



CEU DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

**The Public Defense of the  
Doctoral Thesis in Comparative History**

by

**Lovro Kralj**

on

“Paving the Road to the Holocaust in the NDH:  
Antisemitism in the Ustaša Movement, 1930-1945”

will be held on

**Friday, 27 January 2023, at 12:30**

in

**Central European University (CEU)  
Budapest—1051, Nádor 13, Room 118**

Examination Committee

Gábor Klaniczay – Chair (Department of Medieval Studies, CEU)

Constantin Iordachi – supervisor (Department of History, CEU)

András Kovács – CEU internal member (Department of History/Nationalism Studies  
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Raul Cârstocea – external member (Department of History, Maynooth University)

Ljiljana Radonić – external reader (Institute of Cultural Studies and Theatre History,  
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The doctoral dissertation is available for inspection.

Should you wish to access it, please contact

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation provides a reinterpretation of the importance of antisemitism in the Croatian fascist Ustaša movement. The historiography has often treated the Ustaša antisemitism as a peripheral ideological concept, giving it disproportionately little attention. Due to such approaches, the importance of antisemitism has been downplayed and reduced to pure imitation of German Nazism without real roots in the Ustaša movement. Such interpretations ultimately fail to explain the causes of the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia.

This dissertation analyzes the evolution of Ustaša antisemitism from its earliest adoption in its movement phase during the interwar period to the regime phase when its policies aimed to destroy the Jewish community in the Independent State of Croatia. One of the central arguments in this study is that the Ustaša adopted antisemitism as one of the most important means in the fascistization of the movement on the organizational and ideological levels. Moving beyond the history of ideas, this project also examines how antisemitism influenced the multiethnic communities, communication among various fascist movements and finally how it impacted the persecution of other persecuted groups in the Independent State of Croatia. To answer these questions, we turn to the comparative analysis of the Holocaust in three different cities in World War II Croatia: Križevci, Osijek and Sarajevo. Each case presents us with a particular challenge, as well as insights which force us to rethink the history of antisemitism, fascism, and the Holocaust in Croatian, as well as European history.

**CURRICULUM VITAE***Lovro Kralj***EDUCATION**

- 2015-2023     PhD in Comparative History, Central European University
- 2012-2015     Master of Arts in History and Philosophy, University of Rijeka
- 2014-2015     Master of Arts in Comparative History, Central European University
- 2009-2012     Bachelor of Arts in History and Philosophy, University of Rijeka

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

- 2022 - Teaching and Research Assistant, Department of History, University of Rijeka
- 2020 - Lecturer, Department of History, University of Rijeka
- 2021     Research Assistant for the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
- 2018     Research Assistant for Book Project: “Imperial Encounters in the Adriatic Region,” Dr. Alfred J. Rieber, Central European University, Budapest.
- 2018     Research Assistant for the Book Project: “Proprietary Nationalism,” Dr. Chaim Gans, Tel Aviv University, Israel.
- 2018     Research Assistant for the ERC project: “Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: From Mobilization to Nation-State Consolidation: A Comparative Study of Local and Regional Transitions in Post-Habsburg East and Central Europe.”
- 2017     Research Assistant for the “Comparative Populism Project” hosted by the Central European University, Budapest.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Instructor/Lecturer

Fall/Winter 2021/2022

2022/2023 “Antisemitism and the Holocaust Studies: History, Approaches and Debates” (3 ECTS credits), Department of History, University of Rijeka

“Introduction to the History of the Holocaust” (3 ECTS credits), Department of History, University of Rijeka

Fall/Winter 2020/2021

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2022/2023 “Antisemitism and the Holocaust Studies: History, Approaches and Debates” (3 ECTS credits), Department of History, University of Rijeka

Spring 2019

“Comparative Genocide Studies in Global Context,” University of Pannonia (Kőszeg Section), MA Program in International Studies

Fall 2019

“Fascism and Right-Wing Populism: Ideologies, Movements and Regimes,” University of Pannonia (Kőszeg Section), MA Program in International Studies

### Teaching Assistant (TA), Central European University

Fall 2020/2021

“The World at War: Global and Imperial Perspectives on World War II” (4 ECTS credits), MA Program in Comparative History, Professor: Dr. Charles Shaw

Fall 2016

“Yugoslavia: Wars, Crimes, Trials” (8 ECTS Credits), MA Program in Comparative History, Professor: Dr. Vladimir Petrović

