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FRAGMENTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CROATIAN JEWS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1914-1918)¹

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During the First World War Jews suffered the same as other Croatian citizens. They were mobilized and sent to fight on all fronts, some died and were buried a long way from their homes, some were wounded or left permanently disabled. They effectively froze their social activities, and devoted themselves to volunteer work. At the end of the war, they were faced with many problems, impoverished (apart from a few individuals who made their fortune during the war), often the target of the “Green cadres”, whose looting and burning scared many Jews into migrating to urban centres or abroad. One of the Jews’ greatest problems was the collapse of Austria-Hungary, which left them divided among several newly-created states, which in turn forced further migrations, when the local Jews were unable to obtain Yugoslav citizenship, and were forced to either move back to their “home” countries, or migrate to other parts of Europe, or even America.

Key words: First World War, Jews, “green cadre”

Preface

Before the year 2000, Croatian historiography did not show much interest in researching the history of the Croatian Jews during the First World War and the reasons for this lack of interest are manifold, from the absence of histories of the smaller Jewish communities, to the lack of the deeper research

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¹ This paper was originally published in Croatian language in the collection of works Željko Holjevac, ed., *1918. u hrvatskoj povijesti* (Zagreb, 2012): 427-454, and has been translated into English and adapted for the publication in the *Review of Croatian History*. In the meantime, the author has published a monograph on the history of the Jews in Osijek and their activities during the First World War entitled *Židovi u Osijeku od doseljavanja do kraja Prvog svjetskog rata* (Osijek, 2013).

of the First World War, and the still imprecise data about war losses, and so on. etc. Although works dedicated to the Jewish communities (Našice, Varaždin, Koprivnica, Vinkovci, Nova Gradiška...) exist, they touch upon the period of the First World War only briefly. In the exhibition catalogue *Židovi na tlu Jugoslavije (The Jews on the Territory of Yugoslavia)*, Slavko Goldstein doesn't mention the Jews from Croatia, but only the Serbian Jews, when he speaks of the "liberation struggles during the First World War".² The First World War and the Jews also aren't mentioned in Melita Švob's book *Židovi u Hrvatskoj-migracije i promjene u židovskoj populaciji (The Jews in Croatia – Migration and Changes in the Jewish Population)*.³ There are two newer books that prove the situation has slowly begun to change, and these books touch on Jewish history during the First World War in their chapters. Thus, Ivo Goldstein in his book *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941. (The Jews in Zagreb 1918-1941)* refers to the position of the Jews of Zagreb during the war,⁴ as does Alen Budaj, who gives a short overview of the status and sufferings of Požega's Jews during the First World War in his survey of the history of the Požega Jewish community.⁵ Along with these two books, is also worth mentioning the works that don't deal with the First World War directly but with its consequences, specifically with the "Green cadre" deserters. In those works the Jews are mentioned in passing, as victims of violence and looting.⁶

The war resulted in a great number of victims although we know very little about them because Croatian historiography (and that of other countries) has focused more on researching the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy than on the losses and victims of the war. The losses suffered on the battlefield, in POW and internment camps, but also in the hospitals and households, were immense. However, since the Monarchy lost the War, those losses were never definitely counted, which means only assessments for the whole Monarchy currently exist. Since the newly-created State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs had fought on the side of the Central Powers against the Entente, and later merged with the Kingdom of Serbia and formed the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, it covered up and hid the losses it suffered in the First World War, and

² *Židovi na tlu Jugoslavije*, exhibition catalogue (Zagreb, 1988), pp. 169-170. Chapter title: "Židovi u oslobodilačkim ratovima".

³ Melita Švob, *Židovi u Hrvatskoj-migracije i promjene u židovskoj populaciji* (Zagreb, 1997); Ibid., *Židovi u Hrvatskoj-židovske zajednice*, vol. I, second edition (Zagreb, 2004).

⁴ Ivo Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941* (Zagreb, 2004), pp. 25.-56. Chapter "Doba patnji i novih nada (1914.-1918.)".

⁵ Alen Budaj, *Vallis Judaea - Povijest požeške židovske zajednice* (Zagreb, 2007), pp. 139.-142. Chapter "Židovi u javnom životu grada - U vrtlogu Prvog svjetskog rata".

⁶ Bogumil Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija u jugoslavenskim zemljama 1914.-1918* (Novi Sad, 1990); Ivo Banac, "I Karlo je ošo u komite - Nemiri u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj u jesen 1918.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992), no. 3: 28-29; Josip I. Vidmar, "Prilozi građi za povijest 1917.-1918. s osobitim osvrtom na razvoj radničkog pokreta i odjeke Oktobarske revolucije kod nas", *Arhivski vjesnik*, I (1958).

manifestations of remembrance of the dead was limited to their families. The majority of the fallen from the period of the First World War on the territory of Croatia and Slavonia in general didn't get any memorials, and the lists of the dead were not made in an adequate manner.⁷ The same applies to the losses among the Jewish population, as well as to their remembrance.

The outbreak of war and the Jewish communities in the Monarchy

In the beginning of the War, Austria-Hungarian Jews were patriotically oriented and they shared that national fervour with all the Monarchy's peoples, even during mobilization.⁸ The Jews in Austro-Hungary had previously been given permission to join the army and all the officer ranks were open to them. In the lands of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, between 300,000 and 500,000 Jewish soldiers were mobilized, 25,000 of whom were officers. Around 25 Jews or Jews by origin (some of them had converted to other faiths) had achieved the rank of general.⁹ A special role of the Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was financing the war effort. Their share in the war loans, whether through a company or individually, formed 10% of the entire amount. Their role in the producing of war materials and weapons is also very important. In fact, some individuals made their fortunes during the war and were given aristocratic titles and honours by the rulers.¹⁰ While a part of the wealthier Jews were financing the war with loans, others were dying on the battlefields, and those who survived the horrors of war and captivity in Italy or Russia, were often wounded, disabled or gravely ill, and sometimes suicidal.

According to Hungarian government statistics, 155,799 from a total of 378,000 soldiers (41,1%) who had been involved in the war in Hungary, were fatally wounded, including those that died from the consequences of their wounds. From a total number of 155,799 soldiers, there were 5,116 of the Judaic confession Judaism. Among 352,292 wounded soldiers, 15,339 were Jews, as were 3,770 of 74,860 war disabled.¹¹ These figures refer to the Hungarian Jews,

⁷ Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Utjecaj Prvog svjetskog rata na kretanje stanovništva i stočarstva na području Hrvatske i Slavonije", *Radovi* 24 (1991), p. 41.

⁸ Marsha L. Rozenblit: *Reconstructing a National Identity - The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford, 2001), p. 15. The last census was made in 1910, just a few years before the First World War broke out. It mentions that 932,458 Jews i.e. 4,5% of the population reside in the Kingdom of Hungary (Transleithania), while 1,313,687 i.e. 4,6% of the population live in the Austrian part of the Monarchy (Cisleithania). The largest groups of Austrian Jews lived in Galicia (871,906) and Bukovina (102,919), while some regions such as the Alpine provinces or the Adriatic coastland had few or no Jewish residents.

⁹ M. L. Rozenblit: *Reconstructing a National Identity*, p. 83; Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology* (Detroit, 1996), p. 459.

¹⁰ Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary*, p. 460.

¹¹ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 139.; *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon (Hungarian Jewish Lexicon)*, Péter

however the results are not relevant because some Hungarian historians believe those figures refer to only some cities (Szeged, Miskolc, Pécs, and Budapest), while the other cities and villages in Hungary and Croatia are not included in the total amount, and the number of the killed, wounded, and disabled must therefore be considerably higher.¹² It is still unknown how many people from Croatia were on the battlefields of the First World War. Some believe that 9 out of every 100 residents were in the army, and according to that there might have been 756,000 people from Croatia and Slavonia in the army (including the Jews). If we take the statistics from 1910, can be considered that twenty per each thousand inhabitants were killed or died in the war.¹³ However, these are just assessments, and we cannot make even a rough estimate of the Jewish losses.

