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COLLOQUIA HUMANISTICA

Sephardim, Ashkenazim
and Non-Jewish Peoples:
Encounters Across Europe



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The Jewish Community and Antisemitism in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes /Yugoslavia 1918-1941

Abstract

The Jews in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia made up about 0.5 percent of the total population. The new national framework provided the ability to accept the new state and national idea, but also gave impetus to strengthening their own identity embodied in Jewish nationalism, Zionism. Jews adapted to the new political circumstances relatively quickly and without major turmoil, at least as a whole. A liberal political foundation enabled the Jews to identify relatively easily with the new state. However, over a shorter or longer period, there were earlier national identifications as well. The spread and acceptance of antisemitism in Yugoslavia was affected by different traditions of the attitude towards the Jews in the political culture, political relations in the country and international circumstances. These factors were cumulative, although international circumstances certainly had a crucial impact, especially the coming to power of National Socialists in Germany. The manifestation of antisemitism in Yugoslavia can be divided into three main periods: 1918-1933, from the

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establishment of the Yugoslav state to the intensification of antisemitic propaganda, 1934-1938, from the intensification of antisemitic propaganda to the start of Jews' conditioned loyalty, and 1939-1941, from the start of Jews' conditioned loyalty to the Axis powers' invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941. Hostility towards Jews was manifested much more strongly in the Habsburg Monarchy than in the Kingdom of Serbia. Therefore, the new state in the former monarchy territories inherited latent and sometimes open antisemitism. The spread of antisemitic propaganda and legislation in Yugoslavia should be associated with the state leaders' attempts to find a *modus vivendi* with the totalitarian revisionist neighbors, primarily Germany. As a result, in early October 1940 the government adopted two anti-Jewish decrees. The destruction of the Yugoslav state in April 1941 heralded the beginning of the Holocaust there.

Key words: Yugoslavia, Jews, identity, loyalty, antisemitism, tradition, National Socialism, World War II.

Jewish Identity in the New State

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (abbr. the Kingdom SCS, from 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, abbr. KY) was established on December 1, 1918. The new state was incorporated into the system of collective security in southeast Europe, where the main place belonged to France. Throughout its existence, the monarchist Yugoslavia failed to overcome a basic contradiction: the question of its citizens' identity. Created on the principle of the national self-determination of a "three-named" people (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), who were named one Yugoslav nation in 1929 by state coercion, the Kingdom failed to gather the already largely formed nations around the new national idea (Wachtel, 1998, p. 5).

The Jews within the boundaries of the newly created Kingdom SCS were one of the smallest ethnic and religious communities in the country, accounting for about 0.5 percent of the total population, with a slightly decreasing trend due to the faster growth of the rest of the population. Two-thirds of Jews originated from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and were Ashkenazim. Before World War II in Yugoslavia, there were around 82,000 Jews organized in 121 religious communities. The increase in the Jewish population of the largest cities, such as Belgrade, Zagreb and others, largely followed the rapid growth of the city populations. In the two above-mentioned cities, Jews comprised about 5% of the population, and in Sarajevo about 10%, with a tendency to decrease. The participation of Jews was particularly evident in some activities in which they traditionally engaged: the participation of Jews in commerce was 10 times higher than

among the general population. This structure did not significantly change in the interwar period and was similar to the occupational structure of Jews in other European countries (Freidenreich, 1979, pp. 213–222; Romano, 1980, p. 7).

The basic division of the Jewish community was into Sephardim and Ashkenazim, from which a small community of Orthodox separated. The new national framework provided the ability to accept the new state and national idea, but also gave impetus to strengthening their own identity embodied in Jewish nationalism, Zionism, which was strongly on the rise at the time of the formation of the Yugoslav state. The Union of Jewish Religious Communities of Yugoslavia (Savez jevrejskih veroispovednih opština Jugoslavije – SJVO) was created at the congress in Osijek on July 1-2, 1919, playing a very important role in the protection of individual and collective rights of Jews in the Kingdom. Jews adapted to the new political circumstances relatively quickly and without major turmoil, at least as a whole. The legal status of the Jewish community in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was governed by a liberal constitution adopted in 1921 and in 1931. The Jewish religion was included among the four most important religions, next to the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Muslim faiths, and Jewish religious leaders were ranked accordingly.

