

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE ANTI-SEMITISM IN HUNGARY DURING THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS (1945 – 1948)

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Abstract: *Despite the fact that in the postwar period Anti-Semitism presents some similar features in countries of the East Central Europe, there were specific social, economic, political, and cultural conditions for the manifestation of excesses in each of these states. The historical facts concerning pogroms in North-Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Hungary show clearly a profound delay and obvious prejudices in the mentality of rural residents, especially in the poorest areas. At the same time, there have been factors that have cooperated in maintaining and perpetuating the Anti-Semitism ever since Horthy's regime was in power. These factors have materialized in what was called "the Popular Anti-Semitism", originating from the monarchy, as well as from the post-war realities of the establishment of the Hungarian-Communist regime (especially against persons of Jewish origin who held the leading positions within the party, administration, justice, and police).*

Keywords: *Anti-Semitism, Hungary, Post World War II Period, conflict*

Rezumat: Considerații privind antisemitismul în Ungaria în primii ani postbelici (1945-1948). *În ciuda faptului că în perioada postbelică, antisemitismul prezintă unele trăsături asemănătoare în țările din Europa Est-Centrală, au existat condiții specifice din punct de vedere social, economic, politic și cultural pentru manifestarea exceselor în fiecare dintre acestea. Faptele istorice cu privire la pogromurile din regiunile de nord-est și sud-est ale Ungariei arată în mod clar o profundă întârziere și evidente prejudecăți în mentalul locuitorilor din lumea rurală, în special în zonele cele mai sărace. Concomitent, au existat factori care au cooperat la menținerea și perpetuarea antisemitismului, încă din vremea în care regimul lui Horthy se afla la putere. Acești factori s-au materializat în ceea ce s-a numit „antisemitismul popular”, având origini în perioada monarhiei, precum și în realitățile postbelice ale instaurării regimului comunist maghiar (în special împotriva persoanelor cu origini evreiești care s-au aflat în poziții fruntașe în partid, administrație, justiție și poliție).*

Résumé: Considérations concernant l'antisémitisme en Hongrie les premières années d'après la guerre (1945-1948). *Malgré le fait que pendant la période d'après la guerre, l'antisémitisme présentait en Europe Est-Centrale certains traits semblables pour tous les pays, il y a eu, aussi, des conditions spécifiques du point de vue social-économique, social-*

politique, de la sûreté et culturel pour la manifestation des excès en chacun de ceux-ci. Les événements historiques concernant les pogromes des régions de nord-est et sud-est de l'Hongrie montrent clairement un profond retard et des préjugés évidents dans le mental des habitants du monde rural, spécialement dans les régions les plus pauvres de la perspective sociale et économique. En parallèle, il y a eu des facteurs qui coopérèrent à long terme au maintien de l'antisémitisme et qui se perpétuent dès l'époque du régime de Horthy, facteurs matérialisés dans « l'antisémitisme populaire », ayant ses origines dans la période de la monarchie, ainsi que dans les réalités d'après la guerre de l'instauration du régime communiste à spécifique hongrois (en spécial contre les personnes avec des origines juives qui se trouvèrent à la direction du parti, de l'administration, de la justice et de la police).

INTRODUCTION

Anti-Semitism is one of the popular themes of historical research, but the knowledge of its manifestations and its implications among the historians from foreign countries (i. e. from the country different from that taken as an object of research) is not consistent. The main purpose of the study is to analyse the manifestations of anti-Semitism in Hungary in the first years after World War II, mainly based on the Hungarian literature and partially, in comparison with the situation in Slovakia. However, it is not an exhaustive analysis because it would require much more space.

The roots of modern anti-Semitism (but not of anti-Judaism which was motivated by religion) lie in the 19th century and had far-reaching consequences. In Hungary, it became obvious in the form of anti-Jewish policies, in particular as a result of the considerable immigration of the Jewish population during the “long century”, from Galicia and Eastern European regions. Especially due to immigration, the number of Hungarian Jews increased from approximately 12 000, in 1735, to over 624 000, in 1880.¹ The principal economic activities of the Jews included the distillery, the woodworking and sugar industry, the production of bricks, tiles, cheese, fruits, and vegetables. They often brought new technologies and modern machines with them, but the majority of the population shared the image of the Jew as the usurer, the small shop-keeper or wandering seller, and especially that of the Jewish pub-owner, as it is reflected in folklore and Hungarian and Slovak literature written in the 19th century.