Life in the Jewish communities in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia from the outbreak of the war until 1918

While there were no military operations in the lands of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, its people, being the citizens of a country at war, had to participate in the war anyway.¹⁴ The Jewish community of Croatia took part in the Austro-Hungarian army and endured the same hardships as the other citizens during the First World War. Some Croatian Jews occupied prominent positions in the Hungarian Home Guard and Austro-Hungarian army. The Jews, like all the other citizens of the Monarchy, were shocked by the events in Sarajevo. Jewish municipalities throughout Austria-Hungary, as well as those from Croatia and Slavonia, had prominent roles in various manifestations related to that unpleasant event. The two largest Jewish municipalities – those of Zagreb and Osijek – held funereal meetings and organized commemoration for the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sofia on the day following the assassination. Telegrams of condolences were sent to Ban Ivan Skerlez, and a solemn funereal mass was held in synagogues, during which touching speeches of remembrance for the late Crown Prince were read by the heads of municipalities. Not only were the Jews from the municipality present at the memorial services, but also the oblast (district) leaders as well as prominent individuals from the Zagreb and Osijek communities. Lights for the salvation of Franz and Sofia's souls were kindled in synagogues over the next 30 days.¹⁵

There was no Jewish community in Croatia that remained unaffected by the

Ujvári, ed. (Budapest, 1929), p. 950.

¹² Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary*, p. 460.

¹³ M. Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Utjecaj Prvog svjetskog rata na kretanje stanovništva": 41, 47; Božena Vranješ-Šoljan, *Stanovništvo banske Hrvatske* (Zagreb, 2009), p. 228.

¹⁴ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 140.

¹⁵ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 25; *Narodna obrana*, no. 146, Osijek, 30 June 1914; no. 147, 1 July 1914.

First World War. After the outbreak of the war, Jewish young men were, like all others, mobilised into Croatian units in 1914, and sent into battle mainly near Zvornik on the river Drina or Klek near the river Sava. Next year (1915), they were sent to Galicia (Eastern Europe) and Bukovina. When Italy entered the war, some units were transferred to the Italian Front. Those who died in the first days were buried with the highest honours at the local cemeteries, and mourning services were held for them in synagogues. Later, however, the fallen were buried near their place of death so that even their families didn't know where their gravesites were located. Although the First World War was originally planned to be a war of rapid manoeuvres, it soon became a gruelling war of attrition, and the need for a Croatian Rabbi became apparent. Thus a Rabbi from Požega, Dr. Mojsije (Moses) Margel, was mobilized to conduct services for Jewish soldiers in early 1915.¹⁶ Numerous Jews from Croatia distinguished themselves during military operations and were awarded multiple times for their outstanding bravery and devotion to the Homeland.¹⁷ Thus, the aforementioned Rabbi Dr. Margel was awarded a gold war merit cross in 1917 in recognition of the bravery he displayed the Isonzo Front,¹⁸ while Ensign Schlesinger received a gold medal for bravery in August 1915.¹⁹ There are many similar examples.

As in the rest of the Monarchy, the wealthier Croatian Jews (entrepreneurs, traders, and landowners) were obliged to help financially support the war effort from November 1914, when the first war bonds (*Kriegsanleihe*) were made with a 6% interest rate. All the richer people gave large sums for the bonds, which by 1918 numbered eight in total, and which were a major source of financing the war. For example, a trader from the municipality of Molve by the name Josip Gottlieb had to give a thousand crowns for the first bond and probably the same amount for the following one,²⁰ and an industrialist from Zagreb named Šandor Alexander irretrievably offered a million Austrian gold crowns for war bonds after the war's outbreak.²¹

Socio-political life in the Jewish municipalities was almost completely halted in the period from the beginning of the war in 1914 until 1917.²²

¹⁶ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 140. In January 1915 he was appointed the "Israelite Spiritual Leader of the Home Guard Command" in Osijek, resident in Požega. On 1 March 1915 he was also appointed the "Imperial and Royal Rabbi" in Zagreb. He performed this duty until early October 1918, when he returned to Požega.

¹⁷ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 140; Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Virje za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata", *Virje na razmeđu stoljeća* 4 (1991): 62. The decorated Dr. Feliks Pollak was from Virje.

¹⁸ *Židov*, no. 4, 1 November 1917.

¹⁹ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 29.

²⁰ Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Virje za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata": 48.

²¹ More information about him can be found in: Ivan Mirnik, "Obitelj Alexander ili kratka kronika izbrisano g vremena", *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 28 (1995): 96-127.

²² I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, pp. 27-28. The Jewish Municipality in Zagreb introduced confirmation of girls in 1916, but the ceremony was postponed due to the war, which "would make the girls spend too much money on clothing".

The publishing of the Zionist magazine “Židovska smotra” (*Jewish Review*) stopped, the last issue dated 14 August 1914 having a big headline on the front page titled “War!”.²³ Its editor was Aleksandar Licht (1884-1948), who was soon mobilized and returned home only at the end of the First World War. Numerous Jewish sports, Zionist, and cultural societies ceased their activities. Thus, in Zagreb, the Israelite Croatian Literary Society, Jewish Academic Support society, Jewish Academic Cultural Club “Judeja” (sixteen out of eighteen members were sent to the front, of which one was considered missing, three were captured, and four decorated) all stopped their activities.²⁴ The Zionist society “Zion” ceased to be active in Vinkovci, as did the Jewish Zionist Civil Society in Bjelovar, the Zionist Society “Jehuda Halevi” in Brod on Sava (Slavonski Brod), the Jewish Youth of Karlovac, the Zionist society “B’ ne Jisroel” in Križevci, the Zionist society “Theodor Herzl” in Osijek, and so on.

This was a consequence of the Ban’s Decision (4.232/Pr., from 27 July 1914), which completely halted the activities of all societies save for the Red Cross. However, the aforementioned Decision still allowed for the possibility of exceptions, and the Ban could, in agreement with the military command and with the recommendation of the county and city authorities, allow individual societies to continue their activities. Soon, on 22 September 1914, the ban re-formulated this Decision and allowed government commissioners to give permission independently for societies that dealt with child support and nutrition, or that offered support in the case of illness and/or death, to continue their activities.²⁵ Accordingly, Zionist and culturally-oriented Jewish societies had to freeze their activities, while womens’ and charitable societies were permitted to work, but still had to adapt to the new circumstances. The members of those Jewish societies that had ceased to operate found other ways to participate in humanitarian work, mostly through the charitable societies, so that Jewish women were engaged in various volunteer associations or Red Cross subsidiaries, where they collected food, clothing, various supplies, funds for wartime relief, and even sent packages to the front. The wives of distinguished Jews often worked as nurses or caregivers in hospitals, where they gave solace to the wounded and dying.²⁶ The leaders of Jewish municipalities who had not been mobilized for the war had a prominent role in these efforts, as did their wives and daughters.²⁷ Although, as was already mentioned, almost

²³ *Židovska smotra*, no. 13, 1914.

²⁴ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 26, p. 30.

²⁵ Vijoleta Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...Rad dobrotvornih humanitarnih društava u gradu Zagrebu 1914.-1918.* (unpublished doctoral dissertation) (Zagreb, 2007), pp. 53-54.

²⁶ “Osječke gospogje u služni ratne pripomoći 1914.-1918.,” *Jeka od Osijeka 1918.*, pp. 138-170.

