

ANTI-SEMITISM IN SERBIA AND ITS (RE)INVENTION AFTER 1999

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INTRODUCTION

Serbia has experienced the rise of anti-Semitism in post-Milosevic era. Although it is still true that this does not play as central a role in the nationalist rhetoric as it does in some of the neighboring countries, the singularity of the Serbian case is in the fact that it reached its height in the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, not in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. How to explain the emergence of antisemitism in a country without a deeply-rooted antisemitic tradition? Why did antisemitism find fertile ground in Serbia only after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but especially after Milosevic's regime had fallen and the democratic changes had happened. The historical overview in this thesis will show that there was anti-Semitism in interwar Serbia, but much less then today, and certainly much less than in the other parts of Eastern Europe. It is pointed that it still does not play the central role and that general public is neither included nor involved in this discourse, however, the facts have shown that it is in the rise and the highest stage it has ever reached in this country.

The transition to capitalism in former communist countries of Central, East and South-East Europe has been closely accompanied by the return of overt and, in many cases, extreme nationalism. Various authors link this additionally with the rise of anti-Semitism in those societies, in most of the cases the so-called "anti-Semitism without Jews", since there are almost no Jews left in most of those countries today. The second reason for calling it "anti-Semitism without Jews" falls in the scope of how Jean-Paul Sartre framed this problem, introducing this expression for the first time. He made the claim that instead in the Jews, the explanation for anti-Semitism must be sought in the minds of the prejudiced and argued that if the Jew had not existed; the anti-Semite would have invented him.¹ In Sartre's view anti-Semitism is not merely an opinion but a passion and a way of living one's life. The Jew, in

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre. *Antisemite and Jew*. (Paris, Schocken Books, 1948), 10.

this sense, is only a pretext, on which the anti-Semite can blame anything.² The emergence of the conspiracy theories as explanations for various problematic events and processes can be well explained in accordance with these claims, same as the mechanism of scapegoating.

According to Paul Lendvai, the technique of scapegoats is applied to release the tension within the system.³ This may be applicable both on individual's inner system and the society as a whole. Seen as the tension in individual's inner life, it helps explain which type of individuals tends to express anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes and join ultra-nationalistic groups. In my opinion, these psychological explanations for anti-Semitism are the most compelling, but the issues of why individuals become anti-Semites without Jews will not be covered in my thesis. What I will be interested in is the specifically Serbian case of the rise of anti-Semitism without Jews due to very special Serbian situation, through the lens of the Christian Right and the spread of conspiracy theories.

Serbian sociologist Laszlo Szekely⁴ characterized anti-Semitism as the rebellion of the frustrated mediocrities⁵, and he divided the manifestations of anti-Semitism into three groups: The first manifestation is conviction, secret hatred, not openly expressed. The second manifestation is feeling that is the open hostility towards Jews, expressed in the form of strong ethnic and religious distance, discrimination and finally open public propaganda. Finally, the last level is action which culminates in violence.⁶ Szekely wrote these are also the phases of the development of political anti-Semitism, which leads to anti-Semitic actions. This is proven by the fact that on the level of conviction the individual can be alone, the group emerges on the level of feelings, and finally, the action is always a collective act. This is where the groups of extremists emerge, and that is what they are needed for.

² Ibid.

³ Paul Lendvai. *Antisemitism in Eastern Europe*. (London: MacDonald, 1972), 11.

⁴ Szekely, being a Jew from Serbia himself, wrote a number of important works about historical and contemporary anti-Semitism in Serbia and former Yugoslavia.

⁵ Laslo Sekelj. *Vreme beščašća*, [Dishonorable Times], (Beograd : Akademija Nova, 1995), 60.

⁶ Ibid., 59.

Anti-Semitism is as well crucially linked with the fear of life in an open society⁷.

According to Avineri, in transition countries people are shocked by freedom and the problem of anti-Semitism is crucially related to problem of freedom according to Lowenstein as well.⁸

At the round table organized by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, a University of Belgrade professor of psychology Žarko Trebješanin expressed the view that anti-Semitism appeals to many losers in Serbia's troubled society.⁹ It is fair to add that such a society presents a fertile ground for the spread of the conspiracy theories and similar types of "explanations", and all these "theories" are a specific sort of blaming as well, therefore also a way to release the tension within the system.

As Jovan Byford, another Serbian sociologist specialized in anti-Semitism notes; there are theories that the ideas of the extreme right, which were "frozen" for forty years, were "unfrozen" by nationalistic elites in post-communist period.¹⁰ Although the unfreezing metaphor has been criticized enough in the modern field of nationalism studies, it is clear that there were and still are forces in Serbia which tend to revive nationalistic pre-World War II tradition and rehabilitate certain very controversial individuals and movements, condemned by the communists and praised by the new Serbian nationalists. While Byford wrote how Slobodan Milosevic himself in the 1990s did not actively influence the restoring of nationalistic pre-World War ideology, and kept his distance from the Serbian Orthodox Church, one of the main proponents of the return to pre-War World II Serbian tradition, he

⁷ Shlomo Avineri. "The Return of Nationalism and Anti-Semitism to Eastern Europe", Jan Hanul and Michael Chase (eds.). *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, (Prague: Franz Kafka Publishers, 1993), 32. According to Avineri, Western Europe and North America, although they do have their own problems, basically are open societies, and therefore tolerant also toward Jewish minority. Following this pattern, transition societies are more prone to anti-Semitism.

⁸ Bedrich Lowenstein. "The Motives of anti-Semitism". Jan Hanul and Michael Chase (eds.). *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*. (Prague: Franz Kafka Publishers, 1993), 26.

⁹ The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia has organized the round table entitled "The New Serbian Rights and Anti-Semitism" on November 2005 in Belgrade, and concluded that anti-Semitism in Serbia should not be perceived as an isolated phenomenon but ascribed to the overall radicalization of Serbian politics and society". More on Anti-Semitism in Serbia" *Helsinki Committee Organization in Serbia*. http://www.helsinki.org.yu/focus_text.php?lang=en&idteks=1564

¹⁰ Byford, Jovan. "Teorija Zavere" [Conspiracy Theory]. *Danas*. <http://www.danas.co.yu/20060519/feljton1.html>

did nothing to stop it.¹¹ The revival of such tendencies was left to right-wing political parties, but Byford notes how Serbian conspiracy theorists in both camps relied on the same conjuration tradition. The conspiracy theories related to the Jews have started to spread in Serbia especially after the NATO bombing in 1999. Byford and Billig noted how cleansing of history brought by the fall of communism brought the rehabilitation of controversial ideologies and personalities, all together contributing to the rise of anti-Semitism as well. According to these two authors, the heart of the conspiracy is typically located in the western world.¹² One version of the World Jewish conspiracy is that Jewish lobbies control western powers, and the two authors noted how once the idea of this achieves the status of common sense, it is easy for the extreme versions of conspiracy theory promoted by the extreme right to look credible.¹³ This version is perhaps the most compelling for Serbian anti-Semites, because it corresponds with a suspicion of the West, especially after the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Milentijević thought that the social unrest caused by the demise of communism in former Yugoslavia brought the resurgence of anti-Semitism.¹⁴ In the same book, Robert Wistrich explicitly claims that nationalism is resurging in the whole European continent, but particularly in Central and Eastern part.¹⁵ In Avineri's opinion people in those parts of Europe are returning to identities from pre-communist history, and "some of them are nationalistic

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Michael Billig and Jovan Byford. "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories in Yugoslavia during the War with NATO." *Patterns of Prejudice*, (2001), 318.b However, Some of the early versions of the "World Jewish Conspiracy" assign a central role to the Prague Jewish cemetery

¹³ Ibid., 319

¹⁴ Radmila Milentijević. "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Yugoslavia". Randolph L. Braham (ed.) *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 225. Radmila Milentijević is IN A WAY a problematic source, being a person who was over a certain period a minister in Milošević's regime and she may be writing this in order to show how Yugoslav communism managed to control and suppress anti-Semitism, and therefore, among other reasons, her view is this apologetic. Her view should be taken with reserve as well in the chapter about the history of anti-Semitism in Serbia in this thesis.

¹⁵ Robert Wistrich. "Nationalism and Anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe Today", *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, Jan Hanul and Michael Chase (eds). *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, (Prague: Franz Kafka Publishers, 1993), 35.

and intolerant”.¹⁶ In addition to this, he wrote that it would be too much to expect that in a situation of national hatred and extreme nationalism people would be tolerant towards Jews.¹⁷ According to Szekely, the rule of militant ethno-nationalism and the relations to minorities are the central points of the break-up of Yugoslavia.¹⁸ He also noted that the research which investigates the practical results of Yugoslav ethno-nationalisms needs to be extended by the history-analytical description of anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia since the Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes. Although he admits that it is not the most important manifestation of ethno-nationalism, anti-Semitism is its continuous satellite, and litmus for nationalistic chauvinism and fascism.¹⁹ All Yugoslav nationalisms in 1990s were using Jews for their own nationalistic purposes,²⁰ and he called this the period of the functionalization of Jews. In line with It is interesting to note how during the war in Croatia, there seemed to exist the split between Jews of Zagreb and Jews of Belgrade, following the Serbo-Croatian conflict, and how both Serbian and Croatian side kept denying anti-Semitism and attributing it to the other side. These kinds of mechanisms may very well prove the actual level of prejudice, and the belief of nationalists that it is beneficial to have Jews on your own side, since they are so powerful in the world's politics.

In many other opinions, nationalism makes the largest part of the explanations for the rise of anti- everywhere where that happens. However, I agree with the opinion by Richard Levy that one of the two main purposes of anti-Semitism is to”accomplish other political goals not directly bearing on the well-being of Jews.”²¹ In Serbia, the goals of such political actors which are anti-Semitic cannot have much to do with the actions towards the existing Jews in Serbia, but do help the spread of nationalism and ethnic intolerance in

¹⁶ Avineri, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 32.

¹⁷ Ibid., 31

¹⁸ Sekelj, *Vreme beščašća*, 14.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 79.

²¹ Richard S Levy. *Antisemitism in the Modern World: An Anthology of Texts*. (Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto: DC Heath and Company, 1991), 5.

general. Although Serbian society in general does not see anti-Semitism and the Jews as an important theme for the Serbs, my hypothesis is that extreme nationalistic groups in Serbia express strong anti-Semitism and the belief in conspiracy theories, and in such way promote the belief that Jews, especially American Jews, hate Serbia and work against its interests, making this idea more and more widespread even in every-day common sense public sphere. Why is this case?

Back in 1994 Braham expressed the opinion that even though in East and Central Europe, “the return to history incorporated the phenomenon of anti-Semitism without Jews”²², although he thought that the overt manifestations of anti-Semitism have still been generally minor and sporadic, such as sporadic desecrations, racist graffiti, and rarely vandalizing synagogues.²³ In 1993, Andrejevich noted a growing concern that anti-Semitism in former Yugoslav republics would rise in association with right-wing extremism.²⁴ He thought, however, that in general anti-Semitism is more recent phenomenon in Yugoslavia than in many other European countries, and has no deep-rooted tradition, according to numerous Yugoslav and international scholars and activists.²⁵

To to a certain extent, all of these views explain the mechanisms employed in modern day Serbian society, and the fact that the appearance of anti-Semitic groups and incidents, even maybe the invention of completely new kind of anti-Semitism which either overtly or covertly takes place in programs, actions and beliefs of various, probably interconnected²⁶ organizations in Serbia. Even though the extremist groups are attracting relatively small number of activists in this society, it is still acceptable to say that Serbia went through serious radicalization of its official political scene as well, therefore the number of possible

²² Randolph L. Braham. *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 13.

²³ Ibid., 1

²⁴ Milan Andrejevich. “Concern over Anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia“, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 228.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ This too will be the subject of my research in this thesis, whether those small and marginal groups are actually all connected and cooperating, in such way making this issue more important and worrying.

followers of these nationalist groups, or those possibly influenced by their agendas, might be much bigger than the number of its active members.

The distinction which needs to be introduced is very between anti-Semitism which is based on conspiracy theories, according to which the Jews are the target by extension of conspiracy theories, and anti-Semitism which is based primarily on hatred of Jews. The main question I am interested in investigating in this work will be whether those groups which see themselves as Orthodox Christian and nationalistic Serbian organizations, draw their anti-Semitic beliefs out of anti-Judaic Christian tradition, or base it on the belief in conspiracy theories and anti-Americanism, all these caused not by Christian tradition but by specifically Serbian situation in the 1990s and afterwards. The answer to these questions will hopefully come after the investigation of anti-Semitic incidents and reactions to those, content analyses of internet websites of the radical right groups, and based on individual interviews with the leading members of five such organizations in Serbia. Although more than these five groups will be the subject of website content analyzes these five organizations are picked for the interviews based on the fact that there were declared as strongly pro-Orthodox Christian, and was no trace of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish propaganda on their websites, to determine whether they actually believe in the same ideas as those who express it openly, since they belong to the same tradition and ideological blue-print.

The answer to these questions, as it was said, are expected to lead us to understand how readily far right groups in Serbia adopt anti-Semitic ideology and rhetoric and where they turn to find the arguments in support of their thesis, whether to Serbian anti-Semitic tradition represented by these pre World War II figures, Serbian Church, or outside of Serbia proper. Or, do extremist right groups invent the new kind of anti-Semitism completely alien and unknown in Serbia before, which developed due to and after the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 and the perceived role of some Jews in these events, and all this crucially

linked with the problematic of conspiracy theories. Thus, the central question I intend to address is whether there is continuity or is Serbian anti-Semitism, or a new construction which is answering the challenges of a new situation.

The link between anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism in anti-Western ideologies in general is very important for this matter. Conspiracy theories in Serbia were very influential in the 1990s already, but the NATO bombing in 1999 fostered the spread of such beliefs. Also, previous conceptions about the conspiracy of the Western World against the Serbs involved the Jews up to a lesser extent before 1999. The NATO bombing brought along the proliferation of conspiracy theories,²⁷ which is expectable if it is true that conspiratorial explanations emerge in response to unusual and traumatic events.²⁸ Among other examples, Billig and Byford note that Smilja Avramov, a retired professor of Belgrade Law Faculty even equated in her book *Trilateral* the US establishment and the Trilateral Commission with the Jewish community and attributed to the Jews a key role in the anti-Serbian conspiracy.²⁹ A report on anti-Semitism in (then) Yugoslavia made by Tel Aviv University in 2001 it is explicitly states that following the NATO offensive against Yugoslavia in 1999, anti-Semitic factors within and outside Serbia, as in East and Central European countries, attempted to link Jewish interests with US and NATO policies and claimed that top Jewish officials in the US were behind the attacks.³⁰ According to Byford and Billig, anti-Semitic themes had actually emerged already during the last months of the Milosevic regime.³¹ In order to answer these doubts the attitudes of the rightists groups towards American administration will be investigated, same as their hypothetically existing pro-Russian sentiment, out of the following reasons:

²⁷ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 310.

²⁸ S.M. Lipset and E. Raab. *The Politics of Unreason: Right-wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1978). 75

²⁹ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 313.

³⁰ "Yugoslavia 2000-01", *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University*. <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2000-1/yugoslavia.htm>

³¹ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy". 315

On the other hand, many authors share the opinion that any anti-Semitism in Serbia can only be regarded as imported. If this is so, Russia would most likely be the place from which it is imported, since it was the scene of horrible pogroms and persecutions of the Jews in the nineteenth century, and strongly anti-Semitic ideologies in the 20th century, especially under Stalin. However, this connection of Serbia with Russia is considered as a traditional one by many, especially the nationalists. Serbian nationalism has a link to pan-Slavism and to Orthodoxy, with Russia being a ‘big brother’ of Serbia.