The Yugoslav state guaranteed their individual and collective civil rights, and this was ultimately regulated by the December 14, 1929 Law on the religious community of Jews in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Community funding was regulated by the April 28, 1930 Decree on permanent annual state aid to the religious community of Jews in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The amount of state subsidies for members of the Jewish community was two to three times higher than for members of other religions, although it gradually diminished (Koljanin, 2008, pp. 74–84). The attitude of the Yugoslav state towards Jews can be seen in their high representation in the active and especially the reserve force of the Royal Yugoslav Army (Jevrejski istorijski muzej [Jewish Historical Museum], Beograd, Srbija, Minutes from the session of Main board of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities of Yugoslavia, reg. br. 5856, February 12, 1930).

The position of Yugoslav Jews was based on their position in the Kingdom of Serbia. The Serbian state had been close to the goals of Jewish nationalism (Zionism) because it had based its own renewal and aspirations on the principle of nationality, as opposed to the principle of legitimacy. Shortly after the publication of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, in his letter to Captain Dr. David Albala dated December 27 of the same year, Serbian Minister Plenipotentiary Milenko Vesnić confirmed that

Serbia accepted the content of this document. In this way the government of small, occupied Serbia was the first, after the British government, to support the restoration of the Jewish state in Palestine (Lebl Albala, 2008, pp. 84–89). The support of the state for Zionist goals continued after the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on December 1, 1918. Yugoslav Zionist organizations the Yugoslav monarchy welcomed the creation of Yugoslavia. The organizations had the support of not only the government, but also the court of the Karadjordjević dynasty. In the League of Nations and other international forums, Zionist attitudes had the support of the Yugoslav representatives. The relations between the Yugoslav government and the political bodies of the Jews in Palestine were already established in October 1920.

The liberal political foundation on which the Kingdom was based, and the favorable conditions for development, enabled the Jews to identify with it relatively easily. However, over a shorter or longer period, there were earlier national identifications as well. In Serbia the majority of Jews identified themselves as “Serbs of the Mosaic faith”. The Jewish communities of Croatia and Slavonia, dominated by assimilated Jews, favored Croatian national policies and ideas. The Jews living in the Vojvodina region, which was part of southern Hungary before 1918, accepted the Hungarian language, national and state idea, and culture. However, this changed during the 1930s, especially among young people (Popović, 1997, pp. 81–82; Mihailović, 1995, p. 15).

After the proclamation of the dictatorship of King Alexander in 1929, full Yugoslav national unity was declared, in which Jews could relatively easily find a place. Guaranteed collective rights allowed specificity to be preserved, and the prevalence of Zionism was increasingly considered a national specialty. Therefore, Yugoslav patriotism and Zionism were not mutually exclusive; in fact, they were largely complementary. The Yugoslav identity of Jews developed in such a way that after the Holocaust it fitted into the communist Yugoslavism. Along with the expanding influence of the Communist Party and its youth organization in the 1930s, the “red assimilation”, as it was called by the Zionists, i.e. commitment to the communist revolution, strengthened further, which was thought to resolve all national issues, including the Jewish one.

The process of social emancipation of the Jews in the Yugoslav state proceeded unevenly, being delayed compared to countries of Central and especially Western Europe. During the second half of the 19th century, Jews gained full civil rights in the Yugoslav parts of the Habsburg monarchy and in Serbia. Traditional forms of manifestation of antisemitism were mostly lost or transformed into modern (political) antisemitism.

Antisemitism: Tradition and New Circumstances

The spread and acceptance of antisemitism in Yugoslavia was affected by three main factors: 1) different traditions of the attitude towards the Jews in the political culture, 2) political relations in the country, 3) international circumstances. These factors were cumulative, although the international circumstances certainly had a crucial impact, especially the coming to power of the National Socialists in Germany. The manifestation of antisemitism in Yugoslavia can be divided into three main periods:

- 1918-1933 – from the establishment of the Yugoslav state to the intensification of antisemitic propaganda,
- 1934-1938 – from the intensification of antisemitic propaganda to the start of Jews' conditioned loyalty,
- 1939-1941 – from the start of Jews' conditioned loyalty to the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941.

After the victory of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the “Bolshevik threat” became a political fact of the first order. The opinion that Bolshevism had been created by Jews became extremely widespread, and this was reinforced by one of the major antisemitic stereotypes, namely that Jews were behind the Socialists and the Communists (Slezkine, 2004, p. 236).

