

Sarajevo's Multiculturalism: Daniel Kabiljo's Sephardic Types

In the late 1920s and early 30s, at the prime of his artistic development, Daniel Kabiljo (1894–1944), a Sarajevo artist of Sephardic origin, set out to create a gallery of local Jewish types. Kabiljo's characters, some of them adopted from old photographs and painted in a sentimental realist style or a distilled version of impressionism, inhabit the colorful Baščaršija, the local Turkish market and are joined by other Sarajevo ethnic types—Muslims, Catholic Croats, and Orthodox Serbs. While offering a glimpse of bygone days, his work also expresses nostalgia for a traditional way of life characteristic of Ottoman Sarajevo at a time when the city and its inhabitants were undergoing rapid political and cultural changes under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. What is puzzling is that Kabiljo adopted this anachronistic direction *after* creating daring modernist works. He persisted in it despite the harsh criticism his new works received in art circles. The path leading to this seemingly unusual choice is complex. It highlights not only Kabiljo's personal development, but also the changes within the Sarajevo Sephardic community from which he stemmed.

1 Between East and West

When the young Daniel Kabiljo approached his father, a Sarajevo Sephardic petty trader and shop-owner, saying that he wanted to study art, the elder Kabiljo angrily told him that this would be like “joining the bohemians and gypsies,” and that by doing so he would “gamble away his destiny,” be permanently dependent on others, and never have enough money to support himself.¹ The only extant photograph of the Kabiljo family, taken in 1930 and showing only men, embodies this spirit of patriarchal bourgeois respectability (fig. 2.1). Encouraged by a high-school teacher who sensed his talent, Daniel fortunately did not give up and after many painful confrontations at home was

¹ The quotations are from the short, undated typewritten biography of Daniel Kabiljo written by his brother, Josip Kabiljo, after WWII, p. 1. I would like to thank Nela Levi, the artist's relative from Sarajevo, for sharing this document with me. A copy of it is in the holdings of the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.



FIGURE 2.1
Kabiljo family, 1930 (Daniel sitting
first on the left), photograph. Private
collection

granted a stipend from La Benevolencia, Sarajevo's Sephardic welfare society, to study art.

Such a beginning was not unusual for a young person in Sarajevo's Sephardic environment at the beginning of the twentieth century. While children were supported and encouraged to gain a secular education, the profession of artist was still viewed with suspicion. Traditional Jewish society's conflicted attitude toward visual art, on the one hand,² and concern about an uncertain economic future, as expressed by Kabiljo's father, on the other, still prevented parents from giving their blessing.

However, the confrontation between father and son was not only about professional choices and economic stability. The deeper roots of this conflict lay in the complex process of westernization and modernization introduced by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy into Sarajevo in general, and its Sephardic community in particular. Kabiljo's father, born before the Monarchy's 1878 occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, spent his childhood in an entirely different society, steeped in the Oriental, Ottoman, and traditional Sephardic worlds. His adolescence and that of his son Daniel were entirely different. In order to be able to conceive this bygone time and to better understand the generational conflict between the elder and the young Kabiljo, it is necessary briefly to revisit it.

Sarajevo, the city in which they both grew up, was founded by the Turks in the mid-fifteenth century, after the conquest of Bosnia. Built on the east—west overland trade route from Istanbul to the Adriatic coast, it soon developed into an important commercial center.³ The first Jewish merchants arrived from

2 Much has been written about the problem of "Jewish aniconism." See, for instance, Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3 For the general history of Sarajevo, see Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: a Biography* (London: Hurst, 2006); for the history of Sarajevo's Jewish community, see *Spomenica 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu, 1566–1966*, ed. Samuel Kamhi et al. (Sarajevo:

Salonica. They settled in Sarajevo along with the Muslims—Turks and local Slavs who had accepted Islam, the Croat Catholics, and the Serbian Orthodox, thus taking part in the formation of this multiethnic and multi-confessional city. After receiving permission from the city authorities, the first Jewish community was established in the sixteenth century. Following the Ottoman tradition, it was built as a *mahala*, an open neighborhood in the center of the town, comprised of low, one-storey houses surrounding a cluster of inner courtyards in the vicinity of the synagogue. The neighborhood was located next to a Muslim one, dotted by numerous mosques. As there was no restriction as to where Jews could live, wealthier Jews soon moved to other parts of town, leaving behind the poorer ones. Some Sarajevo Jews were merchants trading in textiles, fur, wood, and iron; others were artisans, such as tinsmiths, shoemakers, and tailors, working long hours in the shops scattered through the alleys forming the central market area. In addition, some Jews were well known in the region as pharmacists and doctors, professions often passed on in the family from generation to generation.

The Ottoman policy of religious tolerance and the independence granted the community, ensured unity and the continuity of Sephardic life and tradition. Sarajevo's Sephardic Jews were thus able to live as a close-knit community and to maintain their religious, cultural, and social heritage mainly due to their rabbis, religious education, traditional communal organization, and patriarchal extended family circles. Although well adapted to their surroundings and often borrowing from them, the Sarajevo Sephardim remained distinct owing to their family names, the Judeo-Spanish language, religious customs, clothes, and food, all of which preserved memories and deep emotional ties to the Iberian Peninsula.

All of this began to change with the arrival of new rulers. The Austro-Hungarians brought with them civil rights for the Jews as individuals, but also posed a threat to the authority and stability of the existing traditional Sephardic community, which was—for the first time—directly confronted with Western culture. Thus, by 1882, the traditional Ottoman Sephardic community was transformed into a central European *Kultusgemeinde*—modernized, but subject to state control and intervention. While the Austrians introduced new industries and directed the local economy towards Vienna, Prague, and Budapest, creating new employment and trade opportunities, the changes in effect destroyed the old Ottoman guild economy. As a result, aside

Oslobodjenje, 1966); Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 11–25; Avram Pinto, *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987). An all-encompassing history of Jewish Sarajevo is still sorely missing.

from several old, wealthy families who found ways to adapt to the new economic order, Sarajevo's Sephardic Jews quickly became impoverished, many of them still trying to make their living as old-fashioned artisans, petty traders, or unskilled workers.

The change affected young people as well. The traditional religious school system underwent changes: in 1894 secular subjects and the Serbo-Croatian language, spoken by the local residents, were introduced into the Jewish school which until then had taught only in Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew. Moreover, with the turn of the century more and more Sephardic children began attending state secondary schools, including the young Daniel Kabiljo. Some continued their education at the university level abroad, mainly in Vienna. It was this change in the educational system and the acceptance of the new opportunities afforded by secular education that finally effected voluntary changes within the community itself.

Daniel Kabiljo's persistent confrontation with his father and his wish to become an artist symbolize these changes. Though thought to be the first academically-trained Jewish artist from Sarajevo very little is known about his early years, professional training, and private life. Although he perished during the Holocaust in the notorious Jasenovac camp operated by the Ustasha, during the period of socialist Yugoslavia Kabiljo was almost entirely forgotten primarily due to the fact that during his lifetime he was not aligned with the leftist and communist ideology.⁴ Despite the fact that several of his paintings would be regularly included in occasional group exhibitions of Jewish artists—usually organized by the Jewish community, there is still a lack of a more serious research about him. Moreover, since many of Kabiljo's works, as well as documents and photographs related to his life, remained in private hands, much of it has been lost.⁵

4 In contrast to, for example, Daniel Ozmo (1912–1942), another Jewish artist from Sarajevo to be discussed later in the book, who perished in the same camp but due to his communist background was celebrated in Tito's Yugoslavia as an anti-fascist hero and martyr.

5 For Daniel Kabiljo's biographical data, see Avram Pinto, "Tri jevrejska slikara iz Bosne—žrtve fasizma," *Jevrejski pregled* 12, nos. 11–12 (1961): 37–38; Vojo Dimitrijević, "Slikari-Jevreji u Sarajevu između dva rata," in *Spomenica 400 godina*, 316–17; *Umjetnici Jevreji Bosne i Hercegovine; sudjeluju i umjetnici Bosne i Hercegovine koji su obrađivali tematiku jevrejskog života*, [catalogue], ed. Smilja Šinik (Sarajevo: Umjetnička Galerija, 1966), 6–7; Azra Begić, "Umjetnici Jevreji Bosne i Hercegovine u XX stoljeću," in *Stvaralaštvo Jevreja u kulturnoj baštini i razvoju Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sveske, Institut za Proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, Sarajevo, 11, 7–8 (Tulza: Institut za Proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, 1984), 45–46; Pinto, *Jevreji Sarajeva*, 129–30; Dolores Ivanuša, *Dimenzije jednog vremena, Židovi—likovni umjetnici u antifasističkoj borbi i žrtve holokausta*, [catalogue, Galerija židovske općine Zagreb] (Zagreb: Židovska općina, 1996), 7–9; *Jevrejski umjetnici iz Bosne i Hercegovine*, [catalogue,

