

SERBIAN STUDIES

JOURNAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR SERBIAN STUDIES

Vol. 27

2013

No. 1-2



SERBIAN STUDIES

JOURNAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR SERBIAN STUDIES

Vol. 27

2013

Nos. 1–2

Editors

Ljubica D. Popovich, *Vanderbilt University*, Co-Editor

Lilien Filipovitch-Robinson, *George Washington University*, Co-Editor

Jelena Bogdanović, *Iowa State University*, Associate Editor

Dušan Danilović, *Iowa State University*, Book Review Editor

Editorial Board

Marina Belović-Hodge, *Library of Congress*

Jelena Bogdanović, *Iowa State University*

Đorđe Jovanović, *World Bank*

Radmila Jovanović-Gorup, *Columbia University*

Dušan Korać, *Independent Scholar*

Gordana Pešaković, *Argosy University*

Ida Sinkević, *Lafayette College*

Svetlana Tomić, *Alfa University, Belgrade*

North American Society for Serbian Studies



Executive Committee

President: Tatjana Aleksić, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*
Vice President: Tomislav Longinović, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*
Secretary: Danilo Tomašević
Treasurer: Sonja Kotlica

Standing Committee

Nada Petković-Đorđević, *University of Chicago*
Milica Bakić-Hayden, *University of Pittsburgh*
Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, *Monash University, Australia*
Ljubica D. Popovich, *Vanderbilt University*
Lilien Filipovitch-Robinson, *George Washington University*

Past Presidents

Alex N. Dragnich, <i>Vanderbilt University</i>	1978–80
Vasa D. Mihailovich, <i>University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill</i>	1980–82
George Vid Tomashevich, <i>New York State University, Buffalo</i>	1982–84
Biljana Šljivić-Šimšić, <i>University of Illinois at Chicago</i>	1984–86
Dimitrije Djordjevic, <i>University of California, Santa Barbara</i>	1986–88
Sofija Škorić, <i>Toronto University</i>	1988–90
Jelisaveta Stanojevich Allen, <i>Dumbarton Oaks</i>	1990–92
Ljubica D. Popovich, <i>Vanderbilt University</i>	1992–94
Thomas A. Emmert, <i>Gustavus Adolphus College</i>	1994–96
Radmila Jovanović-Gorup, <i>Columbia University</i>	1996–98
Julian Schuster, <i>Hamline University</i>	1998–2000
Dušan Korać, <i>Catholic University</i>	2000–02
Lilien Filipovitch-Robinson, <i>George Washington University</i>	2002–04
Ružica Popovitch-Krekić, <i>Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles</i>	2004–06
Ida Sinkević, <i>Lafayette College</i>	2006–08
Milica Bakić-Hayden, <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>	2008–10
Nada Petković-Đorđević, <i>University of Chicago</i>	2010–12
Dušan Danilović, <i>Iowa State University</i>	2012–14

Copyright © 2016 by Serbian Studies: ISSN 0742-3330

Permission is granted to reprint any article in this issue, provided appropriate credit is given and two copies of the reprinted material are sent to *Serbian Studies*.

Technical Editor: Rosemarie Connolly

This issue was published in April 2016.

Serbian Studies is produced and distributed by Slavica Publishers. Individuals should join the NASSS rather than subscribing directly to the journal. Libraries and institutions should order *Serbian Studies* from Slavica; the institutional subscription rate is \$60/year (two issues)..

Slavica Publishers
Indiana University
1430 N. Willis Drive
Bloomington, Indiana USA
47404-2146



[Tel.] 1-812-856-4186
[Fax] 1-812-856-4187
[Toll-free] 1-877-SLAVICA
slavica@indiana.edu
<http://www.slavica.com>

The Lost Voices of Serbian Modernism: Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel

Aleksandra Ilijevski
University of Belgrade

Architects Miša Manojlović (1901–41, Belgrade) and Isak Azriel (1903–?, b. Belgrade, d. Israel after 1949) were professionally very active during the interwar period. They focused on avant-garde designs, and were at the forefront of Serbian Modernism. However, their work has remained mostly marginal in scholarly research. As a member of the Sephardic Jewish community in Belgrade, Manojlović and his family were victims of the Holocaust. Azriel was a survivor, and after the war immigrated to Israel with his wife and son. This paper critically analyzes newly discovered historical sources and archival documents in order to correct problematic issues regarding the life and work of Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel. It also provides a contribution to Holocaust studies in Serbia and cultural history of Belgrade, with the aim of uncovering additional historical data about members of the Jewish families Manojlović (Manojlovic, Manoilovitz, Manuel), Azriel (Azrijel), Munk, and de Majo (Demajo).

During the vibrant period between the Two World Wars, Serbia became part of the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and in 1929 was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Set between modern and traditional identities, modernizing forces dominated Serbian society through rapid industrialization and urbanization. Jews from the territory of prewar Serbia considered the newly formed Kingdom a natural continuum of the former state. Many contributed greatly to the war effort, fighting alongside other Serbian citizens in the First World War.

One of the most prominent members of society was Natalija Neti Munk (Belgrade, 1864–1924), née Tajtacak, the first Serbian volunteer nurse who participated in all the wars that Serbia waged for independence, liberation, and unification, beginning in 1885, then again from 1912 to 1918. She was a decorated war hero, board member of the War Volunteers Alliance and the

Society of Jewish Women. Neti Munk was the wife of Gutman Munk. Their first child Regina (Rifka), was born on 19 July 1882,¹ and was, as records show, married to Jakov M. Manuel on 19 July 1898 in Belgrade.² Jakov's and Regina's son Moša was born on 29 January 1901.³ The birth certificate of their second son Natan, born on 4 June 1902,⁴ shows that the family had changed their name to Manojlović.⁵ These documents confirm this authors' findings that architect Miša Manojlović (see Figure 1 in the gallery of illustrations following this article) was born in Belgrade on 29 January 1901 into a family of Sephardic Jews as Moša Manuel. His first name was not Milan, as many Serbian scholars have suggested. In fact, the change of Jewish family names by adding Serbian -ić at the end⁶ was a practice that had been followed since the period after the Serbian-Ottoman War (1876–78), when Jews were granted the right to higher army ranks, free movement within Serbia, and also autonomy in business transactions. After that time, the differences between Serbs and Sephardic Jews subsided in everyday life. The statistical data indicates that in 1900, 46 percent of Jews in Serbia specified Serbian as their mother tongue.⁷ In addition, it is often emphasized that Jews in Serbia regarded themselves as Serbs of Moses' faith.