Another type of explanations refers to the so-called Judeo-Bolshevik myth which sees the Jews as the inventors and the main leaders of communism, which in the eyes of the far right brought only bad things to Serbia, and this hypothesis is also expected to be confirmed through empirical research. This goes in line with the anti-Yugoslavism and anti-communism of the new Serbian far right. Wistrich wrote that anti-Semitic tendencies and incidents besides being crucially connected with anti-Americanism, are as well crucially connected with seeing communism as Jewish conspiracy.³² Anti-Semitism is linked with anti-Yugoslavism of new nationalists, and according to Wistrich it is usually a part of the struggle for national identity³³, in this specific case, the replacement of widespread Yugoslav identity with a Serbian identity. The fact that one of the main publishers of anti-Semitic literature in Serbia, which will be mentioned later, comes from the Serbian diaspora in the United States, and the fact that Serbian post-World War II diaspora was mainly nationalistic, points to this diaspora as one of the possible importers of anti-Semitism to Serbia. Bishop Velimirović, one of the most important individual figures for this research, was a part of Serbian diaspora in the USA as well.

All these presuppositions are very much connected with the already mentioned explanations which find their bases in the beliefs in the conspiracy theories, whether the

³² Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 36.

³³ *Ibid.*, 35

conspiracy is pro-American and capitalist, communist, Freemason or any other ideological background. Each of these can be linked to the Jews in the view of typical far-right movements. However, to conclude with the introduction it would be important to notice how anti-Semitism without Jews as a subject and problematic in Serbia is very different then the same in, for example Poland, Hungary, or even Romania, where this is an important issue for the entire population which is informed about it, and it is an important part of the construction of the domestic national identity.³⁴ In Serbia, anti-Semitism is not that important for non anti-Semites, and it is still quite a marginal phenomenon. It will be explained further how and why this is the case. And if Levy is right in saying that anti-Semitism is actually a willingness to act against the Jews by political means, even Serbian far-right movements would not be anti-Semitic in that sense.³⁵ In Serbia, with such a small number of Jews, who would they be acting against? More likely, anti-Semitism is for them a rhetorical tool of nationalism, linked crucially with some other goals. However if they are found to have negative stereotypes and ideas about Jews, it will be considered as anti-Semitism even if there is no significant Jewish minority present.

³⁴ Wistrich says that anti-Semitism is an integral part of the struggle for national identity, having in mind Central and Eastern Europe in general. In the case of Yugoslav republics, the definition cannot be as strong as to include the word 'integral'. As the integral part of Serbian identity is differentiation from Croats, Bosniaks or Albanians may be considered, but the opposition Serb-Jew cannot be regarded as integral. Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 35.

³⁵ Levy. *Antisemitism in the Modern World: An Anthology of Texts*, 5.

CHAPTER 1- SERBIA AND ANTI-SEMITISM

1.1. Anti-Semitism; a Marginal Phenomenon in Serbia?

A 1996 report on anti-Semitism in Serbia and Montenegro explicitly claimed that there was no significant tradition of anti-Semitism in the former Yugoslav federation.³⁶ Many academics agree with this observation. According to Todosijević, it is probably due to the fact that Serbs throughout history had other, more important ‘national enemies’ that Serbia is known to be relatively non-anti-Semitic country. But he has also written that stereotypes about Jews were nevertheless widespread in this area.³⁷ Byford and Billing also note how according to a number of recent analyses of anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia, anti-Jewish ideology- which so often takes the form of Jewish conspiracy theory- is a marginal phenomenon in contemporary Serbia.³⁸

However, anti-Semitic incidents and groups do emerge in Serbia, especially since the NATO bombing in 1999, no matter how sporadic and marginal. The central problem in Serbian case comes down to the question how not only that these ideas emerge in a country with practically no Jews left³⁹, which is the case in many other societies as well⁴⁰ and in the opinion of most of the authors and historians, with no strong anti-Semitic tradition, but in the specific case where it has only become part of the public discourse in recent years. All these questions must be linked with asking where the roots of that phenomenon are and whether it is really true that that tradition does not exist. This is important to clarify in order to turn to

³⁶ “Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)” *Antisemitism and Xenophobia Today* <http://www.axt.org.uk/antidem/archive/archive1/yugoslavia/yugoslavia.htm>

³⁷ Bojan Todosijević, *Anti-Jewish and anti-Gypsy attitudes in Hungary and Yugoslavia: Social and Psychological Determinants*. (Budapest : CEU, Budapest College, 1998), 4.

³⁸ Byford and Billig, “The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy”, 310.

³⁹ In 1981 Yugoslav census only 1384 people declared themselves as Jews. Andrejevich, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 249. In 2002 census, according to my interview with Aleksandar Lebl, the head of a Jewish community group that monitors anti-Semitism in Serbia, 1158 persons declared as Jewish. He expressed the belief that the actual number might be between 2000 and 2500, noting that the definition of Jewish for that matter is quite liberal, and the numbers are not reliable.

⁴⁰ Japan is quite a famous example, but also Indonesia.

the question of where modern anti-Semites in Serbia turn to in the history to support their own stands. The question of where this “new” anti-Semitism comes from is actually also a question whether it was in a way imported in Serbian society from outside, as many apologists of Serbia claimed and still claim, where it is imported from and when. The question is if it can simply be claimed that Serbian pro-fascist tradition in 1930s, mostly expressed through the writings and later actions of Dimitrije Ljotić and his movement, but also the writings of Milorad Mojić, Lazar Prokić and bishop Nikolaj Velimirović present the beginning of anti-Semitic tradition in Serbia, which was only presented through marginal groups and isolated individuals, and there was no significant anti-Semitism before? There are various opinions, ones supporting such stand, and the others completely opposing it. All this needs to be linked and explained in the light of the role of Serbian Orthodox Church and religion, in a separate part of this thesis, as well as historical review of anti-Semitism in Serbia.

1.2. Serbian Orthodox Church and Anti-Semitism

Can Serbian anti-Semitism be linked to the growing influence of Orthodox church, especially in light of the canonization of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in 2003? Velimirović was a controversial religious figure from the first half of the twentieth century, morally rehabilitated due to the influence of Serbian nationalism and clericalism, being its most famous ideologue within the Church. The Serbian Orthodox Church is very much involved in Serbian politics, and although it officially rejects anti-Semitism of any kind, the message that it sends to its believers is very controversial. If Nikolaj Velimirović is accepted as a saint, and widely read by the believers, the accusations for anti-Semitism need to be considered more seriously and critically than it is the actual case in the Church. Stephen Roth Institute’s website sees him as highly educated man who became a symbol of Serbian thought,

spiritualism and Orthodoxy, who freely expressed his anti -Semitic beliefs in several of his works, including those from his days in Dachau concentration camp in 1945, where the German occupiers had imprisoned him because of the perceived threat he posed due to his promotion of Serbian strength and values and unity of the Orthodox world.⁴¹ It is also noted how these books are published repeatedly. However, for his apologists, the imprisonment in Dachau is used to prove that he could not have been an anti-Semite.

Jovan Byford has shown how the liberal left often stresses how the teachings of Bishop Velimirovic inspire the Christian right in contemporary Serbian society.⁴² His books can be bought all over Serbia, and over million of copies have been sold over last ten years.⁴³ Byford and Billig argue that Velimirović's antisemitism has never been officially condemned by the church authorities,⁴⁴ and that most of the Orthodox believers seem to be unaware of the controversy surrounding Velimirović's writing. According to Byford, Velimirović is the meeting point between mainstream Orthodox culture and the exponents of the Christian right, which claim legitimacy precisely on the "forgotten" aspects of his literary output.⁴⁵ This is expected to be one of the findings of my own research as well. While the church officially rejects anti-Semitism, Byford claims that the Christian right readily adopts his anti-Jewish references, which according to him present the blend of religious an anti-Judaism and nineteenth century tradition of conspiracy theories.⁴⁶ The already mentioned report on antisemitism in Serbia from 1996 claims that the official Serbian Orthodox church maintains a positive attitude towards Jews and Jewish issues and does not fail officially to denounce antisemitic incidents, whether in individual cases or in general. But it also it stresses that the

⁴¹ "Republic of Serbia 2005" *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University*, <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/serbia.htm>

⁴² Jovan Byford. "Canonizing the Prophet of Anti-Semitism : The Apotheosis of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović and the Legitimization of Religious Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Serbian Society" *Radio Free Europe* www.rferl.org/reports/eeepreport/2004/02/4-180204.asp

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 309.

⁴⁵ Byford, "Canonizing the Prophet of Anti-Semitism", www.rferl.org/reports/eeepreport/2004/02/4-180204.asp

⁴⁶ Ibid.

church is not monolithic and there are a number of clergymen who hold antisemitic views and are followers of Nikolaj Velimirović.

The disputable elements of Velimirović's biography are repressed to cover his anti-Semitism.⁴⁷ Byford, however, thinks that the church and the general public keep praising him despite, not because of his problematic views. Byford also stresses that this kind of repression does not exist in rightist extremist literature, where those views are explicitly used for supporting clerico-nationalism, neo-fascist and anti-Semitic ideological claims. In empirical part of the research for this thesis this will be questioned thoroughly, same as Byford's view that respect for Velimirović perpetuates and legitimizes political extremism and the spread of anti-Jewish prejudices,⁴⁸ since his writings were mixture of religious anti-Semitism, which had a long history in Orthodox Christianity,⁴⁹ and anti-Semitic conspiracy theory of the 19th century. According to this author, the story of bishop Nikolaj's martyrdom in Dachau has been offered as replacement myth⁵⁰, after the communist authoirites denounced him as a clerical nationalist and traitor.⁵¹ Even some institutions within the church denounced him⁵² and he was forgotten for decades, until the rise of Serbian nationalism in the second half of 1980s. Today he is widely regarded as the most respected Serbian religious figure since the medieval St Sava.⁵³ And this is all dependent on "who wants to remember whom and why?".⁵⁴

Velimirović's canonization was said to be the will of people, by the church officials and the Holy Synod that canonized him, as it is believed that Orthodox church just

⁴⁷ Byford, "Canonizing the Prophet of Anti-Semitism", www.rferl.org/reports/eeepreport/2004/02/4-180204.asp

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ According to Szekely as well, this church has never officially left the accusation for Christ-killing. Sekelj, *Vreme beščašća*, 78.

⁵⁰ Byford, "Canonizing the Prophet of Anti-Semitism", www.rferl.org/reports/eeepreport/2004/02/4-180204.asp

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

⁵² Jovan Byford. "From "Traitor" to "Saint": Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Serbian Public Memory". <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/22byford.pdf>

⁵³ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 16.

confirms the already existing cult, but there are many proofs that spreading his cult among people was a deed of a few influential nationalistic bishops within the church. The mainstream of the Serbian Orthodox Church still rarely mentions the anti-Semitic parts of his writings⁵⁵ and this only in order to deny it, although already in the 1990s isolated cases of anti-Jewish sentiment were to be found among Orthodox clergy.⁵⁶ The most often used apologetic argument for Nikolaj is that this attitude belongs to specific type of “benign theological or biblical anti-Semitism”. According to one of the most influential nationalistic bishops, Amfilohije Radović- Nikolaj actually showed his love for Jews by his words, the wish to bring them to the true God. Nikolaj “objurgates because he loves”⁵⁷, and according to Byford this presents the repetition of one of the oldest presuppositions of traditional Christian anti-Semitic rhetoric, that Jews killed Christ and therefore are cursed, unless they accept him. Samardžić in his apologetic book says that Velimirović cannot be an anti-Semite especially since he did not even show special interest in that subject. He wrote that Nikolaj talked about Jews in his religious, God given view, he did not even write a special study about anti-Semitism.⁵⁸ And, Samardžić’s main argument is that instead of paying attention to his words, people should look at his actions, namely that he saved Jews by hiding them in monasteries across Serbia.⁵⁹

Byford still concludes that distrust and hatred of Jews are a pan-Christian phenomenon, not only a Catholic invention, as the Serbian Church tries to prove.⁶⁰ If it is true what leading Serbian sociologist of religion Mirko Đorđević says, the church has lately

⁵⁵ Ibid.,10

⁵⁶ “Yugoslavia 2000-01”, *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University*. <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2000-1/yugoslavia.htm>

⁵⁷ Byford, “Canonizing the Prophet of Anti-Semitism”, www.rferl.org/reports/eeepreport/2004/02/4-180204.asp

⁵⁸ Predrag Samardžić, *Episkop Nikolaj i Novi Zavet o Jevrejima: Novozavetni “Anti-Semitizam” i “Anti-Semitizam” “Vladike Nikolaja u Kontekstu*. [Bishop Nikolaj and the New Testament about Jews: “Anti-Semitism” in the New Testament and “Anti-Semitism” of Bishop Nikolaj in Context]. (Beograd: Hrišćanska misao: Hilendarski fond, Srbinje: Univerzitetski ““Obraz””ovni pravoslavni bogoslovi, 2004.) 5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14. Samardžić argues that the bishop criticized Serbs too, so did that meant he was anti-Serbian?

⁶⁰ Jovan Byford. *Potiskivanje i poricanje antisemitizma: secanje na vladiku Nikolaja Velimirovića u savremenoj srpskoj pravoslavnoj kulturi*. [Repression and Denial of Anti-Semitism: Representations of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in contemporary Serbian Orthodox culture]. (Beograd: HCHRS, 2005), 2.

become political actor with enormous political influence,⁶¹ especially due to the fact that it is certainly not poor anymore. He even calls the Church the main arbiter in Serbia, and claims that enormous number of people trust the Church. Tel Aviv University's Stephen Roth Institute's website claims that both the Serbian Orthodox Church and groups associated with it are known for their ambivalent attitude toward the Jews and anti-Semitism. While on the one hand, representatives of the Church have condemned anti-Semitic acts and stated that anti-Semitism is not in the nature of Serbian Orthodoxy, on the other, the Church recently proclaimed an anti-Semite – Archbishop Nikolaj Velimirović – a saint.⁶² Also, according to Byford and Billig,⁶³ Ratibor Đurđević, a former member of Ljotić's movement and the owner of a publishing house that publishes anti-Semitic books, also published articles in *Pravoslavlje*, a magazine of Serbian Orthodox Church., although that time he made no reference to Jews as usually. These articles did make no mention of Jews, probably since explicit antisemitism would not have been tolerated by the editors and readers of *Pravoslavlje*, or by the Orthodox mainstream in general.

1.3. Anti-Semitic Tradition in Serbia

According to Emil Kerenji, anti-Semitism in Serbia originated in the in pre-World War II period: "It seems that the rise of political anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic rhetoric and agitation was a consequence of the sudden availability and acceptability of anti-Semitic discourse which – unlike ever before, since there had been no indigenous Serbian anti-Semitism, and the discourse had to be imported from abroad – began being disseminated

⁶¹ Mirko Đorđević. "Ideje koje ostavljaju pustoš", *Bosanskohercegovački Dani* <http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/281/t28109.shtml>

⁶² "Republic of Serbia 2005" *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University*, <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/serbia.htm>

⁶³ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 317.

from the highest place, became an acceptable means for political struggle – Ljotić's movement started utilizing this rhetoric on a regular basis."⁶⁴

Why is Serbia generally considered not being a country with anti-Semitic tradition?⁶⁵ According to Christine Von Kohl, the Sephardic dominated Jews in Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia before the World War II were well integrated and not exposed to discrimination.⁶⁶ From fifteenth century on, the Jews had been forming part of town population and dealing with trade, and Von Kohl thinks that no specific anti-Semitism existed in Serbia.⁶⁷ Generally, because of the Ottoman millet system, the historians agree that the discrimination toward Jews was much less present then in Austro-Hungarian monarchy, although the discrimination against Jews before 1878 in Serbia still may be regarded as a part of the general discrimination against the Jews in the Eastern Europe, although Milentijević wrote that in 1918 Jews had achieved full equality, and formally they were more of a religious minority than a national minority.⁶⁸ She wrote that the national complexion of Yugoslavia facilitated the acceptance of Jewish national identity, and that, at the time, Serbian radicals were sympathetic to the Jewish cause and their leader Nikola Pašić was supporting the Zionist attitude of Yugoslav Jewry.⁶⁹ The Zionist federation was the strongest organized Jewish force within Yugoslavia⁷⁰ and it had monopoly over Jewish press. Besides, a sizable number of young Jewish students played active role in illegal communist party. According to

⁶⁴ Emil Kerenji. *Antisemitism and corporatism in the writings of Dimitrije Ljotić*. (MA thesis, CEU, Budapest, 1998), 35

⁶⁵ "Perhaps due to the fact that Serbs throughout history had other, more important 'national enemies' like Turks, Germans, Croats or Albanians, Serbia is known to be relatively non-anti-Semitic place. ..However, stereotypes about Jews are widespread, and in certain right-wing publications it is possible occasionally to find more or less open antisemitic texts." Todosijević, *Anti-Jewish and anti-Gypsy attitudes in Hungary and Yugoslavia : social and psychological determinants*, 4.

