



Anxiety and the Process of Organized Jewish Emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel (1948 – 1952)

The premise being that anxiety is an individual's reaction to an unforeseen or undesired deviation from their personal space of experience, this paper seeks to better define and understand its manifestations within the process of organized Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel, taking place between 1948 and 1952. Migrants from Yugoslavia generally expected that migrating to Israel would allow them to fulfill their overarching aspirations of reuniting with their (often only surviving) relatives, honor personal Zionist ideals, leave the socio-political framework of the postwar Yugoslav state, and distance themselves from the lingering traces of anti-Semitism in Yugoslav society. It seems they failed to consider the possibility that the outcome of the migration process might in part or not at all meet their expectations. Assuming that it would not, on the other hand, resulted in a feeling of anxiety that led them to attempt to control the outcome of the process in various ways. This paper primarily draws on documents preserved in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade.

Keywords: Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia; Israel; Jews, emigration; anxiety

Introduction

Fear is one of the primary human emotions, whose fundamental function is the preservation of the individual and – by extension – the species.¹ It is a reaction to a sensation perceived by the individual as a threat and is, as such, an integral part of the human

1 Ekman, „An Argument for Basic Emotions,” 169-170; Erić, *Strah, anksioznost i anksiozna stanja*, 7.

experience.² Anxiety, while sharing certain characteristics with fear, is in itself a distinct emotion. In this sense, psychology particularly emphasizes the distinction between a reaction to the present moment (fear) and to the uncertainty of the future (anxiety).³ Since the future cannot be predicted, anxiety is an inevitable – if to a varying degree – part of every individual's existence when facing a new experience.

Every migration process involves a transition from a familiar to a less familiar or completely unknown environment. In the broadest sense, one can therefore assume that each individual experiences a feeling of fear related to the point of departure (which is known) and a feeling of anxiety related to the destination of the migration process (which is unknown).⁴ This dichotomy can best be analyzed using the historical categories of „space of experience“ and „horizon of expectations,“ as defined by Reinhart Koselleck.⁵ Particularly relevant in this sense is Koselleck's assertion that the relationship between these two categories is and never can be direct or absolute.⁶ Each individual migrant defines expectations from their new environment based on personal experience. Deviations from the space of experience expected by the individual typically imply an assumption that the future will, in some way, be better than what would represent a direct or objective continuation of what has already been experienced.⁷ The feeling of anxiety can thus be defined as an individual's reaction to the possibility that the destination of their migration may not align with the specific deviation from their space of experience that constitutes their personal expectation horizon.⁸

This paper aims to more precisely define what caused the anxiety experienced by individuals participating in the process of organized Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia

2 Delimo, *Strah na Zapadu*, 16-21.

3 Latas, *Anksiozni poremećaji. Teorija i praksa*, 20-21. See also: Ahtar, *Psihologija patnje*, 18-21; Caldwell, *Anxiety Disorders*, 7; Rycroft, *Anxiety and Neurosis*, 7-15; Tyrer, *Anxiety: A Multidisciplinary Review*, 11.

4 The presence of emotions such as fear and anxiety is not absolute and depends entirely on the circumstances in which a particular migration process takes place, as well as on the individual's personal experience. Accordingly, these emotions are, understandably, much more prevalent during forced migrations and among members of refugee populations. See: Wiking, „Migration and Mental Health,“ 150-151.

5 See in detail: Koselleck, „Erfahrungsraum‘ und ‘Erwartungshorizont‘: zwei historische Kategorien“, 349-374.

6 *Ibid*, 357-358.

7 *Ibid*, 364. In this sense what becomes significant is the category of imagination, which Anders Schinkel introduces as the third, connecting element between the „space of experience“ and the „horizon of expectations“. See: Schinkel, „Imagination as a Category of History,“ 42-54. On the category of imagination, also see: Bazzani, „Futures in Action: Expectations, Imaginaries and Narratives of the Future,“ 387-388.

8 Proposing a more dynamic version of Koselleck's categories of „space of experience“ and „horizon of expectations,“ adapted to situations where an individual faces more dramatic or unexpected changes, Michael Pickering identifies anxiety as one of the potential reactions to situations in which the horizon of expectations shifts in unforeseen ways. See: Pickering, „Experience as Horizon: Koselleck, Expectation and Historical Time,“ 278-279.

to Israel, as well as the ways in which it manifested.⁹ The main premise of the paper is that the feeling of anxiety within this process was above all a reaction to undesired deviations from the personal expectation horizons of individuals taking part in the migration – deviations that migrants faced on a daily basis due to their objective lack of knowledge about the reality of life in the newly established Jewish state. The research primarily draws on documents preserved at the Archives of Jewish historical Museum (Jevrejski istorijski Muzej) in Belgrade.

The centuries-long dream of restoring the national homeland of the Jewish people finally came to fruition in May of 1948. What followed was one of the most consequential migratory movements of the twentieth century. Between 1948 and 1951, approximately seven hundred thousand immigrants from around the world arrived in the newly established state.¹⁰ The initial population of Israel nearly doubled,¹¹ and the intensity of immigration played a defining role in the establishment and long-term development of the new state.¹² Such population growth also brought a range of acute practical problems,¹³ the most serious of which proved to be the lack of adequate infrastructure and a significant mismatch between supply and demand in the local labor market.