¹ Registries of Births and Marriages of Sephardic Jews in Belgrade (Knjige rođenih i venčanih Jevreja Sefardskog obreda u Beogradu). Stari Grad Municipality, Belgrade; and Personal Records Database, Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. Natan Manojlović's birth certificate has an additional note: drowned on 5 August 1919.

⁵ I would like to express gratitude to Barbara Panić, art historian and curator at the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, who helped trace Miša Manojlović's and Isak Azriel's family ancestry, and Professor Aleksandar Kadijević, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, for his support during this research. A special note of appreciation goes to Lilien Filipovitch Robinson, professor at the George Washington University, Washington D.C., and co-editor of Serbian Studies, for her careful reading of this paper and her constructive suggestions.

⁶ David – Davidović, Avram – Avramović, Kalmi – Kalmić, Ozer – Ozerović, Levi – Lević, Almozlino – Almozlinović, also Mentović, Mandić, Karić, Samuilović, Leonović, Mojsilović, Rubenović, Zaharijević, Judić, Mandilović, Isaković, Naftalić, Josifović, Elić, Demajorović, Tajtacaković, Mošić, Baruhović, Aronović, Manojlović, Čelebonović, Kojenović etc.

⁷ Nebojša Popović, *Jevreji u Srbiji 1918–1941* (Belgrade: Institut za savremen istoriju, 1997), 21.

Miša Manojlović graduated from the Technical Faculty in Belgrade in February 1928.⁸ As a young architect, he was promoted at the Fourth Exhibition of the Architecture Students' Club, an annual exhibition opened by Prof. Nikola Nestorović on 19 February 1928, in one of the halls of the Technical Faculty's new building on the Students' Square. Among the authors were Dragan Gudović, Jovan Radenković, Rajko Tatić, Franja de Negri, Jovan Ranković, Stanislava Jovanović, Dragoljub Jovanović, and Djurdje Bošković, who also wrote an exhibition review. With respect to Manojlović's exhibited sketches we only know that Bošković listed his work with the designs "in the Renaissance and Neoclassical form," and referred to Manojlović as diligent.⁹

Public Commissions, Architectural Design Competitions, and Exhibitions

In 1931 Miša Manojlović entered the national competition for the new Railway Station in Skopje (now the capital of the Republic of Macedonia). The response from architects was positive (40 designs), although the broader list of participants has not been reconstructed.¹⁰ The proposal called for a design in the Serbian National Style. The commission did not award first place, and the second place went to Miša Manojlović from Charlottenburg¹¹ for his competition entry *Skoplje*, rendered in a pure Modernist style and with a very spatial and functional interior (see Figure 2). The third was the work by Nikola Dobrović, who was at the time in Prague, and who incorporated a dome structure in his design, as reminiscent of the Serbian National Style. Among known participants were Milan Zloković, Dragan Gudović, Josif Najman, Branislav Kojić, Grigorije Samojlov, Dragoslav Radisavljević, also the teams of Miladin Prljević and Vojin Simeonović, Momčilo Belobrk and Ilija Dimić, and Jovan Radenković and Vladislav Vladisavljević. The Skopje Railway Station com-

⁸ Diploma No. 929, 16 February 1928. See Vojislav Marković, ed., *Imenik diplomiranih inženjera i arhitekata na Tehničkom fakultetu Univerziteta u Beogradu 1919–1938* (Belgrade: Tehnički fakultet, 1939), 42.

⁹ Đurđe Bošković, "Izložba Kluba studenata arhitekture," *Raška umetnička smotra*, no. 1 (1929): 267.

¹⁰ About this competition: "Rezultat konkursa za novu skopsku stanicu," *Politika*, 5 April 1931; "Projekat za novu monumentalnu stanicu u Skoplju," *Vreme*, 17 April 1931; Đurđe Bošković, "U odbranu jednoga stila," *Politika*, 5 May 1931; J. Gerasimović, "U odbranu srpskog stila," *Politika*, 8 May 1931; Đurđe Bošković, "U odbranu srpskog stila," *Politika*, 10 May 1931.

¹¹ Manojlović's connections to Berlin have to be further explored (e.g., was he additionally trained there or working in a studio).

petition reveals how Serbian architecture in the early 1930s dealt with the dilemmas of enforcing new forms of Modernism for major state commissions. Manojlović was originally entrusted with the final design. However, his work sparked a public debate and criticism regarding the application of the National Style and/or Modernism for public buildings. The Skopje Railway station was built in 1940, but not in accordance with Manojlović's design.

About the same time, Isak Azriel, another Serbian architect, was in Berlin. He became Miša Manojlović's partner. Few documents discovered at the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade bring new light to Azriel's unknown biography. He was born to a Jewish family in Belgrade on 23 May 1903, and was married to Gita, née Fridman, born in Riga, Latvia, on 14 April 1901. The couple had a son, Samuilo, born in Berlin on 6 August 1930.¹² The documents also bring some clarification to the confusion in Serbian historiography: Isak's family name was Azriel, not Azrijel. Unfortunately, at this time, there is no data available about Isak Azriel's education.¹³

The Innkeepers Hall (in Serbian Gostioničarski dom) (see Figure 3) at 28 Jug Bogdanova Street (now Secondary School for the Hospitality Industry; Ugostiteljsko-turistička škola) was built in 1931 for the association of Belgrade's hotel and restaurant owners, and represents one of the first works by team Manojlović and Azriel that brought them recognition among fellow architects. The façade of the five-story building was accentuated with slim pilasters that began at the first floor and broke through the roof. In addition, the distinct arrangement of the windows formed a grid which visually balanced the vertical planes. The intricate interplay of openings and pilasters, accentuated by large flat wall surfaces at both ends of the building exemplified how

¹² The author found three documents in the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade regarding architect Isak Azriel that contributed to reconstructing his life. The first is *the Record of Tax Payers for the Year 1940* (Spisak poreznika za godinu 1940), which states that Isak Azriel, engineer, lived in 6/2 Kneginje Ljubice Street in Belgrade. The second is the *List of Camp Returnees and Refugees 1945–1946* (Spisak povratnika iz logora ili izbeglistva 1945–1946), where under No. 34–36 are Isak Azriel, his wife Gita, and son Samuilo, all with date and place of birth, and family address 21 Bosanska Street. The last document is the *Emigration records list 1948–1949* (Spisak iseljenika 1948–1949). On this list are Isak Azriel (No. 396), Gita (No. 397), and Samuilo (No. 398) from Belgrade. The documents also confirm the testimonies of Serbian architects, accepted by scholars, that Isak Azriel was a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Israel after the Second World War.

¹³ What is still unknown is where Isak Azriel was trained, and if that was in Berlin. His name is not in the register of engineers and architects who graduated from the Technical Faculty of the University in Belgrade from 1919–38, or engineers and architects who obtained nostrification of foreign educational certificates. See both registers in Marković, *Imenik diplomiranih inženjera i arhitekata*.