During that time, the Jews were accused by the Slovak intellectuals for a significant share of Magyarization or Hungarization of the population. The Slovak and Hungarian communities have not had great differences in the view of Jewish

¹ Petra Rybářová, *Antisemitizmus v Uhorsku v 80. rokoch 19. storočia* [Anti-Semitism in Hungary in the 80's of the 19th century], Bratislava, 2010, p. 27.

fellow citizens through the prism of stereotypes, except for the accusations of Magyarization. Both reformist and Orthodox Jews provided political support to the governmental policies of the Hungarian governments until the end of the monarchy, and the ruling circles were mostly opposed to anti-Semitic manifestations on the Hungarian political scene. The assimilation of Jews in Hungarian culture should at least statistically increase the number of Hungarians because the non-Hungarian nationalities in Hungary reached more than 50% of the population. Especially Reforming Jews did not want to differ from other members of society. They wanted to be Hungarians and their religion remained a private matter, so they got rid of more traditional customs.² Yet, shortly after the Great War, government policy and public opinion have turned strongly against the Jewish community in post-Trianon Hungary. It was related to the short period of the Communist dictatorship during the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919), which was suppressed by both foreign enemies and internal enemies – i. e. by right-wing and monarchist circles. Since several “red” leaders (led by Béla Kun) were of Jewish origin, anti-Semitic propaganda could use this fact. Many Jews became victims of the so-called “White terror” and anti-Jewish riots.

On 31st of December 1920 a population census took place and showed that 5,9% of the population in the new Hungarian state registered their religious belief as Jewish.³ In that year, the Hungarian parliament adopted a law limiting the study of Jews at universities. This law became the first anti-Jewish law in Europe after the World War I (entered into force on 26th of September 1920). It restricted civil rights on grounds of nationality and caused considerable outrage in the world.

During the inter-war period, however, the Jewish community in Hungary was relatively prosperous despite occasional anti-Semitic attacks. The reversal came in the last year of the World War II, in which Hungary as an ally of the Great-German Empire faced defeat. The anti-Jewish moods have tragically culminated during the year 1944, just several months before the fall of Admiral Horthy's regime, and after the emergence of the Arrow Cross Party government.⁴ Various restrictive measures emerged, i. e. placing Jews into the labour service battalions (*munkaszolgálat*), and finally their deportation to the concentration camps. As it is estimated, 600 000 – 640 000 Jews were deported, but Tamás Stark, on the basis of detailed analysis, specified the number of 437 000 deported Jews in the summer of 1944, and another approximately 50 000 who were forced to build the

² Ješajahu A. Jelinek, *Židia na Slovensku v 19. a 20. storočí* (zborník statí – 1. časť) [Jews in Slovakia in the 19th and 20th centuries], Bratislava, 1999, p. 31.

³ Richard Pražák, *Dějiny Uher a Maďarska v datech* [Chronological history of the Hungarian Kingdom and Hungary], Praha, 2010, p. 283 .

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

fortifications in Austria in the autumn of 1944.⁵

During the biggest persecution in the World War II, approximately up to 50–60% of Hungarian Jews perished, mainly due to the cooperation of the Szálasi's fascist regime with the Nazi Germany.⁶ The American historian Deborah S. Cornelius stated it was the Soviet occupation, which helped save the rest of Jews.⁷

The military defeat of Nazism and its allies in Middle-Eastern Europe did not mean the destruction of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism aimed against the Jewish ethnic and religious minority in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and other countries. The post-war period of 1945 – 1948 is characteristic for its difficult social, economic, safety and political situation. The Soviet ambition further worsened this to advocate pro-communist and communist political powers and regimes.