²⁷ *Hrvatska obrana*, no. 207, 13 September 1916; no. 189, August 1917. Particularly active in the efforts to gather aid for wounded, victims, or poor people in Osijek were the active president of the Upper-town Jewish Municipality, Hugo Spitzer, landowner Šandor/Aleksandar Sorger, Julije Sorger, lawyer Mosin Klein, industrialist Oskar Weiszmayr and lawyer and city representative

all social and political activities in the Jewish municipalities had died down, humanitarian activities kept going, so that the presidents of Jewish municipalities tried in various ways to assist the wounded, those who had lost a family member, and those who were suddenly left impoverished. Thus, the “Committee for Assisting Unemployed and Disabled Commerce, Industry, and Accounting Office Workers” was established in Zagreb, and was later renamed “Prehrana” (Nutrition). The most prominent role in the activities of this committee was taken by Šandor Alexander, a distinguished member of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb, who on 13 August 1918 received a hereditary title of nobility in Hungary from King Charles IV, and hence bore the name “Sesvetski” (“of Sesvete”).²⁸ During the First World War, a Soldiers’ Home was also opened in Zagreb, as was a shelter for soldiers returning from the front and refugees, while free hot meals were also handed out.²⁹ The chambers of the Zagreb Jewish municipality’s Nursing Home in (today the Lavoslav Schwarz Home, built in 1911) were for the most part converted into a military hospital with 50-60 beds.³⁰ The “Care Centre for the Poor of the Jewish Municipality”, was active in Zagreb from the beginning of the war, where a department was active in collecting gifts and donations for wartime relief. Monetary aid was offered by Jews from the entire territory of Croatia, not just Zagreb. Jewish companies and banks also participated in the gathering of relief funds, and offered a rather large amount of aid money (The Discount and Exchange Bank of Brod, Union Candy Factory, and others).³¹ The Centre used the gathered funds to provide weekly food supplies to the families of mobilized soldiers, including bread, flour, fat, rice, grits, potatoes, vegetables, and milk for the children. It also covered the expenses of treating wounded soldiers, acquiring bandages, medicines, lighting, and heating for the hospitals. In addition, the Centre secured the supplying of Jewish soldiers with Kosher food on holidays.³² The Jewish Municipality of Zagreb had an especially prominent role in offering aid to its members. Its leaders arranged for all mobilized Zagreb Jews, as well as those Jews from other municipalities who were stationed in Zagreb, to be present at the celebration of all major Jewish holidays. In addition, the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb organized a Foundation for the Care of Jewish War

Hinko Plachte. Hugo Spitzer and Oskar Weismayer were awarded the civilian War Merit Cross 2nd class for their humanitarian activities.

²⁸ V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...* pp. 218-219; I. Mirnik, “Obitelj Alexander”, pp. 105-108.

²⁹ Ivo Goldstein, “Dobrotvorno i socijalno djelovanje židovske zajednice u Zagrebu u 19. i 20. Stoljeću”, *Revija za socijalnu politiku* (2005), pp. 285-300.

³⁰ Paula Novak, “Povijest doma Zaklade Lavoslav Schwarz”, in: *Dva stoljeća povijesti i kulture Židova u Zagrebu i u Hrvatskoj*, (Zagreb, 1998), p. 74.

³¹ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 140. The Jews “Haas from Kutjevo” and Dr. Mojsije Margel from Požega offered financial support (20 and 30 crowns, respectively) to the war effort in Zagreb in 1915.

³² I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 25.

Orphans (it was founded in 1917 and named after King Charles).³³ As many as 18 foundations were recorded at the Zagreb municipality in late 1916, most of them founded by its prominent members. From the very beginning of the war, the president of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb, Dr. Robert Siebenschein, participated in the „Central Committee for the Protection of the Families of Mobilized Soldiers from the Territory of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia who Died in the War“. The Committee was established in 1 September 1914, with the goal of helping to take care of the families of mobilized soldiers who were left without a source of income after the death of their breadwinners.³⁴ In order to coordinate the activities of the foundations and various initiatives, the Zagreb municipality organized a “Board of Trustees for the Poor” and a “War Relief Station”.³⁵ The school of the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb started producing sandbags in 1915, which were sent to the front.³⁶ The municipality also collected funds for helping the Jews of Galicia and Bukovina, who were left impoverished due to the military operations on the Eastern Front.³⁷ The Jewish municipalities in Osijek were in a similar position, since their members participated in the activities of the Red Cross, the Society for Supporting the War Disabled of Osijek and Virovitica etc.³⁸

Some of the Jewish womens’ societies ceased their activities, but others continued, having adapted themselves to the wartime circumstances. We do not know how many of these societies continued working or their exact activities, though we do have information on some of them, including for example the Israelite Womens’ Charitable Society of Osijek, the Israelite Womens’ Charitable Society of Vinkovci,³⁹ the Israelite Womens’ Charitable Society of Sisak, the Israelite Womens’ Charitable Society of Zagreb “Jelena Pristerova”, the Jewish Girls’ Society in Zagreb “B’not Cijon“, and the Israeli Ferial Colony/ Israelite Vacation Colony.⁴⁰ We know little of the activities of the Israelite Womens’ Charitable Society of Vinkovci, except that it acted together with the First Women’s Charitable Society of Vinkovci (renamed the Croatian Womens’ Society in 1917) in organizing parties, and that members of both societies

³³ *Židov*, no. 3, 15 October 1917; no. 4, 1 November 1917, p. 6.

³⁴ V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...*, p. 198.

³⁵ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 31

³⁶ V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...*, pp. 123-124.

³⁷ Mira Kolar, *Zbrinjavanje gladne djece u Hrvatskoj za Prvog svjetskog rata*, (Slavonski Brod, 2008), p. 36.

³⁸ *Osijek i okolica za svjetskog rata 1914.-1915: ratni almanah* (Osijek, 1915); *Jeka od Osijeka 1918* (Osijek, 1918).

³⁹ Tomo Šalić, *Židovi u Vinkovcima i okolici* (Osijek, 2002), pp. 370-371.

⁴⁰ V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...*, p. 67; *Izvještaj Izraelske Ferijalne kolonije za dvogodište 1917.-1918* (Zagreb, 1919); *Izvještaj Izraelske Ferijalne kolonije za dvogodište 1919.-1920* (Zagreb, 1921).

helped in the feeding of poor schoolchildren.⁴¹ The Israelite Womens' Charitable Society of Sisak organized "entertainment evenings" to help the widows and orphans of soldiers from Sisak who died in the war.⁴² Members of the Israelite Womens' Charitable Society of Osijek took part in all charitable actions intended to help the Jews of Osijek, and also the other inhabitants of that city.⁴³ The Israelite Womens' Charitable Society of Zagreb "Jelena Pristerova" continued working as a society for the support of "bashful poor" in general, and the "poor widows and orphans of Israelite faith" resident in Croatia in particular. The Society also supported the "Israelite Youth" (which intended to devote itself to crafts), covered dowries for poor fiancées, founded and maintained humanitarian institutions, hospitals, and almshouses.⁴⁴ During the war, it founded a central depot for various types of goods (clothing, uniforms, laundry, woollen fabric, socks), which were then sent to Jewish soldiers on the front and in hospitals, while special attention was given to Jewish refugee families throughout the Monarchy.⁴⁵ The Society took part in various actions together with other Zagreb societies, gathering monetary contributions and various materials (bandages, sheets, cigarettes, and food) for all wounded soldiers regardless of religious affiliation.⁴⁶ Apart from collecting and soliciting aid, the Society organized concerts, parties, and similar activities (such as the Memorial Lime) in support of Croatian wounded, disabled, widows, and orphans.⁴⁷ The Israeli Ferial Colony continued its activities, the goal of the society being to "heal and mitigate the wounds caused by the war", and child care by arranging for them to stay at the Adriatic coast or in spas. Colony members also organized colonies for underfed children in Lipik, Vinkovci, and Zagreb. In his will, Makso Steiner left the Colony his foundation in 1917, in the memory of his wife Suza, who had died in 1914. Following his lead, several other foundations were established (Bachrach, Deutsch, Löwy), with the goal of financing childrens' stays at the coast or in the country. By 1918, the Israeli Colony had founded several subsidiaries in Bjelovar and Koprivnica, and the one in Bjelovar later became independent.⁴⁸ The chevra kadishah funeral societies had an especially prominent role in charitable activities. Their goals included the visiting and care of the sick, conducting religious ceremonies for dying or dead Jews, funerals, and the administration and maintenance of Jewish cemeteries.

⁴¹ Lucija Benyovsky, "Dobrotvorna gospojinska (ženska) društva u Hrvatskoj od osnivanja do Prvog svjetskog rata", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 30 (1998), no. 1: 73-93. *Židov*, no. 11, 1 June 1918, p. 3.

⁴² *Židov*, no. 2, 16 January 1918.

⁴³ Lj. Dobrovšak, *Židovi u Osijeku*, pp. 280-284.

⁴⁴ *Židov*, no. 4 – 1 November 1917; V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...*, p. 60.

⁴⁵ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 31

⁴⁶ V. Herman Kaurić, *Za naše junake...*, p. 152.

⁴⁷ L. Benyovsky, "Dobrotvorna gospojinska (ženska) društva u Hrvatskoj": 91.