Kabiljo began to paint at the age of nineteen as an amateur, while sharing a studio “in an old Bosnian house” with two local painters: Vilko Šeferov and Bora Petrović.⁶ His brother informs us that Kabiljo’s early works were mostly portraits.⁷ However, a recently discovered *Still Life*, dated 1913, shows the young artist’s taste for the glamorous and sensual: a bottle of champagne in a cooler, couple of glasses with a cluster of grapes, vine leaves, and an “Eve’s apple” are painted in a clumsy, academic style.⁸ Šeferov had just returned from his studies at the Art Academy in Budapest and may have passed on some of his newly acquired knowledge and taste to the less educated Kabiljo. It is possible that, in return, Kabiljo introduced him to Žak Pinto, a member of the city’s Sephardic community, who commissioned from Šeferov a large, now lost, portrait of himself. In addition Pinto’s father commissioned from Šeferov a copy of a painting by the Spanish artist Ignacio Zuloaga.⁹ All this suggests already existing interest in and appreciation of art among some wealthier Sarajevo Jews, such as the Pintos. At the same time it illuminates the close social, economic, and artistic ties between Šeferov and his Jewish clients, and between the artists themselves, ties developed without the constraints of their ethnic origin. Moreover, while Kabiljo shared the studio with Šeferov, he invented a new artistic name for himself—the more Slavic-sounding Danilus (from now on he will sign his paintings as K. Danilus), a change that points to a wish to accommodate to his artistic, non-Jewish, surroundings. It was at this time also that Šeferov painted a portrait of his young Jewish friend, inaugurating what would later become a fruitful dialogue between Jewish and non-Jewish artists in Sarajevo.¹⁰

Although Viktor Šeferov appeared in these early years of their friendship as artistically more educated than Kabiljo, the entire Sarajevo art scene was very new. For better comprehension of the artistic environment in which Kabiljo

Galerija Novi Hram], ed. Azra Begić (Sarajevo: La Benevolencija, 1997), 22–23; idem, “Jevreji u umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine,” *Izraz, časopis za književnu i umjetničku kritiku* 23 (Jan.–Mar. 2004): 151–52. I would like to thank the Elazar, Levi, Gomboš, and Hamović families of Sarajevo and Israel for their kind help and readiness to share with me their knowledge about Kabiljo’s life and his art.

6 Begić, “Umjetnici Jevreji Bosne i Hercegovine u XX stoljeću,” 45.

7 The undated typewritten biography of Daniel Kabiljo by his brother Josip Kabiljo (see above, n. 1).

8 The painting is presently in the Jewish community building in Sarajevo.

9 Azra Begić, *Jevrejski umjetnici Bosne i Hercegovine*, [catalogue], Sarajevo-Hvar-Zagreb (Sarajevo: La Benevolencija, 2003), 5. It is certainly interesting that the elder Pinto favored the painting by Ignacio Zuloaga (1870–1945). This unusual contemporary Spanish artist depicting numerous scenes from Spanish tradition and colorful folklore must have appealed to this Sarajevo Sephardic Jew’s nostalgia for and spiritual connection to Spain.

10 The painting is presently at the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

began his career, one must recall that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a restless province of the immense Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bureaucrats in Vienna, well aware of the simmering Slavic nationalism that would one day set off WWI, tried a novel approach: encouraging “safe” expression of nationalism through art. After Bosnia and Herzegovina’s occupation in 1878 and its inclusion in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, artists from the more established parts of the empire began to show up in Bosnia. The first painters were Western “Orientalists” who came in search of an “exotic motif and oriental atmosphere.” While proud of bringing enlightenment and modernity to this newly-added backwater, they also, by painting local picturesque motifs, acknowledged that this area, until recently a part of the Ottoman Empire, had its own unique oriental-European identity.¹¹

An example of this cultural colonization policy that combined local tradition with modernity was the Bosnian pavilion, one of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy’s main attractions at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1900. While the architecture of this pavilion was inspired by traditional Bosnian dwellings, the striking art-nouveau murals showing Bosnian characters in folk-costumes decorating its walls were created by Alfons Mucha of Prague, who was later to gain international fame.¹² The handicrafts, colorful carpets, and photographs of various rural types wearing Muslim and Christian traditional clothes added to the exotic atmosphere. The goal of this eclectic mixture was to create a largely imaginary, distinct pan-Bosnian (*bošnjak*) style in art and architecture.¹³

Some of the artists who came to Bosnia to paint stayed on, like the Czech Jan Karel Janevski, who in 1906 opened the first private art school in Sarajevo.

11 For a good introduction into the early period of artistic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Azra Begić, “Prilike” and “Slikarstvo,” in Arfan Hozić et al., *Umjetnost Bosne i Hercegovine, 1894–1923*, [catalogue] (Sarajevo: Umjetnička Galerija BiH, 1978), n.p. [8–24; 36–78].

12 <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/paris-1900/> (last accessed 7 July 2017)

13 For the Austro-Hungarian approach to ruling Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Robert J. Donia, “The Making of *Fin de Siècle* Sarajevo,” in id., *Sarajevo: a Biography* 60–91. This deliberate ‘orientalization’ was also introduced by building Sarajevo’s new town hall in 1892–94 in the pseudo-Moorish style. The same style was employed for the city’s new Ashkenazic synagogue, built by the Czech architect Karel Pařík in 1902. In both cases the style was to symbolize the oriental roots, both of the city of Sarajevo, and—paradoxically—of Ashkenazic Jews, most of whom, as citizens of the Monarchy, came from its other parts, settling in Sarajevo only after the occupation of the city; see Ivan Davidson Kalmar, “Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews and Synagogue Architecture,” *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2001): 68–100.

Others, possibly including Kabiljo's high-school art teacher, taught at local schools, discovering talented pupils and encouraging them to pursue their studies in the Monarchy's academies in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, or Cracow. Supported by government stipends, young artists could study at several art centers, but only a few continued in Munich and occasionally in Paris. Too timid and insecure to explore more radical trends in modern art developing outside the academy walls, they usually adopted a more secure and distilled version of impressionism, and learned by copying the great masters in museums. Still, an awareness of modernism gradually developed.¹⁴

The first generation of Bosnian painters, then, emerged just prior to the onset of WWI. At first it included only artists of Serbian and Croatian origin, for whom the transition from traditional church art, as practiced by the previous generations of their coreligionists, seemed to provide an easier start. The future artists belonging to the Muslim and Jewish ethnic groups, lacking such a predisposition, experienced more difficulty—as exemplified by the strong objections of Kabiljo's father—and joined in only somewhat later.

It therefore comes as no surprise that Kabiljo, at the time he painted the 1913 *Still Life* and befriended Šeferov, expressed a wish to leave his family and Sarajevo and to study art in a more advanced art center. However, WWI, triggered by the fateful shot fired by Gavrilo Princip, a Serbian rebel, at Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Kabiljo's hometown, put an end to all plans. According to the short statement of his brother, Josip Kabiljo, the family had to flee from the city under attack and find shelter in distant Sombor, then a southern Hungarian town.¹⁵ Kabiljo's father was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army, and the family returned to Sarajevo only after the fall of the empire and the establishment of a new state in the region: the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

2 Bosnian Artist or Yugoslav Zionist?

It was only in 1921 that Kabiljo, now twenty-seven years old, finally set out to professionally study art. He first traveled to Vienna, where he remained until

¹⁴ One of the important sources of information was *Nada*, the bi-monthly journal for literature, culture, and art published in Sarajevo between 1894 and 1903. The journal promoted contemporary literature, included reviews of art exhibitions held in artistically more advanced Zagreb and Belgrade, and—most important for the Sarajevo artists—brought quality reproductions and articles about numerous European artists, introducing symbolism, secession, and post-impressionism; see Begić, "Slikarstvo," n.p.

¹⁵ The undated typewritten biography of Daniel Kabiljo by his brother Josip Kabiljo (above, n. 1), 1.

1923.¹⁶ The choice of Vienna as an art center, due to its more conservative art schools, was an unusual one for an aspiring artist at the beginning of the 1920s. Other Sarajevo artists were by then studying art in Paris, in lively Montparnasse academies and studios.¹⁷ By choosing Vienna, Kabiljo seems to have been following in the footsteps of the first generation of academically trained Sarajevo Sephardim, some of whom were, like him, La Benevolencia protégés.¹⁸

The first generation of Sarajevo's Sephardic students appeared in Vienna during the late 1890s. Far from home, they felt the need to stick together. Thus, as noted, a group of them together with fellow students from Serbia and Bulgaria, decided to form Esperanza, an academic society of Sephardic Jews. Although, as demonstrated above, Esperanza based itself on Nathan Birnbaum's pre-Herzlian idea that the Jews are a separate ethnic entity, a people, for Sarajevo Esperanza's members, whose ancestors had until recently lived in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire as a separate religious *and* ethnic community, ethnicity was a natural part of their identity. In Vienna this developed further into a form of Diaspora nationalism, primarily promoting Jewish rebirth in the Sephardi Diaspora. Nevertheless, while preserving ties with their imagined Jewish past, ethnicity and identity, it encouraged students to belong fully to the society they lived in.¹⁹

As there is no any evidence that Kabiljo actually registered at the Viennese Academy of Arts, it seems that he could have studied at one of the city's numerous private art schools.²⁰ His brother Josip relates that Kabiljo spent some time studying in Munich as well.²¹ Upon returning to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, he often visited Zagreb, probably between 1924 and 1926, after

16 Kabiljo registered with the Vienna police each time he changed his address or left the city for a trip back home. These reports were filled out between November 1921 and March 1923, thereby affirming that between those dates he indeed lived in Vienna (copies of those reports were kindly sent to me by the Magistrate of the City of Vienna).

17 Azra Begić, *Umjetnost Bosne i Hercegovine, 1924–1945*, [catalogue, Umjetnička galerija BiH] (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1985), 10, n. 16.

