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Sajmište, Jasenovac, and the Social Frames of Remembering and Forgetting

Abstract: *The article discusses the reasons for the construction, in the 1960s, of a memorial to the victims of the former camp in Jasenovac in Yugoslavia, although no such memorial was built at the Sajmište site. How should we explain and understand this difference and what do these two sites stand for in Yugoslav discourses about the past? I will argue that the memorial project for Jasenovac was, due to certain developments, seen as a substitute for similar plans at nearly all the former camp locations in Yugoslavia. Because of this substitution, after the mid 1960s none of the other concentration camp sites in the country benefited from federal financing and thus all of them were excluded from having a real chance at being made into a proper memorial site.*

Key words: *World War Two, Jasenovac, Sajmište, concentration camps, memory, Yugoslavia, survivor organisations, SUBNOR, war veterans.*

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What was the place of memorializing the victims of the Second World War in socialist Yugoslavia?¹ This question has been investigated thoroughly over the past several years.² The answer becomes more complicated, however, if we turn to the more specific question of why the victims of Jasenovac, but not the victims of Sajmište, got a memorial in socialist Yugoslavia. In order to provide such an answer, we first need some historical context. What role did the official and public remembrance of the victims of concentration camps play in the Europe of the 1950s and 1960s and how do Yugoslav history politics fit into overall patterns? Where can we recognize general European developments and where do we find specifically Yugoslav characteristics of public memory politics during the early and later postwar periods? And, amid these trends and considering the mandates of the socialist leadership of the country, what did the specific remembrance practices at the local level and at the level of survivor initiatives look like? Were there even any such things in Yugoslavia and, if there were, what do we know about the historical actors involved in remembrance?

1 The article is a version of the paper prepared for the international conference *If not now, when...? The Future of the site of the Old Fairgrounds (Sajmiste) in Belgrade*, held in Belgrade, 10–12 May 2012. Its organizers were The Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia, Foundation for an Open Society in Serbia, Stiftung Erinnerung-Verantwortung-Zukunft from Berlin and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Serbia.

2 See for instance just recently Sindbæk 2012 and also Sundhaussen 2004. For a more detailed discussion of the following contribution's main arguments see: Karge 2010.

I am primarily interested in the reasons why, in the Yugoslavia of the 1960s, a memorial was erected for the Jasenovac camp victims, but not at Sajmište. How are we to explain and understand this difference and what do these two sites stand for in Yugoslav historical discourse?

My thesis will be that because of certain developments in Yugoslavia, the memorial project for Jasenovac was seen by officials as a kind of substitute for similar plans in nearly all the other former camp sites in the country. Because of this substitution, after the mid 1950s none of the other concentration camp sites in the country benefited from federal financing and thus all of them were excluded from having a real chance at being made into a proper memorial site.

As Tony Judt so presciently put it, each country's "national amnesia" about the experience of war had been the foundation of divided Europe after 1945. In both east and west, the continent took refuge in the construction and public communication of foundation myths centered on resistance, deportation, collective victimhood and, in the east and southeast of Europe especially, heroism (Judt 2005: 829). Questions about touchy subjects like collaboration with occupation powers, domestic fascist movements or passivity in the face of the deportation and genocide of the Jews and other fellow citizens were either ignored completely or flattened into a narrative about "a few individual traitors" against "masses of resistance fighters." (Confino 2005: 53). Experiences which did not fit into the dominant narratives of national remembrance about resistance and heroism and about "conscious sacrifice" in battle or in the camps were pushed to the fringes of public memory. 107

The intention here is not to level out the differences in remembrance culture and history politics between the different countries or across different political blocs. The division of Europe after the war was a constitutive element, to use a term coined by Maurice Halbwachs, one of the fundamental "social parameters" of collective memory formation in the postwar period (Halbwachs 1950). In western Europe, processing the history of the Second World War was naturally ongoing, but that does not imply any continuous public perception or academic reappraisal of all aspects of the wartime period. The 1950s were marked by widespread silence on or ignoring of the experiences of Jewish concentration camp survivors. Due to a range of differing motivations, from an "inability to mourn" to completely ignoring the victim perspective because of the victims' lack of proper political standpoint, the concentration camp victims were of only secondary importance. In the 1960s this silent consensus began to break down, in part because of the worldwide attention given to the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials and the American television series "Holocaust," shown in more than 30 countries (Fischer and Lorenz 2009: 244). These developments mark a hesitant but real process of diversification in public remembrance of the war, a diversification which increasingly focused on the victims.

