

SERBIAN – ISRAELI RELATIONS

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Abstract: The centuries old friendship of the two nations has been marked by the common history of the Balkan peoples in which the Serbian Jews played a significant role. Not only in the history of the Balkan, but also in the foundations of the modern state of Israel. Contemporary Serbian-Israeli relations are the result of the endeavor of Serbs and Jews of all generations, whether they have lived in their native countries or around the world

Key words: Serbia, Israel, David Albala, Balfour Declaration, terrorism, genocide

Introduction

Serbian-Israeli relations must also be considered from the point of view of Serbian-Jewish relations. I emphasize this because the generations of Serbs and Jews who lived outside Serbia and the state of Israel participated in building a bridge of friendship between two nations and two states. These relationships were not always the way we wanted them to be. The Serbian people lived for almost fifty years in a common state with other Balkan peoples, some of whom did not advocate cooperation with Israel. One, for religious reasons and conflict in the Middle East, and others for the crimes committed during the Second World War. Since 2006, Serbia has become an independent state, and ever since then, there has been great progress and improvement of mutual relations. Wherever they were, at any given time period, there has always been an open solidarity and sympathy between the two nations.

Significant Jews among the Serbs

It is difficult to list all the names of Serbian Jews who have marked our lives and our history. Of course, we are extremely proud of each of them and we often mention them in contacts with our friends from Israel, because man does not die by physical death, but by being forgotten. Even in this way, we try to remember not only those well-known, but also to give credit to all those who, by their work and dedication, incorporated themselves into Serbian-Israeli or Serbian-Jewish relations and, above all, into fraternal love and friendship between our two nations. To mention just few of them: *David Alballe*, Captain of the Serbian Royal Army (SKV), Captain of the SKV *Azariya Cvi*, who received the rank of Major in 1948, Colonel *Alkalaj Mose Buks*, who fought in all

three major liberation wars of Serbia, the bearer of the Thessaloniki Monument, Rabbi *Alkalaj Yehuda Haj*, who was considered as the forerunner of the Zionist movement and the spiritual unification of all Jews, *Alkalaj Solomon*, the bearer of the Thessaloniki Monument, and the heroes of the Balkan wars, *Amar Josif* and *Mose*, brothers, as well as many other prominent public and cultural workers.¹

Balfour Declaration and the formation of the state of Israel

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 confirms the right of the Jews to return to their Biblical encampments in their homeland – the country of Israel.² Since the Balfour Declaration had been issued by The Great Britain, on November 2, 1917, the Kingdom of Serbia was the first one to sign the declaration on December 27, 1917.³ Over a long period of time, this information and data has not been known to the public in Serbia or the public in Israel. Our famous ancestors had far-reaching visions of the future, as well as the understanding of the Jewish people who had been persecuted for centuries. In 1917, the King of Serbia, Petar I Karadjordjevic, the Government of the Kingdom of Serbia, a part of the people and the Army of the Kingdom of Serbia were in the exile on the Greek island of Corfu. There, preparations for the final victory over the occupying forces had been made. It should be emphasized that even in that extremely difficult circumstances, the King and the Government of the Kingdom of Serbia made a decision to sign the Balfour Declaration among the first, taking into account the centenary friendship between the Serbian and

1 *Znameniti Jevreji, Savez jevrejskih opstina Srbije*, Beograd, 2011.

2 November 2, 1917, the Balfour Declaration was issued, in which British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour stated clearly and unequivocally that Britain's leaders "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object."

3 Tullia Catalan, Marco Dogo, *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe from the 19th Century to the Great depression*, Cambridge Scholarship Publishing, New Castle, UK, 2016, p 49.

the Jewish peoples, as well as the generations of Serbian Jews who had been sharing common history with us. The Lieutenant Colonel David Albal of the Serbian Royal Army had the honor to sign the Balfour Declaration on behalf of the Kingdom of Serbia. He was sent to serve in the Serbian Royal Mission in the United States. Immediately upon his arrival in New York, Lt. Col. Albala came into contact with the influential Jews of that time in America.⁴ After signing the Balfour Declaration by the Kingdom of Serbia, the governments of France, Italy, Greece, China and the Netherlands made the same decision.⁵

In addition to the bright examples of cooperation between the two nations, it is necessary to point out that the fascist circles of power that had been organized crimes and genocide against the Jews applied the same policy toward the Serbs and Roma. From war crimes and genocide to the modern-day terrorism, Israel, Serbia and the Republic of Serbian are again under the threat from those who want the complete extinction of our peoples. At a time when we celebrate the good relations between our two peoples, it is necessary to always mention the suffering from the past, so that it will not happen again in the future. We are ready to forgive, but not to forget.

The History of Terrorism and Genocide in the Balkan (Serbs, Jews and Roma as victims)

Islamic fundamentalist terrorist activity in the Balkan, particularly in Bosnia was preceded by the terrorist methods used by extremist Croats that were followers of the fascist Ustaša movement. The principle goal of the Ustaša fascist movement was to create the “Independent

4 Jerusalem Post, *David Albala: Serbian Warrior-Zionist hero*, November 4, 2013. <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/David-Albala-Serbian-warrior-Zionist-hero-330619> Retrieved January 16, 2019

5 Donald E. Wagner, Walter T. Davis, *Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land*, Pickwick Publication, Eugene, Oregon, USA, 2014, p.16

State of Croatia” within Third Reich and it was successful, with Croatia’s independence at the end of 20th century.⁶ Including people from the extreme political left to the extreme political right – was not important for the Ustaše movement’s ideology. Instead, it was the political aim which was to be realized.

One of the very first terrorist actions carried out by the members of Ustaše movement occurred in 1972. The terrorist group consisted of 19 members, composed of Croatian immigrants and members of the “Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood” terrorist organization which operated in Europe, Australia, and the USA. The aim of this group was the “liberation of Croatia by creating an armed rebellion” (Despot, 2005)⁷. Members of the group gathered near Graz, Austria in order to make the necessary preparations, including terrorist training and acquiring equipment. From Graz the group moved by foot into Yugoslavia. The terrorist group was caught and surrounded by Yugoslav security forces on Mount Raduša, near the Bosnian town of Bugojno. The group has been called the “Bugojanska group” ever since. During the security operation 15 group members were killed and four arrested. After the trial in Sarajevo (1972), all four received the death penalty.

The history and destinies of the Balkan peoples are inseparable. The Balkans was and remains not only the crossroad of nations, but also the crossroads of Great Power political interests. A special place in the history of the Balkans belongs to Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the entire Balkans as well as for Bosnia and Herzegovina, “rewinding the historical clock” began with the arrival of the Ottomans in the XV century. Islamization of the local people grew rapidly under the Ottoman yoke. This national identity crisis caused the alteration of historical facts and led some Muslim intellectuals to begin projects creating “new nations”,

6 See more: Robert McCormick, *Croatia Under Ante Pavelic: America, the Ustase and Croatian Genocide*, I.B.Tauris, New York, US, 2014.

7 “We reveal the trial process in Sarajevo of four captives out of 19 members of CRB, emigrant Bugojanska group which entered Yugoslavia in 1972”. Zvonimir Despot, 24. 5. 2005. *Večernji list*, Zagreb, Croatia

language, culture and other traits in order to demonstrate the autochthonous characteristic of peoples that lived or live on the territory of the Balkans, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸

From the representative approaches of Muslim historians, it is obvious that there is a need for a quest in order to “get to our own roots” or national identity. In academia and science, this appearance is not new, and it is present with many nations that had to relinquish their history, religion or origin in order to survive, or in some cases, to retain certain privileges. This identity quest and the rediscovering of former ties with civilizations, which for different reasons have not entered modernity, has led to the creation of an ideal environment for virulently radical forms of Islam that desire to reinvigorate the reestablishing the former Caliphate. The question remains: Will modern civilization have the patience, or will it be able to preserve its values against the advent of an aggressive zealotry now being peddled in the medressas of the Middle or Far East?

The appearance of religiously coated fanaticism has unfortunately become a reality in the entire Balkan region, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was exactly that linkage which is repeatedly insisted

8 In its commentary the national TV of Great Britain or otherwise known as BBC – World Service, says: “The irony rests in the fact that Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though they are a religious group, had for the first time been proclaimed as a separate nation during the atheist communist rule of Josip Broz Tito. It was under his rule that they received equal rights with all other nations within the Yugoslavian federation... Since the war that ran on between 1992 and 1995, Muslims preferred to be called Bošnjaks, which is indeed the definition that in essence does not have a religious meaning. In fact, for the numerous citizens of such orientation, the awareness about their Muslim identity is linked more with cultural heritage than it is with religious beliefs... Most of the Muslims on the Balkans are descendants of Christians; either Orthodox or Roman Catholic, who changed their religion because of different incentives. Muslims in the Ottoman Empire had many privileges – they paid lower taxes, gained easier employment in king’s offices, and they had the right to carry a weapon or to take upon themselves various occupations and sale. Of course, there were cases of forcible change of religion”. BBC World Service, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, UK.

upon in radical Islamic countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, or within Islamic scopes in Turkey and Egypt, that led to the increasing radicalization of the Bosnian Muslim population. Due to the absence of their own national identity and desire for the idealization of the past, some Bosnian Muslim leaders were driven to share their similarities in religion and fanaticism with those that are likeminded, regardless of where they are coming from, now or in the past. With regard to the situation that the Balkans are a frontier region between East and West (the clash of civilizations theory), Muslim peoples and their Balkan adherents (with no identity, since being a Moslem, is not indicative of national membership) have been easily manipulated in the past and the present. The centuries' long Turkish occupation has left its mark not only on Balkan culture, but has also left horrible traces on entire nations.

Islamic fundamentalists have been practicing and conveying their violent ideologies by all means possible over the last several decades. Prior to the current Global War on Terror, they reached their peak following the revolution in Iran. A major goal of Islamic fundamentalists was the establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of Europe that would be governed by Islamic law. Whether it was about political activities or various forms of violence, the ends justifies the means. The 1992-95 Bosnian civil war showed that Islamic fundamentalists had organized entire terrorist-guerilla units of Afghanistan arrivals in order to fight a jihad in cooperation with their co-religionists. During the war, the first nuclei of Islamic fundamentalist terror cells in Bosnia were established with their specifics that are reflected in these acts. These specifics are not only ethnic and cultural-geographical. The fact is that these are completely new ways of creating a global terrorist network such as what we today call "Al-Qaeda", but more precisely its branch in Bosnia. The transformation of the first guerilla units of Islamic fundamentalists into terrorist cells capable of conducting terrorist attacks at anytime and anywhere in the world is particularly interesting to monitor.

Second World War and the origins of Islamic terrorism

Alongside the formation of a Nazi puppet government in Croatia, or NDH, during the Second World War, a Muslim-only SS unit was created in Bosnia and designated the SS Division Handzar. In order to spread agreeable notions of Nazism and Islamic fundamentalism, Ante Pavelić⁹ ordered the building of the “Head’s Mosque”, in order to assure the union of his ideas and his Bosnian Muslim military unit, which he often referred to as the “Flowers of Croatia”. In August 1941, the Muslim delegation, guided by spiritual leader Reis-ul Ulema Fehim effendi Spaho arrived in Zagreb to meet with Ante Pavelić. Pavelić was promised full loyalty and support by the Bosnian Muslims, and in return, many of them received important positions in the newborn fascist state of Croatia (NDH). Osman Džaferbeg Kulenović, a Bosnian Muslim, was the president of NDH and Hakija Hadžić, the Ustaša commissioner of Bosnia.

Before the creation of the SS Handžar division, Germany had already created Muslim only units in occupied Balkan territories. One, the SS Division Skanderbeg, composed of Albanian Muslims, committed horrendous atrocities against Serbs, Roma, and Jews.¹⁰

The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Palestinian, Al Mohamed Effendi Amin el Huseini, a fanatical leader that supported genocide against the Jews and other people, had much in common with Adolf Hitler and his closest collaborators, especially Himmler. Before the war, this fanatical religious leader had hosted and organized the “Pan Islamic Conference” held in December 1931 in Jerusalem, where the Mufti of Jerusalem had on that

9 In order to satisfy religious wants of people of muslim religion, Ante Pavelić ordered building the mentioned mosque. In order to strengthen his influence over muslims even more, Pavelić put Adem-aga Mesić in position of his helper, in old times was called procurator.

10 It was these units: “Hadziefendić Legion” under the rule of Muhamed Hadziefendić; “Green Cadres”, a Nazi formation formed by Domobranci deserters who’s head was Nedžad Topić; the “Young Muslims”, who’s member was Alija Izetbegović; “Huska Miljković’s Muslim Army”; and “Goražde-Foča Muslim policing units”.

occasion, in the spirit of Muslim brotherhood, promised to help all the Muslims of Bosnia and give assistance to the greatest Nazis at that time.

Already by October of 1942, a delegation of Bosnian Muslims¹¹ visited Rome and met with Italy's fascist leader Benito Mussolini, who had proclaimed himself as the protector of Islam. From Mussolini they requested his help to enable them to create a fascist protectorate in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would follow the Albanian model, which comprised Kosovo and west Macedonia. Talks with Mussolini were not fruitful, so they turned to Hitler, in order to establish an Islamic state in Bosnia.

In convincing Hitler to form the Bosnian Muslim SS unit, the key role had the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Huseini¹² and Himmler personally involved. Himmler was fascinated by the willingness of Muslim soldiers to die in a "Holy War" (Jihad). Himmler was fascinated both with the idea of Islam and jihad but also had another strategic advantage on his mind. If he succeeded in attracting Bosnian Muslims to his 120 SS units, it would serve as an attractive model for Turkey and its (then) 40 million Muslims. He was very familiar with links between Turkey and Bosnian Muslims, and Turkey was important in order to unsettle England in the Middle East.

Himmler presented his plans to Hitler for including Bosnian Muslims in SS units in a peculiar way. He explained to Hitler that Bosnian Muslims were in fact, racially Aryans and culturally Arab-Turkish, regardless of the fact they spoke Serbo-Croatian. In this way, Himmler may have become the real creator of a great Bosnian Muslim ideology; he observed a great number of similarities and common goals between Nazism and Islamic fanaticism.¹³

11 The delegation was consisted of: the big mufti of Mostar, Omer Dzabić, Ibrahim Fejić, hadzi-Ahmed Karab and Oman Šehić.

12 In 1943, big mufti of Jerusalem, El Huseini received from Hitler personally honorary title "*SS gruppenführer*".

13 These cultural-historical swindles and malpractices are, unfortunately accepted by numerous muslim intellectuals from B-H, and as a result, this Nazi propaganda and ambition has remained active in so called "muslim intellectual circles" in B-H till today.

