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### **The Yugoslav Planting Campaign in Martyrs' Forest 1952–1955: Symbolism, Rituals and Meaning\***

ABSTRACT: This article will try to examine the phenomenon of memorial forests and its role in the creation of Holocaust memory of the Jewish community in Yugoslavia. Our intention is to present the Yugoslav Jewish tradition of planting memorial forests and analyze its symbolical background. The Martyrs' Forest in Israel will be used as an example of newly-founded place of remembrance, and considering that, the main aim of the article is to show, in comparison with other examples, what kind of symbolical rituals were used to provide a historical context and legitimacy for new memorials.

KEY WORDS: Israel, Yugoslavia, Holocaust, Jews, monuments, memory, World War II

#### *Introduction: Symbolism, Ritual and the new Places of Remembrance*

At the end of the twentieth century interest for issues such as historical remembrance and politics of memory, tremendously increased. The culture of remembrance has become an entirely new academic discipline, and the ways in which human societies used to remember their past began to be thought of as a tool for understanding and researching those so-

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cieties. In the era of scientific objectivity, it is not easy separate facts from interpretation of meaning, which is the reason for the constant struggle between history and memory.<sup>1</sup> Collective memory is closely tied to the collective identity of the members of a society, but at the same time, places of remembrance have a key role in constructing both collective identity and collective memory. One is capable of calling something to mind only if he or she can create a social frame for such an event;<sup>2</sup> for creating a wider social context for past events in the present, places of remembrance are of great importance. According to Jan Assman, the creation of places of remembrance is one of the social mechanisms we are using to convert a memory into a durable, long-lasting creation, alongside with establishing of narratives, using rituals and adopting visual and verbal symbols that support memory.<sup>3</sup> These social mechanisms of remembrance which Assman was talking about, Peter Berk classified in five categories: 1. oral tradition 2. memoires and autobiographies 3. Artistic paintings, photographs and movies 4. Actions responsible for transferring the memory (rituals) 5. space as a medium of transferring (places of remembrance).<sup>4</sup> The last two categories, rituals and places of remembrance, are of great significance for this article.

During the process in which memory becomes a permanent structure, the connection between mental pictures (*imagines*) and the place (*loci*) is very important, just as it was in the era of antiquity.<sup>5</sup> These places of remembrance combined with different architectural objects, such as museums, monuments and temples, are in fact a good example of materialized memory. The theoretical concept of a place of remembrance was developed by French historian Pierre Nora, who wrote about those places as the “ultimate form in which the commemorative consciousness survives”, “relicts of the past”, “illusion of eternity” and “signs of recognition and belonging to one social group and the society in whole”.<sup>6</sup> Nora’s collection *Les Lieux de Memoire*, published between 1984 and 1992, was essen-

1 Mooli Brog, “In Blasted Memory of a Dream: Mordechai Shenhavi and Initial Holocaust Commemoration Ideas in Palestine, 1942–1945”, *Yad Vashem Studies*, no. XXX, 2002, 297.

2 Todor Kuljić, *Kultura sećanja*, (Beograd: Čigoja, 2006), 97.

3 Alaida Asman, „Sećanje individualno i kolektivno“, *Kolektivno sećanje i politike pamćenja*, prir. Michal Sládeček, Jelena Vasiljević, Tamara Petrović Trifunović, (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2015), 78.

4 Peter Berk, „Istorija kao društveno pamćenje“, *Reč*, br. 56, decembar 1999, 85–86.

5 Alaida Asman, „O metaforici sećanja“, *Reč*, br. 56, decembar 1999, 122.

6 Pierre Nora, „Između sjećanja i povijesti“, *Diskrepancija*, januar 2007, br. 12, vol. 8, 143.

tial for promoting the concept of places of remembrance among historians throughout the world. The idea of Maurice Halbwachs about memory as a social phenomenon was developed by Pierre Nora, who also emphasized that places of remembrance are the unity of material, symbolical and functional aspects of memory.

Professor Todor Kuljić has noticed that the importance of any place of remembrance does not depend on its material value, but on its symbolic meaning.<sup>7</sup> Also, the symbolism of such a place comes from its connection with a certain historical event or a person from the past which are important for the collective identity of the group that remembers. At this point it's very important to ask what is happening with those places which don't have this kind of symbolical relation with real historical events, or in another words, how it is possible to find a required symbolism that every place of remembrance must have in order to carry out the social function of preserving historical memory and creating collective identity. The symbolism in those situations must be created retroactively by making new, hitherto nonexistent historical importance, using rituals with strong symbolical meaning. Such symbolical rituals are meant to connect the past with the present and the new places of remembrance with a real historical event. Their practical role is to provide a social function to new memorials, museums and other kind of commemorative places. These kinds of rituals, very often, include the usage of artefacts which have a strong symbolical link with an event that should be commemorated. The artefacts are usually buried into the ground or publicly exposed, therefore, they become a central symbol of the new place of remembrance formed around.

In the context of Holocaust memory, there are numerous examples of secondary places of remembrance whose relation to the historical event is indirect. They are particularly common in Israel and United States because the Holocaust didn't happen on their territory, but it is interesting that creating secondary memorials was also widespread among the Yugoslav Jewish population. In the immediate postwar period the main places of remembrance for the Jews were Jewish cemeteries, where local communities were building monuments for all community members killed during the war.<sup>8</sup> In the late summer of 1952, five monuments were

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7 Kuljić, *Kultura sećanja*, 110.

8 The architecture of those monuments was mostly modest, but with plenty of Jewish symbols. During the period of 1945–1952, fourteen monuments of this kind were erected all across Yugoslavia in the following cities: Subotica, Sombor, Skopje,

erected in Jewish cemeteries in five Yugoslav cities: Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad, Sarajevo and Đakovo. The Jewish community, the main organizer of these commemorations, was also determined to create a symbolical connection between the new monuments and martyrs. The greatest number of victims were buried in unmarked graves so their presence on the memorial site was to be achieved in a symbolical way. In Zagreb and Đakovo it was done with lists of victims' names, laid in metal coffins which were then buried under the monuments.<sup>9</sup> According to the organizers, this act was to be understood a symbolical funeral of the victims.<sup>10</sup> The opening ceremony had two parts: the burial of the coffins and the revelation of the monument. The names on the paper became a replacement for the mortal remains of the victims and, at the same time, the artefact that gives symbolism to the newly founded place of remembrance.