Hostility towards Jews was manifested much more strongly in the Habsburg Monarchy than in the Kingdom of Serbia. Therefore, the new state in the former monarchy territories inherited latent and sometimes open antisemitism. Antisemitism was usually manifested in the form of public statements, the publication of brochures, articles in the press, and there were also partially or totally antisemitic newspapers. Sometimes there were even serious antisemitic incidents threatening the physical integrity and property of Jews (Koljanin, 2008, pp. 194–208).

Minor or grave antisemitic incidents occasionally occurred at the University of Zagreb during the entire interwar period. Antisemitism was manifested in Zagreb in the form of physical attacks on Jews by members of extreme right-wing nationalist organizations. At the same time, political antisemitism was part of the policy of Stjepan Radić, the Croat political leader of the largest liberal party, the Croatian Peasant Party (“Prijetnje g. Radića”, 1928, p. 1).

In the Vojvodina region, in the paper *Zastava*, the leading Serbian liberal party, i.e. the Radical Party, suspected Jews of being friendly with Hungarian national revisionists and communists, accusing them of manipulation and sometimes equating them with the greatest enemies of the people (Bjelica, 2004, p. 30).

Antisemitism in Yugoslav nationalist organizations (e.g. ORJUNA) was a reflection of the efforts to build a new national ideology, which was obstructed by earlier national identifications. Among Belgrade papers in the 1920s, the weekly *Politički glasnik* stood out for its antisemitic orientation. Antisemitic articles could sometimes be found in the Sarajevo papers *Narod*, the journal of the Democratic Party, and *Pravda*, the journal of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization.

Ethnic minorities, primarily Germans and Hungarians, manifested antisemitism as a result of latent antisemitism from the period of the dual monarchy and the impact of growing antisemitism in the home countries of these national minorities. Accusations of “ritual murder” against Jews (blood libel allegations) appeared in Macedonia in Bitola in 1921 and 1922, and among Roman Catholic Hungarians in Bačko Petrovo Selo in August 1928 (“Aveti u Bačkom Petrovom selu”, 1928, p. 2).

A translation of the most influential antisemitic pamphlet, known under the title *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, appeared in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes already in the mid-1920s. In 1925 the pamphlet was published in installments in Makarska, in the journal *Nova Revija* whose editor was a Franciscan professor, Petar Grabić. Soon after the first part of the *Protocols* was published in *Politički glasnik*, in 1926 parts of the pamphlet were published in Belgrade in the journal of the Orthodox Christian community, *Hrišćanska zajednica*. The first comprehensive Croatian and Yugoslav edition of the *Protocols* appeared in 1929, published by the Nova Revija Publishing House in Split and Šibenik. Further editions of this pamphlet were released in Belgrade in 1934 and 1939.

During the 1920s the statements of Roman Catholic clergy contained increasingly apparent resistance to the liberal Yugoslav state. In the clerical press, Jews were placed in the same category as Freemasons, Protestants, liberals, social democrats and communists, as a group blamed for all contemporary evils (Koljanin, 2008, pp. 220–223).

New Political Orientation and Official Antisemitism

The collapse of democracy in Germany and Hitler’s seizure of power on January 30, 1933 marked the beginning of the decomposition of the collective security system in Europe, but also challenged the fundamentals of the European liberal state that was identified with Jews. The intensified antisemitic propaganda that had its source in Germany was soon felt in Yugoslavia as well. The response of the authorities was often delayed, sometimes even lacking, and often depended on local conditions. The

spread of antisemitic propaganda in Yugoslavia in the late 1930s should be associated with the intention of state leaders to find a *modus vivendi* with the totalitarian revisionist forces, primarily Germany. Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović introduced such an opportunistic policy, which involved some changes affecting the Jews. At first these changes could be identified in the press. In 1936, Stojadinović himself confessed that there was an organized antisemitic propaganda action. He promised Jewish leader Dr David Albala that he would stop the campaign, but it was only for a while (Sekelj, 1981, p. 186). On the other hand, in his memoirs Stojadinović claimed that there were Jews among his friends (Stojadinović, 1970, pp. 111, 118, 185, 513). The promoters of the antisemitic press campaigns included the minister of internal affairs, Rev. Anton Korošec, the leader of the Slovene People's Party.