After preparations on December 6th 1942, Himmler officially proposed to Hitler the formation of SS divisions composed of Bosnian Muslims. Hitler approved the plan on February 10th 1943. The “SS Handžar Division” was a part of the Nazi formation of Croatia (NDH). During 1944, two SS Handžar divisions were established and composed of over 26,000 soldiers.

The Mufti of Jerusalem, El Huseini not only played an important role in forming this Nazi unit, but also actively recruited Islamists for it. During his travels between March through April 1943, El Huseini visited Albania, Kosovo and Metohija, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He met with prominent Islamists of Bosnia of that time; Uzeirag Hadžihasanović and hadži-Mujag Merhemić. After his speech in Sarajevo’s Bey’s mosque, he invited those gathered to join the “SS Handžar units”. For his plans, the Mufti El Huseini had gained broad support from Bosnian reis ul-ulema Hazif Muhamed Pandža, who had propagated ideas of the Third Reich amongst Sarajevo’s scholarly Muslims and in other Bosnian cities.¹⁴

By mid March 1943, SS Handžar division recruiting centers were established in the majority of Bosnian cities. The main recruitment centers were in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, Dobož, Brčko, and Bihać. Beyond the borders of present day Bosnia and within the borders of the former NDH, recruiting centers were in Zemun, Zagreb, Osijek, and Slavonski Brod. Within the SS Handžar units there were also ethnic Albanians from the Kosovo region. They trained and they fought in Bosnia, but the majority returned to Albania and Kosovo to form another SS division known as “21 Waffen Gebirgs – Division der SS Skanderbeg.”

The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadži Amin el Huseini, had the goal to create an Islamic state in the center of the Balkans composed of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The groundwork for this plan was the creation of the Bosnian SS Handžar division and soon after, similar

14 L. Hory— M. Broszat, *Der Kroatische Ustascha- Staat 1941—1945*, Stuttgart, 1964, p. 155—159). See also: *Dokument broj 100. Zabeleška Odeljenja za vezu Ministarstva inostranih polsova iz druge polovine jula 1943.o vojno-političkoj situaciji u NDH i Bugarskoj okupaciji Egejske Makedonije*. p.418-420 http://www.znaci.net/00001/4_13_3_5.pdf

Muslim units in regions of Kosovo and Albania. The Albanian Muslim leader, extremist Bedri Pejani, who was the president of the Albanian National Committee, interceded for the ethnic cleansing of Orthodox Christians – Serbs from Kosovo, and together with other like minded individuals, gave full support to forming the “SS Skanderbeg Division.

The Germans initially opposed this plan, but with the withdrawal of Italian units from Albania and its capitulation, these new forces were required to occupy Albania.¹⁵ The SS General Staff planned to recruit about 10.000 soldiers, but the Albanian response to the Albanian National Committee exceeded expectations. There were 11,398 recruits on the enrollment list. The SS Skanderbeg division was formed on April 17, 1944 and composed primarily of recruits who were Albanians from Kosovo. This division was actively included in the Nazi politics of genocide and ethnic cleansing directed towards the non Albanian population, mostly in Kosovo, but also in today’s Republic of Macedonia.

Transformation during 90’

The history of terrorism, as well as classical forms of this criminal act, was a prerequisite for the emergence of a new form of terrorist organizing. The period from World War II until today has been studied with a special analysis of the Islamic fundamentalist units, the Nazi SS Handžar division and SS Skenderbeg division, created during World War II. These units and their members were important actors in promoting the idea of Islamic fundamentalism and achieving ideological goals through violence in the period between World War II and the Civil War in Bosnia (1992-95). In the developing situation and in cooperation with likeminded people from around the world, Bosnian Muslim fundamentalists are internationalizing the question of Muslims in Bosnia. Aid

15 German forces were under the command of general Paulo Bader, who was at the top of the 21st mountain corps which included: 1. the Mountain division; 2. 100th Jaeger division; 3. 297th Infantry division.

that was arriving from the Muslim world was of a religious and political nature, but also of terrorist-logistical nature.

“SS Handzar” division in Bosnia were replaced with “El mujahidin” and “SS Skenderbeg” with “Abu Bakir Sidik” unit in Kosovo. Significant presence of Palestinian jihadist, so called humanitarian NGO, states sponsor of terrorism and manipulation with religion were detected. Same terrorist actors from Middle East and Israel now in Heart of Europe and further more.

Conclusion

When it comes to Serbia and Israel, although they have good relations, they can always be even better, especially in areas where there are common problems. Unfortunately, it seems that the history repeats itself and that many lessons from the past have not been learned. The same centers of power once organized and carried out genocides and war crimes against Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Second World War came up on the scene with the same or similar intentions in the beginning of the nineties of the last century. This is particularly evident in the broad-spread network of Islamic fundamentalists whose goal is the destruction of the state of Israel, but also the creation of the Balkan caliphate. Currently, in the Syrian and Iraqi side of the Islamic state there is a whole brigade composed of Bosnian Muslims and Albanians. The Balkan is not only a “safe haven” for the Islamic state, but also a seeding nursery of terrorists. On the territory of the Balkans, the propaganda media of the Islamic state known as Dabiq and Rumiya are actively working, spreading the call for the destruction of Serbs and Jews as “unbelievers” on daily basis.

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**ISRAEL, THE LAND OF
INNOVATION, AND SERBIA, THE
LAND OF OPPORTUNITY – A BRIEF
OVERVIEW OF THE POINTS OF
COOPERATION**

Introduction

The modern history of the state of Israel has only 70 years, while the history and traditions of the Jewish people go far into the Old Ages. The unity, efforts and skills of the Jewish people through history have often provoked negative attitudes, embodied in envy and the lowest hatred by other nations and religions. The consequences were seen from the Venetian ghetto, all the way to the Holocaust. Today, while the dark shadow of anti-Semitism is still floating in the air, the vast majority of people and democratic societies look to Israel as the leading country of innovation, and to the Jewish people as the leader in innovative entrepreneurship. At a time when the Jewish people started their return to their homeland after the Second World War, Israel looked quite different. Sources of water supply were extremely scarce and limited, and sometimes did not meet even the basic needs. Rural areas prevailed, while today 86% of Israel is urbanized.¹

In this article, we will look at several recognizable points and areas in which Israel represents a role-model for other countries. We will also look at the exchange of knowledge, experience and technology between Serbia and Israel. The main prerequisites for achieving successful scientific, technological and economic cooperation between two states are the relations between them.

Serbia and Israel, Jewish and Serbian people, are long-standing friends, fellow citizens and neighbors, which we consider to be a great advantage in the construction and development of every aspect of cooperation.

Agriculture – survival through innovation

The state of Israel is relatively small, with an area of 20,000 m². It is

¹ To Make a Desert Bloom: The Israeli Agricultural Adventure and the Quest for Sustainability, Alon Tal, *Agricultural History*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (Spring, 2007), pp. 228-257

located in a dry zone where water represents a limiting factor of development. By all preconditions, at the time of the formation of the state of Israel, there were lacking favorable resources for agricultural production. Half of the country was a desert, while the other half was almost dry ground. Today, agriculture is one of the most striking factors for the transformation and development of Israel. The fact that Israel made a fertile land from the desert is widely known and is often emphasized. Since 1948, a rarely settled desert area between Beersheba and Eliat (Arava and Negev) has played an important role in agricultural production. Today, over 40 percent of the country's total vegetables and crops are grown there, and 90 percent of melon exports come from Arava.²

Key factors for the agricultural progress were “safe food supply, water supply and technological innovation”³. The environment in which the Jewish people came upon their return to their homeland dictated the pace that spurred innovation and uncompromising work in the fight against climatic conditions. Today, 162.000 hectares are irrigated in Israel⁴. The innovation and efficient irrigation technology represent a sort of Israeli national brand, known as “drop by drop” system. This irrigation system was invented in Israel in the seventies of the last century. The limited availability of water resources has led to an innovation that is based on the following principles:

1. The most economical use of water;
2. The prevention of water loss;
3. The optimal crop irrigation.

Due to limited space and resources, Israeli agricultural production is based on the intensive crop production, which has resulted in the

2 Israel's Agriculture in the 21st century by Jon Fedler, Tel Aviv, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/economy/pages/focus%20on%20israel-%20israel-s%20agricultu-re%20in%20the%2021st.aspx>

3 To Make a Desert Bloom: The Israeli Agricultural Adventure and the Quest for Sustainability, Alon Tal, *Agricultural History*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (Spring, 2007), pp. 228-257

4 Agriculture in Israel Facts and Figures 2016, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Tel Aviv, 2018

record production of fruits and vegetables per square meter. When we talk about intensive agricultural production, we cannot skip greenhouse agricultural technology. Israeli greenhouses, with their unique technology and agro-technical measures, are now used by farmers all around the world. Yields range from 65 kg to 115 kg per square meter depending on the type of crop.

In this brief review of Israeli agriculture, we can conclude that innovations in the field of agriculture are driven, in fact, by survival. This shows that innovations are often conditioned by practical needs. So, we can conclude that for the last 70 years of its existence as a nation, Israel has become a world leader in the agriculture, with technology, seed materials and fertilizers that are widely present and respected around the world.

Information technology, entrepreneurship and innovation

Israel is certainly a leader in the IT industry. For this reason, Israel is called a “start-up” nation. Credits for channeling and integration of innovation certainly belong to the mentality and environment that fosters entrepreneurship through innovation. Innovative entrepreneurship has been institutionalized through the “Israeli Innovation Authority”, and the “Principal Scientist Office.” The mentioned institute is primarily an integrator between different institutions and private subjects. The Institute provides support in the form of exchange of experiences, creation of favorable environment, financing and networking of “start-up” companies, investors and users of services. The legal/social framework is crucial for the development of entrepreneurship in general, where the entrepreneur is a partner of his state and government. Over 90% of the economy is oriented to the service sector. Many innovations that emerged in the private sector later found their application in the state and military sectors.

According to the prestigious magazine “Forbes”, every 1.400 people in Israel come up with one start-up, which constitutes the largest number of “start-up” firms per capita. Based on this data, we conclude that in

Israel a large number of start-up companies are being created at an early stage, with a favorable environment for finding investors and clients.

The Israeli authorities aim to employ half a million people in the innovation industry over the next ten years.⁵ The indicator of a favorable entrepreneurial environment is also a low unemployment rate of only 3,9%.⁶

The significance of the start-up phenomena and innovations for the Israeli economy and employment in general is illustrated by the fact that the Israeli start-up attracted \$ 5.2 billion in 2017, according to data from the Tel Aviv IVC Research Center, which is \$ 4 billion more than in 2012. This fantastic data shows that human capital is the very basis of the economic development of the state and that the largest natural resource is – human resource.

The concept of Kibbutz – a combination of tradition and entrepreneurship

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, “kibbutz” is an Israeli collective settlement, usually agricultural or industrial, in which all the wealth is common. Kibbutz, as a commune system, was primarily serving the survival of the Jewish people in hostile and resource-limited environment, where solidarity and joint efforts were the only surviving option. Kibbutz was formed by the Russian Jews in the twenties of the last century.

Today in Israel there are 273 kibbutzes in which 2.2% of the population live. According to the information provided by the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, 40% of agricultural production is produced by kibbutzes. From the mere way of survival in early days, Kibbutz today is the basis of the development. At this moment, more and more kibbutzes in Israel are based on business incubators, with mentors and all the necessary support for developing ideas.

5 Israel Innovation Authority, annual report 2017. <http://economy.gov.il/English/NewsRoom/PressReleases/Documents/2017IsraelInnovationAuthorityReport.pdf>

6 <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/israel/unemployment-rate>

Considering the possibilities of cooperation between Serbia and Israel

From 2000. until today, more and more Israeli companies are coming to the Serbian market. Today's value of Israeli investments in Serbia is more than half a billion euros. The focus of Israeli investments is predominantly real estate", and most of the shopping malls in Serbia are owned by Israeli investors. In addition to the real estate sector, an investment in the field of energy was realized, in the form of wind farms with a capacity of 200 mWh. In addition to these colossal investment projects, dozens of Israeli small and medium-sized enterprises in the field of IT, trade and services are also present in Serbia's market today⁷.

We can categorize the huge potential for cooperation and investment opportunities between the two countries in the following areas:

1. Agriculture
2. Tourism
3. IT

Serbia does not exploit its natural resources sufficiently. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, over half a billion hectares of agricultural land has not been used. Technology and agro/technical measures are obsolete. The manufacturing industry is far from satisfactory. Fields of cooperation in the agriculture could be large investment projects in the agro-industrial parks. Such projects would rely on the well-known concept of agricultural (farmers) cooperatives that was destroyed in the process of transition.

The benefits of investing in Serbian agriculture include a skilled workforce and the availability of high quality European organic eco-friendly products. Investing in agriculture would also enhance knowledge and technology sharing.

When it comes to agriculture, the institutions of the two countries should establish mechanisms for networking farmers and agronomists through seminars and exchanges, which would also contribute to the commer-

⁷ Source: Ministry of Finance, Republic of Serbia

cial connection of subjects in this field. Through investment projects, rural and already abandoned areas throughout Serbia will be revived.

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors on a global scale. According to the data of the Tourist Organization of Serbia⁸, an increasing number of tourists from Israel are registered year after year. Direct flights between Tel Aviv and Belgrade have been established. In addition to the economic effect, tourism is also important for the cultural exchange and better linking of the two nations. Because of the low rate of public expression of anti-Semitism, Serbia is a very attractive location for Israeli tourists. Natural and spa centers (mineral springs) and health resorts tourism are underused potential that, in accordance with the official strategy of tourism development of the Republic of Serbia, has yet to experience its expansion. Unfortunately, Israel is still not well known and developed tourist destination for Serbian tourists.

With the efforts of its institutions, Serbia creates frameworks for the development and promotion of innovations and IT sectors. Better connectivity between the two IT industries and the exchange of theories and practices are being promoted through “IT hubs” year after year. Conferences and seminars could also contribute to a better integration of individuals and companies.

As a conclusion...

Serbs and Jews are nations connected by a common tragic destiny, good civic and neighborly relations and culture. Today, in the 21st century, we believe that these two nations have objective predispositions to further foster this connection through the exchange of knowledge, practical experience and economics. Relations that are not complicated by political issues should be optimally upgraded by economic and cultural co-operation.