Manojlović and Azriel had been well informed and inspired by their direct experiences with Modernism in Berlin.

The architectural competition for the preliminary designs for the King Aleksandar I National Hall (Narodni dom kralja Aleksandra I) in Zemun¹⁴ (see Figure 4) was held in 1932–33 (the national was first, followed by a second round).¹⁵ Manojlović and Azriel were commissioned to carry out the project. The Hall, opened on Unification Day, 1 December 1933, was designed as a multifunctional educational, cultural, and sports center. The formal characteristics of the Hall were based on regional building styles, and the architects incorporated traditional architectural elements, like a clay-tiled roof. In contrast, the interior was very modern, with a main hall that hosted various public events.

In 1933 the national Association of Engineers and Architects of Yugoslavia organized a third national competition for the design of the central headquarters in Belgrade—the House of the Association of Engineers and Architects of Yugoslavia (Dom udruženja jugoslovenskih inženjera i arhitekata).¹⁶ The site chosen was at No. 7 Kralja Ferdinanda Street (now Kneza Miloša Street). The first prize was awarded to Miša Manojlović, who, along with Isak Azriel, began work on the detailed architectural and engineering drawings for the winning project (see Figure 5). The functional spatial distribution followed the strict competition requirements, as well as the urban restrictions. The portion of the building facing the main street was a four-story single block, while the building's façade on the side street was fragmented and receded from the regulatory line. Above the ground floor block there was an “L” shaped structure, with a flat roof terrace on the first-floor level.¹⁷ The exterior uncompromisingly exemplified Purism in form, which is the most significant feature of Manojlović's and Azriel's opus. The façades were flat, stripped of ornamentation, while the placement, form, and size of the windows anticipated the interior space, in the best tradition of orthodox functionalism.¹⁸ At the end of 1934 the building was erected. However, the architects changed the preliminary design, and the House of the Association of Engineers and Architects of Yu-

¹⁴ The building does not exist anymore. It was demolished in order to build “Pinki” Cultural and Sports Center (Kulturno sportski centar “Pinki”) by architect Ivan Antić in 1974.

¹⁵ Branislav Kojić, *Društveni uslovi razvitka arhitektonske struke u Beogradu 1920–1940 godine* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1979), 255.

¹⁶ On this subject, see Aleksandar Ignjatović, “Dom Udruženja jugoslovenskih inženjera i arhitekata,” *Nasleđe / Heritage*, no. 7 (2006): 87–118.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

goslavia was exposed to harsh criticism. It was called “a box,” suggesting that the unornamented façade was inadequate to the task of representing Belgrade architects, whose honor needed to be saved by architect Dragiša Brašovan.¹⁹ Subsequently, a new vertical accent spanning the roof was introduced, the façade was polychromed, and the ground level clad in stone. Unfortunately, all these elements actually negated the architectural principles of Modernism—the functionalism and purism of form that Manojlović and Azriel wanted to incorporate into their design.

Architectural exhibitions in the interwar period presented opportunities for architects to exhibit drawings and photographs of buildings as well as entries for design competitions organized throughout the Kingdom. As a representative form of communication with visitors, investors, and critics, the exhibitions became an effective method of implementing Modernist doctrine in order to transform interwar Serbian architecture.²⁰ For the period 1920–40, Tomislav Premerl listed 123 important architectural and urban design competitions, and architect Branislav Kojić cataloged 60 competitions, all from his personal archives.²¹ The most significant and influential architectural exhibition in Serbia was the 1931 First Exhibition of Contemporary Yugoslav Architecture (18–26 February).²² Two years later, the Second Exhibition of Contemporary Yugoslav Architecture was organized. In the case of Belgrade architects, all members of the Group of Architects of the Modern Movement participated in the 1933 exhibition, except Simić and Sekulić. Even though the Group once more invited architects from Ljubljana and Zagreb, this time only

¹⁹ “Prolepšana fasada Doma inženjera i arhitekata,” *Politika*, 24 November 1933, 6.

²⁰ On this subject, see Aleksandra Ilijevski, “The Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion as the Center for Exhibition Activities of Belgrade Architects 1928–1933,” *Zbornik Matice srpske za likovne umetnosti / Matica Srpska Journal for Fine Arts*, no. 41 (2013): 237–48.

²¹ Tomislav Premerl, *Hrvatska moderna arhitektura između dva rata: Nova tradicija* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1990), 181–85; Kojić, *Društveni uslovi razvitka arhitektonske struke*.

²² The organizer was the Group of Architects of the Modern Movement from Belgrade in collaboration with the Architects’ Club from Ljubljana and the Circle of Architects from Zagreb. In the catalogue 174 projects were listed, and from Belgrade the following members participated: Dušan Babić, Đura Borošić, Dragiša Brašovan, Jan Dubový, Branislav Kojić, Petar and Branko Krstić, Mihajlo Radovanović, Milan Sekulić, Dragomir Tadić, Milan Zloković; only Vojin Simić did not exhibit. In addition, Belgrade architects Josif Najman, Branislav Marinković, Jovan Jovanović, and Živko Piperski presented their work. From Ljubljana Josip Costaperaria, Fatur – Kos – Platner, Herman Hus, Lado Kham, Rado Kregar, Jože Mesar, Vladimir Mušić, Omahen – Serajnik, Stanislav Rohrman, Ivo Spinčić, Vladimir Šubić, and from Zagreb Lavoslav Horvat, Drago Ibler, Zlatko Neumann, Stjepan Planić, Vladimir Šterk, and Marko Vidaković participated.

a few of them participated. Đurđe Bošković and Branko Maksimović (who was also a participant) wrote exhibition reviews.²³ From Bošković's review we know that Manojlović and Azriel presented designs for villas, and competition entries for the King Aleksandar I National Hall, the Railway Station in Skopje, and the Belgrade Stock Exchange.²⁴ Maksimović noted Manojlović's and Azriel's competition entry for the Innkeepers Hall, Railway Station in Skopje, and designs for villas.²⁵ Both Bošković and Maksimović commended Manojlović's competition entry for the Railway Station in Skopje: Bošković highlighted the harmoniously and easily solved design,²⁶ and Maksimović praised the good aesthetic concept for the interior and exterior.²⁷ On the other hand, Bošković considered Manojlović's and Azriel's villas and the Belgrade Stock Exchange as "overly simplified," as he did for Milan Zloković's entry for the Stock Exchange.²⁸ Bošković's critique could be interpreted as concluding that the designs focused on function as primary.