18 Avram Pinto comments how difficult it was for young Kabiljo to live only on the stipend, yet he only rarely asked his well-to-do uncle living in Vienna for help; see Pinto, "Tri jevrejska slikara," 37.

19 See Chapter 1, 22–23. See also the Eventov Archives, B-221.

20 Begić, "Slikarstvo," n. 27, informs us that some of Sarajevo's art students who came to Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century were inclined to study at the Zeichen und Malschule of Prof. Robert Scheffer (1859–1934), possibly due to his specializing in portraits and landscape painting.

21 See his typewritten biography (above, n. 1). Dimitrijević, "Slikari-Jevreji u Sarajevu, 316, recalls the same in his short biographical sketch of Kabiljo.

which he returned to Sarajevo to settle there permanently.²² Although there is little information about the art establishments Kabiljo visited and at which he studied, it is possible to follow his activities during this period through the Yugoslav Jewish press, which proudly included reports about his progress.

Kabiljo's name appears for the first time in 1921, in the magazine *Gideon*, the Zionist-oriented organ of the newly founded Federation of Yugoslav Jewish Youth Associations. He is mentioned as taking part in an exhibition including paintings, graphic art and handicrafts, and accompanying the second youth sports rally organized by the Federation held in Sarajevo in August of that year.²³ The fact that Kabiljo's artistic début was connected to a Zionist event suggests that possibly already in Vienna, in addition to the activities of Esperanza, he also became connected to Bar Giora, the Jewish south-Slav Zionist student organization. As shown, while supporting the Zionist movement Bar Giora's members, also supported the idea of Yugoslavism—the unification of southern Slavs and the establishment of a united Yugoslavia.²⁴ In their eyes the two nationalist ideologies were not exclusive, but complemented each other: while Zionism provided a new form of Jewish secular identity, Yugoslavism supported the idea of a new territorial and political solution for the region in which they lived in and felt part of. Moreover, instead of the Judeo-Spanish (or German and Hungarian) spoken by their parents, the language of communication and publication became primarily Serbo-Croatian, anticipating a new dual identity that later, in the interwar period with the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, emerged as a Yugoslav Jewish identity.²⁵

The sport rallies held in different towns throughout the country during the early 1920s were among the first joint activities planned by the newly organized Federation of Jewish Youth Associations and were regularly reported in the Yugoslav Jewish press. They were part of an overall program for the new generation of Yugoslav Jewish youth, as envisioned by European Zionists, which prescribed not only a spiritual rebirth but also a physical one.²⁶

22 Unfortunately, we do not have more details about his possible periods of study in Munich or Zagreb.

23 *Gideon*, 12 (Sept. 1921): 229.

24 Chapter 1, 23.

25 Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 49–52.

26 See Richard I. Cohen, "Representations of the Jewish Body in Modern Times: Forms of Hero Worship," in *Representation in Religion: Studies in Honor of Moshe Barasch*, ed. Jan Assmann and Albert I. Baumgarten (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 237–76. For physical beauty and the resulting awareness of sexuality as a part of the nation-building process, see George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985), esp. 1–22. Indeed, *Gideon* published articles on sexual education and healthy sexuality for Yugoslav Jewish youth.

An interest in sport and idealization of physical well-being led towards admiration of a bodily ideal as represented in classical art. Ephraim Moses Lilien, for example, considered the first Zionist artist, combined art nouveau stylization with a Renaissance physique in creating the image of a “re-born Jew.”²⁷ The appreciation and creation of art, like the encouragement of sport, became crucial elements in the Jewish nation-building project. The “first Jewish art exhibition” was organized in December 1901 during the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel by Martin Buber and Lilien. Thus, the idea of adding art exhibitions to Yugoslav Zionist Youth sport rallies followed this example.²⁸

Kabiljo's art, exhibited at a rally in Sarajevo, was praised along with other exhibits; according to the brief review, among the works shown were oils and watercolors.²⁹ The following year, Kabiljo again participated in an exhibition accompanying the third youth sport rally, this time held in Zagreb. The plans for this exhibition were much more elaborate and the show, in Zagreb's Jewish Community building, included three sections: one for works on cloth, wood, and metal; another for painting and sculpture; and one for children's drawings. This points to more advanced ideas concerning art and exhibitions. Other artists in the Zagreb exhibition included Otti Berger (1898–1944), a woman studying at Zagreb's Applied Arts Academy who was soon to continue her artistic

27 See Milly Heyd, “Lilien: Between Herzl and Ahasver,” in *Theodor Herzl, Visionary of the Jewish State*, ed. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; New York: Herzl Press, 1999), 265–92.

28 About the first Zionist art exhibition, see Schmidt, *Art and Artists*. The committee helping to organize the student rally in Sarajevo and its art exhibition (which included Kabiljo's works) was comprised of Yugoslav members of the academic society Ivria active in Brno, in the Republic of Czechoslovakia, where they studied at the well-known University of Technology. Zionism was popular at this time in Brno, and Max Hickl (1874–1924), a publicist and early Zionist, founded there the Jüdischer Buch- und Kunstverlag (Jewish Book and Art Publishing Company). He also founded and published until his death *Jüdische Volksstimme* (1900–1934), the best known Zionist newspaper in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; see Michael L. Miller, “Brno,” in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), (<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Brno>) (last accessed 20 April 2017). Such connections may have inspired Ivria committee members to add an art exhibition to the sport rallies at home.

29 *Gideon*, no. 12 (Sept. 1921): 229. None of the works were named or described. Other artists who exhibited their work along with Kabiljo were Eugen Karoly from Šikloš, southern Hungary, and young Karl Sternberg from Sarajevo, about whom we have so far not found any information. It is also not clear what kind of graphics were exhibited; possibly they were technical drawings (the author calls them graphic displays) as the participants were engineering students, members of Ivria from Brno; among the handicrafts were embroideries done by women.

education at the Bauhaus.³⁰ There were also Slavko Bril (1900–1943), then an Art Academy student in Zagreb and later a well-known Croatian sculptor, and Adolf Weiller (1895–1969), like Kabiljo a student in Vienna at the time, who will be discussed in the next chapter. Kabiljo's choices for the exhibit (Vera Stein, the author of the article, presents him as K. Danilus, the way he signed his works) were landscapes, street scenes, and a night study. His brush-strokes, the readers learn, are vigorous and he is interested in color. Stein also mentions his watercolors and some pronouncedly decorative paintings which remind her of poster designs and theater decoration.³¹

Kabiljo continued to exhibit similar works—landscapes and street scenes executed in a heavy impasto—at the next sports rally in Belgrade in 1923, again together with Weiller, Bril, and a newcomer: Solomon Papo (1901–1944?) from Banja Luka in Bosnia, who was studying art at the Academy in Zagreb.³² The unsigned report in Sarajevo's Zionist paper *Židovska svijest* mentions a painting entitled *The Evening Stroll* showing a night scene in a big city, probably inspired by the life and art Kabiljo saw while studying abroad. The subject evokes expressionist influences. We also learn that some of the works were bought.³³

Several undated works showing streets and landscapes in heavy impasto, vivid colors, and expressive pictorial language, presently at the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, seem to correspond to the descriptions in the Jewish press. They are modernist and parallel the similar development of such Sarajevo artists as Vilko Šeferov, Roman Petrović, and Petar Tiješić who, as members of the pre-WWI generation had trained in Cracow or Budapest and were exposed to these centers' avant-garde movements: the Young Poland movement, influenced by the École de Paris, or Hungarian avant-garde art which evolved from cubist, fauvist, and futurist influences (figs. 2.2–2.3).³⁴

30 Alongside Otti Berger who exhibited imaginative dolls, the women artists Nelli Geiger and Rahel Stein showed applied art products—pillows, covers, and handbags, some of them, especially by Geiger, influenced by the Wiener Werkstätte style. The author of the article describing the exhibition was also a woman—Vera Stein who viewed it with the keen eye of a professional; *Gideon*, no. 2 (Nov. 1922): 46–48. Her essay appeared also in the Zagreb Zionist weekly *Židov*: Vera Stein, "Umjetnička izložba na omladinskom sletu," *Židov*, no. 36–37 (1922): 12–13.

31 This last group of works recalling posters and theatrical designs is unfortunately entirely lacking from Kabiljo's extant works today.

32 For Papo's short biography see Pinto, *Jevreji Sarajeva*, 131–32; Ivanuša, *Dimenzije jednog vremena*, 18. None of his works have survived.

33 *Židovska svijest*, no. 234 (17 Aug. 1923): 5–6.

34 Begić, *Umjetnost Bosne i Hercegovine, 1924–1945*, 10, nn. 15–16.



FIGURE 2.2 Daniel Kabiljo, *From the Periphery*, ca. 1921–1923, oil on canvas, 25 × 35.5 cm, Inv. No. 664. National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo



FIGURE 2.3 Roman Petrović, *A Street*, 1921, oil on canvas, 49.5 × 42 cm, Inv. No. 261. National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

Kabiljo's works from 1921–23 thus show that he was in contact with the Sarajevo art scene and had absorbed new influences. He had progressed since his unskillful 1913 academic still-life, and was probably proud to show his new work at the Jewish Youth exhibitions. However, what is intriguing is the character of the works he had decided to show at this all-Jewish venue. In contrast to Weiller's paintings, for instance, which stem, as will be shown, from the Jewish milieu and were inspired by the works of "Jewish" artists reproduced in *Ost und West*,³⁵ Kabiljo showed works connected to the modernist art created at this time by Bosnian painters. Thus, it seems that his affiliation with Yugoslav Zionist circles did not encourage him to create "Jewish art," but rather to embrace Bosnian modernism. For him, as a Sarajevo Sephardic Jew, reaching out towards the Westernized Ashkenazic Zionists meant leaving behind parochial academism and embracing a universal modernist pictorial language.