When Israeli independence was declared and mass immigration began, around 60% of the Jewish population of Mandatory Palestine was concentrated in three major urban centers (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Jaffa), while the rest lived in small agricultural settlements.¹⁴ In 1951, the newly established state adopted a population distribution plan with the long-term goal of creating medium-sized settlements that would fill existing gaps in the urbanization process and eventually become centers of regional development.¹⁵ Dispersing the population across the widest possible area also served the strategic aim of strengthening borders, due to fears of attacks from neighboring Arab countries.¹⁶

9 Towards the feeling of fear in the process of organized Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel, see: Radovanović, „Fear in the Process of Organized Jewish Emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel (1948 – 1952).“

10 Neumann, *Aliyah to Israel: Immigration under Conditions of Adversity*, 1-5.

11 With approximately eight hundred thousand people at the time of the declaration of independence, the population of the newly established Jewish state had grown to one and a half million by 1951. See: Vital Statistics: Population of Israel (1948-present).

12 Cohen, „From Haven to Heaven – Changing Composition of Israel's Population,“ 37-39.

13 See: Eliav, „The Absorption of One Million Immigrants by Israel in the 1950s,“ 11-13.

14 Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society*, 71-76.

15 Seventy-two new locations were designated for the construction of settlements with up to 12.000 inhabitants and urban centers with populations ranging from 40.000 to 60.000. See: *Ibid*, 71.

16 See: Samuel, *The Structure of Society in Israel*, 14. The first attack by surrounding Arab states came just twenty-four hours after the declaration of Israel's independence. The so called first Arab-Israeli war ended in March of 1949. See in detail: Herzog, *Arab-Israeli Wars. War and Peace in the Middle East from the 1948 War of Independence to the Present*, 15-108.

In its early years, Israel's economy continued to develop along the lines previously established during the British Mandate rule. By far the largest investments were directed toward agriculture.¹⁷ Industrial development was hindered by a lack of investment, natural resources, a free trade policy, and the small size of the domestic market. Accordingly, the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy in Israel occurred gradually.¹⁸ In the first years of statehood, in addition to farmers, what the new Middle Eastern state needed most were manual laborers and skilled technical workers – specifically trained mechanics.¹⁹ Since the majority of immigrants were traders, artisans, and members of the liberal professions, most had to be retrained.

Members of the Jewish community in Yugoslavia who participated in one of the five waves of organized emigration to Israel in the period between 1948 and 1952²⁰ accounted for just over one percent of the total number of immigrants who arrived in the newly established state during those years. However, these migrants made up approximately 60% of the total number of Yugoslav Jews who had survived the Second World War.²¹

Although the tragic consequences of the Holocaust played a key role in triggering mass migration to Israel, the decisions of individual members of the Yugoslav Jewish community to move to the newly formed state in the Middle East were also significantly influenced by various implications of the socio-political changes accompanying the rise of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to power.²² The construction of a system of social ownership through nationalization, which Yugoslav communist authorities initiated immediately after the war, directly copying the Soviet model,²³ had an especially dramatic effect on the local Jewish community.²⁴ Alongside the property of occupiers

17 Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society*, 76. Agriculture played an even more prominent role when considering the needs of the greatly increasing population.

18 Samuel, *The Structure of Society in Israel*, 14.

19 Weingrod, *Israel: Group Relations in a New Society*, 29-30.

20 The first wave of organized Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel took place between December 1948 and January 1949. Migrants of the second wave left the country in June and July 1949. The third organized emigration followed in March 1950, with the fourth ensuing in May of next year. The final and by far the smallest wave of organized emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel took place in October 1952. See: Радовановић, „Поједини статистички аспекти организованог иселавања Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948-1952),“ 54.

21 Between December 1948 and October 1952, a total of 7.739 out of approximately 12.500 Jews who had survived the Second World War left Yugoslavia. See: *Ibid*, 55-56.

22 One of the most significant elements of socio-political reform in the sense of pushing individual members of the Jewish community into migration was the attempt of Yugoslav authorities at building a society in which religion was to play no role in public life at all. On the various ways in which the new ideological framework of the post-war state influenced organized emigration, see: Радовановић, „Ционизам и прагматизам,“ 235-237; Karakaš Obradov, „Iseljavanje Židova iz Hrvatske nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata,“ 400-401.

23 Bičanić, *Economic Policy in Socialist Yugoslavia*, 22-23.

24 In detail about the appropriation of Jewish property in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, see: Brandl, *Oduzimanje židovske imovine u Hrvatskoj*, 51-77.

and collaborators, the state also took ownership of property confiscated from Jewish victims of the Holocaust during the war. The subsequent nationalization of the private sector²⁵ also disproportionately affected Jews in Yugoslavia due to their prominent involvement in trade and banking.²⁶

Most migrants left Yugoslavia assuming that the outcome of the emigration process would fulfill one of their overarching goals – reuniting with (often their only) surviving relatives, honoring personal Zionist ideals, abandoning the socio-political framework of the postwar Yugoslav state, built on Marxist-Leninist principles, and distancing themselves from the anti-Semitic ideas lingering within Yugoslav society.²⁷ Many of these goals were achieved through the mere act of participation in the process of organized emigration. However, it appears that the migrants failed to consider that the deviation from their personal space of experience might not necessarily be positive or aligned with their individual needs.²⁸ The specific conditions of everyday life in Israel made this fact clear from the outset.