On 29 November 1934 residents of Gospić (now the Republic of Croatia) decided to build the Sokol House (Sokolski dom) in memory of King Alexander I, the Unifier.²⁹ Engineer Luščić from Crikvenica was invited to do the preliminary design, which was later rejected. In January 1935 a public competition was announced, and by 11 March 1935, 78 designs had been received.³⁰ The architects, Professors Edo Šen and Ivo Marčelja, were among the members of the committee that decided not to award the first prize. The second prize went to the design entry *Plaketa u kvadratu* (Plaque in the square) of the Belgrade team, Manojlović and Azriel (see Figure 6). Their work was again functional in design. Three cubic blocks constituted the interior layout: a dominant block with a central hall, and two lower lateral wings. The classical proportions and skillfully planned disposition of a single row of strip windows that brought light into every part of the building were accentuated by

²³ Đurđe Bošković, "Izložba savremene jugoslovenske arhitekture," *Srpski književni glasnik*, no. 38 (1933): 387–89; Branko Maksimović, "Izložba Grupe arhitekata modernog pravca u Beogradu," *Beogradske opštinske novine*, no. 3 (1933): 228–30.

²⁴ Bošković, "Izložba savremene jugoslovenske arhitekture," 388, 389.

²⁵ Maksimović, "Izložba Grupe arhitekata modernog pravca," 230.

²⁶ Bošković, "Izložba savremene jugoslovenske arhitekture," 389.

²⁷ Maksimović, "Izložba Grupe arhitekata modernog pravca," 230.

²⁸ Bošković, "Izložba savremene jugoslovenske arhitekture," 389.

²⁹ *Sokolski dom kralja Aleksandra I Ujedinitelja u Gospiću: Svečano otvorenje i osvećenje 4 juna 1939* (Gospić: Štamparija M. A. Maksimović, 1939), 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

the purism of form itself. Despite such modernity and functionality of design, the committee decided to entrust the elaboration of the project to architect Marčelja, while concurrently accepting the preliminary design of Manojlović and Azriel. Marčelja, who was also a committee member, soon drafted the sketches and the budget. At the meeting on 29 June 1935, however, that decision was changed. The Committee itself was now to carry out the construction, and architect Marčelja was to be in charge of the design. That was the final step in eliminating Manojlović and Azriel from further participation in the project. Marčelja carried out the final design, and the ceremony marking the opening of Sokol House in Gospić was held on 4 June 1939.³¹

The Home for Children and Counseling Office for Mothers of the Society of Jewish Women (Dom za decu i savetovalište za majke Jevrejskog ženskog društva, now the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation), more commonly referred to as the Building of the Society of Jewish Women (Zgrada Jevrejskog ženskog društva) (see Figure 7) was one more major commission for Manojlović and Azriel and an opportunity to contribute to their own Jewish community. Women, who were the pillars of Jewish family life, also played an active role in the community. The Society of Jewish Women was established in 1874 in Belgrade, and the founders were Estera Pinto, Toni Azriel, and Sara Alkalaj. The Society's main activities in the beginning were donating clothing to underprivileged children and aiding girls and their mothers before marriage, as well as helping women who were ill. Over the years, the Society played a transformative role in the traditional life of Sephardic Jews, when women were not allowed outside their family circle. During the First World War, its members became nurses, following in the footsteps of Neti Munk. In the interwar period 1920–41, the chairwomen of the Society was Jelena Demajo.³² Driven by their ongoing dedication to help the most disadvantaged, on 7 September 1937 the construction of the Home for Children and Counseling Office for Mothers was begun in Belgrade on the corner of Maršala Pilsudskog (now Tadeuša Koščušskog) and Visokog Stevana Streets, pursuant to the design of Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel. The supervisory engineer was Samuilo Zaks. The opening ceremony was held on 27 November 1938.³³ In this rounded, three-story building, stripped to a uniform, flat wall surface, Manojlović and Azriel achieved a dynamism of form through the variations

³¹ J. B., "Sokolski dom u Gospiću," *Sokolski glasnik*, 9 June 1939, 4.

³² Milica Mihailović and Jovanka Veselinović, *Priča o komšijama kojih više nema. A tale of the neighbors that are no more. Nachbarn, die es nicht mehr gibt* (Belgrade: Radio B92, [1997?]), 33–36.

³³ Siniša L. Sretenović and Božidar S. Nedeljković-Ročkoman, eds., *Almanah humanih društava* (Belgrade: S. Sretenović, B. Nedeljković-Ročkoman, 1940), 189.

of both arrangement and dimensions of the exterior openings, which in turn anticipated and prepared the way for the arrangement of the interior.

By the late 1930s, the aesthetics of a stripped, unornamented façade was far from a novelty; however, it should be considered as a progression of a unique stylistic expression. Just a few years earlier, critics and fellow architects were constantly negating Manojlović's and Azriel's work as "poor architecture," and, as in case of the headquarters for The Association of Engineers and Architects of Yugoslavia, they saw it just as a plain "box" that needed to be decorated. Public pressure and lack of understanding of the basic concepts of Modernism eventually led to the cancellation of Manojlović's and Azriel's projects. Nevertheless, they were successful at competitions. Fast-forwarding a few years, from the standpoint of the late 1930s it becomes clear that their architecture was nothing more and nothing less than on the edge of avant-gardism. Manojlović and Azriel were pioneers, always a few years ahead.

Residential Buildings

Manojlović's and Azriel's residential architecture, whether designed for private investors of profitable multistory developments, follows the same pathways and stylistic nuances as their previously discussed work. A new aesthetic of flat, unornamented wall surface was adopted from the beginning; also the team always paid attention to the design of living spaces, creating functional layouts of apartments.

The monthly reports of the Belgrade Municipality paper, *Opštinske novine*, in the period June 1932–January 1941, record that more than 65 technical plans and revision designs for new buildings, various annexes, and reconstructions in Belgrade were granted to Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel. Most of the reports carry Manojlović's name; however, architectural and engineering drawings (in the Historical Archives of Belgrade) are in most cases signed by both architects.³⁴ The majority of their clients were members of Belgrade's Jewish community, who before the First World War lived in the Jewish Quarter near the Danube river, in the Jalića and Dorćol area (now part of Stari Grad Municipality) on Jevrejska, Solunska, Cara Uroša, Cara Dušana, Kralja Petra Streets. During the interwar period, when the urban growth of Belgrade was more than evident, Jewish families also moved toward the city center, mainly to Knez Mihailova and neighboring streets.

³⁴ Manojlović and Azriel had architecture offices at 80 Strahinjčića Bana Street, according to the 1937 Belgrade Address Directory. Noted in Divna Đurić Zamolo, "Jevreji—graditelji Beograda do 1941," *Jevrejski istorijski muzej: Zbornik*, no. 6 (1992): 226.