The war claimed the lives of over one million inhabitants of Hungary, of which half were the victims of the Holocaust. In the winter of 1944 – 1945 approximately a million people left Hungary, following the order of evacuation commanded by the government of the Arrow Crosses, or leaving the country because of the fear of Soviet occupation. Approximately 100 000 never returned. The 300 000 Hungarians, who surrendered to the western powers were released in 1946. However, half of the 600 000 captives (including over 100 000 civilians) in Soviet custody were sent to work camps in the Soviet Union. These people, if they survived the hardships, returned during 1947 and later years.⁸ Because of this there was not enough manpower in Hungary to rebuild the country ravaged by war.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FROM HUNGARY IN POST-WAR TIME

Historian János Gyurgyák (paraphrasing the ideas of poet Milán Füst) concluded that the “Jewish question” was especially complicated in Hungary⁹. The

⁵ Deborah S. Cornelius, *Mad'arsko v druhej svetovej vojne* [Hungary in World War II], Bratislava 2015, p. 336.

⁶ T. Snyder also said that about half of the Jewish population of Hungary had been saved and that of the 437 000 deportees about 320 000 were killed. Timothy Snyder, *Čierna zem. Holokaust ako história a varovanie* [Black Earth : The Holocaust as History and Warning], Bratislava, 2015, p. 235. For comparison, approximately 22% of the Slovak Jews survived the war (i.e. about 30 000, out of which 11 000 survived on the territory of the Slovak state, 9000 returned from the concentration camps and about 10 000 survived on the territories occupied by Hungary). Michal Šmigel', *Otázky okolo (povojnovej) židovskej otázky na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1953* [Questions about (post-war) Jewish question in Slovakia in 1945 – 1953], 2017, manuscript, p. 4.

⁷ Deborah S. Cornelius, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

⁸ László Kontler, *Dějiny Maďarska* [The history of Hungary], Praha, 2001, p. 357.

⁹ János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish question in Hungary],

relationship between the Jewish minority and the majority of the population, as well as the complexity of the Jewish identity, were the objects of many observations. Imre Kertész, the Hungarian writer of Jewish origin, also tried to express his views on this matter in his novel *Sorstalanság* [Fateless].¹⁰ Similarly, the Austrian-Hungarian journalist Paul Lendvai, whose Jewish relatives lived in Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, has formed his own opinion. He wrote on the fate of his relatives from Transylvania's territory annexed to Hungary after the 2nd Vienna Arbitration: "Their tragedy was caused by the «liberation» of the Hungarian army, so they once again have become Hungarian citizens. If the Hungarian state authorities had any suspicion on a concealed property, they tortured them mercilessly, gathered and loaded them to cattle wagons, and transported to Auschwitz – without any German intervention. However, all those who lived in southern Transylvania under Romanian jurisdiction survived this persecution. [...] They drove off my grandparents and my relatives, even though they reported to the Hungarians and spoke Hungarian – I never heard a word in the Yiddish language there – and slaughtered them just because they have become «Hungarians» again."¹¹

According to the monograph of Imre Hermann, published in 1945, the characteristics of the Hungarian Anti-Semitism ideology include the following patterns, enriched with the accusations of the dissolution of the Hungarian Kingdom: "*The Jews in Hungary created social upheaval to cover the problems of the immigration of Jews and emigration of common people to America, usury and their misuse of finance capitalism. During the First World War, they dissolved the army and undermined the psychological resilience of the people at the home front. They*

Budapest, 2001, p. 13.

¹⁰ ...I was trying to explain her that they do not just hate her – in the end, they did not know her – it is the concept of the Jew, which irritates them. She told me she does not exactly know what that means. Anne Marie told her that everybody else knows: it is religion. However, this was not interesting to her. What did interest her was the "meaning" of this fact. – Finally, a person has to know, why everybody hates him/her. She admitted that she did not understand anything and that it was very difficult for her to comprehend why she is hated so much only because she is Jewish. This was the first time when she felt disconnection from people and that she belongs somewhere else. She started to contemplate and think about this and tried to find answers in books and discussions. After some time, she finally understood that it is this contemplativeness they hate. According to her "we the Jews are different than the others". This difference is the cause why people hate the Jews. She told me that it is very strange to live with this "notion of difference". For her it is a reason to be proud and sometimes a reason to be ashamed. Imre Kertész, *Bezodovost'* [Fateless], Bratislava, 2000, p. 31-32.