Farewell to the Old

Despite warnings coming from prominent figures within the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities and the Hitachdut Olei²⁹ Yugoslavia,³⁰ it appears that migrants within the first wave of organized emigration viewed the newly established state of

25 Waterston, *Planning in Yugoslavia, Organization and Implementation*, 7.

26 Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community*, 219.

27 These are so-called heterogeneously relevant factors of emigration, meaning general circumstances that affect individual participants in a migration process to varying degrees and in different ways. See: Petersen, „A General Typology of Migration,” 259. On heterogeneously relevant factors within organized Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel, see: Радовановић, „Ционизам и прагматизам,” 234-241.

28 As Aleks Weingrod notes, the ideals of immigrants were consistently utopian, but during the period of immigration to Mandate Palestine, they were primarily focused on the idea of building a Zionist state and society, while after 1948 they represented a reaction to various uncertainties faced in the migrant's countries of origin. See: Weingrod, *Israel. Group Relations*, 7-13. Ilan Troen observes that European Jews viewed immigration to Israel as a potential solution to all the problems they faced after the end of the Second World War. See: Troen, „Zuwanderung und Eingliederung: Die Perspektive eines Israeli,” 26-28.

29 Hitachdut Olei (heb. מילוע תודחאתה) – Association of Immigrants

30 In one of the first notices that the leaders of the Federation addressed to future migrants, it was explicitly stated that a representative of Israel conveyed that every Jew is welcome in the newly established state in the Middle East „provided they come with the intention of living and working honestly, as well as helping in the struggle and building of the State of Israel, but that everyone should know that conditions in Israel are not easy, that it is not a land of milk and honey, but one where everybody must work and fight.“ It was further emphasized: „Only those who are aware of this will manage and be satisfied.“ See: AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 856, Dopis SJVOJ, svim jevrejskim veroispovednim opštinama FNRJ, Predmet: Odlazak u državu Izrael (7. avgust 1948)

Israel entirely through the lens of their personal horizon of expectations.³¹ It is impossible to quantitatively or qualitatively assess how much the situation they encountered in Israel deviated from their expectations. However, it can be assumed that the majority of migrants adapted over time and that their initial dissatisfaction was not enough to trigger any concrete steps towards reversing the process. Accordingly, it is impossible to estimate, even approximately, how many of the migrants who left Yugoslavia in late 1948 and early 1949 found the reality of the Jewish state too far removed from their expectations.³² On the other hand, the small number of available testimonies³³ suggest that a significant number of migrants from Yugoslavia were sufficiently shocked by the conditions in the newly established state in the Middle East to lodge their specific complaints to the Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia.³⁴

Negative reactions from first-wave migrants and inquiries from community members back home planning to move to Israel prompted the executives of the Hitachdut to submit a detailed report on local conditions in Israel to the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities in early March 1949.³⁵ Reiterating that the lack of housing and the specific labor market situation were the most pressing issues, the report also warned migrants about the high costs of education. Regarding the possibility of finding employment in Israel, it was explicitly pointed out that no one who had begun their university studies in Yugoslavia could be guaranteed the opportunity to obtain a degree in Israel, especially since the new state most urgently needed manual laborers. The advisories extended by the Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia were communicated to members of the Jewish community registered for the second wave of organized emigration.³⁶

Various difficulties faced by individual during the first wave of organized emigration to Israel were summed up in a letter the Hitachdut addressed to the Federation of Jewish religious communities of Yugoslavia. It appears that individuals leaving in subsequent waves of organized emigration viewed the problems listed in this letter as the primary potential undesirable deviations from their personal horizons of expectations

31 Migration from Yugoslavia can, in this sense, be viewed as an individual's overarching effort to deal with problems they were facing in their home country by leaving it. See: Weingrod, *Israel. Group Relations*, 7-13.

32 Due to the specific conditions of repatriation, the number of returnees cannot even approximately be equated with the number of those who were disappointed with Israel. As Mladenka Ivanković notes, repatriation was approved only for politically acceptable individuals with certain educational backgrounds or expertise. See: Ivanković, *Jevreji u Jugoslaviji (1944 – 1952)*, 337; Ivanković, *Brođovi nade*, 116. An additional problem is the fact that repatriation was a process that occurred at the individual level within timeframes that cannot be precisely determined. Moreover, the increase in the number of repatriation requests was generally linked to acute political instabilities in the Middle East. Aleksandar Životić notes that during 1956 alone, around 800 Yugoslav Jews residing in Israel requested permission to return. See: Životić, „Jugoslavija i Bliski istok (1945-1956),“ 493.

33 See: Радовановић, „Писмо југословенског исељеника у Израелу,“ 239-242.

34 Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 283-293.

35 Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олеј Југославије (9. март 1949),“ 101-105.