⁴⁸ *Izvjestaj Izraelske Ferijalne kolonije za dvogodište 1917.-1918.*, p. 2, p. 5.

Thus the chevra kadishah of Zagreb helped organize care for the wounded in the chambers of the nursing home of the Jewish Municipality in Maksimirska Street, and paid for a doctor to treat every poor Jew.⁴⁹ In addition, by summer 1915, it had organized for separate burial plots to be set aside in Mirogoj Cemetery for the Jews who had died in the war. Until then, soldiers had been buried in individual graves, each having a plaque bearing their name, while in 1930 the chevra kadishah erected a monument to the soldiers of Jewish faith fallen in the First World War, including both members of the Zagreb municipality and those who died and were buried in Zagreb. From 1914, the Zagreb municipality provided food to forty poor families whose breadwinners were away fighting. The next year that number rose to fifty, and continued to grow until the end of the war.⁵⁰ Volunteering and similar activities were recorded in most Jewish municipalities active in Croatia.

Aside of their participation in the activities of charitable societies of their own faith, Jewish citizens also took part in the work and actions of other, non-religious voluntary associations and committees, and were sometimes even the presidents of such organizations.⁵¹ They were active in the Child Protection League, later the League for the Protection of the Families of Mobilized Soldiers (the founding assembly was held in 1914, even though the organization was founded in 1912),⁵² the Central Committee for the Protection of the Families of Mobilized Soldiers from the Territory of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia who Died in the War,⁵³ and the Red Cross.⁵⁴ They were also involved in caring for hungry children from the areas of Croatia, Istria, Dalmatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁵ It cannot be determined how many Jewish families took care of children and provided them with food, because a census from

⁴⁹ I. Goldstein, "Dobrotvorno i socijalno djelovanje židovske zajednice u Zagrebu": 289.

⁵⁰ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, pp. 25-26, 30.

⁵¹ L. Benyovsky, "Dobrotvorna gospojinska (ženska) društva u Hrvatskoj", p. 91. A provisional committee for wartime relief was active in Daruvar. One of its members was Ida Löwy, wife of a royal advisor and merchant. For a while, she worked as the committee's president, and this position was later held by Laura Glück and Eugenia Pfeiffer. Urged by Ida Löwy and her husband Sigismund, this committee organized a hospital for 30 wounded in the Daruvar spa. Her further efforts resulted in the opening of a second hospital in the Daruvar manor, with a capacity of 100 wounded.

⁵² M. Kolar, *Zbrinjavanje gladne djece u Hrvatskoj za Prvog svjetskog rata*, pp. 32-34. Other members of the executive committee included Šandor A. Alexander, Dr. Lavoslav Schick and, from 1917, the rabbi Dr. Viktor Jacobi. Ela Shick and Anka Viesiner were among those who were responsible for collecting contributions.

⁵³ M. Kolar, *Zbrinjavanje gladne djece u Hrvatskoj za Prvog svjetskog rata*, p. 46. Central committee members included: "Prehrana" president Šandor A. Alexander, lawyer Dr. Robert Siebenschein, and senior accounting advisor Mavro Špicer.

⁵⁴ *Židov*, no. 4. - 1 November 1917. The *Narodne Novine* (Official Gazette) of 19 October 1917 contains lists of those who received Red Cross awards, and these include "a fair number of Jews of both genders".

⁵⁵ M. Kolar, *Zbrinjavanje gladne djece u Hrvatskoj za Prvog svjetskog rata*, pp. 37-38.

around 1920 does not contain the names of any landowners, noble families, government or officials, or Jewish merchants who had taken in children. Even those who may have been included on the list are not recognizable due to the Jewish surnames being written using Serbian orthography.⁵⁶ In Osijek, which was near the front lines, Jewish women took part in the activities of the Red Cross and the Society for Assisting the War-Disabled,⁵⁷ while the youth acted under the wing of the Osijek Jewish Youth.⁵⁸ The situation was similar in Koprivnica, where the Jews participated in the activities of the local societies, the Red Cross, and the societies of their own faith (such as the Israeli Womens' Society), and helped the locals provide for the children from Istria and Dalmatia.⁵⁹

Everyday work in the municipalities was reduced to a minimum, while elections for municipal representatives and Jewish societies (*chevra kadishah*) were frozen, so that the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb decided to postpone the elections that were scheduled for late 1914 until the end of the war and the general normalization of the society. The only bright spot in the social life of the Jewish communities occurred in 1916, when Gavro Schwarz's school textbook *Jewish Religious Rites* (intended for Jewish pupils) was published.⁶⁰ While social activities had, for the most part, died down, religious ceremonies and holidays continued to be observed, especially the Rosh Hashanah, Hanuka, and Yom Kippur. As a consequence of the war, there were a number of refugees among the believers in the Jewish Municipality of Zagreb, including those from Bosnia, Rijeka, Trieste, and other areas affected by the war. Along with the refugees, sermons were attended by Jewish POWs from Russia (Galicia), under the watchful eye of two sergeants. The Jews of Zagreb at first talked to the POWs, and in later years accepted them as their own. In 1916 and 1917 they even took them for dinner at a restaurant on Zagreb's main square.⁶¹

⁵⁶ M. Kolar, *Zbrinjavanje gladne djece u Hrvatskoj za Prvog svjetskog rata*, pp. 140-141, 213.

⁵⁷ Ivan Balta, "Grad Osijek u Prvom svjetskom ratu kroz povijesne priče i iskaze", *Književna revija* (2001), no. 3/4 130-144.

⁵⁸ *Židov*, no. 7-16 December 1917, p. 5; Grgur Marko Ivanković, Ante Grubišić, *Ostavština osječke Slobodnozidarske Lože "Budnost"*, exhibition catalogue (Osijek, 2003), p. 56.

⁵⁹ Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Jedno viđenje povijesti grada Koprivnice od 1901. do 1918.", *Podravina* 16 (December 2009): 24-28; Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Briga Podravine za djecu ugroženu u Prvom svjetskom ratu", *Podravina* 10 (November 2006): 130-157, 140, 147. When 14 girls from Krk arrived in Koprivnica, they were received by Baroness Lila Inkey and the lawyer and Koprivnica Red Cross secretary Lav Fischer. Some of the Jewish families who received Istrian and Dalmatian children in Podravina included: Franjo Betelheim from Peteranec; Marija Pichler from Sigetec; the Sonnenschein family from Sokolovac; Marko Švarc from Novigrad Podravski; Mara Betlheim from Sesvete Podravske, Jerolim and Marija Braun from Đurđevac, Bela Donner from Sesvete Podravske, Mojsije Hirschler from Molve, Leopold Krausz from Pitomača, Roza Singer from Đurđevac, and others.

⁶⁰ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, pp. 26-28.

⁶¹ Aleksandra Muraj, "Židovska zajednica, u zrcalu starih zagrebačkih dnevnih novina", *Ha-kol*, (September-October 2004), no. 85, 43; *Židov*, no. 3, 15 October 1917.

The political, social and cultural life in the Jewish municipalities remained almost non-existent until 1917, in some cases even 1918, when it was rekindled. A Jewish organ called *Židov: Hajehudi, glasilo za pitanja židovstva* (The Jew: Hayehudi, An Organ on Jewish Issues) started being published on 16 September 1917 (the date of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah), while a number of Jewish organizations became active again (the Jewish Youth literary meetings, the Jewish Youth of Osijek, the Jewish Academic Support Society (ŽAPD), various local Zionist organizations). Elections were organized in the Croatian Jewish municipalities – for example, elections for the presidency and council in Zagreb took place in December 1917.⁶² An extraordinary assembly of the chevra kadisha in Osijek convened on 25 November 1917, where the only matter of discussion was related to the rules of the community, because it had been concluded at the assembly in June 1911 that the extant rules should be replaced by new ones.⁶³ In November 1917, it was also suggested that a new society, a Jewish reading room, should be established.⁶⁴ The members of the reading room's founding committee soon requested permission to begin their activities, but the relevant authorities denied it due to a government decree from 1914.⁶⁵ Even so, the reading room continued its activities, organized concerts, and collected donations for the Jewish National Fund and for assisting poor students in Croatian schools.⁶⁶ Various lectures and concerts started to be held in Jewish municipalities. For example, in late 1917 in Karlovac, university professor Dr. Bazala held a lecture on the topic "What is a nation?", where he spoke of the Jews and their religion.⁶⁷ In November 1917, the Jewish reading room in Osijek and the Jewish Youth of Osijek organized a concert in the Croatian National Theatre in that city, with the profits being intended for the National Fund, partly for the refugees in Palestine, and partly for Croatian schools.⁶⁸ The consecration of a new temple in Bjelovar was proclaimed on 15 August 1917.⁶⁹ In October 1917, the presidency of the Jewish Municipality in Bjelovar made a public statement that they were organizing private religious teaching,⁷⁰ while elections for the presidency and municipal council were held

⁶² *Židov*, no. 6, 1 December 1917; no. 7, 16 December 1917.