3 Choosing Sides

By 1924, however, one can sense a change in Kabiljo's artistic activities. Now thirty, he may have felt more acutely the need to prove to his father that he could support himself as an artist. As a Jew, he began to feel a need to preserve his roots. In any case, we see him now more involved with the Jewish community, catering to its needs rather than just showing his latest painterly achievements. As a former recipient of La Benevolencia's scholarship, he may also have been obliged to do so. Moreover, the rising conflict in Sarajevo's Jewish community may also have influenced Kabiljo's change of direction.

The conflict, which reached its peak in 1924, was grounded in ideological differences already inaugurated by the activities of the Jewish student clubs in Vienna, Esperanza and Bar Giora, dividing them, as noted, between Sephardic Diaspora nationalists and Zionists. It became even more pronounced after the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and its Zionist-oriented Jewish national institutions, felt especially in Sarajevo, where The Jewish National Society formed by both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Zionists came under attack by the Sephardic group. The conflict began when the Zionists refused the applications for membership of a significant group of the city's Sephardic activists, who had hoped to gain more influence on a national and local level. The Sephardim, many of whom belonged to city's old and influential families, called in the police, who confiscated the Zionist organization's property and its newspaper *Židovska svijest*. The Sephardim took it over,

35 The importance of this German-Jewish journal for the Pijade brothers was discussed in Chapter 1, 24–25.

founded a new so-called Sarajevo Local Zionist Organization, and started their own newspaper named *Jevrejski život*. The members of The Jewish National Society responded by renaming their paper *Narodna židovska svijest* and by opening a new center under the name of Jewish Club. The strife between the two groups continued until 1928, when both papers closed down and a new editorial board comprised of members from both warring groups reconciled in order to start *Jevrejski glas*, aimed at uniting the opposed factions.³⁶

Kabiljo, like many of Sarajevo's Jews, was probably emotionally involved in the conflict, feeling pressured to choose sides. But judging from the various art-related activities in which he became involved, he found a third option—not to choose. Still, in the period of his *Wanderjahren*, when moving between Vienna, Munich, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, he felt competent to bring to his hometown a Western Zionist approach to art, on the one hand, while on the other, having come from Sarajevo's Sephardic world, he became involved with the budding project of Sephardic nationalism.

Among the first activities Kabiljo now undertook was the publication of articles promoting Jewish national art. The essays he wrote clearly follow the direction set by Zionist writers such as Martin Buber and the journal *Ost und West*.³⁷ One of the early articles he published in 1924 was in Sarajevo's new Zionist newspaper *Narodna židovska svijest*, discussing the nature of art in general and the ways a Jew might participate in it in particular.³⁸ Kabiljo opens his article entitled "About Art," with a quotation from Nietzsche: "We have art

36 The confrontation is well documented in the contemporary Jewish press and by a number of authors who wrote about the conflict in Sarajevo. See Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 148–49; Zvi Loker, "Sarajevski spor i sefardski pokret u Jugoslaviji," *Zbornik* 7 (1997): 72–79; Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia," 90–95; Eliezer Papo, "Serbo-Croatian Influences on Bosnian Spoken Judeo-Spanish," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 (2007): 348 and n. 31. See also Ivana Vučina Simović, "The Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Sarajevo: From Social, Cultural and Linguistic Divergence to Convergence," in *Sefarad in Österreich-Ungarn, Transversal, Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien*, Centrum für Jüdische Studien der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 13, 2 (2012): 41–64.

The use of a different appellation for "Jew" in the titles of these papers also implies a difference in ideologies. *Židov* is the Croatian word for a Jew, suggesting that *Židovska svijest* and *Nova židovska svijest* ["Jewish Consciousness" and "New Jewish Consciousness"] were newspapers with a Croatian-Ashkenazic Zionist orientation. In contrast, *Jevrej* is the Serbian word used for a Jew, as in *Jevrejski život* and *Jevrejski glas* ("Jewish Life" and "Jewish Voice"), newspapers with a connection to the Serbian language, Sephardim living in Bosnia and Serbia, and a Diasporist orientation. About the differences between *Židov* and *Jevrej* and the politics of their use, see Ivo Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu, 1918–1941* (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2004), 5–9.

37 See Rosenfeld, "Defining 'Jewish Art' in *Ost und West*, 1901–1908."

38 K. Danilus, "O umetnosti," *Narodna židovska svijest*, 18 Apr. 1924, p. 8.

so that *we may not perish by the truth.*" Indeed, writing the article less than a month after the disturbing confrontation between Sarajevo's Zionists and Sephardic nationalists, he may have wanted to elevate his fellow citizens' (and his own) mood by leading them into the spiritual and universal realm of art. Although not without the patronizing tone of a Western-educated young intellectual, Kabiljo invites his readers to recognize the power of aesthetic pleasure to lift one above the ugliness of reality. He concludes by stating that a Jewish artist, "naturally predisposed to spirituality," produces art that, due to its soulfulness, may even have a distinct "Jewish style." Just like Buber when addressing the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1901, Kabiljo saw in the renewal of Jewish art the renewal of the Jewish soul.

The following year, he published "The Jewish Spirit in Art" in the same newspaper.³⁹ Again, Kabiljo finds the basis of Jewish art to be a "racial" one, seeking Jewish elements in the inner worlds of Jewish artists rather than in specifically Jewish subjects. Among modern Jewish artists, he mentions those who exhibited at the Fifth Zionist Congress, such as Jehudo Epstein and Ephraim Moses Lilien, and singles out—once more in the spirit of Buber—Jozef Israels and Max Liebermann. According to Kabiljo, they are the Jewish artists who already belong to art history, and he presents each in a separate article, praising the spirituality of the former and the social empathy of the latter.⁴⁰ But—clearly hinting at his knowledge and admiration of more contemporary developments and the avant-garde—he adds to his list of favorites Marc Chagall, and courageously suggests that abstraction is the highest form of pure spirituality.

In retrospect, it is strange to see Kabiljo, who in 1921–23 had exhibited his modernist works, now espousing outdated views on Jewish national art developed by Zionist leaders twenty years earlier. However, knowing that he was writing for an audience almost entirely lacking in knowledge and interest in modern art, while at the same time hoping to contribute to the Zionist cause in Sarajevo, Kabiljo began by adopting an ethnic approach.

39 K. Danilus, "Jevrejski duh umjetnosti," *Narodna židovska svijest*, 17 Sept. 1925, p. 6.

40 K. Danilus, "Josef Israels—jevrejski slikar," *Narodna židovska svijest*, 26 Mar. 1926, p. 5; id., "Max Liebermann," *ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1927, pp. 1–2.; this article was published also as "Max Liebermann—Židov slikar," *Hanoar*, no. 6 (1926–27): 157–59. Articles as those by Kabiljo, dealing with "Jewish art" and presenting various European Jewish artists, occasionally accompanied by the reproductions of their work, were published during the 1920s and early 1930's in Zagreb's Zionist youth journals such as *Hanoar*, *Ha-aviv*, *Gideon*, and later in the cultural magazine *Omanut*.

In addition to writing articles on art and thus, so he hoped, elevating the local taste for it, Kabiljo engaged in Zionist-oriented public projects organized by Sarajevo's new Jewish Club. He developed a special theatrical performance, creating so-called "allegorical" or "living pictures" (*tableaux vivants*). The first was staged on the second day of Shavuot, following a Bible contest and festive concert organized by the Zionist Jewish youth organization in Sarajevo. The acts, staged by Kabiljo, included scenery and costumes worn by actors who presented five biblical scenes: the meeting of Jacob and Rachel, Ruth and Boaz, Esther accusing Haman, the finding of Moses, and the Queen of Sheba. The scenes were accompanied by music and the recital of relevant biblical passages. According to *Narodna židovska svijest* the performance was a huge success and Kabiljo himself had to appear on stage, to stormy applause.⁴¹ This warm reception apparently encouraged him to plan similar productions. In August 1924 he presented an imaginative "living picture" called *A Night in Eretz Israel* at a party planned for Kanfei Neshet, a youth organization of "young pilgrims" who had visited or planned to visit Palestine.⁴² These were followed by similar successes: in the following two years Kabiljo continued to stage such performances of "allegorical pictures" at various celebrations.⁴³

Though the newspapers did not carry photographs of these events, it is possible that a source of inspiration for Kabiljo's pieces was the physical exercises performed by Zagreb's Maccabi sport club, which had already appeared at the first sports rally held in Osijek in 1920. These were referred to as "allegorical exercises" and apparently presented "four phases of Jewish history."⁴⁴ The only photograph that may relate to such a symbolic performance seems to be one from the 1924 Yugoslav Zionist youth sport rally held in Novi Sad, presently in the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade (fig. 2.4). It shows nine well-proportioned youngsters, all dressed in white, as they evoke with their bodies concepts related to the Zionist idea: slavery, combat, unity (in a symbol recalling the Star of David) and—retrospectively shocking—the raised-arm

41 "Biblijsko veče," *Narodna židovska svijest*, 13 June 1924, p. 4.