In the socialist societies of eastern and southeastern Europe there was little diversification before 1989 (and even after in some cases). While the remembrance of the Second World War did not have the same central significance as a founding myth in all socialist societies as it did in Yugoslavia, it was nonetheless a politically instrumentalized sphere of memory loaded with taboos in every country. The consistent focus on the heroes of the war—the Soviet Red Army soldier, the Yugoslav partisan, and even the German communist resistance fighter—shaped national, official socialist cultures of memory from Moscow and East Berlin to Belgrade. The victims, particularly the victims of the concentration camps, were secondary. While they were not completely forgotten, they were given much less attention as political symbols than the combatant and politically active war heroes. State-sponsored war memorials were usually dedicated to the heroes, not the victims. And if the victims were remembered, then they were retroactively reinterpreted as politically active victims who were resisting the enemy, men and women who had sacrificed themselves “for the cause.” An almost instrumental approach dominated. A politically indifferent victim, one who “simply” died as a result of national socialist and fascist policy, a Jew or a Romani for example, was not very high on the scale of socialist remembrance politics. These victims were remembered, if at all, in locally financed memorials and had little hope of state-level recognition.

The hero was also at the center of Yugoslav history politics—the partisan hero. At his side stood the victims, more specifically the “victims of fascist terror” as they were called in Yugoslavia. This image of standing “at the side” does not exactly reflect what was going on, however, since the partisan, the hero, was always portrayed front and center. Thus Yugoslavia was well within developments typical of Europe as a whole, at least in the 1950s. The fact that by 1960, 15 years after the war, neither the former concentration camps at Jasenovac, Sajmište, Jadovno and Niš nor the former camp on the Adriatic island of Molat had been made into memorial sites was not so much a Yugoslav or even a socialist phenomenon. This reflects wider European trends in public and official memory politics after the Second World War.

The proximity of time to the memorialized (or ignored) events should not be underestimated as a factor. Ten years after the end of the war memories were still fresh everywhere in Europe. The material losses were still palpable everywhere and the trauma in human memory had hardly had time to heal.³ Another factor was that the remembrance of concentration camp victims was a completely new form of victimhood remembrance, not only in Yugoslavia. This might have led to

3 According to Bogdanović, writing in his memoirs about the Jasenovac memorial project, even 15 years after the war “death was still somewhere behind our backs. We fled from its shadow and tried to drive it out of our nightmares.” See Bogdanović 2000: 163.

uncertainty on the part of official decision makers both in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. How should the victims of targeted, mass, technology-driven extermination of “worthless life”—to use the national socialist and fascist terminology—be remembered? How should people be remembered, if they couldn’t be subsumed under the idea of patriotic sacrifice for the fatherland?

An answer was found in many countries at first by not emphasizing the “pointlessness” (Koselleck 2001/2002) or randomness of the dying, but rather by reinterpreting the concentration camp deaths as a patriotic act after all. This retroactive imputation of meaning was the key by which the early international and national memorial complexes like Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Neuengamme or Buchenwald would be created. This was not only because of official state considerations, but it was the guiding theme of internationally operating victim organizations such as the international concentration camp committees which played a large role in the creation of these sites since the 1950s. It was no coincidence that the focus at these sites was on the political prisoners and not on the fate of the Jewish victims. We still know relatively little about this international aspect of Yugoslav memory politics and memory culture. Nonetheless it is worthwhile to dig a bit deeper here. It might help explain which components of remembering and forgetting, of public honoring and public silence with regard to aspects of the wartime past were and are specifically Yugoslav.⁴ Thus I would like to attempt a first outline of this differentiation, concentrating on the conceptualizing of former concentration camp sites by Yugoslav political entities directed toward foreign audiences and those for domestic purposes.