⁶³ Croatian State Archives, Department of Religion and Education, box 512/1907, document 1 (3696/1876). The new rules were accepted the same day, 25 November 1917, and approved by the Department of Religion and Education with only slight amendments on 15 June 1918.

⁶⁴ *Židov*, no. 4, 1 November 1917. The founders, Upper-town Jewish Municipality president Dr. Hugo Spitzer and construction entrepreneur Ignat Nathan Schulhof wished to found a Jewish reading room at the Municipality, where members would be free to acquaint themselves with Jewish religiosity, literature, art, and science.

⁶⁵ *Židov*, 4, 15 February 1918.

⁶⁶ "Vijesti iz Osijeka", *Židov*, no. 7, 16 December 1917: 5.

⁶⁷ *Židov*, no. 1, 1 January 1918.

⁶⁸ *Židov*, no. 7, 16 December 1917.

⁶⁹ *Židov*, no. 1, 16 September 1917.

⁷⁰ *Židov*, no. 5, 15 November 1917.

in January 1918.⁷¹ The Jewish Municipality of Virovitica and the local rabbi organized festivities on occasion of the Purim in March 1918, where all the Jewish school youth gathered.⁷² Thus, in early 1918, the Jewish municipalities slowly started returning to their usual activities.

Number of Jewish victims

Detailed casualty lists, from which it would be possible to determine the number of Jewish victims of the First World War, have yet to be made. This means it is also impossible to determine the number of Jews who were disabled, killed, or decorated. However, the names of some such individuals from certain Jewish communities have been preserved. Here we shall mention the names of people whose participation in the war can be confirmed thanks to the existence of documents or other data, though it should be noted that these lists are incomplete. For example, we know that Otto Goldstein⁷³ and Adolf and Milan Juhn are among the dead from the Jewish Municipality of Požega. The dentist Samuel Steiner spent two years in Russian captivity, returning in mid October 1918, while Rafael Spivak was wounded in action and became a disabled war veteran.⁷⁴ A memorial erected in 1935 at the Križevci cemetery testifies to the victims from the local Jewish Municipality. The monument includes the names of Wilhelm / Vilim Hirschl, Miroslav Marić, Vilim Mayer, Salamun Goldberg, Božidar Hiršl, and Zvonko Rehnicher/Rechnitzer.⁷⁵ According to the data presented by 18 members of the Jewish Academic Cultural Society *Judeja*, Marko Beck, Josip Tischler, and Leo Woititz died in battle, while Josip Klein died from wounds suffered during the war. Đuro Herman died on the Italian Front in 1918. The brothers Milan and Rikard Neumann were also among the

⁷¹ *Židov*, no. 4, 15 February 1918.

⁷² *Židov*, no. 6, 15 March 1918.

⁷³ *Jüdische Archiv, mitteilungen des Komitees "Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv"*, liefern 2-3, August 1915, p. 27. Lieutenant Otto Goldstein was born in 1866 in Požega, and died of wounds suffered in combat near Stanisławów, Galicia (today Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine) on 1 March 1915, and was buried in Mármarossziget (today Sighetu Marmăției in Romania) on 24 March 1915.

⁷⁴ A. Budaj, *Vallis Judaea*, p. 140 - 142.

⁷⁵ Renée Weisz- Maleček, *Židovi u Križevcima* (Zagreb, 2012). Posvećenje spomenika palim ratnicima u Križevcima, *Židov*, no. 34 - 23 August 1935, p. 9. Križevci, Otkriće i posvećenje spomenika ratnicima palim u ratu 1914.-18. *Židov*, no. 40 - 27. September 1935, p. 19. The monument includes the name of 2nd lieutenant Wilhelm/Vilim Hirschl, died 10 May 1915 near Balamatovka on the Russian Front (Bessarabia); lieutenant Miroslav Marić, died 26 May in Grebovo (Galicia); private Vilim Mayer, died 1915 at an unknown location; sergeant Salamun Goldberg, died 21 April 1916 in Wolczek in Russia; corporal Božidar Hiršl, died 5 June 1916 in Dobronovc/Dobronoutz in Bukovina (today place in Ukraine - Dobronăuți (Добринівці, Dobrinivți, Dobronoutz, Dobronowce) sergeant Zvonko Rehnicher, died 8 November 1916 in Monte Frunte (Italy).

dead.⁷⁶ Erich Rehberger was among the dead from Bjelovar.⁷⁷ Twenty-three Jews from Zagreb and its surrounding area died in the war – a memorial erected in 1930 bears the names of 23 Jews who “died and were buried in Zagreb”. Apart from the aforementioned Ivo Betelheim and Neumann brothers, the memorial lists the names of the following Zagreb Jews: Miroslav Fischer, Oskar Gardoš, Filip Hauser, Gejza Herzog, Vlatko i Žiga Hirsch, Viktor Hirschler, Stjepan Hönigsberg, Stjepan Kanižai, Emanuel Lang, Hinko Lederer, Julio Müller, Kurt Neuberger, Žiga Neumann, Isidor Pressburger, Ljudevit Singer, Vilko Spitzer, Bernard Steiner, and Maksimilijan Šik / Schick.⁷⁸ The names of a further 26 Jews can be found on the reverse side of the memorial, but these are of Jews from other municipalities who died in Zagreb’s hospitals. Other mentioned victims include: Josef Steiner, Franz Jackerle, Georg Vesselý, Ludwig Rechberger, Adolf Flohr, Julius Kandl, Izrael Daskal, Adolf Kellner, Ludwig Weiss, Isak Braunik, Aladar Waldmann, Dr. Marko Beck (a ŽAPD member), Robert Pick, Dr. Josef Benedek, Seinwel Vogel, Farkas Kohn, and Leo Glaser.⁷⁹ A memorial erected to Jewish victims in the Koprivnica cemetery⁸⁰ mentions the following victims: lieutenant Viktor Hirschler, first lieutenant Vlatko Štern, lieutenant Jakob Reich, warrant officer Emil Schwarz, junior fiscal officer Milan Steiner,⁸¹ master corporal Rudolf Weiss,⁸² home guardsmen Arnold Hirschl and Emanuel Lang.⁸³ Some sources also mention Emil Steiner, but his name does not appear on the monument.⁸⁴ From Županja, Makso Pollak is listed as killed in action.⁸⁵ Thirty-seven men from Našice died in the war, including Jew Martin Leinweber, and their names have been inscribed on a memorial plaque in the parish church.⁸⁶ Information on the Jewish war victims from the Jewish

⁷⁶ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 30; *Židov*, no. 1 – 16 September 1917, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Ženi Lebl, *Da se ne zaboravi* (Beograd, 2008), pp. 204-205.

⁷⁸ *Jüdische Archiv, mitteilungen des Komitees “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv”*, liefern 2-3, August 1915, p. 30. Maksimilijan Šik was born in 1880 in Zagreb, and died on 7 November 1914 near Krupanj (Serbia).

⁷⁹ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, pp. 30-31.

⁸⁰ “Stogodišnjica Hevre Kadiše u Koprivnici”, *Židov*, no. 22 – 1 June 1934, p. 11.

⁸¹ *Jüdische Archiv, mitteilungen des Komitees “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv”*, liefern 4-5, January 1916, p. 40. Milan Steiner was born on 24 October 1891 in Koprivnica, and died in spring 1915, near Stanisławów (then Galicia, today Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine) and was buried in the village of Kyrilin.