42 *Narodna židovska svijest*, 15 Aug. 1924, p. 3.

43 In 1925 he prepared a show for the thirtieth celebration of the charity organization Misgav Ladach, which helped children from poor families, by staging a scene related to the organization's work; in 1926 during the sports rally of the Federation of Yugoslav Jewish Youth in Sarajevo, Kabiljo again presented biblical scenes; see *Narodna židovska svijest*, 13 Mar. 1925, p. 4; 30 July 1926, p. 3.

44 *Gideon*, nos. 8–9 (Sept. 1920): 95.

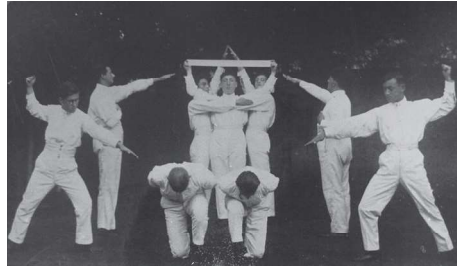


FIGURE 2.4
Maccabi sport club of Zagreb performing
“allegorical exercise,” Yugoslav Zionist
Youth sport rally, Novi Sad, 1924,
photograph, Inv. No. 6252 II, K. 6-10-4/6.
Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade

hail-victory sign, which was in 1924 barely connected with Nazism and was only known as the “Roman salute.”⁴⁵

The idea of introducing such theatrical sport performances may have come from Dr Oto Braun of Zagreb, who during the Osijek rally had lectured about physical education.⁴⁶ Braun spent WWI in Russia,⁴⁷ and it is possible that he may have encountered the idea of “physical theater” there and brought it to Zagreb’s Maccabi, from whence it spread to other centers and possibly influenced Kabiljo. The famous Russian theater director Konstantin Stanislavskii in his later career, just before the outbreak of WWI, emphasized an awareness of bodily movement and expression. This in turn influenced the avant-garde director Vsevolod Meyerhold, whose biomechanics included elaborate exercises for actors.⁴⁸ In any case, it seems that Kabiljo combined the Zionists’ interest in body and physical culture with innovative ideas stemming from the new theater. He also created a stage design: an imaginary depiction of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem planned as a set for festivities marking the inauguration of the Hebrew University at Sarajevo’s hotel Evropa in March 1925.⁴⁹ According to Pinto, he also designed stylized diplomas for various Sarajevo Jewish societies and produced book illustrations.⁵⁰ Of special interest are his works in *Spomenica*, a commemorative volume published in 1924 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Sarajevo’s La Benevolencia society.

45 In the 1920s the salute was especially popular in films, such as *Spartacus*, about the leader of the Roman slave uprising, and *Cabiria*, a film about the Italian nationalist and poet Gabriele D’Annunzio, both of which must have been well known to the young Yugoslav Zionist athletes; see Martin M. Winkler, *The Roman Salute: Cinema, History, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 94–95.

46 *Gideon*, nos. 8–9 (Sept. 1920): 142.

47 Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu*, 30.

48 Konstantin Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theater, 1905–1932* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 19–24, 93–94, 121.

49 *Narodna židovska svijest*, 8 Apr. 1925, pp. 5, 11.

50 Pinto, *Jevreji Sarajeva*, 130.

4 Kabiljo's Sephardic Types

In 1924 the members of La Benevolencia, the city's oldest Jewish institution, were in a festive mood. To mark thirty years of its activity they announced new projects that included collection of materials related to Sephardic folklore as well as the foundation of a publication house, a rabbinical seminary, and a museum.⁵¹ Behind these plans were Sarajevo Sephardim, who at the moment were involved in conflict with the Zionists but were also very active in promoting their own brand of Diaspora nationalism and activism.⁵² Two important intellectual leaders influencing the movement's ideology were Dr Moritz Levy, the chief rabbi of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Dr Kalmi Baruh, a philologist of the Judeo-Spanish language.

Dr Moritz Levy (1879–1941) was of the first generation of Sarajevo Sephardic intellectuals educated in Vienna before WWI who took an interest in the research and preservation of their heritage. Born a year after Sarajevo became an Austro-Hungarian city, Levy graduated from the new secular high-school and enrolled in the University of Vienna to continue his education. In 1906 he received his doctorate there in Semitic philology and a year later completed his rabbinical studies at the Viennese rabbinical seminary, then an important European center for research of Jewish literature and history. Upon returning to Sarajevo, Levy taught religion in the city's high schools and served first as the Sarajevo Sephardic community's rabbi and after 1917 as the chief rabbi of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His most significant work was a book published in German in 1911 based upon his doctoral thesis: *Die Sephardim in Bosnien*.⁵³ It is devoted to the history of Sephardic Jews in Bosnia during the Ottoman Empire.

⁵¹ Pinto, "Jevrejska društva u Sarajevu," 176–78.

⁵² Dr. Vita Kajon, one of the Sarajevo Sephardic leaders, explained it in the following words: "We conceive of Zionism very broadly. Our life differs from Jewish life in other countries. We do not see in Jewry only two poles, nor do we recognize on the one side Zionism and on the other side assimilation. Our life is full-blooded. For us, the center and pivot of Jewish life is not to be found within the Zionist organization. Also outside of it there is a Jewish national life ..."; "Izvještaj Saveznom vijeću u Beogradu," *Židov*, no. 22 (27 June 1924): 3, quoted in Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*, 148–49. For a larger picture of Sephardic identity and activities in interwar Sarajevo see also Ana Ćirić Pavlović, "Sefardski ponos: jevrejsko građansko društvo i društvene veze u Sarajevu između dva rata," *Balkanija*, 6 (2015): 108–20 / "Sephardic Pride: Jewish Civil Society and Associational Networks in Interwar Sarajevo," *Balkania* 6 (2015): 87–100.

⁵³ *Spomenica 400 godina*, 277–78; Pinto, *Jevreji Sarajeva*, 113–14; Samija Šarić, "Prilog biografiji Morica Levija," in Moritz Levy, *Sefardi u Bosni: prilog historiji Jevreja na balkanskom poluotoku* (Sarajevo: Bosanska Biblioteka, 1996), 124–25 (translation of the 1911 German edition).



FIGURE 2.5
A Sephardic family in Sarajevo, photograph reproduced in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien* (Sarajevo: Daniel A. Kajon, 1911), 37

In his research he used original documents, both Turkish and Jewish, and his book is still a valuable source of information. Of special interest is the fact that the book, intended to preserve the Sephardic heritage, includes numerous photographs showing Sephardic types and sites in Sarajevo (fig. 2.5).⁵⁴

Kalmi Baruh (1896–1945), influenced by Moritz Levy and by his research on the Sephardic heritage, became his disciple. Like Kabiljo, Baruh belonged to the second generation of university-trained Sephardic intellectuals. He studied in Zagreb and Vienna, and in 1923 completed his PhD dissertation there on the Judeo-Spanish language of Bosnia. He also became one of the initiators of the short-lived *El mundo Sefaradí*, published in Vienna in Ladino and dedicated to the study and preservation of Sephardic culture. In 1924 Baruh transferred these activities to Sarajevo and, while in general terms supporting

54 It is interesting to compare Moritz Levy's efforts to preserve the Sephardic cultural heritage with similar ones carried out at the same time by Shlomo An-sky, the Russian-Jewish ethnographer and author, who from 1908 extensively wrote about, photographed, documented, and struggled to preserve the east European Jewish heritage. An-sky, close to Simon Dubnow's intellectual circles and a supporter of Diaspora nationalism, contributed to the formation of a modern, secular Jewish identity steeped in east European Yiddish culture; see *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). Sarajevo intellectuals strove to achieve the same aim in the realm of the Sephardic Ladino-speaking world.

Zionism as a national movement, began to strive for full recognition of the Sephardic culture and tradition.⁵⁵ Baruh's aim was twofold: on the one hand, the preservation, research, and development of the Sephardic cultural heritage, and, on the other, the modernization, emancipation, and integration of Sarajevo Sephardim into the cultural mainstream of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and Europe at large.⁵⁶

In 1924 Kalmi Baruh published a lengthy article presenting the Judeo-Spanish language as the central element of Sephardic identity. He showed its use in religion, philosophy, and literature—and lamented its decline. His article begins with a definition of a posited Sephardic realm which, while still in the Jewish condition of exile, appropriates to itself a specific territory that—like that of the Ashkenazic east European Jews—possesses a unique, ethnic identity:

The Sephardic Jews, similarly to the east European Jews, represent a unified community with its own language and traditions, which are tied together for many generations. The life forms of this [Sephardic] ethnic-religious community are the reflection of a special spiritual (Jewish-*Galut* [Exile]) and material (Balkan-Levant) culture.⁵⁷

Sephardim and their culture, similar to the east European Ashkenazim are thus presented as a “scholarly” subject in need of research and preservation. The Sephardic academically-trained intellectuals are now called to study it, just as their learned Ashkenazic colleagues did in respect to east European Jewish folk traditions.