Among the first commissions in 1932 were a two-story residential building with basement, and ground floor for Anđelo and Olga Moric at No 8 Rige od Fere Street, and a three-story corner building with basement, ground floor, and mansardé for the Altarac family, Cezar and Albert, on the corner of Carice Milice and Kosmajaska (now Maršala Birjuzova) Streets. Both buildings are examples of modern, avant-garde architecture, with the façade stripped of decorative elements. The building at the corner of Carice Milice and Kosmajaska Streets represents one of the most successful early designs of Modernist architecture in Belgrade specifically intended for a residential corner structure. The sharp intersection of two streets was softened by the introduction of an unornamented façade of three rows of uniform windows, accentuated with skillfully placed receding ring-like balconies.

In 1934 Manojlović and Azriel worked on the multistory building at 54 (52) Kralja Aleksandra Street. Here, the straight symmetry of the façade was devoid of any decoration and reduced to a series of rhythmically spaced windows. The apartments represented the so-called “Belgrade apartment” in which the central room was linked by French doors to the street facing ones, thus becoming a core of daily family life.³⁵ Unlike the designs of architects Petar and Branko Krstić, Momčilo Belobrk, and Dragiša Brašovan, all of whom used rich multicolored stone trim and unique light fixtures, the hallway designed by Manojlović and Azriel was based on contemporary European models: gray marble, simple brass handrails, and Bauhaus-like ceiling light. This 1935 building represents an anthological design of Serbian Modernism, created before the iconic House of Josif Šojat by Petar and Branko Krstić in Brankova Street (1936) or Momčilo Belobrk’s Garage Building in Svetogorska Street (1938).³⁶

In 1934 Manojlović was granted planning permission for his own family villa at 16 Sanje Živanović Street, and Miša and Keti Manojlovic were listed as owners. Further research has provided new, relevant information about Miša Manojlović. The couple was actually married the previous year, on 25 December 1933 in Vienna.³⁷ The bride was Katarina (Keti) de Majo (born on 15 August 1905, in Vienna) from the prominent Belgrade de Majo family, which also lived in Vienna. Her father was Maks Menahem de Majo, import and

³⁵ Milan Milovanović, “Neimari Vračara: Srpska avangarda Manojlović i Azriel,” *Vračarski glasnik*, no. 23 (Dec. 1998–Jan. 1999): 35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Turkish Community of Vienna, Austria. *1845–1938 Weddings Register*. Page 1 160, Register No. 5, and Yad Vashem, *A page of Testimony*, Manojlovic, Kate (Katerina).

export agent, and her mother Josefina de Majo, née Ganz.³⁸ On 25 December 1934 Miša and Keti Manojlović had a daughter, Ruth, and on 23 December 1937 a second daughter, Vera,³⁹ was born.

In 1937 Manojlović and Azriel were working on Tonkić Palace (now Dubočica Hotel) in Leskovac (see Figure 8), built on the corner of No. 11 Bulevar Oslobođenja and Jedanaestog Oktobra Streets. Considered as one of the most representative buildings in town, it is far different from their previous work. The investor and owner of this three-story commercial and residential building was industrialist Milan Popović-Tonkić. The façade is in the style of monumental Classicism accentuated with elements of Palladian architectural aesthetics.⁴⁰ This propensity for stylistic outreach into historicism has to be seen as a concession to the investor's preference. The main motif was a rounded angled tract, longitudinal in volume that brought unexpected dynamism and plasticity of expression, atypical for architectural forms of academicism.⁴¹ However, curved lines are a typical feature of Manojlović's and Azriel's Modernist built-in corner buildings in Belgrade (The Home for Children and Counseling Office for Mothers, the building for Anđelo and Olga Moric at Rige od Fere Street, etc.), that architects here skillfully incorporated into the academicism matrix. Tonkić Palace was damaged by the 1944 bombing of Leskovac. After the war, the building was restored, and converted into the Dubočica Hotel with a restaurant on the ground floor.⁴²

For Manojlović and Azriel major private commissions for residential buildings followed, including: the multistory apartment building for Flora Medina (1936) at 26 Kosmajaska (now Maršala Birjuzova) Street; the apartment building for Hajim and Ana Medina (1937) at 13 Cara Uroša Street (see Figure 9); the three-story apartment building with mansard for Rejna Talvi (1937) at 9 Ivan Begova Street; the four-story apartment building for Mihailo Danon (1937) in 52 Kneginje Ljubice Street; and the multi-story apartment building at 69 Kneza Miloša Street (1940) (today Savski Venac Municipality office building).

³⁸ Turkish Community of Vienna, Austria. *1845–1938 Weddings Register*. Page 1 54, Register No. 237, and Yad Vashem, *A page of Testimony*, de Majo, Maks Menahem and de Majo, Josefina.

³⁹ Yad Vashem, *A page of Testimony*. Manojlović, Ruth and Manojlović, Vera.

⁴⁰ Aleksandar Kadrijević and Srđan Marković, *Graditeljstvo Leskovca i okoline između dva svetska rata* (Leskovac: Narodni muzej, 1996), 43–44.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44–45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 45.

The Lost Voices

From 1938 until 1941 the situation in Belgrade with respect to building development changed dramatically. Realizing that war was inevitable, many commissions were actually for basement reconstructions to accommodate shelters. At the same time, Yugoslav architecture came under the direct political influence of the Third Reich. In mid-1938, when the decision was made to build the Olympic Stadium in Belgrade,⁴³ the Ministerial Council made the resolution to invite foreign experts. Soon the project was entrusted to Prof. Werner March (1894–1976), the builder of the 1936 Olympic Stadium in Berlin, who after a careful survey decided to erect the new Stadium beneath the Belgrade Fortress, in the Donji grad (Lower Town) area, at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. When the engineers' and architect's associations of the Kingdom convened numerous meetings, the members expressed negative opinions on the project. At one of the meetings held in Belgrade, architect Milorad Matura noted that the greatest drawback to raising the Stadium on the site of the Donji grad was the inevitable "destruction of the Belgrade Fortress which, in the event of war, was a fortification useful to the defense of the capital."⁴⁴ Miša Manojlović openly spoke against the project, and made a presentation on important traffic issues. By displaying urban plans of Belgrade, he stressed that the intended location of the stadium would be very inaccessible to the masses, adding that even parking in the area was impossible.⁴⁵ At the Exhibition of the New German Building Arts (5–16 October 1940) in the German Pavilion at the Belgrade Fair, architect Werner March presented his project for the Olympic Stadium in Belgrade to distinguished guests and Government officials led by Prince Pavle Karađorđević and Princess Olga. A few months later, architects and engineers of the Kingdom were still strongly against the project. On 5 January 1941, many delegates of the Association of Engineers and Architects from Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, and Novi Sad attended the meeting. Keeping in mind the recent outbreak of war in Europe, they urged for dismissal of the financially expensive Stadium project, emphasizing that "the main task at the time was prompt procurement of the basic needs of the

⁴³ On the Olympic Stadium in Belgrade, see Aleksandra Ilijevski, "Đurđe Bošković kao savremenik i tumač arhitekture Beograda između dva svetska rata," *Godišnjak grada Beograda / Annual of the city of Belgrade*, no. 58 (2011): 190–95.