36 See, for example: AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Cirkular JVO Beograd br. 1, upućen svim članovima – Obaveštenja i obavezna uputstva iseljenicima u Izrael (25. februar 1949)

awaiting them in Israel. In this sense, until the very end of the mass emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel, the anxiety felt by migrants was a reaction to the assumption that they would not be able to provide for themselves and their families in their new homeland or that, in a broader sense, their very existence would be threatened. The formal framework of organized emigration significantly contributed to these feelings.³⁷

By joining in organized emigration to Israel, members of the local Jewish community permanently renounced the properties they were leaving behind in Yugoslavia,³⁸ while the export of their remaining property was regulated by relatively strict rules.³⁹ They were allowed to take their personal belongings, furniture, and items deemed to have practical use, either in the household or for professional activity. Export of any kind of machinery or industrial equipment was also explicitly prohibited.⁴⁰

Migrants sought to tailor the formal framework of organized emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel to their individual needs whenever possible.⁴¹ They appear to have been particularly persistent in this regard when it came to the export of movable property. Beyond a mere reaction to the assumption that their material situation in the newly established state of Israel would be uncertain,⁴² the reluctance of those registered for emigration to part with even the most modest belongings can also be understood as an attempt to preserve at least a symbolic connection with their previous life in Yugoslavia.⁴³ This is an element of the individual's personal horizon of expectations that was only hinted at within the framework of organized emigration, yet any potential deviation from it seemingly caused migrants particularly intense anxiety.

Ahead of the second wave of organized emigration, Miroslav Milić from Varaždin approached the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities to request an exception to the general rules that would allow him to export a piano.⁴⁴ He justified this request by pointing out his children's need to continue developing their musical skills. In this sense, the Jewish religious community in Zagreb addressed the Federation ahead of the third wave of organized emigration regarding the export of musical instruments in

37 The experience of losing most of their property in the establishment of the post-war Yugoslav state must have also been a factor in making the migrants especially wary of the need to do everything that was needed to secure their existence in Israel.

38 Ivanković, *Jevreji u Jugoslaviji (1944 – 1952)*, 330; Ivanković, *Brodovi nade*, 105.

39 Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 74-75.

40 Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Trade explicitly emphasized that X-ray machines, cars, bicycles, trucks, motorboats, various engines, agricultural machinery, typewriters, and calculating machines (provided they are not necessary for professional activities) cannot be exported to Israel. *AJIM*, Al. 1948, p.k. 827, Uputstvo o izvozu pokretnih stvari iseljenika-Jevreja iz FNRJ u državu Izrael (19. oktobar 1948).

41 For a detailed view on how individuals perceived the formal frameworks of organized emigration, see: Radovanović, „The Internal Framework of Organized Jewish Migration,” 130-135.

42 Lund, „Poverty and Mental Health,” 214-215.

43 On the role of material possessions in preserving emigrants' connection to a migrant's old homeland, see: Fathi, Ni Laoire, *Migration and Home*, 71-75.

44 *AJIM*, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Pismo Miroslava Milića, SJVOJ-u (1. jun 1949), Pov. br. 1798/49.

general.⁴⁵ Instruments were exempt from the export ban on two grounds – as a household item, as well as an item necessary for the individual's professional activity.⁴⁶ Formal inquiries regarding their export were needless. They can thus be understood as an expression of anxiety triggered by the possibility that the migrant's lives in Israel would drastically differ from what they expected them to be, and an effort made to control the outcome of the migration process, even in the most minimal of ways.

Ahead of the fourth wave of organized emigration to Israel, Ladislav Mačaš from Duga Resa expressed the desire to take with him certain objects necessary for his work as a comedian.⁴⁷ It remains unclear how the items in question deviated from the general permission to export household objects, yet the request itself is highly indicative. Since the newly established Jewish state in its early years was certainly not an environment conducive to earning a living by working as a comedian, the primary function of these items could only have been maintaining a symbolic connection with the migrant's former life in Yugoslavia.

The request made by Max Bretler from Split seems to have been somewhat similarly motivated as the one made by Ladislav Mačaš.⁴⁸ In preparing for the first wave of organized emigration, he asked Federation officials for permission to take a sailboat to Israel, directly contradicting the general ban on exporting any machinery.⁴⁹ Arguing the advantages of making such an exception, he stated the possibility that the sailboat could serve as a lifeboat in case of an emergency. This was certainly just another attempt at controlling the outcome of the emigration process as much as possible. It seems that his request was denied.⁵⁰

The Ministry of Foreign Trade of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was clear in its instructions regarding the export of movable property to Israel, explicitly prohibiting migrants from taking their bicycles with them.⁵¹ It was only individuals registered for the last wave of organized emigration who protested this rule. They requested that the existing restrictions be changed; emphasizing that the manufacturing of bicycles had only just begun in Yugoslavia.⁵² In this particular case, the migrants'

45 AJIM, Al. 1950-1952, Dopis JVO Zagreb, SJVOJ-u (27. novembar 1949)

46 The leaders of the Federation themselves presented this interpretation in response to one of the inquiries they received during the second wave of organized emigration. See: AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis SJVOJ, JVO Dobo, Predmet: Izrael (29. mart 1949), br. 678/49.

47 AJIM, Al. 1948-1951, p.k. 880, Dopis JVO Zagreb, Mačaš Ladislavu iz Duga Rese (30. april 1951)

48 AJIM, Al. 1948-1949, p.k. 897, Dopis JVO Zagreb, SJVOJ-u (1. oktobar 1948)

49 Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 75.

50 The letter by Max Bretler can also be seen as a very specific example of a fundamental lack of understanding of the circumstances in the newly established Jewish state in the Middle East, characteristic of first-wave migrants from Yugoslavia. See: Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олџ Југославије (9. март 1949),“ 101-105.