This comparison between Sephardic and east European Jewish culture reflects the 1924 *Spomenica's* broad, all-encompassing approach marking the

55 See Kalmi Baruh, *Selected Works on Sephardic and other Jewish Topics*, eds. Krinka Vidaković-Petrov and Alexander Nikolić, 2nd corr. and rev. ed. (Beer Sheva: Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture and Jerusalem: Shefer Publishers, 2007). The collection includes translations of a selection of Baruh's articles published between 1924 and 1933, as well as a complete bibliography of his works.

56 This aim was achieved through Baruh's cultural contacts with Spain. He visited the country of his forefathers in 1928 when Ivo Andrić, the historian and writer, and later the Yugoslav Nobel laureate, served there as a diplomat. In turn, the Spanish envoy for cultural affairs visited major Sephardic communities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, which resulted the following year in the international Conference of Balkan Sephardim convened in Belgrade; *ibid.*, pp. vii–viii. As mentioned earlier, David Pijade, Moša Pijade's brother, gave a speech at this conference (Chap. I, 55).

57 Kalmi Baruh, “Jezik sefardskih Jevreja,” in *Spomenica o proslavi tridesetogodišnjice sarajevskog kulturno-potpornog društva “La Benevolencija” maja 1924*, ed. Stanislav Vinaver (Belgrade: Vreme, 1924), 71.

thirtieth anniversary of Sarajevo's La Benevolencia society. As one would expect, it included articles dedicated to the history of Balkan and Sarajevo Sephardim, Bosnian Sephardic marital customs, Sephardic music, folk-medicine, the Judeo-Spanish language, and literary pieces written by the then unknown Isak Samokovlija, who would later become a leading Sephardic Bosnian author.

However, in addition to pursuing clearly Sephardic topics of interest, *Spomenica*—somewhat unexpectedly—included articles and stories by Martin Buber, Isaac Leib Peretz, and Haim Nahman Bialik relating to the Jewish national revival, mysticism, Zionist movement and the horrors of the Russian pogroms. There were also several Hasidic parables, biblical stories, and finally poems by the volume's editor, Stanislav Vinaver, and Heinrich Heine, translated by the former. Some of the articles were written by non-Jews, in this case Serbian and Bosnian scholars researching Sephardim. *Spomenica's* readers were thus exposed to a richly cosmopolitan view of Jewish culture in which Sephardic nationalism, east European Yiddishism, and Zionism co-existed alongside the non-Jewish contributions. In addition, *Spomenica* included visual material: photographs of Sephardic types, taken from Moritz Levy's 1911 book, and contemporary visual art depicting in modernist style the local Sephardic experience. The artists chosen for this task were Roman Petrović, a Sarajevo artist of Serbian origin, and Daniel Kabiljo.

Such an all-inclusive, up-to-date character of this unusual volume may have been envisioned by Stanislav Vinaver, its editor. Vinaver, a Serbian Ashkenazic Jew, was a Belgrade modernist writer and poet. Born in 1891 in Šabac, Serbia, to a respected Jewish family of Polish-Russian origin,⁵⁸ he studied mathematics and physics at the Sorbonne. However, becoming more interested in philosophy and literature, he began to publish extensively and became well known as an erudite Serbian writer and translator. After WWI Vinaver became a leader of the Serbian expressionist movement.⁵⁹ During the Balkan Wars and WWI, like his father he volunteered to serve in the Serbian army. Sent by the Serbian government on a diplomatic mission to Petrograd, he witnessed the October 1917 Revolution and its aftermath. It is possible that during his stay he encountered as well the Russian Jewish culture of that period, which

58 His father, Dr Avram Josif Vinaver, born in 1863 in Warsaw to a prominent Jewish family, was a well known physician in Šabac, Serbia. He settled there after studying medicine in Warsaw, Cracow, and Vienna; *Spomenica poginulih i umrlih srpskih Jevreja u balkanskom i svetskom ratu 1912–1918* (Beograd: Štamparija M. Karića, 1927) 89.

59 For Stanislav Vinaver's biography, see Željko V. Mitić, "Zaboravljeni velikan srpskog jezika," *NoviPolis*, <http://www.novipolis.rs/memento/29186/zaboravljeni-velikan-srpskog-jezika.html> (last accessed 15 September 2017).

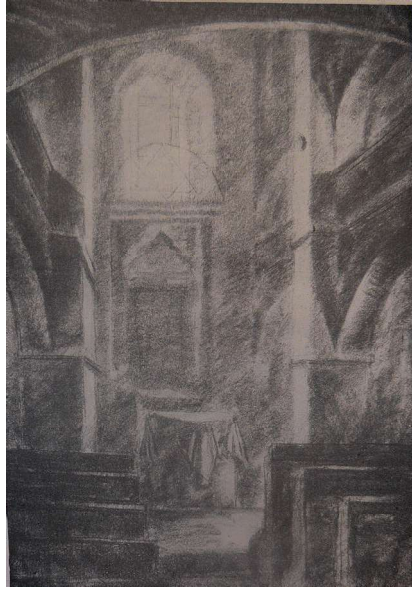


FIGURE 2.6
Daniel Kabiljo, *The Interior of the Great Synagogue in Sarajevo (Il Kal Grandi)*, lithograph, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in Stanislav Vinaver, ed., *Spomenica* (Belgrade: Vreme, 1924), 43

included a Jewish renaissance in the field of art, theater, and literature.⁶⁰ This in turn may well have influenced his conception of Sarajevo's *Spomenica*, especially the inclusion of contemporary visual art created by Kabiljo and Petrović depicting Sarajevo's Sephardic milieu.

Kabiljo's lithograph *The Interior of the Great Synagogue in Sarajevo*, published in *Spomenica* and depicting Sarajevo's sixteenth-century Sephardic synagogue, appears at first to be modernist (fig. 2.6). It clearly preserves some of the geometric structure and two-dimensionality used in his earlier work depicting Bosnian houses. Petrović's illustrations showing streets in Sarajevo, possibly the poor Jewish area on the hilly Bjelave, employ an even bolder avant-garde language, close to Russian cubo-futurism (fig. 2.7). But, Kabiljo, in contrast to Petrović, while working in a contemporary style seems to have based his picture on a photograph of the synagogue's interior published in Moritz Levy's 1911 book (fig. 2.8).

60 During the era of the Russian Revolution local Jewish artists were actively involved in creating modern avant-garde Jewish art which combined Yiddish folklore and traditional Jewish art (the art of ceremonial objects, illuminated manuscripts and scrolls, synagogues, gravestones, etc.) with contemporary artistic styles such as primitivism, expressionism, and cubo-futurism. See further *Tradition and Revolution: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art, 1912–1928*, [catalogue], ed. Ruth Apter-Gabriel (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1987); Hillel Kazovsky, *The Artists of the Kultur-Lige* (Moscow: Most Kultury, 2003).



FIGURE 2.7
Roman Petrović, *Motifs from Sarajevo*, lithograph, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in Stanislav Vinaver, ed., *Spomenica* (Belgrade: Vreme, 1924), 37

Moreover, Kabiljo's *The Lighting of the Sabbath Light* and *The Kiddush*, also in *Spomenica*, point to additional sources, due both to their style and iconography (figs. 2.9–2.10). The two works represent a couple performing Sabbath eve rituals as celebrated in a Sephardic home. One shows a woman standing next to a table, wearing a traditional dress and a *tukadu* head cover, who is blessing the Sabbath light that streams from an oil lamp hanging from the ceiling. On the table is a pile of *pitikas*, pita-breads, and a carafe of wine. In the other image, a man wearing a fez stands next to a similar Sabbath table and recites the *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine, while holding a cup in one hand and a prayer book in the other. The light from the lamp creates a dramatic contrast between the brightly lit center and the deep shadows falling on the walls, suggesting additional barely visible, traditionally dressed images. The solemn tone and the drama created by the interplay of light and shadow, coupled with the strong directional lines enhancing the contrast, indicate expressionistic influences, producing work that much differs from Kabiljo's more geometric rendering of the synagogue's architecture. The iconography of these works points to even more traditional sources.

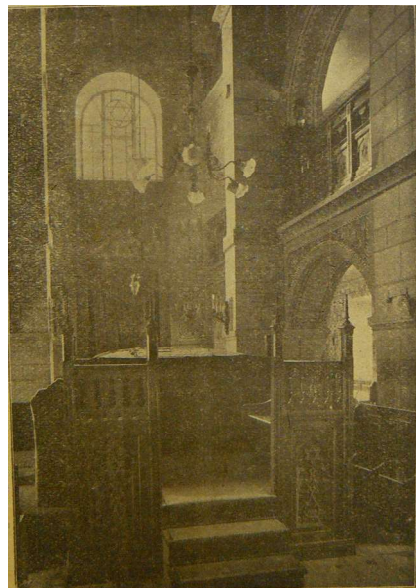


FIGURE 2.8
Photograph of the interior of the Great Synagogue in Sarajevo (Il Kal Grandi), reproduced in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien* (Sarajevo: Daniel A. Kajon, 1911), 119



FIGURE 2.9
Daniel Kabiljo, *The Lighting of Sabbath Light*, lithograph, whereabouts unknown, reproduced in Stanislav Vinaver, ed., *Spomenica* (Belgrade: Vreme, 1924), 58