¹¹ Paul Lendvai, *Moje tri životy. Rozhovory so Zsófiou Mihancsik*, Bratislava, 2016, s. 155.

lead a vicious campaign in Hungary; with the aim to prepare the common person for the dissolution of the thousand-year-old Hungarian empire... In the Middle Ages they poisoned wells, spread diseases and plagues. They also provoked the current war."¹² These "ideas" were spread in pamphlets and scuttlebutts by "engaged anti-Semites" a decade after 1945. According to Paul Lendvai, the pro-Hungarian attitudes of the Jews were disparaged, and the concepts of "the Hungarian original race", "the Hungarian soul", or "the Hungarian spirit of the law" were used "to help the anti-Semites distinguish Hungarians from the Hungarian Jews and to bring hostile attitudes among them."¹³

The Jews who returned to Hungary after the war met many problems; for example, they could not take back their properties because they were confiscated. Therefore, they relied on organizations, which supplied them with food and other necessary things required for their survival. According to J. Gyurgyák, the biggest paradox was that the Jews who survived the concentration camps were able to get work in the state, political and economic areas, where it was impossible before. The "new" post-war Hungary needed experts and intelligentsia for which the educated Jews were ready. However, by accepting these occupations they found themselves in a complicated situation. They had to follow Stalin's ideas and communist orders for which they were criticized or even hated by the significant part of the Hungarian population. Later, the Jews found themselves at odds with their own identity. Many Hungarians also believed that the Communist ideology was trying to create a socially fairer society. They believed that the land reform would provide farmers with independence and a good standard of living, that there will be new jobs for young people, and that enormous social disparities among people (typical for pre-war Hungary) will be eliminated.¹⁴

The Hungarian history after 1945 was problematic not only in the case of the Jewish people, but also in the case of relations between the majority and other minority groups (mainly Slovaks and Germans). The Hungarian nation had to cope with the past, including the "Jewish question", which was heavily politicised.¹⁵ At the same time it was a positive fact that the results of the war meant the destruction of the anachronic, semi-feudal social and political order of the "Kingdom" of Hungary" (*Magyar Királyság* as it was the official name of inter-war state). For some people, its disintegration awakened a revolutionary euphoria,

¹² Imre Hermann, *Psychológia antisemitizmu* [The psychology of anti-Semitism], Nové Zámky, 1998, p. 28.

¹³ Paul Lendvai, *Mad'ari. Vítazstvá a prehry* [Hungarians. Victories and defeats], Bratislava, 2011, s. 306.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 405.

¹⁵ János Gyurgyák, *op. cit.*, p. 582.

especially in the Eastern Hungary. Many workers, small farmers and intellectuals have entered the Communist Party, partly out of conviction, partly out of opportunism. At the time of the elections in November 1945, it had about half a million members. Deborah S. Cornelius stated: "Two distinctly large groups have entered the party - Jews and former members of the 'Arrow Cross' Party. The Jews have entered the party expressing their gratitude for liberation and feeling that Communism could protect them from anti-Semitism. Former members of the 'Arrow crosses' have entered because they wanted to hide their previous activities, but perhaps also from the reason of attraction of radical new change."¹⁶

The situation of the Jewish population in Hungary has evolved in the context of very difficult conditions of the post war period. The Soviet-backed Communist Party has strenuously pursued its goal: gaining power and sovietising the state by various means (including the disqualification and abduction of political opponents and later of those allies who have ended their roles). It gradually eroded the main adversary, i. e. the small farmers' party, the winner of the first post-war election on 4th of November 1945 (the small farmers party won 57% of the votes, the Communists 17%, the Social Democrats 17%).¹⁷ In January 1946 the Hungarian Germans were expelled, on the 1st of February Hungary became a republic, in March the Left Block (*Baloldali Blokk*) was founded on the initiative of the Communists with the aim to isolate the small farmers. The Left Block joined the Communists, Social Democrats, members of the Party of national farmers, and members of the trade unions. After a strong pressure, the small farmers had to exclude "reactionary" members, and gradually other parties, including Social Democrats, and to "clean up" with the help of the security structures. On 12 of March 1946, the Parliament adopted a legal act to protect the "democratic state establishment" and the republic. According to this document, it was possible not only to punish propaganda and public association acting against the republic, but also to penalize those who knew about it and did not notify the competent authorities. The first political processes took place in the form of "People's Court". The difficult social and economic situation of the country also reflected the inflationary process of the new currency - the forint, culminating in July 1946.¹⁸ Tension in society was also increased by the problem of resettlement of the Hungarian population from abroad. The Communist Party of Hungary (from June