⁶⁶ Christine Von Kohl. "Anti-Semitism in Present-Day "Yugoslavia" which no Longer Exists", *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 242.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 245. Von Kohl is referring to the book *Yugoslavia and the "Jewish Problem"* written by Serbian officer E.B. Gaic, after the World War I, that in Serbia there can be no anti-Semitism, and even if it is possible, it can only be the result of an influence from outside. The claims that anti-Semitism in Serbia exists would be just a "conspiracy against the good name of Serbia." Ibid.

⁶⁸ Milentijević, *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust* Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust, 226.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 227.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 228.

Andrejevich as well, before 1941, no organized anti-Semitic movements existed. He wrote that anti-Semitic incidents have occurred over the last 500 years – but sporadic and limited.⁷¹

1.4 Anti-Semitism in Serbia in 1930s and 1940s

Serbia is, to repeat it once again, according to most of the sources and authors given a special place in the anti-Semitic map of Europe, together with Bosnia and Macedonia for example, for being a country which had no wide-spread anti-Semitism while its neighbors and even traditional allies like Russia submitted their Jews to pogroms and persecutions of all types. In contrast with these claims, Ljubica Stefan, a historian from Zagreb wrote how until today, Serbia has worn a hero's halo in a land of martyrs as a member of the anti-Hitler coalition and an alleged contributor to the victory in the World War II", but Stefan says it is completely untrue.⁷² She wrote a book called *From Fairy Tale to Holocaust* in which she says that in Serbia there was a Quisling type of collaboration with the occupiers.⁷³ Stephanie Persin also provides a different picture than most of the sources, not only for the World War II period and the years preceding it, but also for the end of 19th century. She says that Serbian parliament did not lift its restrictions on Jewish citizens until 1889 and even the following: "Because of blatant Serbian anti-Semitism, the Jewish population in the area decreased each year. "⁷⁴

Ruth Mitchell's book *Serbs Choose War* from 1943 presents Serbs in a very positive light, and publishes a document, which states that thanks to the Serbs, the Yugoslav Jews had succeeded in saving and rescuing many of their compatriots from Germany and

⁷¹ Andrejevich, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 250.

⁷² Ljubica Stefan, "Antisemitism in Serbia during the World War II. An International Symposium "Southeastern Europe 1918-1995" <http://www.hic.hr/books/seeurope/014e-stefan.htm>

⁷³ Ljubica Stefan, "From Fairytale to Holocaust." *Hrvatski Informativni Centar*. <http://www.hic.hr/books/from-fairytale/index.htm>.

⁷⁴ She does give similar view on Serbia during Miloš Obrenović as Szekely, and possibly uses him as but aside for that her knowledge about Yugoslavia seems poor, since she mentions that "Serbia's break from Yugoslavia led to a disconnect of the Jewish community". Ibid.

German-occupied countries.”⁷⁵ It also contains another document, which states the following: “I cannot conclude this report without mentioning how the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch Gavril, and his clergy tried to save Serbian Jews and Gypsies.”⁷⁶

Szekely explains how the form in which anti-Semitism appeared in the first Yugoslavia was at first copy of Austro-Hungarian and French model⁷⁷, but in 1930s and 1940s the role model became national-socialist version of totalitarian anti-Semitism.⁷⁸ He claims how: both then as now, Serbian fascism was the strongest proponent of anti-Semitism, and saw the conspiracy as the source of all evil. All opponents of fascism, Bolsheviks and Anglo-Americans, were seen as the tools in hands of the world Jewry.⁷⁹ But, Szekely stresses that Serbian fascism, although it remained legal, had very limited influence.⁸⁰ He claims that based on his interviews, everybody spoke about the high level of tolerance, low ethnic distance and the absence of anti-Semitism from every day life.⁸¹ However, Szekely does not feel it is true that all forms of anti-Semitism are completely alien to Serbian mentality and people.⁸² He explicitly claims that both in Serbia and Croatia at that time⁸³, the government proved to be very uncooperative when it needed to prohibit anti-Semitic literature and publishing centers.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ “Letter written by a Jewish physician, professor in the Department of Medicine in the University of Belgrade, to a friend in London on his escape from Yugoslavia in 1942.” However, it is anonymous and therefore not credible enough, although it was explained: “As the writer is a Jew, for the sake of relatives who remain in Yugoslavia his name cannot be used.” Ruth Mitchell, *The Serbs Choose War*. <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/library/facts/mitchell.html>

⁷⁶ “Today the chief rabbi of Yugoslav Jews lives in America. He was saved from the Gestapo, being smuggled out from Serbia from monastery to monastery by the Serbian clergy. “. Ibid.

⁷⁷ Slobodan Marković does not agree that Ljotić, for example, was national-socialist and claims he was influenced by French model of fascism and Charles Maurras, who was very attached to Catholicism, like Ljotić to Orthodoxy, but unlike Hitler. Marković, Slobodan. “Crkva i Politika”, *Nova Srpska Politička Misao*, http://www.nspm.org.yu/debate_2007/2008_sl_g_markovic1.htm

⁷⁸ Szekely, *Vreme beščašća*, 31.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁰ Not even the leader of Zbor became a Member of the Parliament. Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ 1930s and 1940s

⁸⁴ It will be mentioned later how contemporary leader of Belgrade Jews Aca Singer has exactly the same objection about publishing house Ihtus in 2005 and the fact that Serbian authorities did not ban it from work.

It was mentioned how Emil Kerenji has also written that this period marks the beginning of some kind of anti-Semitic tradition in Serbia, and that anti-Semitic theory was established in Yugoslav political arena right before the World War II.⁸⁵ This was specifically linked to the writings and actions of Dimitrije Ljotić. The leader of Zbor wrote that the Jewish people use the explosives in their hearts to destroy Christian communities and lead them to their ruin, and that Judaism was appearing as a cultural and national danger.⁸⁶ It is obvious from most of his writings that his prejudice is derived from mediaeval Christian notions⁸⁷ but combined with at the time popular conspiracy theories and dubious publications like *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*⁸⁸. The same combination of religious anti-Judaism and modern conspiracy theory can be found in the writings of Velimirović, at the time close friend of Ljotić, and even, according to his own words in 1953, the grey eminence behind the Zbor movement.⁸⁹ Apart from Velimirović's influence, most of Ljotić's ideas were a result of eclectic selection from various intellectual positions. He himself stated how he was influenced by Charles Maurras, Blaise Pascal and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.⁹⁰ However, he was very much connected with Velimirović, and the anti-Semitic Orthodox National Christian Movement, established in Serbia in 1930s.⁹¹ Slobodan Marković does not agree with relating Velimirović and Ljotić in this context, due to the fact that Velimirović was actively involved into all actions of the leaders of Serbian Orthodox Church against signing the Three-Power pact. He believes that Velimirović was personally more the follower of Četnik leader Mihajlović than Ljotić's, but Ljotić and Nedić⁹² were struggling to win his affection and support, according to Kerenji, because of bishop's good reputation and influence in Britain and USA. Apart from Zbor and the anti-Semitism in the church, there was something else happening in Serbia at the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁶ "which we must be free of as soon as possible". Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁹ Byford, *From a Traitor to a Saint*, 8.

⁹⁰ Kerenji, *Antisemitism and corporatism in the writings of Dimitrije Ljotić*, 53.

⁹¹ Ibid., 56

⁹² The leader of Serbian Nazi-backed puppet government and also an anti-Semite.

time: “the ever increasing proliferation of the anti-Semitic texts in Yugoslavia in the latter part of the 1930s”.⁹³ Some of the texts from that period will be found on the websites of contemporary Serbian nationalists. Kerenji still believes that Ljotić was a leader of a movement which was the only anti-Semitic movement in Serbia.⁹⁴ During the war him and his people collaborated with the Nazis and were directly involved in killing Serbia’s Jews. But, besides Zbor, after the War has started, Nedić, former Minister of the Yugoslavian Army, who had a pro-German and anti-Semitic orientation, took over the leadership in Serbia after German occupation.

According to the church sources, Ela Trifunović, born Neuheus, wrote to the Serbian Orthodox Church in 2001, claiming that she had spent 18 months hiding in Ljubostinja monastery where she was smuggled by Velimirović, guarded and later helped move on with false papers. This attestation is parallel and very similar to the case of another religious figure condemned by Yugoslav communists and canonized after the break-up of Yugoslavia, Croatian Catholic cardinal Alojz Stepinac, who is both said to be Pavelić’ collaborator and a Nazi, and a person who has been saving Jews . It is the same historical revisionism in action, again the issue of “who wants whom to remember and why”, and these two examples do not stand alone. Almost every East European country is faced with the same process of the rehabilitation of certain historical figures, by a certain forces in society.⁹⁵

In Dachau camp, according to many sources, Velimirović had a privileged treatment, he was allowed to wear his own religious clothes, he was never tortured and had access to officer's medical services. Contrary to the reports that Velimirović was liberated when American 36th American division reached Dachau, both he and Patriarch Dodžić were actually released in 1944. Together with Milan Nedić and German general Hermann Neubacher, they traveled to Slovenia where they stayed until the end of the war. Contrary to

⁹³ Kerenji, *Antisemitism and corporatism in the writings of Dimitrije Ljotić.*, 58.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Romania and Antonescu, Hungary and Horthy, etc.

most sources that denote him as a harsh anti-Semite, Mitchell gives a somewhat unrealistic view on Nedić: "The fact that Nedić twice demanded from the German commanding officer in Serbia and the Banat that he and his government should be given the right to settle the Jewish problem, against whom no drastic measures should and could be taken in Serbia, shows the feeling of the Serbian people toward the Jews. The following reasons were given by Nedić to the Germans for this demand. If the Germans wanted the Serbs to calm down, it would be of first importance to stop the terrible persecution of the Serbian Jews."⁹⁶

Zbor was actively involved in rounding-up and murdering Serbian Jews.⁹⁷ When Ljotić, got arrested in 1940 by old Yugoslav government, Velimirović attended Ljotić's funeral in 1945. On that occasion, the bishop spoke very positively of Ljotić even though it was already widely known that Ljotić was collaborating with the Germans. He spoke of Ljotić as of "ideologue of Serbian nationalism". SS-member Harald Turner, stated the following in 1942: "Serbia is a nation in which the problem of Jews and Gypsies has been solved." The chief of the German Security Service in Serbia, A. Schafer bragged: "Belgrade - the only larger European city which is cleansed of Jews, has become 'Judenfrei.'"⁹⁸ Hannah Arendt has confirmed this fact about Belgrade, and she was saying that no Jews were deported from Serbia, because the "problem" has entirely been solved on spot.⁹⁹ According to her knowledge, German occupiers were the ones liquidated Jews in Serbia, unlike Croatia where the Ustaše took on the task on themselves¹⁰⁰ and Arendt makes the claim that it is estimated that around 5000 Jews joined partisans in order to save themselves. But, according to Stefan, from 1942 up to September 1944, Jews, who had found refuge in some villages in Serbia, were brought to the Banjica camp after being caught by Ljotić's and Nedić's men, as

⁹⁶ Ruth Mitchell, *The Serbs Choose War*. <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/library/facts/mitchell.html>

⁹⁷ Byford, *From Traitor to Saint*, 8.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann u Jerusalimu- Izveštaj o banalnosti zla*. [Eichmann in Jerusalem- The Report on Banality of Evil] (Beograd: Samizdat B92, 2000.) 53.

¹⁰⁰ Von Kohl, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 246.

well as by Četniks for which they received financial rewards.¹⁰¹ Unlike her, Szekely says: “it is not known that anyone else but the Germans took part in mass executions. However, local police and special police were in charge for transport.”¹⁰²

1.5. Social Federative Republic of Yugoslavia; Anti-Zionism without Anti-Semitism?

In the period of the existence of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, the issue of both the presence or the absence of anti-Semitism cannot be regarded separately and independently of Yugoslav diplomatic relations with Israel and the sharp pro-Arab stand that prevailed. According to Szekely, from 1945 to 1967 all nationalism was latent, and anti-Semitism was very low, and all cases of it were persecuted. But in 1967, Yugoslavia became the loudest criticizer of Israel.¹⁰³ Szekely thinks anti-Semitism still did appear, under mask of anti-Zionism, but it was very marginal, and unlike Warsaw pact countries, communist Yugoslavia has always tried to distance strongly from anti-Semitism.

In 1947, being a member of UNSCOP, Yugoslavia proposed a federal state solution for Israel and Palestine, probably based on the fact that it was itself a multi-ethnic federal state. Yugoslavia recognized the new state of Israel on May 19, 1948, and this recognition was followed by the establishment of full diplomatic relations and the first trade agreement.¹⁰⁴ The Jews from Yugoslavia that survived the World War II were already in 1948 and 1949 permitted to go to Israel. Majority of them decided to use that opportunity.¹⁰⁵ According to Porges, between the creation of Yugoslavia at the end of World War II, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Yugoslav attitude to Palestine Jewry was

¹⁰¹ Stefan, Ljubica. “Antisemitism in Serbia during the World War II”. *An International Symposium "Southeastern Europe 1918-1995"* <http://www.hic.hr/books/seeurope/014e-stefan.htm>

¹⁰² Sekelj., *Vreme beščašća*. 71

¹⁰³ Ibid., 74.

