A Hushed Whisper and a Resounding Silence:
A Comparative Study of Holocaust Memorialization in Serbia and Croatia

by

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Abstract

This project evaluates how the Holocaust has been memorialized in Serbia and Croatia since the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Memorialization is physically manifested at sites and institutions of public memory, most notably museums, memorials, and monuments. This investigation examines how the Holocaust is either incorporated or ignored in existing narratives of the Second World War in Serbian and Croatian public memory. Though the Holocaust was not memorialized as an event separate from the Second World War in Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito, Jewish victims were remembered alongside other "victims of fascism," and the Jewish community was permitted to commemorate its victims. How have memorial paradigms changed since collapse of the common Yugoslav state and the loss of the official narrative of the People's Liberation War? By analyzing the narratives about the Second World War transmitted by new monuments and redesigned museum exhibits, a portrait emerges of the current state of Holocaust memorialization in Serbia and Croatia. This study reveals that memory of the Second World War is very different in these two states, but neither state adequately memorializes the Holocaust. This is due to the political victory of ethnic nationalism following the collapse of the Yugoslav state. In the wartime narratives of Serbian and Croatian nationalists, victims other than those of one's own ethnic group are of little concern.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Alyssa Ilich. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Holocaust Memorialization in Serbia and Croatia", No. 30929, May 14, 2012. No part of this thesis has been previously published. All photographs were taken by Alyssa Ilich.

Dedicated, with love, to my grandfathers.

Radivoje Ilić

February 22, 1931 – April 6, 2012

George Yelich

March 8, 1927 – June 19, 2012

Forever missed.

Acknowledgements

I am immensely grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Srdja Pavlović and Dr. John-Paul Himka, for having guided my intellectual development over the years. I am certain that without their patience, guidance, and feedback, there is no way this project would have come to fruition. Beyond that, though, Dr. Himka and Dr. Pavlović have taught me what makes for excellent scholarship – it is more than clear, lucid writing and thorough research. It is the importance of taking a stand. History doesn't transpire in a moral vacuum, and neither should academia.

While writing is truly a solitary endeavour, my research would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of many people in Serbia and Croatia. Without the help of Rea Živković, I would have been unable to attend the conference on Staro Sajmište held in Belgrade in May 2012. Mrs. Živković also connected me with Danijel Bogunović, who in turn took me to numerous sites, including to the memorial plaque at Topovske Šupe. David Albahari showed me all the monuments in the cemetery at Zemun – it is very unlikely I would have seen these without him. I owe Jakov Berger a great deal for helping me get to Jasenovac and showing me several sites in and around Zagreb. Conversations with these individuals and many others helped shape my thoughts, but all the views presented herein remain my own. Everyone I met along the way throughout the course of my research trips, far too many people to name, brightened what could have otherwise been a gloomy experience.

I am also grateful to all those who agreed to be interviewed, and to Jelena Jelić, Vlada Kovačević, and Andrej Pavičević for acting as interpreters. I am especially grateful to Darko Ćirić of the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp for a very insightful interview. When I was uncertain about my Serbian translations, Nesa Ilich provided assistance, though any mistakes made are my own. I am thankful to Anđel Starčević, who tried valiantly to explain the intricacies of Croatian grammar to me – his tutoring was a huge help. Harold Glass went out of his way to provide me with Hebrew translations when I needed them. He, and several others, also read chapter drafts and provided feedback, which was a huge help.

Many thanks are owed to the Ungurović family for being great hosts every time I was in Zemun. I am always taken aback by the amazingly generous and warm hospitality in the Balkans. Lastly – to my family and friends – thanks for your patience and support.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Foreign visitors to Belgrade seeking the famed nightlife of the Serbian capital invariably end up on one of the many floating bars that line the Danube and Sava rivers. A dozen clubs, emanating thumping bass and cigarette fumes, stretch out along the left bank of the Sava between Brankov's Bridge and the Old Sava Bridge. Across the river, the Kalemegdan fortress is beautifully illuminated, highlighting the city's most iconic monument, *The Victor*, sculpted by the famed Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović to commemorate Serbia's victories in the Balkan Wars and First World War. A different sight awaits those who turn their gazes away from the river and back toward the city of Zemun. There, a few paces from the riverbank, stands a much smaller monument dedicated to the victims of Sajmište concentration camp – a site at which over half of Serbia's Jewish community was murdered during the Second World War. This monument, a ten meter-high fractured encircled star, is also illuminated in the darkness, though its accompanying descriptive plaque is not. Behind the monument, cast in shadow, are many of the original buildings of the camp itself, left to crumble and decay in the years following the Second World War. In the early hours of the morning, the exhausted tourists return to their lodgings, unaware that they spent an evening revelling mere steps from what had been the most deadly concentration camp in Serbia.

Is this neglect representative of the way that Jewish victims of the Holocaust have been memorialized in Serbia as a whole? What about in the neighbouring state of Croatia? Since the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the nascent Serbian and Croatian states have stressed their linguistic, religious, and historic differences. Both states have emphasized their alleged historic tolerance toward their Jewish minorities while decrying the role of the other in implementing the Holocaust, effectively reducing any discussion of the Second World War and the Holocaust of the Yugoslav Jews to one of polemical propaganda.[1] Jovan Byford posits that since the collapse of Yugoslavia, Holocaust memorialization in Serbia has been afflicted by a "symbolic geography"[2] that confines Serbian commemoration of Jewish victims to the territory of the former Independent State of Croatia and ignores Jewish victims within Serbia. In independent

[1] For a succinct overview of what he terms the 'Balkan *Historikerstreit*' see David Bruce MacDonald, *Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 132-159.
[2] Jovan Byford, "When I Say 'The Holocaust,' I Mean 'Jasenovac,'" *East European Jewish Affairs* Vol. 37 Issue 1 (April 2007): 54.

Croatia, Croatian nationalists have sought to obfuscate the role of the Croatian fascist Ustaša movement for the implementation of the Holocaust on the territories of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. This resulted in an even greater marginalization of the Holocaust in Croatia than in Serbia, and little attention to its memorialization. After the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, it took over a decade for the museum of the largest death camp on Croatian territory, Jasenovac, to be reopened. On first glance, then, both Serbia and Croatia seem either unable or unwilling to commemorate Jewish victims of the Second World War killed within their own borders.

The Holocaust was as cataclysmic an event in wartime Yugoslavia as it was elsewhere in Europe. Over eighty percent of Yugoslavia's Jewish population was murdered in the years between 1941 and 1944.[3] Yet as a subject of research, it unfortunately receives little attention – in part because Yugoslavia's Jewish population was quite small before the war, and only a miniscule number of Jews remain in the Yugoslav successor states today. This dearth of attention needs to be rectified, particularly in light of Yugoslavia's violent breakup in the 1990s, when the Holocaust was trivialized and made into a political tool. Holocaust imagery was used and abused not only by the warring ethnic factions, but also by the international community and the media.[4] This investigation endeavours to shed some light on the subject, and will take as its starting point a very basic inquiry: what is the current state of Holocaust memorialization in Serbia and Croatia?

Memorialization, or "the politically charged realm of commemoration"[5] in the public sphere, is physically manifested through the construction of museums, memorials, monuments, and the sacralisation of space through ceremony and ritual. The impulse to memorialize an event is particularly strong at sites associated with violence and suffering inflicted on members of an ethnic, racial, or religious group. Memorialization is a critical process of collective memory. But "if a society remembers," writes James Young, "it is only insofar as their institutions and rituals organize, shape, even inspire their constituents' memories."[6] As such, memorialization is also the most tangible physical manifestation of collective memory, and merits deeper critical

[3] Ari Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry: Aspects of Post-World War II and Post Yugoslav Developments* (Helsinki: The Finnish Oriental Society, 2001), 29.
[4] See, for example, Mark Thompson, *Forging War: the Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1999).
[5] Katharina Schramm, "Landscapes of Violence: Memory and Sacred Space," *History and Memory* Vol. 23 No. 1 (Spring 2011): 6.
[6] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), xi.

scrutiny. It must be recalled that "historical inquiry [is] the combined study of both *what happened* and *how it is passed down to us*."[7] Examining Holocaust memorialization in Serbia and Croatia reveals how memory of the Holocaust has been used in different post-Yugoslav nationalist narratives. How and why did the process of Holocaust memorialization, or the lack thereof, differ in Croatia and Serbia? Reviewing and analyzing the memorials, monuments, and museums in each state will enable a comparative perspective to emerge.

Holocaust memorialization is far from an obscure topic. There is a vast body of work concerning how the Holocaust has been memorialized in Western Europe, the United States, and Israel. There is also a growing body of work on Holocaust memorialization in Eastern Europe, as scholars have increasingly focused on the Holocaust in the east, particularly with regards to Poland and the former Soviet states. I have relied on many of these works to provide the intellectual foundation for my study. Concerning memorials and monuments, by far the most important monographs were *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* and *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, both by James Young. Several studies helped shape my thinking about museums, especially *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979* by Jonathan Huener and *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* by Edward Linenthal. A few edited volumes were invaluable resources, including *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, edited by James Young; *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, edited by Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz; and *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* edited by John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic.

For background information on the Holocaust in Serbia, I relied primarily on Christopher Browning's masterful study *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*. Less has been written about the Holocaust in Croatia, especially in English, but the hefty and detailed volume *Holokaust u Zagrebu* (The Holocaust in Zagreb) by Ivo and Slavko Goldstein more than made up for this fact. Anthropological studies of the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Jewish communities also provided useful background, including *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community* by Harriet Freidenreich, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry* by Paul Gordiejew,

[7] James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 11.

Renewed Survival: Jewish Community Life in Croatia by Nila Hofman, and finally *Yugoslav Jewry: Aspects of Post-World War II and Post Yugoslav Developments* by Ari Kerkkänen. Unfortunately, there is very little written on Holocaust memorialization in the former Yugoslavia – I relied heavily on Jovan Byford's corpus of work, but especially *Staro Sajmište: Mesto sećanja, zaborava i sporenja* (The Old Fairgrounds: A Site Remembered, Forgotten and Contested), which is the only monograph written on the subject. Byford's chapter on Serbia in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light* was extremely useful as was Mark Biondich's chapter on Croatia. Emil Kerenji's doctoral dissertation, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State," was very informative with regard to the history of Holocaust monuments constructed by the Jewish community across the Former Yugoslavia. However, there is almost nothing written about the Holocaust as depicted in Serbian and Croatian historical museums, with the exception of a few academic articles, most notably those by Milica Mihailović and Ljiljana Radonic. The most important sources are therefore the catalogues and guidebooks of the museums themselves, especially the sizeable volume *Jasenovac Memorial Site* published by the Jasenovac memorial museum. As far as I can tell, my work is the first that combines a study of museums and monuments and compares them across Serbia and Croatia.

The methodology for this project was quite straightforward – it entailed visiting and documenting museums, monuments, and memorials in both Serbia and Croatia over the course of three research trips between May 2012 and July 2013. While memorialization also includes commemorative ceremonies and rituals, I omitted these from my study, which focuses purely on the material and visual transmission of collective memory through museums, monuments, and memorials. It is not that ceremonies are unimportant,[8] but they are too temporary and impermanent to sufficiently illustrate the state of Holocaust memorialization in Serbia and Croatia. Museums and monuments are far more concrete, both literally and metaphorically. They provide "the material structure whose analysis provides an opportunity to explore and examine collective memory and to reconstruct the changes that have taken place within it."[9] It must be recalled that collective memory itself is a "reconstruction of the past in light of the

[8] For more on the importance of commemorative ceremonies in transmitting collective memory, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 41-70.
[9] Marta Kurkowska, "Jedwabne and Wizna: Monuments and Memory in the Łomża Region," in *Making Holocaust Memory*, eds. Gabriel N. Finder et al. (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 244.

present,"[10] so this project is just as much about the current political climate in these states as it is about their pasts.

The omission of commemorative ceremonies is one of this study's limitations, but it is not the only one. More importantly, many sites were also omitted. Geographic limitations were necessary – while thorough and detailed, this study is not completely exhaustive, and it was not possible to cover every single site, memorial, or museum in both Serbia and Croatia. The locations visited were carefully chosen based on a number of criteria. The first factor was immediate relevance: because this is a project on Holocaust memorialization, sites where the Holocaust was perpetrated took precedence. These included the sites of the largest death camps in Serbia and Croatia – Sajmište and Jasenovac, respectively – at which many Serbian and Croatian Jews were murdered. Each of these sites features monuments, and there is also a memorial museum at Jasenovac. Three other sites were of relevance in Belgrade in addition to Sajmište: Banjica concentration camp museum, the remnants of Topovske Šupe concentration camp, and the Memorial Park at Jajinci, where many Holocaust victims were buried. Unfortunately, the sites of other camps in Croatia were ruled out, because the majority are not memorialized in any way. Other sites not tied to the camps, but directly connected to the Holocaust included the sites of the former synagogues in Zagreb and Osijek; the Holocaust monument in the Dorćol, Belgrade's former Jewish neighbourhood; and the monument at the site of the Novi Sad raid. The next factor was commemorative relevance – it was important to include monuments and memorials not located at the sites themselves, but which were nevertheless designed specifically to memorialize the Holocaust. These memorials demonstrate how the Jewish communities of Serbia and Croatia commemorate their victims, and include monuments at Jewish cemeteries in Belgrade, Zemun, Novi Sad, and Zagreb. The third factor was centrality – what do visitors to the capital cities of Serbia and Croatia learn at museums about the Holocaust and, more broadly, World War Two in general? This is not to say that museums outside the capital cities are irrelevant, but they are far fewer in number and generally much smaller. All historical museums were visited in both Belgrade and Zagreb, and those under review include the Military Museum, the Jewish Historical Museum, the Museum of Genocide Victims, and the Zagreb City Museum. The final criterion was contrast – it was

[10] Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 76.

necessary to select a few memorials and museums to see how Serbs and Croats memorialize their own victims. To this end, the following were visited: the Memorial Museum of 21 October and Šumarice Memorial Park in Serbia, and the Croatian History Museum in Croatia.

There are several relevant monuments and memorials that were omitted for brevity's sake. As it stands, the majority of monuments and museums that even touch on the subject of the Holocaust were included. The goal was not to thoroughly scrutinize every single museum and memorial in Serbia and Croatia – rather, the intent was to provide an overview of the state of Holocaust memorialization in these two countries today using the most pertinent and illustrative examples and counter-examples. The monuments, memorials and museums that were chosen in Belgrade, Zemun, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Zagreb, Jasenovac, and Osijek accomplish this goal. The final geographic limitation worth explaining is that no sites were visited outside of Serbia and Croatia. However, there are plenty of sites that would have been illuminating to visit and that are directly related to this thesis. The first is the Donja Gradina memorial grounds, located within the borders of Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Donja Gradina was part of the Jasenovac camp complex, and visiting this site would illustrate how Jasenovac is commemorated by the Bosnian Serbs. The second site is a memorial in the town of Bleiburg in Austria, where the retreating Ustaša tried to surrender to the British but were returned to the partisans, who liquidated them instead of putting them on trial for collaborationism. The site is now used for commemorations by right-wing Croatian nationalists. Both of these sites are highly pertinent, but were not included because the focus is not on memorialization in Bosnia or Austria. However, these sites merit inclusion in any future studies dealing with the subject of transnational Holocaust memorialization in the region.

The intent is to evaluate how the Holocaust is remembered (or forgotten) at sites across Serbia and Croatia through the establishment of museums and memorials. How does the Holocaust factor into larger portrayals of the Second World War? More broadly, "who creates this memory, under what circumstances, and for which audiences?"[11] To what extent are museums and monuments a product of official narratives on the Second World War and the Holocaust, and to what extent do they shape public memory of these same events? It must be

[11] James E. Young, "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel, 1994), 20.

recalled that "images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order,"[12] as such, "we should also ask to what ends we have remembered."[13] In other words, it is not only a matter of how the event in question is memorialized, but also why. What are the ideological underpinnings of the narratives told at historical museums? How are they transmitted to the viewing public? What "political calculus"[14] lies within each monument and memorial? The aim is to scrutinize each memorial, monument, and museum, while comparing and contrasting them to another. How do they depict the Second World War – what is valorized, what is glossed over, and what is outright omitted? How is the Holocaust included or ignored, and why?

The structure of this investigation is as follows. The first chapter provides a brief overview of the Second World War and the Holocaust on the current territories of what are now independent Serbia and Croatia. A bit of historical background is necessary to fully contextualize the sites that are under review. The second chapter examines memorials and monuments, which I have categorized in two ways: peripherally public and centrally public. The first section focuses on memorials in the peripherally public sphere. Memorials in the truly 'private' sphere would be forms of remembrance confined to the private homes of individuals and families, genuinely inaccessible to all others. I have chosen to use the term 'peripherally public sphere' because it denotes that these memorials are all accessible to the public, none are completely barred or restricted; however, they must also be deliberately sought out and are not a part of the commonly accessed landscape. The second section looks at memorials in the centrally public sphere, in other words, those memorials in the full public purview. The third chapter examines museums, which are also categorized in two ways: primary and secondary. The first section examines the primary museums – these are museums that are wholly devoted to the Second World War and are located at the sites of concentration camps or mass crimes. The second portion examines secondary museums, which are historical museums that are at remove from the sites and do not focus exclusively on World War II, featuring it only as one among many historical events. Monuments, memorials, and museums are all tied together and summarized in the conclusion.

Ultimately, I argue that Holocaust memorialization is woefully inadequate in both states, though it has changed considerably since the collapse of Yugoslavia. While monuments and

[12] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 3.
[13] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 15.
[14] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 217.

museums constructed under Tito put forward a clear ideological narrative, this narrative did not recognize the Holocaust as a separate event. The post-socialist era saw the recognition of the Holocaust as its own historical event, but unfortunately it was used in a polemical fashion by both Serbs and Croats to highlight their own martyrdom at the hands of either the Ustaša or the Partisans, and downplay fascist collaboration. As MacDonald observes, "articulating myths of persecution and victimization has become an essential part of reconstructing histories and legitimating state-building projects."[15] These myths are inherently parochial and limiting. Omer Bartov explains that "self-perception as victim often immunizes individuals and nations from seeing themselves as perpetrators."[16] This is especially true in Croatia, where there are few museums and monuments devoted to the Second World War, and even fewer dedicated to the Holocaust. It is clear that as a nation, Croatia has not come to terms with its fascist past – memorialization in Croatia manifests itself as a resounding silence. In Serbia, there has been more memorialization of the Holocaust, but in some cases Jewish victimization has only been noted in order to highlight Serbian victimhood. Here, Holocaust memorialization is not a resounding silence – but it is still no more than a hushed whisper.

[15] MacDonald, *Balkan Holocausts?*, 6.
[16] Omer Bartov, "Conclusion," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 668.

Part I: A Violent Legacy

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes extended full civil rights to the Yugoslav Jewish community in the 1919 constitution, wherein they were officially recognized as a protected religious minority. Unlike many other Eastern and Central European states, religious anti-Semitism was never popular in the Yugoslav kingdom. However, as authoritarian and totalitarian fascist regimes began sweeping across Europe in the 1930s, political anti-Semitism gained a public presence in Yugoslavia. It is nevertheless worth noting that "anti-Semitism was never the dominant strand of ideology in any Yugoslav political party during the inter-war period,"[1] and extreme right-wing or fascist leaning parties either garnered very little support, like Zbor in Serbia, or were banned, like the Party of Rights in Croatia. In the years leading up to the war, however, the tide turned against the Jewish population. In 1940, the Cvetković-Maček government passed two anti-Jewish laws, restricting Jewish participation in certain sectors of the economy and limiting Jewish enrollment at post-secondary schools. Tragically, this was only the beginning of the persecution of the Jewish community.

Following its invasion by the Axis powers in 1941, Yugoslavia was divided, dismembered, and occupied. Select regions of the country were annexed to Italy, Albania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, hereafter NDH) was established by the Germans, ostensibly under the rule of Ante Pavelić and his fascist Ustaša movement. Most of Croatia, excluding the Dalmatian coast which had been annexed by Italy, fell within its borders, as did all of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serbian region of Srem. The NDH was jointly occupied by German and Italian troops up until the capitulation of Italy in 1943. Serbia was under direct German occupation and was officially called the "Territory of the Military Commander in Serbia." It encompassed Serbia proper, the northern tip of Kosovo and half of the region of Vojvodina, the other half of which had been annexed by Hungary. The German Military leadership established a Serbian collaborationist administration, effectively a weak puppet government for the rump Serbian state. The first quisling government was the 'Commissioner Administration' led by Milan Aćimović, which was replaced after a few months by the 'Government of National Salvation' headed by Milan Nedić.

[1] Laslo Sekelj, "Anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia, 1918-1945," *East European Quarterly* Vol. 22 Issue 2 (Summer 1988): 163.

The Holocaust in Croatia

The Independent State of Croatia was established on April 10, 1941, mere days after the invasion and dismemberment of Yugoslavia. Headed by *Poglavnik* Ante Pavelić, the new Ustaša regime immediately embarked on a programme of radical national transformation and racial persecution. Martial law was imposed, and "racial laws similar to those in Nazi Germany were proclaimed, leading to the establishment of concentration and death camps."[2] Ideologically, the Ustaša were descended from Croatian far-right political parties, and borrowed elements from both Italian Fascism and Nazism. The regime was radically ultranationalist, advocating "the Croatian right to all territories that had belonged to Croatia or which had been inhabited by Croats in the past,"[3] and which were to be cleansed of all ethnic minorities perceived as undesirable – the Jews, Serbs, and Roma – as well as all political opponents. To this end, the "Legal Decree on Racial Origins" and the "Legal Decree on the Protection of Aryan Blood and the Honour of the Croatian People" were proclaimed on April 30, 1941. The latter law specifically targeted the Jewish population, quickly paving the way for their internment, deportation, and murder.

Immediately following the promulgation of the racial laws, anti-Semitic propaganda became ubiquitous. Synagogues and Jewish cemeteries across Croatia were desecrated, with the intent of removing all traces of Jewish presence in Croatia. "Roundups of Croatian and Bosnian Jews began in earnest in the summer of 1941,"[4] when the first concentration and death camps were established in the NDH. Some of these camps were temporary and in operation only for a few months, others were in operation for the entire war. Temporary camps included the Jadovno camp near Gospić, where thousands of Serbs and an estimated two thousand Jews were killed,[5] and the camps on the island of Pag. The inmates at these camps were liquidated before the summer had even ended. Other large camps included Lobograd and Đakovo, both closed in 1942, where many were killed, but from which Jewish victims were primarily transported to

[2] Ivo Goldstein, "Ante Pavelić, Charisma and National Mission in Wartime Croatia," in *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, eds. António Costa Pinto et al. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 88.
[3] *Ibid*., 87.
[4] Radmila Milentijevic, "Anti-Semitism and Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Yugoslavia," in *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 232.
[5] Raphael Israeli, *The Death Camps of Croatia: Visions and Revisions, 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2013), 69.

other camps including Auschwitz and Jasenovac.[6] In the fall, the regime planned the construction of permanent camps, including the notorious death camp near the town of Jasenovac, completed in February 1942.

Over a hundred kilometers southeast of Zagreb, Jasenovac was a large complex of five camps situated on the Sava River. Paul Mojzes states that it was in fact "the largest extermination camp in terms of area in all of Europe."[7] This harrowing death camp was in operation for the entire duration of the war, and was the central camp to which prisoners were deported from 1942 onward. Jasenovac came to be where "more than half of the Jewish victims from the territory of the NDH and more than one third of Zagreb's Jews […] perished in the Holocaust."[8] In the spring of 1943, the remaining Jews in Zagreb were rounded up and deported to Auschwitz. There had been approximately 25,000 Jews living in Croatia and 15,000 living in Bosnia before the war – around 24,000 of whom lost their lives in the Independent State of Croatia, while 7,000 were deported to Auschwitz, according to Ivo and Slavko Goldstein.[9]

Other ethnic minorities were also targeted for extermination, and nearly all of the Roma in the NDH were killed, many of them at Jasenovac. The Ustaša regime agitated against the Serbian minority, perceiving them "as dangerous, alien, nomadic immigrants."[10] The Serbs were heavily persecuted: expelled, forced to convert to Catholicism, and murdered. By the end of the war several hundred thousand Serbian civilians had been killed on the territory of the NDH by the Ustaša death squads in village massacres and at camps like Jasenovac. However, as Rory Yeomans writes, "despite the initially similar treatment of Serbs and Jews, their collective fates increasingly diverged."[11] Ustaša policy toward the Serbs was much more dynamic and changing than it was toward the Jews or Roma. To begin with, the Serbs were not directly targeted by the racial laws. While Ustaša mass murder of the Serbs was at a frenzy in 1941 and early 1942, it began to abate in the spring of 1942, partly as a result of German pressure and partly because it was driving far too many into the arms of the resistance movements, most notably the partisans.

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[6] Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 61-62.
[7] *Ibid*., 56.
[8] Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu* (Zagreb: Novi Liber & Židovska Općina Zagreb, 2001), 302. Translations from this work, and any errors, are my own.
[9] *Ibid*., 17.
[10] Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941-1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 15.
[11] *Ibid*., 14.

The shift in Ustaša policy is evident from their establishment of a 'Croatian Orthodox Church' in 1942, as well as their collaboration with numerous Četnik commanders on the territory of the NDH.[12] This does not indicate a true moderation of Ustaša ideology, merely that the Serbian minority was too large and their resistance was becoming too destabilizing for the regime. However, no such policy shift took place with regard to the Jews or Roma. Of the 9,000 Jews who survived in the NDH, the vast majority did so by fleeing to the Italian-occupied regions or joining the partisans.[13]

In sum, the Holocaust in Croatia was planned, organized, and perpetrated by the Croatian fascist and ultranationalist Ustaša regime. The majority of the Croatian Jews who lost their lives were killed on Croatian soil – primarily at the Jasenovac death camp, which was truly the focal point of the Holocaust in Croatia. It is thus the Ustaša regime which bears the brunt of responsibility for the destruction of the Jewish community rather than the German occupying forces.

The Holocaust in Serbia

The invasion of Yugoslavia entailed the particularly harsh treatment of Serbia by the German forces from the very moment it began on April 6, 1941. 'Operation Retribution' was the codename for the vicious bombardment of Belgrade by the Luftwaffe, which killed thousands of civilians and inflicted massive property damage on the city. The German military authorities rapidly assumed control of the country, establishing a puppet 'Commissioners' Administration' which they soon replaced with Milan Nedić's collaborationist 'Government of National Salvation.' Ideologically, the Nedić regime was not fascist, and is better described as espousing an "ultraconservative nationalism"[14] that idealized and romanticized pre-industrial village life and decried the toxic influence of modernity on the Serbian nation. Democracy, freemasonry, and communism were seen as threats to the nation that originated with the Jews.

The Germans introduced anti-Semitic measures and racial laws throughout April and May of 1941, whereby "Jews were removed from public service and the professions, all Jewish

[12] Jill A. Irvine, *The Croat Question: Partisan Politics in the Formation of the Yugoslav Socialist State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 130-131.
[13] Esther Gitman, *When Courage Prevailed: The Rescue and Survival of Jews in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2011), xxiv-xxvii.
[14] Milan Ristović, "Rural 'Anti-Utopia' in the Ideology of Serbian Collaborationists in the Second World War," *European Review of History* Vol. 15 Issue 2 (April 2008): 181.

property was to be registered, forced labour was introduced, the Serb population was forbidden to hide Jews, and all Jews were ordered to wear a yellow star."[15] The collaborationist administration aided in implementing these measures and enforcing racial laws,[16] especially its Special Police and security units. The collaborationist forces – numbering at their peak in 1943 around 25,000 people – also aided "in rounding up Jewish citizens, and in tracking down those who had eluded registration."[17] It is worth noting, however, that although the Nedić regime was charged with enforcing these laws, "decision-making pertaining to the so-called 'Jewish question' remained the prerogative of the German bureaucracy."[18]

Following the invasion, Serbia was rife with anti-German sentiment, and resistance movements quickly materialized to combat the Nazi occupiers. The two main movements were the partisans and the Četniks – a Serbian nationalist and royalist movement. Most of the Četniks in Serbia were under the leadership of Draža Mihailović, who painted the movement as a resistance movement although they "remained aloof and deliberately avoided military confrontation with the Germans."[19] To combat the growing resistance, the German military administration instituted harsh reprisal policies whereby one hundred Serbs were to be shot for every German soldier killed. By the late summer of 1941, all male Jews were interned en masse in concentration camps, most notably the Topovske Šupe camp. They were used as a pool of hostages, along with interned communists and Roma, from which shooting victims could be selected when needed to fill reprisal quotas. The reprisal actions affected Serbian civilians as well – thousands of Serbs were killed during mass shootings at Kragujevac and Kraljevo. But shooting Serbs was much more detrimental to German interests than shooting Jews, as it was pushing Serbs into the arms of the resistance. "If the Germans could conceive that not all Serbs were Communists and that the random shooting of innocent Serbs would damage German interests," writes Christopher Browning, "they had no doubt that all Jews were anti-German."[20] By the time the reprisal quotas were rescinded, over five thousand Jews had already been killed.

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[15] Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 191.
[16] Jovan Byford, "The Collaborationist Administration and the Treatment of the Jews in Nazi-Occupied Serbia," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War* Two, eds. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 116.
[17] *Ibid*., 118.
[18] *Ibid*., 111.
[19] Christopher R. Browning, *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution* (New York: Homes & Meier, 1985), 42-43.
[20] *Ibid*., 53.

In the winter of 1941, the remaining Jewish women, children, and elderly were interned at the Sajmište concentration camp. The camp was firmly under the jurisdiction of the German occupation forces. Over the next few months, into the spring of 1942, the victims were gradually killed through the use of a gas van, which drove from the camp to the mass graves at the Jajinci shooting grounds. Between seven and eight thousand Jews were killed at the camp, and it was afterward turned into a camp for Serbian political prisoners. By May 1942, Serbia became "the second Nazi-occupied territory in Europe […] to be formally declared *Judenrein*."[21] Of the pre-war population of roughly 16,000 Jews from Serbia proper, around 14,500 were killed.

The Bačka region of Vojvodina was under Hungarian control until late in the war. In January 1942, Hungarian troops targeted the Serbian and Jewish populations of Novi Sad and surrounding towns in a raid. Thousands were killed over several days, and it was the largest instance of mass murder that took place under the Hungarian administration. In 1944, the Germans assumed control of the region and deported the remaining Jewish population, an estimated 15,000 people, to Auschwitz.[22]

In sum, the Holocaust in Serbia was perpetrated by the German military administration, with few exceptions. The concentration camps of Topovske Šupe and Sajmište were the focal points of the destruction of the Jewish community in Serbia. While the Serbian collaborationist regime of Milan Nedić aided logistically, they do not bear ultimate responsibility for the Holocaust on Serbian territory. However, this is not to say that the role of the Nedić regime should be ignored, particularly in light of the recent nationalist efforts to rehabilitate the Government of National Salvation. Mass murder was carried out in Vojvodina by Hungarian troops, but the much larger mass deportations of the Jewish population were carried out by the Germans. Ultimately, though the Nazi occupation was very difficult for the Serbian population, it was an utter catastrophe for the Jews, who were nearly eradicated.