⁸² *Jüdische Archiv, mitteilungen des Komitees “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv”*, liefern 4-5, January 1916, p. 40. Rudolf Weiss was born in Mali Bukovac and died in 1914 near Han-Zabrdje.

⁸³ “Otkrivanje spomenika palim Židovima u svjetskom ratu”, *Podravske novine*, no. 46, 10 November 1934 no. 47, 17 November 1934.

⁸⁴ Krešimir Švarc, Prilozi za povijest Koprivničkih Židova, *Podravski zbornik* (1991): 169; Hrvoje Petrić, “Sukob sjećanja i simbola. O spomeničkoj baštini i sjećanju na svjetske ratove u koprivničkoj Podravini”, *Podravski zbornik* (2012): 44-48.

⁸⁵ *Židov*, no. 4 – 1 November 1917.

⁸⁶ Branko Kranjčev, “Našice u prijelomnim godinama 1918. i 1919. godine”, *Našički zbornik* 8 (2007): 351-373. Made according to Ljuboslav Kuntarić’s manuscript *Kroz život i vrijeme od 1917. do 1924.*

Municipality of Đakovo can be gleaned from a cenotaph in the local Jewish cemetery. The Schwarz family tomb contains the name of Iso (Isidor) Schwarz, born 1891 and died 10 September 1916 near Crni Vrh, Serbia, aged 24.⁸⁷ While a list of war victims of Đakovo does exist, it does not mention their faith, so it is very difficult to discern who among them were of Jewish origin.⁸⁸ According to the available data, Abraham Stern and Albert Bresslauer from Vinkovci died in 1916.⁸⁹ The list of Jewish war victims from Osijek is also incomplete.⁹⁰ In summer 1915, Oton Pichler and Albert Zwieback died at the Dniester River.⁹¹ Karlo Heinrich (Harry) Pfeiffer, the younger son of Julije Pfeiffer, a printer in Osijek, died on the Italian Front.⁹² Engineer Armin / Herman Spingarn died of typhus in Serbia in 1916.⁹³ Lieutenant Rikard Fürth / Fürst died the same year,⁹⁴ while lieutenant Aleksandar Frank died on the Russian Front during the next year.⁹⁵ Lawyer and prominent Zionist Ervin Kraus died from the “Spanish flu” pandemic in 1918, in an Osijek hospital.⁹⁶ These are all the names that have been discovered thus far, but we hope that more light will be shed on the subject following further studies on this topic, and that it will be possible to make at least an estimate of the number of Jewish war victims in Croatia during the First World War.

Perception of Jews and the “Green cadres”

Although the Jews were in the same position as all citizens of the Monarchy and Croatia during the First World War, it was during this time that a

⁸⁷ Branko Ostajmer, Vladimir Geiger, “Spomenici-kenotafi poginulim, nestalim i od posljedica rata preminulim vojnicima iz Đakova i Đakovštine u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, *Zbornik Muzeja Đakovštine* 11 (2013): 139-156.

⁸⁸ Vladimir Geiger, “O nekim popisima poginulih, nestalih i od posljedica rata preminulih vojnika iz Đakova i Đakovštine u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, *Zbornik muzeja Đakovštine* 9 (Đakovo, 2009): 85-102. Other possible Jews among the war dead from Đakovo include Antun Brajer / Breyer (1898 – 27 August 1914, died at Crni Vrh, Serbia as a member of the 78th Infantry Regiment) and Antun Hamburger (1873 – 24 August 1917, possibly died in Đakovo).

⁸⁹ Tomo Šalić, *Židovi u Vinkovcima i okolici* (Osijek, 2002), p. 66, 413. Albert Bresslauer was born in 1882 in Srijemska Mitrovica. He graduated at the gymnasium (high school) in Vinkovci in 1901/1902. He later graduated medicine studies and died as a physician in 1916.

⁹⁰ Lj. Dobrovšak, *Židovi u Osijeku*, pp. 284-286.

⁹¹ *Hrvatska obrana*, no. 175, Osijek, 26 July 1915.

⁹² *Vjesnik županije virovitičke*, no. 14., Osijek, 15 July 1915.

⁹³ Ž. Lebl, *Da se ne zaboravi*, pp. 204.-205.; *Židov*, no. 2., 16 January 1918; no. 5., 1 March 1918, 4; *Vjesnik županije virovitičke*, no. 19., 1 October 1915.

⁹⁴ *Jüdische Archiv, mitteilungen des Komitees “Jüdisches Kriegsarchiv”* liefern 8-9., January 1917. Richard Fürth was born in 1897 in Osijek, and died on the Southern Front on 19 October 1916.

⁹⁵ *Hrvatska obrana*, no. 115, 22 May 1918.

⁹⁶ *Židov*, no. 24, 15 December 1918, 5; *Gideon*, no. 9-11, 18 June 1922.

different perception of them started to develop among some of the populace (mostly peasants and deserters). They began to be seen as war profiteers and exploiters, and were considered to be foreigners (Germans or Hungarians) because a smaller part of the Jewish population in Croatia still spoke German (mostly in Osijek) or Hungarian. During the war years, Jews found themselves under constant attack by a part of the non-Jewish public, who considered the Jews to have received “preferential treatment”, made themselves rich, and become dominant in certain branches of the economy (especially the more lucrative ones). They also believed that many Croatian Jews had taken prominent positions in the Home Guard and Austro-Hungarian Army through favouritism, and that a large number of them had kept themselves safe far behind the front lines thanks to bribery or their education.⁹⁷ The editors of *Židov* confirmed this,⁹⁸ but there were actually proportionately no more Jews among war profiteers or shirkers than there were Croats, Hungarians, or Germans. Among those who made their fortune in Croatia, we can single out Šandor A. Alexander (1866-1929),⁹⁹ who became rich by selling tea, cabbage, and beans, food that wasn't under state supervision, but was extremely important in the diet of the average civilian. Although he was considered a war profiteer, he was also known for his efforts in charity work.¹⁰⁰ During the First World War, he organized and paid many of the costs of the “Committee for Assisting Unemployed and Disabled Commerce, Industry, and Accounting Office Workers”. One of his greatest achievements was the founding of a soup kitchen for poor citizens and the families of drafted soldiers in autumn 1914, under the wing of his charity organization which would later take the name “Prehrana” (Nutrition), and which was located in the basement of the Art Pavilion in Zagreb. Furthermore, other members of the Alexander family also played prominent roles during the First World War.¹⁰¹

The apothecary Vjekoslav (Alojz) Fischl from Koprivnica made his fortune in a similar way, through the dyeing of fabrics. Since fabrics and cloth were in short supply during the war, people repaired their old clothes, which needed to be re-dyed. The business fell through in 1923, after Fischl's sudden death.¹⁰² According to the reminiscences of his neighbours, Ludvig Lausch from Ludbreg became rich after the end of the war because he had served as an army

⁹⁷ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 28; Bogumil Hrabak, “Dezerterstvo i zeleni kadar u jugoslavenskim zemljama u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije i Baranje* (1979): 4; *Židov*, no. 5, 15 November 1917, Lav Stern's article, “Ratno gospodarstvo i Židovi”.

⁹⁸ *Židov*, no. 5, 15 November 1917.

⁹⁹ For more information about him, see: Ivan Mirnik, “Obitelj Alexander”, p. 96-127.

¹⁰⁰ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ I. Mirnik, “Obitelj Alexander”, p. 96-127.