¹⁰⁴ The source of these facts is a text by Nenad Porges, who was, among other things, the Minister of the Economy of the Republic of Croatia. Nenad Porges. “Jewish History of Yugoslavia” . *All about the Porges*. <http://www.porges.net/JewishHistoryOfYugoslavia.html#Relations%20with%20Israel>

¹⁰⁵ Persin, Stephanie. “Virtual Jewish History Tour Jews of the Former Yugoslavia after the Holocaust”. *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Yugoslavia2.html>

friendly and found expression in allowing passage to thousands of "illegal" immigrants to Palestine¹⁰⁶. He claims that from the Yugoslav point of view, this formed part of the anti-imperialist struggle. There are, however, the opinions that the Yugoslav attitude towards Israel cannot be considered as being generally favorable, even before the Suez crisis. In addition, even those sources testify that it was, until 1956, a fairly balanced attitude. Even, during the first post-war years, Yugoslavia did not express much interest in Middle East at all.¹⁰⁷ And when it did, Yugoslavia looked at it from a doctrinal Marxist positions and perceived Middle Eastern states as half-colonial and a half feudal creations of the British imperialism.¹⁰⁸ The real strengthening of a pro-Arab stand of Yugoslav government and president Tito, started in the 1950s, along with the formation and the strengthening of the Non-Aligned Movement, culminating with the break-up of diplomatic ties with Israel in 1967, after the Six-Day War. Yugoslav reaction was quick and decisive,¹⁰⁹ “culminating in its branding Israel as the "aggressor" “. ¹¹⁰ The same source proceeds by saying that however, the sympathies of the Yugoslav people still seemed to incline toward Israel, and that Tito's commitment was considered in Belgrade as his own personal action by which he faced his comrades in the Party and Government with a *fait accompli*.¹¹¹ But Tito's strategy aimed at linking Israel with USA and other capitalist countries in order to delegitimize it in the eyes of his party comrades. Radio Free Europe reported The Seventh Plenum of the Yugoslav Central Committee, which took place in Belgrade on July 3rd 1967, Tito's speech attacked "imperialist forces," especially the U.S., for allegedly endangering Yugoslavia's independence. The Israeli

¹⁰⁶Porges, "Jewish History of Yugoslavia"

<http://www.porges.net/JewishHistoryOfYugoslavia.html#Relations%20with%20Israel>

¹⁰⁷ Vladimir Petrović, *Jugoslavija stupa na Bliski Istok* [Yugoslavia Enters the Middle East]. (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2007), 29.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 30

¹⁰⁹ Aleksandar Životić. "Jugoslovenska vojna pomoć Ujedinjenoj Arapskoj Republici 1967. godine" Yugoslav Military Aid to the United Arab Republic in 1967]. *Istorija 20. veka*. [History of the 20th Century] Issue no.1. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2007

¹¹⁰Porges, "Jewish History of Yugoslavia"

<http://www.porges.net/JewishHistoryOfYugoslavia.html#Relations%20with%20Israel>

¹¹¹ Ibid.

attack against the Arab countries is explained as a part of a worldwide imperialist plot against "all progressive forces" in the world.¹¹²

The source makes it clear how at The Seventh Plenum Tito had the plan and the strategy to convince the Central Committee to take a stand against Israel and call it the aggressor. It is noted how Tito claimed that Israel "was created as an artificial state," as an "instrument of imperialist forces"¹¹³. In addition, Tito's decisions in Yugoslavia fell on a fertile ground, and many were willing to follow him. Yugoslav press and radio followed this political decision with an anti-American attitude. It is noted that for the first time, a Belgrade paper took a strong position against the American Jews, and that such an anti-Jewish attitude had never before that been present among the Yugoslav peoples and in the Communist Party.¹¹⁴ It was needed to justify the breaking of diplomatic relations with Israel, "surrounded by so many millions of Arabs, and in order to create the impression that two and a half million Jews threaten the existence of the Arabs, the Yugoslav radio and press have indulged in anti-American propaganda."¹¹⁵ Despite of this, Radio Free Europe also reported that Yugoslav correspondent in Cairo was critical of Arab anti-Israeli extremism: "the Arabs should stop preaching the propaganda slogan that the Israelis must be thrown into the sea and totally annihilated. This is not only impossible to do, but is nonsense. Israel has existed as a state for the past 20 years and this reality must definitely be recognized by the Arabs."¹¹⁶ During the years of the non-existence of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, apart from trade, only personal contacts between Jews were permitted to continue. Although Yugoslavia had not restored diplomatic relations with Israel broken after the Six-Day War in 1967, commercial and cultural ties as well as cooperation in the areas of sports and tourism

¹¹² Stanković, Slobodan. "After the Seventh Plenum of the Yugoslav Central Committee" *Open Society Archives*. <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/77-2-287.shtml>

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Stanković, Slobodan. "Yugoslav Journalist Critical of Arab Anti-Israeli Extremism". *Open Society Archives*. <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/78-3-276.shtml>

burgeoned during the 1980s.¹¹⁷

The question is how this reflected on and related to the anti-Semitism. General opinion is that in Tito's Yugoslavia there was little overt anti-Semitism¹¹⁸. In the post World War II period, there was a great trust of Jews in communist state and there was not any anti-Semitism in Tito's politics according to Von Kohl as well.¹¹⁹ This has probably been so because of the promise of assimilation that communism was carrying¹²⁰, especially the Yugoslav communism. Violent anti-Israel campaign did prevail ever since 1967, but in Yugoslavia "...the sharp anti-Israeli stand¹²¹ was not only free of any taint of racial prejudice, but the Yugoslav Communists also publicly castigated the anti-Zionist campaign in Poland."¹²² Although, according to Lendvai, Moscow was the center and exporter of Anti-Semitism¹²³ and Yugoslavia was approaching the Moscow again, the fact that that area did not have the same tradition of anti-Semitism as some surrounding countries¹²⁴ made it possible for the anti-Israeli stand not to be accompanied by anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic literature and expressions were strictly banned in Yugoslavia all until 1990s and the revival of nationalism.

¹¹⁷Gruber, Ruth E. „Jewish History of Yugoslavia.” *Our Jerusalem*.
<http://www.ourjerusalem.com/history/story/history20030601.html>

¹¹⁸ Persin, Stephanie. "Virtual Jewish History Tour Jews of the Former Yugoslavia after the Holocaust"..
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Yugoslavia2.html>

¹¹⁹ Von Kohl, *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 245.

¹²⁰ Shlomo Avineri. "The Return of Nationalism and Anti-Semitism to Eastern Europe." *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 32.

¹²¹ According to Andrejevich as well, in 1967 the diplomatic relations were broken, but economic and cultural links maintained. In 1991 the diplomatic ties were fully restored. Andrejevich, Milan. "Concern over Anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia", Hanul, Jan. and Michael Chase (eds). *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*. (Prague: Franz Kafka Publishers, 1993), 250.

¹²² Paul Lendvai. *Antisemitism in Eastern Europe*. (London: MacDonald, 1972), 22.

¹²³ Ibid., 10

¹²⁴ For example, in Hungary, the government wanted to make sure that the anti-Israeli stand would not revive anti-Semitic passions, but mostly out of fear that this could end up in anti-communism. Kovacs, Andras. "Hungarian Communist Policy and the Six-Day War in 1967". Andras Kovacs and Eszter Andor (eds.) *Jewish Studies at the CEU III, 2002-03*. (Budapest, Jewish Studies Project, Central European University, 2006.), 263

CHAPTER 2- THE REVIVAL OF NATIONALISM

2.1. Rising Influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church after Communism

In Serbia, as in neighboring Bosnia and Croatia, the society has been gradually radicalized by under the influence of the various factors ever since the 1980s, and the growing attachment to national identities went along with the rising influence of the church and the religion, in the sense of belonging to a certain religious group.

The religiosity in general, and the activities of religious organizations, have been suppressed and marginalized during the communism, but have always played an important role in distinguishing “who is who” in the area once called Yugoslavia, especially in cases of groups which shared the same language. The churches have been given the chance to regain what was traditionally their “right” and their traditional role, the care about national causes and the control over the lost, ethnically determined flock. Serbian Orthodox Church, being a national and particularistic church unlike Catholicism in Croatia and Islam with Bosniaks, was even officially „for Serbs only”¹²⁵ All these characteristics made it especially prone to be accepted and used by Serbian nationalists and opened the door to many misuses and obscurities in the very doctrine of the church. It is still the case, especially having in mind the strengthening of the church in Serbia nowadays. The Serbian Orthodox Church has always been very much connected with what is seen and thought of as Serbian national identity, and respectively, with nationalism, but especially since the beginning of the 1990s. In the 1980s, Church was one of the main actors in raising nationalist issues especially in Kosovo. The problematic role and the position of Serbian Orthodox Church during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, when very influential bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church supported the

¹²⁵ The complex situation with SOC not recognizing the independence of Macedonian and Montenegrin Orthodox Church, does not stand as a proof against “for Serbs only” condition, since the refusal is connected with the fact that church sees both Macedonians and Montenegrin as “specific sort” of Serbs, although maybe they “fail to see” this. The church has no problem over “rightfully dominating the surrounding Slavs”.

unification of all lands inhabited mostly by Serbs into one state, and the church re-emerged as the self-proclaimed guardian of national interests, calls for a need to look beyond official rhetoric and standings of the church officials, and investigate the specific cases of the cleansing of history, the return to history with a new, very different interpretation of it, and possibly a hidden, or not explicitly admitted ideology within it.¹²⁶

Relating to the last comment, the main problem refers to the fact that the Serbian Orthodox Church, or at least certain influential and dominating elements within it; and certain extremist and very radical elements in Serbian society that are gaining in influence and being more and more heard of, share a common base for their clerical-nationalist ideologies. Not only this, but it will be investigated how some, even most of such groups have close cooperation with SOC although they generally claim to be independent of it, and in some cases Church denies the connection. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that up to the great extent, this common basis lies predominantly in the writings and the treatment of Nikolaj Velimirović. As already noted, in Serbian society nowadays, Velimirović is a sort of a religious celebrity, with his books being sold everywhere, from major bookstores to street stands, widely read, generally undisputed and highly regarded, especially since his official canonization. The values and beliefs of Nikolaj Velimirović, however, are strikingly similar and congruent, or even, the source of the values proclaimed by radical right-wing groups that emerged in Serbia especially after 2000. There are many examples of members of these groups officially stating him as an ideological leader and sacrosanct figure, and this will be one of the main question in interviews conducted for this thesis. What conclusion does this lead to?

Just like Serbian Orthodox Church, those far-right groups claim to have a vision of a traditional, patriarchal society. In the writings of bishop Nikolaj, these groups can and do

¹²⁶ Democratic critics within Serbia keep claiming claim that the high council of bishops, the Holy Synod, or episcopate is dominated by hard-line nationalists.

find some other things they need and look for: extreme nationalism, fundamentalism, anti-Western propaganda, anti-communism and anti-Yugoslavism. But the anti-Semitism is the one part of Velimirović's opus that the official church¹²⁷ does not dare, or is genuinely not willing to support. The official standing of the church includes the reluctant denial of any possibility of anti-Semitism. Moreover, the official church discourse includes the talk about pogroms of Serbs in Kosovo, Kosovo being "Serbian Jerusalem", which links and compares Serbs and Jews, and continues the insistence on the fact that Serbs and Jews together died in Jasenovac camp and other places in the World War II, as victims of Ustaše and Nazis¹²⁸ The comparison may even go deeper and further. According to Marko Živković, coins the phrase the « Jewish trop to denote one of the most important of Serbian narrative elements, which according to him was a part of the national discourse provided by groups of Serbian intellectuals that paved the way for Milošević's rise to power.¹²⁹ Such ideas as the ones that both Serbs and /Jews are the chosen peoples that are slaughtered and sacrificed, and that Kosovo Albanians stand to the Serbs as the Palestinians to the Israelis started gaining in credibility.¹³⁰ The Holy land of Kosovo is one of the main discourse tools of the church as well, even today.

But how can the church reconcile this stand and the fact that they went on with the canonization of Velimirović, even against the protests of domestic and international Jewish community? When the newsletter of the Serbian patriarchy "Pravoslavlje" printed an anti-Semitic article in January 1992 by their correspondent in Israel "Jews Crucify Christ Once More", Patriarch Pavle and Holy Orthodox Synod announced that the text sounds anti-

¹²⁷ Here I have mind the church officials, and mainly the Holy Synod as the most powerful instance in this, very hierarchical structure.

¹²⁸ Markiewicz calls Serbs- neo Jews, when he talks about anti-Serbism created by Western media during the war in 1990s. He says: "Ask Serbian children in the "Diaspora" how they're treated by comrades and teachers. Ask their parents how they're treated at work. I know Serbs who hide their names and origin - sound familiar?", William Markiewicz. "Nationalists win in Serbia." *Tucson Citizen Thursday*, <http://www.vagabondpages.com/january04/nationalist.html>

¹²⁹ Marko Živković. *The Wish to be a Jew: The Power of the Jewish Trope in the Yugoslav Conflict*, *Cahiers de l'URMIS* n° 6:69-84, March 2000. <http://urmis.revues.org/docannexe329.html>), 69

¹³⁰ Ibid., 73

Semitic, things are carelessly reported" and at the same time claimed: "the phenomenon of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism is completely alien to the tradition and history of the Serbian Orthodox Church."¹³¹ Also, reacting to anti-Semitic graffiti which appeared in Belgrade and Negotin in 2004, the Serbian Orthodox Church deplored "vigorously and unconditionally any act that minimizes the Holocaust of the Jews during World War II. These acts particularly hurt and insult now that we are marking the 60th anniversary of the closing of the death camps of Auschwitz and Jasenovac, in which Serbs and Jews perished and died together only for what they were."¹³² Despite this, the official did not denounce Velimirović for his anti-Semitic writings. The Church has chosen a strategy of forgetting the unpleasant and stressing the useful, in this case, by neglecting and trying to forget the accusations and warnings, and interpreting certain parts of his biography in such way that he is portrayed as the victim of Nazis, and then of the communists as well.

In 2002, The Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church condemned anti-Semitic remarks made by a retired Orthodox priest Žarko Gavrilović, in which he said Jews were born defective because of incest, drew protests from Israel and Yugoslav Foreign Minister Goran Svilanović. In a statement, the church said it resolutely rejected and condemned anti-Semitic remarks and actions, and also denounced the "language of hatred" heard recently in Yugoslavia.¹³³ If from all this we come back to the matter Velimirović's rehabilitation, the question is what the motive behind it was. Is it possible to assume that this happened because other parts of Velimirović's doctrine perfectly fit in Church's official doctrine? Another convenient factor lays in the fact that through his case the Church was able to bash the communists and once again. Yugoslav communist government

¹³¹ Stefan, "An International Symposium "Southeastern Europe 1918-1995" *Hrvatska izdavačka djelatnost*. <http://www.hic.hr/books/seeurope/014e-stefan.htm>

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ "Serbian Orthodox Church Condemns Anti-Semitic Comments by Retired Priest." *University of Buffalo, the State University of New York*. <http://listserv.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0202&L=TWATCH-L&T=0&F=&S=&P=79806>

has condemned this bishop as a fascist, Nazi collaborator and an anti-Semite. Besides, his moral rehabilitation, his journey "from a traitor to a saint", has literally followed the political situation in the land and the changes of political climate. This has for decades been the wish of the radical elements in the church.¹³⁴ His nationalism is defended and even highly respected and justified.

Should we agree with Byford that the radical group use exactly those parts of Velimirović's teachings which the church tries to forget, neglect or even hide? Byford understands how the radical right has no need for this kind of repression and replacement myth that the church is obliged to offer. Mirko Đorđević agrees that historical revisionism is in action. But the main problem is asking if the church with and through the canonization of Velimirović influences, tolerates, or simply does not stop the acceptance of anti-Semitism, giving implicit consent and legitimization to it by such a strong act, and giving a silent incentive to radical right groups to be anti-Semitic? Although official Serbian Orthodox Church always refers to the fact that Jews and Serbs together were the victims of Ustaše and Nazis, the view of Ljubica Stefan is that anti-Semitism was one of the constant ideologies and politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church before, during and after the World War II. Ljubica Stefan is writing: "That is to say, the Serbian Orthodox Church is in fact a kind of political party. It is greater Serbian and even racist."¹³⁵ In order to find out how Orthodox Christianity combined with nationalism and rightist ideologies relates to anti-Semitism, I have conducted an empirical research and discourse analyzes which will be exposed in following chapter.

2.2. Anti-Semitic Incidents after 1999

According to Byford and Billig, in June 1999, after the bombardment of Serbia by NATO, a number of articles containing references to anti-Semitic ideology appeared in

¹³⁴ His nephew Jovan Velimirović, Amfilohije Radović, bishop Artemije, Atanasije Jevtić.

¹³⁵ Stefan., Antisemitism in Serbia during the World War II. <http://www.hic.hr/books/seeurope/014e-stefan.htm>

leading Serbian newspaper Politika.¹³⁶ Already in 2001 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia voiced its concern over and cautions against continuing manifestations of hate speech and anti-Semitic stances in some Serbian media¹³⁷ and warned that this causes fear among the members of the Jewish community in Serbia. But in 2004 Aca Singer said: that there had been very few cases of anti-Semitism in the troubled Balkan republic over the past few years and that this was "encouraging."¹³⁸ Alluding to a shared history of suffering under and struggling against the Nazis, and therefore using similar discursive tools as the Orthodox Church, Singer said the following: "The Serbian people have a special relationship with the Jews. I cannot say that about many other peoples in Europe."¹³⁹

However, a great deal of anti-Semitic graffiti was reported in 2005 on the walls of Jewish facilities, as well as on property of institutions allegedly under Jewish control. In the report it is stated that numerous nationalist far right organizations are active in Serbia, some closely connected to the Serbian Orthodox Church.¹⁴⁰

For International Religious Freedom Report 2006, the Jewish community in Serbia reported continuing incidents of anti-Semitism, including anti-Semitic books, considering that this often led to an increase in hate mail and other expressions of anti-Semitism.¹⁴¹ These same sources associated anti-Semitism with anti-Western and anti-globalization sentiments, as well as with nationalism. Anti-Semitic graffiti appeared in Smederevo, Novi Sad, Niš along with nationalistic slogans such as "Serbia for the Serbs."

¹³⁶ Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 317. Billig and Byford, "The Emergence of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy", 322.