⁴⁴ "Povodom podizanja Olimpiskog stadiona u Beogradu, Beogradski Inženjeri i arhitekti ustaju protiv toga da se poslovi poveravaju inostranim stručnjacima, bez konsultovanja naših ljudi," *Politika*, 20 August 1939, 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

population.”⁴⁶ The issue regarding March’s Olympic Stadium in Belgrade was resolved unexpectedly, exactly three months later, with the bombing of the city and German occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

From the onset of the occupation, members of the Jewish communities in Serbia were subjected to various forms of registrations that soon led to extermination in the concentration camps. The “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” in Serbia can be divided into three phases. In the first (April–August 1941) Jews from Belgrade were registered, their freedom of movement limited, their property looted, and they were sent to forced labor. In the second phase (August–November 1941) the German authorities ordered the mass internment of Jewish men, first the Jews from the Banat region, and then the Belgrade Jews, to Topovske Šupe concentration camp, where they were shot almost daily, especially as part of the retaliatory executions in response to acts of sabotage carried out on the territory of Serbia. In the third phase, 8–12 December 1941 the remaining Jews, mostly women and children, were taken to the Staro Sajmište concentration camp, and in the spring of 1942, from March to early May, suffocated in trucks which served as mobile gas chambers.⁴⁷

Newly found documents unfortunately verify that all members of Miša Manojlović’s family were murdered in the Holocaust in Belgrade. To be specific, his brother-in-law, Willy Maks de Majo⁴⁸ submitted records to Yad Vashem on his lost family members. Miša Manojlović was officially killed, believed gassed in Belgrade by the Germans. The official date of his exe-

⁴⁶ Archives of Yugoslavia, fond 62-1505, Rezolucija Udruženja jugoslovenskih inženjera i arhitekata upućena ministru građevina, 30.1.1941, 5.

⁴⁷ Ženi Lebl, *Do “Konačnog rešenja”: Jevreji u Beogradu 1941–1942* (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2001), 290. The book was translated into English in 2007. Jennie Lebel, *Until “The Final Solution”: The Jews in Belgrade 1941–1942* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu, 2007).

⁴⁸ De Majo, William (1917–93) was born in Vienna and studied at the Vienna Commercial Academy in preparation for a career in the family textile business. However, he opted for a freelance career in graphic design, establishing a studio in Belgrade in 1936. In 1939 he immigrated to Britain, where he worked as a broadcaster with the BBC Overseas Service before serving as a pilot with the Royal Yugoslav Air Force during the Second World War. In 1946 he established W. M. de Mayo and Associates, specializing in graphic design and exhibition work, gaining a wide range of commissions that ranged from the highly detailed series of Letts diaries to the large-scale Farm and Factory Exhibit, Ulster, for the 1951 Festival of Britain. In 1963 he became the founder president of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA), which since then has represented the interests of the graphic design profession in over 60 countries. From Jonathan M. Woodham, *A Dictionary of Modern Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), available at <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095709199>.

cution, according to a postwar death certificate, was 19 November 1941.⁴⁹ Miša was 40. His wife Katarina (Keti) Manojlović was also killed by the Germans, place unknown, but believed to be Belgrade. The official date according to the postwar death certificate was 14 December 1941.⁵⁰ Katarina was 36. Miša's and Katarina's older daughter Ruth was only 7 years old. She was killed by the Germans in Belgrade towards the end of 1941.⁵¹ Vera, their four-year-old younger daughter, was also murdered towards the end of 1941.⁵² Maks Menahem de Majo, Katarina's father, was gassed by the Germans. The official date according to the postwar death certificate was the end of November 1941, in Topovske Šupe concentration camp in Belgrade.⁵³ Josefina de Majo, Katarina's mother, was believed to have been gassed by the Germans at Sajmište concentration camp. The official date according to the postwar death certificate was the end of December 1941.⁵⁴ Moše Munk, Miša's uncle and Holocaust survivor, also registered members of Manojlović family. Regina Manojlović, Miša's mother, (and Moše's sister) is also listed in those records. She was murdered in 1941,⁵⁵ the same year that Jakov Manojlović, Miša's father, was murdered.⁵⁶

Isak Azriel, his wife Gita, and their son Samuilo survived the Holocaust and immigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1949.⁵⁷ Although Serbian colleagues later on managed to contact Azriel, he declined to talk about his life in Belgrade.

Soon after the Second World War, architects Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel became lost voices. Nevertheless, Manojlović and Azriel had had very active practices during the interwar period, but their functional and avant-garde designs have remained marginalized in scholarly research. The primary

⁴⁹ Yad Vashem, "A Page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Misha," *The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names*, available at <http://yvng.yadvashem.org>.

⁵⁰ Yad Vashem, "A Page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Kate (Katerina)."

⁵¹ Yad Vashem, "A Page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Ruth."

⁵² Yad Vashem, "A Page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Vera."

⁵³ Yad Vashem, "A Page of Testimony: de Majo, Maks Menahem."

⁵⁴ Yad Vashem, "A page of Testimony: de Majo, Josefina."

⁵⁵ Yad Vashem, "A page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Regina."

⁵⁶ Yad Vashem, "A page of Testimony: Manojlovic, Jakob."

⁵⁷ See fn. 12.

function of this paper has been to bring to light the lives of Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel and acknowledge the significance of their architectural contributions as pioneers of Serbian Modernism.

ailjevs@f.bg.ac.rs



Figure 1. Photo of Miša Manojlović (Belgrade, 1901–41), architect.
This newly discovered and only known photo of Manojlović
was donated by his brother in-law Willy de Majo to Yad Vashem.