On the other hand, the symbolism for the monument in the Sephardic cemetery in Belgrade was constructed in another way. The remains of 197 victims were buried under the monument, so by the principle *pars pro toto*, they were the symbol and substitute for all the victims from the territory of Socialist Republic of Serbia.<sup>11</sup> In the following years, this place was the most prominent Holocaust memorial site in Belgrade, although some other locations such as Nazi concentration camps for Jews at Sajmište and Topovske šupe had much bigger historical importance as the real locations in which the Holocaust occurred.

There are other examples of using mortal remains of victims as artefacts that should provide a symbolism for the new memorial place, which we can find in Yugoslavia a few decades later. In 1987, The Federation of Yugoslav war veterans (SUBNOR) got three urns bearing the the ashes of Yugoslav Jews killed in Treblinka from the Polish Federation of veterans. The representatives of The Jewish community in Skopje asked

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Zemun, Senta, Zrenjanin, Bačka Topola, Čakovac, Kanjiža, Jabuka, Ada, Mol, Bačko Petrovo Selo and Kikinda (Jevrejski istorijski muzej (Jewish Historical museum - JIM), Katastar jevrejskih grobalja; JIM, Komisija za spomen-obeležja, Osvećenje spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama u Zagrebu, Đakovu, Novom Sadu, Beogradu i Sarajevu, 20. august 1952, 1).

9 „Izveštaj o otkrivanju pet spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama fašizma i palim borcima“, *Bilten Saveza Jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije (SJOJ)*, god. III, br. 9-11, septembar-novembar 1952, 14, 17.

10 Arhiv Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja (Archive of Jewish Historical museum Belgrade - AJIM), Komisija za spomen-obeležja (KSO), Pismo Jevrejske vjeroispovedne općine Zagreb Savezu jevrejskih veroispovednih opština, document without signature, Zagreb, 17. III 1952.

11 „Izveštaj o otkrivanju pet spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama“, *Bilten SJOJ*, 20.

The Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia for permission to send those urns to Skopje, Bitola and Štip, where they were to be exhibited in local museums and ceremonially carried out to Jewish cemeteries once a year on March 11, to commemorate the deportation of Macedonian Jews to the death camps.<sup>12</sup> However, The Federation of Jewish Communities rejected this idea, explaining that this act could be disrespectful to the victims, and suggested placing the urns within the local monuments in cemeteries as it was done in Zagreb and Đakovo.<sup>13</sup>

In Holocaust memorials around the world, the ashes and the lists of victims' names were also quite often used for such symbolical purposes. One of the very first monuments dedicated to Holocaust victims was The Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr in Paris that was revealed in October 1956. At the opening ceremony, members of delegations from almost all European countries laid in the ground scrolls (*meghillot*) containing the names of the victims. A few months later, in February 1957, the urns holding the ashes of martyrs from Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen, Majdanek and so on, were ceremonially buried at the same spot.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it was obvious that required symbolism and connection with the victims that have died far away from the newly-formed place of remembrance were constructed in different ways using, for example, names, ashes or mortal remains of victims, in Yugoslavia, as well as in the other parts of Europe. This was the conventional mode for creating new, secondary places of remembrance, whose connection with the real historical event, in this case the Holocaust, was achieved by using symbolic rituals and artefacts.

The same principle was used in Israel, where the new places of remembrance, usually, were formed around the symbolical artefacts brought from Europe, that were to represent the symbolical connection with the suffering and persecution during the Holocaust. Those artefacts were mostly the Torah scrolls that belonged to some of destroyed European Jewish communities or the ashes of the victims from Nazi concentration camps. In June 1949, a small glass coffin containing thirty-one urns of ashes was brought from Austria and buried at the Sanhedriya cemetery in Jerusa-

12 AJIM, KSO, Pismo Jevrejske opštine Skoplje Savezu jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, Skoplje, 18. 12. 1987.

13 AJIM, KSO, Pismo Lavoslava Kadelburga Jevrejskoj opštini Skoplje, Beograd, 18. 1. 1988.

14 Žak Konfino, „Otkrivanje spomenika neznanom jevrejskom mučeniku u Parizu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, god. VII, br. 11–12, novembar–decembar 1956, 18–19; „U Parizu izvršena sahrana pepela jevrejskih mučenika spaljenih u logorima“, *Bilten SJOJ*, god. VIII, br. 3–4, mart–april 1957, 45.

lem.<sup>15</sup> A similar symbolical ritual was also used at the opening ceremony of *Chamber of the Holocaust* when the urns with ashes and pieces of soap made of human fat were buried at the nearby cemetery. In the mid-fifties, this museum opened the so called *Room of scrolls*, where Torah scrolls brought from Europe were exhibited.<sup>16</sup> Memorial forests are another example of such memorial practice, but with one difference: instead of urns and torah scrolls, the substitute for a victims' body is a tree that symbolizes not only a deceased person but also the return to the Holy Land.

### *Memorial Forests in the Landscape of Memory*

In Israeli culture of remembrance there were a few ways to maintain the memory of Holocaust victims: building monuments, dedicating kibbutzim to the victims and planting memorial forests, The Forest of Martyrs or Ya'ar HaKdoshim among the most famous ones. The Idea of creating The Martyrs' Forest, as well as memorial forests in general, is closely tied to the idea of greening Israel and they carried a strong symbolism because it was actually the metaphor for the return from exile. Through the ceremony of planting new trees, it created a spiritual relation between the land and the people who have returned to live on it, because working the land was to become a part of it and the natural cycle it represented.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the planting of a tree could also be a symbol for the foundation of a kibbutz, which was a very significant element in the process of constructing the new state. The connection between the act of planting and a return to the homeland was also emphasized at The Independence Day of Israel (Yom Ha'atzmaut) when the ceremonies of monument dedication, tree planting and opening new facilities were held all over the country.<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes, in order to underline the importance of symbolism that newly-planted tree carries, it was used as a Biblical connotation. In April 1966, residents of Kibbutz Gat began planting a memorial forest for Dr. Albert Weiss,<sup>19</sup> the ex president of Federation of Jewish Communities

15 Doron Bar, "Holocaust Commemoration in Israel during the 1950s: The Holocaust Cellar on Mount Zion", *Jewish Social Studie*, New Serie, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Autumn, 2005), 18.

16 *Ibid.*, 19.

17 James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993), 219.

18 *Ibid.*, 220.