¹⁶ Deborah S. Cornelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-423.

¹⁷ Richard Pražák, *Dějiny Uher a Maďarska v datech* [Chronological history of the Hungarian Kingdom and Hungary], Praha, 2010, p. 327.

¹⁸ One dollar had in May 1946 the value of 59 millions of forints, at the end of July even 4 600 000 quadrillions of forints. *Ibidem*, p. 329.

1948 renamed as Hungarian Workers Party / *Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*)¹⁹ created a three-year industrial plan in order to rebuild Hungary (from 1st of August 1947) and declared the main goals of its politics, i. e. the victory of democracy, destruction of inflation, division of land, freedom of religion etc. In fact, it was a rigorous and brutal sovietisation of the Hungarian society, which soon brought to prison, labour camps and executions many of those who helped build the new regime (such as L. Rajk, T. Szőnyi, I. Ries, D. Németh, A. Szalai, E. Szűcs). The year 1948 became the “turning point” in politics, economy, culture and education (“nationalization of education”).²⁰

The Jews had more difficult ways to adapt into the post-war society, which was characterized by post-war psychosis, administrative chaos, and various problems related to the construction of a new Hungarian state. Efforts to remove the legislative and administrative barriers imposed on Jewish citizens (which blocked their full inclusion into society) have been complicated by “bottom-up” manifestations, motivated by the subjective motives of the civilian population, taking “justice” into their own hands. According to the official data from the 31st of December 1945, there were 195 000 Jewish people living in Hungary of which 144 000 lived in Budapest and 51 000 in the province.²¹ It is clear that Jews lived mainly in bigger towns, whereas during the war persecution affected Jews who were living mainly in rural areas. According to the census from 1941 (except of the main city – Budapest), there were 37 towns in Hungary where more than 1000 Jews were living. By contrast, in 1946, there were bigger groups of Jews living only in towns like Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged, Nyíregyháza and Makó. Another important fact was the prevalence of the female population within the Jewish community, which led to the creation of many combined marriages. The socially higher group of Jews – entrepreneurs, owners of land and finance entrepreneurs – were able to save their lives on account of their wealth; they blackmailed the corrupt representatives of the Hungarian state and Germans, and therefore they survived. However, after the liberation, they had to decide. Most of them immigrated to America, Canada, France or other countries. Those wealthy Jews who decided to stay hoped for the creation of a civic democracy in Hungary and therefore took over the leadership in factories, banks and mass production facilities.²²

¹⁹ On the 12th of June 1948, the Communist Party of Hungary and the Social Democratic Party joined together to form the Hungarian Workers Party / *Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*. Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

²⁰ László Kontler, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

²¹ Péter Kende, *Röpirat a zsidókérdésről* [Short Review on Jewish Question], Budapest, 1989, s. 37.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Yet, the situation of the middle class was more complicated. The physicians, veterinarians, lawyers, newspaper writers, teachers and engineers were able to continue working after the war. The rest, especially the businessmen, industrialists and owners of small businesses had to look for new jobs in late 1945 and early 1946. Many Jews lost their entire property during the war. Their homes were already occupied by people who did not want to move out or simply couldn't because they did not have a place to go to. Regarding the problems of accommodation, the Jews in Budapest were helped by Zoltán Vas, member of the Communist party; however they did not get their original homes back. The American organization "Joint" informed that 90-95% of Hungarian Jews needed assistance.²³ The newspaper "Népszava" and the author László Hámori reported in the article *Antiszemitizmus és monopolizmus* [Anti-Semitism and Monopolism] that Jews did not have an easy life in the towns, where they returned after the deportations. The state offices did not want to give them back their property and some people did not accept them as citizens of the state. Many were even "shocked" that almost 100 000 of the 600 000 deported Jews, returned home. Some of them stated that the new wave of anti-Semitism arose because the Jews wanted to put "all the guilt on the Hungarian nation."²⁴