Brotherhood and Unity

The Second World War was fiercely fought in Yugoslavia. For the Yugoslavs, the Second World War was also a full-out civil war, and the constituent ethnic groups spent more

[21] Jovan Byford, "Willing Bystanders: Dimitrije Ljotić, 'Shield Collaboration' and the Destruction of Serbia's Jews," in *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Rebecca Haynes and Martyn Rady (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011), 304.
[22] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 91.

time, effort, and lives fighting one another than fighting the occupying forces. In order for Josip Broz Tito's newly established socialist state to survive and its constituent ethnic groups to live as one after the brutal inter-communal violence they had experienced, political myths took precedence over unpleasant truths.

The two central myths of the Tito era were that all ethnic groups had suffered equally and proceeded to struggle together to throw off the fascist yoke during what came to be called the People's Liberation War. The dictum of 'brotherhood and unity' entailed emphasizing the multiethnic nature of the partisan movement and downplaying collaborationism. Of course, there were collaborators among all major ethnic groups – no single group had a monopoly on collaborationism or on the use of mass violence. Indeed, as Tony Judt observes, collaborationism was pervasive across Europe as a whole.[23] Yet clearly there were differences between the Serbian and Croatian collaborationist regimes. The Nedić puppet state had far less autonomy than did the NDH under Pavelić. Likewise, "equating Ustaše and Četnik crimes does not stand critical scrutiny,"[24] yet this was central to the socialist narrative – all collaborators were equated, as were all victims. Hidden in this narrative were the Yugoslav Jews, "fewer than 15,000"[25] of whom had survived the war. Jewish suffering was subsumed under the suffering of all Yugoslav nations during the war, and was not singled out as unique or particularly devastating. Is this still the case today? How did memorialization manifest itself at sites like Sajmište, Jasenovac, and Topovske Šupe, both during the Tito era and following the collapse of socialism? What political myths have replaced 'brotherhood and unity?'

[23] Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*, ed. István Deák et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 295.
[24] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 99.
[25] Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 193.

Part II: Memorials and Monuments

Monuments and memorials exist as visual markers of the characteristically human need to commemorate. So globally ubiquitous that they can be described as "a cultural universal,"[1] memorials range dramatically in form and style. Though the word 'monument' often conjures images of massive structures created to mark military victories located in busy city squares, surrounded by hordes of tourists, smaller memorials go unnoticed every day, whether they are tombstones at a village cemetery or tiny plaques affixed to decaying buildings. It is useful, by way of an introductory note, to delineate what exactly is meant by the terms 'monument' and 'memorial,' which are often used interchangeably. There is a subtle nuance between the two words. As James Young notes, memorials may take many forms, from the abstract and temporal to the concrete – however, a monument "is always a kind of memorial."[2] Memorial, then, is a broader term that includes commemorative days, plaques, sculptures, art, monuments, and anything else whose primary purpose has been socially or politically defined as remembrance.

Whether constructed through state sponsorship or by private community initiative, memorials serve public memory and the need to recall and shape the past for a given ethnic, national, or religious group. The construction or establishment of a memorial is far from value-neutral or haphazard – it is inherently political, "in the sense that it is about power over memory, power over the past, and power over the present."[3] Which memorials are constructed by whom, and for whom? What ends do they serve? If memorials are state-sponsored, they tend to privilege selective interpretations of the past,[4] and can be heavily ideologically motivated. Hence, monuments are often among the first casualties during times of transition, revolution, and regime change, and their removal is often followed by the construction of new monuments with what are deemed more acceptable narratives. This intrinsically political nature is not limited to officially sanctioned memorials. All social groups, including those with less political power than the dominant majority, use memorials in an attempt to unify their memories, assert their identities according to selective ideals, and ultimately strengthen group cohesion. Memorials

[1] Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. Lauren M. O'Connell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7.
[2] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 4.
[3] Tim Cole, "Turning the Places of Holocaust History into Places of Holocaust Memory: Holocaust Memorials in Budapest, Hungary, 1945-95," in *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (Bloomington: Indianan University Press, 2003), 272-273.
[4] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 2.

thus serve multiple important functions that go far and above aesthetic or artistic commentary. They denote certain places, sites, and historical events as worthy of preservation and commemoration and they contribute to an existing narrative about the event or site in question. At their core is the didactic mission of disseminating lessons about the past to future generations – either to instruct or warn.[5] Serving as "signposts for the future,"[6] memorials unite present claims with emotive reactions to the past. This occurs particularly through the commemoration of trauma, death, and suffering. Most memorials are responses to these unsettling subjects; they provide us with an "antidote to entropy,"[7] and the ability to mourn the dead.

With this in mind, it is unsurprising that many memorials and monuments are established after particularly cataclysmic historical events – thus the need to commemorate the Second World War was evident even before the war itself had ended. For one of history's most horrifically bloody wars to be inadequately commemorated would have been a glaring injustice for the victims. Yet the politics of memory were also at play. From the perspective of the victorious Allied states, it was necessary to visually cement the self-aggrandizing and heroic narratives that came to be frozen in place by the Cold War. Early monuments to the liberation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union formulaically served propagandistic purposes as much as they commemorated the massive loss of life and contribution of the Red Army.[8] However, many of the early monuments created by state initiative in Central and Eastern Europe under the communist aegis tended to sideline the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The only exception to this was at specific locations of mass death where the scale of suffering was simply too large to ignore, like the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp complex – although even at these sites, Jewish victims were always memorialized as one of many groups among the 'victims of fascism.' Many of the survivors and families of the victims who perished at smaller execution sites took it upon themselves to commemorate what had happened at these locations, holding private ceremonies and constructing small memorials meant to serve as tombstones for the dead, which often

[5] Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 10.
[6] Sybil Milton, *In Fitting Memory: The Art and Politics of Holocaust Memorials* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 123.
[7] Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, 7.
[8] Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1998), 125.

resisted the homogenizing state-sanctioned narratives.[9]

Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito had its own means of memorializing the Second World War – only some of which can be paralleled with the Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe. The construction of monuments, *spomenici*, to commemorate the war and concretize its memory as the 'people's liberation struggle,' began in the decade immediately following the war. By the 1960s and 1970s, construction picked up pace and thousands of *spomenici* dotted the landscapes of all six republics. Some invoked the same iconography and socialist realist imagery as Soviet monuments, but many were towering abstract and modernist monuments of steel and concrete – distinct from their Soviet counterparts and others in Europe. Furthermore, in stark contrast to the Soviet Union, the Jewish communities of socialist Yugoslavia were permitted to erect their own memorials for the victims of the Holocaust, and in the years following the war they constructed dozens[10] – a merging of state and civilian commemoration. Following the death of Tito in 1980 and the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the dominant narratives of the Second World War changed dramatically under the ensuing nationalist regimes of Franjo Tuđman in Croatia and Slobodan Milošević in Serbia. Correspondingly, there were shifts in the practice of memorialization.

This chapter will examine the Holocaust memorials and monuments of Serbia and Croatia. These memorials are categorized into two groups. The first group belongs to what is termed the peripherally public sphere. In other words, though these memorials are accessible to the public, they are confined to milieus that have been deemed sufficiently 'Jewish,' primarily Jewish cemeteries, and they are thus on the sidelines of public memory. These memorials were established by the Jewish communities of Yugoslavia during the Titoist period, often with the support of the state, though they were not established by the state. The first section of this chapter examines these memorials in the Jewish cemeteries of Belgrade and Novi Sad, and the Jewish sections of cemeteries in Zagreb and Zemun, along with the few other memorials in the peripheral sphere established in the post-Tito period, including those at the Jewish community building in Zagreb. The second group of memorials are those of the centrally public sphere, which are not confined to Jewish milieus. These memorials do not need to be deliberately sought out, as "their audience is the wider public, not just relatives or those immediately affected

[9] Rebecca Golbert, "Holocaust Memorialization in Ukraine," in *Making Holocaust Memory*, ed. Gabriel N. Finder et al. (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 223.
[10] Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 200.

by the deaths commemorated."[11] Often established by the state, these memorials include the Titoist *spomenici* as well as later memorials established following the disintegration of Yugoslavia by both state and community initiative in Serbia and Croatia. The second section of this chapter examines public Holocaust memorials in Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad, Osijek, Kragujevac and Jasenovac – contrasting them when appropriate with World War II and other memorials. The intent is to critically evaluate the memorials. What do these memorials tell the viewer about the Holocaust in Serbia and Croatia, and how do they convey this? Equally importantly – what are they not saying? How does their "symbolic agency"[12] support or resist existing historical and political narratives? The chapter concludes by considering the overall portrait of Holocaust memorialization in both Serbia and Croatia. Is the Holocaust adequately memorialized? Have these states made an effort to come to terms with the past, or has the Holocaust been sidelined and treated as politically problematic?

Peripherally Public Sphere

The Holocaust decimated the vast majority of Yugoslavia's Jewish population and ended organized Jewish community life in many towns across the country, where no one remained alive to reconstitute it. Immediately following the war, thousands of survivors began to reconstruct their shattered communities, primarily in the main metropolises of Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, while thousands of others immigrated to Israel.[13] This left a population of between only six and seven thousand Jews in Yugoslavia.[14] In spite of the multiplicity of challenges they faced, survivors took it upon themselves to establish memorials across the country. In the immediate aftermath of the war, there were no finances that could be devoted to the construction of memorials, and the leadership of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia was far more focused on ensuring that members of the community who had been displaced by the war were fed, clothed and sheltered. By the early 1950s, the Federation of Jewish Communities had secured funding for monuments from "a wide array of individuals and institutions"[15] from across Yugoslavia, Israel, and the United States. The funds were allotted for the construction of five

[11] Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 14.
[12] Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, "Introduction," in *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.
[13] Mass Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia occurred in the years 1948-1952.
[14] Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 193.
[15] Emil Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 209.

large monuments, scattered across the country, that were specifically dedicated to the Jewish victims of fascism. The construction of these monuments was permitted by the Yugoslav government, and their unveiling was even attended by state and military officials. However, as Emil Kerenji points out, these monuments "were located in the Jewish cemeteries. They were thus removed from the full view of the general Yugoslav public. They were located at the periphery."[16]

To describe the cemeteries as 'peripheral' is not meant to denigrate their role in the preservation of Jewish rites and history – it is only meant to highlight the fact that Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe have traditionally been separate from Christian cemeteries. There is thus an imagined ethnic and religious border that surrounds them, rendering them unlikely to be visited by non-Jews, though they are not completely inaccessible. It is important to note that the decision to house the monuments dedicated to the Jewish victims of fascism within Jewish cemeteries was not made by the state in order to deliberately marginalize the memory of the victims. Rather, it was a decision made by the communities themselves, who had already begun placing small memorials in cemeteries after the war ended.[17] The choice of location was made in part for pragmatic purposes – cemeteries and monuments both required upkeep and maintenance, funding for which could be obtained from the same sources.[18] Moreover, cemeteries are perhaps the most natural and intuitive sites for memorializing, commemorating, and mourning the dead. These are also functions of monuments, particularly when the victims do not have a burial place – hence the famous memorial at Treblinka is comprised of 17,000 rock slabs designed to look like a cemetery for the victims who were never given a proper interment.[19] As cultural sites, cemeteries are perhaps the most emblematic of the dictum to 'never forget' – that is, provided they are maintained and cared for. Concern over the state of Jewish cemeteries arose immediately following the war. The Federation of Jewish Communities recognized that it would be impossible to maintain many of the cemeteries of communities in which the Jewish population had been decimated, and their condition was rapidly deteriorating.[20] Cemeteries in larger cities were faced with the same problems, as the surviving population was much smaller than before and financially unable to provide the level of upkeep required. As Emil Kerenji

[16] *Ibid.*, 215.
[17] Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry*, 98.
[18] *Ibid*., 209.
[19] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 186.
[20] Paul Benjamin Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 84.

explains, preserving the cemeteries was seen as critical because their existence and continued maintenance was "proof of the history of Jewish life in Yugoslavia,"[21] and of its continuity.

Currently, the Jewish cemeteries in Belgrade and Zagreb are reasonably well-maintained. In Serbia, the Sephardic cemetery in Belgrade, which dates from the early twentieth century and contains over four thousand graves, is maintained by the Jewish Community of Belgrade and its condition is comparable to that of the much larger New Cemetery of Belgrade across the street.

Figure 2.1 – Damage and overgrowth in the Jewish Cemetery of Novi Sad

Likewise the Jewish section of the graveyard in Zemun, now part of Belgrade, is not in poor condition – though it has been the target of some vandalism,[22] most notably in July 1997 when nine of its gravestones were badly damaged.[23] Of course, all graveyards in Belgrade would benefit from more funding for maintenance as they suffer from cracked sidewalks and overgrown weeds unattended to, but their condition is not completely deplorable. In Croatia, Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb as a whole is very well-maintained, as is its Jewish section, though the Jewish section was the victim of a targeted bomb attack in August 1991.[24]

Outside of Zagreb and Belgrade, the situation is quite different. Smaller cities with substantially smaller Jewish communities maintain their cemeteries, but it is an uphill battle

[21] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 203.
[22] Jewish Community Zemun, "Hevra Kadisha," accessed November 20, 2013, http://www.joz.rs/hevra_en.html
[23] Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry*, 203.
[24] Nila Ginger Hofman, *Renewed Survival: Jewish Community Life in Croatia* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 50.

against the ravages of time. Novi Sad in Serbia once had a Jewish community of over four thousand, now it is only several hundred. Its Jewish cemetery dates from the start of the nineteenth century and is sizeable at more than a hectare, containing upwards of three thousand graves. It is too large a cemetery to keep scrupulously maintained without multiple groundskeepers and ample funding, particularly as the Jewish Community of Novi Sad has also assumed responsibility for attempting to maintain the Jewish cemeteries of surrounding municipalities where no Jews remain.[25] Most of the sidewalks are kept clear, but vines and weeds have overtaken many tombstones, some of which are also cracked and damaged (figure 2.1). The situation is the same in the city of Osijek in Croatia. Here, the Jewish community has initiated the project of digitally preserving and documenting the town's Jewish sites, including its two Jewish cemeteries, the largest of which was established in 1860, containing over five hundred graves.[26] This cemetery is also in dire need of maintenance, with moss, grass, and weeds covering many gravestones, and the chapel clearly requires major restoration work (figure 2.2). In addition to its own two cemeteries, the Jewish community of Osijek also maintains the Jewish cemetery in the town of Đakovo,[27] where there is a monument

Figure 2.2 – Chapel and graves in the Jewish Cemetery of Osijek

[25] Jevrejska Opština Novi Sad, "JONS," accessed November 20, 2012, http://www.jons.rs/index.php/jons
[26] Jewish Community of Osijek, "Digitalization – Jewish Cemetery in Upper Town of Osijek – Preservation Project of Jewish Heritage in Osijek," accessed June 10, 2013, http://project.zo-osijek.hr/gornji_grad/groblje/index_en.html
[27] Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry*, 132.

and the graves of Holocaust victims from the Đakovo concentration camp. However, without the necessary consistent and sufficient funding, all upkeep is very difficult.

An interesting contrast to this sad state of affairs is starkly apparent the instant one walks into Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb. The most notable and opulent cemetery in Croatia, it serves as the final resting place for numerous politicians, artists, writers, and others who helped shape the past and present of this small state. Upon entering Mirogoj, the first thing seen is the massive grave of Franjo Tuđman, occupying the most prominent place behind the chapel at the entrance (figure 2.3). A vast slab of black marble, it is not excessively ornate but its sheer size is "an inappropriate intrusion on the surrounding harmony."[28] The area around the grave is kept pristine with clean sidewalks and plenty of flowers. In its own way this is a reflection of the current state of memory in Croatia, where the Tuđman era and the 'Homeland War' are worthy of remembrance, but the Holocaust and the fascist period are not. Instead, these problematic periods are consigned to remain forgotten. As Barbie Zelizer so aptly puts it, "tombstones, like the cemeteries that house them, are significant only insofar as they merit attention from the living. Without memorial ceremonies, manicured lawns, flowers, and general practices of maintenance, tombstones – and the deaths that they mark

Figure 2.3 – The massive grave of Franjo Tuđman behind the entrance to Mirogoj

[28] Celia Hawkesworth, *Zagreb: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 203.

– fade away."[29] This observation is starkly evident at Mirogoj cemetery. It was in order to prevent this 'fading away' of the memory of the Yugoslav Jewish Holocaust victims that the Federation of Jewish Communities embarked on their project to establish five main memorials – in Zagreb and Đakovo in Croatia, Belgrade and Novi Sad in Serbia, and Sarajevo in Bosnia, three of which will be described forthwith.

The 1952 monument to the 'Jewish victims of Fascism' in the Sephardic cemetery in Belgrade is not immediately visible upon entering the cemetery, as it is located near the far back wall. However, its less prominent location does not detract from its imposing presence.

Figure 2.4 – Bogdanović's Monument to the Jewish Victims of Fascism in Belgrade

Designed by the architect Bogdan Bogdanović, the monument consists of two large curved granite-faced concrete structures that mirror one another (figure 2.4). A pathway bisects these structures, evoking the tragic fact that the Holocaust was a massive break in the history of the European Jews. The gap between the structures subtly references the heroic as well, in that the shape of the structures recalls the parting of the Red Sea, when Moses led the Jews out of bondage. The monument's sheer scale simultaneously attests to the heroic resistance against fascism. The stone

[29] Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 238.

structures also evoke other Jewish themes, in that their shape resembles the Tablets of Law,[30] as passed down to Moses on Mount Sinai. The pathway bisecting the monument is flanked by metre-high walls as it leads up to the monument, with one wall representing the Ashkenazi community of Belgrade and the other the Sephardi community. Interestingly, both the pathway and the walls are partly comprised of old tombstones from the city's former Jewish cemetery on Palilula Street, though this "was apparently decided upon due to financial constraints"[31] and not for its symbolism. Over the years, memorial plaques dedicated to specific victims of the Holocaust have been affixed onto the walls, with the number of plaques increasing each year.[32] These plaques, which contain the names of victims and act as substitute gravestones, are private family initiatives and were not an element of the original monument at the time of its unveiling. In contrast to these private plaques, at the point where the path bisects the stone structures there is a single official plaque containing the inscription "to the Jewish victims of fascism and the fallen fighters of the People's Republic of Serbia,"[33] and a small carved star. After bisecting the monument, the path, still flanked by low walls, leads to a large iron menorah. There is another tiny plaque opposite the menorah, which states that "this monument was raised by the Jewish Community of Belgrade in 1952 with the help of the government of the People's Republic of Serbia and the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and through the contributions of its members and friends." Immediately beside the monument there is also a large stone grave. Its plaque denotes that "here are buried the bones of 197 Jewish victims of fascism that were found and gathered at this cemetery, they are a symbol of all our victims in the area of the People's Republic of Serbia, where there are over thirty thousand who were buried in mass graves and whose locations remain unknown." The plaque is in Serbo-Croatian, not Hebrew, yet it specifically commemorates Jewish victims.

The menorah, atop a granite pedestal, is situated behind the concrete structures but is still visible from the front of the monument. The menorah is the largest of the monument's Jewish icons, but the concrete structures are also decorated with an iron star of David and the Hebrew letters that are an abbreviation for the "gravestone formula that is routinely translated into

[30] I am thankful to Harold Glass for this very interesting observation.
[31] Andrew Lawler, "The Memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović: Their condition and situation as of 2012," accessed November 15, 2013, http://www.academia.edu/5227153/The_Memorial_works_of_Bogdan_Bogdanovic_Their_condition_and_situation_as_of_2012
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] All memorial plaque translations from the Serbo-Croatian and any accompanying errors are my own. Some assistance with translations, when required, was provided by Nesa Ilich.

English as 'may his soul be bound in the bonds of eternal life.'"[34] Evidently, the monument does not shy away from the use of Jewish motifs or iconography, and through their use conveys the irreparable tragedy of the Holocaust; recognizing the specificity of Jewish victimhood, and even going so far as to include the number of Jewish victims in one of the accompanying plaques. In fact, the 1952 monuments were among the first in Europe to make use of Jewish symbols with the tacit support of the state, at a time when any mention of Jewish victimhood, even outside Eastern Europe, was extremely rare.[35] However, they did so "while conforming to fundamental postulates of Yugoslav socialist ideology,"[36] the most important of which was the myth of the national liberation struggle, whereby Tito's multiethnic partisan forces fought and defeated the Nazis and their bourgeois fascist collaborators. Thus, while most of the monument's iconography was explicitly Jewish, its plaque references the two designated groups of 'victims of fascism' and 'fallen fighters' that dominated official Yugoslav remembrance of the war. Kerenji rightly notes that both "were understood to be multiethnic groups,"[37] so that no group could claim to have a monopoly on victimhood, thereby ignoring the complication of the interethnic civil war that had raged alongside World War II. In sum, the Jewish community was allowed to explicitly recognize Jewish victims, but had to do so within the framework provided by the regime, which implicitly acknowledged that all groups had suffered in the fight against fascism, no group more so than any other. Paul Gordiejew has aptly defined this sociopolitical process of accommodation to the state as submergence: "a synthesis of a Jewish memorial culture and a newly invented socialist culture in which the former accommodated itself with the latter."[38] The Yugoslav Jews, as a minority population, demonstrated their status as loyal citizens and true Yugoslavs in the eyes of the regime by contributing to the building of socialism and a secular Jewish identity. This was not in any way disingenuous or forced, as many Yugoslav Jews, almost one third, had survived on account of the Partisan movement.[39] There was thus a symbiotic relationship between the community's leadership and the state, and notwithstanding the fact that the 1952 monuments utilized specifically Jewish themes, the narrative they provided that was accessible to the wider Yugoslav public dovetailed with the new socialist forms of

[34] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 212.
[35] *Ibid.*, 287.
[36] *Ibid.*, 192.
[37] *Ibid.*, 113.
[38] Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*, 96.
[39] Ivo Goldstein, "Restoring Jewish Life in Communist Yugoslavia (1945-1967)," *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* Vol. 34 No. 1 (Summer 2004): 58.

commemoration.[40] Their messages about the Holocaust, as an event separate from the Second World War, were 'submerged' in the narrative of the larger suffering of the Yugoslav peoples.

The messages about the Holocaust in the 1952 monument in the Jewish section of Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb are arguably even less accessible to the general Yugoslav public, in spite of the fact that the monument makes use of strongly Jewish imagery (figure 2.5). The

Figure 2.5 – The 1952 Monument to the Jewish Victims of Fascism in Mirogoj Cemetery

monument is situated atop a stone surface and consists of a long black marble backdrop, approximately a meter high, on which is inscribed the following phrase in Hebrew: "In memory of the Jewish soldiers who fell in the war against the fascists and the Jewish victims who died at the hand of the Croatian fascists."[41] Immediately, one notes the use of the two commensurately equal groups of 'victims' and 'fallen soldiers,' in other words, partisans. Thus, even while commemorating their victims in Hebrew, a language alien to the regime, the acceptable Socialist narrative is replicated. According to Kerenji, in spite of the fact that the Jews are named specifically as victims, it is in a manner that merges them "symbolically into the story of the new Yugoslavia."[42] However, out of character for other monuments of the time, the perpetrators responsible for the Holocaust are also singled out as 'Croatian fascists' as opposed to the more

[40] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 182.
[41] I am extremely grateful to Harold Glass for providing me with all of the Hebrew translations. In this particular case, he also pointed out that the word used for "victims" is the same as that used for "sacrifices."
[42] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 214.

generic 'fascists,' used on most other Yugoslav monuments. This is likely because Hebrew was used, obscuring meaning for the non-Jewish public, who were only capable of reading the monument's Serbo-Croatian inscription. While Kerenji argues that "there was no substantive difference in the meaning between the messages conveyed"[43] in Hebrew and Serbo-Croatian, this particular inscription seems to indicate otherwise. Though subtle, it is important and cannot be written off as a minor difference.

To the far right of this marble inscription is a very large statue of Moses, sculpted by Vanja Radauš and Antun Augustinčić. Moses is portrayed as standing assertively, holding two stone tablets in one arm and pointing at them with the other (figure 2.6). He is staring sternly at what appear to be the Ten Commandments, but upon closer inspection the tablets contain only two commandments, written in Serbo-Croatian: Thou shalt not kill and thou shalt not steal.[44] Clearly, these are the two most important commandments that were violated by the perpetrators of the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia, and in this manner the sculpture is pointing an accusatory finger at the perpetrators. However, one has to closely inspect the statue to take note of the writing on the tablets. The only other Serbo-Croatian inscription on the monument must also be located through close inspection, as it is carved on the stone ground around the monument's base, unlike the Hebrew writing on the black marble, which is perpendicular to the ground and immediately visible. The Hebrew inscription also stands out starkly against the black marble, whereas the Serbo-Croatian words engraved on the ground do not command immediate attention – they are embedded among the surrounding flagstones, which are of the same colour and texture. The ground inscription is also cracked and damaged, resulting in some missing letters; it is unclear whether this was due to vandalism or natural wear and tear. It is more likely the latter on account of its location, though

Figure 2.6 – The Statue of Moses and the stone tablets

[43] *Ibid*., 212.
[44] *Ibid*.

the monument has been vandalized in the past, and was in fact defaced within days of its completion.[45] The Serbo-Croatian engraving states the following: "This monument was raised to the Jewish fallen fighters in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle and the Jewish victims of fascism from the years 1941-1945, at this grave the bones of unknown Jewish victims are buried, transferred from the camp of Jasenovac-Gradiška, who symbolize all victims and whose names have been recorded and added to the buried remains." Like the Serbo-Croatian inscriptions on the Belgrade monument, the perpetrator is not singled out and two groups are specified – victims of fascism, and fallen fighters. Unlike the monument in Belgrade, no number of victims is stated. Both of these facts point to the effectiveness of "political-symbolic submergence in Titoism,"[46] which dictated the terms of representation and acceptable narrative. However, in the Zagreb monument at Mirogoj there is an underlying subtly accusatory tone not present in the Belgrade monument, and this tone is inferred through the Hebrew wording and the details concerning the main figure of Moses, particularly the two commandments written in Serbo-Croatian. The accusatory note is thus directed at the local perpetrators, some of who are buried in Mirogoj cemetery where the monument stands. Thus, while conforming to the socialist narrative, the monument simultaneously provides its own parallel but subtle narrative, hinting at the reality of the Holocaust in Croatia: it was perpetrated by the Croats themselves, and not at the behest of Nazi Germany.

The Zagreb monument would certainly benefit from some restoration work, particularly as its damaged state is sadly contrasted with the pristine condition of many other monuments in the cemetery, including the aforementioned grave of Franjo Tuđman. Mirogoj was constructed in the nineteenth century, and while many graveyards constructed in this period were still segregated by religion, all faiths share space at this cemetery. Though this may seem to be an encouraging symbol for interethnic tolerance, differing memories of the Second World War also share space at Mirogoj. Arguably, the stage was set for this during the war itself, when the Ustaša regime established days of official public mourning and commemoration for fallen 'martyrs,' a key ritual of which was a procession to Mirogoj, where several Ustaša commanders were buried.[47] In the turbulent 1990s, during and after the struggle for independence, multiple new monuments were established at the cemetery. Some were for the fallen soldiers and victims

[45] *Ibid.*, 220.
[46] Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*, 82.
[47] Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 330-331.

of the Homeland War, but there was also a monument built for the 'Victims of Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross,' an event from the end of the Second World War during which the Partisans were said to have executed hundreds of thousands of fleeing Ustaša soldiers and Croat civilians. The actual figure of victims is substantively lower, in the tens of thousands, but Croatian nationalists attempt to equate this to the horrors at Jasenovac "by calling Bleiburg the site of the 'Croatian holocaust.'"[48] The Tuđman era was characterized by this kind of 'equalizing' of Ustaša crimes against others and Communist crimes against the Ustaša and Croats more generally. The president himself played a particularly influential role in this regard, even proposing in 1998 the construction of "a memorial for the *Ustaša* that had fallen during the war, together with a memorial for those who perished in Jasenovac."[49] The Jewish community of Zagreb protested against this soon after on Holocaust Memorial Day at Mirogoj cemetery,[50] which was perhaps the most fitting location and time for such a protest. Thus, while the early monuments to the Jewish victims of fascism were confined to the peripheral sphere, they have retained their symbolic value, even to this day.

The use of Jewish symbols and iconography was characteristic of all of the 1952 monuments, and was not limited to those in Zagreb and Belgrade. As a final example, there is the monument in the Jewish cemetery of Novi Sad – a much smaller and plainer monument than its Belgrade and Zagreb counterparts. The monument consists of a white stone urn atop a limestone pedestal approximately a metre high. The front of the pedestal displays a large carved menorah where immediately below there is an inscription that simply reads "1941-1945." The pedestal and urn are protected by a textured limestone canopy supported by four rectangular pillars, and the entire monument sits on a limestone plinth. The top of the canopy prominently displays a Star of David. It is clear that the monument's purpose is to provide a place of mourning for the Jewish victims whose graves were never marked, but the monument is out of the purview of the general public and would only have a strong resonance with those who understand the significance of its inscribed dates and happen to come across it. Located in the Jewish cemetery of Novi Sad, the monument is in good condition, without much visible damage,

[48] Ljiljana Radonic, "Croatia's Politics of the Past during the Tuđman Era (1990-1999) – Old Wine in New Bottles?" *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013): 245.
[49] Hofman, *Renewed Survival*, 38.
[50] *Ibid.*

but it is in need of maintenance. Moss and weeds have overtaken part of the plinth, and the limestone that would ordinarily be a bright white has become dulled and sullied over time.

Figure 2.7 – The Monument in the Zemun Jewish Cemetery

The five large monuments of 1952 were not the only memorials constructed in the years following the war. Nearly every Jewish cemetery that remained active after the war saw the construction of a monument or the addition of a memorial plaque. While generally the memorials were designed "in accordance with the ritual mode of commemoration of World War II that was being established in Yugoslavia,"[51] some offer very interesting deviations from the standard anti-fascist narrative. A particularly illustrative example is provided by the monument in the Jewish section of the main cemetery in Zemun. A plain black marble obelisk, it stands around two meters high and resembles many other simple war memorials (figure 2.7). A Cyrillic inscription in Serbo-Croatian merely states "to the victims of fascism 1941-45," which is followed by an alphabetical list of the victims, also written in Cyrillic. This narrative is identical to that of a nearby monument in the same cemetery, where a mass grave was located in 1944. The other monument, however, is not in the Jewish section of the cemetery. It was sponsored by the Zemun Organization of Fighters of the National

[51] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 211.