8 <http://www.srbija.travel/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0.283.html>

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**THEOLOGICAL REVIEW
OF THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS
THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

The Fate of the Jewish on the European soil

It is a tragic historical fact that the fate of the Jewish people on the European soil, from the earliest times, was associated with persecution, discrimination and prejudice by the local population. Whether they were immigrants because of the persecution, whether their migration was conditioned by economic reasons, the presence of this people has largely caused a backlash, and often an open hostility by the host nation.

We can look for reasons in the religious and cultural specifics of this nation, but they, in themselves, are not sufficient to explain often irrational hatred and genocidal tendencies that some nations openly expressed toward the Jews. This hatred was especially reflected in periods of major economic crises and epidemics on the European soil, which, in the absence of the right information, looked like “punishments of God.”

The causes of the persecution of the Jews in Europe

According to the biblical tradition, the Jewish nation, or “Israel,” is described as God’s chosen people, the bearer of God’s revelation, and the one from which God, at the certain time of history, will bring forth the Messiah, the Savior of the world. As such, this people enjoyed the special privileges of God, since they were the guardian of the law of God, which distinguished them from other “pagan” nations. (Deuteronomy 7: 1-26).

Aware of this choice, the divine benefits and the historical task entrusted to them, the Jewish people, have accepted the burden of great suffering, along with great promises. Hence, their strong desire to preserve their culture, faith and customs in each new community they’d moved into, were often interpreted as fanaticism and exclusiveness by the non-Jewish domestic residents – “pagans”.

Psychological and social reasons for the exile and hostility

The psychological reasons we could seek in what other peoples observed as a feeling of superiority, spiritual arrogance and exclusiveness by the Jews. Strict adherence to ritual rules, “kosher” methods of eating, avoiding certain foods, making marriages exclusively within their own faith, the incredible skill in commercial affairs and, above all, uncompromised monotheism, which has not been discounted at the cost of death, had provoked distrust and animosity among their neighbours – a fertile soil for all kind of most bizzare conspiracy theories.

Biblical background of the persecution

We could say that the role of the Jewish people, Israel, in the biblical revelation, might be seen as megalomaniacal, viewed from the point of rationalistic, atheistic mind or mind that does not recognize the Bible as the supreme authority in the matter of religious affairs. The fact that one small nation, in a limited geographic location, had been given a global, messianic role and a great historical task of conveying the only true God, its character and laws, seems delusional and pretentious, to put it mildly.

Suffering for the sin (apostasy)

One side of this suffering had been conditioned by the apostasy, disobedience to God’s Word and laws and blending or compromising with the surrounding, pagan nations (the so-called “uncircumcised”). In that sense, the exile or enslavement by indigenous peoples and tribes had had a pedagogical character, with an ultimate goal to bring the “chosen people” back to God of their fathers – their original faith and tradition.

This deeply intimate and exclusive relationship between the Creator and Israel, the Jews, has been described in the Old Testament,

metaphorically, through the relation of parent (primarily father) and children, shepherd and herdsmen, groom and bride (Song of songs), husband and (adulterous) women or harlot (Hoshea) ... In all of these examples, God declared a strong and unwavering intention to accomplish his purpose with Israel, despite their unfaithfulness. "My love for you is eternal; that's why I keep my loving kindness to you" (Jer. 31:3)

Suffering for the righteousness

The other side of this suffering is caused by the holiness ascribed to this nation as a people of Holy and Righteous God. The Bible in several places shows that Israel will be "a thorn" into the eyes of other nations, precisely because it will, through its righteousness, or the stigma of God's presence, consciously or unconsciously, convict other pagan nations of their lawlessness and superstition. The Bible clearly emphasizes the sharp gap and the antagonism between the light and darkness, righteousness and injustice, and gives a double-edged promise:

1. Bearers of light will always be persecuted. (John 5:19; 2 Tim. 3: 10-12)
2. The light shines in the dark, and darkness will NEVER take it away. (John 1: 5)

From this perspective, the persecution of the Jews on the European soil is merely an extension of the biblical persecution, with the same background and ultimate goal.

The Replacement Theology

In the first century after Christ, all followers of the "Way" (Christianity) were aware that Christianity owed its biblical foundation and messianic roots to the Hebrew Scripture, the Old Testament, upon which the divine revelation of the New Testament came forth. In fact, Jewish-Christian relations, despite some elitist outbursts by Christians in the second and third centuries, managed to remain consistent and solid until the middle of the fourth century and the First Council of Nicea (325. AD). At this

assembly in Nicaea, under the patronage of the Emperor Constantine, the Church officially seceded from its Jewish roots in Christian theology and practice, detaching the Easter from the Passover.

Deception of the Church Fathers

But the Nicaean bishops' formulations had their foothold in the discussions held on this topic in the second century. Justin Philosopher (or Justin Martyr), an early Christian philosopher, theologian and thinker, in his First Apology, "Dialogue with Judas Trifon" (published in the 15th century) presented strong claims in favor of "New Israel" or "True Israel" that had replaced the biblical Israel in the Old Testament. Hence the term "Replacement Theology".

Another prominent Christian figure, Marcion (about 85th – 160th century AD), an outstanding businessman and son of a Christian bishop, consciously forced the anti-Hebrew attitude toward the Bible and decided to completely exclude all Jewish legacy. He insisted that the New Testament was the only authentic revelation of God, the God of love and grace, unlike the vindictive Jewish god in the Old Testament, preoccupied by material things, conquests and devastation. God of the New Testament is, according to Marcion, God of the Spirit, while the God of the Old Testament, by the false Jewish prediction, was God occupied by physical and material spheres of life. The Jews, their religion and culture, even their national aspirations towards the Promised Land and their patriotism, had been regarded as carnal, worldly, unimportant, simply saying – "Jewish".

Unfortunately, even though Marcion's attacks and exclusions of the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish practices were condemned by official Church fathers, many Christians and Christian leaders have come under their influence.

Contrary to their Teacher and Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Church Fathers tried to raise a new "wall of separation" between the Jewish and Christian people. The results of their replacement theology were the

attacks on the Jewish people for the next 1.500 years or so, but also the impoverished Christian understanding of themselves as an Israel's "sisters by faith." The Christian denial of all Jewish legacy only strengthened the resistance of the Jews toward the message of the Gospel.

Deception of the Reformers

This Christian elitist antipathy toward Jews and Judaism became woven into the fabric of Christian theology and thereby into Western civilization. Martin Luther and the other reformers inherited this anti-Jewish theological posture and cultural prejudice. Luther, heralded as the Father of the Reformation and an avid student of Paul, is credited for his justification by faith emphasis as newly discovered in Romans. But in the processing of his new insights, he took severe liberties to castigate the Jewish people, even Jewish Believers in Yeshua. His instilled cultural dread of Jews and all things Jewish, as fostered both by his Augustinian theological training and blatant 16th century cultural prejudices, pushed him into the entirely unrealistic perspective of presuming that newly established European Protestantism was at risk of being fully swallowed up by massive Christian conversion to Judaism. This led Luther to craft during the final decade of his life horrific written sermonic siege upon the Jewish world. That collection informed much of the Western expressions of anti-Semitism over the centuries that followed and was quoted often times by the Nazi Regime in the days of Hitler.

Epistle of Romans 11

We find warnings against Replacement Theology (Supersessionism) in the Book of Romans, where Paul attacks it at its roots and reminds Gentile followers of Yeshua that "the root (that is, Israel) supports you (Romans 11:18b)

Playing with a metaphor of a wild and cultivated olive trees brilliantly, as a picture of the "natural" and "grafted" offsprings of God, Paul speaks

to the blinded Christians from the pagan background who had lost the broad picture of God's purpose for His chosen people. Both "natural" and "grafted" branches have their place in His eternal plans. His ultimate goal has always been that both branches would be interwoven and connected to the Tree of Life, healed and restored. (Romans 11: 16-30)

Therefore, only our blindness and pride, as well as our collective prejudices and wrong theological inheritance could prevent us to see the clear, continuous God's plan with the people of Israel and the role of Israel in our own clinging to the Family tree of the Messianic nation. ("If you are in Christ, then you are the offspring of Abraham, the heirs of the promise" – Galatians 3:29)

The Jewish Messiah – Universal Christ

It is not coincidence that two of the four Gospels begin with the genealogies of Yeshua Hamashiah, Jesus Christ, or the genealogies of his official/biological parents – Joseph, in the (Gospel of Matthew 1) and Mary (Gospel of Luke 3). It seems that the authors of these writings were very cautious to establish the Jewish origin of Jesus and His continuity with the Messianic line of Israel.

In the biological sense, therefore, by its human origin, Jesus was the true Jew, from the tribe of Judah (Sheveth Yehuda), with all the racial and genetic characteristics of this ethnicity. Therefore, it is sad and controversial that in the very name of this Peacemaker and Reformer, in centuries to come, there would be bloody wars, crusades, mass extermination, during which the people to whom Jesus himself belonged – have suffered to the great extend.

The Ultimate Solution

This dangerous deception had reached its culmination in The World War II. Tanks to the triumph of Nazi ideology, it was not difficult to determine the main culprit for all the evil and general crisis that chara-

cterized one epoche. One nation was declared to be an epitome of evil, a national enemy, a litter of infection... After being completely dehumanized and satanized, only one thing had to be done with that nation: the decree of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" had been brought on June 1941. Holocaust across the Europe were the monstrosities on how this "solution" had been implemented.

After this bloody chapter in the world history and the history of the Jewish people, there should be no doubt in the consciousness of any sober, thoughtful man that anti-Semitism, in any form, has always been the root or seeds of every fascism.

The New Trends

However, there is a growing field of academic research and general Jewish-friendly perspective at work in the Christian Church today. The re-establishment of the Land of Israel in 1948 and the recapture of the City of Jerusalem in 1967 has forced the Church to reconsider long held attitudes towards the Jewish people. In a time when Israel did not inhabit the Land promised to them by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, it was a bit easier to believe that He may have abandoned His Covenant promises to Israel. With the nation re-born in a day (Isaiah 66:7-8) and the City now under Israeli sovereignty (Luke 21:24), Christians of many denominations are seriously reconsidering many long held theological positions concerning Israel and the Jewish people. May the Lord eradicate the fallacy of Replacement Theology from the Church, in our lifetime and in our days!

The relation to Israel – the criterion of God's judgment over the nations

There are two divine attitudes that we, as human beings, find especially hard to understand, which are loyalty and consistency. God had sworn to the patriarchs of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "Whoever blesses

you, he will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed.” (Genesis 12: 3, Genesis 27:29, Numbers 24: 8-9).

By giving His blessings to the patriarchs of one nation, Israel, God has blessed the entire Jewish nation with the prophecies and promises that have never been withdrawn. Transitions, apostasy, scatterings, the deviation from tradition, the restoration of tradition, altogether have never been able to cease these blessings. They still have the same power.

Brotherhood of the Serbian and Jewish nations

Friendship tried by fire becomes a fraternity. The Serbian and Jewish people bind the traditional friendship that have been tested and tried by the common suffering and persecution during the Second World War. Members of the Serbian people have been awarded, after the War, with 128 medals of the Righteous Among the Nations, for personal merits for helping the Jews during the Second World War. These brave individuals or whole families put their own lives and lives on their dear ones at the risk by hiding their fellow Jews under their roofs and sharing a last crumble of food with them.

This friendship has continued to this day, and it is up to us now to strengthen it further. We can do this in follow ways:

- By rising awareness of the important role of the Jewish people in the global history.
- By rising our voice against any form of anti-Semitism in our society.
- By constantly reminding our community about the error of Replacement Theology and its tragic results in the history of the world.
- By blessing Israel, the Jewish people, as Christians and representatives of our nation, appealing to our neighbours and countrymen to have the same attitude towards the Jewish nation.

At the very end of the history of the world as we know it today, after all the apocalyptic sequences described in the Book of Revelations and the establishment of the Messiah as the Lord and King over the

nations (Parusia), the Bible also describes the Judgment of the nations. One of the crucial criteria of this judgment will be the relationship to the people of Israel (Joel 3: 1, 2). This is important to keep in mind, in order to be aware of the lasting value that the blessing of the Israeli nation has from the historical and eschatological perspective. Let us, therefore, strive to collect some more “Medals of the Righteous Among the Nations” with our words and deeds, to be able to share it, one day, with those whose names are already in this glorious list.

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**THE RIGHTEOUS
AMONG THE NATIONS
IN SERBIA**

There are not many examples of true fraternal relations in the worst historical periods, such as the relation between Jewish and Serbian nations. During the Second World War, both Serbs and Jews were declared "unclean races" to be exterminated, so they share their common destiny of persecution, humiliation and genocide together. Monuments from that period show the mixture of Serbian and Jewish names, symbols of the star of David and the Orthodox cross. This brotherhood was reflected in both suffering and survival, which has been recognized and honored with 128 medals for "The Righteous among the Nations", bestowed to Serbian citizens.

The Historical Review of the suffering of Jewish and Serbian people during the Holocaust

In order to understand the kind of horror the Jews had been passing through in Serbia under the Nazi regime, during the Holocaust (which was, unfortunately, just one of the last episode in their two thousand years of exile and martyrdom), we will focus on the scene described by Zeni Lebl, in her book "Until *The Final Solution* – the Jews in Belgrade":

"Right after the liberation, in the only remaining Ashkenazi synagogue in Belgrade, the service was held. From the very beginning of the War, this synagogue was turned into a brothel for Nazi soldiers – the only reason why it hadn't been demolished together with others. It was monstrously desecrated, robbed and ruined. There came a small group of mortified, withered women in rags and two older men. They stood in the ruined temple, with their exhausted bodies and souls, to say Kaddish for the victims. Those few were the only Jewish survivors in Belgrade at that time".

Until The Second World War, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, there were about 82,000 citizens of Jewish nationality. Among them, about 37,000 lived in Serbia, which was 45% of the total Jewish population in the Kingdom. While Ashkenazi Jews lived mainly in Vojvodina, those from Sephardic background settled mostly south of the Danube and Sava.

Throughout the long history of suffering and discrimination in this region, the civil equality had been finally granted to them after the Congress of Berlin, in 1878.

The announcement of their great suffering and persecution in the 20th Century had affected the Jewish community in Serbia as well, when the Serbian government brought some restrictive laws – one regarding the number of Jewish children allowed in educational institutions, and other forbidding Jews perform any kind of work related to human nutrition.