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Like many other European countries in both the east and the west, starting in the 1950s Yugoslavia took part in activities aimed at the construction and expansion of memorial sites at the sites of former concentration camps abroad. As early as 1955, Yugoslavia was working on drafts for a memorial to the Yugoslav victims at the Mauthausen concentration camp. Beginning in 1956, Yugoslavia took part in international competitions to design a victims’ memorial at Auschwitz, a project that was never completed.⁵ Yugoslavia was also involved in the memorial-building activities at the former concentration camp sites at Dachau and Sachsenhausen during and after the late 1950s.⁶ While remaining firmly a non-member of the concentration camp committees being formed at the time, it remained in

4 This, however, is the focus of a newly begun PhD project by historian Julia Kling at the University of Regensburg. Her topic is “The European Dimension of Yugoslav Memory. Transnational Discourses and their Influence on National Commemorative Activities of Second World War Yugoslav Veterans’ and Victims’ Associations”.

5 *Report of the Secretariat CC (Central Committee) SBNOR*, 1956, ASCG, f. 297, k. 15, b.b.

6 *Draft working report FC (Federal Committee) SUBNOR*, 28.4.1965, ASCG, f. 297, k. 1, 0103–1840/2.

close contact with the committees through the Commission of Former Political Deportees and Prisoners which had been founded in 1951. This cooperation grew in the mid 1950s, after the death of Stalin. Since the focus of these international committees was, as described above, not on an equal treatment of all the victims, but on political victims, Yugoslavia followed this trend. For Yugoslav decision makers the emphasis was on the participation of the country in the European anti-fascist resistance struggle and thus on securing the country's place in the concert of European resistance movements. That was the Yugoslav motive for participating in the memorial projects in places like Auschwitz and Mauthausen and that was more generally the tone of the early memorial complexes. At the European level, the Holocaust, the deportation and extermination of the European Jews and non-political victims played only a minor role, if any at all.

110 In Yugoslavia itself two memorial projects at the sites of former concentration camps were discussed by the central authorities in Belgrade and financed by the state in the 1950s. One was the memorial cemetery near Kampo on the Croatian island of Rab. In this case, however, it has as little to do with remembering the victims as it did in the case of Yugoslav participation in the projects at Auschwitz or Mauthausen. Rather, it was a prestige project at a location where predominantly Jewish, Croatian and Slovenian inmates had been kept in an Italian concentration camp during the Second World War. The Yugoslav state had invested a large sum in the creation of the memorial cemetery in what was a unique project for its time.⁷

But why there and not at some other location? In the case of Kampo, it hadn't been one's "own" site, but an Italian camp. Furthermore, after the Italian surrender and the dissolution of the camp, volunteer combat units were recruited from among the able-bodied inmates, units which then joined partisans.⁸ Thus, a narrative of self-liberation and active partisan resistance and combat could be developed. The history of the Rab camp was not just easily digestible within the context of official Yugoslav memory discourse, it was a perfect fit: the narrative developed at the memorial cemetery spoke of heroism and not of victimhood.⁹

7 "For example 60–70 million have been invested in Rab. There was a concentration camp there, and [now] there is a wonderful gravesite unlike any other in Yugoslavia. That is an architecturally unique artistic memorial. We can't go that route in each and every case." *Velimir Stojnić, Organization secretariat CC SBNOR*, 19 October 1954, HR-HDA, f. 1241/3, k. 356, b.b.