19 Albert Weiss (1905-1964) professor at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, president of The Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia. He was born in Zemun and studied law in Paris, Berlin and Zagreb. During World War II he was imprisoned in a

of Yugoslavia. For that occasion a great ceremony was held, attended by more than 500 Yugoslav Jews from all around the world. At the stage there was a huge transparent with a quotation from The Book of Isaiah on Hebrew: “for my people will live as long as trees”.<sup>20</sup> This connection with the Biblical tradition wasn't so unusual. James E. Young remarked that Biblical locations and Holocaust memorials were the key spots through which Jews restored the connection with their soil and history, but it also shows the double-edged significance of Martyrs' Forest: on one side, it remembers the martyrs and fighters and on the other, it celebrates a return to the homeland and, in a form of a tree, takes a root in the ground as a mark for those who gave their lives for Israel.<sup>21</sup> The symbolic ritual of tree planting as a metaphor of life was also used in Yad Vashem where the new trees were planted in honor of The Righteous among the Nations.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of Martyrs' Forest was derived from the idea that six millions trees should be planted in memory of six million European Jews killed by the Nazis and every tree was to symbolize a victim. The Jewish National Fund and B'nai B'rith organization founded this forest in the early fifties near Jerusalem. From the very beginning they were planning to plant a forest alongside the corridor between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and it should have been divided into 14 sections that symbolize 14 European countries. The intention was to create a durable monument that will be a part of landscape and nature, which should last more than every classic monument or as those who have planted this forest, used to say: “they are monuments more durable than stone”.<sup>23</sup> For the people who struggled to built and defend the new homeland on their ancient land, in ideological context, afforestation was „a way to concretize the renaissance of the Jewish people in their liberated country“ that should remember them on the Holocaust victims and other significant individuals.<sup>24</sup> The Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia representatives have described, per-

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POW camp. After the war he was a member of the Yugoslav delegation at the Nurnberg Trial and the president of The Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia from 1948. until his death in 1964.

20 „Sadenje šume na ime dr Alberta Vajsa“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 5–6, maj 1966, 3.

21 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 220.

22 „Jugosloveni posadili drvca u Aleji pravednika“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 11–12, decembar 1965, 3.

23 P. Št., „Dva nova gaja u Herzlovoj šumi“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, no. 7, jul 1964, 5.

24 A. B., „Značaj našeg pošumljavanja“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, god. XIV, br. 5–6, maj 1966, 1.

haps most accurately, what the Martyrs' Forest should actually symbolize. In their official letter regarding the beginning of planting the Yugoslav sector they wrote that "the forest that lives and breathes, grows and blooms, is the best evidence of victory of life over death, the light over darkness, renewal over desolation, constructing over ruining."<sup>25</sup> From this quotation we can see that willingness to restore and build had an influence on Holocaust memory and that Martyrs' Forest, similarly to Bogdan Bogdanović's Stone Flower in Jasenovac, should symbolize rebirth and the triumph of life. Since Israel posthumously gave citizenship to all the victims of the Holocaust, the forest was also to symbolize those "lost" citizens of Israel and their return to the homeland.<sup>26</sup> The social and political role of the Martyrs' Forest was to include memory of the Holocaust and celebrate the new country in the collective identity of the Jewish people.

Of course, except this symbolical function, that had to maintain historical remembrance, The Martyrs' Forest had another practical function. From the beginning Israel had the lack of natural resources so the afforestation and water supplying were the key issues. The planting of forests was a way of prevention against erosion and spreading of desert and it could also improve the quality of soil. Memorial forests were the kind of memorials which merged practical and ideological needs of the new state.

#### *The Yugoslav Section of the Martyrs' Forest*

The Martyrs' Forest had to be divided into several sections and each stood for one country whose Jewish population was destroyed during the war, which also meant that every section should have as many trees as the number of Jews murdered in that country. By this calculation, the Yugoslav part of the Martyrs' Forest was supposed to have 60,000 trees. According to the budget planned for the collecting, we come to conclusion that the Jewish community in Yugoslavia had to raise money for 40,000 seedlings, while the remaining 20,000 seedlings had to be provided by Yugoslav Jews from Israel and USA.

It is important to underline that the planting of forests in the Holy Land was not a new or unusual memorial practice for Yugoslav Jews, and it was not tied just to a Holocaust remembrance but, on the contrary, it had wider context and a certain tradition. This kind of memorialisation

25 „Poslanica Saveza prilikom svečanog otkrivanja jugoslovenskog dela 'Šume mučenika' u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJO*, no. 4, april 1953, 6.

26 *Ibid.*, 6-7.



appeared even before World War II. In April of 1935, near Haifa, a forest was dedicated to the memory of Yugoslav King Alexander I Karađorđević, and not far away from there, another one was dedicated to his father, King Petar I Karađorđević. The planting of King Alexander's forest was a result of a huge campaign which included many Yugoslav Jewish communities, such as Bijeljina, Štip, Šabac, Zemun, Subotica, Travnik, Donja Lendava, Novi Sad and many others, while Jews from Romania contributed 1,000 trees.<sup>27</sup> The Yugoslavian Jews emphasized that this monument should be a perennial mark that will "tell a story to future generations about limitless love of a part of Jewish people... for a great man" and that will be, at the same time, "a connection between the hearts of Yugoslav Jews... and a cradle of Bible, the base of humankind."<sup>28</sup>

By then this was a common way to honor the memory of the dead and killed. However, it is quite interesting that from the nineteen-seventies, memorial forests have not been just related to the dead, but they also become a way to pay tribute to living individuals. The first time when people to whom the forest was dedicated were present at the event was in 1972 when The Association of Yugoslav Jews in USA, based in New York, planted a forest with 1000 trees for their meritorious members Pavle Neuberger<sup>29</sup> and his wife Anuška.<sup>30</sup> At that occasion the two of them revealed the plaque with their names because it was usual for every memorial forest to be marked with a plaque or stone bearing the name of those to whom it is dedicated. The tradition of planting memorial forests was also continued in the years after the end of campaign for The Forest of Martyrs, but in this period mainly smaller forests were planted in the name of prominent members of the community. For example, on 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1963, in Herzl Forest near Ben Shemen, a ceremony to mark the planting of a forest for Iso Herman<sup>31</sup> was held. This was the fourth memorial forest which Israelis of Yugoslav origin planted for their dead compatriots, and two

27 „Za Goru kralja Aleksandra“, *Židov*, br. 1, 4. januar 1935, 9.

28 „Givat Meleh Aleksander, Gora Kralja Aleksandra u Erec Jisraelu“, *Jevrejski kalendar za godinu 5696. od stvorenja sveta* 28. IX 1935. do 16. IX 1936. god., (Beograd, 1935), 22–23.

29 Pavle Neuberger (1894–1976), prominent Zionist and Jewish social activist. He was a lawyer from 1922 until 1940. After the war he participated in the activities of Keren Kayemet, The Union of Yugoslav zionists and the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia. In 1940, he moved to New York, where, he opened a law office in 1947.