When the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated on April 1941, it did not fall under the unified power of an occupier, but its parts were divided and placed under the jurisdiction of various members of the Axis Powers. The present day territory of Vojvodina was divided between three different fascist states. Srem was attached to the Independent State of Croatia, Backa to the Hungary, ruled by the fascist dictator Horthy, while Banat, as well as the rest of Serbia, was occupied by the Germans. The distinctiveness of this historical moment was also caused the distinctive suffering of the inhabitants in these territories, both Serbian and Jewish, which from the very beginning was the main target for extermination by the occupiers. The specificity of the suffering of the Jews in Serbia during the 4 years of war, from 1941 to 1944 can be classified into several categories.

The first and most terrible specificity was reflected in the quick and efficient implementation of the so-called “final solution” to the Jewish Question, on the territory of Serbia, with the capital city as the headquarter of these operations. By March 1942, all male members of the Jewish population had already been arrested and shot, together with the Banat Jews, while women and children had been deported to the camp “Sajmište”, where they were killed in the so-called “Dušegupka”, mobile gas chamber. On June 1942, a telegram was sent from Belgrade, proudly announcing that Serbia was the first “Jugendfrei” territory in Europe.

Another specific feature was that as early as in April 1941, Jewish men were already arrested in the first collection camp in Belgrade it-

self, called “Topovskešupe” (Canon sheds), where they represented the first source of hostages for shooting, which the German command had issued. For every German soldier killed, 100 Serbs or Jews were to be shot, and for every wounded soldier, 50 were to be shot.

The following specificity is reflected in the excellent cooperation between Wehrmacht units and German units.

For the sake of the analysis and better insight into the effectiveness of the destruction of the Jewish people in Serbia, it should be added that the mass shootings in 1941 in Serbia were carried out before the planned deportation of German Jews to the death camps. The shooting-ranges carried out on the territory of the Jajinci, Pančevačkirit, Banjice and Sajmište were under the control of the local troops, which was controlled by the Minister of the Government, Milan Nedić. The agreement with the terrible results of the occupying authorities in the destruction of the Jews in Serbia was expressed in a document of “The Government of National Salvation”, led by the General Milan Nedic, from 1942, stating that “thanks to the occupier, we are free from the Jews, and it is up to us now to get rid of other elements that carry immorality and prevent the unity of the spirit and the Serbian national feeling”.

The largest massacre of the civilian population in Vojvodina occurred at the very beginning of 1942, in the period from January 21st to 23rd. This event is known in history as “Novosadska Racija” (“Novi Sad Raid”, or “The Raid”).

Due to a minor incident at a Vojvodina farm, when the Hungarian gendarmes encountered a secret partisan’s base, bloodshed went throughout the whole of the South Bačka region and lasted throughout the month. The killings began in the village of Churug, where about 1,000 people were killed and thrown under the ice in the river Tisa. Among them there were also 100 Jews. The killings were carried out in all the surrounding villages, and finally, in the January 21st, the raid was conducted in Novi Sad, too – people were thrown under the ice on the Danube, killed by maul and knives. About 1,250 Serbs and Jews were murdered in that raid. Among these victims, there were 819 Jews, both sexes

and all ages. Due to the method of killing, there are no precise records about the massacre until the present moment. It is believed that about 5,000 people, mainly Serbs and Jews, were killed in these few weeks. All the Jews, who had miraculously survived this massacre, were deported later, in the spring of 1944, in death camps in Poland and Germany.

Camps in the territory of Serbia in which the Jews with other civilian victims were killed are as follows:

- “Banjica”, which was located in the city of Belgrade itself. According to the census conducted through this camp, 23 000 people had been passed through it, including 688 Jews, with children and adolescents, both sexes.
- “Topovskešupe” (“Canoon Sheds”), located at Belgrade Fair, also known as “The Jewish camp -Zemun”, were initially kept for Jewish children and women exclusively. About 6000 of them were killed in mobile gas chambers.
- The Camp in Šabac, where the Jews transported from Kladovo ended up. These people had fled across the Danube from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in their desperate attempt to reach Palestine.
- The camp in Niš, “Red Cross”, where the Jews were separated from other prisoners and where about 500 of them had been murdered.

Despite the fact that from May 30, 1941, the law that strictly prohibited helping and hiding of the Jews, known as “Beherbungsverbod”, was in force, massive, active efforts of the population in the rescue of the Jewish people had been recorded. Many Serbs risked their lives and the lives of their families, knowing that their fate, in case they were caught, would not be different from the fate of the Jews, rescuing Jewish children, women and men.

The Righteous among the Nations in Serbia

In 1953, Israeli Parliament – Knesset – formed the YadVashem – a memorial museum for the victims of the Holocaust. Ten years later, the

Commission for the Declaration of the Righteous Among Nations was established. These acknowledgments, in the form of medals and charters, testify to the brave acts of the non-Jewish people, who had been risking their lives and the lives of their loved ones during the Second World War, in order to save often unknown persons of Jewish origin.

NenadFogel was researching these events, collecting them in a book about the brave people in Serbia. He listed all the names and events he had come to in order to be remembered within the collective memory. These are also the brightest moments of the fraternal relationship of the Serbian and Jewish people. Cherishing the culture of the memory, which teaches us that forgotten things and events could easily be repeated, and that the Nazi-fascism is not dead even though the Nazi-Germany had capitulated in 1945, these names stood in the memorial park in Jerusalem as the brightest examples of humanity.

“This book,” *The Righteous Among Nations – Serbia* “, we proudly dedicate to the citizens of Serbia who have saved the Jews during the Second World War, with the desire to build them a monument through the stories told in their honor,” wrote NenadFogel in 2010.

That is why many individuals who had saved the Jews, but did not receive the deserved admissions, because, unfortunately, they had not even been suggested, were mentioned in these stories.

A special kind of solidarity and brotherhood has been developed over the years between people of different confessions and nationalities, who have found themselves in the common hell and have done their best to help one another.

Perhaps the subtitle of this book best describes the type of this venture, because it’s called “Heroes without guns, on the barrel of gunpowder.”

One of the fascinating stories is about Martina Levac from Zemun. Three German high-ranking officers moved into her villa, while she hid three illegal immigrants in her attic, Jews. Through various troubles and dangerous situations, representing them as repairmen, who came to fix something in the house, she’d been hiding three young Jews in front of the fascist noses. On one occasion, one of them was helping

Martina to serve the dinner and interfered with the conversation in Deutch indiscreetly. He could not resist to comment something on Nietzsche's philosophy, which the officers were speaking about. Even at that moment, when he was very close to reveal himself, Martina was protecting him. In 1942, the young Jews left her attic and joined partizans. Fifty eight years later, as an old woman, Martina received the Medal of the Rightful among the Nations, handed over to her by an Israeli ambassador.

Then the story of Ljubica and Jelenko Stamenkovic, peasants from a small mining village near Aleksinac, who'd been hiding the Jewish family Kalderon from Belgrade (three members) in their house during the war, sharing with them and their children every crumble of food in these difficult wartime days. They were honored with medals in 2005.

There are many stories that show the basic and greatest human virtue, solidarity and humanity.

The exact number of those who were hiding during the war in Serbia, with the help of their Serbian counterparts, is difficult to precise, but it can be said that there were hundreds of persons who have survived the war in the villages in the interior, as well as in Belgrade itself, most often with a false identity and documents. Larger groups were hiding particularly in Toplica, in the south of Serbia, but also on the mountains of Kopaonik and Rudnik, then in the villages of the eastern Serbia.

From that time, one letter was preserved, which the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia, Dr. Isak Alkalaj, wrote to the refugee government at the beginning of the war, saying:

...“In these harsh conditions of life imposed by the German occupiers, the Jews are able to survive – if it is ever called life – only thanks to their non-Jewish fellow citizens who are trying to help them and ease their hard fate...”

The social and educational background of the helpers was very diverse: from peasants, urban poor, craftsmen, to intellectuals and industrialists. Among them, there were people of reputation and influence in their local communities, but most of them were ordinary people

from towns and villages who were severely affected by the occupation themselves, and for that reason they could best sympathize with the fate of the persecuted Jewish people...

Some of the most prominent public figures of the Jewish community in Belgrade, such as, for example, the president of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities of Yugoslavia, Dr. Friedrich Pops, and the psychiatrist and theater director, Dr. Hugo Klein, remained in the occupied Belgrade throughout the war, thanks to their Serbian friends who were hiding them.

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**YUGOSLAV INTELLIGENCE
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

On 29 November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted on the partition of the British Mandate Territory of Palestine into two new states, a Jewish state and an Arab state. This monumental decision altered the history of the Middle East and served as the basis for the foundation of the State of Israel. However, the road to Israel's independence, which began in the dignified halls of the UN in New York, quickly turned to the battlefields. Israel's Arab neighbors refused to recognize the partition and the establishment of a Jewish state, and quickly attacked the Jewish population in Palestine. The conflict quickly turned into a fully fledged war which lasted over a year, before Israeli forces were able to beat back the invading Arab armies and establish Israel as a political reality in the Middle East.

The bigger security problem of the Jewish community in Palestine was not of men and women ready and willing to fight, but that of arms and ammunition. The lack of weapons almost meant defeat for the small Jewish military force, fighting for its survival against five invading Arab armies. Despite extensive political and diplomatic efforts, most countries were not willing to supply the nascent Israel with the arms it needed for its survival. Only Czechoslovakia agreed to supply the future state with thousands of rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition, for a hefty payment in foreign currency. Delivering these arms covertly, efficiently and above all quickly from Czechoslovakia to Israel became a crucial task for Israel's secret operatives in Europe. Many European countries were pressured by the British not to help the Israelis. The solution to the arms deliveries problem was a secret cooperation with Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav secret intelligence service played a key role in helping to transport those crucial firearms from its manufacturers in Czechoslovakia to the battlefields in Israel. This chapter examines this little known episode of Israeli-Yugoslav relations which was so critical for the establishment and survival of the State of Israel.

Jewish Shortage of Arms

The War of Independence did not catch the Jewish population in Palestine unprepared. The Haganah, the military Jewish underground organisation,

was established already in the 1920s in order to provide security for the many small and often distant Jewish villages and communities spread all over Palestine. The Haganah established a formation of elite fighting units, known as the Palmach, which encompassed about 2000 men and women. It also developed a field force of lesser trained volunteers to provide local defense in towns and villages. Much of the training for the Palmach and the Haganah field force was provided by Jewish veterans who had fought in the British Army during World War II. The main security problem faced by the Jewish leadership, led by future Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, was not men but weapons. During the British mandate period, the illegal possession of weapons was a capital offence. The British authorities did their best to prevent Jewish communities and organizations from acquiring any form of arms. Over the years, the Haganah had covertly acquired for a wide variety of covert sources a myriad of old, often obsolescent, weapons smuggled in from all over the world. There were also attempts at primitive local production of weapons, mainly small arms, but these could not be developed effectively as long as British rule was maintained. By November 1947, the lack of weapons in the Haganah was so desperate that many of its fighters and volunteers were unarmed. A lack of ammunition further exacerbated this dire situation. Even those Haganah and Palmach units which had a good number of firearms had so little ammunition that their military capabilities in battle were severely limited.

In order to address this shortage, Haganah officials were covertly dispatched all over the world to seek suppliers and sources of arms for the soon to be independent Israel. However, not representing a real country proved to be a major setback, since armament deals are almost exclusively made on a government to government basis. The covert organization responsible for illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine and the arms acquisition was called '*Mossad LeAliya Bet*', the forerunner of today's Israeli Mossad¹.

The Mossad Aliya Bet representatives seeking arms abroad had to work through circuitous ways, working with gun runners and smugglers who could provide weapons covertly for the right price. Small amounts of weapons were procured this way, and secretly shipped to the Haganah

in Palestine. But this small trickle of firearms, of many different makes and calibers, could not address the military needs of the rapidly expanding conflict. Barely two weeks after the UN partition vote, US President Truman invoked the Neutrality Act, which imposed a weapons embargo on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict². It therefore became clear that the United States was not going to be a source of weapons for the Haganah and Israel. David Ben Gurion instructed his representatives around Europe to seek out a government which would be ready to supply Israel with large numbers of standardized military firearms, and above all, the necessary ammunition to keep these arms going in battle³.

The Czechoslovak Arms Deal

In December 1947, Ben Gurion dispatched Ehud Avriel to Paris in order to covertly purchase as many arms as possible urgently. Avriel met with numerous arms dealers, agents and shady smugglers but no deal materialized. He was then introduced to a Jewish businessman, Robert Adam-Abramovich, living in Paris. Abramovich escaped from Rumania during the Holocaust. After the war, he developed close contacts with the management of the Brno arms factory in Czechoslovakia. Avriel and Abramovich flew together to Prague and negotiated over a massive arms deal, which ultimately included thousands of rifles, machine guns and millions of rounds of ammunition. The Brno factory, which produced during the war weapons for the Nazis, was desperate to find new export markets. The Czech government wanted to develop sources of income in foreign currency and was attracted to the immediate cash payments in US dollars offered by the Mossad representatives. Most of the money for the purchase of the arms came from donations by wealthy American Jews who gathered funds at the behest of Ben Gurion.

After protracted negotiations, the Czech authorities agreed to sign a covert arms deal with the representatives of the future State of Israel, under the cover of exporting these weapons to another country. Ehud Avriel decided on creating a cover by which the weapons would, supposedly, be exported to Ethiopia. At the time, Ethiopian Emperor Ha-

ile Selassie maintained good relations with Israel and Avriel was able to obtain Ethiopian documentation which could be adapted to cover this deal. He contacted the Czech Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, who was a close friend of Zionist leader Chaim Weitzman. Masaryk pledged his full support for the deal and personally signed the contract on behalf of Czechoslovakia on 14 January 1948. The way was opened for the export of large amounts of Czechoslovak arms to the Haganah forces in Palestine and the future Israel.

Operations Base Sibenik and the Role of the Yugoslav Intelligence Service

Once the Czech authorities agreed to the arms deal with Israel, the main problem was how to deliver these arms to Palestine, still under British rule. The British Navy patrolled the Mediterranean very effectively and searched any ship bound for Palestine, stopping both Jewish migrants and secret arms shipments. Transport by air was almost impossible because the British controlled the very few airfields in Palestine. Mossad operatives in Europe had to find a way of circumventing the British blockade, by sea or air, and delivering the Czech arms as quickly as possible to Haganah and Palmach units fighting desperate battles all over Palestine.