[Source: Yad Vashem]

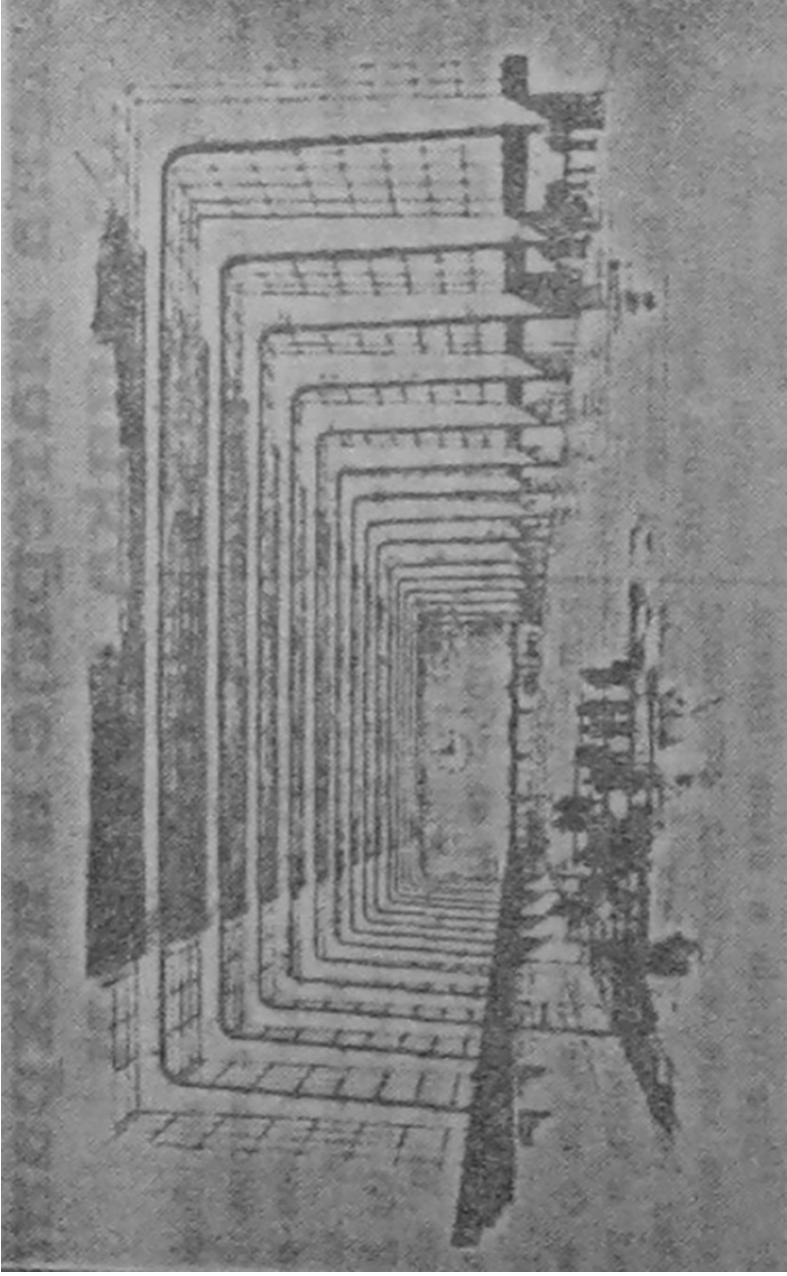


Figure 2. Miša Manojlović, New Railway Station in Skopje, competition design, interior, 1931

[Source: Vreme]



Figure 3. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel,
the Innkeepers Hall in Belgrade, 1931

[Source: Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade]



Figure 4. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel, King Aleksandar I National Hall in Zemun, 1933

[Source: Collection of A. Ilijevski]

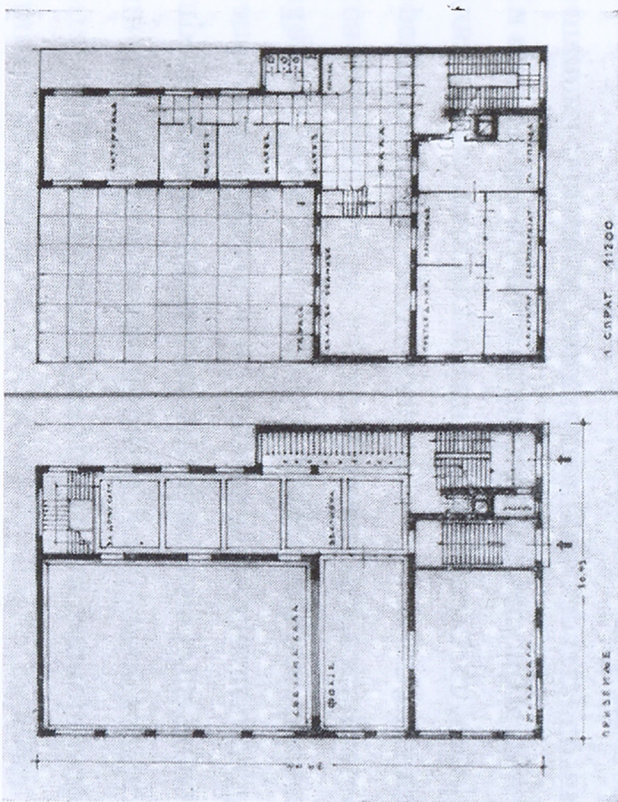
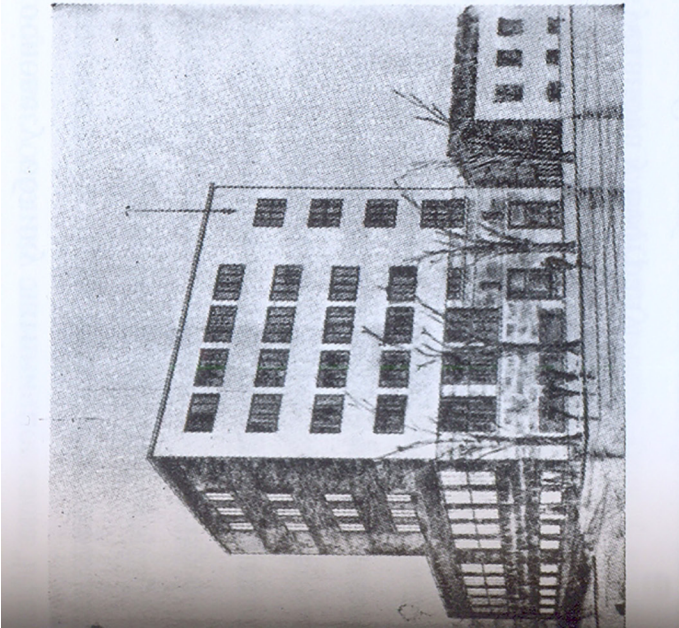


Figure 5. Miša Manojlović (and Isak Azriel), Association of Engineers and Architects of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, competition design, 1933

[Source: Tehnički list]