Liberation Struggle and is dedicated "to the victims of fascist terror," which is written in black on a plain white backdrop (figure 2.8).

Ostensibly, the trite dedication on this monument commemorates victims from the Sajmište camp, though they are not designated by ethnicity in any way whatsoever, nor are "the circumstances in which they were killed."[52] The phrasings of these two exceptionally plain monuments demonstrate the prototypically acceptable narratives used to commemorate the war – they accuse only fascists and do not single out any ethnic group as victims. The black obelisk could be seen as nondescript, were it not for two markers that this is a Jewish memorial: a carved Star of David and a Hebrew inscription, which translates as "Remember what the Amalekites did to you." This is part of a passage from the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, which exhorts the Jews not to forget being attacked by the Amalekite tribe during their exodus from Egypt. The Amalekites have come to symbolize the archetype of the murderous enemies of the Jews. During and after the Second World War, the Nazis were referred to as Amalekites, though the term could be referring to all fascist collaborators as well. What is certainly clear is that such specifically Jewish cultural references "were of an entirely different order than those provided by the discourses of 'victims of Fascism' and 'fallen fighters,'"[53] though this was evident only to Jews and not to the general Yugoslav public, to whom these messages and meanings were indecipherable.

Figure 2.8 – The Zemun Cemetery monument, dedicated by the Zemun Organization of Fighters

[52] Jovan Bajford, *Staro Sajmište: Mesto sećanja, zaborava i sporenja* (Beograd: Beograski centar za ljudska prava, 2011), 89. All translations from this work are my own, with the exceptions of excerpts from chapters 7 and 9. The translations for these chapters are from the conference reader "If not now, when…? International Conference: The Future of the Site of the Old Fairground Staro sajmište in Belgrade 10th to 12th of May 2012."
[53] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 212.

Though the majority of the memorials in the peripherally public sphere were established soon after the war, several have been established more recently. Most notably, another Holocaust monument was established in the Sephardic cemetery in Belgrade, funded by the Jewish Community of Vienna. This monument is dedicated to the Jewish victims of the Kladovo transport, a group of Austrian Jews attempting to flee to Palestine by ship on the Danube. Stranded in occupied Serbia, this group of Jews was unable to reach their destination. The refugees were all apprehended and interned by the Nazis. Eventually, the men were shot on death marches in 'reprisal' for partisan sabotage and the women were sent to Sajmište several months later. The monument is a large slate wall set perpendicular to the similarly tiled ground. Inscribed on the surface of the wall in white writing in Serbian, Hebrew, and German[54] is the following: "Here lie the remains of eight hundred Jews from Austria who were on their way to the Holy Land, brutally murdered by Nazi criminals on October 25, 1941, in Šabac. This monument was raised by the Jewish Community of Vienna to never forget." The inscriptions differ very little in each language; the only real distinction being that the months of the Jewish calendar are used in the Hebrew variant. In addition, the wall features a large black menorah. It is evidently the most recent monument in the graveyard, and very well-maintained. Its narrative clearly differs from the monuments of the socialist era; there is no mention of anti-fascist fighters, the struggle for national liberation, or generic 'victims.' Instead, the victims and perpetrators are clearly described as Jews and Nazis. This is to be expected as it was raised after the socialist period and by a community not influenced by socialist modes of commemoration.

The final memorials of note in the peripheral sphere are those not located in cemeteries. The Jewish Community centre in Zagreb houses several memorial plaques for victims of the Holocaust from various sites across Croatia. To see these plaques, one must first enter the community centre, which is now equipped with a security checkpoint that must be cleared to access the building's foyer. This is because the centre, like the Jewish section at Mirogoj cemetery, was also bombed in August 1991, not long after open hostilities had ignited Croatia's war of secession from Yugoslavia. Damage from the bombing was substantial,[55] especially on the first floor and in the main foyer, where a memorial plaque at the entrance was shattered. Its reconstructed shards state "For members of the Jewish Community who died in the National

[54] Dalia Ofer, *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel, 1939-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 64.
[55] Hofman, *Renewed Survival*, 50.

Liberation War and victims of Fascism, this memorial plaque was established on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the uprising. Jewish Community of Zagreb, 1961." It is adorned with a small carved star, denoting its origins in socialist forms of commemoration. It remains unclear who was behind the bombing. Among the theories, one is that it was the work of Croatian extremists, with or without the involvement of the Croatian government, whose main motivation was anti-Semitism.[56] The most plausible explanation was reported on by the Belgrade magazine *NIN*; according to this narrative, the bombing was part of a Yugoslav Army operation, a false-flag attack "code-named 'Opera Orientalis,' which was aimed at bringing worldwide reproach on the Croats,"[57] particularly from international Jewish organizations. If the goal was to make the Croatian government appear unrepentantly anti-Semitic, it did not succeed. The government in fact loaned the community money for repairing and upgrading the building.[58] Of course, this fact on its own does not necessarily absolve the Croatian HDZ government, particularly concerning the anti-Semitic statements made by its top leadership in the 1990s.

The memorial plaques on the first floor of the Zagreb Jewish community centre are visible upon entering, where they encompass a sizeable portion of the wall across from the staircase leading up to the main rooms of the community centre. One plaque is dedicated to "Jewish youth killed in 1941 in Jadovno Camp." It lists over one hundred and fifty inmates' names, along with the inscription "we have not forgotten you, relatives and friends." A second large plaque contains around a hundred names, and is dedicated to Fallen Fighters, "On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Rab Jewish [Partisan] battalion in September 1943, formed by former detainees of the Italian Concentration camp on Rab. Zagreb, 18 September 2003." In both memorials, Jews are being memorialized first and foremost as Jews. In the second memorial, they are also memorialized as partisans, but the commemoration of Jewish victimhood is of overarching importance, particularly since the Rab Jewish battalion was broken up and absorbed into other partisan detachments.[59] Notably though, these plaques are confined to the inner sanctum of the community center, where they are out of the purview of the general Croatian public. When they were in the public purview, they were subjected to heavy vandalism. The monument to the Jewish battalion was initially located on the

[56] *Ibid*.
[57] Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry*, 207.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] Jennie Lebel, *Until 'The Final Solution': The Jews in Belgrade 1521-1942,* trans. Paul Münch (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, Inc., 2007), 335.

island of Rab itself, but was continually vandalized with graffiti, defaced with swastikas, broken, and even outright removed. The community grew tired of re-establishing the plaque each time an incident occurred, and decided to move it permanently to the community centre.[60] While monuments in the peripherally public sphere are less accessible, they are also generally safer, and this trade-off appears to be of particular importance in the Croatian context due to the increased vandalism during and after the war of 1991-1995.

In sum, the early monuments and memorial plaques in the peripherally public sphere speak to the importance of the organized postwar Jewish Community and the emphasis its leadership placed on properly memorializing Jewish victims of the Holocaust. They also speak to the relative tolerance of the Yugoslav authorities in allowing these memorials, in contrast to the states of the Eastern bloc.[61] Nonetheless, if it were not for the efforts of the community, there would never have been any memorials that singled out Jewish victims in particular, only generic memorials to non-identified victims and fascist fighters. It was seen as crucial to construct the five monuments in 1952 since "in the absence of tombstones to the victims, the monument can function as a substitute site of mourning and remembrance."[62] Yet, these monuments were all placed in Jewish cemeteries, which are already sites of mourning and remembrance – but peripheral sites, drawn around ethno-religious lines. In this manner, they risked sealing off memory of the Holocaust and confining it to Jewish milieus where the general Serbian or Croatian public would not be forced to confront it. The early monuments in the cemeteries of Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad and Zemun are all similar in that they used Jewish symbolism and iconography, like menorahs, while remaining true to the socialist means of commemoration present in Tito's Yugoslavia. Yet they also provided parallel narratives "accessible only to those familiar with Jewish culture and tradition."[63] These narratives were usually encoded in Hebrew, where they called out the perpetrators, either by translations that subtly differed from the Serbo-Croatian, or by using specifically Jewish cultural references. Later monuments, exemplified by the monument to the victims of the Kladovo transport, did not need to adhere to the socialist narrative. However, the collapse of Yugoslavia brought with it

[60] Anonymous member of the Zagreb Jewish Community, alias "Vincent Vega," interview by author, Zagreb, June 2012.
[61] Goldstein, "Restoring Jewish Life," 68.
[62] Andreas Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel, 1994), 15.
[63] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 213.

some nationalist antipathy to memorialization of the Holocaust, and a denigration of the socialist narrative of the war. This antipathy has included vandalism, particularly affecting Jewish cemeteries. As the case of the memorial plaques in Zagreb's Jewish community demonstrates, a sad fact is that select memorials may be more secure when not in the view of the general public.

Centrally Public Sphere

This chapter now turns to the memorials of the centrally public sphere. These memorials are in numerous locations, from the sites of former camps to memorial parks, but what they have in common is that they are not restricted to Jewish milieus. Initially, most of these memorials were constructed by the state, but in recent years they have increasingly been constructed through community initiative. Given that memorials in the centrally public sphere have a much higher visibility to the general public than those of the peripherally public sphere, they have been less static and more subject to changing political currents. Yugoslavia under Tito developed its own memorial aegis to support its official narrative of the multiethnic partisan war against the fascist occupiers, and the construction of monuments was thus treated as a task of paramount importance. As Lucia Volk explains, "because they are characterized by their immutability, memorials are crucial ingredients in the cultural reconstruction of societies that have undergone profound transformation,"[64] particularly when transformation stemmed from the experiences of war and mass killing. The regime aimed to use memorialization to help supplant local narratives of the war, which in most cases were memories of brutal interethnic violence, with the equalizing narrative of 'brotherhood and unity.' As previously explained, this narrative ensured that few memorials would be for the victims of specific ethnic groups, so memorialization of the Holocaust was maligned in the socialist period outside of Jewish spaces, with a few notable exceptions. Public memorials in both Serbia and Croatia were affected by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the collapse of the socialist narratives of 'brotherhood and unity' and the 'People's Liberation War,' although many memorials of the socialist era remain to tell this story. Memorialization in Serbia and Croatia from the late eighties onward occurred under differing regimes and in heavily nationalistic political climates. The Jewish communities in Serbia and Croatia also reasserted their right to memorialize the Holocaust in centrally public spaces. Following the confrontation with the Soviet Union in 1948, whereby Yugoslavia broke with the

[64] Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs*, 2.

Eastern bloc, Tito sought to carve an independent path for his socialist state. Aesthetically, this meant not following the lead of the Soviet Union in using socialist realism to memorialize the Second World War. Several socialist realist monuments can be found across the former Yugoslavia, for instance the Monument to the 1944 Liberation of Belgrade outside Belgrade's Partisan Cemetery. This monument, which recently underwent restoration work for the sixty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade, features a prominent statue of the archetypal strong partisan warrior. The background is a large stone gate on which two bas-reliefs depict the uprising of hardy men and women, peasants and workers alike, against the fascist occupiers. It is understandable that this particular monument would mirror Soviet forms of commemoration, as in doing so it implicitly acknowledges that the Red Army played a significant role in the liberation of Belgrade. However, socialist realist monuments are a rarity. Most monuments, *spomenici*, made use of an "unrestricted, abstract visual language"[65] and did not depict the events they commemorated by using traditional narrative forms. Rather, they typically utilized minimalist and modernist sculptural forms that were devoid of any inherent commentary on the events and places that they memorialized. This "strategic non-commemoration"[66] was aimed at constructing a new Yugoslavia and a new conceptualization of national identity that superseded ethnic identification. The *spomenici* could not, in their most abstract forms, accuse perpetrators or mark specific groups as victims, which suited the regime's "strategy of 'levelling,'"[67] meant to equalize the experiences of all ethnic groups during the war. Following the collapse of socialism and the dissolution of the common state, the *spomenici* were put in a strange position. On one hand, they were castigated for their perceived 'meaninglessness,' into which any potential feeling or narrative could be projected. On the other hand, "in spite of the absence of explicit references, the monuments' meanings were fixed to serve the Communist Party's political purpose,"[68] which resulted in the monuments becoming the targets of nationalist ire. Thus, monuments designed to be as ambiguous as possible actually came to be heavily invested with meaning by representing the very era that produced them. Many of these uniquely Yugoslav

[65] Karla Lebhaft, "Damnatio Memoriae: Memory and Identity of the (Post) Communist Croatia," *University of Bucharest Review: Literary & Cultural Studies Series* Vol. 3 Issue 1 (June 2013): 61.
[66] Alysse Kushinski, "Non-Commemoration and the Nation: Memory and Forgetting in the Former Yugoslavia," *University of Bucharest Review: Literary & Cultural Studies Series* Vol. 3 Issue 1 (June 2013): 73.
[67] Jovan Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization: Holocaust Memory in Serbia since the Late 1980s," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 526.
[68] Kushinski, "Non-Commemoration and the Nation," 73.

monumental objects have since been neglected and vandalized in Serbia and Croatia, and worse, deliberately destroyed. Their erasure has been particularly rampant in Croatia, where in the decade following independence nearly three thousand memorials were removed or destroyed.[69]

The most famous *spomenik* on the territory of the former Yugoslavia is the 'Stone Flower.' This monument, designed by the architect Bogdan Bogdanović and unveiled in 1966, sits atop the site once occupied by Jasenovac concentration camp in Croatia, and is part of the larger Jasenovac Memorial Site that includes a museum and education centre. The monument is

Figure 2.9 – The Stone Flower by Bogdan Bogdanović at Jasenovac Memorial Site

a massive concrete flower twenty seven metres tall and approximately the same width. The flower most closely resembles a lily, with its petals opening to the sky (figure 2.9). A long wooden walkway, meant to evoke the trip by railway to the camp,[70] leads to the crypt of the

[69] Radonic, "Croatia's Politics of the Past," 243.
[70] JUSP Jasenovac, "JUSP Jasenovac – Jasenovac Concentration Camp Memorials," accessed May 16, 2012, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6715

monument, where the flower meets the ground. The crypt, which may be entered by the visitor, covers the monument's concrete foundations, and serves to tie the opening of the petals to the fate of the victims.[71] It is partly lit by sunlight, which enters through a gap above the north-facing wall. Prominently displayed on this same wall is a bronze plaque with an excerpt from Ivan Goran Kovačić's poem *Jama* (The Pit) one of the most renowned wartime poems, which reads, when translated: "That simple happiness, the window's glint; Swallow and young; or windborne garden sweet - Where? The unhurried cradle's drowsy tilt? Or, by the threshold, sunshine at my feet?"[72] These lines of the stanza "speak of the last conscious moments of a blinded victim who believes he is seeing and hearing his parting images and sounds."[73] The victim is the central figure of the poem, which begins with his eyes being gouged out by the fascists, who have captured and tortured him, throwing him into a pit with the other murdered victims. This poem was taught after the war throughout Yugoslavia for its anti-fascist message, depicting the bestial actions of the Ustaša against ordinary civilians; young and old, men and women, and the destruction and terror wrought on the countryside. The poem does not wholly skirt the ethnic dimension of these killings, with the poet asking in another stanza; "Is there a place where men forget again / and live with those who wronged them by their side?"[74] Kovačić himself was a partisan fighter captured and killed during the war by Četnik fighters, a fact which provides the monument with a subtext where the message is not only against Croatian fascism but against all forms of ethnic nationalism.

The monument, through its form, carries clear messages. Bogdanović began his design process focused primarily on the symbol, for which he chose the flower, which traditionally symbolizes life. However, life is "inseparable from funeral symbols, since for new life cleansing and consecration are needed."[75] In this way, the monument also represents the cyclical nature of renewal. At the time, the prevailing ideological notion was that the new state was providing this badly needed social renewal, and the ability for interethnic reconciliation. Socialist Yugoslavia was to be the place Kovačić described in his poem, where men would forget and live together as though they had not wronged one another. Yet they had wronged one another, and the memory

[71] *Ibid*.
[72] Andrew Lawler, "The Memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović."
[73] Nataša Jovičić, "The Alchemy of the 'Flower," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 238.
[74] Ivan Goran Kovačić, *The Pit: Poem, 1943*, trans. Alec Brown (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1961), 60.
[75] Jovičić, "The Alchemy of the 'Flower," 229.

of Jasenovac was a prime obstacle to reconciliation, particularly between Serbs and Croats. Thus the site posed a problem for the Yugoslav state – Tito could not ignore the location of the largest concentration camp in the Independent State of Croatia, where a hundred thousand people, including the majority of Croatia's Jewish population, had perished. For a decade after the war, though, the site sat empty, devoid of any official markers of what had transpired. This was partly due to a lack of financial resources that could be spared, but it was also that memorializing the site risked opening old wounds. Memorialization had to acknowledge what had happened, while simultaneously looking away from the past and toward the future. In the early 1960s, the Union of anti-fascist fighters of Croatia mounted a campaign to have the site properly memorialized,[76] which culminated in the construction of the stone flower and the Jasenovac museum. Bogdanović's design epitomizes the "fusion of the tragic and the victorious in Yugoslav memorialism,"[77] where the victory is social renewal in the new Yugoslavia in spite of the Yugoslav peoples having experienced great wartime suffering at the hands of the fascists.

Crucially, the monument does not point an accusatory finger at a specific ethnic group, following the "national narrative of omission."[78] One would struggle to learn through the monument, especially since it has no explanatory plaque, that Jasenovac was a camp motivated by racial hatred, and was the primary locus of the Holocaust of Croatia's Jewish population. Although many Croats were killed at the camp by the Croatian fascists, they were interned there because of their political beliefs. Croats were not targeted for their ethno-religious background, unlike the Serbs, Jews, and Roma. The monument is not a completely ambiguous abstract work of art. It does carry messages, and one can read into it a particularly strong statement of anti-fascism through the poem excerpt in the crypt. But the ethnic dimensions of what transpired at Jasenovac are blurred, and a silence resounds across the marshy landscape where the camp once stood. It feels as though the monument is neither forward-looking, nor does it fully look to the past. Rather, it references only the point in time when it was created. In other words; "cleared of any narrative purpose, political specificity, and social significance, these monuments contain nowadays only a tectonic form, suggesting at the same time that the former places of

[76] Pål Kolstø, "The Serbian-Croatian Controversy over Jasenovac," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War Two*, ed. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 239.
[77] Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*, 134.
[78] Kushinski, "Non-Commemoration and the Nation," 73.

remembrance became places of forgetting."[79] Both surprisingly and fortunately, the monument was not damaged in 1991 during the fighting between the Yugoslav National Army and the Croatian military and paramilitary forces. On some level, this speaks to its success in sticking to a non-accusatory narrative. The museum, by contrast, was vandalized and ransacked multiple times. Today, the monument and the entire memorial site are in good condition, protected as 'cultural goods' by the Croatian state. The monument underwent restoration work in 2002, when damaged portions of the concrete were filled in. However, more work was recommended at the time to strengthen the concrete, and this has not happened.[80]

The area surrounding the former Jasenovac camp site is host to the largest concentration of mass graves on Croatian territory, many of which were never exhumed. In Serbia, the primary execution and burial site of victims killed by the German forces was at the shooting

Figure 2.10 – The heroic victims of Jajinci as depicted in the relief by Stevan Bodnarov

grounds of Jajinci. Victims buried in mass graves at Jajinci included those from concentration camps in Serbia. Jajinci itself is just south of Belgrade, very close to Banjica concentration camp, which was administered and guarded by both the Germans and the forces of Milan Nedić's collaborationist government. The majority of Holocaust victims on the territory of

[79] Lebhaft, "Damnatio Memoriae," 62.
[80] Lawler, "The Memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović."

Serbia are among those who were buried in mass graves here. The very first shooting victims buried at this site were in fact the Jewish men who had been interned at the Topovske Šupe camp in Belgrade. The victims of the largest mass grave here were not killed on-site, but were the Jewish women, children, and the elderly who were murdered on the drive to Jajinci from Sajmište camp in the Sauer gas van. In December of 1943, the Germans decided to excavate and burn the victims' remains in order to destroy the evidence of the crimes committed at Jajinci.[81] Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that this is among the few major sites of the Holocaust in Serbia – but it is not memorialized as such. The first monument established at the site was placed at the entrance to former shooting grounds in the summer of 1951. It is a cast iron bas-relief by the sculptor Stevan Bodnarov, done in socialist realist style (figure 2.10) and mounted on a sandstone backdrop. It depicts the victims of Jajinci, men and women alike, "defiantly standing in front of a firing squad expecting a heroic death."[82] But as Jovan Byford points out, only adult victims are portrayed, which completely marginalizes and obfuscates the Jewish children from Sajmište buried at this site, whose "fate was not marked or in any way mentioned."[83] In fact, the monument features no explanatory plaque beyond the engraved dates of 1941-1944. This falls in line with the acceptable socialist narrative that equalizes all victims under the general heading of 'anti-fascists.'

A memorial park was established in 1964 at Jajinci. When it was opened, the park was used to mark the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade, and it was thereafter used for major official commemorative ceremonies. The park features a small monument, where carved into a granite surface and mounted on a concrete block is an excerpt of a poem by the Serbian poet Desanka Maksimović, who also wrote a famous poem memorializing the Kragujevac massacre in Serbia. The excerpt reads "If my arms are broken / I have wings / and with them, like a bird, I am embracing the horizon," and it accompanies another monument, established in 1988. This was one of the last *spomenici* constructed while Yugoslavia was an extant country, and is a sculpture designed by Vojin Stojić, depicting a highly stylized bird which could be mistaken for an abstract symbol (figure 2.11), mounted on a concrete column, altogether around fifteen meters tall. Jovan Byford asserts that the development of Jajinci memorial park in the 1980s was prioritized over memorialization at the site of Sajmište because

[81] Lebel, *Until the Final Solution*, 334.
[82] Bajford, *Staro Sajmište*, 89.
[83] *Ibid*.

Jajinci "was the location of Banjica inmates' suffering,"[84] and Banjica camp had become the symbol of communist resistance and suffering.

The grounds of the memorial park could use repaving, as there are plenty of loose and damaged tiles. Otherwise, all of the monuments remain in good condition. Curiously, there is also an Orthodox church nearby, adjacent to the former shooting grounds, with portions of this church still under construction. Finally, at the entrance to the park near the 1951 monument, there is an explanatory plaque. This was added much later, only at some point in the past seven years, by the City Council of Voždovac, and it states the following in English: "More than 80,000 Serbs, Jews, Roma and other anti-fascist [*sic*] were executed in this area during World War Two (1941-1944)." It carries the same message in Serbian. On one hand, this phrasing is a clear continuation of socialist modes of commemoration. On the other hand, it differs in that it specifies which ethnic groups were victims. It does so, however, in a very disingenuous manner, overlooking "the distinction between the Holocaust and other instances of genocidal violence or war crimes."[85] This grouping of all of the victims together lends itself to the assumption that they were all killed in the same way and for the same ideological reasons, but that is not the case. The Serbian government, however, found this a useful trope in the 1990s, when official policy was to compare the wartime fates of the Jews and Serbs.

Figure 2.11 – The stylized bird spomenik at Jajinci

[84] *Ibid*., 153.
[85] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 534.

The *spomenici* at Jasenovac in Croatia and Jajinci in Serbia are meant to commemorate particular locations where mass killings occurred during the war, but there were also monuments constructed to mark select events, generally mass killings that occurred over a short time frame. Unlike the more abstract monuments constructed in the 1960s, these monuments often depict victims, though in a very stylized manner. Monuments commemorating events were built starting in the 1970s. The first such example, and the one most relevant to the Holocaust in Serbia, is the monument to the victims of the Novi Sad raid, built in 1971. As the explanatory plaque of the monument details, "In the Novi Sad raid of 21-23 January 1942 more than 1,300 Jews and Serbs, men, women and children that were innocent, were killed by the Hungarian fascists and thrown into the icy Danube." This is the Hebrew translation, in Serbian 'fascists' is replaced by 'Hungarian soldiers and their helpers,' and the sentence "eternal glory to the victims of the raid" is added. Uncharacteristically, the number of victims is actually under-estimated.

Figure 2.12 – The Monument to the Victims of the Novi Sad Raid on the banks of the Danube

The monument is located in Novi Sad on the left bank of the Danube River, on the quay and near the Varadin Bridge. Set among a small garden of flowers is a sculpture by Jovan Soldatović entitled "Family." The sculpture consists of two adult figures that stand around four meters high, and the smaller figures of two children, all of which are made of roughly modeled bronze (figure

2.12). The garden is surrounded by a low brick wall that continues along the riverfront, and onto which are affixed bronze plaques that list all of the victims' names. Interspersed between these plaques are four plaques, two with stars of David and the other two with crosses. There is also a blank plaque at the end, perhaps indicating victims whose names were unknown and could not be inscribed. Separate from the lists of victims is one final plaque, in Serbian. It states that "Remembrance is a memorial harder than stone. If we are people we must forgive, but must not forget."[86] This clearly articulates an ethos that sets it apart from monuments whose usual purpose was to transmit didactic anti-fascist narratives in support of the socialist state. It also implicitly recognizes the reality of the city of Novi Sad and the entire region of Vojvodina –that it was ethnically mixed before the war and remains so in the postwar era. Thus maintaining peace, primarily between Serbs and Hungarians, must be at the forefront of memorialization. Though the monument recognizes the mutual fate of Serbs and Jews and seems to equalize them, it does not single out the Holocaust as a unique historical event.

While there is only one monument in Novi Sad that commemorates the raid, albeit a large and detailed one, there are numerous monuments that commemorate the Kragujevac massacre. This was a reprisal event whereby the Germans organized mass shootings on October 21, 1941,

Figure 2.13 – "Broken Wing," one of the many monuments to the victims of the Kragujevac massacre

[86] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 52.

in the Serbian city of Kragujevac and surrounding villages. Civilians, including all the students from the local high school, were rounded up and shot until the Germans met their quota of 2,300 victims to satisfy the reprisal ratio of a hundred Serbs killed for one German.[87] Though few Jews were among the victims of this massacre, it was primarily because there were few Jews in Kragujevac, and most Jewish men, previously interned at Topovske Šupe, had already been shot as reprisal hostages. While this massacre, then, was not an event of the Holocaust in Serbia, it is important to illustrate its memorialization to show that there is a veritable excess of memorial culture surrounding this event that has not waned at all. This contrasts markedly with the neglect of many sites of the Holocaust in Serbia, particularly at Topovske Šupe itself. Instead of a single Kragujevac massacre memorial, there are no fewer than ten; all placed in Šumarice Memorial Park. This well-maintained park is vast, several kilometers squared, marking the site of the original massacres and over thirty mass graves. Opened in 1953, it is a relatively short drive from the centre of the city. It is worth noting immediately that this park was opened a full decade before the park at Jajinci, which speaks to the almost mythic dimensions that the Kragujevac massacre had acquired in Serbian collective memory early on.

The construction of monuments began a few years after the park was opened to the public. The most well known of these monuments is the 1963 monument to the executed pupils and teachers, entitled "Broken Wing," by the Serbian sculptor Miodrag Živković. This monument had a stylized v-shape, evoking the irreparable damage to the community caused by the massacre (figure 2.13). Made from white concrete, from afar the material appears textured. When approached, the faces in anguish carved into the rocky surface become visible. Another prominent monument, by the Serbian Jewish sculptor Nandor Glid, was erected in 1980. After having fought in the partisan movement, Glid went on to design the famed 1968 international memorial at Dachau concentration camp.[88] His monument for Šumarice is entitled "A Hundred for One," after the German reprisal quota. The monument, which is several meters tall, was cast in bronze (figure 2.14). From a distance, it resembles a tree, with the sturdy base of the monument rising up like a trunk, giving way to branches that are depicted as human arms and legs. Upon approaching closer inspection, faces can also be seen among the contorted limbs, so that when the 'tree' is approached it reveals itself to be a tangle of pained victims. This

[87] Browning, *Fateful Months*, 52.
[88] Milton, *In Fitting Memory*, 166.

monument is very similar to the later Holocaust monument Glid would design for the banks of the Danube in Belgrade. Both are striking and powerful monuments. Notably, both stray from the earlier more abstract style of the *spomenici* in that they depict victims and do not privilege abstract forms over human forms – instead, they combine the two.

The Kragujevac mass shootings were deplorable, one of the single largest massacres committed by the Germans against the Serbian civilian population, certainly deserving of commemoration and remembrance. However, through its hyper-memorialization, the massacre has become an almost mythic event casting the entire Serbian population as martyred by the Germans during the Second World War. Though the Serbian population was treated very poorly, as were most Slav civilians under Nazi occupation, they were not the targets of genocidal policies. The massacres at Kragujevac and Kraljevo were the only large-scale reprisal actions, because the reprisals had proven to be counter-productive in quelling the uprising against the Germans. The mass shootings were also discrediting Milan Nedić's collaborationist government, which was premised on its ability to save Serbian lives. The Germans therefore scaled back reprisal actions and dramatically reduced the quotas in December 1941.[89] However, as Christopher Browning notes, if this "ensured that further arbitrary shootings of Serbs did not

Figure 2.14 – The Monument "A Hundred for One" in Šumarice Memorial Park

[89] Browning, *Fateful Months*, 55.

occur,"[90] it was already too late for the adult male Jews, who had comprised the first detainees shot to fill the reprisal quotas in the fall of 1941. It is worth reiterating that while all male Jews were shot in reprisal, not every Serb was a potential target. The quota of 'a hundred for one' encompassed over five thousand Jews, and thousands of Serbs, but this did not eradicate the Serbian population in the way it did the Jewish population, a fact that has been forgotten in Serbian and Yugoslavian memorial culture alike. As a result, the Šumarice memorial park has ten monuments; yet the former camp at Topovske Šupe where the Jewish men were interned does not have a single one, only a small and solitary memorial plaque.

While it was evidently rare to find a monument exclusively for the Holocaust in socialist Yugoslavia, there were a few. One such example is found in Osijek, where the pre-war Jewish population had been eight percent of the town's total population.[91] Here, there is a monument officially dedicated to the victims of fascism, in the square right across from the Jewish Community Centre. Its placement straddles the line between being in the peripherally public sphere and centrally public sphere, though ultimately it falls into the latter. This monument, officially titled "Humanity," but also known as "mother and child," depicts the elongated, somewhat abstract figure of a mother, who is holding her child up above her head. Though the monument officially follows the anti-fascist narrative, it is impossible to mistake as anything other than a Holocaust monument. No other group of victims in Osijek during World War II included women and children, subjected to genocidal policies. Thus, without explicitly stating it, the monument is clearly pointing to the near erasure of Osijek's Jewish population. Unveiled in 1965, it is the work of the Croatian Jewish sculptor Oscar Nemon. The square in which the monument stands was later renamed after him by the city of Osijek. This is welcome news in a country where, following its independence in 1991, the tendency was to rename streets and build memorials for Ustaša leaders, including those most egregiously responsible for the massacres of Serbs and deportations of Jews in the Independent State of Croatia, such as Mile Budak and Jure Francetić.[92] The renaming campaigns of the Tuđman era also targeted the 'Square of the Victims of Fascism' in Zagreb, which had been the wartime location of the Ustaša Security Police and

[90] *Ibid*, 53.
[91] Kerkkänen, *Yugoslav Jewry*, 132.
[92] Hofman, *Renewed Survival*, 35.

the Gestapo,[93] who were responsible for deportations of Jews. This square was renamed "as the Square of Great Croats,"[94] a change that generated protests and was reversed after the death of Tuđman. Thus the targets of Croatian nationalist erasure were all socialist forms of commemoration, whether they were *spomenici* and monuments to the victims of fascism or mere street signs.