30 P. Št. „Sađenje gajeva u Herzlovoj šumi“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 5–7, jun 1972, 8.

31 Iso Herman (1888–1963), Jewish social activist, vice-president of the Ashkenazi municipality in Sarajevo and a member of the main and the executive board of The

more forests, one for Dr Zak Kalderon, and another one for Moshe Bar-Zvi Schweiger,<sup>32</sup> were planned.<sup>33</sup>

In the early fifties, when the initiative for Yugoslav part of Martyrs' Forest was introduced, the tradition of planting memorial forests among the Yugoslav Jews had already been established. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia (FJCY) coordinated the fundraising in Yugoslavia from the beginning, and its main partner in Israel was Keren Kayemet LeIsrael - Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF). Since its founding in 1901, Keren Kayemet LeIsrael was tasked with buying land in Palestine, preparing it for settlement and taking care of natural and cultural heritage. Its main activities were afforestation, water management and the protection of the environment.

The initiative for planting the Yugoslav part of the Martyrs' Forest came from organizations of Yugoslav Jews from Israel and the USA. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia decided to join the campaign at The Sixth Conference of Jewish Municipalities of Yugoslavia held in Belgrade in September 1952.<sup>34</sup> The money collected was to be spent for purchasing 60,000 trees and building a pavilion with a permanent exhibition. The fundraising among the Jews that stayed in Yugoslavia was to be organized by the local Jewish municipalities, while The Federation of Communities, as the main Jewish organization in the country, was to coordinate the actions and take over the money collected. The only part of the country where there were no efforts to collect the money was The Socialist Republic of Montenegro because there were no Jewish municipalities there neither before nor after World War II, and the number of Jews there was negligible.<sup>35</sup> According to the instructions from The Federation of Communities, the trees were not only to be dedicated to those who per-

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Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia. At the end of 1940s he settled in Israel where he was active in organization Hitahdut Olei Yugoslavia.

32 Moshe Bar Zvi Schweiger (1905–1963), a prominent jurist and zionist, the son of rabi Herman Schweiger from Senta. After he moved to Israel at 1947, he was a member of Main Court of MAPAI party and a member of Working board of Hitahdut Olei Yugoslavia.

33 „Sađenje gaja na ime Ise Hermana“, *Jevrejski pregled*, god. XIV, br. 11–12, novembar–decembar 1963, 49.

34 AJIM, Pererina Arhiva (PA), K28, Yugoslavian sector in Martyrs' Forest/ Jugoslawischer Sektor im Maertyrerwald, 15 September 1952.

35 AJIM, PA, K28, Jugoslovensko odeljenje „Šume mučenika“ u Izraelu, 2.

ished in the Holocaust, but also to those who died after the war as the result of persecutions during the war.<sup>36</sup>

For Yugoslav Jews, the period when the campaign started was decisive, for several reasons. Moreover, it was the period when Jews in other socialist countries faced important challenges. In August and September 1952, five monuments to Holocaust victims were revealed in five Yugoslav cities: Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Novi Sad and Đakovo.<sup>37</sup> This act represented the pinnacle of Jewish efforts in the postwar period not to forget the victims, sufferings and persecutions. It also represented the end of the first phase of Holocaust memorialization in Yugoslavia. Those five monuments, together with 14 other monuments across the country that the Jewish community built earlier in memory of the Holocaust victims, meant that the goal of building monuments in the country was accomplished, at least for the time being. The Jewish Community could then focus its efforts on memorialization of the Holocaust abroad with a number of important initiatives in the early fifties such as The Martyrs' Forest in Israel, The Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr, and a non-released Memorial of the Holocaust Victims in Riverside Park in New York. Additionally, by the end of 1952, the organized emigration of Yugoslav Jews to Israel was completed<sup>38</sup> and the campaign for the Yugoslav part of Martyrs' Forest was a good opportunity to continue and strengthen the contacts and cooperation between those who emigrated and those who stayed in the country.

From the early nineteen-fifties until Stalin's death, the Soviet Union and the greatest number of socialist countries were marked with an intense antisemitic campaign, the closing of Jewish institutions, the ban of emigration etc. The process against Rudolf Slansky in Czechoslovakia at the end of 1952 revealed the real strength of antisemitism in the Eastern Bloc. In such historical context, although Yugoslavia was ideologically more similar to the East than to the West, after the split with Soviet Union

36 AJIM, PA, K28, Cirkularno pismo SJOJ svim jevrejskim opštinama u FNRJ, 23. april 1953.

37 For more details, see: Emil Kerenji, "Jewish citizens of socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944–1974", (dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2008), 205–237; Olga Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja, Spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918–1989*, (Beograd: Čigoja, 2014), 368–373; Давор Стипић, „У борби против заборава: Јеврејска заједница у Југославији и очување сећања на Холокауст 1945–1955“, *Годишњак за друштвену историју*, бр. 2, 2016.

38 Mladenka Ivanković, *Jevreji u Jugoslaviji (1944–1952). Kraj ili novi početak*, (Beograd: INIS, 2009), 319–320.

in 1948, Yugoslav leadership was trying to find an independent and authentic way in socialism, which, over time, began to include some “western values”. The special situation in Yugoslavia comparing to other socialist states, as well as, Yugoslavian attitude towards the Jews and the state of Israel is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Yugoslavia was the only communist state in Europe that allowed its Jewish population to cooperate with The Jewish National Fund,<sup>39</sup> which also means that Yugoslavian Jews were the only Jewish population in communist Europe that was able and allowed to take part in the Forest of Martyrs planting campaign.<sup>40</sup>

In the beginning, it was mainly the members of the Jewish community who took part in the campaign. They gave the money for the trees in the name of their beloved relatives, friends or neighbors killed in the Holocaust. For example, Leopold Hoffmann from Jewish community Bačka Palanka donated money for four trees in the names of his sons Sandor and Armin, daughter-in-laws Ilonka and grandson Miki.<sup>41</sup> Also, Vera Schwarz from Križevci in the People’s Republic of Croatia, donated money for one tree as a tribute to her friend Ružica Rotter, also from Križevci, who was killed by the Nazis at the age of thirty-six.<sup>42</sup> This shows that every tree was related to the name of one victim, which means that every tree was personalized as a living symbol of a deceased. Therefore, the Martyrs’ Forest was different from most Holocaust memorials in not being a collective monument for a group of unknown people, but on the contrary, emphasizing the personal identity of every victim. The life continuum concept was one of the key symbolical ideas on which, not only the Martyrs’ Forest, but also every other memorial forest, was founded. We can witness this on the example of the Forest for the prominent Zionist Alexander Licht that was planted in May 1969. One of the first trees in the forest was planted by Licht’s grandson as a symbolical act that was to show

39 P. Št., „Gaj Saveza jevrejskih opština u Izraelu“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, god. XX, br. 5-7, jun 1972, 19.