The manifestations of antisemitism in the Serbian environment, primarily in Belgrade, were almost exclusively of character by the end of the 1930s. The antisemitic campaign was spread by a small-circulation newspaper entitled *Balkan*, subsidized by the government. The collapse of Stojadinović's government in February 1939 halted the antisemitic campaigns and led to the *Balkan* paper being banned. In the environment of Serbia, a major role in the spread of antisemitism was played by the pro-fascist Yugoslav National Movement "Zbor", founded on January 6, 1935. The movement and its leader Dimitrije Ljotić never managed to spread their political influence, primarily because of their political program and their close relationship with Nazi Germany (Stefanović, 1984, pp. 47, 72).

The antisemitic propaganda in Croatia was often anti-Yugoslav and anti-Serb at the same time. Its main message was: Croats have lived as slaves of their worst enemies the Serbs and the Jews, who created Yugoslavia and together are destroying the Croatian life force and ethnic identity. This propaganda was spread by members of extreme right-wing nationalist and clerical organizations as well as illegal terrorist organizations, among which the most prominent was the Ustasha. It was established in 1932 in Italy by Ante Pavelić, who organized the murder of King Alexander and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseilles on October 9, 1934. According to its ideological character and practice, the Ustasha were closer to the Nazis, and antisemitism became one of the basic tenets of their ideology and political action. The most important pillar of the Ustasha organization was in clerical circles as well as educational and cultural institutions, first and foremost Matica Hrvatska (Jelić-Butić, 1978, pp. 41–45). Newspapers that were partially or totally oriented towards antisemitism already appeared in 1933. They included the Catholic newspaper *Hrvatska straža* (Goldstein & Goldstein, 2001, p. 49),

Hrvatska smotra as well as the influential Catholic Action organ *Nedjelja*. After Alojzije Stepinac came to replace the archbishop of Zagreb in 1935, antisemitism in the Catholic press became more prominent (Horvat, 1984, pp. 328–331; Koljanin, 2008, p. 286).

After the National Socialist regime was established in Germany in 1933, antisemitic propaganda among ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) in Yugoslavia strengthened significantly. Incidents of Germans' physical violence against Jews occurred more often from 1939. To a lesser extent, this also happened with the Hungarian national minority (Janjetović, 2005, p. 244).

Manifestations of antisemitism from representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church were relatively rarer and mainly confined to statements made by some members of the clergy or written in provincial church press. The influential bishop of Ohrid and later of Žiča, Nikolaj Velimirović, increasingly directed his criticism of extreme ideology at Jews by adopting antisemitic attitudes ([Bishop Nikolaj], 1940). After the war broke out, the highest representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Gavriilo and Bishop Nikolaj, expressed significant support for the Jewish community in their public statements and talks ("Besjede slugu Božjih", 1940, p. 7).

In the statements of Minister of Internal Affairs Rev. Anton Korošec in February 1938 and Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović in January 1939, the Jews' status was determined by their "good behavior" and assessment whether the government had been provided with "proof of their loyalty" ("Gospodin Stojadinović o jevrejskom pitanju", 1939; "Predsjednik vlade dr. M. Stojadinović o židovskom pitanju", 1939, p. 9). The fall of Stojadinović's government on February 5, 1939 and the first steps of the new government of Dragiša Cvetković towards the Jewish community seemed encouraging. The beginning and progress of World War II had an immediate impact on the deterioration of the position of Jews in Yugoslavia. At the end of the 1930s Yugoslavia found itself surrounded by countries (Greece being the exception) where antisemitism was institutionalized and became part of government policies. In the same period, during the 1930s, Yugoslavia became an important transit country for Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some 55,000 Jews from these countries passed through Yugoslavia and about 4,000 of them stayed in the country; almost all of the latter lost their lives during the occupation after April 1941 (Ristović, 1998, p. 29; Anderl & Manošek, 2004, pp. 277–279).

The creation of the Banovina of Croatia on August 26, 1939 abolished state centralism and the Yugoslav national idea. This did not satisfy the

aspirations of the more militarily extreme Croatian nationalism led by the Ustasha and clericalists. Archbishop Stepinac clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation in the country, arguing that it threatened the very existence of the Croatian Catholic people, clearly identifying Serbs and Jews as the main culprits (Koljanin, 2008, pp. 374–381, 494–495, 499).