By contrast, following Tito's death, socialist forms of commemoration retained their dominance in the republic of Serbia. During the collapse of Yugoslavia, from 1989 until 2000, Serbia was under the rule of former communist apparatchik Slobodan Milošević. During this time, commemorative forms largely remained the same, but their underlying narratives shifted away from socialism and towards Serbian nationalism. This led to the greater prominence of Holocaust memorialization, but within a manipulative framework whereby the Milošević regime used the Holocaust "selectively and strategically to accentuate the pivotal motif of Serbian nationalism, that of *Serbian* suffering."[95] The monuments at the site of what was once Sajmište concentration camp in Belgrade present the best examples of this narrative shift. As the site that had been both a camp for Jews and Roma from 1941-42 and thereafter a camp for Serbian political prisoners, Sajmište acutely represents the difficulties in forging "a commemorative space large enough to accommodate the plural memories and symbols of disparate, occasionally competing groups."[96]

Sajmište presents an interesting case insofar as numerous physical structures of the camp, which had previously been the Belgrade fairgrounds, remained intact following the war. Over time its buildings, including the former guard tower, barracks, and morgue, were appropriated for different purposes. Initially, the abandoned site became an artists' colony, with the buildings serving as workshops. Later on, the barracks were used as emergency housing for low-income residents of Belgrade, including refugees, and today several hundred people call the decrepit neighbourhood of the old fairgrounds home. Various businesses also opened up in the former camp buildings, including a restaurant, auto shop, and travel agency. For nearly thirty years, the site was not marked or memorialized, in spite of the fact that it had been the largest concentration

[93] Mark Biondich, "Representations of the Holocaust and Historical Debates in Croatia since 1989," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 139.
[94] Hawkesworth, *Zagreb*, 202.
[95] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 517.
[96] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 153.

camp on Serbian territory. The first victims of the camp were the estimated eight thousand Jewish women and children interned and asphyxiated in the mobile gas van from December 1941 to May 1942.[97] From mid-1942 to the camp's bombardment in 1944, it was a concentration camp for political prisoners and partisan captives, the majority of whom were Serbian men. During this period, just over 30,000 people were interned therein.[98]

A Sajmište memorial plaque was mounted in 1974 and removed when it was replaced by a new monument on July 7, 1984. In contrast with the old plaque, the monument was unveiled "in a central position in the fairground complex,"[99] amongst the pavilions and near the former guard tower, giving it at least a symbolic importance. The monument to the victims of the camp is a very plain black marble slab, mounted onto a concrete block atop an equally nondescript concrete plinth (figure 2.15). In the bottom left corner of the marble plaque, there is also a bronze decoration resembling a stylized star. Its inscription reads "on the area of the old Sajmiste, the German Gestapo created in 1941 the Sajmiste camp in which with the help of domestic traitors, over 40,000 people from all parts of our country were

Figure 2.15 – The 1984 monument to the victims of Sajmište concentration camp

[97] Menachem Shelach, "Sajmište – An Extermination Camp in Serbia," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* Vol. 2 No. 2 (Aug 1987): 255.
[98] Bajford, *Staro Sajmište*, 45.
[99] *Ibid*., 111.

cruelly tortured and murdered."[100] The number of victims is exaggerated, but it was the number determined by the 1947 Yugoslav government commission, and naturally the monument reflects the socialist narrative, particularly as it was funded by a local committee of the Veterans of the National Liberation War. Funding also came from the community of the old fairgrounds. The monument has since been neglected and seemingly abandoned. The grass around the monument is totally unkempt and its stone base is cracked, as is the sidewalk leading up to it.

Its abandonment was largely due to the fact that a new monument was unveiled on April 21, 1995. This monument was actually supposed to have been built in 1989, but was delayed when there was insufficient funding for it.[101] Unlike the monument from 1984, the 1995 monument is not actually located within the perimeters of the former camp, but is instead located on the perimeter, very close to the bank of the Sava River. Arguably, this is a more prominent and visible location, but it lacks the centrality of the 1984 monument, which remains the only marker that exists within the site of the camp itself. The 1995 monument stays true to socialist commemorative forms, as it was designed during that period by the Serbian sculptor Miodrag Popović, who originally intended it to be built at Jajinci.[102] The ten meter high bronze monument consists of a star within a massive circle, which is supported by a base that rises diagonally. The circle and star have been fractured, dividing the monument into two halves (figure 2.16). It is accompanied by plaques in both English and Serbian, which are identical in their statements. They explain

Figure 2.16 – The 1995 monument on the banks of the Sava

[100] Lebel, *Until the Final Solution*, 338.
[101] Bajford, *Staro Sajmište*, 120.
[102] *Ibid*., 119.

that the old Belgrade fair was the site of a Nazi concentration camp between 1941 and 1944. What is written thereafter deserves to be repeated in full: "War crimes and genocide against around one hundred thousand patriots, members of Yugoslav liberation movement, children, women and elderly, were committed here. Nearly half of the prisoners were killed either in the concentration camp or at the mass execution sites like Jajinci, Bežanijska Kosa, Jabuka and Ostrovačka ada. Many of them were relocated to death camps throughout the [*sic*] German occupied Europe. The victims were mostly Serbs, Jews and Roma. This memorial is dedicated to all of them. It is also dedicated to the victims of the notorious Ustashi concentration camp of Jasenovac, victims of Hungarian occupation who were washed ashore in Belgrade, as well as the heroic resistance to the Nazi terror and all Yugoslav citizens, victims of genocide." Several things are of note here. Firstly, as Byford points out, the groups of victims were completely undifferentiated,[103] though their treatment was quite different. Some of the Roma were released from the camp, and though many of the Serbian political prisoners were killed, neither of these groups were the subjects of total extermination, as the Jewish women, children, and elderly were. Yet the plaque references "children, women, and elderly" without specifying that the victims in these categories were almost exclusively Jews. Instead, it disingenuously portrays all three groups as victims of the same genocidal policies, including deportation to death camps. The shift from the socialist narrative to the Serbian nationalist narrative, whereby Serbs were also victims of genocide, is crystal clear. Secondly, it inflates the number of victims so that it is even higher than the 40,000 estimated on the monument from 1984. This was a hallmark of post-socialist Yugoslavia, whereby every ethnic group sought to portray themselves as having been the most egregiously victimized whether during the Second World War or in the postwar period. Thirdly, it does not include 'domestic collaborators' among the perpetrators, who are only described as Nazis and Hungarians – non-Serbs, in other words. Finally, it expands the scope of the victims commemorated at the camp to include the victims of Jasenovac, who were mostly Serbs, even though the two camps were completely separate. This serves to reinforce the notion of Serbs as victims of genocidal policies, which they arguably were on Croatian territory, although this was not an accurate representation of their treatment at Sajmište or on Serbian territory during the Second World War.

[103] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 535.

Not all monuments unveiled in Serbia during the Milošević era offered such a disingenuous representation of wartime history. On October 21, 1990, a monument entitled "Menorah in Flames" was unveiled near the banks of the Danube, in the district of Dorćol that had been the Jewish quarter in the pre-war period. Rather than being right on the path near the riverbank in prominent view, however, it is tucked away off to the side, nestled near an apartment complex and children's park. The monument was designed by Nandor Glid, and echoes his earlier monument "A Hundred for One" in Kragujevac. Approximately three meters tall and the same width, it is a bronze sculpture in the shape of a menorah, seemingly aflame. The branches of the menorah clearly encompass human faces and limbs (figure 2.17). It was the

Figure 2.17 – "Menorah in Flames" by Nandor Glid, located in a residential area off the Danube promenade

first memorial in the centrally public sphere devoted exclusively to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and was dedicated "to the Jewish victims of Nazi Genocide in Belgrade and Serbia, 1941-1944" by the "People of Serbia, City of Belgrade and Jewish Community," according to its

accompanying plaque. Immediately, it is obvious that this monument belies the socialist narrative, as 'victims of Nazi genocide' is used instead of the typical socialist-era phrasing of 'victims of Fascist terror.' The plaque is written in Serbian, English, and Hebrew and while the Serbian and English translations are word for word identical, the Hebrew version replaces 'Nazi Genocide' with 'Shoah.' Though this seems extremely minute, it is important in that the Shoah is taken to mean above all the murder of the Jews, whereas 'Nazi genocide' is much broader and could potentially encompass many other groups of victims. The plaque thus offers a slightly more exclusivist narrative when read in Hebrew.

Though on the surface, this monument appears to indicate that the Holocaust was finally being properly memorialized, Jovan Byford has argued that the motives underlying the monument's construction were problematic in two ways. The first is that the monument's underlying narrative was crafted to "carefully and strategically"[104] highlight Serbian philosemitism as much as it was to commemorate the Holocaust. In other words, the Holocaust was being commemorated as an event, but in a fashion that instrumentalized it to send a specific political message. The second is that since this monument was constructed specifically for Holocaust victims, these victims no longer had to be memorialized at the sites at which they were killed, including at Sajmište.[105] Byford's assertions are not unfounded, considering the fact that the ensuing 1995 monument at Sajmište memorializes the Jewish victims as only one group among several. Nevertheless, "Menorah in Flames" remains the only official Holocaust monument dedicated exclusively to Jewish victims in all of Belgrade. It is a striking work of public art. Sadly, the monument and its bronze plaque are dirty and weathered, and the area around the monument does not appear to be regularly maintained. However, the structure itself is not damaged, even though the area as a whole seems neglected.

The Holocaust memorial most recently established in Belgrade was a long overdue memorial plaque unveiled at the site of Topovske Šupe camp in January 2006. Over years, the site of the former camp deteriorated to the point where only one original wall of one of the camp's buildings remains. The memorial, a bronze plaque designed to resemble an unrolled torah scroll, is mounted on this weathered brick wall (figure 2.18). The plaque informs the reader in Hebrew, Serbian, and English, that "between August and December 1941, this site

[104] Bajford, *Staro Sajmište*, 155.
[105] *Ibid*., 156.

served as a Nazi concentration camp for Jews and Roma from Belgrade and Banat. All of them were imprisoned here and several hundred were taken daily for execution by firing squad." The inscriptions are identical in each language. The fact that it took sixty five years even for a small memorial plaque to be established at this site is very telling. There had been a failed attempt to have the site marked in 1978, and in 1994 a plaque was put up – not at the site itself, but on an adjacent boulevard near the former camp.[106] The 2006 plaque was thus the first marker

Figure 2.18 – The 2006 memorial plaque at the site of what was once Topovske Šupe Camp

established at the site itself, but its establishment was a pyrrhic victory for the Jewish community, because the land of the former camp had already been sold by the city to a property development group.[107] As of June 2013, Delta Holdings plans to use the purchased land, including the camp's remnants, to construct the largest shopping mall in the Balkans, though this has met with some small protests.[108]

The fact that a mall is being built on the site of one of Belgrade's largest wartime camps is indicative of the official approach to Holocaust memorialization in Serbia. As Byford points out, memorialization "is devoid of any long term strategic planning."[109] The profit motive and development take precedence over marking the past, with Topovske Šupe consigned to remain a tragic blank spot in Serbian collective memory of the Second World War. I posit that this is the

[106] Lebel, *Until the Final Solution*, 337.
[107] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 542.
[108] Balkan Insight, "Belgraders Demand Preservation of Nazi Camp," accessed August 20, 2013, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgraders-demand-preservation-of-nazi-camp
[109] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 542.

case for two reasons. First, the victims of this camp were not Serbs. Secondly, not only were Serbs not the victims at Topovske Šupe, they were among the perpetrators, since the camp was guarded by gendarmes provided by the Nedić regime.[110] This does not, of course, reflect an image of all Serbs as perpetrators of the Holocaust, which is far from the case. The Holocaust in Serbia was conducted nearly entirely at the hands of the Germans, but this camp provides one of the instances in which assistance from the Serbian collaborationist administration was essential. This fact renders it harder to memorialize the site, because its history does not fit neatly into the idealized nationalist narrative that is on display in the 1995 Sajmište monument, whereby Serbs and Jews were equally victimized during the war.

Silence regarding perpetrators is not a problem limited to Serbia, as it is even more pronounced in Croatia. Two memorial plaques provide evidence of this. The first is the memorial plaque for the destroyed synagogue of Zagreb. The synagogue had stood on Praška Street, near the centre of the city, just off what is now Ban Jelačić Square. The Ustaša regime destroyed the synagogue piece by piece over the months spanning winter 1941 and spring 1942. The property where the synagogue had stood, which is now a parking lot, was returned to the Jewish community of Zagreb in 1999. Since then, the community has been debating how best to approach the space, with some members favouring rebuilding a replica of the synagogue, which would "serve as a public reminder of the events that took place in Croatia from 1941 to 1945."[111] Alternate proposals have included a museum or mixed religious and commercial space. This has remained undecided and is the source of ongoing controversies, debates, and disagreements in the Zagreb Jewish Community.[112] The only marker that indicates what once existed is a memorial plaque on the wall of a building beside the parking lot. It is a small beige plaque featuring a drawing of the front façade of the synagogue, and short inscriptions in Hebrew and Croatian. Its Croatian inscription informs the reader that "in this place stood the synagogue constructed by the Zagreb Jewish community in 1867, torn down by the fascist government in 1941." The Hebrew inscription modifies the wording slightly to "destroyed at the hands of the fascists, in the days of the Shoah in 1941." Notably, the plaque does not have an English or German translation, rendering many tourists unable to read it, not that they would be likely to notice it in the first place as it is quite unobtrusive. The Hebrew wording is more specific in that

[110] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 81. See also Lebel, *Until the Final Solution*, 307.
[111] Hofman, *Renewed Survival*, 79.
[112] *Ibid*., 130.

it points out the destruction of the synagogue occurred alongside the Holocaust, but crucially, neither the Croatian nor the Hebrew specify which 'fascists' carried out this crime. The term 'fascists' is used in a completely generic way, which could lead the uninformed reader to assume that the fascists in question were the Germans, which is not the case – certainly the term 'Ustaša' could have been used, but it was not.

The memorial plaque marking the destroyed synagogue in the upper town of Osijek presents an even vaguer narrative. The building where the synagogue once stood now encompasses a bank on the ground floor with an apartment complex occupying the upper floors. A small plaque in the shape of a Star of David is embedded in an outer wall of the ground floor (figure 2.19). It states, word-for-word in Hebrew and Croatian; "In this place stood a synagogue that was established in 1869, was burned in 1941 and was destroyed in 1950." The plaque does not denote who or what was responsible for the burning of the synagogue, leaving the possibility open that it may have occurred by accident. It almost goes without saying that this is not the case – the synagogue was deliberately robbed and burnt down by the Ustaša in April of 1941.[113] The plaque completely skirts any mention of the group responsible for this crime or even the historical context in which it occurred – the Holocaust. Aside from this plaque and Oscar Nemon's statue, previously described, there are no more memorials to the Holocaust in the public sphere in Osijek. There have certainly been none added since Croatia achieved independence in 1991, though there have been other monuments constructed. A monument located in Freedom Square was recently built

Figure 2.19 – The plaque marking the former synagogue in the upper town of Osijek, barely visible in the bottom left corner

[113] Jewish Community of Osijek, "Digitalization – Synagogue Location in Upper Town of Osijek – Preservation Project of Jewish Heritage in Osijek," accessed June 10, 2013, http://project.zo-osijek.hr/gornji_grad/sinagoga/index_en.html

to honor Franjo Tuđman, and the town's main square was renamed Ante Starčević Square after the nineteenth-century Croatian nationalist politician.

A monument constructed in 2005 depicting Starčević stands in this square, entitled "Father of the Homeland" (figure 2.20). The base of the monument states, in Croatian, German, and English: "Only the laws of God and Nature are above the sovereign will of the people of Croatia. GOD AND CROATS." This sends a clear message regarding who the inhabitants of Osijek are meant to be, and consequently marginalizes its ethnic minorities. Starčević's political beliefs and ideals have remained controversial, with some accusing him of racism and anti-Semitism. Whether this is justified or not is irrelevant, because what is important to note is that Starčević was wholeheartedly embraced as a figure by the Ustaša regime, who also constructed monuments to him as the father of their movement and ideology.[114] The shortage of Holocaust memorials in Osijek, and indeed the rest of Croatia, is thus not due to a lack of a culture of memory. It is simply that memory of the Holocaust is not prioritized in any meaningful way.

Figure 2.20 – The Statue of Ante Starčević in central Osijek

In sum, the memorials of the centrally public sphere were initially constructed by socialist regime, and thereby reflected the memorial paradigms deemed acceptable under Tito. The early memorials, as exemplified by the famous 'Stone Flower' monument at Jasenovac, were modernist sculptures and often did not feature explanatory plaques. These monuments used

[114] Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 286.

abstract forms to be as inclusive as possible and encompass broadly defined groups of victims,[115] without singling out the perpetrators, which was necessary to uphold the dictum of 'brotherhood and unity.' When narratives were built into the monuments, they focused on the 'victims of fascism' and 'fallen partisan fighters.' Such narratives are evident in monuments marking the sites of former camps and execution grounds, like at Jajinci. Monuments that marked events of mass killing were typically less abstract, like the monuments of Novi Sad and Kragujevac, but they did not deviate from the standard narrative about the war, they only added depictions of human beings. In contrast to the memorials in the peripherally public sphere, the monuments in the central sphere did not carry strong sub-textual messages regarding the Holocaust. With few exceptions, they did not even subtly single the Holocaust out as an event unto itself worth being commemorated outside the socialist paradigm. Memorials constructed from the late eighties onward, including in independent Serbia and Croatia, are excellent examples of the politics of memory on display in the public sphere. The transition from Socialist narrative to one of Serbian nationalism is most evident in the two monuments at the site of Staro Sajmište, where the Holocaust came to be memorialized alongside Serbian suffering, which was the primary focus of commemorative efforts. In Croatia, there was a strong disavowal of the socialist narrative, and there remains a silence regarding the Holocaust and an absence of memorials in the centrally public sphere. Those that do exist tend to sideline difficult issues, for instance avoiding any mention of perpetrators. Worse yet, many socialist-era memorials have been torn down.

Concluding Remarks

This overview of the memorials of Serbia and Croatia, while not completely exhaustive, has served to delineate and catalogue the physical structures that exist to mark the Holocaust in both peripherally and centrally public spaces. The peripherally public sphere consists primarily of the monuments raised in Jewish cemeteries after the Second World War by the Jewish communities of Yugoslavia. These monuments, in both Serbia and Croatia, share many characteristics since they were established at the time of the common Yugoslav state. While they are unique in that they commemorate specifically Jewish victims, they do so in a manner that was deemed acceptable by the socialist regime whereby the Jews were among many groups

[115] Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 155.

included under the category of 'victims of fascism.' The monuments thus memorialized Jewish suffering while also conveying "the story about belonging to the new Yugoslav state project."[116] Nevertheless, while outwardly conforming to the official Yugoslav narrative about the Second World War, the monuments concurrently transmitted specifically Jewish messages about the Holocaust that were not accessible to the general Yugoslav public. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the common narrative of the war lost nearly all its traction. Later monuments in the peripherally public sphere in both Croatia and Serbia thus commemorated Jews as Jews, and not as generic 'victims.' Several memorial plaques in Croatia were initially established in the centrally public sphere and then moved into a peripherally public location, due to vandalism sparked by extreme Croatian nationalist antipathy against memorializing the Holocaust and the partisan movement.

Memorials of the centrally public sphere do not have the capacity for anonymity, as they are fully in the public purview, rendering them subject to changing political whims. The practice of memorialization has clearly shifted over time, particularly after the collapse of the common Yugoslav state. This serves as a reminder that memorials, despite their perceived immutability, are as ephemeral as the contexts in which they are created. As James Young states, "both a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities of the moment."[117] These realities, for the socialist Yugoslav state, were reflected in the first monuments constructed. The need for the regime to foster a sense of interethnic harmony was paramount, and this is evident through the use of abstract forms in the *spomenici*. The modernist forms of these monuments signified the heroic fight of the peoples of Yugoslavia and their victimization at the hands of the fascists, but singled out neither perpetrator nor victim by ethnicity in order to focus on 'brotherhood and unity.' Often these monuments did not have accompanying descriptive plaques, and the transmission of their narratives was thus dependent on their forms and on "the foreknowledge that the visitor brings to them."[118] This was certainly the case at Jasenovac, Jajinci, and other sites. Thus, during the Titoist period, the Holocaust was not publically memorialized as the Holocaust, and Jewish victims were subsumed and included in the more general commemoration of victims. In the late Titoist period, some monuments and memorials in the republic of Serbia and Croatia

[116] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 196.
[117] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 95.
[118] Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration*, 161.

began to reflect more parochial concerns – memorialization of the Kragujevac massacre provides an excellent example of the growing Serbian fixation with Serbian victimhood.

This fixation on victimhood only increased in both Serbia and Croatia during the turbulent decades of the eighties and nineties. As Yugoslav memorial culture collapsed, nationalist elites in both Serbia and Croatia inflamed public sentiments by asserting that one ethnic group had been egregiously victimized by the other. This had profound implications for memorialization of the Holocaust in both states. In Serbia, the Holocaust was not singled out as an event to be marked and commemorated; rather, it was memorialized almost exclusively alongside the suffering of Serbs during the Second World War. The transition to this nationalist narrative is especially evident in the changing monuments at the site of Sajmište. However, this narrative, and its accompanying omissions, has not gone completely unchallenged. The Jewish community asserted their own narrative at the site of Topovske Šupe, finally marking the site that had long since been a blank spot in Serbian collective memory, in part due to the role played by collaborationist Serbs at the camp. That the Nedić regime had participated in the implementation of the Holocaust in Serbia is a fact that most Serbs would rather ignore, which gives credence to Pierre Nora's remark that "memory is blind to all but the group it binds,"[119] accommodating only "those facts that suit it."[120] The situation in Croatia is even more indicative of this reality. From its independence onward, the impetus in Croatia has been to memorialize the following: Croatian victimhood at the hands of the communists, especially specific incidents like the Bleiburg massacre; Croatian victimization at the hands of the Serbs during the so-called 'Homeland War'; and polarizing Croatian historical figures like Ante Starčević who were staunch nationalists, not those Croats who advocated for interethnic harmony. The Holocaust does not have a place within this framework, especially because memorializing the Holocaust requires acknowledging that there was a period in time when Croats had their own homegrown fascist movement, responsible for the perpetration of heinous crimes against minorities. A "memorial mea culpa"[121] necessitates dismantling nationalist narratives, a process exacerbated by how deeply entrenched these narratives have become over the past twenty years in Croatia. Confronting the Holocaust in Croatia has thus been more difficult and problematic than in Serbia, which is evident in the fact that fewer memorials were even constructed in Croatia.

[119] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 9.
[120] *Ibid*., 8.
[121] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 22.

This broad but extensive consideration of memorial forms and messages in Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Croatia has served to highlight the role played by the politics of memory in the memorialization of the Holocaust and the Second World War. Times of political transition include transitions in memorial culture, which reflects the deep impact of nationalism in both Serbia and Croatia. This serves as a reminder that memorials are part of both the physical landscape and the socio-political landscape. Far from timeless or unchanging, they are only "illusions of eternity."[122] In his masterful work *The Texture of Memory*, James Young cautions that the construction of monuments may not provide the solution to the problems posed by difficult historical events. He warns that the desire to memorialize an event stems just as much from a desire to forget it, particularly when it comes to the Holocaust, and that once a monument is constructed it serves to "[divest] ourselves of the obligation to remember."[123] This is an accurate observation in that many monuments serve to close off discussion and debate, which are the cornerstones of successful memorialization. However, what about in the cases of Serbia and Croatia? Is the larger problem not the fact that so few Holocaust monuments have been constructed in the first place? In other words, forgetting has not followed memorialization, because there was so little memorialization to begin with – leaving only forgetting. The dispiriting shortage of memorials explicitly and exclusively for the Holocaust in the public sphere is inextricably tied to the fact that, in both states, the Holocaust has largely been consigned to be forgotten. This began under Tito in the name of interethnic harmony, but has continued unabated in Croatia in the interest of nationalist elites. It is also true of Serbia, except where the nationalist elites could utilize the Holocaust politically, reducing Jewish wartime suffering to a tool used by Serbian nationalist leaders.

[122] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 12.
[123] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 5.

Part III: Museums

There are few cultural institutions that have become as iconic as the museum. Initially, museums were only accessible to the strata of the wealthy or highly educated, but beginning in the early eighteenth century, they were opened up to the general public. Since then, museums have proliferated across the globe, covering a wide range of subjects, including nature, art, and history. In the twentieth century, there was a veritable 'museum boom,' and every major city now boasts multiple museums, drawing tourists and residents alike. Museums are among the most influential public and private institutions, receiving millions of visitors every year. In simplest possible terms, a museum "consists of a building to house collections of objects for inspection, study, and enjoyment."[1] Yet there is far more to the museum, which plays an important sociopolitical role encompassing multiple functions. Charged with the tasks of collecting, conserving, and storing objects for the purposes of research, interpretation, and exhibition, the museum is also a cultural center and social instrument.[2] While each of these functions is important, the central functions of the museum are exhibition and interpretation. The majority of the other functions, including conservation and preservation, serve the goals of displaying and explaining the museum's contents to the visiting public.

In the case of the historical museum, exhibitions generally follow a linear historic narrative, though some are organized thematically. While there is no mandate on what museum displays must include, the historical museum typically includes objects like original artifacts, photographs, and maps which help to craft its narrative alongside explanatory plaques, multi-media or audio-visual displays, and catalogues or guidebooks. In designing the museum's exhibition, "thinking about the audience plays a major role."[3] While historical museums certainly have an academic function, with their collections serving as source materials for researchers who are often given special access, the target audience is the general public and not the expert. Historical museums must therefore be organized in a manner that transmits ample information while keeping visitors engaged and interested. This is a challenging goal, given the

[1] Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979), 5.
[2] *Ibid*., 14-15.
[3] Michael C. Steinlauf, "What Story to Tell? Shaping the Narrative of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews," in *Making Holocaust Memory*, ed. Natalia Aleksiun et al. (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 320.

fact that visitors differ markedly in both age and educational backgrounds – they are far from a homogenous group.[4] However, communication with the audience is paramount, as the primary purpose of museum exhibitions is education. This pedagogical purpose presupposes an interaction between the visitors and both the museum's displays and its overarching historical narrative.

The history museum is thus one of the key public institutions responsible for the creation and transmission of historical consciousness to a broad audience. This didactic mission is, at its core, about constructing collective memory, and it must be recalled that education is neither value-neutral nor apolitical. Much like the meanings communicated by memorials and monuments, the contents of historical museums are always a result of the interplay between politics and history. In other words, the pedagogical function of the museum is also a political function, aimed at crafting an official historical narrative. The construction of this narrative and the choice of objects to display in the museum is not a haphazard one. Susan Crane remarks that "being collected means being valued and remembered institutionally,"[5] and this remembrance is carried forward by the visitors who view the museum's objects, because the tangibility of the objects forms the basis of their understanding of the historical event. The materiality of the museum is critical to the transmission of the historical narrative – the objects often carry an emotive value, and are meant to imbue moral lessons. "Objects constitute the essence of the museum," notes Edward Alexander, "they may require enhancement, but they themselves tell much to their beholders."[6] The historical museum therefore enshrines certain objects as worthy of preservation, which carries an underlying judgement concerning which events are worth remembering, and how they ought to be remembered and framed in the public eye. This judgement is inherently a political one.

Museums are subjected to greater political constraints than monuments, given that the state is typically the primary source of funding for their construction and continued operating costs. This must serve as a reminder that the museum can be an institution deeply embedded in the existing power structures, which carries sinister possibilities when the ruling government is an authoritarian one. We must not forget that the fascist regime in Croatia opened a museum in

[4] Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 165.
[5] Susan A. Crane, "Introduction: Of Museums and Memory," in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 2.
[6] Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 178.

1944 dedicated to the Ustaša movement,[7] and that the Nazi regime in Germany toyed with the idea of opening "a museum of artifacts of vanished races."[8] While we prefer to conceptualize museums as providing an essential pedagogical service that is neutral and free from propagandistic overtones, they can nevertheless be complicit in programmes of indoctrination under authoritarian power structures. Even when their narratives are not crafted under authoritarian regimes, museums are still worthy of critical scrutiny in large part due to the role of government in their creation and maintenance.

Unlike monuments and memorials, which can be built quite rapidly provided there is sufficient funding, museums require a far larger financial investment and often take years, even decades, to plan and construct. Due to this fact, few historical museums were built in the immediate postwar period, particularly in Europe, where reconstruction of infrastructure took precedence. Gradually, narratives and objects of the Second World War were integrated into existing historical and military museums. It took several decades before museums devoted exclusively to the Second World War were opened. While these museums often emphasized atrocities perpetrated by Axis forces, they did not focus narrowly on the Holocaust. The first national Holocaust museum to open was Yad Vashem in Israel in 1953, but it took a long time for other countries to follow suit. In the United States, a national Holocaust museum was not opened until 1993, largely because consciousness of the Holocaust had not even begun to crystallize in the West until the late 1960s.[9] A similar pattern was followed in Eastern Europe, although museums devoted exclusively to the Holocaust were not opened until after the fall of communism, because in the communist narrative the Holocaust was subsumed in the larger narrative of the 'Great Patriotic War.' In Yugoslavia, fascist crimes against the Yugoslav peoples were documented and displayed to the public at several museums, which were opened in the 1960s on the sites of former camps, for example at Jasenovac. These museums were not specifically or exclusively about the Holocaust. Rather, when they presented the Holocaust, they did so in a manner compliant with the official Yugoslav narrative, which did not recognize the Holocaust as a separate event but as one of many fascist crimes against the multiethnic Yugoslav peoples. There was thus no single 'Holocaust museum' in socialist Yugoslavia, and following

[7] Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation*, 192.
[8] James Ingo Freed, "The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel, 1994), 95.
[9] Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 104.

the dissolution of the common state, none were established in either independent Serbia or Croatia. This is not the case for every former republic, as a large Holocaust memorial centre opened recently in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

This chapter examines the portrayal and presentation of the Holocaust at museums in both Serbia and Croatia. Since no museums are exclusively dedicated to the Holocaust, the museums under examination are a more diverse collection, though all of them memorialize the era of the Second World War in at least one of their exhibits or displays. Not every single museum in each country has been examined; the museums selected are either located at key historical sites or are emblematic of specific modes of remembrance that are worthy of critical scrutiny. The aim is to evaluate how each museum exhibits and interprets the Second World War, and how the Holocaust is either included or marginalized. How are these events remembered, presented, and explained to the general public? How are the displays constructed? Do they contain original photographs or artifacts, or audiovisual materials like film footage or interviews with survivors? What are the larger narratives that underpin the museum exhibits, guidebooks, catalogues, pamphlets and brochures? Are they guilty of the "fabrication, rearrangement, elaboration, and omission of details about the past"[10] or do they confront the past in its entirety?