40 It is very important to underline that within the Martyr’s Forest there also were some sectors dedicated to the Jewish victims from all East-European countries. For example, in January 1953 one part of the forest was ceremonially dedicated to the memory of the Jews murdered in Czechoslovakia, and the first tree was planted by Yosef Sprinzak, the Speaker of the Knesset. We can not conclude on the basis of available sources whether Jews in Czechoslovakia had a permit to freely raise money for the forest and to cooperate with Keren Kayemet.

41 AJIM, PA, K29, Spisak priložnika za Šumu mučenika jevrejske opštine Bačka Palanka, Beograd, 16. april 1953.

42 AJIM, PA, K29, Popis žrtava fašizma na čije se ime imadu zasaditi stabla u “Jaar Hakedošim”, Križevci, 25. april 1953.

that the circle of life continues and that the function of memorial forest is completed.<sup>43</sup>

During the first couple of months, the best results in the campaign were achieved in small communities like Bjelovar, Vinkovci, Čakovec, Tuzla and some others, which was a surprise for the Federation of Communities.<sup>44</sup> Among those communities especially good results were seen in Bjelovar where, by the middle of 1954, members raised the money for 1718 trees dedicated to their murdered loved ones. This was an excellent result because at that time this community had only seventeen members. The Šibenik community also stood out, raising 40,000 dinars, although it had only one member.<sup>45</sup> Jewish National Fund asked the Federation of Communities to deliver at least half of trees before April 1953 when the first trees had to be planted. Given the slow pace of the fundraising, it was completely impossible to satisfy this request, so instead, in December 1952, The Executive Board of Federation decided to give to JNF, as an advance payment, some proceeds from selling the Federation's publications, as well as from religious books that the Federation owned in Israel.<sup>46</sup> The contributions were paid only in cash and if we compare the amount that individuals gave and the number of trees that were equal to that payment, we can conclude that one tree had a value of 300 dinars.<sup>47</sup> The results of campaign until April 30, 1953, are shown in a following table:<sup>48</sup>

Community	Members	Number of trees	Money raised
Beograd	1,371		76,400
Bjelovar	15	156	46,800
Banja Luka	34	13	3,900

43 „Posvećenje gajeva dr-a Lichta i cionističkih boraca“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 5–6, jun 1969, 14.

44 „Akcija za podizanje jugoslovenskog dela Šume mučenika u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 3, mart 1953, 12.

45 AJIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (LXXXVII i LXXXVIII) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 28. jun 1954, 1–2; JIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (XC i XCI) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 12. jul 1954, 3.

46 AJIM, Zapisnik CVI i CVII zajedničke sednice Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, održane 24. XII 1952, 10.

47 AJIM, PA, K29, Spisak priložnika za Šumu mučenika jevrejske opštine Bačka Palanka, Beograd, 16. april 1953.

48 Table based on: „Nastavlja se akcija za podizanje jugoslovenskog dela Šume mučenika u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 4, april 1953, 9–10.

Bačka Palanka	16	18	5,400
Čakovec	21	86	25,800
Daruvar	18	25	7,500
Donji Miholjac	12	31	9,700
Karlovac	21	51	15,300
Mostar	59	6	1,800
Nova Gradiška	13	26	7,800
Novi Sad	284	173	51,900
Osijek	175	59	17,400
Pančevo	34	24	7,200
Rijeka	90	87	26,100
Senta	27	12	3,600
Skoplje	99	44	13,200
Slavonski Brod	19	36	10,800
Tuzla	34	65	19,500
Vinkovci	10	41	17,500
Virovitica	11	6	1,800
Vrbas	8	10	3,000
Zemun	71	24	7,200
Zrenjanin	122	157	47,100

Here we can see, as already mentioned, that some small communities have collected quite a lot of money considering their low membership numbers, while in some bigger communities, like Zemun, Skoplje, Novi Sad and Osijek the campaign did not produce expected results. Generally, the initial response of Jewish population was very good, but after some time it began to decrease, so the Executive Board of Federation decided to in-

tensify the efforts. To this purpose, they began to organize rallies and lectures with the intention to educate people about the importance of the campaign. The Federation of Communities called for local Jewish municipalities for donations in the names of prominent members killed by Nazis. In order to motivate the Jews to join the campaign, the Executive board of Federation also asked the Women Section of Federation to take part, and they also decided to expand the campaign outside the Jewish community. The Jewish leadership advised the local communities to ask for help only from "close acquaintances and trustworthy friends" from whom complete understanding could be expected.<sup>49</sup> It is apparent that initially the plan was not to engage a wider social base in the campaign, which we can also conclude from a letter The Federation of Communities sent to all the Jewish communities in the country, in which they wrote "not to make the campaign too wide".<sup>50</sup> The money raised up to that point was not enough, so the Jewish community understood that it needed to ask social organizations, public institutions and state corporations for financial support.

In order to gain funding from the public sector they had to acquire certain permits from the government. The Federation of Communities asked the Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs for permission. The Federal Secretariat replied that decision about that could be made only by republic secretariats, but they also added they will urge the Republic secretariats to decide in favor of the requests of local Jewish communities.<sup>51</sup> Here we can see that, although government institutions and social organizations have not joined the campaign for Martyrs' Forest from its beginning, their attitude towards it was benevolent. Regarding that and because of the Federal Secretariat's recommendations, in February 1954, State Secretariat for Internal Affairs of the People's Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina gave a permission to The Jewish Municipality in Sarajevo to raise money from February 10, to June 10, 1954, and this decision enabled the expansion of the campaign even outside of Jewish Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>52</sup> Until the middle of March 1954 all the Jewish

49 AJIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (CXIV i CXV) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 14. april 1953, 4.

50 AJIM, PA, K28, Cirkularno pismo SJOJ svim jevrejskim opštinama u FNRJ, 23. april 1953, 2.

51 AJIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (CXXVI i CXXVII) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 27. decembar 1953, 2.

52 AJIM, PA, K29, Rješenje Državnog sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove Bosne i Hercegovine broj 5217/54, Sarajevo, 7. februar 1954.

municipalities in Yugoslavia got required permits, except Ljubljana, which was expected to get it soon.