The movement “Zbor” was increasingly militarized and preparing to clash with its political opponents, primarily communists but also pro-Western and liberal-democratic political forces. At the end of the 1930s the impact of antisemitism could be felt in some state institutions, primarily in employment and in the army. After the fall of France in June 1940, Yugoslavia found itself in even greater isolation, so a policy of neutrality was harder to sustain. Increasing pressure from Germany for Yugoslavia to join its side directly affected the position of Jews in Yugoslavia. The article “Freemasons” in the *Vreme* newspaper on July 22, 1940 marked the beginning of a campaign against Freemasons which gained a more antisemitic tone. At the suggestion of the Croatian members of government and Minister of Education Rev. Anton Korošec, in early October 1940 the government adopted two anti-Jewish decrees (“Uredba o merama koje se odnose na Jevreje u pogledu obavljanja radnja sa predmetima ljudske ishrane”, 1940; “Uredba o upisu lica jevrejskog porekla za učenike univerziteta, visokih škola u rangu univerziteta, viših, srednjih, učiteljskih i drugih srednjih škola”, 1940; “Uredbe i o uredbama protiv Jevreja”, 1940). These decrees became known as the Korošec laws. The first decree prohibited Jews from conducting wholesale trade in food, and the other was *numerus clausus* for Jewish enrollment in universities and high schools (Dolenc, 2005, pp. 205–208). At the end of October, new measures against Jews were passed that were valid only in the Banovina of Croatia (“Naredba sa zakonskom snagom o osnivanju Povlašćenog hrvatskog industrijsko-trgovačkog društva u Zagrebu Pohid”, 1940; “Naredba sa zakonskom snagom o otuđivanju i poslovanju privrednih preduzeća”, 1940).

Yugoslavia joining the Tripartite Pact on March 25, 1941, a military coup d'état and establishment of General Dušan Simović's government two days later, were a prelude to the attack on Yugoslavia. At the same time, German propaganda blamed “plutocratic” Great Britain, i.e. “World Jewry,” for the coup, fanning the flames of war in order to achieve global domination (Koljanin, 2003, pp. 85–86). Alongside the activation of internal enemies and revisionist neighbors, German preparations for the war included setting up bodies that would deal with the “Jewish question.” The destruction of the Yugoslav state in April 1941 marked the beginning of the Holocaust in different occupied territories and in the newly created puppet Independent State of Croatia.

Conclusions

After the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia was established, the Jews adapted to the new political circumstances relatively quickly. A liberal political foundation enabled the Jews to identify relatively easily with the new state. However, over a shorter or longer period, there were earlier national identifications as well (Serbian, Croatian, Hungarian). Antisemitic manifestations in the kingdom were affected by different traditions of the attitude towards the Jews, political relations in the country and international circumstances. However, this last factor had a crucial impact. Hitler's seizure of power on January 30, 1933 challenged the fundamentals of the European liberal state that was identified with Jews in the new political paradigm led by German National Socialism. The intensified antisemitic propaganda that had its source in Germany was soon felt in Yugoslavia as well. The spread of antisemitic propaganda in Yugoslavia in the late 1930s should be associated with the state leaders' intention to find a *modus vivendi* with totalitarian revisionist forces, primarily Germany. Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović introduced such an opportunistic policy, which involved some changes affecting the Jews. The beginning and progress of World War II had an immediate impact on the deterioration of the position of Jews in Yugoslavia. At the suggestion of the Croatian members of government and Minister of Education Rev. Anton Korošec, in early October 1940 the government adopted two anti-Jewish decrees, known as the Korošec laws. The first decree prohibited Jews from conducting wholesale trade in food, and the other was *numerus clausus* for Jewish enrollment in universities and high schools. A military coup d'état on March 27, 1941 and the establishment of General Dušan Simović's government two days later were a prelude to the attack on Yugoslavia and the beginning of the Holocaust after the German invasion on April 6, 1941.

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Jevrejska zajednica i antisemitizam u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca/Jugoslaviji 1918-1941