The museums under examination are classified in two ways. The first are what I term the 'primary' museums. These are the museums that are located at the sites of former camps or at the sites of massacres, and are the primary museums at which specific events and aspects of the Second World War are commemorated. The primary museums are the Jasenovac Memorial Museum in Jasenovac, Croatia; the Banjica Concentration Camp Museum in Belgrade, Serbia; and the Memorial Museum of 21 October in Kragujevac, Serbia. Museums that are located away from the sites of camps or massacres are classified as 'secondary' museums. To place these museums in a secondary category does not mean they are less important institutions; it only means that they are a step removed from the sites themselves, meaning they are less narrowly focused on specific places and events. Generally, these museums have broader themes and mandates. To illustrate this point, while the Banjica Concentration Camp Museum in Belgrade focuses almost exclusively on the history of the camp and the inmates' experiences therein, neither the Second World War nor the Holocaust are the sole focus of the Serbian Military

[10] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 3.

Museum, which covers Serbian military history from the pre-feudal era all the way up to the NATO bombing campaign of 1999. The secondary museums in Belgrade are the Jewish Historical Museum, the Military Museum, and the Museum of Genocide Victims. In Zagreb, the secondary museums are the Zagreb City Museum and the Croatian History Museum. Recalling that "museums are more than cultural institutions and showplaces of accumulated objects: they are the sites of interaction between personal and collective identities, between memory and history, between information and knowledge production,"[11] an examination of the contents and narratives of these museums is warranted. Taken together with the overview of memorials, an evaluation of museums will paint an overall portrait of the current state of Holocaust memorialization in both Serbia and Croatia.

Primary Museums

There is a surprising dearth of museums on the territory of the Former Yugoslavia that are either exclusively devoted to the Second World War, or that feature it prominently. This is a seemingly curious fact, given that it was the partisan victory during the Second World War that established socialist Yugoslavia. In addition to being memorialized through the construction of *spomenici*, the founding myth of the 'People's Liberation Struggle' was publically commemorated on several national holidays. These marked key wartime events, for instance Republic Day on November 29 commemorating the founding of the new socialist state, likely the most important holiday in Yugoslavia. Museums, though far less significant than holidays or memorials, nonetheless played a role in commemorating the partisan struggle, particularly at the sites of critical wartime events. Thus primary museums in the socialist period were typically among the most important institutions for the creation of public historical consciousness. However, when the common state collapsed, so too did strict adherence to its founding myths. The few museums that had displayed socialist narratives of the Second World War were closed, either temporarily or permanently, or they saw their exhibitions change quite dramatically. For instance, the Museum of July 4 in Belgrade commemorated the beginning of the partisan uprising, but it was permanently closed after the Yugoslav wars. The museum at Jasenovac was closed during the war in Croatia from 1991-1995, and did not reopen until 2006, with an entirely new exhibition.

[11] Crane, "Introduction," 12.

The Jasenovac Memorial Museum is the first of the primary museums under review, and it is also the most important. The designation of primary museums refers to those museums that confront the period of the Second World War and the Holocaust at the relevant sites where massacres occurred or camps were situated, and Jasenovac was the largest camp on the territory of what had been Yugoslavia. In fact, during the Second World War, Jasenovac was the largest concentration camp not run by Nazi Germany, but by a collaborating state.[12] For this reason, it is important to commemorate the camp from a European perspective, and not only within the Balkan, Yugoslav, or Croatian contexts. The site of the former Jasenovac camp complex is thus one of the few sites in socialist Yugoslavia that was marked by both a massive monument and a memorial museum. Currently, the Jasenovac Memorial Museum is actually "the only major state- funded [exhibition] dealing with the World War II period"[13] in all of Croatia – all other museums deal with this time period in an ancillary manner, if they address it at all. It was seen as critical to adequately document the crimes perpetrated by the Ustaša at the camp – but at the same time, there are few sites in Europe that have been the point of departure for such vicious controversies and heated polemical debates. To this day, Jasenovac continues to stir ethnic resentment among Serbs and Croats.

The site of the Jasenovac camp complex had been reduced to smouldering ruins and rubble when it was liberated by the Yugoslav Partisans in late April of 1945. By this time, "all traces of the crimes committed there between 1941 and 1945 were removed"[14] by the retreating Ustaša, who had in addition destroyed most of the camp's archival records and killed all of the remaining inmates. Following liberation by the partisans, the majority of the remaining structures of the camp were removed "for unknown reasons."[15] Thereafter, almost no traces of the camp remained. The site sat empty for many years, until the large veterans' organizations started a campaign to memorialize the camp, which culminated with the opening of the Jasenovac Museum in 1968, two years after the 'Stone Flower' monument was unveiled. The museum was established by the state, and as such its interpretive narrative was completely in

[12] Goldstein and Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 304.
[13] Ljiljana Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe: the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising and the Jasenovac Memorial Museum," *Nationalities Papers* (2014): 1, accessed March 15, 2014, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2013.867935
[14] Drago Roksandić, "Of Tragedy, Trauma and Catharsis: Serbs in Jasenovac Camp 1941-1945," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 73.
[15] Radonic, "Croatia's Politics of the Past," 238.

accordance with the official narrative of the People's Liberation War. This narrative was strongly anti-fascist, though it did not castigate all Croats as Ustaša supporters. The museum did categorize the victims ethnically, but at the same time, the victims were primarily designated as anti-fascists – their political identity superseded their ethnic identities. This is in line with the valorization of partisan victims and 'heroic' deaths over those of ordinary civilians, who did not fit as easily into this simplistic narrative beyond demonstrating the barbaric nature of the fascist onslaught. The displays of the museum in the socialist period featured thousands of artifacts, many of them "weapons and other instruments used to kill the inmates,"[16] as well as graphic pictures and archival film footage of the camp and its victims. This served to emphasize the sadism of the fascists and the moral dimensions of the partisan struggle. The museum at Jasenovac was "one of the most visited museums in the whole of Yugoslavia,"[17] and among the state's most important WWII sites. Visitors to the memorial complex included state officials, tourists, veterans, school children from all over the country, and many others. It had a library and publishing house in addition to its permanent exhibition. The museum remained in operation until 1991, when war engulfed the Croatian region of Slavonia. That year, the museum was occupied by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav People's Army, who transported some of the museum's inventory to Bosnia, where it was eventually sent to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington for cataloguing and safeguarding. In October 1991, Croatian paramilitary units retook the museum, vandalizing, defacing, and destroying much of what remained in the building.[18] The museum was later shelled by the Serbs, who retook the area before it was ultimately recaptured by the Croats in May 1995 during Operation Flash.

After the war ended, it took over a decade for the museum to be reconstructed and reopened. When the new exhibit was finally unveiled to the public in 2006, it was the subject of heated debates and controversies. It is clear why this is the case when one walks through the museum's redesigned space, which features very minimalist displays. Though the museum buildings appear sizeable from the exterior (figure 3.1), much of this is devoted to administrative offices and a large education centre. The permanent exhibit is confined to two mid-sized rooms

[16] Kolstø, "The Serbian-Croatian Controversy over Jasenovac," 239.
[17] Lawler, "The Memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović."
[18] Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1994), 32.

of only 350 square meters,[19] an exhibition space considerably smaller than the Zagreb City Museum and other secondary museums under review in this chapter. The exhibition rooms are very dark, with black walls and floors, and very dim lighting. Spotlighting and backlighting is used to highlight the panels of text mounted on the walls and the few artifacts on display in glass cases. The darkness of the exhibit is not very effective in helping to present its contents, and renders it difficult to read much of the text on the panels – particularly the English translations,

Figure 3.1 – The exterior of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, the large building to the left is the education centre

which are in white typeface on a beige background. The Croatian text, by contrast, is printed in black and is considerably more readable. There are only a couple dozen panels of text in the whole museum, which also contains very few artifacts from the camp. The text panels in the first of the two rooms focuses on the background information concerning the establishment of the camp and survivors' experiences, while the panels in the second room focus on the specifics of life and death in the camp, on the attempted breakout in April 1945, on the aftermath of the camp, and on other issues such as the total number of Jasenovac victims. Text panels are thematic in nature, though they loosely follow a chronology. In addition to the text panels, there are several televisions embedded in the walls of the first room that play reels of elderly survivors discussing their experiences in the camp complex. Unfortunately, these are automatic and not visitor-activated, which means that unless a visitor approaches with impeccable timing, they will arrive partway through the interview. This is the only use of audio-visual material in the museum; survivor testimony is not complemented by archival film footage of the camp.

[19] JUSP Jasenovac, "JUSP Jasenovac – Memorial Museum," accessed November 30, 2013, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6559

As a memorial museum, the exhibition is not purely pedagogical; rather, it melds the transmission of information with "a commemorative aspect."[20] The names of all of the known victims of the camp, which have been meticulously catalogued by the museum staff, are inscribed and displayed as a form of commemoration. Some of the victims' names are inscribed in white on black walls in the first of the exhibition rooms, but the vast majority of the names are written in white on glass plates that descend from the ceiling throughout the museum (figure 3.2). Inscribing the names of victims is a common means of commemoration, also used at other Holocaust museums, for instance at the Pinkas synagogue in Prague. There, however, nearly 80,000 names of Holocaust victims from Bohemia and Moravia are written in red and black on

Figure 3.2 – The two walls of names at Jasenovac Memorial Museum, with the glass panels of names overhead

beige walls, clearly visible to the visitor, who is also overwhelmed at the sight of the inscriptions covering every possible surface. But because the glass panels of names at Jasenovac are stacked one in front of the other, they do not have the same magnitude of effect as they would have had the names been written on all of the walls, surrounding the visitor. Instead, the panels hover above the visitor's head, causing less of a psychological impact and rendering them more

[20] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 12.

difficult to read. Thus, the museum's commemorative function is not as effective as it could have been, had the names been made more visible.

The core narrative of the new exhibition contrasts markedly with that of the socialist-era museum. In the previous exhibition, first opened in 1968 and then updated and expanded in 1988, the narrative was strongly ideological, emphasizing the brutality of the fascist threat and the moral triumph of the partisans. To convey this, graphic images, archival footage, and killing instruments were prominently on display. In the new exhibit, these have been nearly entirely removed. Both the narrative of the museum and its displays have changed dramatically. The new narrative focuses on the individuality of the victims as opposed to the overarching ideological framework of the Second World War. In the words of Nataša Jovičić, director of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, the new exhibit was designed as a space "where suffering is individualised and where the victims are identified and can represent themselves"[21] to the public. As such, the artifacts on display are primarily "the personal belongings of individual victims."[22] Taken together, the few artifacts and photographs, text panels, filmed interviews with survivors, and the catalogue book present the narrative of the new Jasenovac Memorial Museum. This narrative does not whitewash the camp. Throughout the exhibit, it is clear that the camp was a site where tens of thousands perished, but the overall context in which this occurred is far less clear, and the new exhibition suffers from several major shortcomings.

The first of these is the shortage of artifacts and photographs on display in the museum. The largest and most important artifact is not located in the museum at all, but rather on the walk from the museum to the monument. On this walk, one passes by the 'memorial train' – a train that was used for transporting inmates to the camp (figure 3.3). This was added to the memorial grounds in 1989. Within the museum, the few artifacts presented are objects that belonged to camp inmates and victims, including clothing, bags, letters, ration cards, and so on. The images on display include pictures of victims before they were interned and killed in the camp, archival pictures of the camp buildings, and a handful of other pictures, including the famous picture of Ante Pavelić meeting Adolf Hitler in 1941. Other visual materials on display include newspaper articles from the time period, for instance the full-page announcement by Slavko Kvaternik

[21] Nataša Jovičić, "The Victim as an Individual: Introduction by the Director of the Jasenovac Memorial Site," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 9.
[22] Ljiljana Radonic, "Croatia – Exhibiting Memory and History at the 'Shores of Europe,'" *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* Vol. 3 (2011): 356.

pronouncing the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, and several maps indicating where mass graves, killing sites, and camp buildings had been located. It was a deliberate decision "not to show anonymous dead bodies and weapons of killing,"[23] meant to contrast the new Jasenovac museum with the old socialist-era museum, which was blamed for wrongly

Figure 3.3 – The Memorial Train at Jasenovac Memorial Site, the largest artifact preserved at this site

having stoked the fires of ethnic resentment when "memorial sites should not in any way serve to commemorate hatred, or as aids to teaching others to emulate crime."[24] Instead, the new museum leadership and design team sought to "make Jasenovac a 'site of life' and of an affirmative message"[25] with a focus on human rights education and humanizing the stories of individual victims. To this end, the museum makes very sparse use of visual materials. This attitude is also reflected in the museum catalogue book, which is not a traditional guidebook but is rather an edited volume written by the historians and experts responsible for the creating the text panels in the museum. The documentary and visual evidence used in the catalogue is identical to that used in the museum – including pictures of victims' belongings, personal letters, and propaganda posters – but there are a great deal more photographs in the catalogue book, primarily more pictures of the victims before they were sent to the camps. Also included are pictures of the camp buildings, and of inmates in the camp; however, there are almost no images

[23] *Ibid*., 363.
[24] Nataša Jovičić, "The Victim as an Individual," 10.
[25] Radonic, "Croatia – Exhibiting Memory and History," 363.

of perpetrators, whether in the camp or otherwise. There are pictures of Ustaša roundups of civilians, but there are almost no pictures of the liquidation of the inmates or the means by which they were killed, with only one exception – the infamous picture of starving Serbian children in the tower at Stara Gradiška.[26] Unsurprisingly, this shift in focus was harshly criticized.

The removal of all instruments of torture and killing sparked especially strong negative reactions,[27] and prompted the return of a handful of these objects to the exhibition, including knives and mallets. The only display that really stands out in this regard are numerous sets of shackles, exhibited at ground level in a case lit by dark red lighting (figure 3.4), with the following caption: "Shackles found in 1945 on the site of Camp III Brickworks Jasenovac." This is the only display in the museum that visually hints at the scale of the killings. The display case showing knives and mallets is much smaller and less prominent. There are certainly valid and important debates concerning what is appropriate to display in museums, particularly because the "prominence of the Holocaust in visual culture can have problematic consequences, such as the overexposure of certain images and a perceived trivialization."[28] Photographs of murder and objects used to murder are alleged to re-victimize the victims and desensitize the public. In the postmodern era, some scholars have questioned whether it is even still necessary for museums to display objects at all. For example, the permanent display of the Vienna Jewish museum does not display any actual

Figure 3.4 – The display of shackles found on the site of the Brickworks Camp

[26] This photograph is on page 59 in the catalogue, cited herein as *Jasenovac Memorial Site.*
[27] Kolstø, "The Serbian-Croatian Controversy over Jasenovac," 240.
[28] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, "Evoking the Sacred: Visual Holocaust Narratives in National Museums," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* Vol. 9 Issue 2 (July 2010): 228.

artifacts, relying instead on a minimalist approach featuring only text panels and hologram plates,[29] designed to give the museum a sense of impermanence. Though the Jasenovac Memorial Museum is not quite as extreme in its adoption of a minimalist ethos, the same major critique applies to both museums – they are "too dependent on viewers having prior knowledge about the Holocaust to be effective as a place to learn about what actually happened."[30]

Though there are valid concerns about how to visually present difficult historical events while demonstrating a proper level of respect to the victims, what is certainly clear is that museums do need artifacts, and that there is a troubling shortage of these at Jasenovac. Museums have traditionally relied on an "object-based epistemology"[31] in order to transmit didactic messages and provoke emotional reactions. Artifacts are not meant to add to the museum experience, but to be an integral part of it, because "interpretation relies heavily on sensory perception."[32] Museums need a textual narrative, but they cannot sideline objects and images, especially because too much text tends to overwhelm the visitor. As Barbie Zelizer notes, images are "a more effective means of bearing witness

Figure 3.5 – The sparse layout of the dimly lit exhibit at Jasenovac

[29] Reesa Greenberg, "The Jewish Museum, Vienna: A Holographic Paradigm for History and the Holocaust," in *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, eds. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (Bloomington: Indianan University Press, 2003), 243.
[30] *Ibid*., 248
[31] Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 7.
[32] Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 12.

than words."[33] Images and artifacts are not mere props meant to accentuate the text – rather, they convey their own meanings. Holocaust museums carry a particularly heavy educational burden that necessitates designing exhibits that employ a combination of text, images, and artifacts. Artifacts play a key role, primarily by serving as tangible evidence of the crimes committed. The concrete nature of the object aids in cementing the museum's historical narrative in the mind of the visitor. Photographs perform the same task, helping to "stabilize and anchor collective memory's transient and fluctuating nature,"[34] which is why so many photographs are considered iconic emblems of twentieth century events, atrocity photographs in particular. In effect, both original artifacts and photographs serve to bear witness to the crimes, and they are often "presented to give voice to survivors' intimate historical and personal memories."[35] It is thus surprising that the Jasenovac Memorial Museum features so few objects and photographs (figure 3.5), even of objects that belonged to the victims, given its stated focus on the individual victims of the camp.

The dearth of artifacts and photographs on display at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum is all the more surprising when one considers that this museum deliberately modeled itself after more established Holocaust museums, primarily the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. There is no shortage of objects in the permanent exhibition of the USHMM, which has "approximately one thousand artifacts"[36] on display. The former director of the USHMM, Jeshajahu Weinberg, has noted that the museum's purpose is not merely to present objects to the public – visual materials must also be contextualized with text.[37] Nevertheless, when its exhibition was under development, the main focus and debate was less on crafting panels of text and more on which artifacts to display and how to do so appropriately. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum tells the story of the Holocaust to the visiting public primarily through visual means, because the museum director felt that "the power of photographs and

[33] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 139.
[34] *Ibid*., 6.
[35] Andrea Liss, "Artifactual Testimony and the Stagings of Holocaust Memory," in *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*, eds. Claudia Eppert et al. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 132.
[36] Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 189.
[37] Jeshajahu Weinberg, "From the Director," in *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, by Michael Berenbaum (Boston: Little, Brown & Company Limited, 1993), xiv.

artifacts would only be diminished by passionate text."[38] The visual components of the museum were more than capable of provoking an emotional response on their own. Curiously, this same philosophy does not appear to have been applied at Jasenovac Memorial Museum, in spite of the fact that the USHMM was used as a template while its exhibition was being developed. Furthermore, as Ljiljana Radonic notes, it is odd that the Jasenovac Memorial Museum looked to institutions like the USHMM in Washington and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam for inspiration, as opposed to memorial museums actually located at the sites of former concentration or death camps in Germany or Poland, which would have been more analogous.[39] Artifacts have traditionally provided the material basis for Holocaust museums at the sites of former camps, even when the camps themselves were destroyed. Museums of the camps have often juxtaposed the objects used or created by inmates with the objects used to kill them.[40] Thus it would have been well within the norm for Jasenovac to display all artifacts pertaining to the camp, not merely those objects that had once belonged to the inmates and victims. When these artifacts are the only ones on display, the perpetrators are erased. Were it not for the handful of shackles, mallets, and knives on display at Jasenovac, the museum would not have succeeded in visually communicating a critical fact: that Jasenovac was a death camp. Of all the shortcomings of the new exhibition, this is the most crucial.

While the visual narrative at Jasenovac is sorely lacking, the textual narrative is more thorough. The panels of text at the museum make it clear that Jasenovac was a death camp, and that it played a key role in the Holocaust of the Jewish population of the Independent State of Croatia. Though it was also an internment, transit, and labour camp, panels entitled "Death Camp" and "Ways of Leaving the Camp" note that "above all" Jasenovac was a place of death where the majority who entered the camp never left. In the same panel, it is also made clear that the murder of Serbs, Jews, and Roma was racially motivated: these groups "were murdered with no verdict since they did not fit into the proclaimed Ustasha concept of racial and national purity." By contrast, "Croats and Bosnian Muslims were killed because they either belonged to the anti-fascist resistance or the regime considered them to be a threat." The key purpose of the camp is thus illuminated. There are also panels of text that feature brief explanations on the

[38] Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, 186.
[39] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 11.
[40] At Buchenwald, for example, see Claudia Koonz, "Germany's Buchenwald: Whose Shrine? Whose Memory?" in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel, 1994), 113.

women's camp, the work camp, and the children's camp at Stara Gradiška. Regarding the children's camp, it is evident that Serbian and Jewish children were the primary victims – this fact is in no way blurred. Another plaque notes that victims were not killed in gas chambers, but by various other means. Information is then provided about all the main execution methods and sites, for example the shooting grounds at Donja Gradina. In spite of this, the museum has come under fire from critics, including former Croatian President Stipe Mesić, who claimed "that the brutality of the killings did not come through clearly enough"[41] in the museum's exhibition. While this is true, it is primarily due to the lack of photographs and artifacts. The text panels do inform the reader that inmates were brutally killed, albeit not in too much detail.

Ultimately, however, the museum has made some progress in that it acknowledges that the Holocaust did happen in Croatia.[42] While the socialist-era museum was much more visually-oriented than the new museum, it did not single out Jewish victims of Jasenovac as being Holocaust victims in particular, only victims of fascism. This is not to say that the new museum's narrative is completely unproblematic. To begin with, its portrayal of the Independent State of Croatia is inadequate and serves to sideline the issue of responsibility for the mass crimes that took place under the Ustaša regime. In one of the exhibit's text panels, the NDH is described as "neither independent, nor Croatian, nor a state," because the country was divided into zones of Italian and German occupation, and portions of its territory were annexed by Italy and Hungary. This statement has been echoed verbatim by prominent Croatian politicians in the post-Yugoslav period.[43] If the NDH was not truly independent, or Croatian, or even a state at all, then there is no need to address the issue of culpability, and all crimes committed inside its borders can either be blamed on the Germans or Italians, or relegated to a group of marginal extremists. While it is true that the Ustaša leadership were not at any point in full control of the territory they ostensibly ruled, which was under dual occupation by Italy and Germany, it is disingenuous to imply that they did not have the capacity to set their own policy directives. Yet this misleading perspective has been touted by politicians and historians alike. Jozo Tomasevich argues that because the Ustaša were not elected or supported by most Croats, "their actions

[41] Kolstø, "The Serbian-Croatian Controversy over Jasenovac," 240.
[42] Radonic, "Croatia – Exhibiting Memory and History," 362.
[43] Sabrina P. Ramet, "The NDH – An Introduction," in *The Independent State of Croatia 1941-45*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Routledge, 2007), 3.

cannot properly be blamed on the Croatian people as a whole,"[44] instead, responsibility for the atrocities committed by the regime "must be laid at the door of Germany and Italy."[45] How much public support for the Ustaša regime there actually was is a contentious question, particularly with regards to public support for violence against Jews, Serbs, and opponents of the regime. The groundswell in support for the partisan movement among the Serbs in Croatia was certainly a direct reaction against Ustaša violence. However, this violence spurred many Croats into joining the partisans as well, and by 1943 their numbers in the movement had dramatically increased.[46] Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that the Ustaša would have been able to seize and maintain power without at least the tacit support or approval of a sizeable portion of the populace. Nor would atrocities against minorities have been possible without sufficient manpower provided by the Croatian state – the guards at Jasenovac were not German or Italian soldiers. Of course, as Alexander Korb remarks, "the question of public participation in violence cannot be answered with sheer numbers,"[47] the issue of complicity is much more complex that simply stating how many members of the Ustaša Security Services participated in the roundups of Jews or Serbs. Acknowledging these facts certainly does not mean that every Croat today must take responsibility for the fascist regime or carry the burden of collective guilt – but it does require honest reflection.

One searches in vain for a thorough assessment of culpability in both the museum's textual and visual narratives. This is the result of the exhibition's victim-centered approach, which almost completely erases the perpetrators. As Efraim Zuroff noted in a scathing article written after the new exhibition was unveiled, there are no photographs in the museum of any of the camp commanders or guards – the individuals responsible are not adequately identified.[48] "The issue of personal responsibility is ostensibly covered by repeated references to 'the Ustasha,'" Zuroff writes, "but if not a single Ustasha personally connected to the crimes at

[44] Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 342.
[45] *Ibid*., 272.
[46] Nikica Barić, "Relations between the Chetniks and the Authorities of the Independent State of Croatia, 1942-1945," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War* Two, eds. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 177.
[47] Alexander Korb, "Understanding Ustaša violence," *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol. 12 Issue 1/2 (Mar-Jun 2010): 9.
[48] Efraim Zuroff, "Ethnic hostilities prevent truth from being told about Jasenovac," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, December 6, 2006. Accessed October 15, 2013,http://www.jta.org/2006/12/06/archive/ethnic-hostilities-prevent-truth-from-being-told-about-jasenovac

Jasenovac is named and not a single photograph of any of the camp commanders is exhibited, then the image is created as if no individual Croatians are actually guilty."[49] Given that the only photographs shown of perpetrators named in the museum are of top Ustaša leaders including Slavko Kvaternik and Ante Pavelić, this criticism is warranted. The visual narrative does not depict the perpetrators, and the textual narrative more often refers vaguely to 'the Ustaša' rather than to specific individuals. Though the narrative makes it clear that racism and fascism were at the core of Ustaša ideology, this ideology is not contextualized when it ought to have been thoroughly described and explained. Ljiljana Radonic remarks that there is only one poster that deals with the issue of anti-Semitism, but that it does not explain if Ustaša anti-Semitism was "a precise replica of the Nazi role model."[50] How was Ustaša ideology like other fascist ideologies of interwar and wartime Europe? What did it have in common with the variants of fascism espoused in Germany, Italy, or other collaborating states – how were its tenets similar or different? The Ustaša are mentioned in the text panels as perpetrators, but their motives and origins are not clear. This could potentially create the impression that they came from elsewhere and were imposed on Croatia from without, which is far from reality. This impression is bolstered by images such as that of Pavelić meeting Hitler, where the inscription below the photograph states that Ustaša policy was approved by Nazi Germany. This creates the sense that Nazi Germany was pulling all the strings from behind the scenes. In spite of the fact that their regime was not freely chosen or elected by the Croatian people, there was nevertheless a basis of support for the Ustaša movement, and they tied their ideals and philosophies to those of earlier Croatian politicians like Ante Starčević. Further, while the panels indicate that victims were persecuted due to the racist component of Ustaša ideology, the origin of this racism and the movement's goals are unclear. It is worth noting that the museum catalogue book delves into more detail concerning Ustaša ideology than do the panels of text on display at the museum. In his contribution to the museum volume, Drago Roksandić cites an Ustaša slogan that sums up the main goals of the movement: "Non-Croats are taking up space which would be welcome to Croats living abroad."[51] It is evident that Ustaša ideology is one of extreme Croatian nationalism, where a 'final solution' is needed not only to rid Croatia of Jews, but of all national

[49] *Ibid*.
[50] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 15.
[51] Roksandić, "Of Tragedy, Trauma and Catharsis," 84.

minorities. Nataša Mataušić's article likewise emphasizes that the purpose of racial legislation was to create an ethnically pure Croatian territory.[52]

However, it is more difficult to learn this from the museum's explanatory panels. Intriguingly, these panels avoid a detailed discussion of nationalism and the role it played in the Second World War – Croatian nationalism in particular. The panels also avoid thoroughly addressing nationalism in the postwar and post-Yugoslav eras. For a museum with a pedagogical focus, "a location for learning about non-violence, democracy, and human rights,"[53] it is strange that there is not more attention devoted to the dangers of nationalism in all its guises. A particularly poignant example of this is seen in the discussion about the number of camp victims, which has been one of the most inflammatory debates concerning the camp. The most systematic research undertaken on the number of camp victims has taken place at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum and has produced significant results – notably, the most detailed list of victims to date, which identifies each victim by name. This list has continued to grow, so while the catalogue, published in 2006, cites 69,842 victims,[54] the current panel in the museum entitled "table of victims by ethnicity" cites 81,998. The victims are grouped by ethnicity, and it is clear that Serbs were the largest group of victims at 46,685, followed by 16,131 Roma, and 12,982 Jews. However, Ivo Goldstein estimates the latter figure is inaccurate and that there were approximately 17,000 Jewish victims at Jasenovac.[55] The information panel also features a note entitled "regarding the number of victims of Jasenovac concentration camp." This explanatory note makes clear that the mythological figure of 700,000 victims, frequently cited during and after the socialist era, was completely inflated and had no factual basis in spite of its official status. The panel also notes that following Croatia's independence "the total number of victims was reduced to between 30,000 and 40,000." Interestingly, it does not note who promulgated these drastically inflated and reduced figures – Serbian and Croatian nationalists, respectively. Franjo Tuđman was one of the main proponents of the figure of 30,000 or fewer victims, but the panel does not reference him or detail the role of Croatian nationalists in attempting to

[52] Nataša Mataušić, "The Jasenovac Concentration Camp," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 47.
[53] Jovičić, "The Victim as an Individual," 9.
[54] Đorđe Mihovilović and Jelka Smreka, "About the 'List of Individual Victims of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp': According to Information Collected and Verified to Date," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 218.
[55] Goldstein and Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 648.

whitewash Ustaša crimes, particularly at Jasenovac.[56] Beyond whitewashing, Tuđman had promulgated the notion that Jasenovac had been a communist-run camp after 1945, which was an outright fabrication, and had even planned to "rebury the Bleiburg victims, some of them criminal Ustaša,"[57] at Jasenovac. The panel regarding the victims at Jasenovac only explains that "neither of those 'truths' was the result of systematic and reliable research but the outcome of using Jasenovac for political purposes." It does not elaborate on what these political purposes were, or who they were meant to serve – there is no mention of nationalism at all. The panel concludes by stating that "although most probably the identity of all those who died here will never be known, the known scale of the suffering and especially the motives for building this camp and the ways the inmates were killed tell us much more than the bare numbers and the names themselves." This is certainly true. As those who compiled the list of victims so aptly put it, "the Jasenovac victims are not just numbers,"[58] but individual men, women and children. Their deaths should not be politically instrumentalized. Yet the Jasenovac Memorial Museum does not sufficiently explain the motives for building the camp. Jasenovac was motivated by deep religious, racial, and ethnic hatred that stemmed from an ideology of exclusivist nationalism. The museum lacks this emphasis, and does not feature an adequate analysis of Ustaša ideology.[59] This ideology cannot be sufficiently discredited if it is not sufficiently explained. Though this is more thoroughly detailed in the museum catalogue, it is almost completely glossed over in the exhibit itself, as evidenced in the display on the contentious issue of the number of camp victims.