51 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 827, Uputstvo o izvozu pokretnih stvari iseljenika-Jevreja iz FNRJ u državu Izrael (19. oktobar 1948)

52 AJIM, Al. 1950-1952, Dopis JVO Subotica, SJVOJ-u (9. jul 1952), Predmet: V grupno iseljenje u državu Izrael

attempt to circumvent existing export rules in order to bring part of their former lives with them was perhaps most clearly expressed.

A unique example of migrants' efforts to avoid unwanted deviations from their personal horizon of expectations, shaped by their life in Yugoslavia, was that of the Adlerstein family from Senta, who left for Israel during the second wave of organized migration.⁵³ Adolf Adlerstein contacted the Federation to inquire about the possibility of exporting a foldable wooden house.⁵⁴ The request itself was likely a reaction to a warning issued by the leaders of Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia at the end of the first wave of organized emigration.⁵⁵ In light of the lack of adequate housing for immigrants, those registered for emigration were encouraged, whenever possible, to make use of exporting portable wooden homes.⁵⁶ More broadly, this request should be understood as an attempt by an individual emigrant to „transplant“ their space of experience into the framework of their new surroundings. An additional element of the desire to control the outcome of emigration as much as possible was the request of Adlerstein's daughter, Jelena, who asked the Federation if it would be possible for her to bring her pet dog to Israel.⁵⁷

The generally precarious material situation of the Jewish community in postwar Yugoslavia made the export of property to the new homeland in the Middle East not only an extraordinarily significant but also a potentially traumatic experience for migrants. In this respect, even a relatively banal element of the organized emigration process, such as luggage transport, could negatively impact an individual migrant's initial impression of his new surroundings. Even if unforeseen circumstances could be avoided, the process of transporting the migrant's property to Israel proved as a rule to be unreliable enough to provoke a certain degree of anxiety, even in the best of cases. Since luggage arrived in Israel by separate transports, individual migrants had to manage living with limited resources in a new and unfamiliar environment for a certain

53 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 1288, Spisak iseljenika, alija 1949.

54 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis Adlerstein Adolfa, SJVOJ-u (15. april 1949), Pov. br. 880/49.

55 See: Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олеј Југославије (9. март 1949),“ 101-105.

56 The leaders of the Federation pointed out to Adlerstein that the response depended entirely on the volume of his luggage, that is, on the possibility of packing and loading it appropriately onto the ship to Israel. See: AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis SJVOJ, JVO Senta (18. april 1949), Pov. br. 880/49. For information on the process of preparing emigrants' luggage for the journey to Israel, see: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 76-78.

57 Although she explicitly emphasized that this would not be the first such case, the sources do not provide any similar example. See: AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis Adlerstein Jelene iz Sente, SJVOJ-u (9. mart 1949)

time.⁵⁸ Failures in transport and unforeseen circumstances further complicated the situation.⁵⁹

After the successful completion of the first wave of organized emigration, Karl Vidrih from Jaffa contacted the Federation of Jewish religious communities of Yugoslavia in late February 1949.⁶⁰ His luggage was not on the steamer „Bosna“, which had arrived with the first wave of migrants' luggage from Yugoslavia in Israel a few days earlier.⁶¹ He learned from an unnamed source that his lift van had been held in Rijeka shortly before loading, but he did not receive an explanation of why this had happened. Anđelko Tajtacak from Netanya faced similar problems.⁶² One of his suitcases was confiscated in Rijeka and even marked so that it would not accidentally be shipped to Israel at the beginning of 1949. Ladislav Lamper from Bet Olim contacted the freight company before reaching out to the Federation but was unable to find out why the shipping of his suitcase was prohibited.⁶³ By the time preparations for the second wave of organized emigration were underway, the problem of luggage delays had become so acute that the Jewish religious community in Čakovec appealed to the Federation, requesting that the possibility of increasing the allowed weight of personal luggage traveling together with migrants to Israel be considered.⁶⁴

Problems with the export of migrants' property persisted throughout the entire process of organized emigration. Due to the overall small number of participants in the fifth wave of organized emigration, migrants were transported by train to Naples, where they boarded a regular passenger ship for Haifa.⁶⁵ The luggage wagon, which was supposed to be attached to the express train carrying the migrants, had departed earlier that day with a freight train,⁶⁶ which resulted from a mistake made in Zagreb. Although it was eventually found and held in Sežana, from where it continued its journey to Naples, even the temporary loss of luggage was an extremely unpleasant experience for the migrants.

58 Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 77. The problems emigrants faced with transferring funds to the newly established State of Israel should also be viewed in the same context. See in detail: Радовановић, „Организована емиграција капитала“, 181. One such example was recorded in February 1949, when an unnamed emigrant contacted the Federation, complaining that he had not received confirmation of payment to the transfer account and that the first shipment of lift vans did not include his belongings. See: AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis NN iseljenika, SJVOJ-u (21. februar 1949).

59 For more on the shortcomings in the luggage transport process, see: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 78.

60 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Pismo Karla Vidriha iz Jafe, SJVOJ-u (23. februar 1949), Pov. br. 408/49.

61 See: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 59.

62 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis Tajtacak Anđelka, SJVOJ-u (26. februar 1949), Pov. br. 477/49.