Accordingly, the Jews had to decide if they want to emigrate or remain in Hungary after 1945. Those who decided to stay began to take part in the political and social lifestyles. The older, more religious-Jews, abstained from the political life. The Jews who were determined to take on an active role in politics had to plan how to cope with their identity or if they want to hide it for practical reasons.²⁵ Therefore a group of the Jewish communists who gave up their religion attracted

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59-60.

²⁵ As some Slovak authors show, a similar situation was in Slovakia. Due to the previous experience and fear of an insecure future in the new republic, many members of the Jewish community tried to integrate into the majority. Part of the Jews were trying to assimilate – they stopped practicing their faith, lived in mixed marriages, changed their names into a Slovak equivalent and so on. This was the reason for the fact that members of the community had an ambivalent relationship with their own identity – going from complete revulsion to total identification with one's heritage. More regarding this problem can be found: Michal Šmigel', Jana Šišjaková, *Protižidovské prejavy na východnom Slovensku v prvých povojnových rokoch (1945 – 1947)* [Anti-Jewish manifestations in eastern Slovakia during the first post-war years (1945 – 1947)], in: *Annales historici Presovienses*, vol. 8/2008, Prešov, 2008, p. 198.

The other part of the minority was ready to emigrate from Slovakia and understood that its work in Slovakia was only temporary (in the end many Jews returned to Slovakia only to find out if some relatives survived and later they emigrated from the country).

more and more members and sympathizers.

Because of the ideals of religious equalization, a significant part of the Jews sympathized with the Communist party, from which they expected safety. Other Jews felt that the memories of the Holocaust strengthened their Jewish identity and proudly proclaimed it and also joined the Zionist movement. The Zionists gathered those Jews who agreed with emigration to Palestine or Israel (after its creation on the 14th of May 1948). It is important to mention the creation of the Zionist political party in Hungary in 1945 – The Socialist Zionist Party / Ichud Mapáj (*Szocialista Cionisták / Ichud Mapáj / Pártja*) – which was relatively popular. It was active until 1948.²⁶ In July 1946 the State organization of Hungarian Jews was created (*Magyar Zsidók Országos Egyesülete*), which was supposed to protect the social and political position of the Jewish community.²⁷

On the 6th of January 1945, according to the law article 200/1945 of the Interim national government, the Jewish laws of the Horthy's regime were dissolved. New laws were created later on and there were some bills that requested compensation, stopping the attacks based on race and religion. The right for full compensation was not given to the Jews. However, a fund was created and it was supposed to aid the Jewish institutions. As the Hungarian state couldn't cope with the difficult economic situation,²⁸ the American organization "Joint" was aiding in compensation procedures. The mentioned laws from 1946 were gathered in a volume with a foreword from Dr. István Ries, the Minister of Justice, and printed with an appropriate aid from the American Joint Distribution Committee.

The Interim national government set out to punish the war criminals and perpetrators of the genocide of the Hungarian Jews; therefore, it created the so-called People's Court (*Népbíróság*). The first decisions of this institution (death penalties) were carried out on the 4th of February 1945.²⁹ In October 1945 the leader of the "Arrow Crosses" Party, Ferenc Szálasi, and ten of his aides were brought to Hungary. The court proceedings started in February 1946 and in March he and seven others were executed.³⁰ Further people from the Ministry of the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 91.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66. István Földesi, the vice-president of the Israeli religious organization, played a big part in its creation.

²⁸ For example, during late 1945 the industry was only producing 20-30% pre-war capacity and the supply of the civilian population was still insufficient.

²⁹ The first ones were Peter Rotyis and Sándor Szívós.