¹⁰² Josip Milhofer, “Sjećanja na koprivničke ljekarnice i farmaciju početkom XX. stoljeća”, *Podravski zbornik* (1979): 223-226.

bursar, and thus returned home with a large amount of cash, which he invested well. There are similar stories about Šimun Löwenstein, also from Ludbreg.¹⁰³

As the war years went by, there was less and less food, and increasing speculation. The population became gradually poorer, and were threatened with hunger. Their anger was in part turned against the Jews. Even the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) showed disfavour towards the Jews, especially when it enacted the Law on Usury (27 April 1916),¹⁰⁴ which targeted all usurers, but also contained restrictions that applied only to Jews. According to the editors of *Židov*, this law was designed to single out Jewish usurers in particular.¹⁰⁵ Certain members of the Parliament (such as Ivan Kovačević) publically expressed their displeasure with the Jews.¹⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that none of the other members reacted either positively or negatively to Kovačević's particular statement.¹⁰⁷ Apart from the charge of usury, the Jews were often accused in public of exploiting their neighbours and the soldiers who were unfit for combat (wealthy Jews were accused of using them for performing various forms of work, such as woodcutting).¹⁰⁸

Stjepan Radić also expressed a negative opinion of Jews during his public appearances in 1916-1918.¹⁰⁹ He didn't consider himself to be an anti-Semite but, in his own words, opposed the idea that Jews should be able to take prominent positions in Croatian society,¹¹⁰ saw them as usurers¹¹¹ and speculators,¹¹² and didn't accept them into his party (the Croatian Peasants' Party).¹¹³ As is

¹⁰³ Milivoj Dretar, "Antisemitski ispadi u Ludbregu", *Ha-Kol*, no. 107, December 2008, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁴ *Sbornik zakona i naredaba valjanih za Kraljevine Hrvatsku i Slavoniju, godina 1916.*, vol. VIII, no. 35 (Zagreb, 1917), pp. 86-90.

¹⁰⁵ *Židov*, no. 5 – 15 November 1917, p. 1. "Ratno gospodarstvo i Židovi".

¹⁰⁶ *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kralj. Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije, 1913.-1918.*, od 5. lipnja do 19. studenog 1917., vol. V (Zagreb, 1917), pp. 816-817; *Židov* no. 3, 15 October 1917.

¹⁰⁷ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ B. Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija*, p. 59; *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kraljevine Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije 1913.-1918.*, od 10. prosinca do 29. listopada 1918., vol. VI (Zagreb, 1917), p. 386.

¹⁰⁹ Ivo Goldstein, "Stjepan Radić i Židovi", *Radovi, zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 29 (1996): 212-214.

¹¹⁰ *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kralj. Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije, 1913.-1918.*, od 14. prosinca do 9. ožujka 1917, godine 1916. i 1917., vol. IV (Zagreb 1917), 158th Sabor session of 3 March 1917, p. 830-831. Branka Boban, *Stjepan Radić u vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata* (Zagreb, 2006), p. 179.

¹¹¹ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, pp. 33-34. Ivo Goldstein, "Antisemitizam u Hrvatskoj", *Zbornik Antisemitizam, Holokaust Antifašizam* (Zagreb, 1996), pp. 28-30; *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kraljevine Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije 1913.-1918.*, od 10. prosinca do 29. listopada 1918., vol. VI (Zagreb, 1917), pp. 249, 1201-1202.

¹¹² *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kralj. Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije, 1913.-1918.*, od 14. prosinca 1916. do 9. ožujka 1917., godina 1916. i 1917., vol. IV (Zagreb, 1917), 135th Sabor session of 20 December 1916, pp. 94-95.

¹¹³ *Stenografski zapisnici sabora Kralj. Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije, 1913.-1918.*, od 14. prosinca 1916. do 9. ožujka 1917., godina 1916. i 1917., vol. IV (Zagreb, 1917), 158th Sabor session of 3 March 1917, p. 831.

plainly visible from the above, one of the leading Croatian politicians, and some other prominent individuals, had a negative opinion of Jews, and this, together with the mounting economic and social problems, influenced the general perception of Jews among “ordinary” citizens and villagers, which is also visible in occasionally anti-Semitic incidents, such as the one which took place in Ludbreg in 1917, where the chief fireman shouted “Let the Jewish burn!” to one of his men, after a fire had spread to a neighbouring Jewish house.¹¹⁴

While such incidents weren't common, they did happen. Until mid 1918, anti-Semitism was usually expressed in writing or orally, but the increasing poverty and generally desperate situation in the country near the end of the war resulted in the escalation of anti-Semitic outbursts, which sometimes resulted in physical attacks on Jews. For example, in August 1918, there were anti-Semitic demonstrations in the Daruvar beer hall because Armidi, a Zagrebian opera singer of Jewish heritage, performed along with Croatian and German songs.¹¹⁵ The climax of the social upheaval in the country, which also affected the local Jews, took place in 1918, when a massive wave of civilian- and military-related unrest swept through the country. Some of unrest was of peasant origin, while other incidents were the work of “Green cadre” deserters, who directed their discontent towards state and municipal officials, gendarmes, clergy, war profiteers, wealthy peasants, shop and tavern owners, companies, and nobles' estates.¹¹⁶ Impoverished peasants led by groups of army deserters plundered many rural settlements, but also some towns and their shops. Many traders, often rural Jews, fell victims to the peasant rebels, rioting citizens, and the “Green cadres”, who saw them as Hungarians, Germans, or simply exploiters.

Robberies and arson against Jewish shops and other property became commonplace in the whole of Croatia. Almost all urban and rural settlements were affected. Only in the region of Slavonia, sources mention such incidents in: Našice, Orahovica, Požega, Osijek, Donji Miholjac, Virovitica, Vinkovci, Petrijevci, Pakrac, Daruvar, Virje, Đurđevac, Slatina, Ilok, Dubrava, Dalj, Županja, Draganić, Đakovo, Cernik and Nova Gradiška, Garešnica, Dugo Selo, Kloštar, Novigrad, Pitomača, Kutina, and Ludbreg. There were also reports of unrest in the Zagorje, Lika, and Međimurje regions.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ I. Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918.-1941.*, p. 34. M. Dretar, “Antisemitski ispadi u Ludbregu”, pp. 44-45; *Židov*, no.4, 1 November 1917, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ I. Goldstein, “Antisemitizam u Hrvatskoj”, p. 30; “Svakako samo ne hrvatski”, *Židov*, no. 17, 1 September 1918, p. 4; no. 19, 1 October 1918;

¹¹⁶ Andrea Feldman, “Židovi u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji”, *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, no. 2 (Zagreb, 2000), pp. 447-463.

¹¹⁷ Dragoslav Janković, Bogdan Krizman, *Grada o stvaranju Jugoslavenske države, (1.1.-20.12. 1918.)* (Beograd, 1964), pp. 628-629; *Židov*, no. 23 - 1 December 1918, p. 5; Josip I. Vidmar, “Prilozi građi za povijest 1917.-1918. s osobitim osvrtom na razvoj radničkog pokreta i odjeke Oktobarske revolucije kod nas”, *Arhivski vjesnik*, vol. I, 1958: pp. 109-110, 120-127, 147-149.; B. Hrabak, “Dezerterstvo i zeleni kadar u jugoslavenskim zemljama u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, pp.

Since most of the shop owners and traders were Jews, the burning of shops and stores was considered to be anti-Semitism by some scholars, who point out that government officials excused such behaviour (robbery, arson, banditry) by claiming that the victims of these crimes were actually war profiteers.¹¹⁸ However, the contemporaries of these events offer a somewhat different picture. Thus, one contemporary witness claimed the disorders were initially aimed “against Jews, large landowners, and later turned into general looting”.¹¹⁹ While we can generally agree that the incidents were aimed exclusively at Jews in many smaller communities, it is also true that the conflicts in urban areas were for the most part aimed against the government, as the result of agrarianism, an ideology promoted by Stjepan Radić. Official reports show that, in many towns and cities, Catholic (Croatian, German, Hungarian) and Orthodox (Serb) property was looted and burned along with that of the Jews. One should also take into account the fact that there were also Jews among the deserters and looters.¹²⁰ Most likely, the cause of these incidents and looting of Jews can be put down to the fact that the new government (the National Council) did not react in time and condemn war profiteering, so that the villagers and citizens felt betrayed, and directed their anger at those who were least protected. At the same time, the Jews felt themselves betrayed by the government, and saw their own troubles exclusively as the consequence of the anti-Semitic harangues of the press, intellectuals, and government officials. The Jews resented the local authorities for not taking measures to stop the looting and destruction of their property, even though they had the foreknowledge about what would happen. The Land Committee of the Zionist Federation of