Realizing the length of time necessary for shipment by sea, as well as the British naval superiority in the Mediterranean, Ben Gurion demanded that at least some of the weapons be sent by air if at all possible. An intensive effort was made to covertly deliver some weapons by air. Mossad operatives were able to hire a Douglas DC4 aircraft and its crew from an American airline, the 'US Overseas Airlines', for a hazardous mission to Palestine. Loaded with 200 rifles, 40 machine guns and 150,000 rounds of ammunition, labeled as medical equipment, the plane flew from Prague and landed at night in an abandoned British emergency airfield near the Arab village of Beit Darass on 1 April 1948⁴. A group of Palmach fighters waiting on the ground quickly unloaded the arms, still in their manufacturers crates, and rush them during in the same night to Jewish units in the Jerusalem front. By morning,

no trace was left of the secret landing, with cows being walked on the abandoned airfield. British police officers, who arrived after frantic calls by local Arabs who claimed that a 'Russian plane' secretly landed at night and unloaded weapons for the Jews, were hosted to a good lunch in a nearby Jewish village and came to the conclusion those reports were a figment of Oriental imagination.

Despite the secrecy over the entire operation, as soon as the DC4 landed back in Prague its crew was met by CIA officers posing as American diplomats. The pilots were questioned over the activities of the Haganah in Czechoslovakia. It is likely that CIA officers were alerted to the mysterious flight, which did not register a destination and which was closely guarded by the Prague police while loading its cargo. The CIA provided the results of its investigations to the British Embassy in Prague, and thus British authorities were alerted to the fact that Czechoslovakia was providing arms to the Jews in Palestine⁵.

Despite the success of the DC4 airlift, it became clear that aerial transport could only provide a drop in the sea in terms of the quantity of the arms urgently needed. A shipping solution had to be found in order to bring the hundreds of tons of weapons and ammunition supplied by the Czechoslovaks. After many disappointments, Mossad Aliya Bet operatives were able to purchase a small 600 ton ship, the *Nora*, in Italy, and made it ready for the smuggling of arms to Palestine⁶.

An experienced Mossad Aliya Bet operative, Shaike Dan, developed close contacts with the Yugoslav intelligence service. Born as Yashayahu Trachtenberg in 1909 in Bessarabia, Dan immigrated to Palestine in 1935, where he joined the kibbutz and became immersed in Zionist activities. During World War II, Dan joined British intelligence and was trained in a special unit affiliated with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to operate behind enemy lines in Eastern Europe, establishing escape lines for downed allied pilots and working with local partisans⁷. In 1944, Dan was parachuted by British intelligence into Yugoslavia and joined Tito's partisan unit. After the war he remained in contact with many of the partisans who later became the political leaders of Yugo-

slavia. Some officials in the Yugoslav capital Belgrade were willing to covertly help Israel but without going public. Many Yugoslav intelligence officers were ex-partisans who had fought the Nazis throughout World War II and experienced at first hand the horrors of Nazi occupation and the deportation of the Jews to concentration camps. They felt a moral obligation to assist those Holocaust survivors who now considered Israel as their only possible home on earth. In addition to that, many Yugoslav officials rejected British imperialism and respected the Jewish struggle for independence in Palestine, in which they saw many parallels to their own historical struggle in the Balkans. Shaike Dan sought to receive permission in Belgrade for weapons from Czechoslovakia to be shipped through Yugoslavia to the port of Sibenik, where they could be loaded onto ships and smuggled into Palestine.

At the time, the Jewish Agency, the political organization representing the Jewish community in Palestine, were very active at the United Nations in New York, lobbying for the Zionist cause. The Jewish Agency's most senior diplomat, Moshe Sharet, met with the Soviet representative to the United Nations, Andrej Gromyko. Gromyko asked about the situation regarding equipment in Palestine, what was needed and whether Jewish forces could clandestinely unload ships without fearing British intervention. Ben Gurion instructed Sharet to reply that the unloading of ships could clandestinely be conducted in Tel Aviv at night. The Soviets thus implicitly gave their approval for the supply of arms to Israel. In a later document, Ivan Bakolin, head of the Middle East Department at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, wrote "*regarding the message of comrade Gromyko on the requests of the representatives of Israel... To provide assistance to Israel, I see it as possible to inform the Czechs and the Yugoslavs, secretly, our wish to cooperate with the representatives Israel over the purchase of artillery and aircraft shipments to Palestine*".⁷⁸ Once Yugoslav authorities received the blessing of the Soviets, the way was opened for actively supporting Israel's clandestine effort of obtaining arms urgently.

In March 1948, the ship Nora left Italy and entered the port of Sibenik, where a large shipment of arms from Czechoslovakia arrived for Israel.

The arms were shipped from Czechoslovakia down the Danube in barges to Vukovar, and from there taken by train to Sibenik, where they were held in a large warehouse at the port. It was guarded by a special team of well-trained officers from the Yugoslav intelligence service which were released from their regular assignments and sent to Sibenik to ensure the security of this sensitive operation. At any given time eight or ten armed Yugoslav intelligence officers were stationed in and around the warehouse. Many of these young Yugoslavs were former partisans who understood the historical significance of the task at hand.

As soon as the *Nora* docked loading began, with Mossad operatives mixing together with Yugoslav port workers to ensure the safety of the crates. Shaul Avigur, head of the Mossad operations in Europe who was based in Italy at the time, wanted to split the large shipment of arms into two parts, half being loaded on the *Nora* and the other half to go into a different ship. Avigur was afraid that the British Navy may find and confiscate the shipment, putting an end to the massive effort that went into securing those critical arms for Israel. However, Shaike Dan, who was in Sibenik throughout the entire operation, decided that the urgency of the military situation in Israel made this type of caution irrelevant and that the risk had to be undertaken to ship all available arms as one shipment on the *Nora*. Despite Avigur's orders to the contrary, Dan instructed the port authorities to load the entire shipment onto the *Nora*. This arms shipment included 4500 rifles, 200 machine guns and over five million rounds of ammunition, a huge quantity of arms way beyond anything that had reached the Haganah beforehand⁹. The arms crates were labeled as agricultural machinery and tractor spare parts.

The loading of the arms onto the *Nora* was carried out under the watchful eye of Yugoslav intelligence officers. In order to expedite the loading, and perhaps with historical irony in mind, the Yugoslavs also employed a group of German prisoners of war to help carry the crates to the *Nora*¹⁰. During the loading, one large crate fell while being hoisted by a crane and split open, with brand-new rifles spilled all over the pier. This mishap may have been an intentional act by local communi-

sts who were eager to find out what the mystery crates being shipped under such secrecy contained. A similar event took place around the same time at the Port of New York, while crates of arms were being loaded onto a ship heading for Israel. Together with Yugoslav security officers, Shaiké Dan rushed over and the rifles were quickly returned to the ship. The entire arms shipment was camouflaged by being covered with hundreds of tons of potatoes and onions¹¹.

Once the loading of the *Nora* was complete, its Italian crew refused to sail. The ship's captain, a 56-year-old veteran of the Italian merchant marine, said to Dan, "*if these arms will reach Palestine you will be a hero, but if the arms will be confiscated, I will become a pirate...*"¹² All attempts to convince the captain to sail failed, as his fear of British Navy searches was greater than the rewards offered by the Mossad. Dan had no choice but to threaten the captain that he will be arrested by the Yugoslav authorities and detained in Sibenik indefinitely, while the Israelis would find a new captain and crew to take the *Nora* out to sea. Only three years after the end of World War II, there was still strong animosity between Yugoslavs and Italians. During the war, Yugoslavia was divided between Italians and Germans who ruled with an iron hand and terrorized the population. The Italian captain knew he would receive little sympathy in a Yugoslav prison. He had no choice and the ship set sail towards the Mediterranean. It is clear that Shaiké Dan could not have acted the way he did if he did not have the full backing of senior Yugoslav intelligence officers present in Sibenik.

The *Nora* made its way across the Mediterranean but was caught in a strong storm and had to stop for two days at the port of Larnaca in Cyprus, where it berthed next to several British warships. Fearing detection by his unfriendly 'neighbors', the Haganah representative on the ship could not use the wireless to inform the Jewish leadership anxiously waiting in Tel Aviv on the progress of the voyage. Once the weather became better, the *Nora* continued its voyage and arrived at the shores of Palestine. The ship was given a cursory search by British authorities who failed to detect the weapons hidden under thousands of sacks of potatoes and was then released.

On 1 April 1948, the *Nora* arrived off the coast of Tel Aviv. After darkness, small boats were dispatched to the ship and the weapon crates quickly unloaded. As soon as the crates were unloaded at the port of Tel Aviv they were heaved onto trucks and rushed to the front lines, especially to the Jerusalem area. Jerusalem was under siege, its population was being starved and Jewish forces were preparing a new military offensive to relieve the siege. The joy of receiving for the first time modern weapons overcame many young Israeli soldiers, many soldiers kissing the oiled weapons as they unpacked the crates. In the Jerusalem front, these weapons enabled the first truly large-scale Haganah offensive which broke through Arab lines and lifted the siege of Jerusalem, ensuring the survival of Jerusalem's Jewish population. The following day, Ben Gurion cabled Avriel "*the things came on time and saved Jerusalem. Say well done to Ehud!*"¹³.

Mossad operations continued in Sibenik even after the State of Israel gained its independence on 14 May 1948. Arms were shipped from Czechoslovakia down the Danube to Sibenik, loaded onto ships and taken to Israel, where they were used to great effect in Israel's military successes over the invading Arab armies. By early 1949, Arab invasions were repulsed and Israel established its control over much of the area given to it by the UN partition resolution. The war ended in cease-fire agreements signed in Rhodes in March 1949.

Conclusions

In 1968, twenty years after the arrival of the *Nora*, a commemoration ceremony was conducted in Israel, bringing together many of the people responsible for that successful operation. The guest of honor was David Ben Gurion, who summarized the contribution of the arms from Czechoslovakia to Israel's independence. Ben Gurion emphatically stated that "*the Czech weapons saved the State of Israel, without any doubt! Without these weapons we would not have stayed alive*"¹⁴. This, in one line, is also the contribution of Yugoslav intelligence to the establishment of the State of Israel. Without being able to establish a secure and effective base of operations in Sibenik, the Mossad Aliya Bet would very likely not have

been able to transfer the arms from Czechoslovakia to Israel on time to save the Jewish state. Yugoslav help in this operation was sanctioned at the highest levels of political authority, but it was up to individual Yugoslav intelligence officers, many of them ex-partisans, to carry out the practical aspects of this policy and ensure an uninterrupted and quick delivery of the arms on their way to Israel. Without this help, Haganah forces may not have been able to withstand the strong Arab attacks of March 1948 and Jewish defense may have collapsed in many areas. The contribution of the Czechoslovakian arms deal was critical for Israel's success in its war of independence, and the role of Yugoslav intelligence was critical in the arms delivery operation.

1. The name is Hebrew for 'Institute for Immigration B'. Immigration 'B' was a euphemism for illegal migration.
2. Slater Leonard, 'The Pledge', New York, 1970, p. 45.
3. Frank Haggai, Klima Zdenek and Goldstein Yossi, 'The First Israeli Weapons Procurement Behind the Iron Curtain: The Decisive Impact on the War of Independence', *Israel Studies* Vol. 22 No. 3, Fall 2017, pp. 125-151.
4. Milstein Uri, 'Sending arms by air and sea under the noses of the British', <http://www.news1.co.il/Archive/002-D-125487-00.html>, downloaded 17 December 2018
5. There were no tower facilities, electric lighting or power at this abandoned emergency airfield, and Haganah operators had to search through Tel Aviv electrical shops to find enough batteries for powering makeshift landing lights. Due to radio problems and misunderstandings, the DC4 was almost prevented from landing. See *Ibid*.
6. Yona Amnon, 'Missions with no Trace', Jerusalem, 2006, p. 248.
7. Ettinger Amos, 'Blind Jump: The Story of Shaike Dan', New York, 1992.
8. Yehuda Ben Tzur, 'Nora – the acquisition (Rechesh) ship which carried the arms shipment that made a turning point in the War of Independence' (Heb.), www.palyam.org/OniyotRekhes/Nora_I, downloaded 15 December 2018.
9. Ettinger Amos, 'Blind Jump: The Story of Shaike Dan', pp. 277-278.
10. Yehuda Ben Tzur, 'Nora – the acquisition (Rechesh) ship which carried the arms shipment that made a turning point in the War of Independence' (Heb.), www.palyam.org/OniyotRekhes/Nora_I, downloaded 15 December 2018.
11. Much of this vegetable load rotted on the way and had to be discarded upon arrival in Tel Aviv.
12. *Ibid*, p. 279.
13. Galili Zeev, 'Ephraim Eilin – The Man who saved the State in 48', <http://www.zeevgalili.com/2010/09/10783>, downloaded 30 December 2018. Also Milstein Uri, 'Sending arms by air and sea under the noses of the British'.
14. A recording of Ben Gurion's speech is available at http://www.palyam.org/OniyotRekhes/hf_Nora.

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COMBATING FUNDAMENTALISTS BY DEMOCRACY: LESSONS FROM AFGHAN MILITIAS

Abstract: Serbia is characterized by a heterogenic society comprised of a variety of religions (including minorities such as Muslim Albanians). Throughout the 1990's, groups of Jihadists from Afghanistan entered the country, in order to implement a fundamentalist agenda. Their involvement in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union served as a fertile ground for training and an implementation of former experiences. Serbian authorities decreased the activities of these Afghan militias, yet, as they expanded their operations into new areas of conflict, as Syria, there could be a new challenge. Allocating the professional information between Israeli relevant experts (having to face these militias on the northern border), and their Serbian counterparts, may contribute to the working relations between the countries and develop a new improved professional cooperation.

Key Words: Afghan Militias, Democracy, Jihadists, Community & Social Networks

Introduction: Methods of Resolving Counter Religious Tensions

Serbia is characterized by a variety of religions, culminating in a co-existence of Serbs vis-v-vis Albanian communities. It is a challenging society, on which methods of negotiating differences can be implemented based on a common denominator of trust. The ethnic principle of each religion is, in fact, an important factor to be taken into consideration by the governmental relevant experts, thus, referring to internal issues of the religious community (Rossi, 2014: 867; Sullivan Relating to Lijphart, 2009: 103). Thus, the political culture in the country serves as a key factor in relating any social structural aspect, above any constitutional solution (Orlović, 2015: 46).