Jevreji u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji su sačinjavali oko pola procenta ukupnog stanovništva. Novi nacionalni okvir im je obezbedio mogućnost da prihvate novu državnu i nacionalnu ideju, ali je to istovremeno dalo podsticaj za jačanje njihovog sopstvenog identiteta otelotvorenog u jevrejskom nacionalizmu, cionizmu. Jevreji su se relativno brzo i bez većih potresa, gledano u celini, prilagodili novim političkim okolnostima. Liberalna politička osnova omogućila je relativno lako identifikovanje Jevreja sa novom državom. Ipak, tokom kraćeg ili dužeg perioda postojale su ranije nacionalne identifikacije. Na širenje i prihvatanje antisemitizma u Jugoslaviji uticali su politička kultura, politički odnosi u državi i međunarodne okolnosti. Ovi činioци su delovali kumulativno, ali međunarodne okolnosti su sigurno imale ključan značaj. To se prvenstveno odnosilo na dolazak na vlast nacionalsocijalista u Nemačkoj. Manifestovanje antisemitizma u Jugoslaviji može da se podeli u tri perioda: 1918-1933, od osnivanja jugoslovenske države do jačanja antisemitske propagande, 1933-1938, od jačanja antisemitske propagande do početka uslovljavanja lojalnosti Jevreja, i 1939-1941, od početka uslovljavanja lojalnosti Jevreja do napada sila Osovine na Jugoslaviju u aprilu 1941. Neprijateljstvo prema Jevrejima mnogo jače se ispoljavalo u Habzburškoj monarhiji nego u Kraljevini Srbiji. Stoga je nova država na

teritorijama bivše monarhije nasledila ispoljavanje latentnog, ponekad i otvorenog antisemitizma. Širenje antisemitske propagande u Jugoslaviji i legislative treba povezati sa pokušajem državnog vođstva da uspostavi *modus vivendi* sa totalitarnim revizionističkim susedima, pre svega sa nacionalsocijalističkom Nemačkom. Kao rezultat, početkom oktobra 1940. vlada je donela dve antijevrejske uredbe. Uništenje jugoslovenske države aprila 1941, istovremeno je označilo i početak Holokausta u njoj.

Ključne reči: Jugoslavija, Jevreji, identitet, lojalnost, antisemitizam, tradicija, nacionalsocijalizam, Drugi svetski rat.

Społeczność żydowska i antysemityzm w Królestwie Serbów, Chorwatów i Słoweńców/Jugosławii 1918-1941

Żydzi w Królestwie Jugosławii stanowili około pół procenta całej populacji. Nowe ramy narodowe dały im możliwość zaakceptowania nowego państwa i idei narodowej, ale jednocześnie wytworzyły impuls do umocnienia własnej tożsamości ucieleśnionej w żydowskim nacjonalizmie, syjonizmie. Żydzi, jeśli się spojrzy całościowo, stosunkowo szybko i bez większych wstrząsów przystosowali się do nowych okoliczności politycznych. Liberalne podstawy polityczne sprawiły, że utożsamienie Żydów z nowym państwem było stosunkowo łatwe. Jednak przez krótszy lub dłuższy okres istniały wcześniejsze identyfikacje narodowe. Na rozprzestrzenianie się i akceptację antysemityzmu w Jugosławii miały wpływ kultura polityczna, stosunki polityczne w kraju oraz uwarunkowania międzynarodowe. Czynniki te działały łącznie, ale z pewnością kluczowe były okoliczności międzynarodowe. Chodzi tu przede wszystkim o dojście do władzy narodowych socjalistów w Niemczech. Manifestację antysemityzmu w Jugosławii można podzielić na trzy okresy: 1918-1933, od powstania państwa jugosłowiańskiego do wzmocnienia propagandy antysemickiej; 1933-1938, od wzmocnienia propagandy antysemickiej do początków warunkowania lojalności Żydów; oraz 1939-1941, od momentu warunkowania lojalności Żydów do ataku państw Osi na Jugosławię w kwietniu 1941 r. Wrogość wobec Żydów była znacznie silniejsza w Monarchii Habsburskiej niż w Królestwie Serbii. Dlatego nowe państwo odziedziczyło przejawy ukrytego, a niekiedy otwartego antysemityzmu na terenach dawnej monarchii. Rozprzestrzenianie się propagandy antysemickiej w Jugosławii i ustawodawstwo należy wiązać z próbą ustanowienia przez kierownictwo

państwa *modus vivendi* z totalitarnymi rewizjonistycznymi sąsiadami, przede wszystkim z narodowosocjalistycznymi Niemcami. W rezultacie na początku października 1940 r. rząd przyjął dwa antyżydowskie dekrety. Zniszczenie państwa jugosłowiańskiego w kwietniu 1941 r. oznaczało jednocześnie początek Holokaustu na tych terenach.

Słowa kluczowe: Jugosławia, Żydzi, tożsamość, lojalność, antysemityzm, tradycja, narodowy socjalizm, druga wojna światowa.

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