¹³⁷ "Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia- 2001(2002). Report on Antisemitism." *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia* <http://www.helsinki.org.yu/hcs/HCSreports.htm>.

¹³⁸ "World Jewish Congress Promotes Religious Tolerance in Serbia." *AccessMyLibrary*. http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-13647179_ITM

¹³⁹ "Jewish Leaders Visit Serbia to Build Ties". *The Centre for Peace in the Balkans* <http://www.balkanpeace.org/index.php?index=article&articleid=13180>

¹⁴⁰ "Republic of Serbia 2005" *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University*. <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/serbia.htm>

¹⁴¹ "Serbia and Montenegro (includes Kosovo). International Religious Freedom Report 2006". US Department of State. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/>

Reuters reported on September 2007 that Serbian police banned a rally in Novi Sad called The 'March for Serb Unity', planned by a small neo-Nazi organization "Nacionalni Stroj" (National Front) after it was condemned by Serb parties, non-governmental organizations and the World Jewish Congress. It is noted that neo-Nazi groups are on the rise in Serbia, but usually have few members and are mostly marginalized.¹⁴² "Nacionalni Stroj" has first publicly appeared earlier than 2007, in April 2005 *European Jewish Press* online source was saying: "Although only 3,000 Jews live in Serbia, the last month has seen a resurgence of anti-Jewish feeling in Belgrade and throughout Serbia." Three perpetrators were arrested for putting up posters showing the logo of a B92 station in a Star of David with the message "Boycott because of anti-Serbian influence... supporting the spreading of drug use, homosexuality and other Western sicknesses." signed by an unknown group, "Nacionalni Stroj" (National File).¹⁴³ Belgrade was covered by anti-Semitic graffiti and fliers. At the time Belgrade mayor Nenad Bogdanović has spoken out against the recent rise in anti-Semitism, saying he hopes anti-Jewish sentiment will disappear in the new, multicultural Europe. "Serbian people who try to be anti-Semitic are stupid people. It is not part of the history of Serbia."¹⁴⁴

After these incidents, the police officially proclaimed "Nacionalni Stroj", "Krv i Čast" and "Racionalisti" as neo-Nazis, and "Obraz" as a clero-fascist group. Some time after, organization Women in black from Belgrade warned in 2001 that "Obraz" as the avant-garde of a possible rebirth of fascism in Serbia. Clerico-nationalists usually view skinheads as heathen; however, "Obraz" had announced after the incidents in 2005 that it would organize a march in support of the National Front. It remained not clear whether some of their members

¹⁴² "Serbian Police Ban Rally by Neo-Nazi Group". *The Australian Jewish News*. <http://www.ajn.com.au/news/news.asp?pgID=4162>

¹⁴³ "Belgrade Mayor Speaks Out." *European Jewish Press*. http://www.ejpress.org/article/news/eastern_europe/849

¹⁴⁴ Jeremy Last, "Belgrade mayor speaks out" *European Jewish Press*. http://www.ejpress.org/article/news/eastern_europe/849

were arrested together with the members of “Nacionalni Stroj”. “Obraz” is sometimes said to be closely connected with student organization active on Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, “Sveti Justin Filozof”, and clero-nationalistic web portals such as www.gazimestan.com, and the organization “Dveri Srpske”. [Serbian Gates], and determining this will be the subject of my empirical research as well, same as the content of their web pages and the attitude towards anti-Semitism.

At the same time, a journalist reporting for *Transitions online* website was wondering whether Serbia’s top institutions are really doing enough against political extremism, although anti-Semitic hate speech in Serbia has been firmly condemned by the government, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the political elites, even nationalist Serbian Radical Party.¹⁴⁵ He says that while some analysts blame what they call a wave of anti-Semitism" on social intolerance, wars, poverty, and other negative consequences of transition, others argue that these acts are deliberately targeting the interests of the government of an important step towards European integration. It is, however, said that the Serbian Orthodox Church deplored vigorously and unconditionally any act that minimizes the Holocaust of the Jews during World War II. “These acts particularly hurt and insult now that we are marking the 60th anniversary of the closing of the death camps of Auschwitz and Jasenovac, in which Serbs and Jews perished and died together only for what they were.”¹⁴⁶

Many see these extremist tendencies also as a reaction to what is perceived as a key role of some prominent American Jews in the break-up of Yugoslavia and the wars that followed, as well as the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia. Alexander Lebl, said that many

¹⁴⁵ Mitić, Aleksandar. “Anti-Semitism: The Writing on the Wall”. *Transitions online*. <http://www.cceol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=F294F464-6274-4724-AB5E-271B5FE7985D>

¹⁴⁶ (Ibid.)

Serbs “think the NATO bombing of Belgrade was a conspiracy led by Jews like the U.S. secretary of state, Madeleine Albright,”¹⁴⁷

2.3. Anti-Semitic Publications

One of the main indicators of anti-Semitism in a country is a presence of anti-Semitic literature and its influence.¹⁴⁸ Aca Singer, the leader of Belgrade Jews and an Auschwitz survivor, reacting to anti-Semitic graffiti in Belgrade and Negotin in 2005 stated his critic of the Serbian judiciary, which has not yet been ruled on the Association of Jewish Communities' complaint filed against Ratibor Đurđević. This former a member of Ljotić's organization, immigrated to the United States following the World War II and returned to Serbia in 1990. His publishing house, Ihtus Christian Book, published *The Serbs in the Claws of the Jew* and other anti-Semitic works. He argues that the Serbs are an obstacle to the forces of Jewish conquest in the Balkans.¹⁴⁹ Singer said that over the five years prior to 2005, over a hundred anti-Semitic books have been published in Serbia,¹⁵⁰ which shows that it started in 2000, a year after the NATO bombing.

In the older preface of Serbian version of “the Protocols of the Elders of Zion”¹⁵¹, by an unknown publisher, it is stated firmly that every patriot and the Slav should read this book carefully. “The big catastrophe prepared by secret, underground forces which had ruled the destiny of peoples since forever, threatens to fulfill\ their satanic intentions in

¹⁴⁷ Dinah Spritzer. “Serb Extremism on Rise, but Jewish Life Flourishing.” *The Jerusalem Post* <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1196847267359&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

¹⁴⁸ Aleksandar Lebl in a talk which we had expressed the belief that anti-Semitism comes out as a downside of democracy., since even openly anti-Semitic groups cannot be banned in the name of democracy. In the same way, the freedom of expression and the freedom of publishing, as democratic achievements, indirectly contribute to the rise of intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism etc.

¹⁴⁹ Ljubiša Ivanović and Dragana Nikolić -Solomon. “Anti-Semitism Raises its Head in Serbia” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, http://iwpr.net/?p=bcr&s=f&o=242031&apc_state=henibcr2005

¹⁵⁰ Mitić, “Anti-Semitism: The Writing on the Wall” <http://www.cceol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=9750af0d-656d-4aac-adb0-7653e0e84532&articleId=f294f464-6274-4724-ab5e-271b5fe7985d>

¹⁵¹ Anonymous, *Protokoli Sionskih Mudraca* [Protocols of the elders of Zion], (Belgrade, Anonymous 2001), 4

close future”.¹⁵² The preface to 2001 edition starts by saying that people are made poor by “the dictatorship of the proletariat”, and that there are clear double standards proven through actions of the New World Order and satanization of Serbs. The author is wondering how it is possible that the Jews now support “Nazi-fascist imperialistic and genocidal forces in Europe, and in ex-Yugoslavia” and that “they don’t mind united Germany, but they do mind united Serbian people on the land of their ancestors.”¹⁵³ The (unknown) author proceeds by saying that American administration gives away Serbian land, and Serbia, that did not even participate in civil war, is blamed for everything, by enemies of Serbs. In search for those enemies it is enough to find out who hides behind American and French government. The answer is, to this author- the Jews.

It will be crucial, in order to answer the question about their anti-Semitism. during the content analyzes of right-wing interned websites, to investigate what type of publications they are addressing their readers and followers, and in the interviews that will be conducted, one of the main questions will be whether the individual has read “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion” and what attitude about that book the person holds. The hypothesis is that not only this, but many other anti-Semitic publications occupy an important place on the websites in question.

¹⁵² Ibid., 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 14.

CHAPTER 3- SERBIAN RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. The Types of Right-Wing Groups in Serbia

After the analyses of the website moderated by Serbian extreme right-wing organizations, the first conclusion is that there are, roughly speaking, predominantly two different types of such groups. One type may be called Nazi right-wing extremists, typically the Serbian sections of international groups of that type, such as “Nacionalni Stroj” (National Front) and Blood and Honour (Krv i Cast.), but also the group called Rasonalisti, which is the term made out of the Serbian version of the term Racial Nationalists. The other type is Christian right wing, which is diverse in itself, varying from clerofascist and openly anti-Semitic “Obraz” (Dignity) to extremely anti-fascist groups such as “1389”. As most important Christian right wing important for the research I have also classified the organization Naši¹⁵⁴ (Ours), “Dveri” Srpske (Serbian Gates), Sv. Justin filozof (Saint Justin the Philosopher) and Familija Srpskih Navijača (Family of the Serbian Supporters)¹⁵⁵. The organizations such as Srpski Nacionalisti which do not clearly define as Orthodox Christian right, were left out of the analyses, while I included the website of the Serbian Defense League which is extremely anti-Semitic and operated by American resident, since anti-Semitic motives seem to make the central focus of this organization, which makes no reference neither to Christianity nor to Nazi convictions.

However, the borderline between the two roughly defined types is very hazy and hard to be strictly determined, although it is fair to say that the organizations of the first type openly promotes anti-Semitism and most of the organizations of the second type try to deny

¹⁵⁴ Naši stands for *The Ours* or *Our Own (People)*, and there is also Russian organization with the same name and the meaning, which Serbian Naši are cooperating with closely. They are based in Arandelovac, a town in Central Serbia, and since there is no coverage of the Jewish problematic on their website, their leader was interviewed by me in order to find out his attitudes in this regard.

¹⁵⁵ The family of the Serbian sport fans. This organization, same as “1389”, have has also given me the interview for this thesis and will be discussed more in a following chapter.

such allegations . But the classifying and Nazi groups as pagans is not simple at all, although some anti-Nazi Christian groups would like to simplify it and in these way make the difference between themselves and the neo-Nazis. However, it is clear that some of those “pagan” groups use Orthodox Christian motives as well to promote their own stands. For example, the person who is certainly closely connected to “Nacionalni Stroj” and Blood and Honour, even said to be the leader, Goran Davidović, on his own internet website has motives such as praising Dimitrije Ljotić¹⁵⁶, who was a Christian fascist, and Serbian Blood and Honour are shown at their website in a church, attending and praying during the “Memorial meeting of National formation dedicated to the Serbian victims of NATO aggression in 1999”¹⁵⁷. These groups also provide links for some websites that promote Slavonic paganism, therefore it is not completely clear where to draw the line and how to classify them in religious sense, or whether this should be the guideline for the classification at all, in their case. However, the clandestine organization Racionalisti which is extremely and violently antisemitic, is clearly referring to Serbian pagan background. “Obraz” may be regarded as the border case between the two types.¹⁵⁸ Being officially proclaimed as clero-fascists, and according to the fact that they supported “Nacionalni Stroj” in 2007, as well as the fact that they are certainly more openly anti-Semitic than other Christian right-wing groups, they might be classified in the first group. But the fact that they are extremely pro-Orthodox Church and that they are said to have close ties with “Dveri”, Sv. Justin Filozof and some other organizations of that type, but with the Church as well, puts them in the second group.

As far as Serbian internet anti-Semitism not originating in Serbia proper is concerned, the most extreme attitudes can be found on the website of the abovementioned Serbian

¹⁵⁶ Vladimir Maksimović, “Pomen Ljotiću”, *Zvanični sajt Gorana Davidovića*. http://gorandavidovic.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=235&Itemid=49

¹⁵⁷ “Memorial meeting of National formation dedicated to the Serbian victims of NATO aggression in 1999” *Blood and Honor Serbia*. <http://www.bhserbia.org/main.htm>

¹⁵⁸ The already mentioned march in support of ““Nacionalni Stroj””. It remained not clear whether some of their members were arrested together with the members of ““Nacionalni Stroj””

Defense League, *Compuserb*, where it is claimed how powerful Jews from the world destroyed Yugoslavia so domestic Jews could rule it. SDL claims they are documenting Zionist genocides on Serbs.¹⁵⁹ The death of Slobodan Milošević is also seen as caused by the Jews. However, this website is run by person named Boris Pribich, who is living in California, and this case raises the problematic issue about internet anti-Semitism, the fact that the website can reflect opinions and convictions of one single person, or only a few of individuals, who are administering the website. It is still worth of investigating who gets influenced by such ideas and whether the existence of such websites may help the rise of Serbian anti-Semitism. Another important issue is that this case contributes the hypothesis that the import of anti-Semitism to Serbia goes through Diaspora. Pribich sees the United States, in which he is based, as a Zionist superpower, saying the following: “Jews herd *stupid* Americans like *cattle* against one people after another and they sell weapons to the enemy to kill Americans in order to profit from spilled blood”¹⁶⁰

Somewhat similar, extreme nationalist organization which has been very loud and active for the past couple of years, especially regarding the Kosovo issues and participating in protests after the declaration of the independence of Kosovo, Garda Cara Lazara [The Guard of the Emperor Lazar] on their forum gives the list of Jews that destroyed Serbia. According to them, those are Madeleine Albright, George Soros, James Rubin, Wesley Clark, William Cohen and Richard Holbrook, American Jews who are seen as powerful figures in the world politics.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ “CompuSerb breaking the silence” *CompuSerb* <http://compuserb.com>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ “Forum Garde Svetog Cara Lazara”. *Garda Cara Lazara* <http://kosmetskiboj.7forum.net/obavestenje-fl/jevreji-koji-su-nam-dosli-glave-t20.htm?highlight=jevreji> The representative of the organization “1389”, in an interview given to the author of this thesis in Belgrade, on 16.05.2008, marked Garda Cara Lazara as the group they have tried to cooperate with, but turned out not to be serious. It will be shown later, in the chapter containing the findings of the interviews how “1389” most clearly distances themselves from anti-Semitism and Nazism, although they are strongly nationalistic, and according to one of my other interviewees, but also according to the words of their representative, connected with, or at least sympathizers of Serbian Radical Party.

3.2. Anti-Semitism of the pro-Nazi Right-Wing

The main anti-Semitic internet activities and propaganda for Serbian audience go through the international web portal *Stormfront*, *White Nationalist Community*, which is hosting Serbian neo-Nazi and racist organization, as well as many others from all over the world. On one of their forums, the members are trying to make the list of the Jews in Serbia, contributing and discussing who is a Jew and who is not.¹⁶² It is especially interesting how they are repeatedly attempting to label non-Jewish liberal Serbian intellectuals as Jews. Although the author of the forum keeps repeating how this list is only for informative purposes, the hate speech in posts is extremely present.

The online libraries of "Krv i Čast" "Nacionalni Stroj" and the website of "Rasolisti" include Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, anti-Jewish books by Serbian pre World War II anti-Semites Jaša Tomić, Milorad Mojić, Danilo Gregorić and Lazar Prokić, books by a racist Branimir Maleš¹⁶³, and of course, all refer to the full text of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, with Serbian preface. These groups see both the media in Serbia and the government as Zionist, and based on that, Krv i Čast i "Nacionalni Stroj" claim that that Serbian authority banned "The march for Serbian unity" in 2007 according to the order of its Zionist masters¹⁶⁴, in that way assaulting democracy and the rights of these groups. "Nacionalni Stroj" explicitly claims, as well as Rasolisti, that they believe in the biological inequality of individuals and races. Rasolisti came up with interesting word game, saying how they fight against the wall; whether it is the Wailing wall, or the Wall street- it is the same.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, their beliefs are the combination of extreme anti-Judaism and political anti-Semitism based on the

¹⁶² "Stormfront Srbija" *Stormfront White Nationalist Community*.