CONFERENCES

- 2021 “Negotiating Genocide in the Microcosms of Fascism: Nazis, Ustaše, Arrow Cross and the Persecution of Jews in the City of Osijek,” 2021 Lessons & Legacies Regional Interim Meeting Munich, October 15-17, 2021.
- 2020 “Entangled Histories of Antisemitism and ‘Fascistization’? A Quantitative Approach to Study of Antisemitism in the Ustasha Movement (1929-1941),” *Interdisciplinary Conference on Anti-Semitism Trier*, University of Trier, October 8-10, 2020.
- 2020 “Regional Approach to the Holocaust in Croatia: Minority Politics, Collaboration and Persecution,” *Holocaust Research in Challenging Times: An Online Conference of Holocaust Researchers*, Western Galilee College, May 5, 2020.
- 2019 “The Fascist Civil War(s): Conflict Between the Paramilitarist and Statist Interpretation of Fascism in the Ustasha Movement,” *Fascism and Violence: Second Convention of the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies*, Uppsala University, September 25-27, 2019.
- 2019 “Croatia’s Little Eichmann? Ivan Tolj and the Deportations of Jews from Sarajevo, Vinkovci and Osijek,” *International Workshop on Deportations of Jewish Population in Territories under Nazi Control. Comparative Perspectives on the Organization of the Path to Annihilation*. Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI), June 11-13, 2019.
- 2019 Participant at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization, Holocaust Educational Foundation, Northwestern University, Evanston, 23 June – 5 July 2019.
- 2019 “Re-Imagining Genocide: WWII Mass Atrocity Photographs as Propaganda Instrument During the Yugoslav Wars,” *The Camera as a Witness: Photography and Memory*, NIOD – Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam, Netherlands, April 17, 2019.
- 2019 “Prisoner’s Antisemitism in the Ustasha Jasenovac Concentration Camp,” 23<sup>rd</sup> Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Extermination Sites, Thessaloniki, March 16-22, 2019.
- 2018 “Unexpected Journey of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion Through the Balkans: Entanglements, Transfers and Transitional Antisemitism,” *Conspiracy Theories in/about the Balkan*, University of Zagreb, December 19, 2018.
- 2018 “Paving the Road to Death: Antisemitism and Fascistizaion in the Ustasha Movement 1928-1941,” *Lessons and Legacies Conference on the Holocaust XV. The Holocaust: Global Perspectives and National Narratives*, Washington University, St. Louis, November 1-4.

- 2018 Participant at the Summer Institute “Teaching about Anti-Semitism in the Twenty-First Century,” York University, Toronto, July 9-12, 2018.
- 2018 “Four Waves of Memory Politics Related to the History of the Ustasha Movement (1980-2017): Nationalism, War, EU and Populism,” *Nationalism in Times of Uncertainty*, ASN European Conference, University of Graz, July 4-6, 2018.
- 2018 “On the Importance of Antisemitism as the Building Block of Fascist Ideology: The Case of the Ustasha Movement (1930-1941),” *First Convention of the International Association for Comparative Fascism Studies: Comparative Fascist Studies and the Transnational Turn*, Central European University, Budapest, April 27-29, 2018.
- 2017 Participant at “The Holocaust by Bullets on the Occupied Soviet Territories,” seminar organized by Yahad-In Unum, Holocaust Memorial Centre Budapest, November 30 – December 1, 2018.
- 2017 Participant at the international seminar *Advanced Holocaust Studies Today: Sources and Approaches* organized by European Holocaust Research Initiative (EHRI) in Lviv, Ukraine, September 17-22, 2017.
- 2017 “Rise and Fall of the Independent State of Croatia in the Memoirs of the Ustasha Members,” *Victory or Defeat: Societies between Warfare and Post-War Turmoil*, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, May 25-27, 2017.
- 2017 “The Ustasha Politics of Mass Violence: From Grassroots Wild Ustashe to State-organized Methods of Destruction,” *Fascist Warfare: A Concept to Understand Fascism and Total War in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, Universita Autonoma de Barcelona, March 16-17, 2017.
- 2016 “The Ustasha Politics of Ethnic Cleansing: Relationship Between State-Organized and ‘Wild’ Ethnic Cleansing in the Independent State of Croatia during 1941,” *V. Congress of Croatian Historians: Crisis, Conflict and Solidarity in Historical Perspective*, Croatian National Board of Historical Sciences, University of Zadar, October 5-8, 2016.
- 2012 Participant at the international school “Exchange of experiences and knowledge about memory of the Holocaust and War Crimes,” organized by The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Institut für angewandte Geschichte and Documenta – center for confronting the past, Zagreb, November 9, 2012.