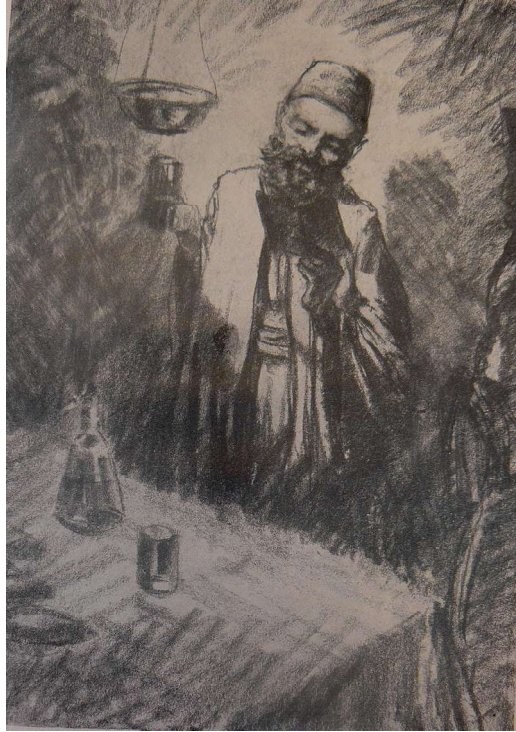


FIGURE 2.10
Daniel Kabiljo, *The Kiddush*,
lithograph, whereabouts unknown,
reproduced in Stanislav Vinaver,
ed., *Spomenica* (Belgrade: Vreme,
1924), 93

While studying in Vienna, Kabiljo, who was interested in Jewish art and, as noted, wrote about it in the Jewish press, probably visited the city's Jewish Museum and saw there the work of Austro-Hungarian Jewish artist Isidor Kaufmann. Kaufmann's *Blessing the Sabbath Candles*, created early in the twentieth century, offers an east European version of the subject. Moreover, a scene showing the blessing of the Sabbath light radiating from a lamp had appeared even earlier, in 1865, in an album created by Moritz Oppenheim, in Frankfurt, depicting scenes from Jewish traditional life.⁶¹ However, the most significant difference between Kaufmann and Oppenheim, on the one hand, and Kabiljo's work, on the other, is the lack of an implied continuity of Jewish life, shown in the earlier works by the presence of a child (Oppenheim) or a young woman's pregnancy (Kaufmann). The childless Sabbath ritual of Kabiljo's pictures

61 See G. Tobias Natter, *Rabbiner, Bocher, Talmudschüler: Bilder des Wiener Malers Isidor Kaufmann*, [catalogue] (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1995) [German and English], 202–203; *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim: Jewish Identity in 19th Century Art*, [catalogue, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Frankfurt am Main], ed. Georg Heuberger and Anton Merk (Frankfurt am Main: Wienand Verlag, 1999), 288.

seems to have a different aim. By depicting a scene from Sephardic traditional life, Kabiljo was attuned to the Sarajevo Sephardic movement's desire to preserve the memory of bygone days. This life, its customs, clothes, and food, were now remembered only by the elderly. Indeed, in his article published in *Spomenica*, when writing about the traditional Sephardic romances (*romansa*, a type of Sephardic song) Baruh complains:

The *romansa* is seldom heard in the house of a Sephardic Jew lately. Until recently, its oriental melody could be heard in Bosnia, whether to give rhythm to the rocking of a crib, or to celebrate a wedding or a circumcision with a song accompanied by the *pander* (tambourine). [Today] ... the world of *romansa* has become incomprehensible to the Sephardim.... The *romansa* has disappeared for younger generations ... there was no one to pour into them their fervent emotions. These days, the *romansa* can be heard only from old women. They are still guarding the *romansa* as a rare jewel in their home.⁶²

Thus, Kabiljo, like Kalmi Baruh—two modernized and westernized grandchildren—took upon himself the task of preserving this “rare jewel.”

A similar discovery of the value of the Sephardic tradition and nostalgia for the old ways appears in the poetry published in *Spomenica* by Isak Samokovlija (1889–1955). Samokovlija, who graduated from medical school in Vienna and at the time worked as a young physician in Bosnia's provincial towns, later became a celebrated Jewish writer in Bosnia, best known for his moving, deeply human, and picturesque stories and dramas revealing the life of Sarajevo's poverty stricken, traditional, Sephardic Jews—deprived beggars, porters, artisans, and petty traders.⁶³ Apparently, the three poems comprising the cycle “The Wreath of a Silent Solitude: Yearnings and Visions” were his literary debut. Like the contributions of Baruh and Kabiljo, the poem “Holiday” also celebrates the wisdom and heritage that the old generation has bequeathed to the young one:

The vigorous binders—the old men and the grey women/
Your stories were so beautiful ... / In them maybe something weeps quietly/
in them maybe the past times show fear/ and our hearts, childish and small, used
to shiver/ and pride was born in anger/ and we heard the voices of God ...

62 Baruh, “Jezik sefardskih Jevreja,” 72.

63 Katan Ben-Zion, *Presence and Disappearance*, 129–35. Samokovlija's first known story that became popular, about Raphael the beggar, “Rafina avlija” [Rafi's street], was published in 1927.

/ The old men with grey-silver beards and the good old women!/ Sing your songs on that endless sea: / today will your children gather/ and recite for you a prayer in a whispering choir.⁶⁴

Spomenica thus opened up a new direction for Kabiljo. Although, as noted, he continued to create art projects for Sarajevo's Zionists, the Sephardic circle's ideology now equally attracted him. Thus, his next lithograph, *The Jewish Madonna*, although published in 1925 in the Zionist *Narodna židovska svijest*, shows, in his new expressionist style, a young Sephardic woman (fig. 2.11). She wears the traditional shawl Sephardic women used to don when going out of the house and her head is covered by a *tukadu* cap.⁶⁵ She sits in an open landscape holding a body draped in cloth, in a position reminiscent of the Christian Pietà, lending this work the tragic dimension suggested by the title⁶⁶ Appearing in the Zionist periodical, Kabiljo's lithograph seems at first to follow the images of suffering Jewish women in the aftermath of the pogroms in eastern Europe, for example that of a desolate mother with a baby on her lap in Maurycy Minkowski's *After the Pogrom*, 1905, reproduced in *Ost und West* in



FIGURE 2.11
Daniel Kabiljo, *The Jewish Madonna*,
1925, whereabouts unknown, reproduced
in *Narodna židovska svijest*, nos. 76–77
(17 Sept. 1925): 2

64 Isak Samokovlija, "Venac gluhih samovanja—čežnje i vizije," in *Spomenica*, ed. Vinaver, 123.

65 About the traditional Sephardic women's clothes see Levy, *Sefardi u Bosni*, 39–40.

66 *Narodna židovska svijest*, nos. 76–77 (17 Sept. 1925): 2.

1907.⁶⁷ However, the Sephardic identity of Kabiljo's woman connects her to a different kind of "suffering," inflicted in this case, as felt by Kabiljo, by the loss of the traditional Sephardic world and by nostalgia.

As Kabiljo underwent a transformation of his own identity and art, Bosnia and Herzegovina in general, and the art world in Sarajevo in particular, were changing as well. By 1923, as the general euphoria following the end of WWI and the establishment of a new south Slavic state had calmed down, it became clear that Sarajevo, once a show-case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and therefore enjoying funding and special care in regard to its cultural life, had lost its favored position. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes cared mostly for the development of its three leading nations and their centers: Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, while multi-ethnic Sarajevo became the Kingdom's "forgotten city."⁶⁸ The lack of investment and lagging economy soon caused stagnation in the city's cultural and artistic life resulting in a number of artists leaving for Zagreb and Belgrade. The local branch of the all-Yugoslav Society of Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian Artists, founded in the city immediately after the war, which had sponsored the establishment of a private art school, exhibitions, publication of graphic albums, production of stage designs, and more, almost entirely ceased its activities. Instead, there appeared on the scene local societies that supported cultural and artistic life in the city such as Cvijeta Zuzorić—funded by well-to-do women, and cultural-educational societies belonging to four ethnic minorities: the Serbian Prosveta, Croatian Napredak, Muslim Gajet, and Jewish La Benevolencia.⁶⁹ The atmosphere of neglect and despair in Sarajevo's art world thus paralleled the development of the preservation and bemoaning of the bygone Sephardic culture to which Kabiljo now drew close. The universalist modernism and experimentation and of his early 1920s "Zionist" phase was now replaced with nostalgic visualization of the past.

Kabiljo again used a photograph from Moritz Levy's 1911 book on Sephardim in Bosnia when creating what seems to have been his first Bašćaršija, or old local Turkish market scene (figs. 2.12–2.13). The images of two Sephardic women and a boy, shown in their traditional clothes, are based on a group photographed at the turn of the century. Kabiljo closely follows the photograph and shows the characters in a sentimental realist style. It was possibly this small oil painting that triggered a series of larger works depicting in the same old-fashioned, anachronistic style the types who peopled the Bašćaršija:

67 *Ost und West*, 12 (1907): cols. 767–68.

68 See Robert J. Donia, "Royal Yugoslavia's Forgotten City," in id., *Sarajevo: a Biography*, 130–67.

69 Begić, *Umjetnost Bosne i Hercegovine, 1924–1945*, 10–13.



FIGURE 2.12
Daniel Kabiljo, *Jewish Women in Sarajevo*, mid-1920s, oil on canvas, 29 × 19 cm, JHM Art Collection, Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade



FIGURE 2.13
Sephardic women on a street in Sarajevo, photograph, reproduced in Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien* (Sarajevo: Daniel A. Kajon, 1911), 70

artisans, shoppers, women, and children belonging to different ethnic groups: Jews, Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. They appear as individual portraits, shown working in a tinsmith's shop, shopping, carrying bags, hurrying down a cobblestone street, counting money, smoking or talking (figs. 2.14–2.15). Even the script of the artist's signature became old-fashioned and decorative, recalling calligraphy. Of special interest are the Sephardic women with their traditional head coverings, the older women in scarves, the younger in more fashionable coats and high heels but still wearing the *tukadu* cap (fig. 2.16).