63 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis Lamper Ladislava iz Bet Olima, SJVOJ-u (27. februar 1949), Pov. br. 560/49.

64 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis JVO Čakovec, SJVOJ-u (9. mart 1949)

65 See: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 60.

66 AJIM, Al. 1951.1952, p.k. 801 (Arhiv Perera 40), Izveštaj Rubena Rubenovića o V aliji (1. novembar 1952)

Facing the New

The limited or highly specific demands of the Israeli labor market were one of the reasons that led migrants to assume that in their new homeland they would be unable to financially support themselves and their families.⁶⁷ Their unrealistic expectations of a state at war with its Arab neighbors⁶⁸ resulted in disappointment and even bitterness in some individuals.⁶⁹ On the other hand, some attempted to adjust their personal horizon of expectations to the situation in Israel, thereby easing the anxiety that accompanied the assumption that reality would fall short of their hopes.

Even before receiving formal warnings from the Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia,⁷⁰ a certain number of prospective emigrants presumed that conditions in the newly established state would not meet their idealized expectations. Accordingly, they tried to prepare as best they could for the anticipated discrepancy between ideals and reality. A notable example is the driving-mechanic courses that immigrants attended, hoping to acquire practical skills they would be able to use to find employment in their new country. These courses were organized by local communities at the initiative of the migrants themselves.

While it is reasonable to assume that similar efforts occurred in other communities, the sources provide detailed data only on the driving and mechanics courses in Belgrade and Zagreb. In Belgrade, training began on September 20th, 1948 with theory classes taught by Josif Polak, an auto mechanic, and Jakov Polak, a technical student.⁷¹ Twenty-seven participants completed two practical modules: first in a garage, and then on two cars leased from Aleksandar Čarapić and Velimir Bot. Each trainee had to log ten hours of field driving before they could apply to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Traffic Police) to take their driving exam.

While the course in Belgrade was already underway, a group of youths from Zagreb who had registered for emigration also approached the Federation of Jewish Religious

67 In this sense, one can speak of an undesirable deviation between the horizon of expectations and the space of experience so drastic that the emigration process brought no fundamental change. The labor market that the immigrants encountered in the newly established state in the Middle East offered them essentially the same, very limited, opportunities as the labor market in Yugoslavia.

68 Unrealistic expectations of the newly established Jewish state during the period in question were, to some extent, characteristic of all immigrants to Israel. See: Troen, „Zuwanderung und Eingliederung“, 26-28; Weingrod, *Israel. Group Relations*, 7.

69 A letter addressed to members of the Jewish community planning to join the third wave of emigration serves as a kind of manifesto of disappointment among Yugoslav emigrants. See: Радовановић, „Писмо југословенског исељеника у Израелу“, 239-242.

70 Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олеј Југославије (9. март 1949)“, 101-105.

71 АЈИМ, Ал. 1948. р.к. 800. (Архив Перера 30), Допис руководиоца курса вођње СЈВОЈ, Аутономном одбору за помоћ (16. октобар 1948). Interest in the driving course organized by the Jewish community in Belgrade was apparently so high that participants were divided into at least two groups. The first began their training on September 20th, while sources indicate that a second group was scheduled to start on November 20th. See: АЈИМ, Ал. 1948, р.к. 800 (Архив Перера 37), *Zapiski* (18. новембар 1948).

Communities, expressing their desire to leave for Israel „with at least one practical skill in hand.“⁷² Although there is a lack of detailed accounts of the course in Zagreb, it likely followed a similar format to the one in Belgrade.

While the driving and mechanics courses resulted from migrants' assumptions about the skills they would need in Israel,⁷³ Hebrew language courses were a direct response to warnings received from the Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia about labor market conditions in Israel.⁷⁴ Migrants were told that without a command of Hebrew, they would most likely be unable to work in their professions – even if their occupations were in demand. Sources indicate that Hebrew classes, like the driving courses, were organized locally in cooperation with the Federation, depending on the number of individuals showing interest.

The most detailed account found in the available documents concerns the Hebrew course organized by the Zagreb Jewish Religious Community. The course was taught by the chief rabbi of Zagreb, Hinko Urbah.⁷⁵ The main problem faced by migrants attending the course was a shortage of textbooks.⁷⁶ As the interest grew, the local community had to repeatedly request assistance from other Jewish religious communities and the Federation.⁷⁷ Following the distribution of textbooks provided by the JOINT,⁷⁸ the Federation executives attempted to acquire additional books through the Israeli embassy in Prague.⁷⁹

72 AJIM, Al. 1948-1949, p.k. 897, Jevrejski omladinci SJVOJ-u, Predmet: Šoferski kurs

73 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis Autonomnog odbora pri SJVOJ, Odboru za pomoć u Beogradu (22. januar 1949), Pov. br. 146/49.

74 Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олеј Југославије (9. март 1949),“ 101-105.