8 On the Jewish Battalion see Goldstein 2001: 520–521.

9 Byford argued similarly with regard to the former camp at Niš, where in the 1950s a small memorial pyramid was dedicated "to the heroism of the imprisoned partisans and communists and not to the suffering of the prisoners". See Byford 2011: 96. This pyramid was, unlike Rab, paid for by the Republic of Serbia. The 4th Plenum of the main committee of the Serbian SBNOR claims that they only reckoned with an official opening for visitors in 1961. Before that time the grounds were being used by the Yugoslav army. *On cultural sites related to the*

This instrumental approach can explain a lot, but not everything. Why was a memorial complex built in Kampo, but not on Molat, where there was another “foreign,” again Italian, camp?¹⁰ And in this case even more importantly, an instrumental approach can hardly explain why it came to the construction of a second monumental memorial project at the location of a former camp, the one at Jasenovac. This had been the largest camp in Yugoslavia, but there was no heroic story to be told and this wasn’t a camp set up by the Germans or Italians. It was a camp with a particularly difficult history, a history that flew directly in the face of the official Yugoslav narrative of brotherhood and unity—a Croatian-led camp in which Jews, Romani and others, but primarily Serbs, had died or been purposefully murdered. This memorial was built nonetheless—something that can not be explained by purely instrumental considerations such as international prestige or further weaving the narrative of heroic partisans.

By the early 1950s, the first memorial plans for Jasenovac were being discussed in the Belgrad center of SBNOR¹¹ and in the Croatian veterans’ organization. In 1955 there were monies available to the central committee of the SBNOR for a design competition for a Jasenovac memorial. This plan failed, apparently, because in 1960 there was a second call for designs, this time by invitation only, won by the Belgrade architect Bogdan Bogdanović with his “Stone Flower” design. Except for the memorial construction begun in the early 1960s on the Jasenovac grounds, the Yugoslav state paid for all costs, including the design competition and Bogdanović’s revision work. How do we explain this strong and, compared to other projects around Europe, relatively early political engagement for Jasenovac? What might at first appear to be a relatively early success in Yugoslav victim memorialization can in fact be interpreted as such. But it is decidedly *not* the result of official political will to memorialize the victims. Instead, the political leadership had caught itself in its own net of exaggerated official casualty figures and the resulting need to act under the pressure of former deportees and prisoners.

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We still know little about these camp survivor organizations and initiatives in Yugoslavia.¹² They had been active since 1951 as the Section of Former Political

Struggle for People’s Liberation, 4th Plenum, Main Committee (MC), SBNOR Serbia, 12 March 1960, HR-HDA, f. 1241/2, k. 287, b.b.

10 Until the mid 1970s there was only a simple plaque at this location. See Konjhodžić 1960: 78.

11 Savez Boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata (Jugoslavije) (League of Veterans of the War of People’s Liberation). After 1961 the name was changed to Savez Udruženja Boraca Narodnooslobodilačkog rata (SUBNOR) (League of Organizations of Veterans of the War of People’s Liberation).

12 Jovan Byford has contributed important material, especially on the Serbian Republic, but doesn’t take into account the Central Section of Former Political Deportees and Internees which operated mainly abroad from 1951. See Byford 2011: 93f.

Deportees and Prisoners, part of the central organization of the SBNOR. By the end of the 1950s, however, the section had a staff of only five members which meant that its domestic work was almost entirely invisible. That only changed when toward the end of the 1950s sections were founded in the Yugoslav republics as well. At the same time organizations of survivors of various camps were also organizing. In Belgrade at that time an initiative by the name of Action Committee of Jasenovac Prisoners (*Akcioni odbor logoraša Jasenovca*) came into being primarily with the goal “of constructing a memorial to those who fell in Jasenovac.”¹³ This organization was the first to organize survivor visits to the camp grounds

[...] in order to remember the victims who died for freedom at this, our largest and most terrible place of execution, where every step is bathed in blood.

112 This and similar initiatives probably increased the pressure and helped bring about a final decision on Jasenovac. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, these initiatives managed to sensitize a large number of people to the obvious neglect of memorialization at Jasenovac. While only about 700 people visited the increasingly rundown grounds of the camp in 1956, there were more than 10,000 in 1963, that is, before the opening of the memorial.¹⁴ Not only the camp visitors were made aware of the problem, but the political leadership as well. The memorial event organized by survivors and relatives of the victims on July 4th, 1963, was referred to as an “official demonstration” in a later protocol.¹⁵

The historian Jovan Byford, who has worked intensively on the history of memorialization at the Sajmište site, notes that the survivors of that camp had formed their own group in 1960 as well.¹⁶ If there was in fact an increased public sensibility about Jasenovac and other former camps around the turn of the decade from the 1950s to the 1960s, how do we explain the absence of memorials at these other sites? Did anyone notice and, if so, was this communicated?