Some scholars relate to a question of power sharing through centralization or decentralization processes between these communities by a central government (focusing on implementing agreements of representation of minorities transferring the central authority from or to the government, while occasionally relating to territorial issues). Throughout this process, it is important to emphasize the dimension of the community itself. In that manner, Serbians implemented the meaning of sharing the experience of common living between different religions, through democratic processes of an institutional model combining federal features (Gergana, & Huysseune, 2004: 1; Kasapović, 2005: 25-26; Orlović, 2015, 29; Rossi, 2014: 867; Sullivan (Relating to Lijphart), 2009: 103).

Orlović (2015: 29, 45-46), noted that a functioning state outgrows any religious division in the society. Notwithstanding the key factor of the state, in preventing any use of potential conflicts by internal or external powers (e.g., Terrorists).

The Use of an Unbalanced Central Government by Terrorist Movements: The Case of Afghan Militias

Throughout history there were cases in which the central government could not impose useful sovereignty over specific communities. Hafez

(2009: 73, 75,89-90), related to the dispersing militia members following the defeat of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, as key Afghan militias served as key protagonists in that arena. Originally, Afghan militia members began their operation in their homeland, as a small group of 3,000-4000 volunteers. Following 1986/7, until the end of the war in their country in 1989, these insurgents decided to depart from their homeland while exploiting four factors in the early 1990: Emerging conflicts, safe havens, governmental support, and militant networks. The Afghan insurgents, thus, entered the Balkans (mainly Bosnia), and other existing conflicts throughout that period (early 1990's), such as Algeria and Chechnya.

As the rule by the central government weakens in favor of local or foreign militias, they tend to abuse fears and motivation for aggression or anger among minorities (Spanovic et.al., 2010: 725). Afghan militias who entered into Muslim areas in the Balkans, used a generally marginalized social and economic status, gaps between them and majority societies, vis-à-vis a unique social and political integration in the country (Zsolt, 2009: 257, 2777).

According to Byman (2015: 581), these militia members form networks with other radicals, embrace techniques like suicide bombings and beheadings, and establish ties to Jihadists around the world. Hence, the necessity of effective security services in order to lower the ambition and brutality of active Afghan militia members. Their lack of discipline will cause anger and disassociation by the local populations and may serve as a tool of combatting them (should relevant security services operate effectively).

Asal & Pate (2014: 1, 10-11, 14-15) argue that religious political organizations use violence to gain political change in the country. Thus, according to Sarajlić (2011: 173, 188), social networks may be based on humanitarian approach through the use of religious NGO's supported by Saudi-Arabia or Iran. As Serbia has a new Islamic community, there is an important role for the traditional or communal leadership, with which the state will work, on narrowing existing cleavages in favor of a common denominator. Economic and business development may be one of the means to achieving it.

Cooperation between Israel & Serbia:

Israel has to confront pro-Iranian militias in Syria, some of them are Afghan militias transferred through Iran and Iraq in order to participate in the Syrian civil-war. Karagiannis (2013: 119), defined the role of these militias in conflict zones while relating to Syria, as using mosques, preachers, and the internet to promote radicalism and recruit new members. This is done by emphasizing identity and imagined global community by transnational Islamic multifunctional entities on the rise.

In depicting the test case of Afghan militias' entry into Muslim areas in the Balkans, one may draw parallel to other conflicts, referring to countries having to combat the same militias in different parts of the globe. Hafez, (2009: 90), recommended cooperation between concerned governments of dispersing jihadists. This cooperation could be based on: Intelligence (in the country of origin, e.g., Iraq), emerging conflicts or weak states as a potential target of dispersing Jihadists, aid by the west to these countries, diplomatic majors against third party states that harbor these insurgents and offer amnesty to foreign fighters who wish to return to a normative behavior (who do not take part in Jihad any more). There can be a parallel deduction of insights, referring to those countries having to combat the same militias in different parts of the globe.

An additional method of combating extremism in potential communities from which terrorists may evolve, is a reduction of fear as it is an important factor contributing to building trust between conflicted groups. Feeling of trust will arise as the population will feel less aggrieved and angry over past injustices (Spanovic, et.al., 2010: 737).

Conclusions:

The experience of combating Afghan militias in the past can serve as a tool for promoting cooperation between Israeli experts and their Serbian counterparts. As these militias enter new conflict areas, one may draw a parallel from previous experiences in combating this mi-

litia by sharing the operational best practices, intelligence, tactics and strategies. The success in decreasing the activities of Afghan militias in the Balkans, can be reviewed according to new challenges of the 21st century. A future cooperation and foreign relations between Israel and Serbia can be based on sharing professional information.

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ISRAEL AND YUGOSLAVIA AT CROSSROAD (1947–1949)

Introduction

About one million Serbs, 80,000 Jews and some 25,000 gypsies were killed in Yugoslavia during World War II. The Muslim S.S divisions from the Balkans played a central role in eradicating the Jewish communities and they were renowned for great cruelty towards the Jews, gypsies and Serbs.

Yugoslavia was formed from the ruins of the Second World War, as a new socialist state under the leadership of Tito, searching for identity in the bipolar world. Israel was founded as a new independent state after the holocaust and had to fight in order to protect itself against hostile Arab neighbors. On this background Israel and Yugoslavia had some common interests that led to cooperation between the two states. Yugoslavia had taken an adherent position towards the Israeli side in the conflict and allowed the transfer of arms, and by doing so contributed to the victory of Israel in the 1948 war.

At the time that Yugoslavia supported Israel in its war of independence Muslim volunteers fought against Israel with the Arab forces. Since the Muslim volunteers in the German S. S. units could not return home for fear of prosecution or internment, they remained in Italy as a people without a country and some of them left to Syria to take part in war against Israel.

There were hundreds of volunteers from Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia and Albania in Syria by April of 1948, before Israel's declaration of Independence on May, 15, 1948. The Muslim volunteers from the Balkans took part in battles against Israel in Jerusalem Jafa and the Galil.

This article will discuss the bilateral relations between Israel and Yugoslavia on the backdrop of the "Cold War" era:

- The Israeli Yugoslav cooperation during the Israeli war of independence 1947–1949.
- The involvement of Muslims from the Balkans in the 1948 war against Israel.

The Israeli Yugoslav cooperation during the Israeli independence war 1947–1949

After the Second World War with introduction of the socialist system in Yugoslavia it saw the Jewish community of Palestine as a potential ally. Yugoslavia saw the British as imperialists and foes, allies from the time of the Second World War, who had returned to their evil ways. Moreover, as former partisans, they felt an emotional affinity for the small nation of the Jews struggling against an enemy that vastly outnumbered it.

The Jewish community in Palestine made the preparations for the declaration of independent state of Israel according to the UN resolution “Division of Palestine” from November 29, 1947, facing the Arab threat to invade and destroy the new state.

Israel needed arms desperately and a significant source was the Eastern bloc. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, requested assistance in the purchase of industrial products that it could not obtain from the West, (tractors, transformers, heavy trucks, heavy duty cranes and oil drillings machinery).¹

By the standards of the time, the dimensions of the Yugoslav request were enormous. For precisely that reason it generated the idea that Israel might reap political benefit throughout Eastern Europe. Israel had established a governmental corporation to deal with such matters. In the summer of 1948 the proposition was discussed by Efraim Ilin and Avraham Friedman (another Israeli businessman) on the one hand, and the Israeli construction company Solel Boneh, on the other. The partners referred to the corporation as “Hadad” – an acronym of the initials of Hillel Dan and David HaCohen, managers of Solel Boneh who, together with Meir Giron, were principally responsible for instrumenting the corporation on that side.

According to Ilin, the cooperative corporation was never formally established and “every transaction was carried out ad hoc”. Nevertheless, several transactions were effected on behalf of the Yugoslavs valued at many hundreds of thousands of dollars. The “Yugoslav connection”

paid various political and military dividends. Not unnaturally 'it also raised hopes that the Hadad Corporation's activities could be put to use in other Soviet bloc countries, especially in order to soften opposition to widespread legal emigration of Jews. (One important instance took place in Romania).

With the Arab invasion threat in its back, Israel increased the pace of attempts to purchase weapons to prepare for the upcoming war properly. The purchases of military equipment had to be done secretly, given the UN embargo on military aid to the rival sides in the Middle East, and the presence of British forces in Palestine until May 1948.

Israel had made great efforts to get direct military aid from the Soviet Union but was unable to achieve it. Despite its refusal to sell the weapons directly, the Soviet Union agreed that Israel will purchase military equipment from Czechoslovakia, but not Soviet-made – only locally made products or World War Two surplus left.

The negotiations for the Czechoslovakian aid began in December 1947 and the aid itself ended in 1951.

On January 10, 1948, the first weapon deal with Czechoslovakia was signed, and it included: 200 MG34 machine guns, 4500 "Mouser P 18" rifles, and about 5 million 7.92 mm diameter bullets. More deals were signed in the following weeks.

In another deal, Israel purchased "Messerschmitt" fighter planes, since their manufacture in Czechoslovakia was renewed for export. On April 23, 1948, Israel purchased ten of those planes, and a month later – 15 more.

Czechoslovakia did not have a maritime outlet, and most of its air lanes were above British and American controlled areas. Delivering the goods to Israel had to be done in transit by communist countries such as Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, or Poland – to harbors in the Adriatic or Baltic seas.

The actual course, not necessarily the shortest one, combined railway transport to Bratislava, over to ships sailing on the Danube, and again by train or trucks, to the ports Šibenik or Rijeka on Adriatic coasts of Yugoslavia, and over to Israel on ships.

At the end of January 1948, Israel assessed that the delivery would take no longer than a month, yet this assessment was optimistic and did not take into account the future difficulties that the Yugoslav government was about to create. As it turned out, Czechoslovakian ability to set the records strait was slim, and an “order” from Moscow failed to arrive, the Israeli purchase agents had to negotiate themselves directly with the Yugoslav authorities.²

Eventually, weapons deliveries were transferred through Jugoslavija and contributed heavily to hold the Arab invasion that began on May 15; 1948. Jugoslavija was also a mediator for delivery of 50 “Spitfire” fighter planes that Israel purchased from Czechoslovakia. The planes were needed for the IDF counter offensive that was first planned for the last week of September 1948 and later postponed to the middle of October 1948. They were considered a necessary term for the creation of Israeli control and domination of skies.³ But, existing difficulties were further compounded by the sensitivity of Prague to Anglo – American pressures, and an American threat to the aerial corridor in which Czechoslovakia planes flew in the skies of Europe.⁴

Therefore, the Czechoslovakian government did not allow the delivery of the fighter planes by flight. In their distress the Israeli purchase agents came up with the idea to fly the planes directly. To implement this idea, a few more external fuel tanks were installed, which allowed them to fly to Israel. The mission had succeeded technically, but failed in timing. Jugoslavija, which was supposed to help in the fueling of the planes in Podgorica (Titograd) near the Albanian border, constantly hardened the terms.

An attempt to find out what were the motives for these delays showed, that since the Cominform conference – the high establishment of the communist parties, that was completely under Russian supervision – the Belgrade\Moscow relations were getting worse and worse. In September 1948 the Yugoslav government was walking down a slippery lane between Western and Soviet orientation in which not only Moscow, but also Washington were measuring Belgrade with suspicious.

From previous attempts to deliver Czechoslovakian weapons to Israel, it was clear that the Soviets will not interfere to pressure Jugoslavija to hurry the transfer of the equipment. The continuing hesitations of this government and its lack of cooperation with Israel in the fall of 1948, despite its financial rewards are explained with these Yugoslav misgivings.

The delay in the delivery of the “Spitfire” planes on the eve of the most decisive operations of the IDF caused Israel to consider relocating the fueling to Bulgaria – only then the Yugoslavs confirmed, and on September 24, 1948, six “Spitfire” planes, painted in Yugoslav air force colors, arrived from Konovitz in Czechoslovakia to Podgorica in Jugoslavija.⁵

After one of the planes was severely damaged upon landing, the planes took off after 2 days of rest, refueling and technical preparations. Five planes have been guided and escorted by the chartered “Sky Master” plane that was used by the Israeli transportation squadron.⁶

Alas, two airplanes had to land in Rhodes in Greece, due to fuel supply problems. This incident exposed the Yugoslav partnership and made them cease the operation. In the end, only 3 airplanes arrived, and only those took an active part in the IDF operations in October 1948. The other 15 planes, who were destined to go the same route, were the victim of Yugoslav hesitations that lasted for many weeks.⁷

The Israeli government tried again to transfer the fueling stop to Bulgaria, but over there the Israeli agents encountered the demand of the Bulgarian government for payment of 10,000 dollars for each plane to land in its terms, excluding the price of the fuel.

After a while, the Yugoslav government decided to open the Podgorica airbase on December 17, 1948. Following the end of the 1948 war and the truce accords with the Arab states, the need for the transfer of planes and arms via Jugoslavija was eliminated.

The involvement of Muslims from the Balkans in the war against Israel (1947 – 1949)

Germany occupied the Balkans in 1941. Among other aspects, World War II honed the confrontation between the Muslims in the Balkans and their adversaries and provided an opportunity for the infiltration of radical Islamic influences from the “Breeding house” of the Palestinian Mufti Hajj Amin al Husseini.⁸ Hajj Amin noted that thanks to his considerable efforts he had succeeded in convincing the Muslims in Balkans of the importance of active cooperation with Germany, and they understood that it was worth their while to volunteer and be incorporated in the establishment of the SS-Waffen Divisions.

The Muslim Waffen SS divisions in Balkans

The first Muslim division was formed in 1943 and was called “Handzar,” meaning a spear or a dagger.⁹ The division was also known as SS Division number 13. The Handzar soldiers rained terror upon the civilian population everywhere that they were posted and perpetrated many war crimes, mass killings, rapes, the burning of complete towns with their inhabitants, robbery and looting.

The second Muslim Waffen SS division was formed in March 1944, on the basis of Albanians from Kosovo and Sanjak. The Waffen-SS 21st Division, was named after the Albanian national hero from the 15th century – Skander-beg.

The first operational activity of the 21st Division was on May 21, 1944; the “Skander-beg” soldiers raided Jewish homes in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, arrested them and handed them over to the Germans who sent them to Bergen-Belzen where many of them perished.

At the initiative and with the active assistance of Hajj Amin, an attempt was made to establish the third Muslim Waffen-SS division. At the order issued by Himler’s headquarters on June 10, 1944, it was decided to establish a new Muslim division, the Waffen-SS 23rd Divi-

sion named “Kama”. On June 24, 1944, it was transferred to Hungarian territory where it was supposed to stay until the end of December 1944.

For reasons that are unclear, the members of the Skander-beg and Kama Divisions were dispersed among other Waffen-SS divisions in Hungary due to a directive issued on September 24, 1944, and for all intents and purposes the Muslim Divisions ceased to exist.