<http://www.stormfront.org/forum/forumdisplay.php?stormfront-srbija-43.html?f=43>

¹⁶³ He wrote a text "Sefardi i Aškenazi" [The Sephards and the Ashkenazi] in which he claims those are two different races. Branimir Maleš "Sefardi i Aškenazi". *Krv i Čast Srbija* <http://www.bhserbia.org/glavna.htm>

¹⁶⁴ "Nacionalni Stroj": Saopštenja. "Nacionalni Stroj". http://www.nacionalnistroj.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=47

¹⁶⁵ "Neprijatelj". *Rasolisti Srbije*. <http://www.rasolisti.net/neprijatelj/>

ideas that the Jews control world economy. They call the Jews “the enemy” and “the ancient evil”, and deny Holocaust, based on the scandalous comparison of the Jews and mad cows in UK, in the text “Mrtve krave protiv mrtvih Jevreja” [Dead Cows Against the Dead Jews]. They are claiming that such a large number of bodies could not have disappeared, since the Britons in the twenty-first century did not manage to completely destroy the bodies of the dead cows, therefore it is possible that the Nazis managed to disintegrate so many Jews. Their conclusion is: the killings of so many Jews never happened.¹⁶⁶

3.3. *Christian Right Wing*

The only case I could track in which the Serbian Orthodox Church denounce internet activities of nationalistic groups that relate to the church was when bishop Artemije, one of the most prominent nationalists within the Church on church’s official website, decided to give an announcement in English that he is not in any way connected to www.gazimestan.com¹⁶⁷ in particular. In this proclamation he is saying that due to the increasing frequency of the creation of anonymous websites, from various self-proclaimed defenders of Orthodoxy, who in a most callous way attack the Serbian Orthodox Church, mudding, among others things, the work and persons of some of our oldest and most esteemed bishops, attempting to, in a very faithless manner, create divisions in the Church itself. Artemije, who these self-proclaimed are supposedly defending, announced that he does not support the Gazimestan website www.gazimestan.com.¹⁶⁸ However, if the announcement is read in its total, it gets clear how Artemije did not react because of the hate speech promoted on

¹⁶⁶“Mrtve krave protiv mrtvih Jevreja” *Racionalisti Srbije*.

<http://www.racionalisti.net/neprijatelj/mrtvekraveprotivmrtvihjevreja.php>

¹⁶⁷ www.gazimestan.com was for a certain period very popular among Christian nationalists, but the website does not operate anymore and therefore it is not included in these analyses.

¹⁶⁸ “The Holy Hierarchical Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church against Slandorous Internet Activity.” *Serbian Orthodox Church*. <http://www.spc.yu/Vesti-2007/02/14-02-07-e.html>

those websites, but because it is said that his names is there used in order to attach some other Church officials.

As it was mentioned repeatedly, the most extremist organization in this groups is “Obraz”, Orthodox clero-fascist organization which was established as a movement, in support of magazine ““Obraz””, in 1993, and in late 2000 evolved into a political organisation. “Obraz” is strictly and originally Serbian, and directly inspired by Velimirović’s ideology.¹⁶⁹ According to the 2005 report, originally, the official “Obraz” website included a “Declaration for the Enemy,” which threatened Jewish or Judeo-Masonic individuals or groups. It was eventually replaced with the text: “Will Serbs exist in the near future or will we be murdered by Shiptars¹⁷⁰ those who converted to Islam, or die by the hand of Judeo-Masonic NATO murderers?... or will we... drown in the sewers of the Soros Open Society and the New World Order?”¹⁷¹ The Stephen Roth’s Institute’s website in its report notes that many antisemitic and racial incidents mentioned previously such as graffiti Jewish facilities, or on institutions perceived to house liberal/open-minded people (Belgrade University’s Faculty of Philosophy, B-92 TV, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights), have been attributed to “Obraz”, but have not been proven.¹⁷²

According to the same source, the nationalist, religious Saint Justin the Philosopher (Sveti Justin Filozof) movement, named after a pupil of Velimirović, attracts conservative and Orthodox members, and is reportedly supported by Serbian Orthodox Church. Branches of the movement exist in many universities in Serbia. However, at the time of this research in 2008 I have discovered that this organization is no longer functioning. The most influential student organization of that type at this moment is Nomonkanon, based at the Faculty of Law in

¹⁶⁹ Mladen Obradović, the leader of ““Obraz””, stated explicitly Velimirović as his role-model, a few days after the declaration of the independence of Kosovo, in talk-show Dvougao on RTV B92 in Belgrade. The whole show can be viewed on ““Obraz””’s website “B92 dvougao” Mediji. ““Obraz””. <http://www.Obraz.org.yu/>

¹⁷⁰ Derogatory term for Albanians

¹⁷¹ “Proglas neprijateljima.” ““Obraz””. <http://www.Obraz.org.yu>

¹⁷² “Republic of Serbia 2005” *The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism*, Tel Aviv University. <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/serbia.htm>

Belgrade, but its representatives were not contacted for the interview either, due to the fact that I have decided to exclude students' organizations and include only those which are clearly activist or political.

The Stephen Roth Institute's website says that "Dveri" (Gates) is one of the largest right-wing, movements attracting both extreme right and Orthodox supporters,, that it has close links to the Serbian Orthodox Church and Church officials sometimes lecture at their weekly meetings.¹⁷³ In 2001, "Dveri" claimed that Orthodox Serbian unity cannot be achieved with those who do not accept the Truth, such as Jews, Muslims, Protestants. According to the report, their ideology is based on conspiracy theories (such as powerful forces controlling the world) and extreme xenophobia, requiring Serbia to unite nationally and religiously. The movement has a journal and is expanding rapidly throughout Serbia.¹⁷⁴ But, they publicly denounce the accusations of anti-Semitism and this will be thoroughly referred to, since "Dveri" according to the interviews from the other organization are considered to be the largest, the best organized and the most influential of all the organizations mentioned.

Boško Obradović, the editor-in-chief of "Dveri" magazine, wrote in one of his article how there were no Serbs who did wrong to the Jews, but there were Jews in the worlds, especially the US and France, that made a big sin toward Serbian people.¹⁷⁵ He added that this does not mean they are the representatives of the whole Jewish people and complained how it is not acceptable that every critic of actions and behavior of certain Jews gets labeled as anti-Semitism, Jewish people cannot have such privileged position that every member of Jewish nation is untouchable. He thinks it is amoral to label every talk about Jewish influence in the

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ 2005 <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/serbia.htm>

¹⁷⁵ Boško Obradović, "Trojanski konj anti-Semitizma". *Srpski Sabor "Dveri"* <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/45>

world as anti-Semitism.¹⁷⁶ In that very sentence, he inserts the comment how that Jewish influence in the world cannot be doubted.

According to a text at “Dveri Srpske” website co-authored by bishop Atanasije Jevtić and Radoš Mladenović, the accusations for anti-Semitism in Serbia are completely false and equating Serbian patriotism with Nazism is nothing but effrontery.¹⁷⁷ They have also issued a text which talks against Byford’s brochure from 2005 “Repression and Denial of Anti-Semitism: Representations of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in contemporary Serbian Orthodox culture.” They label this book as a of a campaign by a small but loud group of people that insinuates lies not only the Saint Nikolaj but the whole of Church and the most of Serbian people. In this way, the authors are insinuating how most of Serbs belongs to the Church and they are involving much wider audience in the issue, presenting the accusations against bishop Nikolaj as indirectly the attack on Serbian people . They also claim how Byford and published only selective results, even though some of his interviewees spent up to four hours answering his questions, in that way proving, according to them, the honest and Christian desire to help a young researcher, who then twisted their words.¹⁷⁸ They insist on repeating that neither Serbian people nor bishop Nikolaj have ever been or anti-Semites, although, according to the text, it might be the case that from time to time there appears some unstable Serb or a group of Serbs with such beliefs, however that is not the real expression of the Serbian people and the Church.¹⁷⁹ According to this apology, the famously quoted Nikolaj’s sentence “the Jews and their father the devil”¹⁸⁰ was actually what Christ said to the Pharisees, so according to this text, that proves there was no anti-Semitism in Nikolaj’s words, nor in the church of Christ. The word “rehabilitation” is also problematic, since Jevtić

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Atanasije Jevtić and Radoš Mladenović . “Novi napadi na vladiku Nikolaja“. [New Attacks on Bishop Nikolaj]. *Srpski Sabor “Dveri”*. <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/150>
<http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/150>

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Nikolaj Velimirović.. “Kroz tamnicki prozor” [Through the Dungeon Window]. *Scribd*.
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/15031/Sveti-Vladika-Nikolaj-Kroz-Tamnicki-Prozor> (p. 65).

and the co-author say that the Church has never accepted communist accusations, there was no reason for Nikolaj to be rehabilitated. However, they are wrong in saying this, because not only that the people in former Yugoslavia accepted communist allegations, but as it was mentioned previously, a part of the church denounced him as well. The recommendation the authors of the text give is for Byford and “others behind him”¹⁸¹ to investigate about anti-Serbs among contemporary Jews, such as, again, Holbrook Albright, Soros, Abramovich and not about anti-Semites among Serbian people, who have has a lot of friends among Jews.¹⁸²

Boško Obradović’s text “The Trojan horse of anti-Semitism”¹⁸³ insinuates how these accusations are deliberately imputed, thanks to the fact that in the modern times virtual reality becomes more real than the reality itself. His judgment is that campaign is at the first place directed against Serbian Church, since after the twentieth century, anti-Semitism is the worst possible accusation for a nation. However, although according to him, anti-Semitism just as any chauvinism has no justification, it cannot become an ideology to serve political interests. The author claims there are no examples of anti-Semitism in Serbia, that. Jews in Serbia have never had any difficulties, not to talk about pogroms. He literally uses the words no examples and never, although it is an exaggeration and the examples always exist. Obradović’s insinuation is as well that no one can in advance claim that those who wrote the graffiti gave been Serbs, and even if so, the skinheads are not Serbian organization but imported from the West, and this is according to him godless Serbia that the Christians want nothing to do with. He expresses the doubt that anti-Semitism in Serbia is “prepared in media kitchens”¹⁸⁴ and ends by claiming the significance of Jewish heritage for Serbian own identity. He also claims in another text how Nazism and anti-Semitism do not exist in Serbia, but fall in the scope of

¹⁸¹ Atanasije Jevtić and Radoš Mladenović . “Novi napadi na vladiku Nikolaja“. [New Attacks on Bishop Nikolaj]. *Srpski Sabor “Dveri”*. <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/150>.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Boško Obradović , “Trojanski konj anti-Semitizma”. *Srpski Sabor “Dveri”* <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/45>

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

what he calls virtual reality.¹⁸⁵ Similar opinions can be read at the website www.vidovdan.org.¹⁸⁶ They suspect that someone is trying to ruin Serbia's good name with the accusations and insinuate that the appearance of groups like "Nacionalni Stroj" and their incidents looks "ideally anti-Semitic",¹⁸⁷ and might therefore be a manipulation. Such a denial seems to be typical for the Christian Right.

Another member of "Dveri" even defends a neo-Nazi Goran Davidović, saying that if Davidović said he was not a neo-Nazi, he believed him.¹⁸⁸ His text goes along the same line of argumentation: Nazism and anti-Semitism in Serbia do not exist, and incidents are deliberately caused in order to falsely accuse the Serbs.

According to the website of the group "1389", in the section where they list the issues which are of the national importance, it is stated that anti-Semitism is racism and that this must be made clear. It is a consequence of the hatred and wild passion, and the hatred towards the entire nation is always irrational. In this way they clearly define anti-Semitism as something negative. However, they say that the key problem is in those who are Jews, but not the Israelis¹⁸⁹, and that is why anti-Semitism develops in societies in which the participation of the Jews in political power is too big.¹⁹⁰

To conclude with this, it would be important to note that that kind of denial does not exist on the web pages of "Obraz". "Obraz" has its proclamation to the enemies¹⁹¹, where, at the first place and as the first enemy listed come the Zionists, defined as anti-Christian Jewish

¹⁸⁵ Boško Obradović, "O nacizmu u Srbiji". *Srpski Sabor "Dveri"* <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/268>

¹⁸⁶ Vidovdan is religious orthodox holiday and the day on which the Battle of Kosovo took place, therefore this holiday has a special significance for Serbian nationalists. The Battle of Kosovo happened at the end of the fourteenth century between medieval Serbs and the Turks, and is used in Serbian national mythology as a symbol of Serbian heroic resistance,

¹⁸⁷ Branko Radun. "Podsećanje: Kako se pojavio ""Nacionalni Stroj""". *Vidovdan*. <http://www.vidovdan.org/article259.html>

¹⁸⁸ Vladan Glišić "Nacisti nisu srpske patriote. Firer nije pravoslavni Srbin" *Srpski Sabor "Dveri"* <http://www.Dverisrpske.com/tekst/249>

¹⁸⁹ It will be clarified in the chapter with the interview findings what "1389" means by this division.

¹⁹⁰ "Nacionalni interes". *Srpski Narodni Pokret 1389* <http://www.1389.org.yu/nacionalniinteres.htm>

¹⁹¹ "Proglas srbskim neprijateljima" *"Obraz"*. [http://www.""Obraz"".org.yu/""Obraz""/Nacela/Srbskim_neprijateljima.htm](http://www.)

Racists .It was said before how it is clear that following words do not address to the Zionists, nor in the exact nor in “Obraz”’s sense of that word but to all Jews. The “Obraz” claims how the Zionists belong to the people that had such a unique mercy to have the Christ revealing to them, but they despised, rejected and crucified Him. “Obraz” does not hesitate to openly use the old Christian accusation for Christ-killing in the twenty-first century. They continue with the obvious hate speech and including all the Jews as a target of their threat when they say: “You begun straying and taking away from other people what you lost by your own fault.”¹⁹² “Obraz” accuses Jews of being in a quest against Christ and all the Christians ever since the Pharisees the Manichean and the cabalists, all through Masonry and the Illuminati, and for having an insane wish to rule the world.¹⁹³ The proclamation continues by the words: “you organized and financed the biggest world wars and revolutions.” The conclusion from what they themselves say cannot be but the one that “Obraz” is an openly anti-Semitic organization. According to Byford, it had often been anti-Semitic and racist even back in 1996, when Vojislav Kostunica¹⁹⁴ had written one nationalistic article for the “Obraz” magazine.¹⁹⁵ However, Byford said that the founder of “Obraz” Nebojša Krstić was a man very close to Serbian Orthodox Church,¹⁹⁶ but this tie has considerably abated when Krstić was killed in 2001. Byford claimed that Mladen Obradović, Krstić’s successor, was less capable and has less links with the Church, but although this link is no longer direct, it still exists,¹⁹⁷ and the official Church has not, until the day of Byford’s speech at the forum “Racism, Fascism, Xenophobia...” in 2005.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ The leader of Democratic Party of Serbia, who has become the president of Serbia in 2000, when he was running against Milosevic. Kostunica is current technical Prime Minister of Serbia (since the new Government is not yet formed after the last Parliamentary elections in Serbia in May 2008) , and has been occupying the position since 2003.

¹⁹⁵“Kostunica contributed an article to ““Obraz”””. *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia*. http://www.helsinki.org.yu/hrantisemitism_t01.html

¹⁹⁶ “a man whom the Patriarch awarded for a paper he had written as a student at the Theological College” Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Through the Serbian Popular Movement ‘Svetozar Miletić’ close to Bishop of Bačka Irinej. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4- THE RESEARCH

4.1. Analysis of the Responses

In order to verify or falsify my hypothesis that anti-Semitism, if there is to be found among the members of radical Christian right-wing organizations in Serbia, comes as a reaction to Serbian political problems in the late 1990s and onwards, and it is related to conspiracy theories much more than motivated by traditional Christian anti-Judaism; I decided to conduct interviews with the members of six such groups. The organizations I contacted were “Obraz” (Dignity), “Dveri Srpske” (Serbian Gates), “Naši”¹⁹⁸ (Ours), “Sv. Justin filozof” (Saint Justin the Philosopher), “Familija Srpskih Navijača” (Family of Serbian Supporters) and “1389”.¹⁹⁹ The leader of “Obraz” responded at first and asked for the questions to be sent in advance, after which he did not wish to reply. The representatives of “Dveri” did at all respond at my wish to contact them. As far as “Sv. Justin filozof” is concerned, it turned out that the organization does not function anymore, as already mentioned. The representatives of the three remaining groups have responded to all of the questions, and my findings will be presented in this chapter. The representative of “Naši” and the author discussed the views of that group on several different occasions. The interviews were conducted in Belgrade in early May 2007, in Serbian language.

