefully forward, and speak openly. We will never be able to free ourselves from this longing any more than from the feeling that in spite of everything, we belong to this world, although we now live banished and unhappily in the opposite kind of world."

This Spanish-Jewish world in Bosnia also appears in the writings of the Serbo-Croatian writer Isak Samokovlija, who accurately portrays the Jewish environment in his short stories. They have appeared under the title The Red Dahlia and they are also available in German.

### Mortally Wounded by Hitler

When German troops occupied Greece and Yugoslavia in the Balkan campaign in 1941, tens of thousands of Sephardic Jews came under Hitler's domination. This also happened to Jews in Rumania and Bulgaria, because their native countries were allied with Hitler. However, Bulgaria protected its Jews as far as possible against him. With the setting in place of the Nazi death machinery, Spanish Jewry ceased to exist for all practical purposes in Southeastern Europe. The flourishing communities in Sarajevo and Skopje, Belgrade and Bitola were liquidated. After the war, the few survivors emigrated to Israel or overseas.

### The Present Situation

Today the majority of Sephardics live in Israel, where in Tel Aviv two Jewish-Spanish weekly newspapers are published, La Verdad and El Tiempo. A number of scientific institutions in that country are concerned with the study and preservation of Sephardic culture. Turkey is still the country with the second largest number of Spanish-speaking Jews. Of the 40,000 Turkish Jews, over half are of Spanish origin. They have synagogues and schools in Istanbul, where they publish two weekly newspapers, La vera luz and Salom. One finds Spanish Jews mostly in the Ortaköy and Hasköy sections of Istanbul. There a visitor is greeted with a "Venido bueno i claro." Jewish merchants also speak Spanish among themselves at the bazaar, when they don't want customers to understand what they're saying. A visitor hears the sound of Spanish romanceros coming from Jewish homes. People still sing about Toledo and Madrid as well as Queen Isabella. They still serve Spanish food.

In Yugoslavia Spanish Jewry is dying out, but in recent years books of Spanish sayings have still appeared in Bosnia as have folk tales in Macedonia.

### Yugoslav Jews Before and During the Second World War

When the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed in 1918, the different Jewish communities in the country were also unified. Until that time they had lived within the state administration of Austria and Hungary in the kingdom of Serbia; and until 1912 they had also been, in part, Turkish subjects. The first meeting of the new Union

of Jewish Communities took place in the year 1921. In 1929 a law was promulgated for the Jewish communities, which stipulated, among other things, that the organization include all Jewish religious communities except for the Orthodox Jews. This organization was responsible for the numerous refugees from Germany, beginning in 1933. Just before World War II, which began for Yugoslavia in 1941, there were 75,000 Jews. Of this number 4,000 were emigrés from other countries. In the school year 1938/39 there were 6,713 Jewish secondary school and university students. Of this number, 709 were at Yugoslav universities. Although Jews represented only .46% of the population of Yugoslavia, they represented 4.4% of the students in Yugoslavia.

In 1928 a Theological Institute for the education of rabbis had been built in Sarajevo.

In the Second World War 60,000 Yugoslav Jews lost their lives. The best situation for Jews was to be found in the Italian-occupied areas on the coast, whereas in the Croatian Ustascha State and the Hungarian or Bulgarian-occupied regions they were turned over to the Germans. Of the 15,000 survivors only a few thousand remained in Yugoslavia. There were 56 communities newly-established after the war, but between December 1948 and October 1952 alone 7,739 Jews emigrated to Israel. The census of 1953, which was the last census requesting information about citizen religious affiliation, counted only 2,565 people who considered themselves Jews in the religious sense. As ethnic Jews, 4,811 people in Yugoslavia were counted in the census of 1971. The number of members of Jewish communities in the year 1980 totalled 5,638 people. The Union of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia publishes the monthly Jevrejski pregled [Jewish Review] in Belgrade today. There are also a youth magazine, Kadima, an almanac and different books published in Belgrade. There is a museum also in Belgrade and a retirement home in Zagreb.