The campaign was expected to be finished until the end of 1953, but soon it turned out to be impossible. The same year in December, The Main Board of Federation of Jewish Communities, during the analysis of results, concluded that a lot has been done, but yet it was not enough and the campaign had to be extended. Until that time, 4,683 trees have been dedicated to the victims<sup>53</sup> which was about a quarter of all the trees that were supposed to be planted in the first stage. The Jewish communities of Sarajevo and Zagreb gave the greatest contribution to the campaign, because each of them raised enough money for more than 1,000 trees. In terms of money, The Federation has collected around 1,5 million of the 6 million dinars needed, so it was obvious that the campaign had to be extended into the next year.<sup>54</sup>

In order to raise the expected amount, it was necessary, not only to extend the campaign but also to include individuals and organizations outside of the Jewish community. The campaign was extended a couple of times, and the final balance sheet was made in early 1955. Among the companies, organizations and institutions that supported the campaign were, for example, The First Singer's Association from Belgrade, the National Theatre in Belgrade, the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the Red Cross, the National Assembly and Executive Council of some republics and numerous People's Committees, such as those from Osijek, Belgrade, Zagreb etc. Among the individuals who contributed there were prominent government and party officials. At the meeting with Dr. Albert Weiss, the chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia, Moša Pijade promised that he would give a personal contribution for The Martyrs' Forest and stated that the Federation had to talk to the National Assembly of FNRJ.<sup>55</sup> In addition to Moše Pijade, Milovan Djilas and his wife Štefica also gave a symbolical donation of 600 dinars, or two trees,<sup>56</sup> as did the Yugoslav ambassador to Israel, Dr Dušan Bratić. The participation of non-Jews was very important for the Jewish community, not only in financial terms,

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53 AJIM, Zapisnik II sednice Glavnog odbora Saveza jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, 20. decembar 1953, 5.

54 Ibid., 19.

55 AJIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (XC i XCI) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 12. jul 1954, 2.

56 AJIM, PA, K29, Diploma o donaciji za šumu mučenika na ime Milovana i Štefice Đilas.



but much more, as they used to say, a moral success, a proof of brotherhood in the country.<sup>57</sup>

The campaign was finished in 1955, and by that time the Federation had collected 15,541,206 dinars.<sup>58</sup> According to the Federation's calculation, after deducting the costs of printing certificates of appreciation, travel costs of representatives of the Federation etc., the remaining 14 millions dinars would be absolutely enough. The three biggest Jewish municipalities in the country have raised most of the money. Zagreb collected 4,138,855, Sarajevo 3,006,249 and Belgrade 2,353,784 dinars. However, if we compare the amounts raised with the number of members of each community, we can conclude that in relative terms the greatest contribution to the campaign came from the communities of Bjelovar, which raised 560,400 dinars, Križevci 322,055, Šibenik 108,400, Vukovar 95,700 dinars.<sup>59</sup>

It was not only the Jews from Yugoslavia that joined the campaign, but also many other members of Yugoslav Jewry, regardless of where they lived, including Jewish emigrés in the USA and Israel. In March 1954, the chairman of The Federation of Communities, Dr Albert Weiss, reported to the Executive Board that in Israel enough money was raised for 8,600 trees, and 1,000 in New York.<sup>60</sup> Also, The Association of Yugoslav Jews in the USA planned to donate 1000 more trees in memory of Alexander Licht. It is obvious that, by early 1954, much more money had been collected in Israel and USA than in Yugoslavia, but this was not unexpected, because in this period Jews who lived in Yugoslavia made up only a third of all the Jews of Yugoslav origin. However, by the end of the campaign, most of the trees were planted from the money raised in Yugoslavia.

The commemorations that took place in the Yugoslav part of The Martyrs' Forest were intended to connect the Jews in Yugoslavia with those who have emigrated to Israel and USA, but also to connect Israel and Yugoslavia, because manifestations like these were often attended by Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Israel. Finally, they were important as a manifestation that should restore the relation between the Jewish people and the Holy land of their ancestors. The first commemoration in the Yugoslav sector of the Martyrs' Forest was held on April 22, 1953 when

57 AJIM, PA, K28, Keren Kayemeth Le Israel – Att. Dr. H. Freedman, Jerusalem, no. 1047/54.

58 AJIM, Zapisnik VI sednice Glavnog odbora Saveza jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, 18–19. februar 1956, 4.

59 „Rezultat akcije za ‘Šumu mučenika’“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 5, maj 1955, 17.

60 AJIM, Zapisnik zajedničke sednice (CXXX i CXXXI) Izvršnog odbora Saveza i Autonomnog odbora za pomoć, 12. mart 1954, 4.

the beginning of planting was consecrated ceremonially. Furthermore, it is mentioned that every new place of remembrance needs a symbolism that is the source of political and national importance of those places. The symbolism could be constructed using different kinds of artefacts, such as Torah scrolls, ashes of victims or books with the names of the dead etc., that represented the symbolical connection between the places where the real historical event occurred and the new places of remembrance, the victims and the monument, past and future generations. In the case of the Yugoslav sector of Martyrs' Forest, this connection was made by one symbolical act: the ground from all the Jewish cemeteries in Yugoslavia was taken and brought to Israel and later it was ceremonially laid on the location where the Yugoslav part of the forest was to be planted.<sup>61</sup> In this way, a symbolical connection was established between the ground where 60,000 Yugoslav Jews lived and suffered and the land of their ancestors. This wish to emphasize the role of the Forest in improving Yugoslav-Israeli relations was also visible in the statements of the representatives of The Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, who spoke about the act of planting as a symbol of the lasting friendship and peaceful cooperation between Yugoslavia and democratic Israel, and between Yugoslavia and the Jewish people, but also between nations of the world in general.<sup>62</sup>

On April 20, just two days before the opening ceremony, the State of Israel celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and The Federation of Communities chose a delegation of three men<sup>63</sup> to represent the Yugoslav Jewish Community at these ceremonies. However, the Federation was informed that Israel cannot financially support the Yugoslav delegation's journey that year, so the Federation decided not to send a delegation. Instead, The Federation had to be represented in both events by the Yugoslav writer of Jewish origins, Isak Samokovlija, who was at that time visiting Israel. On the ceremony in Martyrs' Forest, the introductory speech was given by Dr Shlomo Levi, the chairman of The Jewish National Fund, and then, Dr Samokovlija read the Federation's letter. On that occasion, he addressed the dead: "For each of you, we are planting a tree, and we are gathering all

61 „Акција за podizanje jugoslovenskog dela 'Šume mučenika' u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 3, mart 1953, 12.