FIGURE 2.14 Daniel Kabiljo, *The Tinsmith*, 1920s–1930s, oil on canvas, 55 × 38 cm
PHOTO © CITY MUSEUM OF SARAJEVO

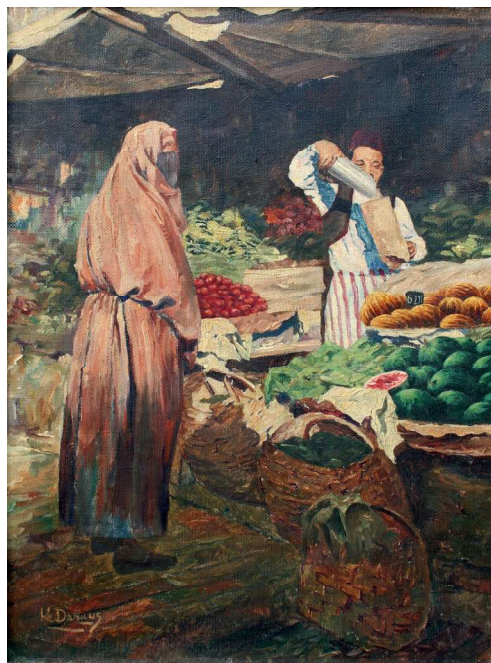


FIGURE 2.15
Daniel Kabiljo, *Selling Fruit at the Market*, late 1920s–early 1930s, oil on canvas, 60 × 46 cm
PHOTO © CITY MUSEUM OF SARAJEVO



FIGURE 2.16
Daniel Kabiljo, *The Conversation*, 1930s, oil on canvas, 57.5 × 39 cm, Inv. No. 723, National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo



FIGURE 2.17
Daniel Kabiljo, *A Boy in the Market*,
late 1920s–early 1930s, oil on canvas,
74 × 54 cm. Private collection

Moreover, Kabiljo's study of a boy carrying a heavy sack over his shoulder (fig. 2.17) clearly recalls the character of little Raphael from Isak Samokovlija's stories. In "How Rafael Became a Man" Samokovlija, in a passage vividly describing the sounds and sights of the Baščaršija's Tinsmiths' Alley, creates a background for Kabiljo's characters:

From that day he was here all the time; before a week had passed little Rafael knew every corner. He knew the shops, the artisans, and their apprentices; he knew that Haim the tinsmith made water pipes, buckets, and big pots; while Šimšon crafted stoves, cookers, and furnace pipes; and the master artisan Maće fashioned lamps, pitchers and coffee pots from a yellow tin that shone like gold. The enormous din in Tinsmith Alley carried him away now like the most beautiful song. Often he would close his eyes, lean against a wall and only listen. It seemed to him that he could tell apart each bang, that by hearing the noise he could tell what each tinsmith was working on. When he heard an unknown bang, he would run immediately to see what sort of thing Šimšon or Maće were creating today.⁷⁰

70 Isak Samokovlija, "Kako je Rafael postajao čovjek," *Nosač Samuel: pripovjetke* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1946), 75.



FIGURE 2.18
Daniel Kabiljo, *A Street in Sarajevo*, colored
linocut, 18 × 11 cm, 1937. Private collection

Although not usually connected, these two—the artist and the writer—both influenced by the same Sephardic cultural revival, independently produced works which unintentionally seem to complement each other.

In such works, Kabiljo, now a proponent of the Sephardic revival, observed Sarajevo's colorful market as an “Orientalist,” similarly to the late-nineteenth-century Austro-Hungarian artists who had once come to Sarajevo to develop a unique Bosnian style. He was not the only artist in Sarajevo to do this. Petar Šain (1885–1965), who belonged to the first generation of the city's artists under Austro-Hungarian rule, also turned to such folkloristic renderings. In addition, during the late 1920s and the 1930s Kabiljo created numerous depictions of old Sarajevo streets and corners showing mosques and minarets, old Turkish houses, and courtyard gates. Some of these works were oils and watercolors, but most were small colored linocuts, often signed with pseudonyms such as the Slavic sounding *Edić* or *Martić*.⁷¹ Only occasionally would he create a depiction of a Sarajevo street showing more a daring, modernist style (fig. 2.18).

⁷¹ The colored linocuts of Sarajevo streets are numerous and repetitive, indicating that Kabiljo produced them for commercial purposes. This may explain the use of a different pseudonym in the signature and probably his wish to dissociate these works from his more artistic ones, signed K. Danilus. Nela Levi recalled a family story according to which Kabiljo was in love with a girl named Marta and in her honor used the name *Martić*.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Kabiljo began to exhibit these paintings depicting Sarajevo's market types and the old neighborhood in both Jewish and non-Jewish venues. His exhibitions held yearly in the Sarajevo Jewish community between 1928 and 1930 were not always reviewed favorably: he was criticized for lack of originality. However, a review in Zagreb's *Židov*, in December 1928 after his first solo show, helps to better understand some of the artist's reasons for repetitiveness, anachronism, conservative style, and sentimental subject-matter. From the unsigned author of the article one learns that Kabiljo worked in the seclusion of his studio for a number of years, and that he had financial difficulties. He indeed seems not to have had regular employment, did not teach art in schools as did a number of other Sarajevo artists, and tried to live only from his painting.⁷² From the same 1928 review it is also possible to learn that although he exhibited "one modernist work, we prefer Danilus as the artist of the *mahala*." Moreover, the author of the article sees Kabiljo as "the child of *mahala*, of Bosnian *čaršija* with its oriental types which he brought to life on canvas."⁷³ While thus setting out as an "Orientalist" artist, Kabiljo had himself become, in the view of Zagreb's Ashkenazic Zionist paper, an oriental "other." The following sentence may, however, explain much: "In spite of the [harsh economic] conditions, the exhibition was materially successful—a number of works were sold to individuals and Jewish institutions."⁷⁴ Thus, although repetitive, folkloristic, and anachronistic, Kabiljo had his audience and had to cater to it in order to make a living. This also explains why most of his surviving works are today in private collections.

In 1931 and 1933 Kabiljo participated in group shows with various Sarajevo artists organized with the help of the city's art society Cvijeta Zuzorić. In the last of these exhibitions he showed paintings depicting local types—*Muslim Girl*, *Jewess*, and *Peasant Women in the Town*—and a review published in the Jewish paper remarks upon his folkloristic and romantic inclinations.⁷⁵ Indeed, by 1933 the art world in his hometown, influenced by the harsh economic and political situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in Europe, had become highly polarized between "bourgeois realists" and the "socially aware avant-garde." Kabiljo, it seems, did not belong to either group. In January 1941, Juda Levi, in his unpublished manuscript about Yugoslav Jewish scholars, intellectuals, and artists, expressed the Jewish community's disappointment with "Danilus, who in his time promised much more as a painter of motifs from

72 Begić, *Umjetnost Bosne i Hercegovine, 1924–1945*, 110.

73 J. M., "Izložba slika jevresjkog slikara gosp. Danilusa," *Židov*, no. 52 (Dec. 28, 1928): 3.

74 Ibid.

75 "Izložba Cvijete Zuzorić," *Jevrejski glas*, 10 Nov. 1933, p. 4.

Jewish life, but under the influence of his surroundings and other difficulties could not entirely fulfill this promise.”⁷⁶ At that time Kabiljo’s carefully balanced portrait of vanishing worlds and his wish to harmoniously include all representatives of Sarajevo’s multicultural community—Muslims, Jews, and Christians—belonged to a different period and were invested with memories and nostalgia.

Kabiljo’s search for an identity thus echoes changes in Jewish and Yugoslav societies after the WWI. Initially he enthusiastically embraced Zionism, Yugoslavism and modernism as complementing facets of his emerging artistic self. But, this pan-nationalism and unism became challenged by his sense of belonging to the local Sarajevan and Sephardic heritage. Declining economic conditions affected his art and he turned towards pictorial anachronism. Nevertheless, this path included also Kabiljo’s insistence on his city’s unique pluralism and multiculturalism. But his lack of affiliation with the pre-WWII leftist and communist activists led to an almost complete lack of interest in him during the post-war years. Probably incarcerated with other Sarajevan Jews, he was sent to Jasenovac and it seems that he, as a camp inmate, continued with artistic activity in the camp until 1944, when he perished. So far there are no known art works preserved from this period.⁷⁷

In contrast to Pijade’s and Kabiljo’s searches for identity, the early development of Adolf Weiller, which will be discussed in the following chapter, offers a third path. As an Ashkenazic Zionist and Croatian artist Weiller felt closer to the eastern and central European Jewish tradition, but also to local folklore and nature.

76 Juda Levi, “Jugoslovenski Jevreji u nauci, književnosti i novinarstvu, u muzici, likovnoj umetnosti i glumi” (Belgrade, January 1941), 57. This manuscript is in the holdings of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, Serbia.

77 See Ivanuša, *Dimenzije jednog vremena*, 9.