**GRANTS AND AWARDS**

- 2023 Senior Fellowship at the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History in Munich
- 2021/2022 Claims Conference University Partnership in Holocaust Studies Lecturer (to be implemented at the University of Rijeka)
- 2020/2021 Claims Conference Saul Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Study
- 2019/2020 Claims Conference Saul Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Study
- 2019/2020 Junior Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies
- 2019 Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University Teaching Grant
- 2019 Visegrad Scholarship at the Open Society Archives
- 2018/2019 Sharon Abramson Research Grant for the Study of the Holocaust (Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University)
- 2018 Institute for Advanced Studies Koszeg (iASK). Project titled “Memory Politics as Populist Right-Wing Political Strategy in Croatia (2010-2017).”
- 2017 Institute for Advanced Studies Koszeg (iASK). Project titled “Memory of the Ustasha Atrocities Between Myth and Reality: Politicization, Securitization and the Production of Knowledge (1985-2017)”

**LANGUAGES**

Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian – Native Speaker (C2)

English – Spoken: C2, Reading level C2

German – Spoken A2, Reading level B1

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

### Forthcoming

- 2023 “The Making of the Ustaša ‘Deportation Expert:’ Ivan Tolj and the Perpetration of Ethnic Cleansing in the Independent State of Croatia” in *Deported: Comparative Perspectives on Path to Annihilation for Jewish Populations under Nazi German Control*, edited by Michaela Raggam-Blesch, Peter Black, Marianne Windsperger (New Academic Press, 2023).

### Book Chapters and Journal Articles

- 2022 “Microcosmos of Fascism in the Age of Genocide: German Nazis, Croatian Ustaše, and the Hungarian Arrow Cross in the City of Osijek.” *S: I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods.Documentation*.9,no.2(2022):67-89. [https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0222/art\\_1kra01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0222/art_1kra01)
- 2021 “Populist Memory Politics and the Ustasha Movement 1945-2020.” In *At the Intersection of Memory and Populist Politics in Southeastern Europe*, edited by Jody Jensen. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- 2019 “The Rise and Fall of the Independent State of Croatia in the Memoirs and Testimonies of the Ustasha Members” *History in flux: Journal of the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula* 1, no. 1 (2019): 167-184. <https://doi.org/10.32728/flux.2019.1.9>
- 2019 “The Evolution of Ustasha Mass Violence: Nation-Statism, Paramilitarism, Structure, and Agency in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941.” In *Fascist Warfare, 1922–1945*, edited by Alonso M., Kramer A., Rodrigo J., 241-268. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27648-5\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27648-5_11)
- 2019 “Photography, Collaboration and the Holocaust: Looking at the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945) through the Frame of the ‘Hooded Man’.” *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 2, no. 2 (2019): 49-57. <http://doi.org/10.21039/jpr.2.2.46>
- 2019 “Paving the Road to Death: Antisemitism in the Ustasha Movement (1929-1945).” In *Right-Wing Politics and the Rise of Antisemitism in Europe 1935-1941*, edited by Frank Bajohr and Dieter Pohl. Munich: Institut fur Zeitgeschichte, Wallstein, 2019.



**Reviews**

- 2019 “Review of Pino Adriano and Giorgio Cingolani’s ‘Nationalism and Terror: Ante Pavelić and Ustasha Terrorism from Fascism to the Cold War,’ Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2018.” *Journal of Southeastern Europe* 43, no. 3 (2019): 328-330. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18763332-04303008>
- 2019 Tagungsbericht [Conference Report]: Between Absence and Affirmation. 23rd Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Extermination Sites, 16.03.2019 – 22.03.2019 Thessaloniki, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 31.07.2019, <[www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8384](http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8384)>.
- 2017 Lovro Kralj: Rezension zu: Bergholz, Max: *Violence as a Generative Force. Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community*. Ithaca 2016 / Goldstein, Ivo; Goldstein, Slavko: *The Holocaust in Croatia*. Pittsburgh 2016, in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 12.09.2017, <[www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-26998](http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-26998)>.
- 2015 “The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia: Origins and Theory,” by: Nevenko Bartulin, in *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske* [Journal for the History of Western Croatia] 10 (2015): 175-180.
- 2013 “Povijest kinematografije u NDH.” [History of Cinematography in the Independent State of Croatia] by: Daniel Rafaelić, *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske* [Journal for the History of Western Croatia] 8 (2013): 221-224.
- 2013 “Prva medievistička znanstvena radionica u Rijeci.” *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske* [Journal for the History of Western Croatia] 8 (2013): 225-229.