A decade after the end of the Second World War the neglect of former concentration camp sites was a side issue, but one that did get some public attention. We can see this in the reports of various SBNOR sub-organizations and the offices responsible for monument preservation. This report by the Croatian SBNOR to the 3rd SBNOR Plenum in February of 1954 can serve as an example:

13 Č. Huber, *On the organization of former camp internees*. Archive JU.SPJ, 1985, b.b., and henceforth *ibid*.

14 *Session on the construction of a memorial in Jasenovac*, 10 April 1964, HR-HDA, f. 1241/2, k. 294, b.b.

15 *Ibid*.

16 See Byford 2011: 96.

We consider the biggest and most urgent problem to be the preparation of graves, where mass executions took place, that is, in the former concentration camps, but those are sites and graves which require larger financial investment, our local district organizations can not complete them with voluntary donations or similar means.¹⁷

Only one year later, during the 3rd Yugoslav SBNOR congress in 1955, the former camps and the absence of any recognition of their victims were again an issue. The congress discussed the necessity of preparing the former camp sites, especially in Croatia, and even referred to it as one of the most pressing issues.¹⁸

Neither at the time nor for the next decade was there any noticeable reaction to this, something easily shown with the case of the former Ustaša concentration camp Jadovno near Gospić. Congress documents show that as early as 1955 the main committee of the Croatian SBNOR was working on a draft solution for Jadovno. But S(U)BNOR did absolutely nothing until 1974. The camp remained desolate except for a plaque, put up by the organization “The Progressive Woman” from Grubišno Polje in 1957.¹⁹

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When finally, at the end of the 1950s, former prisoners and deportees founded republic-level sections within SBNOR, the discussion about these gaps in public memory really picked up. A striking example of this was the first federal congress of former political prisoners, deportees and internees in May of 1960. Jasenovac was perceived as the primary memory gap:

17 *Report of the 3rd Plenum CC SBNORJ*, 19 February 1954, HR-HDA, f. 1241/3, k. 356, b.b. See also a 1962 report by the Croatian office for monument protection: “When dealing with the preservation and financing of memorials which serve to document enemy crimes—concentration camps, crime scenes, trenches, secret torture chambers and the like—then we are often very indecisive and unsure.” *No title, 1962, HR-MK, Uprava za zaštitu kulturne baštine, Dokumentacija NOB-spomenike*, b.b.

18 *Commission for the marking and construction of historical sites, 3rd Congress SBNORJ*, 27.4.1955, HR-HDA, f. 1241/3, k. 356, b.b.

19 See Konjhodžić 1960: 170. See also the proposal from the Croatian draft law from 1974: “So far absolutely no work has been done on the territory of the Jadovno camp, nor in the camp complex ‘Danica’ in Koprivnica, the torture site ‘Sing-Sing’, the childrens’ camp in Jas-trebarsko, nor the camp on the island of Molat, so that in this [coming] period primarily the development of expert projects and small-scale works is planned.” *Draft proposal for the passage of a law to establish the significance of memorials to the workers’ movement, the War of People’s Liberation and the Revolution and on the participation of the Socialist Republic of Croatia in the financing of their defence, their construction and their maintenance. Republic Secretariat for Education, Cultur and Sports of the Socialist Republic of Croatia*, 19 March 1974, HR-MK, Uprava za zaštitu kulturne baštine, „Dokumentacija NOB-spomenike”, b.b.