Because the museum does not feature a "systematic representation of the perpetrators,"[60] its narrative could potentially, but unintentionally, reinforce the narratives that have been openly promulgated by Croatian nationalists since the death of Tito. In their mild incarnations, these narratives did not deny that the Holocaust took place in the NDH, but they minimized the role of the Ustaša in its implementation – all racial legislation was a product of German machinations, "while the Croat side had implemented these measures reluctantly."[61] In the most extreme

[56] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 13.
[57] Radonic, "Croatia's Politics of the Past," 253.
[58] Mihovilović and Smreka, "About the 'List of Individual Victims of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp,'" 218.
[59] Zuroff, "Ethnic hostilities prevent truth from being told about Jasenovac."
[60] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 16.
[61] Mark Biondich, "'We were Defending the State': Nationalism, Myth, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Croatia," in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, eds. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 67.

incarnations of the nationalist narratives, the Holocaust had not occurred in the NDH at all. The Ustaša regime was not inherently anti-Semitic, had not implemented racial legislation, and had not sent opponents to death camps – camps like Jasenovac were only work camps, where far fewer numbers of people had perished.[62] The former narrative is an example of what Michael Shafir describes as deflective negationism, while the latter is outright negationism.[63] Unlike outright negationism, deflective negationism does not deny that the Holocaust occurred, but aims to whitewash or minimize the participation of a given nation. In the Croatian context, what both forms of negationism have in common is that they have a tendency to see all Ustaša crimes, whether they treat these crimes as real or imagined, as justified in the face of the dual threats posed by communism and Serbian nationalism. Violence was in defense of the state, and the NDH, while possibly engaging in unsavoury actions, was a genuine expression of the centuries-old desire for independent Croatian statehood. This narrative was espoused and popularized by Franjo Tuđman in the 1990s and was frequently used to minimize Ustaša crimes.[64] One cannot accuse the Jasenovac Memorial Museum of harbouring this narrative in any way, shape, or form. The museum acknowledges the scope and heinousness of Ustaša crimes, and confronts the fact that genocide was committed within the borders of the NDH. Overall, the textual and visual narratives of the museum and its accompanying catalogue make it clear that Jasenovac was a death camp operated on Croatian soil where nearly 100,000 people were murdered. However, there is not enough emphasis placed on the dangers of exclusivist nationalism, and on Croatian nationalism in particular. A thorough assessment of culpability for Ustaša crimes is also lacking due to the stated focus on victims instead of perpetrators, which allows the visitor to think of the Ustaša as an alien force with no popular support, when in fact their "responsibility for the Holocaust was as great as that of the Nazi Regime."[65] Ultimately, the effect of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum's victim-centered textual narrative is to displace the perpetrators and blur the ideological backdrop to the crimes they committed. This, in turn, means that there is no effort

[62] Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein, "Revisionism in Croatia: The Case of Franjo Tuđman," *East European Jewish Affairs* Vol. 32 No. 1 (2002): 52.
[63] Michael Shafir, "Denying the Holocaust Where It Happened: Post-Communist East Central Europe and the Shoah," in *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 199.
[64] Goldstein and Goldstein, "Revisionism in Croatia," 62.
[65] Kerstin Nystrom, "The Holocaust and Croatian National Identity: An Uneasy Relationship," in *The Holocaust on Post-War Battlefields: Genocide as Historical Culture*, eds. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Malmö: Sekel, 2006), 259.

made as far as addressing why these crimes took place.[66] To the uninformed visitor, the museum's victim-centered displays are difficult to contextualize – there can be no explanation for the violence and terror "without explaining the origins of the Ustasha's genocidal policies."[67]

In sum, the new exhibit of the Jasenovac Memorial Museum was designed to focus primarily on the victims of the camp. The small, dimly-lit exhibition space makes very sparse use of visual materials like artifacts and photographs, and those that are used are centered on the victims. Instead of focusing on objects, the displays rely primarily on panels of text, some audio-visual materials like interviews with camp survivors, and commemorative glass plates inscribed with the victims' names. Though the darkness of the exhibit could be described as providing a viscerally foreboding and gloomy mood, the museum does not "'inflict' the Holocaust on the visitor"[68] in the same manner as other Holocaust museums. This is because most graphic photographs and artifacts, including most instruments of torture or killing, were removed from the exhibition after a deliberate decision was taken not to display them. The new focus on humanizing the victims and acknowledging their individuality resulted in a marginalization of these artifacts and photographs. This is the museum's most significant shortcoming, because "the use of photography and artifacts as evidence of the events, the passage of events into memory, and the transference of images into post-memory are crucial bridges that help translate the history from one generation to the next."[69] The museum design team argue that the exhibition space was too small to display many artifacts, and that a streamlined, modern, multimedia-centered exhibit thus "enabled visitors to the Museum to gain access to more information and allowed considerable more museum items to be presented than would have been possible using traditional displays."[70] However, given the amount of empty space evident in the exhibition rooms, more visual materials could easily have been displayed, and ought to have been, because objects and photographs play such significant and multifaceted roles in museums, particularly Holocaust museums. There are genuine debates over what should be displayed and how, but it seems no other Holocaust museum has excised disturbing artifacts and photographs as much as the Jasenovac Memorial Museum. Most other museums have chosen to display them, with the goal of morally transforming the visitor through their emotional

[66] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 14.
[67] Zuroff, "Ethnic hostilities prevent truth from being told about Jasenovac."
[68] Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, 112.
[69] Liss, "Artifactual Testimony and the Stagings of Holocaust Memory,"119.
[70] JUSP Jasenovac, "JUSP Jasenovac – Memorial Museum."

response to the displays.[71] The museum's meager visual narrative is supplemented by a more thorough textual narrative. Though this makes progress in that it acknowledges the Holocaust and genocide took place in the NDH, it has several problematic elements. Because the narrative focus is on the victims as individuals, very little attention is paid to the larger historical context and socio-political background. The ideology underpinning the Ustaša movement, exclusivist Croatian nationalism, is not thoroughly explained. As a result, the perpetrators fade into the backdrop and the NDH appears as an Axis-created aberration, something outside the general course of Croatian history, for which Nazi Germany bears ultimate responsibility. The fact that the NDH was indeed established by Nazi Germany should in no way obscure the fact that the Ustaša did implement their own policies, sometimes even in contravention to German or Italian demands. Thus, concentration camps were established for Jews, Serbs, and Roma, without any German directive to do so. However, without the ideological focus, there is no explanation for this violence.

Though the redesigned Jasenovac Memorial Museum has made some improvements over the previous exhibit, particularly in that it acknowledges the Holocaust occurred in Croatia, elements of its displays and content are clearly problematic. It is not that there is no value to highlighting the stories of individual victims – indeed, humanizing and individualizing the victims is crucial at any museum addressing mass murder. Yet the larger historical and socio-political contexts should not be lost to the individuals, either, and this is what has happened at Jasenovac. In effect, the issues of memory at the museum are a mirror of larger Croatian debates about the period of WWII. Because the museum is completely under the auspices of the Croatian ministry of culture, which is the source of all its funding, this museum can be seen as a national museum. It is thus representative of the official policies of the Croatian government when it comes to memorializing what the former Minister of Culture of the Republic of Croatia called a "tragic page in Croatian history."[72] The museum's narrative is, in microcosm, "the canonized national narrative of this period."[73] It is impossible to say that this official narrative fully confronts the scope of the NDH and its crimes. Instead, it portrays this era more selectively and simplistically. One of the difficulties in fully addressing what happened at Jasenovac is

[71] Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, 112.
[72] Božo Biškupić, preface to *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 5.
[73] Radonic, "Slovak and Croatian invocation of Europe," 1.

acknowledging that Serbs were the largest group of victims, and that their murder was motivated by the same racist ideology that motivated the murder of the Jews. Dealing with this issue has become hugely problematic in large part due to Serbian nationalists' misuse of Jasenovac as a symbol for the historic treatment of Serbs on Croatian territory, and their astronomical inflation of the number of Serbian victims at Jasenovac. Those involved with the creation of the new Jasenovac exhibit clearly did not want the same political misuse to take place, and they cautioned that the mere intention to create a memorial centre "can transform into a real incentive to hatred, turning everything into crime again."[74] The goal was to create a museum that would instead focus on the future through educating and healing wounds. Jasenovac would "bear a deep, humanist message,"[75] and this would serve to prevent future crimes. Surely there is an underlying noble intent to this goal. There is no merit in allowing the past to poison everything in the present and in so doing, sow salt in the soil of the future. However, the formula of "bad memories lead to war; good memories lead to peace"[76] embraced by the Jasenovac museum is inherently both trite and obfuscating. A museum that concerns itself with the crimes of the past cannot be wholly devoted to a humanist future. Rather, it must confront that past in its entirety, while acknowledging the reality that museums alone "do not solve problems nor heal wounds."[77] Instead, in the words of Edward Linenthal, "the more volatile the memory, the more difficult a task to reach a consensual vision of how the memory should be appropriately expressed, and the more intense become the struggles to shape, to 'own' the memory's public presence."[78] The negative reactions and controversies sparked by the unveiling of the exhibit at Jasenovac demonstrate that these struggles are far from over in Croatia.

Jasenovac Memorial Museum is the only death camp museum in Croatia; by contrast, there is no museum completely comparable to Jasenovac in Serbia. As outlined in the previous chapter, Staro Sajmište, the site of the only death camp on Serbian soil during WWII, is marked by two monuments and not by a museum. However, there are several important primary museums in Serbia. The first, and most well-known, is the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp (figure 3.6), operated under the auspices of the Museum of the City of

[74] Tea Benčić Rimay, "Against the Banality of Evil: Editorial," in *Jasenovac Memorial Site*, ed. Tea Benčić Rimay, trans. Janet Berković and Janet Tuškan (Jasenovac: Public Institution Jasenovac Memorial Site, 2006), 12.
[75] Jovičić, "The Victim as an Individual," 9.
[76] Rimay, "Against the Banality of Evil," 13.
[77] Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, 52.
[78] *Ibid*.

Belgrade. Though not a Holocaust museum, it is the only museum in Belgrade devoted exclusively to the period of World War II. Banjica concentration camp was established by the Germans on June 22, 1941, in what had previously been military barracks of the Royal Yugoslav Army. It was the first concentration camp in Belgrade, and was also the longest-operational, remaining in use until October 4, 1944, mere days before the partisan liberation of the city.

Figure 3.6 – The entrance to the Banjica Concentration Camp museum

Banjica concentration camp was not one of the focal sites of the Holocaust in Belgrade. In the summer of 1941, Jewish men were interned at Topovske Šupe camp, while the women, children, and elderly were imprisoned at Sajmište later that year. Neither of these sites now house museums. The vast majority of prisoners at Banjica, nearly ninety percent,[79] were Serbian men, taken into custody for having resisted the occupation or for their political convictions. More than 23,000 people passed through the camp and of these, 4,200 perished therein. It is worth noting that this number consists of victims who have actually been identified. It is likely that the number of victims was higher, as many inmates were deported elsewhere across Europe, whether to other concentration camps or for forced labour. The figure of 4,200 includes 445 interned Jews who "without exception were executed."[80] The majority of the victims were executed at the Jajinci shooting grounds, where they were buried in mass graves, while a smaller number were killed at the camp itself.

[79] Darko Ćirić, *Muzej Banjičkog Logora: Vodič* (Beograd: Muzej Grada Beograda, 2002).
[80] Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 85.

Just like the museum at Jasenovac, the impetus for opening a museum dedicated to Banjica came from SUBNOR, the organization of veterans of the national liberation war. The first exhibit opened in 1969 and was expanded in 1983. This exhibit focused primarily on memorializing the suffering of camp inmates, but it interpreted the victims of the camp exclusively as communists. Banjica concentration camp thus came to be seen as a site emblematic of communist suffering. In the late 1990s, the museum administration decided to rectify this "one-sided view," and a new exhibit was designed in order to "shed light on the suffering of others," including hostages, civilians, Jews, and Roma.[81] There is now a more pronounced focus on other camp inmates, ignored in the previous exhibit, including members of the Četnik movement – without, however, narrowly presenting the camp as a site of Serbian martyrdom. The narrative of the museum shifted to focus less on communist resistors, so that the new exhibit, unveiled in 2001, presents a more nuanced portrayal of the camp. The new exhibit featured redesigned displays and presented more objects and artifacts hitherto not shown to the public. Central to the new depiction of the camp remains the fact that this was a site of Nazi crimes against humanity.

The buildings of Banjica concentration camp were not destroyed during the war. In the postwar period they were given to the Yugoslav Army and then renovated,[82] so although the buildings are original, the authenticity of the camp's interior was lost. However, the Banjica museum has sought to present an authentic portrayal of conditions in the camp by restoring two rooms, based on photographs, to the appearance and state they were in while the camp was in use. One of these restored rooms is a small isolation cell and the other is a prisoners' barracks, complete with inmates' items (figure 3.7). These two restored rooms are visible immediately to the left upon entering the museum, in an area referred to as the 'memorial hall,' which effectively takes up nearly half of the museum's available exhibition space. According to the museum brochure, the reconstructions were intended to "strikingly depict the dreary atmosphere surrounding prisoners."[83] Replicating the conditions in the camp enables visitors to bear witness to the crimes committed at Banjica, and visually enhances the knowledge they take from the museum. Reconstructions, like artifacts, serve to bring visitors "closer to the historical real, […]

[81] Darko Ćirić, Director of the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp, interview by author, Belgrade, June 2012. Translation during the interview was provided by Andrej Pavičević.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Belgrade City Museum, "Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp: Responsibility to Future Generations," (Belgrade: Belgrade City Museum, n.d.), n.p.

to the tangibility of the events and to the experiences of those who did and did not survive."[84] On the wall immediately opposite the reconstructed barracks, there is a list of names comprising all of the known victims of the camp. Taken together, the reconstruction and the list of victims serve to provide the memorial hall with a commemorative purpose that does not sacralise the camp, but sets a sombre mood and provides a space for contemplation. One of the primary purposes of the museum is commemoration, it is meant to be "a memorial dedicated in memory of non-military prisoners and victims."[85] In this sense, Banjica is similar to Jasenovac, where victims' names are also displayed – though the display is more effective at Banjica, where the

Figure 3.7 – The memorial hall at Banjica museum, featuring a replica of prisoners' barracks and list of victims

names are well-lit and at eye-level (figure 3.8). Banjica also sets itself apart from Jasenovac in that it attempts a reconstruction of camp conditions, which are not depicted at Jasenovac.

The memorial hall is one of the two rooms of the permanent exhibit; the other is the main exhibition room. Taken together, the entire museum is quite small, approximately the same size as the museum at Jasenovac. But the two museums have chosen to use the space available to them in very different ways, and the displays at Banjica do not adopt a minimalist ethos. As evident upon first entering the memorial hall, the museum puts a great deal of emphasis on

[84] Liss, "Artifactual Testimony and the Stagings of Holocaust Memory," 121.
[85] Ćirić, *Muzej Banjičkog Logora.*

crafting a visual narrative. The reconstructed rooms are not the only visual depictions of the camp – the central display of the main exhibition room consists of a large scale model of the camp as it appeared during the war. There are also numerous original photographs of the camp and several maps. In addition, over four hundred artifacts from the camp are on display to the public.[86] The narrative at Banjica focuses primarily on the victims, and this is evident through the artifacts on display. Ten glass cases display numerous personal belongings of the camp inmates, including children's toys as well as artwork and objects crafted at the camp. This display, like at Jasenovac, is an attempt to personalize the victims and acknowledge their individuality. However, unlike at Jasenovac, personal items are not the only artifacts on display. Other artifacts exhibited include weapons, torture instruments, and objects of sabotage used by partisans. A few of the artifacts and photographs are quite graphic and do not shy from depicting German brutality. There are photographs of camp victims before they entered the camp, but there are also photographs of the injured and executed, including pictures of the 1945 exhumation and reburial of camp victims and a large picture of a partisan resistor hung from a lamppost in downtown Belgrade.

Figure 3.8 – The wall of names in the memorial hall at Banjica Museum

It is evident from the displays that that most of the victims of the camp were men of fighting age who were members of groups that initially resisted the German onslaught, notably the Partisans and the Četniks. The guidebook specifies that just over two thousand women were imprisoned at Banjica, and less than a thousand children, but over twenty thousand men were

[86] *Ibid*.

interned at the camp throughout the course of the war.[87] The exhibit displays several 'wanted' posters, printed in both German and Serbian, of communists sought for having committed acts of sabotage, and reward signs for information leading to their capture. There is also a wanted poster for Četnik saboteurs, and photographs of the sabotage acts. There are dozens of pictures of partisans, military officers, and Četniks, who were all victims of the camp. A panel of photographs of Serbian intellectuals and academics who were detained at the camp in November 1941 (figure 3.9) is featured as well. This emphasizes a fact noted in the guidebook – that although Serbs were not victims of Nazi genocide, there was certainly mass "persecution of [the] democratic intellectual and political elite of the Serbian people."[88] The camp was aimed specifically at interning those who supported or were involved with the resistance movements, who were thus "detained on 'political grounds.'"[89] The Nazi goal to suppress the movements was particularly brutal in the summer and early fall of 1941, before the Četnik resistance against the Germans had abated. The Germans recognized that Mihailović and the Četniks were useful in the fight against the partisans, and by the spring of 1942 they had taken "the Chetnik leader off their 'most wanted' list."[90] Throughout the war, the Četniks primarily resisted the partisans and generally sought either accommodation or collaboration with German forces. These facts are by and large ignored at the museum, which instead focuses on the fate of the camp victims, Četnik victims included.

Figure 3.9 – The Serbian Intellectuals and Academics interned at Banjica

[87] *Ibid*.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] Belgrade City Museum, "Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp."
[90] Sladjana Lazić and Sabrina P. Ramet, "The Collaborationist Regime of Milan Nedić," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War* Two, ed. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31.

A particular strength of the museum is its display of documents in addition to photographs and artifacts. Multiple notices and warning posters from the German command are shown, as well as hostage lists, ordinances, communications between the German high command and subordinates regarding executions, and other directives. These fully portray the harshness of German reprisal actions against the populace. One example is a directive entitled "The Announcement of Destruction," which exhorts German soldiers to be utterly without mercy to the Serbs, as "the goal is to create a deterrent example […] everyone who acts mildly wrongs the lives of his [dead] comrades."[91] In this directive, all Serbs are described as treacherous, responsible for the deaths of many Germans, not just in this war but in the First World War as well. Through exhibiting the documents, the museum manages to keep focused on the victims while not ignoring the perpetrators. Of particular importance is the panel dedicated to the fate of the Belgrade Jews (figure 3.10). This panel includes copies of directives issued by the German command aimed specifically at the Jewish population, including the order to wear yellow armbands, the order to assemble and register with the occupation forces, and the introduction of a restricted curfew whereby Jews were only allowed in the streets between 6:00 and 18:00. Curfews were introduced for the Serbian population as well, but they were not as strict, and the directive from the Belgrade Command noted that "if necessary additional limitations are going to be undertaken towards [Jews]." Other documents concern the so-called reprisal shootings. There is a notice from July 5, 1941, declaring that Jews and communists will

Figure 3.10 – Panel on the fate of the Belgrade Jews

[91] Document displayed in the museum, all translations from Serbian are my own.

be held culpable for any and all sabotage and be shot on the spot, warning further that "the smallest attempts to commit acts of sabotage and violence will encounter even harsher measures." Just what these harsher measures entailed becomes horribly clear when one examines another document, the "Report Concerning Jews and Gypsies" submitted by Sergeant Walther, commander of Infantry Regiment 433. This document, dated November 4, 1941, details the liquidation of the remaining Jews and Gypsies held in Belgrade concentration camps that had been carried out several days prior. Herein, the Sergeant complains to his superiors about the inadequacy of the trucks provided to the regiment for transporting the victims to the shooting site. The trucks were "without a roof or tarp," thereby detrimental to maintaining secrecy. However, he notes that the execution site was "very appropriate," as digging pits was easy in the marshy soil, and prisoners could not escape and run because the slope surrounding the site was too steep. Walther also judges the shooting of the Jews to have been "easier than the execution of the Gypsies," because the latter reacted hysterically, screaming and attempting to run away. "It must be recognized that the Jews […] kept very quiet," he noted, "very calmly staring death in the eye." These harrowing documents and ordinances are displayed alongside photographs. There is a photograph of a sign stating "Jews prohibited on tram," a photograph of one of the armbands Jewish citizens were forced to wear, and lastly, a photograph of the gas van that was used to kill the Jewish women, children, and elderly who had been interned at Sajmište. However, the guidebook seems to imply that this van was also used on Jewish victims at Banjica, which as Jovan Byford points out, is not the case.[92] The guidebook notes that victims from Sajmište and victims from Banjica were buried together at Jajinci, but that racial laws were applied not to Serbs but "in relation to the Jews and the Gypsies,"[93] who became targets of genocidal policies. In spite of not being a Holocaust museum, the Banjica museum nevertheless accords some exhibition space to the fate of the Jews. The museum is cognizant of its place as one of the only Serbian museums that devotes space to the fate of the Belgrade Jews, and this was an addition to the permanent exhibit when it was redesigned. The previous exhibit mentioned Jews as victims of the camp but did not provide any other information.[94] In an interview, Museum Director Darko Ćirić explained that the Holocaust is not a taboo topic in

[92] Jovan Byford, "'Shortly Afterwards, We Heard the Sound of the Gas Van': Survivor Testimony and the Writing of History in Socialist Yugoslavia," *History and Memory* Vol. 22 No. 1 (Summer 2010): 13.
[93] Ćirić, *Muzej Banjičkog Logora.*
[94] Darko Ćirić, interview.

Serbia, but that for decades there were many ideological problems concerning how to depict the Second World War, which resulted in the marginalization of sites like Sajmište. It had been expected that Sajmište or Topovske Šupe would become memorialized for the Jewish victims, but this did not happen.[95] In this light, the information panel on the fate of Belgrade's Jews at Banjica Museum takes on an even greater importance.

The documents on display at Banjica make it clear that the Nazi occupation forces perpetrated heinous crimes against civilians. There is no erasure of the perpetrators in these exhibits – there are photographs of German military, Gestapo, and SS commanders at the top of the chain of command responsible for the creation of the camp, including Commander Harald Turner, Commanding General Paul Bader, SS General August von Meyszner and SS Colonel Emanuel Schäfer. Moreover, the museum does not balk at acknowledging the fact that while the SS and Gestapo had jurisdiction over about two thirds of the prisoners, it was the Serbian collaborationist administration and its Special Police force that had jurisdiction over the remaining third.[96] These perpetrators are also pictured, including those at the top of the administration, Milan Nedić and Milan Aćimović, but also the Chief of Banjica camp from 1941-44, Svetozar Vujković. Of course, the Special Police were secondary forces, and the Germans retained full command, but it is both notable and commendable that the museum makes no attempt to gloss over Serbian collaborationism.

In sum, the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp is one of Belgrade's best historical museums. The documents, posters, artifacts, and photographs that comprise the displays in the permanent exhibition seamlessly come together to communicate a narrative to the audience without too much textual interference. When explanatory plaques are used they are kept brief as the objects, documents, and photographs largely speak for themselves, and are supplemented by the guidebook. A downside is that the guidebook is only in Serbian, and the documents displayed are all in Serbian and German – more translations would benefit foreign visitors. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the memorial hall and reconstructed rooms provide a commemorative purpose and aid the visitor in visualizing the camp. Altogether, the museum makes effective use of a very small space to craft a strong visual narrative. In this, it

[95] *Ibid.*
[96] Ćirić, *Muzej Banjičkog Logora.*

differs markedly from the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, where the visual narrative is weaker as there are fewer items, documents, and photographs on display.

At its core, what makes the narrative of the redesigned exhibit at Banjica effective is that it no longer focuses solely on the suffering of communist resistors, while still acknowledging that Serbian Partisans were indeed the largest group of victims. The guidebook, pamphlet, and exhibition all note that others interned at Banjica included Četniks, intellectuals, and supporters of the resistance, peasants, criminals, black market profiteers, prisoners of war, Jews, Roma, and nearly a thousand foreigners including Greeks, Albanians, Italians, and so on. The museum succeeds in commemorating all victims largely because it does not politically instrumentalize their deaths. The museum thus avoids using remembrance as a tool "to bolster hegemonic […] nationalisms and ethnocultural identifications."[97] Instead, it "endeavours to bring forth into presence specific people and events of the past in order to honor their names and to hold a place of their absent presence in one's contemporary life,"[98] fulfilling dual pedagogical and memorial goals. Victims should be recognized and memory kept alive, but according to the museum's director, "the best way to give respect [to the victims] is to depoliticize the memories and give basic facts."[99] Unfortunately, the museum, like many museums in the post-Yugoslav states, is inadequately funded. Its working hours are limited due to the fact that much of its funding goes towards material conservation rather than staffing.

The Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp, as the only museum that deals exclusively with the WWII period in all of Belgrade, commendably succeeds in transmitting a great deal of information with limited resources and space. However, the museum does have some shortcomings. One is that it could engage more of a textual narrative that explains, for example, Četnik ideology. The Četnik movement comes off primarily as an anti-fascist resistance group, which is far from the truth – they were in fact an anti-partisan resistance group, and tended toward accommodation with the Germans. However, not engaging with this fact enables recognizing that many Četnik fighters were among the camp victims, which is true, though a museum should not sacrifice honesty for the sake of a simplified narrative. Another

[97] Claudia Eppert, Sharon Rosenberg, and Roger I. Simon, "Introduction. Between Hope and Despair: The Pedagogical Encounter of Historical Remembrance," in *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*, eds. Claudia Eppert et al. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 3.
[98] *Ibid.*, 4.
[99] Darko Ćirić, interview.

shortcoming is that the panel on the Jewish victims never describes them as Holocaust victims. It is made clear that Jews and Roma were victims of genocide, but it is not entirely clear that they were victims of the Holocaust that was perpetrated all over Europe. In spite of its shortcomings, however, it is an effective museum focusing on an important part of Belgrade's history.

The final primary museum under examination is another museum in Serbia commemorating Serbian victims. The previous chapter described Kragujevac Spomen Park, the memorial park to the victims of the Kragujevac massacre. Few Jews were among the victims of this massacre, as previously mentioned, and thus the Memorial Museum of 21 October located at Kragujevac Spomen Park is not a Holocaust museum, just as the Banjica Museum is not a Holocaust museum. But it is worthwhile to examine how Serbian victims have been commemorated, as it is in stark contrast to the way Jewish victims have been commemorated in Serbia. Though the memorial park was inaugurated less than a decade after the war, the museum did not open until 1976. Designed by Ivan Antić, the building itself was meant to symbolically commemorate the victims, notably through the lack of windows and the cross-shaped foundation, intended to symbolize martyrdom. The lower level of the museum features an art gallery, while the permanent exhibition is on the second floor. Before one climbs the stairs to the permanent exhibition, the tone of the museum is set by a large photograph of Nikola Tesla and an excerpt from his letter "To my brothers in America," written in April 1942. "What spiritual strength, hardy resoluteness, fearlessness and heroism our yet immature boys fostered," Tesla wrote, "as they cheered before the German gun barrels: 'We are Serb children. Shoot!' How proud we can all be, knowing that there is no other example as magnificent as this in the entire history of the world. These wonderful martyrs will live in our memory for centuries, arousing our fascination with their immortal deeds."[100] The emphasis on martyrdom is thus apparent before one even views the museum's displays.

The permanent exhibition uses a combination of artwork, sculpture, documents, artifacts, photographs, and explanatory panels to transmit its narrative, and also features a separate room that commemorates the victims. The documents and artifacts on display include personal belongings and notes from 43 of the victims, who wrote to their loved ones as they awaited their deaths. Most of the documents and objects focus on the victims, as the German order dictating

[100] From the permanent exhibit of the Memorial Museum of 21 October, this is displayed in both English and Serbian.

the execution was unfortunately not among the preserved documents. The museum's textual narrative is supplemented by a pamphlet entitled "Kragujevačka Tragedija 1941" and an audio guide, which is available in several languages. The Kragujevac massacre is described as a symbol of all of the reprisal actions carried out by the Germans against the Serbian population in the Second World War. This symbolic status is central to the museum's entire narrative. The execution of civilians began on October 19 and 20, when 123 "Jews, Communists, and prisoners from the local jail were shot; the troops liquidated the rest of the civilians only the next day."[101] The victims of the mass shooting on October 21 included hundreds of Serbian high school students and some forty Roma children aged 12 to 15.[102] The artwork on display (figure 3.11), including three sculptures, paintings, and Desanka Maksimović's famed poem "Krvana Bajka," (Bloody Fairytale) serve to reinforce the notion that the Kragujevac massacre is a metonym for all of the German reprisal actions in Serbia.

Figure 3.11 – Some of the artwork at the Memorial Museum of 21 October

To achieve this, the museum relies on a somewhat simplified portrayal of the war. It completely equalizes the Partisan and Četnik movements, describing them in one of the explanatory panels as the "two liberating movements: the 'national' and the communist." Draža Mihailović and Josip Broz Tito are depicted as leading two resistance movements, both fiercely fighting the Germans, which is inaccurate. However, the panel does note that members of Dimitrije Ljotić's Zbor movement, allied with the Serbian collaborationist government, took part

[101] Walter Manoschek, "The Extermination of the Jews in Serbia," in *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, ed. Ulrich Herbert (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 176.
[102] Staniša Brkić, "Kragujevačka Tragedija 1941," (Kragujevac: Spomen Park 21 Oktobar, n.d.), n.p.

in shooting the civilians at Kragujevac alongside the German soldiers. Interestingly, the audio guide also mentions that the quisling government under Nedić issued a directive that all documents should state the cause of the victims' deaths as 'accidental,' but this fact is not written on any of the museum's text panels. The museum at least does not hide the fact that "far from protecting the Serbian people from atrocities, the Nedić government was rather directly complicitous in the perpetration of war crimes against the people of Serbia."[103] What is less clear is the number of victims. Though the consensus appears to be 2,300 victims,[104] based on German documents and the Nuremberg trials, the museum pamphlet states 2,792 were executed – of course, if this includes victims killed in surrounding areas on the days prior and after October 21, then it seems likely. For reasons unclear, a text panel in the museum also states that there could be as many as 12,000 victims – but given that another panel gives the 1941 population of the town as 41,000, this is an absurdly high figure and would mean a quarter of the town was executed. Wildly inflated figures "invite a simplistic and undifferentiated representation of wartime history."[105] Leaving the total number of victims ambiguous and open to interpretation is detrimental as it can only serve to distort and mythologize the event itself.