62 „Poslanica Saveza prilikom svečanog otvaranja jugoslovenskog dela 'Šume mučenika' u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 4, april 1953, 7.

63 As the representatives of the Federation of Communities were elected Avram Mevorah, member of the Executive board of the Federation; Beniamin Samokovlija, the president of Jewish municipality of Skopje and Dr. Pavle Centener, the president of Jewish municipality in Osjek.

of you, one next to another, not in a form of a sad cemetery, but as a living and dense coniferous forest, with its roots plunged deep into the ground and with its tops lifted into the blue sky, here, in freedom, in the state of Israel, to which you have helped with your lives to become the wonderful, bright and the most brilliant Jewish reality".<sup>64</sup> He added, once again, that the transmission of the ground from Yugoslavia to Israel shows a strong relationship between two states and two nations.

In the previous quotation we can notice two very important moments, which have already been underlined at the beginning of this article. The first one is the idea about Holocaust victims as the first fighters who gave their life for Israel, which was one of the main Zionist ideas in the time Israel's creation. In this way of thinking, represented by Isac Samokovlija, James E. Young saw a certain dichotomy of the Israeli Holocaust memory. According to Young, this dichotomy between dead civilians and dead fighters was represented in Israeli memorial iconography through connecting the Martyrs perished in the Holocaust and fighters that gave their lives for the independence of Israel, because, as Young said, the fight for Israel was a compensation for suffering, and the creation of Israel was a compensation for the Holocaust, so those civilians who died in the Holocaust were actually the first fighters for the freedom and independence of Israel.<sup>65</sup> The second important idea that we can notice in Samokovlija's speech is the idea of a newplanted forest as a symbol of the return to the land that the Jews left a long time ago and where their roots are, as Samokovlija said, "plunged deep into the ground". This is how the Holocaust and the return to the Holy land have been interconnected once again.

After Isak Samokovlija's speech came the addresses of Dr. Joel Rosenberg in the name of Hitahdut Olej Yugoslavia, and Dušan Bratić, Yugoslav ambassador in Israel. Afterwards, Reuben Schtein recited a poem *Kaddish* by Hinko Gotlieb in Hebrew. At the end of the ceremony, rabbi Altaratz sang suitable prayers and said the kaddish for the dead. The most important part of the ceremony, the planting of the trees, David Alkalay described quite emotionally: "And then a deeply moving moment came, when one hundred people spread out across the field, and with the young trees in their hands and the sense of deep respect, put them into the ground... Max Bretler mixed the pieces of Yugoslav land with the Hard land of Isra-

64 David Alkalaj, „Svečanost sađenja prvih stabala u jugoslovenskom odeljenju 'Šume mučenika' u Izraelu", *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 5, maj 1953, 7.

65 Džejms E. Jang, „Izrael", *Podsećanje na zločine. Rasprava o genocidu i ubistvu naroda*, eds Knige Folkhard, Fraj Norbert, (Beograd, Novi Sad: Platoneum–SJOJ, 2011), 284.

el... It was a deeply impressive scene and it was very hard to hide excitement".<sup>66</sup> This was a ceremony that represented a foundation of the new place of remembrance, The Yugoslav section of the Martyrs' Forest, and the beginning of a new tradition that should be maintained in the form of annual commemorations.

In the case of The Yugoslav part of the Martyrs' Forest there was no precise date for the annual commemoration, so it was celebrated every year on Yom HaShoa, the Israeli date of Holocaust remembrance. For example, the bulletin of Hitahdut Olej Yugoslavia reported that the pilgrimage, as they used to call it, to the Martyrs' Forest for the year 1961, would be held on April 13 because that year the anniversary of the beginning of Jewish catastrophe in Yugoslavia fell on the same day as Yom HaShoa.<sup>67</sup> Also in 1967, a huge commemoration was held the day after Yom HaShoa, on May 7.<sup>68</sup> We can notice that the annual commemorations in the Yugoslav sector of the forest had nothing to do with the history of the extermination of Yugoslav Jewry. They were connected to the international symbols of the Holocaust because they were held on Yom HaShoa, which actually was the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

The representatives of Jewish people emphasized that the Yugoslav part of The Martyrs' Forest was not planted only by Jews, but also by many non-Jews who gave their support. Until the break up of Yugoslav-Israeli relations in 1967, all the diplomats that served as Yugoslav ambassadors after Dušan Bratić used to visit the Yugoslav section of the Forest. Ambassador Jovan Vukomanović, together with his wife and embassy secretary Zlatko Sažunić, visited the forest in late 1964, and he also attended a big celebration in May 1955 organized by Hitahdut Olej Yugoslavia.<sup>69</sup> His successor Dragoje Đurić continued this tradition by paying memory to the victims alongside the representative of Keren Kajemet in March 1958.

In addition to The Martyrs' Forest, Yugoslav Jews planted a few more forests in Israel in memory of Holocaust victims and the heroes fallen in the struggle against Nazism. In 1965, the board of Jews from Bitola who lived in Israel, together with Hitahdut Olej, held a few commem-

66 Alkalaj, „Svečanost sadenja prvih stabala“, 8.

67 „Hodočašće u Jaar Hakedošim“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 3–4, mart 1961, 3.

68 „Hodočašće u Šumi mučenika“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 6–7, jun 1967.

69 „Jugoslovenski poslanik u Izraelu posetio mesto na kome se sadi Šuma mučenika“, *Bilten SJOJ*, br. 1–2, januar–februar 1955, 18; „Komemoracija žrtvama fašizma u 'Šumi mučenika' u Izraelu“, *Bilten SJOJ*, god. VI, br. 6, jun 1955, 7.

orative ceremonies for the Jews from Bitola killed in the War. As part of these commemorations, a forest was planted as the addition to the Martyrs' Forest in memory of Bitola Jews in April 1965. In July, In Herzl Forest near Ben Shemen,<sup>70</sup> another forest was planted in memory of Leon Mose Kamhi, the prominent Zionist and public figure from Bitola, who fell as the victim of fascism.<sup>71</sup> In the part of Herzl Forest, where there were already several trees for the meritorious Yugoslav Jews, in 1972 another forest was planted in memory of all the victims of the Holocaust and members of the Yugoslav Jewish community who died before the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the of The Federation of communities at 1969. In 1978, relatives and friends who survived the war, planted trees for their loved ones, who died in the Jadovno concentration camp, in Herzl Forest. The opening ceremony was held on April 11, marking the day when the tragedy of the Zagreb Jews began, a day after German troupes entered the city.<sup>72</sup> Another forest was planted close to the Yugoslav sector of the Martyr's Forest, for the victims from "Kladovo transport", to mark the 40th anniversary of their death.<sup>73</sup> This was a way for Yugoslav Jews to commemorate the suffering of their Austrian, Polish and Czechoslovakian fellows, who tried to escape Nazism by fleeing to the Holy Land.