Translated from German by  
Dr. Erlis Glass, Rosemont College

## Jewish Communities Before and After World War II

Name	Membership	Name	Membership
Apatin	61	Parabuć	73
Bačka Palanka	229	Petrovgrad	1267
Bačka Topola	254	Pirot	96
Bajmok	123	Podravska Slatina	136
Banja Luka sephardic	244	Priština	385
Banka Luka aschkenasic	139	Rogatica	44
Bela Crkva	52	Ruma	249
Belgrade sephardic	8500	Sanski Most	94
Belgrade aschkenasic	1888	Sarajevo aschkenasic	1060
Bezdan	90	Sarajevo sephardic	7054
Bihać	156	Senta	595
Bijeljina	245	Sisak	258
Bitola	3146	Skopje	2816
Bjelovar	337	Slavonska Pozega	123
Brčko	145	Slavonski Brod	423
Čakovec	404	Smederevo	70
Čantavir	66	Sombor	945
Čonoplja	31	Split	284
Čurug	55	Sremska Mitrovica	100
Daruvar	169	Stanišić	31
Debeljača	148	Stara Kanjiža	174
Derventa	118	Stara Moravica	38
Doboj	53	Stari Bečej	253
Dolnja Lendava	134	Stari Sivac	47
Donji Miholjac	173	Subotica	4900
Dubrovnik	24	Sušak	143
Dakovo	197	Šabac	83
Horgoš	24	Štip	588
Karlovac	297	Temerin	63
Koprivnica	358	Titel	80
Kragujevac	85	Travnik	261
Križevci	119	Tuzla	241
Kula	124	Valpovo	140
Kutina	132	Varaždin	515
Leskovac	59	Velika Kikinda	512
Ludbreg	82	Vinkovci	630
Mali Idjos	30	Virovitica	204
Mostar	142	Visoko	126
Murska Sobota	711	Višegrad	93
Našice	229	Vlasenica	61
Niš	337	Vršac	290
Nova Gradiška	198	Vukovar	213
Novi Bečej	204	Zagreb aschkenasic	8712
Novi Kneževac	69	Zagreb sephardic	625
Novi Pazar	297	Zvidovići	117
Novi Sad	4104	Zemun aschkenasic	354
Novi Vrbas	233	Zemun sephardic	115
Osijek Gornji grad	2400	Zenica	195
Osijek Dolajigrad	184	Zvornik	78
Pakrac	99	Žabalj	100
Pančevo	403	Žepče	58



Name	Membership
There were also the following Orthodox communities in 1940:	
Ada	350
Bačka Palanka	50
Bački Petrovac	100
Bačko Petrovo Selo	310
Ilok (aschken. orth.)	160
Ilok	150
Mol	100
Senta (seph.)	850
Sombor	70
Stara Kanjiža	35
Subotica	560
Zagreb	130

In 1947 the following communities were in place:

Ada	59
Apatin	25
Bač	2
Bačkovo Petrovo Selo	26
Banja Luka (+85 in the vicinity)	46
Belgrade	2271
Bitola	57
Bugojno	8
Dubrovnik	31
Kikinda	37
Kosovska Mitrovica	33
Mol	11
Mostar	65
Novi Pazar	36
Novi Sad(+220 in the vicinity)	1001
Osijek (+249 in the vicinity)	361
Pančevo (+13 in the vicinity)	88
Pirot	12
Priština	224
Rijeka (+75 in the vicinity)	99
Sarajevo	1557
Senta (+118 in the vicinity)	110
Skopje	328
Sombor (+56 in the vicinity)	145
Split (+19 in the vicinity)	163
Stremska Mitrovica (+13 in the vicinity)	20
Subotica (+276 orthodox Jews)	981
Šid	16
Tuzla	78
Vršac	31
Zagreb (+434 in the vicinity)	2080
Zavidovići	25
Zemun	132
Zenica (+9 in the vicinity)	34
Zrenjanin	92

In 1969 one finds this picture of post-war communities:

Name	Membership
Ada	--
Apatin	--
Bač	--
Bačkovo Petrovo Selo	--
Banja Luka	47
Belgrade	1602
Bitola	--
Bugojno	--
Dubrovnik	62
Kikinda	4
Kosovska Mitrovica	--
Mol	--
Mostar	74
Novi Pazar	10
Novi Sad	281
Osijek	220
Pančevo	78
Pirot	--
Priština	--
Rijeka	160
Sarajevo	1090
Senta	58
Skopje	54
Sombor	61
Split	115
Sremska Mitrovica	--
Subotica	403
Šid	--
Tuzla	60
Vršac	7
Zagreb	1341
Zavidovići	12
Zemun	136
Zenica	30
Zrenjanin	28

Up until 1969 there were also the following communities:

Bačka Topola	29
Bjelovar	12
Bečej	5
Čakovec	21
Daruvar	36
Doboј	27
Jajce	20
Ljubljana	84
Niš	36
Slavonski Brod	32
Travnik	17
Virovitica	34

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Translated from Glaube in der 2. Welt (Zollikon, Switzerland), Vol. 11, No. 2 (1983), pp. 15-21 by permission of the publishers. The author based the article on information based primarily upon Zlatko Frid, Vjerske Zajednice u Jugoslaviji (Zagreb, 1970), Franc Perko, Verstva v Jugoslaviji (Celje, 1979), and Radovan Samardzic, Religious Communitites in Yugoslavia (Belgrade, 1981) as well as with the help of Rev. Hans Frei of Christcatholisches Pfarramt in Bern, Switzerland and Mr. Christian B. Schaffler of the Communications Section of the Advent-Mission in Basel, Switzerland.

Not all religious communities have been covered in this article, not even all of the smaller ones. The Roman Catholic Church, The Serbian Orthodox Church, The Macedonian Orthodox Church, and the Muslim Religious Community can be regarded as the major religious groups of Yugoslavia. The [Lutheran] Evangelical Churches and the Reformed Churches have not been included in this article though they are minority churches. Glaube in der 2. welt previously published articles on the Roman Catholic Church, Islam, and the Reformed Churches.

<sup>2</sup>Editor's comment: The above sentence is incorrect as there were no Methodist churches in Macedonia prior to 1921. These churches used to be administered by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston, MA as Congregational churches and were transferred to the Methodists by an agreement after World War I. For detailed information see Paul Mojzes, "A History of the Congregational and Methodist Churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia," unpublished doctoral dissertation at Boston University, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>Now deceased [editor's note.]