Of course, the museum on the whole does not attempt to mythologize the event, but it does sacralise the executions by turning all of the victims into martyrs. This is achieved in the museum through visiting a room in the permanent exhibition dedicated to the victims. At the entrance, the names of the survivors are inscribed on glass. One then enters a darkened room, wherein church-like music is playing alongside the recitation of the names of the victims. The room is empty, save for small, circular photographs of the victims that are embedded in the walls and backlit so they shine with an eerie glow. When the religious aura of this room is combined with the simplified portrayal of the war, the impression can be created that all Serbs were potential victims of the German war machine. The museum pamphlet goes beyond this, stating that the massacre was "one of the greatest crimes of the German military in the Second World War."[106] This massacre was certainly a crime, but put in perspective alongside the thousands of other similar crimes committed by the Wehrmacht and Einsatzgruppen against civilians across Europe, it is only one of many, and far from the greatest. By the end of 1941, there were

[103] Sladjana Lazić and Sabrina P. Ramet, "The Collaborationist Regime of Milan Nedić," 37.
[104] Manoschek, "The Extermination of the Jews in Serbia," 176.
[105] Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration*, 44.
[106] Brkić, "Kragujevačka Tragedija 1941."

"between 20,000 and 30,000"[107] civilians executed in Serbia by the German military in their attempt to stem the uprising – but not all of these civilians were Serbian. Serbs were shot in reprisal actions when "Jews and Gypsies did not exist in sufficient numbers for mass executions."[108] It is worth reiterating this point, which is not mentioned in the museum at all – by the time the shootings at Kragujevac took place, most male Jews in Serbia had already been shot, because they were among those first interned. "Once the partisan resistance drove the Germans to inflict upon themselves the obligation to fulfill the maximum reprisal quota," Browning writes, "all interned Serbs were at high risk, but the interned male Jews were doomed. The German military could conceive of innocent Serbs but not innocent Jews."[109] While the Kragujevac massacre is worthy of commemoration, it is also worth remembering there were other victims of the reprisal actions. These victims have scarcely been commemorated with monuments or memorials, let alone in museums.

These three primary museums – at Jasenovac, Banjica, and Kragujevac – represent different means of commemorating victims of the Second World War. Each of the museums adopts a focus that is primarily centered on the victims. Yet none of these is a 'Holocaust museum,' and the latter two museums focus primarily on Serbian victims. The problems with the narratives of each museum are emblematic of the larger problems associated with the memory of the Second World War in both Serbia and Croatia. In Croatia, this entails being unable to grapple with the legacy of the Ustaša movement as a Croatian nationalist movement that perpetrated atrocities against ethnic minorities. In Serbia, there is a similar reluctance to address collaboration by presenting the Četnik movement exclusively as a resistance movement. There is also a tendency to devote far more attention to Serbian victims than other victims.

Secondary Museums

There are far more secondary museums in Serbia and Croatia than there are primary museums. The secondary museums are those that are removed from the sites of the events or concentration camps, and they often have mandates that are broader than focusing solely on the Second World War. All of the museums under examination have displays on the Second World War or demonstrate problems associated with the memory of this period. Curiously, neither

[107] Manoschek, "The Extermination of the Jews in Serbia", 178.
[108] *Ibid.*, 176.
[109] Browning, *Fateful Months*, 55.

Croatia nor Serbia has a national history museum with a permanent exhibit. This is an odd fact, given how strongly both states sought to establish and fortify their national identities in the late Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav periods alike. Museums are a way of concretizing and legitimating national identity, yet a national museum has not been permanently established in either independent state – the national museums feature only temporary exhibits which have tended to avoid the Second World War. This section will thoroughly examine the exhibits at the Jewish Historical Museum and the Military Museum, both in Belgrade, as well as the Zagreb City Museum, in Zagreb. It will also touch on the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade as well as the Croatian History Museum in Zagreb.

The Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade is located on the first floor of a three story building that belongs to the Jewish community, marked only by a small brass plaque. The museum, operated and funded by the Federation of Jewish Communities, is dedicated to all aspects of the history of Jewish settlement in Yugoslavia. The museum was founded in 1949 with the goal of collecting "all data available about the Holocaust and the participation of Jews in the national liberation movement."[110] Establishing a permanent exhibition in 1959, it was officially opened in 1960. In 1969, the second, revised permanent exhibition was unveiled, which remains the permanent exhibition to this day. Though confined to a single exhibition room of two hundred square meters, the museum has numerous collections and its own archive. The Jewish Historical Museum has organized dozens of temporary exhibitions elsewhere in Serbia and internationally, and also participates in ceremonies and commemorations. In addition, the museum has published collections of Holocaust testimony from Yugoslav Jews in multiple languages in a volume entitled *We Survived*.

The permanent exhibit, in spite of being confined to a small space, presents hundreds of objects, documents, and photographs. The first half of the museum displays cultural, religious, and ceremonial artifacts and clothing, as well as numerous paintings. Several panels and display cases focus on the nineteenth and twentieth century efforts to foster Jewish life in the lands that would become Yugoslavia, especially through organized community associations, and sporting and cultural societies – as the museum's former director notes, these are now "a reminder of

[110] Vojislava Radovanović, *The Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade*, trans. Zaneta Miljanić (Belgrade: The Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia, 2010), 5.

people who no longer exist."[111] The second half of the permanent exhibit is devoted to Jewish participation in the First and Second World Wars, Jewish participation in the partisan movement and Communist Party, the Holocaust, and post-war life in socialist Yugoslavia. The exhibit is quite dated, and textual narrative is very clearly in line with the acceptable narratives of socialist Yugoslavia. One of the text panels explains that Jews "were natural participants in all liberation movements and wars for freedom which the Yugoslav peoples fought against many invaders," and that they were especially inclined to join the partisan struggle "together with other peoples of Yugoslavia." This evidently follows the narrative of the heroic, multinational anti-fascist resistance promoted by the state, anchored in the notion of 'brotherhood and unity.' Of course, Jews were well-represented among the partisans, and with good reason, as the partisans were the only truly multi-ethnic fighting force. The museum thus preserves both myth and reality, and presents the Jewish community's submergence in the "invented tradition of socialist Yugoslavia."[112] As Paul Gordiejew notes, the permanent exhibit "display[s] submergence by presenting visually and chronologically the processes and major events that led to submergence,"[113] the most important of which was the Second World War and destruction of the Jewish community in the Holocaust.

It is crucial to note that the Jewish museum is the only museum in Belgrade that thoroughly explains the Holocaust and informs visitors that the Holocaust occurred "during WWII in all the countries occupied and ruled by the Nazi troops."[114] The museum's textual narrative describes German anti-Semitic measures, deportations, and death camps both within Yugoslavia and in the rest of Europe, and displays documents including originals and copies of German, Yugoslav and Ustaša anti-Jewish decrees and deportation orders. Explanatory plaques are provided in both English and Serbo-Croatian. The museum's visual narrative is particularly striking. Numerous photographs document the scope of the destruction of Jewish communities across Europe, from looted and destroyed synagogues to mass graves and concentration camps. There are photographs of many of the German and Ustaša-run camps set up across Yugoslavia including those at Sajmište, Đakovo, Banjica, Jasenovac, Niš, Sisak, Rab, and of mass crimes such as the Novi Sad raid. The museum guidebook provides more detailed information,

[111] Milica Mihailović, "The Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade," *European Judaism* Vol. 36 No. 2 (2003): 68.
[112] Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*, 91.
[113] *Ibid.*, 133.
[114] From a text panel in the museum.

including the fact that "the Sajmište camp was the biggest Nazi camp in the Balkans."[115] But the Holocaust is also presented in its full European context, and photographs are not limited to Yugoslav sites. There are also photographs of deportations, forced labour, ghettos, and concentration and death camps elsewhere including Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald. Artifacts on display include yellow star badges, cans of Zyklon B, and prisoners' uniforms (figure 3.12). A large map marks the sites of all concentration camps, death camps, and mass killings that took place during World War II throughout occupied and dismembered Yugoslavia.

The visual narrative clearly portrays the utter devastation that befell the Yugoslav Jewish communities, but the textual narrative has optimistic undertones, placing faith in the new state. "In free socialist Yugoslavia, in which the equality of all the peoples and nationalities is one of the principal achievements of the peoples' revolution, the long desired aims of the small Jewish community have finally been accomplished," one of the museum's final panels explains, "after

Figure 3.12 – The display case featuring artifacts and photographs from the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp complex

[115] Radovanović, *The Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade*, 24.

the tragic years of hardships, but also glorious years of struggle for the liberation from the occupying forces and building of the new society, the members of the mutilated Jewish community, together with other citizens of Yugoslavia, began another difficult struggle of rebuilding the devastated homes, the destroyed economy, the demolished cultural and historic monuments, in the struggle for a new life that free men are worthy to live." Again, this palpably demonstrates Gordiejew's theory of submergence, whereby the "Jewish community reimagined and represented itself through the lens of the newly legitimated ideology"[116] of Yugoslav socialism. Some of the final photographs on display at the museum are of Jewish partisans and Jews who attained the status of 'National Heroes' in the fight against fascism. In this way, the museum is as much a museum documenting Yugoslav socialist narratives as it is a museum documenting Jewish life in Yugoslavia.

The museum's former director, Milica Mihailović, questions "the relevance of the themes in the permanent display after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia," and notes that "the permanent display is past its sell-by date and time has already left its mark."[117] The museum is in need of physical restoration and ideally, more space. Yet although "the time has come to change the museum's permanent display,"[118] considerable resources, financial and otherwise, are needed to aesthetically and thematically refurbish the museum. These are resources that the museum lacks, as it is a private institution and not a state museum. The current director, Vojislava Radovanović, writes in the guidebook that "the actual age of the permanent exhibition of the Jewish Historical Museum does not bother anyone, as it does not have impact on the excellent quality of information regarding Jewish history."[119] While this is true, it belies the ideological lens through which some of this information is filtered. Yet as Mihailović observed in an article written over ten years ago, "until the political, economic and financial situation [in Serbia] sorts itself out, it would be very hard to come up with a concept for the new permanent display."[120] Clearly, the political and economic situation in Serbia is still in flux, and the permanent exhibit remains unchanged. The Jewish Historical Museum thus retains a firmly Yugoslav identity in a post-Yugoslav Serbia, while simultaneously being one of the only Serbian

[116] Gordiejew, *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*, 91.
[117] Mihailović, "The Jewish Historical Museum," 72.
[118] *Ibid*., 63.
[119] Radovanović, *The Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade*, 6.
[120] Mihailović, "The Jewish Historical Museum," 72.

museums that interprets the Holocaust in its entirety: as the destruction of both the Yugoslav and European Jews.

In contrast to the detailed narrative of the Holocaust at the Jewish Historical Museum, the Military Museum in Belgrade is nearly completely mute on the subject. This museum devotes much of its exhibition space to the Second World War while not mentioning the Holocaust, and scarcely mentioning Jews at all, in spite of the fact that multiple concentration camps for Jews existed in Belgrade. It is thus worthwhile to examine this museum's exhibit more closely. The Military Museum is centrally located in the Belgrade fortress. A major landmark, it was founded in 1878 by Milan Obrenović and had multiple permanent exhibits, which were damaged when the city was bombed in WWI and WWII, before the current permanent exhibit was unveiled in 1961. Today, the museum is under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia. It is a government funded museum; its budget is tied to the budget for the ministry, which also funds the military. The museum's collections and permanent exhibition are extensive, covering 2300 square meters. Over three thousand objects and artifacts are on display in a two-story building with more than fifty rooms.[121] The museum is organized chronologically, with the first floor covering the pre-Slavic period and all the key events of the early modern and modern periods including the battles of Marica and Kosovo Polje and ensuing Ottoman conquest, the fifteenth century Peasant Revolts, the First and Second Serbian rebellions, and the Balkan Wars. The main floor concludes with elaborate and detailed displays on the First World War, exhibiting both authentic and replicated weapons, uniforms, flags, photographs, and documents.

The second floor begins with the interwar period, but quickly moves on to the Second World War, which dominates the remainder of the exhibition. Thus, exactly half of the available space at the Military Museum is devoted to the period between 1918 and 1945. Because the exhibit was crafted when Yugoslavia was an intact country, its narrative is not confined to Serbia, but covers what happened across Yugoslavia in the period from 1941 to 1945. The display on the interwar period covers the weakness of the Little Entente and the ensuing rapprochement of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia with the Axis countries. A photograph of Prime Minister Cvetković and von Ribbentrop signing the Tripartite Pact on March 25, 1941, marks the beginning of the section of the museum devoted to the Second World War, which

[121] Military Museum Belgrade, "Museum Activity – Display," accessed May 30, 2012, http://www.muzej.mod.gov.rs/en/museum-activity/display#.U3TsQ_ldU5g

displays hundred of artifacts including partisan and enemy weapons, uniforms, flags, insignia, sabotage items, medals, artwork, and maps.

It is clear that the Partisan narrative still predominates in the museum, but it is equally apparent that there have been recent efforts to change this and add more information about the Četniks in an attempt to equalize the two groups. A museum employee who wished to remain anonymous explained in an interview that the second floor exhibit was actually closed for several years, but reopened at the behest of the public.[122] Only recently, in the past five or so years, have there been changes to the exhibit, with information removed that pertained to the rest of Yugoslavia, and displays added on Draža Mihailović and the Četniks, "but it is a very slow process."[123] In the words of the interviewee, "historical facts are not just related to the partisans, but the spirit of the [1961] exhibit was to promote [the] partisan movement."[124] This is palpable evidence of the fact that in Serbia "existing interpretations of the Second World War are being re-examined, along with the role that partisans and quislings, the fighters against Fascism and various other ideologies, played in it."[125] This occurs a political level and is reflected on an institutional level, particularly so in this instance because the institution is directly tied to the government.

Though the museum has begun to depict the Partisan and Četnik struggles side by side, there is still a greater emphasis on the partisan movement. Extensive exhibition space is devoted to the initial 'uprising of the Yugoslav peoples,' the formation of the National Liberation Army, and Partisan battles and victories. The Partisan commanders, National Heroes of Yugoslavia, and Marshal Tito are all lauded – particularly the latter, of whom there are dozens of photographs and two statues. But there are also several panels on the Ravna Gora movement and the Četniks under Mihailović. It is clear by the different layout and font of the text panels that these have been added recently, as have all the English captions provided on this level of the museum – much is still only available in Serbian. One explanatory panel gives pre-eminence to the Četnik movement, stating that it was composed of Yugoslav officers who refused to surrender, turning instead to guerilla warfare "against the occupation troops," and that the partisans only began their resistance once they had "support from [the] Comintern." This

[122] Anonymous employee of the Military Museum, interview by author, Belgrade, June 2013. Translation during the interview was provided by Vlada Kovačević.
[123] *Ibid*.
[124] *Ibid.*
[125] Mihailović, "The Jewish Historical Museum," 62.

neglects to mention that the period of Četnik resistance was very short-lived. While "there is no doubt that any museum exhibition on World War Two in the former Yugoslavia and in Serbia

Figure 3.13 – The military museum displays plenty of photographs of Nazi and Ustaša soldiers and top leadership

should deal with [Mihailović] and with his Chetniks […] the problem is that they [are] presented exclusively as a resistance movement and therefore as an Allied military force,"[126] which is not the case.

The exhibit does not focus solely on the Partisans and Četniks, but also devotes several halls and rooms to the treatment of civilians under German, Italian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian occupation, as well as in the Ustaša Independent State of Croatia. The perpetrators are not maligned in these displays, and are often the prime focus (figure 3.13). But when the 'civilians' are identified by ethnicity, they are almost exclusively Serbs. This is particularly striking when one examines the captions for the dozens of photographs on display in this section of the museum. Sometimes the victims are not identified by ethnicity, though one usually infers that

[126] Mario Jareb, "Allies or Foes? Mihailović's Chetniks during the Second World War," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War* Two, eds. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 155.

they are Serbs, for example, “German soldiers posing next to hanged civilians at Pančevo,” “German soldiers next to executed citizens of Čačak,” and “Hungarians next to executed civilians of Subotica.” Interestingly, these do point out the ethnicity of the perpetrators, which is never omitted.

Captions such as “German soldiers taking citizens of Kragujevac to execution in October 1941,” and “Executed hostages in the Kraljevo wagon factory yard in October 1941” are clearly deemed not to need more detail on the victims, as the mass shootings at Kraljevo and Kragujevac have become so emblematic of Serbian suffering. More often than not, though, the victims are identified, and they are identified as Serbs. Here is but a sample of captions where this occurs: “Ustašas posing next to bodies of killed Serbs, Bosnia 1941,” “Forced conversion of Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism in a Slavonia village, performed by a priest,” “Forced exodus of Serbs from the territory of the NDH in July 1941,” “Ustašas posing over killed Serbs in Bijeljina in 1941,”

Figure 3.14 – Some of the photographs on display, the caption for the top picture mentions Jews among the victims

and so on. These graphic photographs are displayed alongside artifacts like Ustaša daggers and torture instruments. Shockingly, hardly any other photographs are of victims of other ethnicities. There is one photograph of Slovenians in a transit camp awaiting their deportation to Serbia. There is also a photograph with the caption "Ustašas posing over killed Serbs, Jews, and Roma thrown into mass grave" – this one of only two captions in the entire museum that mentions Jews and Roma among the victims (the top photograph in figure 3.14). Jews are frequently unmentioned, even in captions of photographs of mass crimes where Jews were among the victims, for instance a photograph of the Novi Sad raid is captioned with "Hungarian fascists executions [*sic*] of civilians in the Danube near Novi Sad." This erasure of Jewish victims is not limited to the visual narrative. A text panel on the Ustaša movement states that the "ideology of the Ustašas was based on hatred toward Serbian nation [*sic*] and Yugoslavia," omitting any mention of anti-Semitism as one of the key elements of their ideology. The text panels on the German reprisal policy and the documents outlining 'a hundred for one' do not note that Jews and Roma were the first victims of this policy, and the only groups subjected to total extermination. Even more puzzling is a large map of wartime Europe on display, where all of the concentration and death camps across Europe are marked with symbols, including the camps in Belgrade and Serbia. No explanatory text panel accompanies this map, and the Holocaust is not mentioned at all anywhere in the museum. The map is thus presented without any historical context whatsoever.

Because of its silence concerning the Holocaust, the Military Museum stands in stark contrast to the Jewish Historical Museum and the Banjica Museum. It is extremely surprising that with almost an entire floor of the Military Museum devoted to the Second World War, no space could be found even for a brief overview of German camps that existed in Belgrade itself, like Topovske Šupe. However, by ignoring Jewish victimization and almost exclusively depicting Serbian victimization, the museum does succeed in crafting a narrative of Serbian martyrdom. This is similar to the way the Holocaust is often treated in the rest of Eastern Europe. Jonathan Huener's observations about Polish memory can apply just as easily to Serbia; he notes that the Polish nationalist "memorial paradigm either marginalized the mass murder of Jews or, as was often the case, implied that Poles had shared in that fate, not only as the first victims of Nazi aggression and occupation, but also as certain victims of Nazi extermination

policy in the future."[127] At the military museum, Serbs are presented exclusively as victims of Nazi and Ustaša policy alike, and Jews are only mentioned twice in photo captions, only in conjunction with Serbian victims. In no way does this sufficiently acknowledge what happened to the Jews in Serbia or the rest of Yugoslavia. As Jovan Byford so aptly put it, "Holocaust remembrance in Serbia must include more than the notion that Jews and Serbs were 'brothers in suffering' […] it must be detached, first of all, from the narrative of Serbian martyrdom and allowed a separate existence as an object of memory."[128] It is clear that the Holocaust receives no such treatment at the Military Museum.

In sum, due to its status as a government-run museum, the Military Museum presents what can be seen as an official Serbian state narrative of the Second World War. In the communist era, this was heavily ideologically motivated, depicting the partisan narrative of the National Liberation War. The 1961 exhibit has not been dismantled, but it has been significantly altered. In many ways, this is a tangible representation of the current state of the politics of Serbian memory of the Second World War. The museum's website states that "future generations have a task to correct omissions with new displays and to present integral History of Serbs using modern achievements of Historiography an[d] Museology without dangerous ideological misleads [*sic*],"[129] which seems to indicate that in the future, more of the socialist narrative will likely be dismantled. Sadly, it is extremely unlikely that these changes will result in any more light being shed on the fate of Serbia's Jews and their destruction in the Holocaust.

There is one more secondary museum in Belgrade that merits brief mention, though it will not receive the same depth of scrutiny because it does not have a permanent exhibition and therefore, no contents to evaluate. This museum is the Museum of Genocide Victims. From a visitor's perspective, it is quite hard to locate, on the second floor of a nondescript building with only a small plaque noting the museum's location on the second floor. When one enters the building and climbs the stairs, entrance to higher levels is restricted by a security guard, who responds to inquiries about the museum by redirecting the visitor to the Serbian History

[127] Jonathan Huener, "Auschwitz and the Politics of Martyrdom and Memory, 1945-1947," in *Making Holocaust Memory*, ed. Gabriel N. Finder et al. (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 152.
[128] Jovan Byford, "When I say 'The Holocaust,' I mean 'Jasenovac,'" 66.
[129] Military Museum Belgrade, "Museum Activity – Display."

Museum,[130] located around the corner. It is very unlikely that many tourists, or even locals, ever visit this museum, which at any rate "does not have an exhibition space, apart from a dim corridor outside staff offices in Belgrade where a simple poster exhibition can be seen."[131] Nevertheless, the museum has created numerous temporary exhibits that have been shown in museums across Serbia, and merits a brief examination.

The Museum of Genocide Victims was established in 1992 by the Serbian Parliament and commenced work under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture in 1995. The initial plan was to build the museum on the grounds of the Sajmište camp, not in order to commemorate the Jews killed there, but rather to commemorate the Serbian victims of the Independent State of Croatia.[132] However, this never came to fruition due to the very difficult economic situation in Serbia at the time. The plan to locate the museum at Sajmište to commemorate Serbian victims of the NDH demonstrates that the museum was established in line with a Serbian nationalist interpretation of the Second World War, where the only victims whose fate was worth highlighting were the Serbs killed by Croatian fascists. In its initial years under the leadership of Milan Bulajić, the museum espoused what Jovan Byford calls an "unashamedly propagandist agenda."[133] This agenda relied on maintaining a one-dimensional, overly simplistic view of the war. During the decade from 1992-2002, "the Holocaust was relegated to the status of a secondary event, one that was used, strategically and selectively, as a point of comparison and a symbolic prop to accentuate Serbian victimhood."[134] The museum devoted attention to Jewish victims killed in Croatia, but no attention was paid to the Jewish victims killed in Serbia. While these victims were ignored, the number of Serbian victims of the NDH was pushed ever higher, with a minimum of 700,000, but possibly upward of one million, purported to have been killed at Jasenovac alone – a flagrant exaggeration as that would have been the majority of the Serbian population in Croatia at the time.

However, in 2002 Bulajić left the museum, and since then the museum has adopted a different course "in favour of a more considered approach to genocide research and

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[130] This museum also lacks a permanent exhibition and will not be examined here. None of its recent temporary exhibitions have dealt with the period of the Second World War; instead they have focused on events like the Serbian uprisings against the Ottoman Turks.
[131] Byford, "When I say 'The Holocaust,' I mean 'Jasenovac,'" 54.
[132] Bajford, *Staro Sajmište*, 140-141.
[133] Byford, "When I say 'The Holocaust,' I mean 'Jasenovac,'" 60.
[134] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 532.

memorialisation."[135] This is apparent when one reads the catalogues of the museum's more recent exhibits. These differ notably from the Serbian nationalist narrative of the Second World War, and offer a more nuanced portrayal of events. The catalogue for an exhibition on War Crimes against the Yugoslav civilian population does not focus exclusively on Serbian victims. While pointing out that numerically the Serbs had the highest losses, the catalogue states that "the most tragic was the suffering of the Jews who lost 84% of their pre-war population,"[136] noting that only Jews and Roma were subjected to racial laws and interned at camps like Topovske Šupe. The catalogue indicates that while many Serbs were killed in reprisal actions, "the Jews and Gypsies among the first were shot as hostages."[137] In the Serbian nationalist narrative, these victims are typically ignored, but this is no longer the case in the museum's publications. In addition, the catalogue notes that Serbian collaborationist forces including the Serbian State Guard and the Special Police helped to commit crimes against Serbian civilian populations, for instance by rounding up victims for the shootings at Kragujevac. The Serbian nationalist narrative would typically ignore this fact as well. But one of the most striking differences are the much more realistic and even conservative numbers of victims provided by the museum. The catalogue cites 3,800 victims from Banjica; 10,636 Serbian victims and 6,400 Jewish victims from Sajmište; and 90,000 identifiable victims of all nationalities from Jasenovac. The Museum of Genocide Victims has thus made drastic changes since its opening just over twenty years ago. However, because it does not have a permanent exhibition space, its presence in the public sphere is unfortunately restricted to research, publishing and pedagogical work, for the latter of which there are very limited funds available.[138] Hopefully increased funding will become available and the museum more publically accessible, but this does not seem likely.

Evidently, the secondary museums in Belgrade contrast strongly with one another and offer divergent portrayals of the war and manners of acknowledging or ignoring the Holocaust. The situation is different in Zagreb, because so few museums even mention the Second World War. The museum in Zagreb that devotes the most space to this time period is the Zagreb City Museum. This is a well-designed and visually striking museum, established in a former convent

[135] Byford, "When I say 'The Holocaust,' I mean 'Jasenovac,'" 60.
[136] Jovan Mirković, ed., *"I'm losing my Life Because of Wicked and Cursed People": The Crime of Genocide and War Crimes Against Civilian Population in the Yugoslav Territory 1941-1945*, trans. Zoran Janjetović (Belgrade: Museum of Genocide Victims, 2011).
[137] *Ibid*.
[138] Conversation with several employees of the Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade, June 2013.

by The Brethren of the Croatian Dragon, a Croatian historical society. Over 4500 objects are on display in a huge exhibition space of two thousand square metres.[139] The current permanent exhibit dates from 1997, but the museum itself is over a hundred years old. The permanent exhibit traces the cultural and political history of the city of Zagreb from the Iron Age to the present, chronicling major events such as the founding of the Zagreb bishopric, the construction of the Zagreb cathedral, the Croatian national revival, Ban Josip Jelačić's entry into Zagreb, the First World War, the creation of Yugoslavia, the Second World War, and the Homeland War. Throughout, the textual narrative stresses Zagreb's turbulent history as the most significant Croatian city.

Ample attention is devoted to the Croatian national revival and the nineteenth century, and one display in these rooms is especially relevant in the context of the Second World War. This display concerns the construction of the synagogue on Praška Street, and includes an 1880 photograph of the synagogue interior, a scale model of the synagogue, and three artifacts. The artifacts are the largest intact pieces of the synagogue – two memorial plaques from 1867 and 1881, and a stone washbasin (figure 3.15). Along with partial pieces of the column kept in the Jewish Community center, these are the only surviving fragments of the building. The accompanying text panel notes that the Edict of Toleration issued under Joseph II allowed Jewish settlement in Croatia, and that Jews "embraced" the Croatian cultural milieu. Construction of the synagogue began in 1867 and its prominent location in Zagreb's lower town was purported to show "how the Jewish community was accepted and respected

Figure 3.15 – The washbasin of the Zagreb Synagogue

[139] Muzej Grada Zagreba, "Muzej Grada Zagreba – General Information," accessed April 23, 2013, http://www.mgz.hr/en/musem/info/

in the life of Zagreb."[140] Yet no explanation is given for the destruction of the synagogue. The plaque merely states that the surviving fragments of the synagogue were "removed from the temple during its demolition in 1942." One must wonder why the building of a community that was "accepted and respected" did not even last one hundred years, and was purposely demolished.

The answer is not given until the room in the museum devoted to the Second World War, which is far smaller than the multiple rooms that cover the nineteenth century. The room opens with a panel of text entitled "The Second World War," wherein the visitor is informed that "the rapture at the creation of an independent state expressed during the grand welcome accorded to the new head of state Dr. Ante Pavelić, was soon to be erased by the *Treaties of Rome* which gave great parts of the national territory to Italy, by the racial and religious discrimination of which the victims were the Jews and the Serbs, and the reign of terror aimed at all those who did not support the ideas of the Ustasha movement, in particular at the communists." This makes it clear that the NDH was a totalitarian regime that relied on violence. It is also apparent that Jews and Serbs were targeted by the regime, but the full extent of their persecution is not evident – the text panel does not use the word 'Holocaust.' But the concluding paragraph of the panel does note the persecution of Croats: "At the end of the Second World War a crime was committed in Bleiburg against the Croatian people, which set off on its 'Way of the cross.'" Croatian post-war victimization is thus subtly equated with the victimization of ethnic and religious minorities under wartime Ustaša rule.

Jewish persecution is noted, both visually and textually. Jewish insignia is on display, as is a photograph of a Jewish woman wearing this insignia. In Croatia, Jews did not wear a yellow star; they wore a yellow badge inscribed with a black 'Ž,' for *Židov*. The text panel explains that this "Semitic segregation" was "based on [the] 'Jewish Law' of 30 April 1941 created on the model of the so-called Nazi 'Nuremberg Law.'" Oddly, the panel goes on to state that as the end of the war neared, Ante Pavelić "expressed willingness to correct the tragic mistakes of his regime, [and] proclaimed [on] May 3, 1945, the legal provision on the Equalization of NDH citizens with regard to their racial background." This is potentially misleading, and can create the impression that there was some sort of genuine change of heart from the Ustaša leadership as opposed to an obvious last-ditch effort to save their lives, given the inevitable partisan takeover.

[140] From the explanatory panel beside the photograph of the synagogue interior.

The brutal persecution of ethnic minorities was not some sort of 'tragic error' the regime made and came to regret – it was central to the entire Ustaša political platform. To portray this any other way is disingenuous at best.

Several Ustaša warning posters and notices are on display, most of which target Jews and Serbs. These "racist provisions" include a notice restricting the movement of Serbs and Jews in Zagreb to daytime hours. There are also announcements of executions of Jews and communists in reprisal for all acts of partisan sabotage or assassination. But these measures paint a very partial picture of the persecution of Zagreb's Jews, who comprised a third of the Jewish population of the NDH.[141] There is a photograph of the destruction of the Zagreb Synagogue, and the accompanying panel explains that the synagogue was destroyed over several months beginning in the winter of 1941 and spanning into 1942, as part of the persecution of the Jewish community. It would seem far more fitting for the fragments of the synagogue to have been displayed in this room, instead of the room on the nineteenth century – after all, the museum only has the fragments because of Ustaša intolerance, not Austro-Hungarian tolerance, which enabled the synagogue's construction. More importantly, there is no other information on the treatment of Jews in the NDH beyond the anti-Semitic insignia and announcements, and the photograph of the destruction of the synagogue. There are photographs of the German and Partisan armies in Zagreb, photos of Zagreb destroyed by allied bombs, and photographs of the effects of food shortages. But there are no photographs or text panels that inform the viewer about the Holocaust, even though the Jewish population were deported to death camps from the centre of the city; according to Ivo Goldstein, "residents of Zagreb were able to see everything in June and July 1941, when the Jews were loaded into railway wagons at the Zagreb Fair."[142] Though the exhibit presents the fact that the Jews were subjected to intense persecution at the hands of the Ustaša, it almost completely avoids the Holocaust.