In these interviews I was posing very broad and general questions about the subjects which I was interested in, so the interviewee could say whatever he²⁰⁰ thinks and wants to say about the issue. The questions were mainly aiming at finding out their ideas about Jews, anti-Semites, conspiracies, communism, famous anti-Semites Ljotić and Velimirović, and other

¹⁹⁸ It has been mentioned how this organization was created after a Russian organization with the same name, which Serbian Naši are closely cooperating with. (I.I. in an interview to the author on 20.05.2008). There is no coverage of the Jewish –related issues on Serbian “Naši” website, neither positive nor negative views, so the website need not have been analyzed in the previous chapter.

¹⁹⁹ “1389” is the name of the organization from Belgrade, which is named after the year of the Kosovo Battle.

²⁰⁰ All the interviewed person were of male gender.

issues. In order to determine this, the previously listed questions were posed, out of which the questions 9d, 10d and 11-20 were meant to investigate the subjects of the interest for this thesis, while the other questions served as a preparation, as well as a way for acquiring additional information, such as the size of the groups, the length of its existence etc. I was additionally interested in right-wing groups' members' views about the freemasonry, communism, and similar subjects which typically appear related to anti-Semitic motives. I wanted to investigate not only their attitudes about Jews, but also whether they consider themselves pro-Russian and Anti-American. The hypothesis that this will be the case for all of them has been confirmed throughout conversations. It was important for me to find out how well connected they are with the official church, and with other patriotic organizations and which, this time from their own testimonies.

In general, all targeted organizations except "Obraz" were formed after 2000, and have a small number of the active members, but according to my presupposition and also to the answer given by the representative of "Naši", for certain actions they are able to gather much more people.²⁰¹ He gave the example when the organization decided to prevent the promotion of the liberal radio and TV show "Peščanik" in Aranđelovac, and said that although the organization has sixty members in that town and around thirty in Zrenjanin, it was able to gather around one thousand two hundred people for this action.²⁰²

All these organizations declare as orthodox believers, with their religious beliefs being integral part of their ideology.²⁰³

²⁰¹ The actions of that organizations are not anti-Semitic, but they are directed against liberal media and Liberal-Democratic Party, and aimed at issues which are of much bigger interest for Serbian general public than anti-Semitism is, such as protests against the independence of Kosovo. Their website contains no declaration about the Jews not about anti-Semitism, nor does the website of "FSN", therefore it is especially interesting to find out whether they express anti-Semitic ideas once they are asked about the subject.

²⁰² I.I. in an interview given to the author on 30.04.2008.

²⁰³ "1389"- R.P said that Serbian people is one of the main pillars of the authentic Christianity, and that the faith of the Serbs is inseparable from the Orthodoxy, which had saved the Serbs over history.

4.2. Nationalism and Ideology

None of the organizations in question deny they are nationalists and the right-wing, and proudly claim this fact. The representative of “Naši” declared that the aim of the organization is the protection of Serbian national interest; economic, spiritual and cultural renewal of Serbian nation.²⁰⁴ However, he does not want his group to be classified as the extreme right, saying as well the following “Although many would like to see as the extremists. Democratic Party and Liberal Democratic Party are much more extreme than us.”²⁰⁵ “FSN” representative declared they were even willing to confront for the homeland, in any sense of the word,²⁰⁶ and that they were not interested in politics, but what he had called “healthy nationalism” and Orthodoxy. The interviewee expressed his affinity for the World War II Četnik movement. The members of “1389” do not want to classify their group in the ideological sense, and claim to be against all the ideologies.²⁰⁷ They are both strongly anti-fascist and anti-communist, and think that any ideology would lead people side wards. All three groups express strong anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist convictions.

“1389”, as mentioned, expressed strong anti-Nazi convictions and say that Nazism is completely alien to the people of Serbia.²⁰⁸ The member of “Naši” said that being a Nazi in Serbia is something imported and ridiculous: It disables a nationalist, since that means being a nationalist who cannot do anything. All they do is that they “spit on the Jews and the Gypsies, make some incidents here and there”.²⁰⁹ But, this actually prevents the real action he himself is calling for. In his views these Nazis are mainly teenagers or football fans of club called “Rad” from Belgrade, known for its skinhead fans.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.05.2008.

²⁰⁷ R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ I.I. in the interview on 30.04.2008.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

4.3. Interconnections and Connections with the Serbian Orthodox Church

“FSN” considers that over Internet appeared certain groups that in this way gain in popularity, have strong and resounding declarations, but the reality and the background of these groups is that they not as they seem. He does not explain this in more details, but it is likely that he meant their real motivation and influence are much different and under suspicion. He denotes them as “the so-called cyber-Serbs”²¹¹

As far as the mutual cooperation of the groups of the type in question is concerned, it is fair to conclude that they are practically all connected. According to what the interviews have declared, they all know each other (at least the leadership), have each others personal phone numbers and have cooperated on various occasions, over different actions, although, not all of them have positive views on some of the others. Asked not to cite their negative views, I will only explicitly mention the cases of mutual respect and close cooperation, and while I will mention certain critical view about “Obraz“, I will not write which of my interviews said that.

One of the interviews said how “Obraz” used to be the most perspective of all nationalistic organizations, but after the death of their founder, they became ridiculous and known only for incidents, although back in the old days they were said to have up to 30000 members.²¹² Both “Naši” and “1389” list “Dveri” as the organization that they have close cooperation with, and note that “Dveri” are very well connected with the Serbian Orthodox Church. “Naši” representative notes that “Dveri” are the most serious, well organized and perspective of all Christian organizations.²¹³ He even said how all that his own organization did was is done with the aim of making one bigger organization in future, which he had not said much more about, but it was clear how it was meant to unite various different

²¹¹ V.S. in the interview on 13.08.2008.

²¹² Anonymous respondent in an interview to the author. Note how his opinion agrees with Byford’s observation previously mentioned.

²¹³ I.I. in the interview to the author on 30.04.2008

organizations, and it had been implied that the Russians would have a role in that too.²¹⁴ “FSN” member said how they had tried to cooperate with the others, not mentioning any names, but had only lost their time because those mostly had turned out to be the sub-branches of various political organizations and sects, and he added how by their structure they resemble the conspiracy groups. This is a very interesting finding, the case in which a nationalist activist suspects nationalistic organizations for being a part of some conspiracy as well. He claims: “At least 70 % of them are the creation of different secret services with the task to collect the information and break the unity of the Serbian national being”.²¹⁵

“1389” member said that since there were many patriotic organizations which were, however, very small; they had since the beginning been aware they had to cooperate with all of those, except for Nazi organizations, with which they had an enormous ideological clash, since Nazism had been a catastrophe for the Serbian people²¹⁶. They are also cooperating with organizations from Republika Srpska and Russia, what he is especially glad about, since according to him that means they are not only nationally oriented. They are willing to accept all Orthodox and Slavic, also either Orthodox or Slavic people and organizations. He gave an example of Slovak girl being a member of “1389”, which they have recently gladly accepted.²¹⁷

Coming back to “Obraz”, the representative of “Naši” said how he agreed with most of their stands, mentioning explicitly the Proclamation to Serbian enemies, which has been analyzed in the previous chapter as strongly anti-Semitic, but this representative did not think “Obraz” had done in making this kind of open and public proclamation, because, as he explains: “not “everything can be said publicly”.²¹⁸ He expresses a very Machiavellian view that some things must be kept silent in order to get the positions. Completely aware how

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.08.2008.

²¹⁶ R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ I.I.

“Obraz”’s radical stands are not acceptable to wider population in Serbia, although they are to him personally.

As far as the link between right-wing organizations and the Church is concerned, the interviewed individuals said to have good relations and the blessing of the Church. “Naši” representative testified how they refuse to receive instructions from the Church and wanted to be independent, but since many of them are theologians as well as him, they are respected by the church officials.²¹⁹ He says that the main problem with the priests was that they obey the bishops too much, and that the Church functioned in its own strange way, which was not convenient for his organizations, seeing it as too strict and hierarchical for his own purposes. He repeated that “Dveri” were more closely connected with the Church.²²⁰ “FSN” did not claim any link with the Church except for the fact that “they help the church as much as they can”, and search for the guidance in it so they would not lose their path.²²¹ “1389” claim to have excellent relations with the Church, and that they had got the official blessing from SOC for some of their actions, as well as oral blessing by the Russian Church.²²²

4.4. Opinions about Ljotić and Velimirović

I wanted to investigate the attitudes of the interviewees about these two historical figures in order to see whether they see them in an apologetic way, and what kind of opinion they have about the anti-Semitism of the two. The hypothesis was that neither of the representatives of the right-wing will condemn and reject these two, and especially not “the Saint”, has proven to be true. Nikolaj is seen in absolutely positive light, while Ljotić is criticized, but not rejected and condemned. All the respondents denied that either of the two was an anti-Semite.

²¹⁹ I.I. Even some Church official wanted to be on their lists when they were running local parliamentary elections, but the organizations did not want that.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.08.2008.

²²² R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008

“Naši” representative said that the accusations that bishop Nikolaj’s was an anti-Semite were false.²²³ “FSN” member lists this bishop as a positive figure in the Serbian history, naming him “Saint Nikolaj the Serbian”, and says the following about the accusations for anti-Semites: “A saint is a saint, nonsense are nonsense”²²⁴ According to “1389”, the bishop has been attributed what he never had said. They believe he had prophetically foreseen the danger that comes from Europe and out of the giving up on the Serbian tradition.²²⁵ The mistake that the bishop did make, said the “1389” representative, was that he supported pro-English stand before the World War II, and he should not have supported neither that nor German, but pro-Russian.²²⁶ This representative said that he was aware that those accusations exists, but that was being done by those whose materialistic system of values puts materialism above the spirit and culture, and they had done it out of the hatred. He said that they hated this author and were frustrated because of the influence he has, the followers he gathers, and the hard critics he had for the Western philosophy. The interviewee wondered how it is logically possible that he was an anti-Semite, when he had been in German camp Dachau and had seen from the inside all that irrational hatred. “1389” representative claims there is not one single anti-Semitic article by bishop Nikolaj that can be found,²²⁷ which is definitely far from the truth, and probably dependent on what this individual defines as anti-Semitic, provided that he has read bishop’s books, which I did not ask him.

As far as Ljotić is concerned, “1389” representative said that there are both good and bad things about him. He is criticized because he should not have created a separate movement from the Četnik one, and created an additional division among the Serbs. Good

²²³ I.I. in the interview to the author on 30.04.2008.

²²⁴ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.08.2008

²²⁵ R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008. It is interesting to note that when bishop Nikolaj wrote against Europe, he did so also because, as he wrote: “Today’s Europe is Judaized.” Velimirović, “To the Serbian People, 62.

²²⁶ Ibid..

²²⁷ Ibid.

things about Ljotić, according to this person, were that he had based his beliefs on anti-communism and strong Christian note, the fact that Ljotić warned about anti-Christian character of the communism and the Satanist elements within it. The fact that him and his followers were too passionate about this lead them to choose the wrong allies, namely the Germans, the interviewee notes, and explains this happened because they were acting according to the principle that the aim justifies the means, which is again, Western, and not Serbia. “Naši” member, a graduated theologian, defended Ljotić in a very interesting manner, by accusing the SOC of being more anti-Semitic than him; due to the fact that he personally does not see that the Church is anti-Semitic. He testified how his school book at the University, from The History of Religion, included explanations that before the World War I and II, people in all European countries had been turning against the Jews, because these had been working against the interest of those countries. According to I.I., Ljotić was not an anti-Semite since he had never said something like that. He said about Ljotić: “He is the man”²²⁸ “On je faca (the man)” and “We²²⁹ were all breastfed on this source” This proves the presupposition from the beginning of this thesis that Ljotić is the source of contemporary fascist and anti-Semitic ideas in Serbia. At last, “FSN” shortly characterizes Ljotić as a good believer, honest Serb, but still, only a politician.²³⁰

4.5.. The Attitudes towards the Jews and Anti-Semitism

“1389” representative claims that chaos caused by communism made possible for some Nazi ideologies to be spread in Serbia, as well as anti-Jewish sentiments, namely the ideas that the Jews rule the world and are to be blamed for everything.²³¹ He says that among

²²⁸ His original sentence was “On je faca”, and the term “faca” in Serbian is a slang term denoting someone you deserves the respect.

²²⁹ The Serbian nationalists. (Comment by D.K.)

²³⁰ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.08.2008.

²³¹ R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008.

the people who rule in the world there are Jews, but there are also Serbs, as well as all other nations. He also identifies the two different currents in the Christian right, one that is pro-Nazi and another anti-fascists. According to him, among the Jews there are many honest friends of the Serbs. He indicates the Society of Serbian-Jewish friendship²³². He says that there are many Jews who are Serbian patriots, in Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia, patriots who, however, profess Judaism; and in line with this, he stated that he saw evil in those Jewish organizations that do not profess Judaism.²³³ It was not clear who he had in mind, whether the Zionists or something different.

According to "Naši" member, the Jews are biblical people but unfortunately they did not recognize the savior. They still wait in vain for the emperor above all emperors on earth, but Christ is that emperor in the heavens, and he says: This is why their hatred for Christianity is two thousand years long."²³⁴ Asked about whether he thought that the Jews killed Christ, he responded: "The Holy book says so."²³⁵ According to the book, the Pilate asked them and the Jews of Jerusalem asked for his death, agreeing that the sin goes on them and their children. This is the traditional Christian anti-Jewish stand²³⁶, but the interviewee interestingly adds "But I do not judge them for that. The Christ came there to be killed. And the Serbs would do the worse to him."²³⁷ The same person expressed the view that there are no more than 500 Jews in Serbia, but they all occupy high positions.²³⁸ He was wondering, right after these statements, how it was possible that banks had never been burnt down during revolutions. The banks are, in his view clearly linked to the Jews, and the fact that they were spared in revolutions most likely, according to the context and implications of what he said, meant he believed this

²³² This organization has been criticized in Szekely's book *Dishonorable Times* as pro-Milosevic and they even sued Szekely for writing such things about them.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ I.I. in the interview to the author on 30.04.2008.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ According to Szekely as well, the Serbian Orthodox Church has never officially left the accusation for Christ-killing. Sekelj, *Vreme beščašća*, 78.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

bankers caused, financed or organized those revolutions. However, he does not see himself as an anti-Semite, despite of all these views and the belief in the conspiracy theories which will be stated right after this, because in his views not all the Jews are included in these conspiracies, but, as he says, 0.5% of Jews.²³⁹ So, he explicitly said he believed in conspiracy theory, but not some fantasies, he believes that this world has got a specific way of moving towards its end, and behind this there is a small number of Jews as well,²⁴⁰ as he says, 0,5 percent. He stated that he believed those people sacrificed millions of their compatriots, so that powerful Jewish people would be protected to do evil deeds nowadays, without any punishment, and perform crimes against humanity. He also stated he owned and had read a copy of “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, and implied that he believed what was written there, even implied that it is self-obvious. He advised the author to read it. “Read it, and see for yourself”.²⁴¹ Besides this, he recommended many other books about the conspiracies, especially *The Red Symphony* saying that was an excellent book stolen from a mason which links masonry and communism. “It says everything”, he stated.²⁴²

The same interviewee has also said that the major part of the politicians involved in the break-up of Serbia were Jews, and asked for a clarification, he answered that time he had Serbian Jews on his mind, not some foreign politicians, therefore the members of the real existing minority. “I have a list somewhere. I’ll give it to you if you want!”²⁴³ He exclaimed, implying that the list was in his view reliable, no matter that the list in question is most likely the one easily found on the websites of the ultra right-wing anti-Semitic groups, most likely Nazi sympathizers, which this elementary school teacher of religious education, was not willing to see as authentically Serbian. He also stated that one of the leaders of the Zionist

²³⁹ Ibid. Besides this, he said that his grandmother was Jewish, “so you see, I am one of them “ he said and then laughed at that statement of his.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. He mentioned the percentage again, for the third time, Jews not saying how he came up with that number.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

movement was a Serbian Jew, buried in Zemun, and said that movement had even been condemned by the UN, and that it had been the project installed in all communist countries, but Serbia had experienced the worst consequences. According to him, Milosevic worked for someone from the outside and deliberately lost all those Serbian territories. He was imputed from outside, in this person's view, so the democrats could rule today. At the question who he worked for, the answer was the following: "America. The Freemasons. The Devil. What do I know?"²⁴⁴

"FSN" member explicitly said he has a dual attitude towards Jews. "Israeli Jews are religious martyrs, as we are, which is confirmed by a large number of the societies of Jewish-Serbian friendship. Unlike the powerful world Jews, those mighty infidels whose religion is money, and the power. Those with their accomplices are the evil for the entire humanity."²⁴⁵ This individual has also decided to tell a joke about Moses, which went like this: Why did Moses lead the Jews through the desert? And the answer he gave was: He was too embarrassed to lead them through settlements. The joke implied, in its original Serbian meaning, that one should be embarrassed if he is with the Jews.