75 Hinko Urbah (Moravska, September 29, 1872 – Paris, 1960), Chief Rabbi. He completed cheder and yeshiva in Bratislava. He finished secondary school in Budapest, where he also attended higher rabbinical school. He simultaneously studied comparative philosophy of Semitic languages at the Faculty of Philosophy and earned his doctorate in 1904. He served as a rabbi in Tuzla (1906 – 1911) and Zemun (1911 – 1928), and as Chief Rabbi in Sarajevo (1928 – 1946). Together with Hugo Spicer, he spoke at a Zionist gathering in Slavonski Brod in March 1909. He taught at the Theological Institute, which was opened in Sarajevo in 1938. After the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, he fled to Italy, and at the end of 1943 to Switzerland. He returned to Sarajevo in 1945, from where he was transferred to Zagreb in 1946, continuing to serve as Chief Rabbi for two more years. He emigrated to Israel carrying with him about eighty copies of the Torah, saved on Yugoslav soil. Together with his wife, he was placed in a nursing home in Jerusalem, from where his son Benjamin took him to Paris, where he passed away. See: „Urbah, Hinko (Urbach, Heinrich)“.

76 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis Autonomnog odbora pri SJVOJ, Odboru za pomoć u Beogradu (22. januar 1949), Pov. br. 146/49.

77 It is explicitly stated that seventy books were delivered from the Subotica municipality to Zagreb, but that at that moment, they were still missing twenty more, *Ibid.*

78 JOINT (The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) is a humanitarian organization from the United States that has been engaged since 1914 in providing humanitarian aid, primarily to European Jews. After the re-establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, JOINT was primarily dedicated to facilitating the immigration process to Israel. See in detail: Handlin, *A continuing Task*. On the activities of JOINT in post-war Yugoslavia, see: *Spomenica 1919-1969*, 122-123.

79 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Dopis SJVOJ Hinku Urbahu, nadrabinu iz Zagreba (29. januar 1949), Pov. br. 185/49.

The seriousness with which future migrants treated the warnings received after the first wave is also reflected in their approach to higher education. Having been cautioned that they would likely be unable to obtain a degree in Israel, some individuals deliberately postponed leaving Yugoslavia until the last possible moment to complete their studies. Although aware that the new state primarily needed manual laborers, migrants seemed to regard a degree as a guarantee of a more stable, long-term future in Israel,⁸⁰ at the same time securing an outcome that better aligned with their personal expectations of their new surroundings.⁸¹

Ahead of the second wave of organized emigration, the Federation received appeals from two students at the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Mechanical Engineering – Oto Almozlino⁸² and Karlo Kudiš⁸³ – requesting to join a later transport due to exams scheduled for June.⁸⁴ Kudiš even expressed the hope of leaving for Israel with a degree, planning to expedite its issuance. Within the same migration wave, Vojislav Ungar from Subotica made a similar request to delay his departure until he could complete his last exam and finish his studies at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry with a degree in agronomy.⁸⁵

One of the most striking responses to the concern that the new Jewish state might not meet their personal expectations was the effort by some migrants to preserve the possibility of returning – contrary to the formal framework of the migration process, requiring renunciation of Yugoslav citizenship before leaving the country.⁸⁶ They cited circumstances that led them to view this renunciation to be too risky in the long-term. These cases resulted in open insistence by Yugoslav migrants on the assumption that Israel might not meet their personal expectations – or, indirectly, the anxiety arising from that possibility.⁸⁷

80 Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 60.

81 See: Радовановић, „Извод из дописа Хитахдут Олеј Југославије (9. март 1949),“ 101-105.

82 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis Almozlino Ota, SJVOJ-и (28. мај 1949), Pov. br. 1535/49.

83 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis Karla Kudiša, SJVOJ (17. јун 1949)

84 A total of three transports were organized within the second wave of Jewish emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel. The first ship transporting migrants left Rijeka on June 24 and arrived in Israel on June 30, 1949. The second departure took place on July 7, and the emigrants from this group disembarked on July 13, 1949. The last transport within the second emigration wave set sail on July 20 and arrived in Israel on July 25, 1949. See: Радовановић, „Извештаји Савеза јеврејских вероисповедних општина Југославије о завршетку прва два таласа организованог исељавања у Израел 1948/9,“ 89-90.

85 AJIM, Al. 1949, p.k. 753, Pismo Vojislava Ungara, JVO Subotica (26. јун 1949)

86 The stance of the Yugoslav authorities toward the return of emigrants to Yugoslavia was fundamentally negative. As Mladenka Ivanković notes, repatriation was approved only for politically acceptable specialists, provided they accepted Yugoslav citizenship and did not claim property they had renounced before leaving the country. See: Ivanković, *Jevreji u Jugoslaviji*, 337; Ivanković, *Brodovi nade*, 116.

87 The process of renouncing Yugoslav citizenship began immediately upon the submission of the emigration application. Unsigned petitions for release from Yugoslav citizenship were submitted by individuals registered for organized emigration to the Federation, which then forwarded them to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for processing. The Federal Ministry distributed the petitions to the offices of

The Jewish Religious Community in Bitolj wrote to the Federation in preparation of the first wave and regarding the application of Marija Kon Dobrovšek and her husband Vladislav Kon.⁸⁸ Being Catholic herself, she wished to retain the option of returning to her brothers and mother in Yugoslavia in the case of her husband passing away.⁸⁹ She petitioned to avoid giving up Yugoslav citizenship. Records do not clarify the outcome, but it is unlikely that her request could be granted.

