

## FOREWORD

The Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, the ethnic-religious organization representing nine Jewish communities with nearly 3,500 members, is very happy to be the publisher of the jubilee *Jewish Almanac 1971-1996*. This is one of its many and various activities aimed primarily at maintaining the Jewish identity.

We approached this important undertaking under very complex conditions – surrounded by wars, with most of our members facing a difficult financial situation, at a time when we had been giving shelter to a large number of our co-nationals from regions in which their lives had been endangered. With great sacrifices by individuals and considerable financial efforts, we succeeded in assuring the publication of this book.

Our wish was to have this book printed last year, in 1999, for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federation's foundation<sup>1</sup>, and to present it to guests from this country and abroad with whom we wished to celebrate that jubilee. Unfortunately, due to well known reasons, that could not be done.

*The Jewish Almanac 1971-1996* comprises a representative selection of works from prize-awarding competitions organized by the Federation in the 1971-1996 period. Among 128 prize-winning works, 50 have been chosen for publication in this *Almanac*, from all fields covered by the competition.

The Federation started announcing prize-awarding competitions for works with Jewish themes in 1955, and it has been maintaining that tradition to these days. The initiative to introduce prize-winning competitions for works with Jewish subject matter was given by the then president of the Federation, Dr. Albert Vajs. The first prizes were awarded in 1955. In the following decades that competition has become a traditional cultural manifestation with high standing in the broader Yugoslav society. At the time this book is being printed, the 44<sup>th</sup> competition for the year 2000 will be announced.

Many of the prize-winning works have been published, in whole or in part, in *Jewish Almanacs*. During the period in which they had been appearing

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<sup>1</sup> The Federation was founded on 1 July 1919 as the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. After WWII it continued under its present name.

regularly, i.e. in 1954–1970, a total of eight volumes were published. After that, the publishing ceased, partly because a new publication of the Federation, *Jewish Studies of the Jewish Historical Museum*, was started, the first volume of which appeared in 1971. From that time on, *Jewish Studies* have been publishing scholarly works and systematized materials on the history of the Jews in Yugoslavia. Works from the competitions of the Federation have also been printed therein.

After 1970, prize winning works have been kept in the Federation's archives. Thus a rich collection of unpublished scholarly, literary and memoir works came into being. At the same time, the moral debt started increasing vis-à-vis the small Jewish and broad Yugoslav communities, as well as the authors who won prizes and the members of the juries, all of whom contributed to the high standing of this cultural manifestation. Many writers and scholars who are well-known at present, achieved their first successes in anonymous prize-winning competitions of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia: David Albahari, Dobrilo Aranitović, Ljubica Arsić, Hans Bramer, Dragoljub Čolić, Filip David, Miroslava Despot, Zora Dirnbah, Ildi Ivanji, Danilo Kiš, Gordana Kuić, Ženi Lebl, Vojislav Maksimović, Dimitrije Mašanović, Sonja Nahman–Premeru, Danilo Nahmijas, Vidosava Nedomački, Đuro Orlić, Isak Papo, Avram Pinto, Mirjam Rajner, Ljubivoje Ršumović, Laslo Sekelj, Pavle Šosberger, Nikola Šuica, Jorjo Tadić, Dragiša Vitošević and others. Later, some of them had been members of juries in Federation's competitions. In addition to them, jury members in the 45 years have also been other well-known names in Yugoslav science and culture: Aron Alkalaj, Isak Amar, Andrija Gams, Zoran Gavrilović, Ivan Ivanji, Ljubiša Jocić, Simha Kabiljo–Šutić, Lavoslav Kadelburg, Žak Konfino, Aleksandar Levi, Julija Najman, Predrag Palavestra, Miodrag Pešić, Andreja Preger, Radovan Samardžić, Dušan Sindik, Ana Šomlo and many more. We are publishing this jubilee issue of the *Jewish Almanac 1971–1996* in order to pay our tribute to those zealous people.

The prize-winning competition of the Federation has been unique and specific in Yugoslav culture as it includes three fields having in common only Jewish themes. Traditionally, prizes have been awarded in the field of scholarly works, essays and journalistic articles with topics from Jewish history, literature, arts, social sciences and other areas of Judaica. Another field comprises literary works – novels, stories, poetry, dramas – with Jewish topics. Finally, prizes have also been awarded for historical and memoir materials, chronicles and memories of contemporaries from the past of Jewish communities, cultural, sports and other societies and associations, as well as from the time of World War II and the Holocaust.<sup>2</sup> The contents of the *Jewish Almanac 1971–1996* follow the propositions of the competitions. The Editorial Board reviewed all the works winning prizes between 1971 and 1996, and selected for publication, in whole or in excerpts, those works which meanwhile had not been published by the authors themselves or which represented the best contributions of the authors in the year of winning prizes. Works are illustrated by materials contained in the original version and by photographs from the archives of the Jewish Historical Museum. The best quality from the technical point of view and thematically the most interesting illustrations have been singled out in the two annexes of the *Almanac*.

<sup>2</sup> Only in the first year, competitions were announced also for painting and music.

In addition to selected works which won prizes in competitions in the 1971–1996 period, the present *Almanac* also comprises a Dictionary of Jewish Terms, contents of all previous *Jewish Almanacs*, tables of works received in all prize-winning competitions from 1955 to 1966 and a list of all works winning prizes in competitions of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia ending with 1996.

Like in all competitions of the Federation in the last 45 years, authors of Jewish and non-Jewish background are equally represented in the *Almanac*. The *Almanac* comprises works of authors from all the republics of former Yugoslavia (SFRY) as well as from some other countries. The Editorial Board took care to fully respect the language of the authors. We believe that the rich and varied contents of the *Jewish Almanac 1971–1996* will offer its readers an interesting insight into close to three decades of creative works with Jewish themes.

We thank all who helped this book reach the readers.

Belgrade, April 2000.

The Publishers