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The Campaign for planting the Yugoslav sector in the Martyrs' Forest started in 1952 as an independent initiative of the Jewish community, but during the next 3 years it became the indicator of solidarity with Jewish people and support to their efforts to keep the memory of the Holocaust victims alive. In the times when Jews faced a huge escalation of antisemitism in most European socialist States influenced by the policy of Stalin and USSR, this campaign, so far neglected in domestic historiography, showed that solidarity with Jewish victims and the struggle against antisemitism were highly valued principles of the Yugoslav state and the

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70 In this sector of the Herzl Forest several parts of the Forest were dedicated to prominent Jews of Yugoslav origin: Hinko Gottlieb, Arie (Leo) Stern, Moshe Bar Zvi, Olga Alt, Iso Herman, Jaque Kalderon, Ziga Noimann and Alexander Licht.

71 P. Št., „Svečanost sađenja gaja za Leona Kamhija“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 8–9, septembar 1965, 7.

72 „Posveta gaja žrtvama Jadovna“, *Bilten udruženja Jevreja iz Jugoslavije u Izraelu*, br. 5–6, jun, 1978, 27–28.

73 AJIM, Fond Bate Gedalje, K2, paket 13, Pismo Bate Gedalje Savezu jevrejskih opština Jugoslavije, 18. 7. 1982, 1.

Yugoslav society. At the same time, the concept of the Martyrs' Forest had great symbolic importance. The Holy Land did not witness the Holocaust, which means that new places of remembrance founded in Israel needed an artificial link with real events and real victims. In the case of the Martyrs' Forest that link was made on multiple levels. First of all, through the symbolism of soil brought from Jewish cemeteries in Yugoslavia, the connection was restored between not only those who perished in the Holocaust and long dreamed of the Promised Land, but also between those who emigrated to Israel and those who stayed in Yugoslavia. On another level, the planting of trees indicated another very important political Zionist message – that all the victims were brought to the land of their ancestors and through the roots of trees they marked what was believed to be the Jewish right to the Holy Land. All this brings us to the conclusion that this campaign had a deeply developed political background, which was inseparably connected to the memorial purpose of the Martyrs' Forest.

### Summary

Memorial Forests are unique kinds of memorials in Israel with multiple memorial roles: on the practical level, they were planted to provide the protection against erosion and spreading of the desert and to improve the quality of the soil. On the other hand, memorial forests seemed like a suitable way to preserve the memory of certain people or historical events and to celebrate the return of the Jews to the land of their ancestors. The Martyrs' Forest (Yaar Hakedoshim) was a memorial forest dedicated to all victims of the Holocaust. According to the plan, The Martyrs' Forest was to be divided into sectors, and each of them should represent a European country and number of trees in each was to be equal to the number of Jewish victims in that country. All together the Forest should contain 6,000,000 trees, and 60,000 were to be planted in Yugoslav sector. The campaign for the planting of Yugoslav sector in The Martyrs' Forest started in 1952 and was coordinated by The Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia. By autumn of 1955 The Federation raised 15,541,206 dinars which was enough to plant the required number of trees. In the context of social history, the campaign showed a huge level of empathy and solidarity of Yugoslav citizens and political and social organizations with the Jewish community. Using this campaign as a key study, our aim is also to analyze relations among Yugoslav Jews and their com-

patriots who emigrated to Israel and USA, with a special emphasis on the cooperation with Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael.

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## Резиме

Давор Стипић

### Акција сађења југословенског дела Шуме мученика 1952-1955: симболика, ритуали и значење

**АПСТРАКТ:** Чланак представља покушај да се научно испита феномен меморијалних шума и њихова улога у конструирању сећања на Холокауст међу југословенским Јеврејима. Намера нам је да објаснимо традицију сађења меморијалних шума у јеврејској заједници у Југославији, као и да образложимо њихову симболичку позадину па је стога главни циљ чланка да, поредећи их са другим примерима, објасни симболичке ритуале који су коришћени да би се новим меморијалима обезбедио историјски контекст. Користећи пример ове акције, чланак представља и преглед сарадње између југословенских Јевреја, њихових сународника који су емигрирали у Израел и САД и организације Керен Кајемет ЛеИзраел, у заједничким напорима да сачувају сећање на све који су страдали у Холокаусту.

**Кључне речи:** Израел, Југославија, Холокауст, Јевреји, споменици, сећања, Други светски рат

Сађење меморијалних шума представљало је специфичну врсту меморијалне праксе у Израелу, чија је функција била вишеструка: са практичне стране пошумљавањем се борило против ерозије и спречавало ширење пустиње, док је, са друге стране, ово имало комплексан симболички значај – градило се историјско сећање на одређене људе или догађаје, али и прослављао повратак Јевреја у земљу својих предака. Шума мученика (Јаар Хакедошим) представљала је посебну врсту меморијалне шуме, засноване на концепту по коме би шест милиона посађених стабала подсећало на страдање шест милиона европских Јевреја, при чему је шума била подељена у неколико сектора, од којих је сваки симболисао по једну окупирану европску државу, а број стабала у сваком од сектора био би једнак броју страдалих Јевреја из дате државе. Према овој рачуници, у југословенском делу Шуме мученика требало је засадити 60.000 стабала, а ре-



ализацију овог пројекта иницирао је и координисао Савез јеврејских општина Југославије уз помоћ израелске организације Керен Кајемет ЛеИзраел. Акција прикупљања средстава трајала је око три године и за то време јеврејске општине широм земље, а нарочито оне мање, као што су Бјеловар, Винковци, Чаковец, Тузла, показале су велики степен посвећености идеји очувања сећања на сународнике страдале у Холокаусту. Истовремено, акција је показала и значајну солидарност државних институција, политичких и друштвених организација, као и грађана Југославије. Такође, Шума мученика је била новоформирано место сећања, које није било, у историјском смислу, директно повезано са злочинима и страдањем, па у социо-антрополошком смислу пракса посвећивања и сађења Шуме мученика представља и важну студију случаја која указује на присуство и друштвену укорененост универзалних ритуалних радњи чија је функција обезбеђивања симболике била незаобилазан део изградње сећања на Холокауст у новоформираној држави Израел.