The exhibit is more forthcoming about Ustaša ideology, presenting it as an anti-communist, anti-Serb, and anti-Semitic movement led by extreme nationalists. There is an extensive display of Ustaša propaganda posters (figure 3.16) with slogans like "No more Slavery! No more Yugoslavia!"; "Hands off of Croatia!"; "Long Live the Croatian People and the Independent State of Croatia!"; and "Forward, Croatia needs you." Nearly all of these posters

[141] Goldstein and Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu*, 123.
[142] *Ibid*., 628.

are aimed against the Serbs and the spectre of a communist takeover. Other forms of propaganda are also exhibited, including Ustaša newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts. While the exhibit has a strong visual narrative in terms of photographs, posters, and artwork, there is a notable shortage of artifacts on display, which detracts from the overall presentation. Its textual narrative is weaker, and furthermore, most of the panels are only available in Croatian, with a select few available in English.

Figure 3.16 – An Ustaša propaganda poster on display at the Zagreb City Museum

The exhibit on World War Two closes with photographs of the liberation of Zagreb by the Partisans. There is a photograph taken by Milan Pavić of Ban Jelačić square on May 8, 1945, which is completely deserted. Another photograph, taken three days later, shows the square packed with a hundred thousand people in support of the national liberation movement. Nevertheless, the closing text panel notes that "Zagreb experienced May 1945 mute and in terror," with many Croatian army units and civilians fleeing the city and "the totalitarianism of the communist regime." While the crimes of the partisans, including the Bleiburg massacre, merit attention, they were not even close to being on the same scale as Ustaša crimes. Any presentation of World War Two in Croatia must put these crimes, including the Holocaust, front and centre. "One must wonder," writes Ivo Goldstein, "how it was possible that communities in which cultures and civilizations flourished, and Zagreb was doubtlessly one of them, suddenly turned into a scene of the most massive crimes and savagery."[143] Unfortunately, the Zagreb City Museum does not begin to tackle this question, and only gives a very shallow depiction of the extent of Ustaša brutality.

The final secondary museum under review is also in Zagreb, but like the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade, it merits only a brief mention. This is the Croatian History

[143] *Ibid.*, 105.

Museum, which, though it has exhibition space, does not have a permanent exhibition due to limited space. The Croatian History Museum is the result of a merger in the 1990s between the History Museum of Croatia and the Museum of the Revolution of the Peoples of Croatia. A new building was provided by the Croatian government in 2007, but after seven years the museum still has not moved from its temporary location and "now faces the challenge of creating a permanent display."[144] The museum also manages a permanent exhibition about Ivan Goran Kovačić, the famous partisan poet, but this is located in Lukovdol and not in Zagreb. The museum's collections include hundreds of thousands of objects – art, uniforms, flags, coins, weapons, and so on, spanning Croatia's history from the middle ages to the present.

It is noteworthy that although there have been dozens of temporary exhibitions staged by the museum, none have focused exclusively on the period of the Second World War and very few have even touched on this period. Instead, they have focused on topics like the Ottoman invasion, Ban Josip Jelačić, and the First World War. One of the more recent exhibitions was entitled "The Homeland War," which ran from December 2011 to September 2012. This exhibit visually chronicled the collapse of Yugoslavia, the Serb revolt in Croatia, and the liberation of the regions of Slavonia and Krajina. Displays were constructed using artifacts, posters, photographs, and film. The textual narrative made it clear that the Croatian state "had to defend itself in a war imposed by Serbian aggression," and that the Serbs in Croatia were implementing "the Greater Serbian policy of Slobodan Milosevic."[145] In so doing, the museum is delivering the narrative of the 'Homeland War' as constructed by the Croatian government. The Croatian Serbs are described as rebels and terrorists acting in collusion with Serbia, Montenegro, and the Yugoslav People's Army to "create ethnically cleansed territories."[146] This carried on until the Croatian army came to liberate the "occupied territories." Naturally, misdeeds on the part of the Croatian government and army are completely omitted, because they complicate a self-serving, nationalist portrayal of the recent war.

The Croatian History Museum certainly has more diverse and nuanced temporary exhibitions than its exhibition on the Homeland War, but it was important to briefly touch on this exhibition in order to illuminate the point that Croatian museums are more than happy to focus on historical periods where Croatia was victimized. Periods when the Croatian state victimized

[144] Croatian History Museum, "Croatian History Museum" (Zagreb: Croatian History Museum, n.d.), n.p.
[145] Croatian History Museum, "The Homeland War" (Zagreb: Croatian History Museum, n.d.), n.p.
[146] *Ibid.*

its own citizens, like the fascist period, seem much more difficult to approach. It will be interesting to see how the future permanent exhibition addresses the issue of the Second World War and the Holocaust, and if it does so in a manner similar to the Zagreb City Museum, which marginalizes the experiences of victims by not telling the entire story. This, of course, remains to be seen – but one thing is certain, Croatia needs a museum in its capital city that tells the whole story of Croatia during the Second World War. This part of Croatian history should not be erased.

The secondary museums in Belgrade offer diverse presentations and depictions of the Second World War and the Holocaust. The Jewish Historical Museum, while staying true to the socialist narrative, gives much attention to the Holocaust. By contrast, the Military Museum ignores it, and has begun dismantling the socialist narrative of the war. Other museums have also undergone changes. Though the Museum of Genocide Victims adhered to a Serbian nationalist narrative when it opened; its catalogues demonstrate a dramatic shift and now pay attention to the Holocaust as its own event instead of politically instrumentalizing it. By contrast, only one of the secondary museums in Zagreb even offers a depiction of the Second World War, and it mostly skirts the issue of the Holocaust. One can only hope that the future permanent exhibition at the Croatian History Museum will rectify this portrayal.

Concluding Remarks

Following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the successor states of Serbia and Croatia both inherited cultural institutions conceived and constructed under the aegis of the erstwhile common socialist state. Most of the museums under review in this chapter were among these cultural institutions, including the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, the Museum of Banjica Concentration Camp, the Military Museum, the Jewish Historical Museum and the Memorial Museum of 21 October. The majority of these museums were opened in the 1960s. The Jasenovac and Banjica museums have had their exhibitions completely redesigned, but with all of the other socialist-era museums there have been either partial or no changes made to the exhibits. Of the remaining museums, only one, the Zagreb City Museum, predates the socialist era, and two were created after – the Museum of Genocide Victims and the Croatian History Museum. But not one out of these museums is a Holocaust museum. Ultimately, visitors to historical museums in both countries must seek out the references to the Holocaust on their own;

both at the primary museums at the sites of camps and massacres and at the secondary museums distanced from these sites.

Scrutinizing the permanent exhibitions at these museums is illuminating, and reveals much about the state of Holocaust memorialization and official narratives of the Second World War in both Serbia and Croatia. Susan Crane writes that "museum exhibits about this period carry an extraordinary burden of responsibility,"[147] and this chapter has sought to examine how well the museums of Serbia and Croatia carry this burden. To the extent that several of these museums receive government funding, they reflect the narratives of the states themselves. In creating the museums' textual narratives and setting up the visual displays using artifacts and images "there is a selection process at work that supports an over-arching ideology,"[148] and determining the ideological underpinnings of any given exhibit requires critical analysis. The museums whose exhibits were created during the socialist period clearly reflect the ideological constraints under which they were created, but a state can "influence the collective memory of a people's past only to the extent that it retains political power."[149] Independent Serbia and Croatia are no longer subject to the ideological constraints of socialism, but have chosen to grapple with its legacy in different ways, and represent the Second World War according to new national interpretations.

The socialist narrative retained much of its prominence in Serbia during the Milošević era, and with it, the disinclination to recognize Jewish victims as Holocaust victims. At the same time, rehabilitation of the Četnik movement in the public sphere gradually began, which was a reflection of the growing predominance of populist ethnic nationalism. Equalization of the Četniks and Partisans as 'anti-fascists' can be seen at several Serbian museums, most notably at the Military Museum and the Memorial Museum of 21 October, and to a lesser extent, at the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp. The Military Museum is a particularly strong example of this shifting narrative of the war, as its permanent exhibition is clearly in transition between the socialist and nationalist narratives, reflecting Serbian society's divided wartime loyalties. This museum is tangible proof that "museums create collective memory and contribute

[147] Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," *History & Theory* Vol. 36 Issue 4 (Dec 1997): 58.
[148] Andrea Tyndall, "Memory, Authenticity and Replication of the Shoah in Museums: Defensive Tools of the Nation," in *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 115.
[149] Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration*, 25.

to the construction of a nation's narrative, but they do not do so in a static sense; rather, the museum is a process as well as a structure."[150] It also palpably shows that neither the nationalist nor the socialist narratives have room for Serbia's Jewish victims, who are almost completely omitted from the permanent exhibition. This demonstrates that in the nationalist narrative, "a concern for memories other than one's own is conditional on their incorporation within the memorial boundaries that circumscribe one's identifications,"[151] so Jewish victims become important only if they can be used to highlight Serbian suffering, as was originally done at the Museum of Genocide Victims. Hence, it is far easier to commemorate Serbian victims, as is done for the victims of the Kragujevac massacre at the Memorial Museum of 21 October. Here, commemoration borders on sacralisation, with all the Serbian victims accorded the status of martyrs.

By contrast, the Jewish Historical Museum pays ample attention to all Jewish victims of the Holocaust, but from firmly within the socialist memorial paradigm. In fact, it is the only museum in Belgrade that thoroughly explains the Holocaust. While the shifting political situation has seen the Military Museum begin to change its narrative, the Jewish Historical Museum is unable to alter its exhibit largely due to financial constraints. There is also a deep nostalgia among many in the Jewish community for the socialist period, and an opposition to the nationalist narrative which encourages the rehabilitation of Nazi collaborationists including Milan Nedić's regime, which oversaw the internment of Belgrade's Jewish population. Not all of the narrative shifts at Serbian museums have been towards nationalist portrayals of the war, which is an encouraging fact. The Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp and the Museum of Genocide Victims are particularly exemplary in this regard. Both of these museums have rejected the inflated figures of victims that were used during the socialist era and further promulgated by nationalists in the post-socialist period. Both also shed light on the persecution of Serbia's Jews, though at the Banjica museum this is restricted to one information panel, albeit a detailed one. The Museum of Genocide Victims, however, has almost no public presence as it does not have a permanent exhibition, so these narrative shifts have a weaker impact than the changes at large institutions like the Military Museum.

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[150] Hansen-Glucklich, "Evoking the Sacred," 215.
[151] Roger I. Simon, "The Paradoxical Practice of *Zakhor*: Memories of 'What Has Never Been My Fault or My Deed,'" in *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*, eds. Claudia Eppert et al. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 12.

In short, the museums in Serbia under review in this chapter do not "communicate shared understandings of the Holocaust."[152] Instead, they range from ignoring the Holocaust completely to depicting it as a European catastrophe. This is part and parcel with the different ideological underpinnings of the permanent exhibitions, some of which reflect an untouched socialist narrative of the war, and others a revisionist, nationalist narrative. Refreshingly, some museums in Serbia have begun to re-evaluate existing narratives in search of a balanced account.

The situation in Croatia is quite different. Here, the socialist narrative has been excised from the public sphere. There is less diversity concerning representations of the Holocaust because there are fewer museums that even cover the Second World War. The Croatian History Museum ought to do so, but it does not have a permanent exhibition and its temporary premises are very small. Few of its temporary exhibitions have even touched on the Second World War, let alone the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia. Instead, exhibitions at the Croatian History Museum have focused on events like the 'Homeland War,' which are more socially and politically palatable because they offer the opportunity to cast all Croats as victims. The Zagreb City Museum is thus the only museum in Croatia's capital city that features space in their permanent exhibition devoted to the Second World War. This space is restricted to one room, and while its narrative is forthcoming about Ustaša ideology, it does not thoroughly explain what happened to Zagreb's Jewish community during the war. Croatia needs a historical museum that addresses this period of its past in its capital city – seventy years after the war, there is only resounding silence. A proposal was made to build a museum similar to the Jewish Historical Museum on the space of the former Zagreb synagogue, but this has not happened,[153] due to internal disputes and a lack of funding. The onus thus falls on the Croatian government to ensure that the future permanent exhibit of the Croatian History Museum adequately informs visitors about the Holocaust and all other crimes committed in the Independent State of Croatia.

The very limited portrayal of the Holocaust in Zagreb museums means that the Jasenovac Memorial Museum takes on an even greater significance. It is the only state-funded museum devoted exclusively to the period of the Second World War in all of Croatia, and thus very much represents the official state narrative. This is the closest approximation to a Holocaust museum available to the visiting public, though it is over a hundred kilometers southwest of Zagreb.

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[152] Judith E. Berman, *Holocaust Agendas, Conspiracies and Industries? Issues and Debates in Holocaust Memorialization* (Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), 56.
[153] Hofman, *Renewed Survival*, 81.

From 2008 to 2012 the museum received somewhere in the range of 8,000 to 10,500 visitors, which is a far cry from the position it once occupied as "one of the focal memorial sites of the National Liberation War."[154] The redesigned permanent exhibition has been opened for less than a decade, but in this time has attracted its share of controversy, largely because it features very few visual materials. From the perspective of the designers, these were removed because they were too graphic, and created an invocation to hate instead of a 'message of light.' However, images and artifacts are critically important to museums, because they have an enduring power and are "entwined in our capacity to remember."[155] Suppressing the disturbing nature of the site is justifiably seen as a whitewashing that distorts the reality of the camp. When this is coupled with a vague textual narrative, it is clear why there is so much discontent regarding the permanent exhibition. Its stated focus on the individual victims belies the ideological backdrop that led to the camp's existence in the first place. The museum's director writes that the museum "although linked to the past, is dedicated to the future,"[156] and bears a humanist message in support of democracy and human rights. But this is potentially insulting to the victims. As Michael Berenbaum notes, "the central theme of the story of the Holocaust is not regeneration and rebirth, goodness or resistance, liberation or justice, but death and destruction, dehumanization and devastation, and, above all, loss."[157] This does not come through clearly enough at Jasenovac. The Holocaust is not given a full portrayal at any Croatian museum.

Ultimately, any analysis of a museum must recognize that museums are far from stagnant cultural institutions, though they can seem unchanging for decades. They play a key role in transmitting historical consciousness to a broad and diverse public; their narratives often being crafted by those in political power. During periods of change, museums can be contested battlegrounds. Because they are large institutions, they are not as easily altered or removed as monuments, but they are just as subjected to changing political currents. Yet "even in the absence of overt pressure, commemorative strategies remain culturally and politically inflected."[158] Analysis of Serbian and Croatian historical museums thus reveals a great deal about collective memory of the Second World War and how the Holocaust is incorporated or

[154] Lawler, "The Memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović."
[155] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 13.
[156] Jovičić, 'The Victim as an Individual," 9.
[157] Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company Limited, 1993), 220.
[158] Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration*, 81.

ignored in this narrative. Of course, it is not as simple as contrasting "evil, manipulative 'propaganda' and objective, appropriate 'commemoration,'"[159] and Jonathan Huener accurately describes this as a false dichotomy. But, he continues, "the need to condemn vulgar abuses of history and memory remains, as does the need to recognize the work of more objective memorialists."[160] Evidently, some museums under review here are deserving of this recognition – most, however, are not.

[159] *Ibid*.
[160] *Ibid*.

Conclusions

As the years go by, the Second World War and the Holocaust recede further and further into the past. A generation from today, no one alive will have any personal memory of the war. All that will remain are socially and nationally constructed collective memories. This is a stark reminder of James Young's admonition that "*Memory must be created* for the next generation, not simply preserved."[1] A given society's memory of the Second World War "is shaped by such public sites of memory as the museum, the memorial, and the monument."[2] These sites are the centripetal points around which historical memory is transmitted to the public. This project has examined the memorialization of the Holocaust in the public sphere in both Serbia and Croatia. It has endeavoured to show how the Holocaust is both incorporated and ignored in existing narratives of the Second World War at diverse monuments, memorials, and museums.

It is clear that there is no shortage of memory in these two post-Yugoslav states. In Serbia and Croatia, "the past is not a foreign country but on the contrary, still far too familiar."[3] Yet it is equally clear that the past is invoked for political purposes. Historical narratives are crafted to reflect the ideologies of the regimes in power through museums and monuments funded by the state. These narratives have shifted dramatically following the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the loss of the unifying socialist narrative of the Second World War. Under Tito, the war was remembered not as a bloody civil war but as a heroic multiethnic fight against fascism. Yugoslav memorial culture involved the construction of *spomenici*, abstract and modernist monuments. These monuments never invoked the ethnicities of the perpetrators and rarely invoked the ethnicities of the victims, instead subsuming them all under the banner of 'victims of fascism.' The *spominici* thus harboured within them a narrative of omission. The most famed *spomenik* remains the 'Stone Flower' at Jasenovac, which at once references life and death but does not carry an accusatory subtext. In socialist Yugoslavia, the Holocaust was not singled out as a separate event; as Emil Kerenji explains, "insisting on the ethnicity of the victims […] was permissible only if one simultaneously downplayed the genocidal nature of these crimes and connected them to all other crimes that had been committed in Yugoslavia

[1] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 199.
[2] Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age," 9.
[3] Ron Van der Laarse, "Beyond Auschwitz? Europe's Terrorscapes in the Age of Postmemory," in *Memory and Postwar Memorials: Confronting the Violence of the Past*, eds. Marc Silberman and Florence Vatan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 87.

during the war."[4] But the Yugoslav state differed from its Eastern European counterparts in that the Jewish community was permitted to memorialize their own victims, the 'Jewish victims of fascism.' In 1952, the Federation of Jewish Communities oversaw the construction of five large monuments in Jewish cemeteries across the country. These monuments replicated socialist modes of commemoration while including subtle messages that called out the perpetrators and acknowledged the cataclysmic destruction of the Jewish community.

Following the collapse of the common socialist state, in both Serbia and Croatia "the established political class resorted to traditional forms of nationalist manipulation and mobilization."[5] Nationalist narratives do not make much room for other victims of different nationalities. "Nationalism has little redeeming virtue," writes Vladimir Tismaneanu, "it is a discourse of parochialism, it is limitative, self-absorbed, incapable of promising universality."[6] This project has demonstrated that there is both Serbian and Croatian nationalist antipathy toward memorializing the Holocaust, rooted in exclusivist ethnic nationalism – especially so in the Croatian case.

It is not difficult to locate *spomenici* in Serbia. Indeed, the socialist narrative retains much of its prominence, and is still on display in the public sphere. This is largely due to the fact that unlike Croatia under Franjo Tuđman, the regime of Slobodan Milošević did not seek to completely dismantle the socialist narrative of the war. The Jewish Historical Museum retains a socialist narrative, as does the Military Museum, though the latter has begun to change its displays to accommodate the nationalist narrative as well. Existing socialist-era monuments and institutions in Serbia generally reflect the prioritization of communist suffering. This is evident in the development of a memorial park at Jajinci and the establishment of a museum at Banjica, both of which occurred in the 1960s, over the memorialization of sites such as Sajmište or Topovske Šupe. Jewish civilians lost their lives at the latter sites, and they did not fit as neatly into the 'anti-fascist' narrative as did the partisan fighters killed at Banjica.

The memorialization of Serbian victims was also given primacy in the late socialist period. This is especially evident when it comes to the hyper-memorialization of the Kragujevac massacre. Over ten monuments at Šumarice Memorial Park and the Memorial Museum of 21

[4] Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 121.
[5] Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 7.
[6] *Ibid*., 24.

October commemorate the approximately two thousand Serbian victims shot by the Germans. The site sacralizes the victims, presenting them as martyrs for the Serbian nation. Kragujevac is not an exceptional case, either. In post-socialist Serbia, "the memory of atrocities against the Serbs became the dominant theme as regards references to the Holocaust."[7] Jewish victims were acknowledged only if they provided "the nationalists with a way of highlighting the Serbian history of martyrdom."[8] The Museum of Genocide Victims was established in 1992 with the purpose of highlighting Serbian martyrdom at the hands of the Croatian fascists. Thus, memorialization focused primarily on the joint suffering of Serbs and Jews in the Independent State of Croatia rather than on Serbian territory. This tendency is also clear at the Military Museum, where nearly all of the photographs are of Serbian victims, mainly in the Independent State of Croatia. It is equally apparent in the plaque for the 1995 monument constructed for the victims of Sajmište, which melds together socialist and nationalist narratives and equalizes the suffering of 'Serbs, Jews and Roma' even though Jewish suffering at the camp was qualitatively different.

Jovan Byford argues that the 1990 Holocaust monument on the banks of the Danube in Belgrade was largely token commemoration, and that "rather than being commemorated as an object of memory in its own right, the Holocaust was effectively appropriated to celebrate and promote aspects of Serbian national identity,"[9] namely Serbia's historic tolerance of its Jewish minority. If the Holocaust were given its full due, then Topovske Šupe would have been memorialized much earlier than 2006, and the land on which it sits would not have been sold to become a mega-mall. It is apparent when visiting Sajmište and Topovske Šupe that sites of Jewish victimization have been devalued, while sites and events of Serbian victimization have been accorded an almost mythological status.

Holocaust memorialization in Serbia during the 1980s and 1990s exhibited some continuity with the socialist period in that the fate of Jewish victims was not recognized as unique. However, while in the socialist narrative victims of all ethnicities were grouped together, in the Milošević era 'victims of fascism' were instead referred to as 'Serbs, Jews, and Roma.' The tendency was to acknowledge Jewish victims in the Independent State of Croatia but to ignore the Jewish victims killed in Serbia under German occupation. Fortunately, this has

[7] Nystrom, "The Holocaust and Croatian National Identity," 261.
[8] Byford, "Between Marginalization and Instrumentalization," 530.
[9] *Ibid*., 531.

begun to change. The Museum of Genocide Victims has abandoned its adherence to the nationalist narrative. In 2001, the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Banjica Concentration Camp was redesigned. The new exhibit includes a panel about Belgrade's Jewish victims and acknowledges the specificity of their victimhood. However, the post-Milošević era has also been marked by a growth of right-wing nationalism. These extreme nationalists seek to rehabilitate all fascist collaborators, not only the Četniks of Draža Mihailović, but also the Zbor movement of Dimitrije Ljotić and the 'Government of National Salvation' under Milan Nedić, and this is slowly occurring in public discourse.[10] It has already begun to occur at the state-funded Military Museum, where the Četnik and partisan movements are given equal status as resistance movements, reflecting the deep and longstanding cleavage in Serbian society between wartime supporters of each movement. But as the changing permanent exhibit at the Military Museum demonstrates, this will not serve to shed any more light on the Holocaust.

In short, the post-socialist Serbian state has had an uneasy relationship with the memory of the Holocaust. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia, the tendency has been to valorize Serbian victims of the Second World War, including both Serbian victims killed in Serbia under Nazi occupation and Serbian victims killed by the Ustaša in the Independent State of Croatia. The nationalist paradigm has only extended to include Jews inasmuch as they suffered alongside the Serbs. This was certainly the case in the Milošević era, and it has not improved much since. Reviewing memorials, monuments, and museums, it becomes apparent that for the most part, Jewish victims killed in Serbia have had their fates glossed over or omitted from this narrative, and when Jewish victims are acknowledged, their deaths are politically instrumentalized. Fortunately, memorialization in Serbia has not been completely homogenous and not every single museum and monument adheres to the nationalist narrative. Furthermore, the socialist memorialization of the Second World War has not been excised from the political landscape, presenting a more diverse memorial landscape.

The situation differs radically in Croatia, where a segment of the population has a hatred of the socialist era so visceral that thousands of *spomenici* have been destroyed. In many ways, Croatia has always been politically divided between two ideological positions: Yugoslavism and

[10] Sladjana Lazić, "The Re-evaluation of Milan Nedić and Draža Mihailović in Serbia," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War* Two, eds. Ola Listhaug and Sabrina P. Ramet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 266.

"exclusive Croatian nationalism."[11] Memory of the Second World War has also been divided, with partisan supporters and nationalists each remembering the past in a manner conducive to their identities. This is well illustrated at the Zagreb City Museum, where there are two pictures of the liberation of Zagreb. The photograph taken on May 8, 1945, is of Ban Jelačić Square completely deserted, while the photograph taken two days later is of the same square packed with more than a hundred thousand people celebrating the partisan victory and the fall of the Ustaša state. These two photographs sum up the problem with the memory of the Second World War in Croatia – there were large numbers of supporters on both sides of the wartime divide between nationalists and communists. What is apparent, though, is that the nationalists have won the 'memory war,' as evidenced in the destruction of *spomenici* and the vandalism of Jewish memorials. The discouraging lack of memorials devoted to the Holocaust, and museums that so much as mention it, also make this glaringly clear.

The only state-funded museum in all of Croatia that deals exclusively with the Second World War is the Jasenovac Memorial Museum. This museum has changed drastically since the socialist era, when it fully displayed the horrors of the camp. The new museum exhibit, unveiled in 2006, has removed most of the artifacts and photographs. To compensate for the weak visual narrative, it ought to have had a much stronger textual narrative, but this too is problematic. The narrative at the museum is very vague on Ustaša ideology and does not sufficiently stress the dangers of nationalism. The pedagogical philosophy underscoring the museum is that only educating the public about non-violence, human rights, and democracy can prevent mass crimes and genocide from occurring – but these crimes are not full presented, explained, or contextualized. The narrative at the museum places the victim at the forefront, while the perpetrators recede into the background, which completely skirts the issue of complicity. The Jasenovac Memorial Museum is not the only site where this occurs. Plaques marking the sites of destroyed synagogues in Zagreb and Osijek are also vague when addressing who destroyed the synagogues. The Zagreb plaque mentions 'fascists' while the Osijek plaque names no perpetrator. Of course, "only rarely does a nation call upon itself to remember the victims of

[11] Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, trans. Nikolina Jovanović (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 75.

crimes it perpetrated."[12] Yet without doing so, there is can be no concerted national effort to come to terms with the past.

Worse yet, there have been attempts to equate Ustaša and partisan crimes. This began in the Tuđman era, and went so far as to include proposals to rebury Ustaša victims of the Bleiburg massacre at Jasenovac, meant to overcome the "'unnatural' division of Croats."[13] Tuđman also helped popularize drastically reduced numbers of Jasenovac victims and the notion that Jasenovac had been a 'work camp.' Yet the former Croatian president was far from the most extreme when it came to rehabilitating the Independent State of Croatia. In towns and cities across the county, far-right politicians both proposed and enacted the renaming of streets and squares for Ustaša figures like Mile Budak, Jure Francetić, and even Ante Pavelić. Fortunately, this met with some resistance. The Square of the Victims of Fascism in Zagreb was only temporarily renamed the Square of Great Croats, as public protest forced a return to the original name. The ensuing post-Tuđman governments have been much more aggressive in countering the promotion of Ustaša figures and iconography.[14]

The construction of new monuments for Bleiburg victims and for the Homeland War indicates that there is ample inclination in Croatia toward memorializing Croatian victims. "The Homeland War only forestalled a frank discussion of the past and even made possible a reinterpretation of the NDH in a more positive light," writes Mark Biondich; "the popular sense of victimization at Serbia's hands in the 1990s played into the Croat nationalist right's long-nurtured belief of historical Croat victimization."[15] The Homeland War has clearly been elevated to the status of a nationally-sanctioned myth. This is evident in the temporary exhibit "The Homeland War" at the Croatian History Museum, and also when one visits the opulent grave of Franjo Tuđman. The veneration of figures like Tuđman and Ante Starčević, in spite of their controversial legacies, further illustrates the victory of the nationalists in the war for Croatian memory. Unfortunately, this leaves no space for Jewish victims of the Holocaust, or other victims of the Independent State of Croatia – whether Serbs, Roma, or Croatian political opponents.

[12] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 21.
[13] Radonic, "Croatia's Politics of the Past," 251.
[14] Biondich, "Representations of the Holocaust," 151-152.
[15] *Ibid*., 141.

In sum, the post-socialist Croatian state has barely made an effort to memorialize the Holocaust. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia, the government of Franjo Tuđman went the opposite direction, choosing to rehabilitate the NDH period and minimize the crimes of the Ustaša. Successive governments have made some improvements, primarily by reopening the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, but there remains a dire need to improve the memorial landscape. There are fewer memorials, monuments, and museums in Croatia that deal with the period of the Second World War than there are in Serbia. This is partly because of the attempting erasure of the partisan narrative from the physical landscape. It is also because when new monuments have appeared, they have not been for victims of the Ustaša state. Instead, they have been for Croatian victims. These new monuments are being created even as the Holocaust goes unmemorialized – a visitor could conceivably visit Zagreb and if they did not happen to notice the plaque marking the missing synagogue or walk through the Zagreb City Museum's one room on the Second World War, they could leave the capital city with no idea that Croatia had once been a fascist state.

Memorials, monuments, and museums in Croatia and Serbia all remember the Second World War differently "according to the hue of national ideas, [and] the cast of political dicta."[16] The Holocaust is sometimes incorporated into the narrative of the Second World War, but generally it is not. Memory of the Second World War is sharply divided between the two states, but it is also divided internally in each state based on competing wartime loyalties. What has become clear after reviewing dozens of memorials and museums is that neither Serbia nor Croatia has come to terms with the difficult legacies of the Second World War, including the destruction of their Jewish communities. This is reflected in the memorial cultures of both states. Nevertheless, the process of coming to terms has clearly been more difficult in Croatia owing to the direct Croatian complicity in the Holocaust. Ultimately, from the late 1980s onward, both states have been far more focused on their own victimization than on the victimization of others within their borders. In the nationalist worldview, "obsessive self-pity, the absence of empathy, the inability to mourn with the others and to understand their plight are indicative of a general collective self-centeredness that constructs fences around the in-group and elaborate, manufactured images about the 'Other.'"[17] Both states are content to celebrate their

[16] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, viii.
[17] Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation*, 50.

own victimhood, as though it confers some sort of immunity from criticism and exoneration for past misdeeds. But they are ill at ease when it comes to acknowledging the victimhood of others within their borders. If there is to be any progress in the region, it must start here. This is especially pressing in the aftermath of the brutal Yugoslav breakup. A society must have the capacity "to genuinely confront its past, warts and all, rather than to settle for almost mindless celebration and the complacent maintenance of unexamined assumptions about the events in question."[18] Otherwise, national memory acts a prison trapping its constituents in a never-ending cycle of retribution and self-exoneration.

[18] Levinson, *Written in Stone*, 124.

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