The Muslim SS divisions after the end of WW II

About one million Serbs, 80,000 Jews and some 25,000 gypsies were killed in Jugoslavija during World War II. The Muslim SS Divisions played a central role in eradicating the Jewish communities. They were renowned for great cruelty towards the Jews, gypsies and Serbs.¹⁰

When the war came to a close the Handzar division surrendered to the British army on May 8, 1945. Large numbers of Bosnian Muslim P. O.Ws were moved by the British army from Villach, Udine and Padua to Rimini near Taranto in Italy. According to one of the members of the unit there were as many as 70,000 P. O.Ws, including Bosnians and others, at the camp.¹¹

Meanwhile the former members of the Handzar division began to be transformed from P. O.W camps to displaced persons (D. P.) camps in Italy. This was brought due to the creation of Marshall Tito’s Jugoslavija at the end of the Second World War. Since the former Bosnian Muslim volunteers in the German S. S. units could not return home for fear of prosecution or internment, they remained in Italy as a people without a country.¹²

The war in Palestine – The Arab Liberation Army (ALA)

In 1947, following the UN resolution for the partition of Palestine, Qawuqji was appointed commander of the Arab Liberation Army (Jaysh al-Inqadh) formed by the Arab League out of volunteers from the surrounding Arab countries and Muslim communities to come to

the aid of the Palestinian Arabs. The prime minister of Syria, Shukri al Quwatli, was behind the scenes of the proposal to establish the volunteer army and the headquarters and training bases of the Arab Liberation Army were in Damascus.¹³

The Arab Liberation Army (ALA) had entered Palestine gradually over a period of four months starting in January 1948 and Qawuqji himself entered Palestine in early March 1948, establishing headquarters at the village of Jaba'.

The formation of the Bosnian unit of the ALA (1947)

A report by Israel Baer in the Palestine Post noted that “the latest recruits to the Syrian army are members of the Bosnian Waffen S. S... Syria has offered asylum to the entire Bosnian S. S. several thousands of whom had escaped into British occupation zones in Austria and Germany... a number of Bosnian S. S with their Nazi-trained commanders are now in Syria. It is reported that they are directing a school for commando tactics for the Syrian Army.”¹⁴

On March 14, 1948, a group of 67 Albanians, 20 Bosnians, and 21 Croats led by an Albanian named Derwish Bashaco arrived by boat in Beirut from Italy. A Haganah¹⁵ report mentions that there was a German officer among them. They were hosted by the Palestine Arab Bureau and made their way to Damascus to join the ALA.¹⁶

The Syrian army had provided a Syrian military base in Katana, south-west of Damascus for training Palestinian youth and later for the use by the Arab Liberation Army. Upon arrival in Damascus, the volunteers from the Balkans found their way to the Katana base.¹⁷

If one accepts merely the low totals from newspaper accounts it appears that there were at least 520 Bosnians, 67 Albanians and 111 Croats in Syria or Beirut as well as 135 Bosnians on their way to Egypt and fifty-seven Bosnians in Jordan. There were at least 890 volunteers from Jugoslavija and Albania in the Middle East by April of 1948, before Israel's declaration of Independence on May, 15, 1948.¹⁸

By December, 1947 a nucleus of former Handzar officers had made their way to Syria and were beginning to re-constitute their unit in Damascus. Their knowledge of Arabic would have been rudimentary but their unit's imams, who presumably also were in the D. P camps, would have been able to translate some Arabic to them, having learned literary Arabic through religious schooling.¹⁹

The 1948 war – The Jihad in Palestine

On January 8, 1948, the borders of British held Palestine were breached by a battalion of the ALA – “the Second Yarmuk Battalion” which was 330-soldiers strong and was commanded by Adib Shishakli. Entering from Syria, the battalion set its headquarters near Tarshiha in the Galilee. On January 20, 1948, this battalion attacked Kibbutz Yehiam and failed. The British High Commissioner Alan Cunningham asked his government to pressurize Syria to stop the invasion of the mandate territory by the ALA by threatening that the British Army would take action.²⁰

On January 20, 1948, a second ALA Battalion, a 630-soldier-strong First Yarmuk battalion, led by the Syrian officer Mohammed Safa, entered Palestine. It crossed the Damia bridge over the Jordan River in a long convoy. An attempt by the British police to prevent their entry failed because of the intervention of the Arab Legion, and so the invasion was not stopped by the British in spite of protests from the Jewish Agency.

Fawzi al Qawuqji joined this regiment, which was parked near Tubas. On February 15, 1948 the battalion attacked Kibbutz Tirat Zvi but failed to overtake it.

The Hittin Battalion, led by the Iraqi Madlul Abbas, crossed the Jordan River on the Damia bridge on January 29, 1948. The two battalions that had come from Transjordan split into smaller units and deployed throughout Samaria.

On February 15, 1948, Al-Ahram's correspondent in Beirut reported: “The Arab forces are ready to launch the Jihad outside and inside Palestine according to a master plan, to be implemented in several phases.”

He added: “Four thousand mujahedeen are fighting alongside the Palestinians inside the country, while hundreds of others are awaiting the orders of General Ismail Safwat to cross the borders under the command of Fawzi Al-Qawuqji.”²¹

Qawuqji returned to Syria to organize further forces and in March 1948 re-entered Palestine from Syria with the “Al Hussein,” and “Al Qadsia” battalions, numbering 360 soldiers each. A final “Jabal al Arab” battalion manned by 500 Druze soldiers and commanded by Shakib Wahab settled in Shfar’am.

The Druze forces took part in the battle of Ramat Yohanan. Following the fierce battle that inflicted many casualties on both sides, the battalion commanders reached an agreement with the Haganah to withdraw. Some members of the battalion, led by Ismail Qabalan, later fled from Syria and volunteered to the IDF to form the basis of its Druze forces.

The battle of Mishmar Haemek

On March 5, 1948, Qawuqji returned to Palestine and set his headquarters in the Jaba village between Nablus and Jenin. He also set up a radio station broadcasting propaganda in Hebrew, Arabic and English. On April 4, 1948 the ALA forces attacked Kibutz Mishmar Haemek in order to take it and join forces with the Arabs of Haifa. The campaign lasted for ten days and ended in defeat for the ALA.

The battle of Safed

In Parallel, the battalion led by Adiv Sishakli was defeated in the battle for Safed during operation “Yiftach.”

The battle of the road leading to Jerusalem ²²

Since the fall of 1947, Arab forces under Abdul Kader Hussein and other locals had harassed Jewish traffic and supplies moving from Tel Aviv to

Jerusalem. Eventually the road was effectively closed. By this time the ALA had consolidated a position around Nablus and Jenin, after having infiltrated into Palestine from Syria through Jordan.

Qawuqji wrote in his memoirs that “on April 8, 1948, I took the risk of sending reinforcements to Jerusalem under the command of the late Staff Captain Mamun al-Bitar, an extremely courageous and competent officer.”²³

An artillery unit of the ALA was dispatched to Nebi Samuel, on April 10, 1948, and more units arrived in late April to aid in the siege of Jerusalem but there are conflicting reports that some Bosnians found themselves embroiled in the battle for Kastel between the 3- 8 of April, 1948. The Bosnian unit included at most 120 men from the ALA. This battle was a precursor to the Haganah's Operation “Nachshon” which was intended to relieve the siege of Jerusalem.

It is not clear what became of the Bosnians who fought at Kastel, it may have been the same unit that was at Jaffa a month later. Most likely there were a few Bosnians who had joined Abdul Khader Hussein's 'Mujahideen' unit .

The battle of Jaffa

The next battle that the Bosnian units participated in was at Jaffa between April 25 and May 5, 1948. Jaffa had been allotted to the Arab state in the U. N partition plan, but it was surrounded by territory allotted to the Jewish state. The battle began when the Jewish underground group, the ETZEL , launched an attack on the city. According to the Haganah there were 400 “Yugoslavs” and 200 Iraqis defending Jaffa.²⁴

According to Khalidi the garrison of Jaffa consisted of 350 ALA men and 250 local Arabs.

On April 28, 1948, Michel Issa, commander of the Ajnadin Battalion, received orders from Fauzi Qawuqji to move from the Jerusalem foothills to relieve the siege of Jaffa. At the time he was based at the villages of Biddu and Nabi Samweel with a unit of the Hittin battalion. He

took all 250 men with him. The Ajnadin Battalion was made up of local Arabs most of whom had formerly been members of the Trans-Jordanian Frontier Force (T. J.F. F).⁴⁵

Issa arrived in Jaffa on April 29th at 6am at the time Jaffa was commanded by Major Adel Najm al-Din who proceeded to refuse to hand over the city to Issa. Due to the dispute Najm al Din deserted the city on the 1st of May. According to Issa's telegram to Qawuqji, Adel left city by sea with all Iraqis and "Yugoslavs. The last telegram that Qawuqji received about the situation in Jaffa was that "Michel Isa had succeeded in reaching our lines with what was left of the Ajnadin Battalion".²⁵

The last stages of the 1948 war

In June 1948 the ALA returned to the Galilee and took part in retaking Malkiya, on June 5th. During the "ten days battles" ALA forces based in Tarshiha attacked Jewish forces in Sejera but had to retreat when Nazareth was occupied by the IDF.

On July 18, 1948, the second truce of the conflict went into effect. During the second truce the ALA remained active and in October 22, 1948 the ALA succeeded in taking the post of Sheikh Abed near Manara and a counterattack by the IDF Carmeli Brigade failed. During the 24–25 October, ALA troops regularly sniped at Manara and at traffic along the main road.

Fawzi al Qawuqji demanded that Israel evacuate neighboring kibbutz Yftah and thin out its forces in Manara. Israel, in turn, demanded the ALA's withdrawal from the captured positions and, after a "no" from Qawuqji, informed the United Nations that it felt free to do as it pleased.²⁶

In October 1948, the IDF initiated Operation "Hiram" "to rout the ALA from its strongholds in the Galilee. The operation was launched on the night of 28–29 October 1948, fielding four IDF brigades. The operational order was "to destroy the enemy in the central Galilee "pocket", to occupy the whole of the Galilee and to establish the defense line on the country's northern border."²⁷

The operation began as the ALA's headquarters at Tarshiha was attacked and captured by IDF forces. Although the ALA suffered hundreds of casualties, Qawuqji, managed to escape with most of his army to Lebanon. The ALA never returned to Palestine and was dismantled in the following months.

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**SERBIA AND ISRAEL
RELATIONSHIP – SECURITY
ASPECTS**

An historical retrospective

In July 2018 the Israeli president Reuven Rivlin visited the Republic of Serbia to participate in a ceremony with Serbian President renaming a street after the Zionist visionary Theodor Herzl in the Belgrade neighborhood of Zemun. This unusual event, (as reported by Ronem Shinidman on the Israeli Jerusalem Post, November 3, 2018) marked the first ever visit by an Israeli president to Serbia, received less coverage than would be expected from most Israeli news outlets. President Rivlin's visit accompanied by this journalistic important report has revived a chapter in the new history of the Jewish people, which I am sure many Israelis, and especially the younger generation, are unaware of. What was Herzl's connection to Zemun, and why would the Serbian government name a street after him? According to the eye-opening and interesting report, "the answer may surprise most Jews and even many ardent Zionists. The intellectual roots of political Zionism and the Jewish state did not start with the refined emancipated Jews of Vienna or Paris, and they certainly don't begin in Poland. Zionism's journey traces back to a pious Sephardi rabbi Judah Ben Shlomo Hai Alkalai, in what was then the Serbian border town of Zemun at the edge of the Austrian Empire. It was rabbi Alkalai who taught Herzl's grandfather and father and likely planted the seeds of the Jewish state, some 70 years before the First Zionist Congress in Basel and 90 years before the Balfour Declaration".¹

Rabbi Alkalai was one of the influential precursors of modern Zionism and was noted through his advocacy in favor of the restoration of the Jews to the Land of Israel. By reason of some of his projects, he may justly be regarded as one of the precursors of the modern Zionists such as Theodor Herzl.

While most of Balkan nations have been intolerant towards its Jewish population, Serbia stood out as the few countries offer Jews a home. The Jewish community in Serbia is one of the less persecuted Jewish communities in Europe, and it was strengthened by Serbian

¹ <https://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Celebrating-Zionisms-roots-in-Serbia-570873>

sacrifices in WWII to protect its Jewish community from the Nazi Germans. Later, Israel was formed with Serbian supports. And in the Cold War, Yugoslavia/Serbia maintained close relations to Israel until today.

Security current affairs

In October 2009, The Republic of Serbian Interior Minister paid a visit to Israel, during which an agreement was signed between the two governments on cooperation in the fight against crime, illegal trade and abuse of narcotics and psychoactive substances, terrorism and other serious criminal acts.

The relations between The Republic of Serbia and Israel have known lights and shadows with moments of solidarity along misunderstandings and political divergences. There was a too long period of rupture in the relations, and yet, the warm feelings, affinity and friendship were kept alive. Today, the bilateral relationship enjoy open channels and rich political dialogue, exchange of views and positions trying to set a high level political agenda for the benefit of the two countries. In economy, the trade exchange is growing and its portfolio becomes wider and more diversified. Israeli investments in Serbia are on the rise and number of Israeli tourists has increased dramatically. Exchange of cultural activities is an important tool in getting to know each other better.

Nowadays both countries are threatened by or in conflict with Islamist radicalism and terrorism which also creates a feeling of shared destiny. The regular bilateral consultations between the Republic of Serbia and Israel extensively upgraded in all topics of common interest among them security and counter terrorism. Both, Israel and the Republic of Serbia recognize the threat that terrorism poses to the basic values on which it rests, such as the rule of law, human rights and democracy, including freedom, peace and safety of citizens, sovereignty and territorial integrity, stability and safety of the state and legitimately elected authorities, as well as international peace and safety of the international community.

Today more than in past years, the growing threats to public and homeland security challenges define the bilateral and multilateral co-

operation. Israel and The Republic of Serbia share common and fundamental interests in combating terrorism, radicalization to violence, inspiration and incitement to terrorism, the use of weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime, cybercrime and cyber-attacks, border control, and crisis management transcend national boundaries.