70-76, 88, 90-98, 101, 111; B. Kranjčev, “Našice u prijelomnim godinama 1918. i 1919. Godine”, pp. 351-373, 364; B. Krizman, “Građa o nemirima u Hrvatskoj na kraju 1918. Godine”, p. 122; *Židov*, no. 23, 1 December 1918, B. Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija*, pp. 204, 240, 245, 252, 265, 29; *Židov*, no. 23, 1 December 1918, p. 4; M. Kolar-Dimitrijević, “Virje za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata”, p. 57; Dragutin Feletar, “Koprivnički događaji 1918.-1920.”, *Podravski zbornik* 1979: 8; Bogdan Krizman, “Građa o nemirima u Hrvatskoj na kraju 1918. godine”, *Historijski zbornik*, 1957, no. 1-4: 113, 116; I. Goldstein, “Antisemitizam u Hrvatskoj”, p. 31; A. Feldman, “Židovi u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji”, p. 453; Jasminka Domaš Nalbantić ed.; *Obitelj*, (Zagreb, 1996), pp. 89-90, Zdenka Šimončić-Bobetko, “Agrarne promjene u Đakovštini 1918.-1941. godine”, *Zbornik muzeja Đakovštine*, no. 4, (1997), pp. 61-64; Vjekoslav Žugaj, *Židovi novogradiškog kraja* (Zagreb, 2001), pp. 33-34. Ivo Banac, “‘I Karlo je ošo u komite’ - Nemiri u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj u jesen 1918.” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 24 (1992): no. 3, pp. 28-29. Marija Winter, “Tragedija ludbreških Židova”, *Podravski zbornik* (1986), pp. 26-29; Milivoj Dretar, “Povijest ludbreške židovske zajednice”, *Podravski zbornik* (2004): 126; Marija Winter, *Iz povijesti Ludbrega i okolice*, book I and II (Koprivnica, 2000), pp. 157-158; Marija Winter, “Ludbreg i okolica od početaka XX.stoljeća do raspada Kraljevine Jugoslavije”, *Podravski zbornik* (1988): 30-38. M. Dretar, “Antisemitski ispadi u Ludbregu”: 44-45.

¹¹⁸ Andrea Feldman, “Gospodica Ashkenazy žali - intelektualni život Židova u međuratnoj Hrvatskoj”, *Zbornik Mirjane Gross* (Zagreb, 1999), p. 355; I. Banac, “‘I Karlo je ošo i komite’”: 28-29.

¹¹⁹ B. Hrabak, “Dezerterstvo i zeleni kadar u jugoslavenskim zemljama u Prvom svjetskom ratu”: 87-88, 92.

¹²⁰ B. Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija*, p. 200.

Yugoslavia publically condemned the incidents involving the Jews and asked the Entente for assistance,¹²¹ but this action had no effect on the government authorities.

Creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS)

Like most other people, the Croatian Jews received the creation of the new State/Kingdom of SHS with sympathy and even elation, hoping that it would be more considerate towards the Jewish community.¹²² Already in early 1918, the newspaper *Jug (South)* published an article where the “Young Jews of Osijek” showed sympathy for the “idea of the unity of the trinominal South Slavic nation”.¹²³ After the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was constituted, the representatives of the Committee of the Zionist Organization of the Yugoslav Lands held a meeting and issued a declaration where they stressed that they do not wish to involve themselves in the politics of the newly-created state, but also that, as a Zionist organization, they support its principles, welcome its solution of the “South Slavic problem, which best suits the ideals of the Yugoslav people and which will be implemented by their selected representatives”, and also expressed hope that Yugoslavia will, in the future, secure all other minorities their free development and equality before the law in the districts (oblasts) and in life in general, as well as complete freedom of religion. They also hoped that the new “Yugoslav press” would help reduce the public antipathy towards the Jewish people. In accordance with this, the “national Jews” would “diligently work for the benefit and prosperity of the people among which they live, and accordingly offer moral and material support for every patriotic effort”.¹²⁴

After the National Council of the State of SHS was constituted, local committees were founded throughout Croatia, including Jewish municipalities. Many social, estate, and other organizations sent letters of support following the founding of these committees. For example, following its founding, the Committee of the National Council in Koprivnica received a letter from the local Jewish Municipality, which expressed its support for the founding and activities of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.¹²⁵ The executive committee of the Israeli ferial colony in Zagreb also welcomed the founding of the National Council and the creation of the State/Kingdom of SHS.¹²⁶ However, this enthusiasm soon died down as the Jews faced a new disappointment,

¹²¹ I. Banac, “I Karlo je ošo i komite”: 29.; *Židov*, no. 23 1 December 1918, p. 4-5.

¹²² “Jugoslaveni i Židovi”, *Židov*, no. 20 16 October 1918,.

¹²³ *Židov*, no. 5 1 March 1918, p. 4.

¹²⁴ “Proglaš Zemaljske organizacije cionista”-introductory page, *Židov*, no. 21 23 October 1918.

¹²⁵ D. Feletar, “Koprivnički događaji 1918.-1920.”: 20

¹²⁶ *Izvištaj Izraelske Ferijalne kolonije za dvogodište 1917.-1918.* (Zagreb, 1919), pp. 5-6.

since peacetime didn't bring them any great relief. It all began with the attacks of the "Green cadres", whose pressure led the Jews to move from rural into urban areas, or even abroad, into the newly-established neighbouring states or America.¹²⁷ After the end of the war, some Jews were threatened with exile because they did not have citizenship or domicile due to being born outside the borders of the State of SHS (i.e. on the territory that, after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, had become part of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, or Romania).¹²⁸ They did not have to wait long to be disappointed in the new state because, aside from the aforementioned attacks, they were often criticized for being unpatriotic, insufficiently pro-Croatian, and for not speaking "pure" Croatian. They were also denied being issued Yugoslav domicile certificates despite the fact that some families had lived in Croatia for decades. Thus, prejudice still existed, because the Jews did not manage to build a positive image of themselves among part of the populace despite being significant participants in Croatian intellectual, cultural, and political life. They continued to be harassed in the interwar-period press, and occasional anti-Semitic attacks were recorded in the country.

Conclusion

In the end, what can we say about the Jews during the First World War, except that they suffered the same as other Croatian citizens, that they were mobilized and sent to fight on all fronts, that some died and were buried a long way from their homes, and that some were wounded or left permanently disabled? They effectively froze their social activities, and devoted themselves to volunteer work. At the end of the war, they were faced with many problems, impoverished (apart from a few individuals who made their fortune during the war), often the target of the "Green cadres", whose looting and burning scared many Jews into migrating to urban centres or abroad. One of the Jews' greatest problems was the collapse of Austria-Hungary, which left them divided among several newly-created states, which in turn forced further migrations, when the local Jews were unable to obtain Yugoslav citizenship, and were forced to either move back to their "home" countries, or migrate to other parts of Europe, or even America.

¹²⁷ J. I. Vidmar, "Prilozi građi za povijest 1917.-1918.," pp. 75.-76.

¹²⁸ Ivo Goldstein, "Židovi u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji-problem ravnopravnosti i jednakovrijednosti", *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, 2 (Zagreb, 2000), pp. 465-482.

Fragmente der Geschichte der kroatischen Juden während des Ersten Weltkrieges (1914-1918)

Zusammenfassung

Die Juden duldeten wie andere kroatische Bürger während des Ersten Weltkrieges: Sie wurden mobil gemacht und in den Kampf auf alle Kriegsschauplätze geschickt, einige kamen ums Leben und wurden weit von ihren Heimen begraben, einige wurden verwundet und zu dauerhaften Invaliden geworden. Ihre gesellschaftlichen Tätigkeiten legten sie auf Eis und widmeten sich der humanitären Arbeit. Gegen Kriegsende mussten sie mit vielen Problemen kämpfen, waren verarmt (ausgenommen einige Einzelne, die während des Krieges reicher wurden), häufig waren sie Opfer des sog. „grünen Kaders“, dessen Plünderung und Brandstiftung viele Juden erschreckte und nötigte sie, in die Städte oder sogar ins Ausland überzusiedeln. Der Untergang der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie verursachte den Juden zusätzliche Probleme, denn danach waren sie zwischen einigen neu gegründeten Staaten geteilt, was sie wiederum zur weiteren Aussiedlung anregte. Nachdem die in Kroatien einheimischen Juden die jugoslawische Staatsbürgerschaft nicht bekommen konnten, waren sie gezwungen, in ihre „Mutterländer“ zurückzukehren oder in andere Teile Europas oder sogar Amerikas zu emigrieren.

Schlagwörter: Erster Weltkrieg, Juden, „grüner Kader“