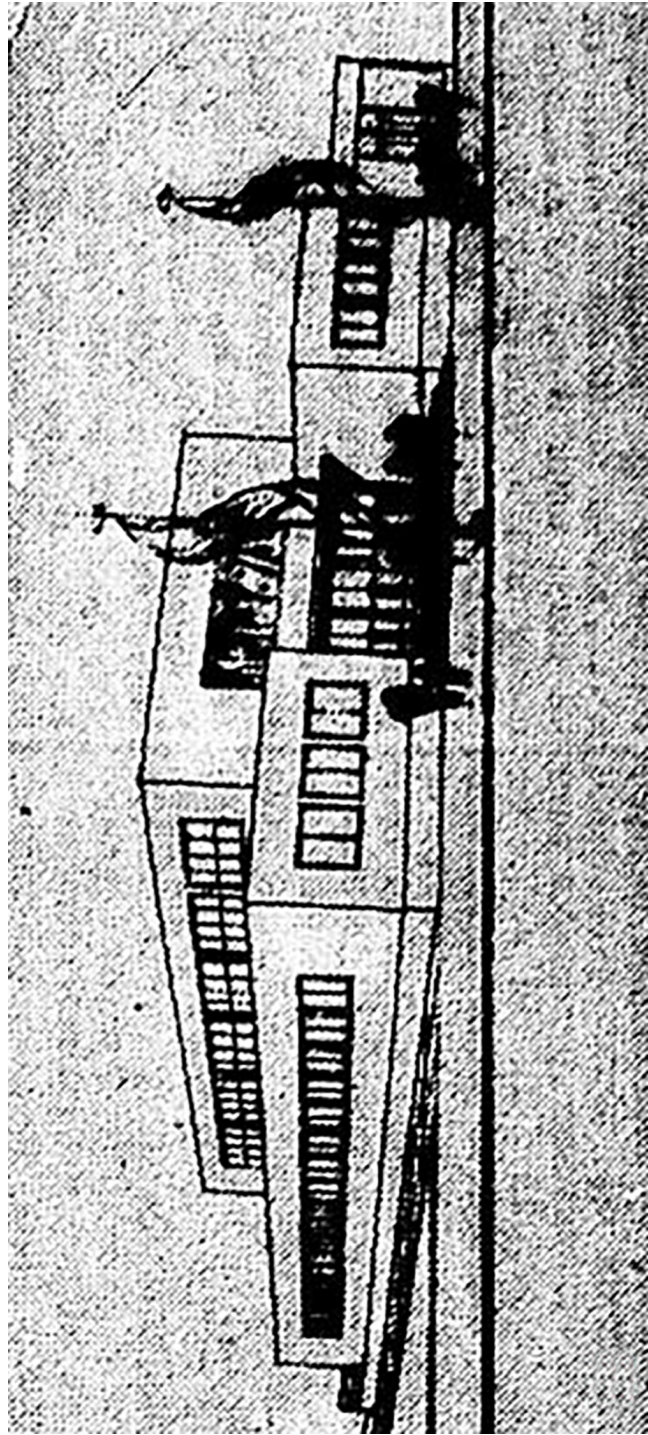


Figure 6. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel, Sokol House in Gospić, competition design, 1935

[Source: Politika]

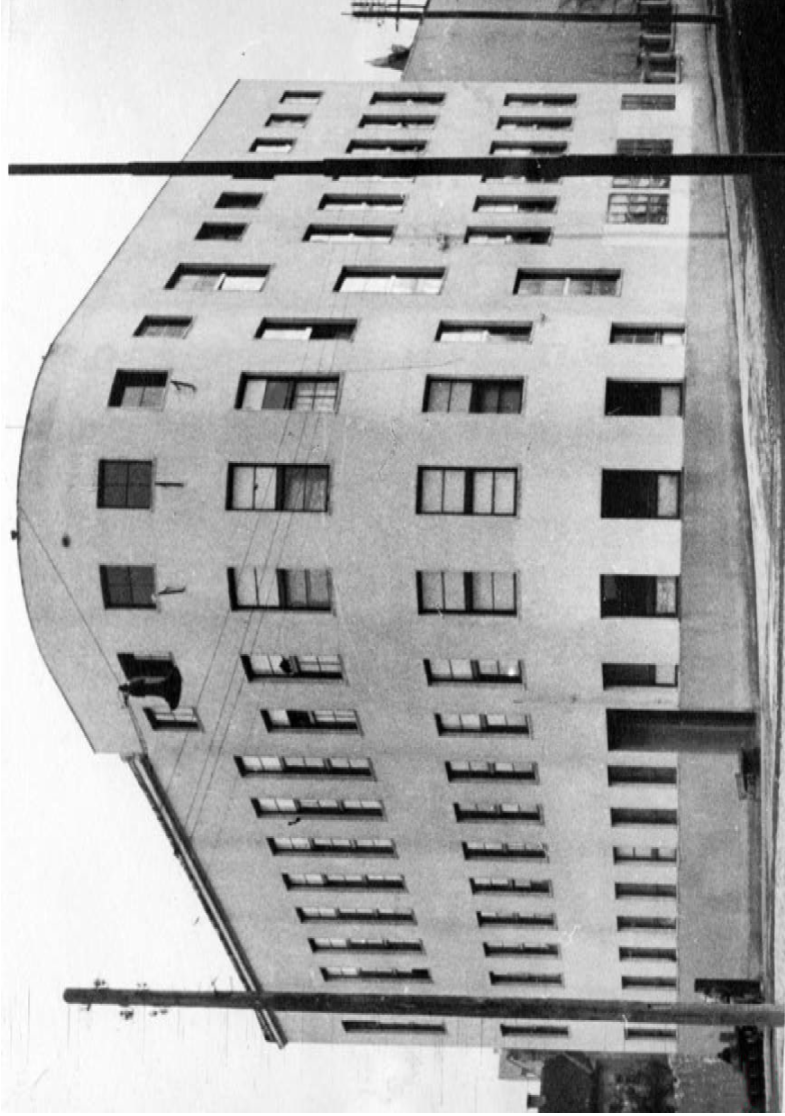


Figure 7. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel,
the Home for Children and Counseling Office for Mothers of the Society of Jewish Women in Belgrade, 1938
[Source: Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade]



Figure 8. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel, Tonkić Palace in Leskovac, 1937

[Source: Aleksandar Kadijević, Srdan Marković, *Graditeljstvo Leskovca i okoline između dva svetska rata*]



Figure 9. Miša Manojlović and Isak Azriel, Apartment building for Hajim and Ana Medina at No 13 Cara Uroša Street, Belgrade, 1937

[Source: Collection of A. Kadrijević]