The Jihadist terrorism today can be characterized in three main trends: the preference for attacking soft targets and people, rather than other targets, to provoke an emotional response from the general public. Attacks on symbols of authority and attacks on symbols of Western lifestyle. New attacks by jihadist terrorists following one of these patterns, or a combination thereof, are very likely:

- Along with the increase in jihadist attacks, their preparation and execution have become less sophisticated.
- Jihadist terrorists are often found to be lone actors, either preparing themselves alone or facilitated by friends and relatives.
- However, online propaganda and networking via social media are still essential means by which to recruit, radicalize and raise money. The often rudimentary knowledge of Islam makes potential attackers vulnerable to influence and manipulation.
- Recent jihadist attacks were committed primarily by home-grown terrorists, radicalized without having travelled to join a terrorist group abroad. Among the highly diverse range of attackers, some were known to police, but not for terrorist activities, and most had no direct links to any jihadist organization.
- The degradation of the so-called Islamic State's (ISIS) organizational structures does not imply a reduction of the threat of jihadist terrorism. Terrorist activities ordered, guided or inspired by ISIS, al-Qaeda or other jihadist organizations remain a real possibility.
- Civil wars generated an unprecedented flow of refugees (among them potential Jihadi infiltrators' return to their home countries), created new strategic and security operational challenges with implications on borders security (Land, Sea and Airports) and the homeland security.

- Wahhabism extreme ideology, charities and funding still remain a cause of concern with implications on the homeland security.

Unfortunately, it appears that terrorism will continue to be a threat for the world, its citizens, security and the way of life for the foreseeable future. The problem affects all equally, and we can only address it with collective action, unity of purpose, and above all trust. As both countries are targets for terrorism – we need to keep our collective focus, and strengthen our efforts to deny terrorists the means they need to carry out attacks including arms, explosives and funding; work on evolving areas such as CBRN threats; and continue to tackle radicalization and all types of violent extremism. In light of the global nature of these challenges, Israel and The Republic of Serbia share and recognize the grave threat that terrorism, radicalization to violence, inspiration and incitement to terrorism pose to international peace and security, the fact that there can be no justification for acts of terrorism, and the need to take effective measures against terrorists, their sponsors and enablers.

In order to counter the threat of terrorism, Israel and The Republic of Serbia have increased their security coordination and dialogue, with the aim, inter alia, of curbing the movement of “foreign fighters”, cutting off terrorist financing, and countering inspiration and incitement to acts of terrorism and violence, including online.

In a joint effort (as part of the global war on terrorism) Israel and The Republic of Serbia are engaged in strengthening the operational, technological, and methodological cooperation in the field of homeland and public security in general, and in combatting terrorism in particular:

- Maintain direct channels of communication at the highest levels of the homeland and public security agencies identifying current and future terrorist threats and trends in both countries and the international arena.
- Establishing mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge, information, and best practices.
- Developing technological recommendations and methods for preventing and countering terrorism, and for handling emergency situations.

Ephraim Lapid

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**TWO CHIEFS OF ISRAELI
MILITARY FROM EX-YUGOSLAVIA
COMMANDED THE IDF IN
TIMES OF WAR**

Haim Bar-Lev and David (Dado) Elazar were the IDF Chiefs of General Staff in the 1960s and 1970s respectively. Both grew up in Ex-Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from 1918 till 1929 and from 1929 till 1941 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) settled in Israel as teenagers, and were good friends who kept contact over the years. Elazar succeeded his friend Bar-Lev as Chief of General Staff. Their names are linked with Israel's toughest wars – the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition and the Yom Kippur War. Each in his turn led the IDF when it faced major threats, overcame them, and came out victorious.

Haim Bar-Lev

Haim Brotzlewsky (later Bar-Lev) was born on November 1924 in Vienna, Austria, to his parents Menachem and Devora. Six weeks after his birth, his father traveled to Eretz Yisrael (Mandatory Palestine) to attend the cornerstone celebration of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. After purchasing several plots of land, he returned home, and was later employed as the professional manager of a Zagreb textile plant. When Haim was four, the family moved to Zagreb, which was then part of the Ex-Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) and today it is the capital of Croatia. Haim was sent to the city's Jewish school. Zagreb's Jewish community was famous for its well-organized institutions. In 1938, his older sister Tirtza, settled in Eretz Yisrael, and a year later he followed her and entered the Mikveh Israel Agricultural School near Tel Aviv. That was the period of the "Great Arab Revolt", three years (1936-1939) of terrorist clashes between Arabs and Jews. The students of Mikveh Israel participated in the defensive actions of the Jewish community (*Yishuv*). During the Hanukah break of December 1941, Bar-Lev underwent training within the Palmach semi-military organization, the operational arm of the Haganah.

In 1946, Bar-Lev was made commander of a Palmach company (where he was nicknamed "Kidon" [bayonet]). He commanded the force that blew up the Allenby Bridge as part of a large-scale operation, in which

eleven bridges were blown up throughout the country in protest against the detainment of hundreds of Jewish activists by the British. In 1947, he became commander of the 8th battalion of the Palmach Negev Brigade, and a year later, when Israel was fighting its War of Independence, he commanded the 9th battalion of the Negev Brigade in the battle for the liberation of the Negev from Egypt. In 1952, Bar-Lev was appointed Chief of Staff of the Northern Command, and in 1954 he was given command of the Giv'ati brigade. In 1956, on his return from a battalion commanders' course in Britain, he was appointed Head of the Instruction Department in the GHQ. During the Sinai Campaign (1956) he commanded a reserve armored brigade, and in July 1957 he was appointed Commander of the Armored Corps, and promoted to Major General. In 1961, he was sent to New York for Business Administration studies at Columbia University. On his return in 1964, he was appointed Chief of the IDF Staff Branch, and in 1967 became Deputy Chief of General Staff. In the 1960s, Bar-Lev participated in a short pilots' course on light aircraft, as did other senior IDF officers at that time.

In 1968, Bar-Lev succeeded Yitzhak Rabin, who had commanded the IDF in the Six-Day War of 1967. During his office as Chief of General Staff, Israel constructed a line of about 30 fortifications on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, capable of withstanding the artillery fire of Egypt's recurring post-war attacks. This defense line became known as the "Bar-Lev Line". The Egyptians pursued a war of attrition, and the IDF carried out numerous operations in response. The Palestinian Terror Organizations simultaneously attacked Israeli targets in Israel and worldwide, and the IDF developed varied operational methods to thwart them.

In early 1972, after four years as Chief of General Staff, Bar-Lev retired from the IDF, and pursued a political career. In March 1972, he took office as Minister of Trade and Industry in the governments of Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin, without being a Knesset member. On 6 October 1973, when the Yom Kippur War broke out, Bar-Lev returned to active service as a reserve Lt. General (while maintaining his ministerial position). In the early days of the war, he served as adviser to the

commanding officer of the Northern Command, Maj. General Yitzhak Hofi, and on 10 October, he was appointed commander of the Southern Front, to make up for the poor functioning of Maj. General Shmuel Gonen (Gorodish), commanding officer of the Southern Command. Over the initial stage of the war, Bar-Lev succeeded in stabilizing the southern front, and played a major role in containing the Egyptian attack and engaging in an offensive.

Between 1977 and 1992, Bar-Lev was a Knesset Member for the Avoda (Labor) Party, and was the party's secretary general in 1978-1984. He served as Minister of Police in 1984-1990. In 1992, he was appointed Israel's ambassador to Russia. Russia of the early 1990s was a fascinating scene of historical revolutions. The Soviet regime collapsed after about 70 years of great achievements and terrible oppression of dissidents who dared disagree with the leadership. Hundreds of thousands Jews immigrated to Israel from different corners of the CIS. Bar-Lev began learning Russian, which he found quite easy given his origins and his familiarity with the Cyrillic alphabet. During his time in Russia, he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, and died on 7 May 1994, aged 70.

Haim Bar-Lev is primarily remembered in Israel's history as the IDF Chief of General Staff during the agonizing War of Attrition (1967-1970), and as the officer who took command of the southern front against Egypt in the Yom Kippur War.

David Elazar

David (Dado) Elazar was born on 25 August 1925 in Sarajevo , which at that time was also Ex-Yugoslavia (part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) and today it is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His Sephardi family moved to Ottoman-ruled territories after the Jewish expulsion from Spain. His mother Zehava died when he was six, and he was raised by his grandmothers. His father Solomon (Shlomo) served as an officer in the Yugoslav army. At the age of 12, Elazar went to school in Zagreb, where he joined the youth movement *Hashomer HaTsa'ir*.

At that time, he met Haim Brotzlewsky and they became friends. When World War II broke out, a group of Jewish youth, including Elazar Elazar, organized and went to Eretz Yisrael, where Elazar worked in a kibbutz.

In 1946, at the age of 21, Elazar joined the *Palmach*, and was recognized as an outstanding trainee. Having completed his training, he was sent to the Upper Galilee as platoon commander. His platoon was involved in scouting, assisted under-cover Israeli soldiers in penetrating into Syria, and tended to Jews who entered Israel illegally from Syria and Lebanon. Through these activities, he became familiar with Syria's preparations for the war the Arab States waged on Israel, later known as Israel's War of Independence. In late December 1946, he was back in the Palmach headquarters, and participated in a retaliation operation and a raid against a British military base.

In 1948, during the War of Independence, he participated in a number of battles in the Jerusalem area. Elazar was famous for staying calm under fire. He cared for the wounded, and made a point of going to battle with his men. He moved fast up the command ladder due to his commander's qualities, but also because the Palmach suffered numerous casualties and its command ranks dwindled. In late May, he was appointed company commander, and in mid-July he became a battalion commander in the Palmach Harel Brigade. When the fighting was over, he filled a series of staff positions.

In 1955, Elazar was appointed commander of the Negev Brigade, a position he held during the Sinai Campaign of 1956. After the campaign, he was retrained and qualified as an armored-corps officer. He was appointed chief of the Northern Command in 1964, at a time of great tension with Syria over the Syrian attempt to divert the Jordan River sources and prevent Israel from using its National Water Carrier.

In the Six-Day War of 1967, he commanded the takeover of Samaria from Jordan and of the Golan Heights from Syria, a very important achievement in the national security history of Israel.

On 1 January 1972, Elazar was appointed the IDF 9th Chief of General Staff. While he was in office, the IDF faced and coped with an

Egyptian and Syrian strategic surprise attack against Israel that is still being studied by most armed forces worldwide. In April 1973, warnings began to accumulate that Egypt was planning to attack Israel in mid-May. Elazar was concerned about this eventuality, and was supported by Mossad chief Zvi Zamir and defense minister Moshe Dayan. In contrast, Maj. General Eli Zeira, head of the IDF Intelligence Directorate, assessed that Egypt would not start a war. Based on the assessment that war was imminent in the summer of 1973, the IDF declared a state of alert and mobilized its reserves. With hindsight, some believe that the events related to that state of alert bred a false sense of security that led to ignoring later indications of war, and were therefore largely responsible for the IDF lack of preparedness for the surprise attack launched on Yom Kippur.

On 1 October 1973, the Egyptian and Syrian armed forces declared a state of alert. An erroneous intelligence assessment maintained that the probability of war was low. In the early morning of 6 October, (Yom Kippur), CGS David Elazar was convinced that war was about to break out on the same day. Eli Zeira, Head of the Intelligence Directorate, and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan remained confident that war was not impending. Dayan's wrong assessment had two momentous implications: He did not approve a large-scale reserve mobilization as requested by the CGS (on 5 October, the CGS finally instructed small-scale mobilization of his own initiative). In addition, Dayan did not approve a preemptive air strike, as suggested by the CGS. Behind the rejection of Elazar's demands by Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Dayan was another weighty consideration, namely, the possible effect on Israel's international status and its relations with the United States. They thought that a preemptive Israeli attack or even a general mobilization of reserves would create an international public opinion that would accuse Israel of starting a war, and would severely harm Israel's relations with the United States.

On 6 October 1973 at noon, Syria and Egypt launched a combined attack that took the IDF and the whole county by surprise. After heavy

defensive battles, a failed counter-attack in the Sinai, and numerous casualties to Israel's ground and air forces, the attack was finally contained. On 11 October, the fighting in the north transferred to Syria's territory, and on 16 October the IDF forces crossed the Suez Canal.

During the first days of fighting, Elazar was among the very few who managed to remain optimistic and in control (unlike Defense Minister Dayan who spoke about "the destruction of the third Temple".) The war uncovered deep personal disagreements between several IDF generals, especially on the southern front, some of which have not been settled for many years since. At a certain point, the functioning of the Southern Command Chief, Shmuel Gonen (Gorodish) was so failing that Elazar was forced to appoint ex-CGS Bar-Lev as commander of the Southern Front. The end of the war found the IDF forces in the depth of Syria's territory, the Egyptian third army was encircled in the Sinai, and IDF forces deployed on the western bank of the Suez Canal. The IDF suffered numerous casualties to attain these achievements.

When the fighting was over the government of Israel set up a national commission of inquiry, the Agranat Commission, to investigate the IDF lack of preparedness for war. On 1 April 1974, the Commission published an interim report in which it recommended terminating Elazar's office as CGS and Maj. General Zeira's office as Head of the Intelligence Directorate. The recommendation concerning David Elazar was based on the conclusion that he failed to put together intelligence assessments of his own or a detailed defensive program, and was overconfident that the regular IDF forces were sufficient to fend off the enemy. Following the commission's recommendation, Elazar handed in his resignation to the government on 3 April 1974, under protest that he was judged unjustly, especially in view of the Commission's decision not to impose any sanctions on the political echelon, and its disregard of the CGS notable functioning during the war, which led to success.

After his resignation, Elazar entered the private business sector, and was later appointed Chairman of Zim Shipping Company.

On 15 April 1976, Elazar suffered a heart attack while he was swimming in a Tel Aviv pool, and died at the age of 50. Being held responsible for the Yom Kippur fiasco undoubtedly broke his heart. He was buried in the Military Cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. Over ten thousand people attended his funeral.

Many Israelis strongly disapprove of the exculpation of the political echelon, primarily Defense Minister Dayan, from the trauma of the 1973 war. They call attention to Elazar's self-control and his contribution to achieving victory, despite the unfavorable opening conditions. Yugoslavia-born David Elazar will be remembered in Israeli history as a determined commander in wartime – in 1967, when he commanded the takeover of the Syrian Golan Heights, and in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when he commanded the IDF during the surprise confrontation with the Egyptian and Syria armies, and led it to victory.

The legacy of such military leaders as Elazar and Bar-Lev influences Israeli military thinking even today. In a similar way, their Balkan background and personal histories reflect on the deeply rooted relations between Jews and Serbs. The expanding relations between Israel and Serbia clearly illustrate the meaning of a common history for jointly facing the challenges of today and tomorrow.