[...] we find it hard to talk about Jasenovac. [...] We know that the main committee has received some funds for Jasenovac, but we also know that those who have to make a decision here don't agree. [...] Why not build an ossuary here, why don't we start retrieving the bones of our comrades, bones which have so often been washed up by the river? [...] I for one, comrades, am ashamed that Jasenovac and Gradiška still haven't been put in order.²⁰

The meeting went on to express incomprehension and criticism in light of the state's toleration of neglect at other, comparable sites such as Sajmište, Jajinci and Banjica. Not a single one of those sites had, at that time, been prepared for visitors. Josip Šener, a survivor of Sajmište, was comparatively mild in his criticism:

I think that Sajmište should be put in order in some way. Our future committee should think about that a little.²¹

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The conference delegate Stojanka Radošević was harsher in drawing attention to the disinterest which society had so far shown for the issue and the resulting neglect of former camp and execution sites—well beyond the cases of Sajmište, Banjica and Jajinci:

A question, comrades, that we have to think about most seriously, has to do with restoring the historical sites of the life and death of those who were in camps and prisons. [...] I can tell you that our academics learned only last year what Banjica had been during the war and they have begun to put up signs [at the site] and have even succeeded in hosting [public] lectures [by survivors] about the issue. Isn't that sad? [...] The 15th of May is approaching and we are going to go to Jajinci. I can tell you that last year the entrance to Jajinci was so poorly set up that it was a disgrace. An army unit was doing some work there and that was it. What was being done there was neither pleasing nor appropriate for the representation and remembrance of our dead comrades who lost their lives there. Maybe our comrades who are directly responsible for leadership on this issue should invest more effort and look for ways to renovate Jajinci properly. I am not only saying that because Jajinci and Banjica have neither been renovated nor marked with appropriate memorials, but also because I believe that to be the case for most of these sites.²²

20 Osman Žubović, *Federal conference of former political prisoners, internees and deportees*, 8 May 1960, ASCG, f. 297, k. 19, b.b.

21 Josip Šener, *Ibid.*

22 Stojanka Radošević, *Ibid.* The marginalization of the Jewish victims of Jajinci in the 1950s mentioned by Byford, or rather their inclusion as "patriots," was also an element in a draft in the Bogdanović exhibition catalogue. This idea from the period 1955–1957, never realized, was referred to in the file as a "Memorial for executed patriots, Jajinci near Belgrade." See AZW 2009: 160.

It is important to understand that from the late 1950s on there most certainly were different public venues available for discussion about the need to build memorial sites at the former camps. These were not outside of state-sponsored structures, but within the framework of societal groups such as the SBNOR or the new survivor organizations. They were visible in Yugoslavia at the time. If these voices were heard in Yugoslavia, regarding Jasenovac and other sites, then how do we explain the failure of the state to invest federal moneys in any site except Jasenovac?

This can only be explained, to my mind, by an early political decision, a decision which had primarily financial implications and thus prevented any plans for the renovation of these often very large camps, for the recovery and appropriate burial of hundreds and thousands of human remains and the design and construction of large memorials. The vast majority of the memorials built in the 1950s and 1960s for the “War of People’s Liberation” (*Narodnooslobodilački rat, NOR*), its heroes and victims were planned, financed and built at the local level, by towns and districts. The republic level was involved in the planning of larger projects. Only rarely was a memorial project planned and financed at the federal level. There was one major exception, reflected in the founding in 1952 of the “Committee for the Marking and Renovation of Historical Sites of the War of People’s Liberation,” (*Odbor za obeležavanje i uređivanje istoriskih mesta iz NOR*) led by Aleksandar Ranković. This committee, which operated alongside the SBNOR, was financed directly by the federal executive council and dissolved in 1963. For about ten years it planned and carried out the building of pan-Yugoslav sites of memory at so-called “central historical sites” connected to the People’s Revolution. These included, among others, Titovo Užice, Drvar Bihać and Jajce. In 1954 Sutjeska was included and starting in 1955 the committee got involved in the concentration camp memorial projects outside Yugoslavia mentioned earlier. This committee was thus responsible for the creation of memorial sites which, as I argued above, memorialized the heroes of the War of People’s Liberation. Victim memorialization was not envisioned. But here another exception was made—Jasenovac. Even though there had been local initiatives by the town of Novska and initiatives by Zagreb’s republican SBNOR branch to renovate Jasenovac, these were prevented by Belgrade in what was an unparalleled intervention from the center. As early as August of 1952 there was an instruction from Belgrade to Novska, communicated via the republic capital at Zagreb, to take no further steps, because Jasenovac would be seen as “an issue for all the republics.”²³