Another somewhat similar case is that of Jova and Draga Gigović, who asked the Federation for formal confirmation that they would be granted Israeli citizenship after successfully completing the emigration process.⁹⁰ They claimed they needed such a document to be released from Yugoslav citizenship – something that normally was not part of the emigration procedure. Their insistence on formal assurance of Israeli citizenship can only be understood as apprehension at the possibility of becoming trapped in the migration process without legal protection from either country – a particularly dramatic potential deviation from their expectations of the organized emigration process.

Conclusion

The possibility that Israel might not live up to their expectations never crossed the minds of those in the Yugoslav Jewish community who made their way to the newly established state during the first wave of organized emigration in 1948–49. Cautions about the specific conditions awaiting them—which officials of the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities had shared with those intending to leave for Israel—were, it seems, largely taken lightly. What ultimately gave rise to concerns of possible dissatisfaction with what would be the challenges of everyday life in the newly established state of Israel was the letter by the Hitachdut Olei Yugoslavia addressed to migrants of the second wave, containing the most common complaints that the organization's officials encountered up to that point. The anxiety experienced by participants in the final four waves of organized emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel was rooted in the distinct possibility that their new environment would not meet their specific expectations.

individual republics based on their respective jurisdictions. Following individual review and resolution of the petitions, during which the persons permitted to leave the country were identified, emigrants were summoned to the relevant office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to sign the petition for release from citizenship. This was also the final step in the administrative procedure preceding the actual act of leaving the country. By way of the Federation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs returned the signed petitions for release from citizenship to individual emigrants, who used them to complete further formalities. See: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 66–67.

88 AJIM, Al. 1948–1951, p.k. 768, Dopis JVO Bitolj, SJVOJ-u (22. septembar 1948), Pov. br. 1455/48.

89 On the position of individuals in mixed marriages within the process of organized emigration, see: Радовановић, *Исељавање Јевреја из Југославије у Израел (1948 – 1952)*, 141–147.

90 AJIM, Al. 1948, p.k. 757, Dopis Jove i Drage Gigović, SJVOJ-u (27. april 1949), Pov. br. 982/49.

Striving to cope with what they perceived as an unwanted deviation from their horizon of expectations, thus eliminating the underlying cause of anxiety they were experiencing, migrants from Yugoslavia, on the one hand, sought to adapt the process of organized emigration to suit their own needs and, while on the other, tried adapt to the conditions awaiting them in the newly formed Jewish state. These two approaches in dealing with the uncertainties of life in the newly formed state of Israel were perhaps most obvious in the way Yugoslav migrants addressed the concern that they would not be able to provide for their families. In trying to somehow circumvent existing rules on taking their belongings to Israel, the primary goal of Yugoslav migrants was to preserve as much of their assets as possible; however, the significance of maintaining a symbolic connection to the home they left behind should not be underestimated. The other way migrants attempted to secure their livelihood in the newly established Jewish state was by acquiring skills they assumed would be useful in the local labor market. Local communities used the brief interval between emigration registration and actual departure to organize driving courses and Hebrew lessons. On the other hand, migrants remained committed to obtaining higher education, evidently convinced that it would secure a better life for them in the long term.

While it is impossible to establish a link between the anxiety experienced by members of the Yugoslav community leaving for Israel within the process of organized emigration and a certain number of them returning, individuals attempting to keep the possibility of coming back open is very indicative of their state of mind. This can be seen as a culmination of the overarching assumption that the newly established state would fail to live up to the idealistic expectations of migrants coming from Yugoslavia, but might in fact prove to be their direct negation.

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SAŽETAK

Pojava anksioznosti tijekom organiziranog iseljavanja Židova iz Jugoslavije u Izrael (1948. – 1952.)

U članku se na temelju gradiva iz arhiva Jevrejskog historijskog muzeja u Beogradu obrađuje tema pojave anksioznosti kod jugoslavenskih Židova koji su organizirano iseljavali iz Jugoslavije od 1948. do 1952. Oni koji su se odlučili na iseljavanje uglavnom su očekivali pronaći preživjele članove obitelji, ostvariti osobne cionističke ideale, napustiti društveno-politički kontekst poslijeratne države i udaljiti se od ostataka antisemitizma u jugoslavenskom društvu. Pritom, čini se, nisu uzeli u obzir mogućnost da im iseljavanja neće ispuniti očekivanja.

Nedugo nakon što su se iseljenici prvog vala potužili organizaciji Hitachdut Olei Jugoslavije na uvjete života u novostvorenoj židovskoj državi, dio je jugoslavenskih Židova počeo ozbiljnije razmatrati mogućnost da Izrael neće ispuniti njihova očekivanja. Posljedica je bila pojava anksioznosti, ponajprije povezane s pretpostavkom da u novoj domovini neće moći materijalno zbrinuti sebe i svoju obitelj. Iseljenici su nastojali zaobići propise jugoslavenske države vezane za izvoz pokretne imovine u Izrael jer su želji novu domovinu ponijeti što veći dio uglavnom skromne imovine kojom su raspolagali nakon rata. S druge strane, među osobama zainteresiranim za napuštanje zemlje pojavile su se različite inicijative za organizaciju tečajeva za stjecanje novih vještina za koje se pretpostavljalo da će im omogućiti lakše pronalaženje zaposlenja u novostvorenoj državi na Bliskom istoku.

Ključne riječi: Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija; Izrael; Židovi; iseljavanje; anksioznost