"1389" member thought that the role of Jews in Serbia is not as big as in other countries, therefore: "It is absolutely ridiculous and stupid to import certain ideologies from the West to Serbia. Both Nazism and communism are the products of the West."²⁴⁶ He notes how the Jews and the Serbs were "put in the same basket" during the World War II, therefore there was so much solidarity among them and many Serbs had been saving the Jews and risking their own lives.²⁴⁷ But he continues by saying that the Jewish question is very complicated, and even the Jews such as Marx opened it. "And if even they cannot understand it, how can we?"²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ V.S. in the interview to the author on 13.05.2008.

²⁴⁶ R. P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

He makes the division of the Jews into Sephardic Jews and the Ashkenazi in the following sense: He sees Sephardic Jews as authentic Israelis, and says that the others are just Judaised people of different origin, Khazars, etc. He said: “With the first groups, we are in very good terms. With the second- in very bad.”²⁴⁹ However, he sees anti-Semitism as absolutely alien to Serbian people and says there had never been any anti-Semitism in Serbia although previously he had indirectly admitted how it appeared lately, together with the Nazi organizations, which he saw as one of many bad consequences of communism. According to him, it is realistic to say that in American administration that bombed Serbia there are many Jews, but those are not Sephardic Jews, he explicitly claimed. He says this has been used in support of the Nazi theories but now those theories are falling apart, he believes. He is proud of the fact that big Nazi gatherings that happen all over Western world, as he calls it, same as gay parades, are not tolerated in Serbia.²⁵⁰

4.6. *World Politics and Religion*

“1389” representative expressed very positive and respectful view on Islam and Judaism, but negative on Catholicism. He said that he respected traditional values that Islam preserves and does not see Islamic countries in general as Serbian enemies. He also said that Judaism is the religion which stayed the same over all the centuries and that should be respected as well.²⁵¹ Very conservative view, he respects the preservation of old traditions. Or it might be that he sees the parallel to Orthodoxy in that, claiming its authentically Christian, while the Catholicism separated from original Christianity, and then Protestantism from the Catholicism. He claimed how Judaism, although it has only small number of believers in the modern world, is not the religion that remained among Israeli people alone. Asked about the role of the religion in world politics, he said that nowadays, unlike in past,

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ R.P. in the interview to the author, on 16.05.2008.

the religion does not influence politics so much anymore, with the exception of Catholicism. But in his view this is only because it is an organized state, not a religion anymore. In general, he said that it is not that religion influenced politics, but politics misused religion.

“FSN” representative said he did not wish to say anything about three other main organized religions, which he considered as cults and that Orthodoxy is a heavy burden, but they are willing to carry it willfully.²⁵² He explicitly said that he did not want to comment their role in politics, but has only added: “Some of them deal with world economy²⁵³, other lead wars²⁵⁴, some make their religious objects into objects for fornication.²⁵⁵ A lot of them are sects, by their organization, structure, both religious and economic. All are far away from God.

“Naši” representative said that Orthodoxy is the only religion where the Holy Spirit is present, all others are empty.²⁵⁶ He has also stated he believed in the imposing of the New World Religion, by the sinister New World Order, in which he considers that the Jews are involved, but again, “those 0.5 percent of all the Jews. “This new religion, according to the interviewed person, will be offered and accepted because people need spirituality, but it empty, it is nothing, he said. It is false spirituality meant to make the masses stupid and crazy.²⁵⁷

4.7. Russia and the United States of America

All Serbian Christian right-wing organizations are pro-Russian and anti-American. The representative of “Naši“ said that they have constant contacts with Russian “Naši“, and visit each other, exactly at the month of the interview. He said that it is true that Russia

²⁵² V.S. in the interview to the author, on 1305.2008.

²⁵³ Judaism?

²⁵⁴ Catholicism?

²⁵⁵ Islam? This guess is based on the fact that another interviewee, the representative of Nasi said that Islam is far behind Christianity also because their vision of heaven and paradise include having food and drinks, and as many young virgins as one may want. He says that while Orthodoxy speaks about spirit, they speak about bodily pleasures. I.I. in the interview to the author on 30.04.2008.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ I.I. in the interview to the author on 30.04.2008

watches after its own interest, but right at that moment it is in Serbian interest to be close to Russia, economically, militarily and in any other way, since European Union does not want Serbia as an equal partner, and since Russians are also orthodox which, he said is at least for him, was very important.²⁵⁸ He also said that. America held the entire world in its claws²⁵⁹, and Russia and China are the only ones preventing their influence. The rule of the USA reminds him of the biblical tale of Sodome and Gomore, and says: “if their domination is not stopped, then it is the apocalypse, the end of the world.”²⁶⁰

“1389” member said all Serbs were secretly anti-American. According to him, this does not mean Serbs should hate them, but he hopes for the end of American domination because it is a fact are that they had lead anti-Serbian politics all the time in the past two decades, and did many wrongs to the Serbs.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. and the usage of this word is very interesting, since there is anti-Semitic book from the 1930s “Serbian people in Jewish Claws” by Milorad Mojic, with a scary picture of bearded Jewish with horns and claws, in which he holds the globe

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ R.P.

CONCLUSION

It is hard to claim what contributed more to the rise of anti-Semitism in Serbia; whether the bombardment of Serbia in 1999 or the fact that democratic transition in 2000, and after brought with it the proliferation of the right-wing organizations that have been banned in the communist Yugoslavia. Both are so close in time that it had been hard for me to determine whether the title of this thesis should have included the time determinant “after 1999” or “after 2000”. According to the findings, both play a significant role in the appearance of anti-Semitic sentiments, but more crucial role should be attributed to the NATO bombing which eventually lead to linking the already existing 1990s conspiracy theories about anti-Serbian Western conspiracy almost exclusively to American administration and seen all other involved countries as mere pawns of the USA, and at last, linking American administration to the Jewish conspiracy. In my view, both factors contributed much more to the rise of anti-Semitism than the growing influence of the Church, since even the members of Christian right, provided they are anti-Semitic, list much more often, as reasons for their views, the belief in the Western conspiracy against the Serbs, than the traditional Christian anti-Judaic charges.

However, even though these theories started being widespread and influencing certain specific psychological type of individuals, the general public remained relatively immune to anti-Semitism, but not to the ideas about anti-Serbian character of what is seen as the West. This fact might influence the future wide-spreading of the anti-Semitic theories as well. At the example of the popularity of bishop Nikolaj, it is clear how most of those who praise him do not accept the accusations about anti-Semitism. He is respected and sanctified despite of that, since general public sees anti-Semitism as a potential stain on his pure image. After the Holocaust and anti-fascist tradition of Serbia, even bishop's right-wing apologists seem to find anti-Judaism as more acceptable term than anti-Semitism is, with all its political connotations.

However, they coined the phrase “benign biblical anti-Judaism” and tried to find the examples of such writings in the very Holy Book. They tracked those down in the preaching of St Paul, even in Christ’s words.

Here it is very important to stress how the intent of the new nationalists to create a new historical narrative could carry as by-product anti-Semitism or the legitimization of it. Thus, the purpose is not anti-Semitic but the end result gets close to it and this is often the case when anti-Semitism without Jews appears. If, as Byford says, Velimirović is the meeting point between mainstream Orthodox culture and the exponents of the Christian right, the fact that a believer of the Church may get easily involved in the Christian right wing also carries the danger of turning this individual into an anti-Semite, or at least, the apologist of a clearly anti-Semitic author. Whether one becomes an anti-Semite depends highly, in my view, on one’s personality, and that is why at the beginning I said these psychological theories are the most compelling. Since there are various types of the Christian right in Serbia, the fact that one is a member of the right-wing organization does not necessarily mean one is an anti-Semite. However, in my opinion the wide-spread respect for figures such Velimirović and Ljotić makes it easier for anti-Semitic ideas to be spread as well. In the empirical part of my research I have found a lot of reasons to support Byford’s view that the respect for Velimirović perpetuates and legitimizes political extremism and the spread of anti-Jewish prejudices, and that the official church does not distance itself enough from the extremists. This is especially true for those extremists within the Church itself, thanks to those persons, it is possible to see how someone like Nebojša Krstić was closely affiliated with the Church, or that an anti-Semite like Đurđević had texts in official Church newsletter, although both were anti-Semites. But, the main problem with respect to the Church comes down to asking if the church with and through the canonization of Velimirović, influences, tolerates, or simply does not stop the acceptance of anti-Semitism. With this act the Church is giving implicit consent

and legitimization to, and perhaps even a silent incentive to radical Christian right groups to accept all parts of Nikolaj's teachings. This may hold the truth even though the official Serbian Orthodox Church is certainly not openly proclaiming anti-Semitism and reluctantly tries to deny it, and even if cannot be said that a believer of the Church would necessarily, or even likely, adopt anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic beliefs.

A different kind of justification is used to explain the fact that there are both strong publicly present discourse about Serbian-Jewish friendship, and the one that talks about the hatred that American powerful Jews have for Serbia. This cognitive dissonance is solved by the fact that a division is made between good Jews and the bad Jews, Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. All three interviewees expressed the belief that there are two different kinds of Jews. To repeat, according to one of them, there 0.5 per cent of all the Jews are the bad, rich Jews. Another individual explicitly divides the Jews into Sephardic Jews who are friends and the Ashkenazi who are not. The third one makes the similar distinction between, according to him, religious and positively viewed Israeli Jews, and also rich powerful Jews from the World, as he said which are viewed extremely negatively. This proves the view that Christian right wing has an ambivalent attitude toward the Jews, the same as it has been proven for the official Church, on the example of Velimirović's canonization. It was proven throughout the analyses how there exist the link between the Church and the right-wing organizations which cannot be disregarded. The real danger comes out of the possibility that the sympathies for anti-Semitism, or for anti-Semites, which is not the same, get up to a certain extent spread on the wider audience and the political mainstream as well. It might be concluded if we pay the attention to the report of the Helsinki committee from 2004 which stated the following: "Serbia's present coalition government has been formed by the party the leader of which looks up to Dimitrije Ljotić²⁶², well-known ideologist of fascism before and during the World War II,

²⁶² Kostunica

as his political ideal. The media in Serbia promote the intellectuals advocating not only the validity of fascist collaborators' ideas, but also a ban on non-governmental organizations, "financed by Soros's Jewish lobby."²⁶³ Still, this is the subject that only sporadically appears in Serbian media and mainstream politics, due to the fact that there are issues like Kosovo, and the instable Serbian political scene divided between the radical nationalists and pro-European democratic wing, that occupy Serbian people and Serbian media much more than this. The anti-Semitism is debated only shortly after incidents happen, and quickly forgotten by general public. It is definitely not an issue of importance to everybody, and it is far from being one of the central ones.

As far as the so-called Cyber-Serbs and cyber-anti-Semitism are concerned, the fact that an organization has a website does not prove that it has significant number of members who agree with the stands which are proclaimed electronically. The most dangerous phenomenon related to this, in my opinion, is the fact that the Nazi groups also use Christian motives to attract more Serbs, as well as the fact that due to the existence of the groups like "Obraz", it is clear to draw the line who the Nazis and the fascists are, which of them are imported branches of international groups, and which are typically Serbian and supported by the church. The fact that "Nacionalni Stroj" uses democracy as an argument in order to prove it was not fair that their "March for the Serbian Unity" was banned, saying their democratic rights were violated, definitely goes in line with cited Lebl's opinion that democracy contributes to the rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism.

Coming back to the, for this subject extremely important issue of the conspiracy theories, it is very important to conclude that besides with what had been elaborated enough already, those conspiracy are also related to the communist legacy of Serbia. The source of the beliefs that the Jews and American imperialism are crucially connected come, not from

²⁶³ "Lessons from Kristallnacht in Serbia 2005". *Helsinki committee for human rights in Serbia*.
http://www.helsinki.org.yu/projects_oas_t04.html -

the pre-World war tradition, and not only from the events in the 1990s, but mostly have source in Tito's times. That is where the roots of anti-Americanism are as well. The part in which Tito's efforts to label Israel as the aggressor and protected by American are described, gives enough proves how Yugoslav communist leadership viewed the making of Israel as imperialistic conspiracy and strongly supported the Arabs. What is important to note is that, once this has been the official stand of Tito and the Party, the general Yugoslav public accepted this views readily. Although modern conspiracy theorists, whether nationalist, anti-Semitic, clero-fascist or Nazi, Serbian extremist rightists are unanimous in their 'fight' against communism, and even link communism to the Jews , they are not immune to the fact that the anti-Israelism and the link of the Israel and America was established crucially exactly by those communists, and they partly inherited this.

All this does not mean that traditional Christianity does not have its role in the Jew-hatred, and that the modern-day Christians become anti-Semitic only by the influence of politics and conspiracy theories. As Bauer said, the borderline between Christian and modern anti-Semitism was hazy,²⁶⁴ and it still is today. It is not easy to dwell on the conspiracy theory only, since there is also continuity of specific religious beliefs. But, the conclusion that comes out of this research, putting this aside, is that the rise of anti-Semitism in post-1999 Serbia comes as a reaction to specific Serbian political problem. Had it been cause by Orthodox Christian beliefs only, it would have appeared much earlier, and it would have been much stronger. The most interesting feature of Serbian Christian anti-Semites is that they refuse to admit they are anti-Semites, therefore the inherited Christian prejudice is just another way for one's prejudice to be rationalized, but not the main cause for their ideas. In modern times the belief in conspiracy theories is much more used as a way to rationalize the need for blaming and scape-goating.

²⁶⁴ Yehuda Bauer. "On the Applicability of Definitions- Anti-Semitism in Present-Day Europe." *Anti-Semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe*, 52.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. What is the name of your organization and your function in the organization?
2. When and why was the organization founded?
3. What is your ideological background?
4. Do you cooperate with other organizations of similar ideological background and which are those?
5. Do you cooperate or have any contact with Serbian Orthodox Church?
6. What is the political model you hope for Serbia?
7. What is the religious background of your political stand?
8. How should the country be organized for political point of view?
9. According to you, what is the main difference between Orthodoxy and other main confessions?
 - a) Catholicism?
 - b) Protestantism?
 - c) Islam?
 - d) Judaism
10. What is the role of these religions in world politics?
 - a) Catholicism?
 - b) Protestantism?
 - c) Islam?
 - d) Judaism
11. What does religion suggest, how should other ethnic groups be treated?
12. What is your opinion about the role of the Jews in Serbia in the past?
13. What is your opinion about the role of the Jews in Serbia today?
14. What is your opinion about the role of the Jews in the NATO bombing of Serbia
15. Do you own and did you read "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion"? Your opinion about this book?
16. What is your organization's attitude to the USA?
17. What is your organization's attitude to Russia?
18. What do you think about Communism?
19. What do you think about Free Masonry?
20. What do you think about Velimirović and Ljotić?

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