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So this is where the political decision was made—the decision that meant that Jasenovac among all the victim-oriented memorials planned and built to date would be the only such site brought under the remit of the committee. Over the

23 MC SBNORH to the initiative committee to build a memorial to the victims of fascism at Jasenovac, 23 August 1952, HR-HDA, f.1241/2, k. 47, b. 75.

next 10 years, only Jasenovac would manage to maintain its admittedly controversial place in this committee's discussions. In January of 1959, about a year before the design competition for the Jasenovac memorial, there was a heated and quite illustrative discussion about the memorial plans for Jasenovac at a joint session of the committee and SBNOR.²⁴ The committee member Rodoljub Čolaković drew attention to the fine line between heroes and victims:

Memorials are expensive and we should only turn to solutions which speak of something sublime, something great in another sense—for example a memorial of the Revolution. Jasenovac [on the other hand, H.K.] should be made attractive and modest. Our country doesn't have a lot of money and it would not be a good idea to waste money on expensive memorials.

116 It would become evident a year later that a modest memorial for Jasenovac would not be possible. Also evident, however, was the implicit rejection of federal funding and hence of any and all expensive memorial plans for the victims of other former concentration camps, execution sites, prisons and karst gorges in Yugoslavia. Ranković would go on, in the same meeting, to justify the federal neglect with both financial and substantial arguments. He was of the opinion that a memorial for Jasenovac would not necessarily have to actually be in Jasenovac:

If we build a memorial, why should we do so in Jasenovac? It would be a memorial not only for the victims of Jasenovac, but more generally for the victims in Yugoslavia.

None of the various considerations which were discussed in the committee in the 1950s ever ended up affecting Jasenovac. The memorial ended up anything but modest, architecturally and financially gigantic. But as far as the neglect and the financial and discursive marginalization of the other former concentration camp sites are concerned, things worked out just as the committee members and political decision makers had intended. Except for Jasenovac, all the sites were excluded from costly federal financing. We can not definitively determine whether the political decision makers intended the Jasenovac memorial to memorialize all victims in Yugoslavia and hence function as an adequate substitute. But it is quite clear that the political decision to include only Jasenovac, of all the comparable sites, in the plans of a single committee with access to federal funds, led to considerable financial and organizational shortages for the other sites.

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²⁴ Henceforth: *Joint Session of the Executive Committee CC SUBNORJ and Committee*, 13 January 1959, ASCG, f. 297, k.17, b.b.

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Hajke Karge

Sajmište, Jasenovac i društveni okviri sećanja i zaborava

Apstrakt

Tekst razmatra razloge za izgradnju spomen-područja posvećenog žrtvama logora Jasenovac u Jugoslaviji tokom šezdesetih godina XX veka, iako takav spomenik nije podignut na mestu logora na Sajmištu. Kako da objasnimo i razumemo tu razliku i koje je mesto ta dva logora u jugoslovenskim diskursima o prošlosti? Tvrdim da je, zahvaljujući određenim kretanjima, projekat za Jasenovac bio sagledavan kao zamena za slične planove za bezmalo sva mesta gde su se nalazili logori u Jugoslaviji. Zbog te zamene, nakon sredine šezdesetih godina XX veka nijedno područje gde su se nalazili koncentracioni logori u zemlji nije dobilo saveznu finansijsku potporu, pa je svima njima uskraćena mogućnost da budu pretvorena u odgovarajuće mesto sećanja.

Ključne reči Drugi svetski rat, Jasenovac, Sajmište, koncentracioni logori, sećanje, Jugoslavija, organizacije preživelih, SUBNOR, ratni veterani.