³⁰ The People's court condemned 58 388 war criminals during its existence until 1950. From the 322 death penalties, 146 were carried out. *Ibid.*, p. 53-54. Comparison with the situation in Slovakia in: Marek Syrný, *Post-war retributive jurisdiction in Slovakia*,

Interior and police organisation were executed, because they were involved in the deportations of Jews. The death penalty was also given to previous heads of government Bárdossy, Imrédy and Sztójay.

The government was looking for people who were responsible for the negative situation of Hungary during the Second World War. Germans were collectively found guilty,³¹ and most of them (around 135 000) were deported. Further 60-70 000 Germans were sent to the Soviet Union in the forced-labour camps.³² The 200 000 Hungarians also emigrated from Hungary in fear of the “people's democracy”. Most of the Hungarians were confronted with negative aspects of the war and post-war situation, especially the brutality of the Soviet occupation, police and the State security (ÁVO) persecutions³³, courts and emigration of many people, as a “Jewish revenge” of the influential Jewish members of the Communist party: Mátyás Rákosi (born Rosenfeld), Gábor Péter (born Benjamin Eisenberger), Ernő Gerő (born Singer), Mihály Farkas (born Löwy), József Révai (born Lederer), Ernő Szücs (born Süs) or Zoltán Vas (born Weinberger).³⁴ In the collective memory of Hungarians this Jewish Communist fraction has been very often connected with ethnic origin of the leaders of the Hungarian Soviet republic (1919). Hungarians of Jewish descent held many influential positions in the state, police, state security, People's Court which fed the notions of a “Jewish revenge”. Fame started to spread that the Jews want to take revenge for everything so that the Hungarians will never recuperate.

ANTI-SEMITIC CONFLICTS IN HUNGARY DURING 1945-1948

Very soon the first conflict with an anti-Semitic motive arose in Pécs. People started to protest against the harsh rulings of the local People's Court and the pamphlets demanded the execution of the judges. The demonstrations subsequently changed to public destruction of the Jewish religious objects. According to P. Kende, this could also be the remnants of the preferred anti-

in: *European researcher: International Multidisciplinary Journal*, vol. 53, is. 6-2 (2013), p. 1722-1727.

³¹ The Germans were living in Hungary since the middle ages, primarily in cities. The biggest enclaves of rural population were created in the 18th century, after the expulsion of the Ottomans from Hungary.

³² Paul Lendvai, *Tisíc let mad'arského národa* [Thousand years of the Hungarian nation], Praha, 2002, p. 285.

³³ In September of 1948 the name changed into the Office of State Security /AVH.

³⁴ János Gyurgyák, *op. cit.*, p. 583-584.

Semitic rhetoric of the previous years.³⁵

In the publication *A kommunistapárt és a zsidóság Magyarországon (1945-1956)*³⁶ Róbert Szabó stated an example of a "Jewish revenge" which took place in Gyömrő. In 1945 the deported Jews returned to their town, but discovered they lost their properties and families. A possible solution to overcome the impasse was to join the Communist Party and police. In the beginning of 1945 a big police raid took place in Gyömrő. Approximately 200 people, who held political power during the rule of the "Arrow Crosses", were arrested. The police were questioning and torturing them (with an "active help" from the returnees Jakab Krupa, Károly Bayer and three Schwarzstein brothers). At the end of this process some were freed, but 23 remained in custody. In the summer of the same year, 16 people were found dead in the lake in Gyömrő. Later the grave of the rest of them was found. During the inquiry, the cause of their deaths was found out: terrible torture after which the victims were shot or buried alive. The author outlined the lack of character of the involved policemen (of Jewish origin) who took over food packages destined for the people, who were already killed. The affair and the inquiry were hampered by the Communist Party and its chairman, Mátyás Rákosi. Minister of Interior, F. Erdei, rejected the exhumation of the bodies until September. The delayed identification had shown that the dead bodies belonged to 23 members of the "Arrow Crosses". Among them were persons and office workers who had the job of creating and presenting registers for the deported Jews.³⁷ This "Jewish revenge" created a nationwide outcry. The Communist Party was trying to downplay and cover up the whole situation. In December 1945, the perpetrators were jailed, but in early 1946 they were released. The whole situation was never fully investigated.³⁸

In the spring and summer of 1946 many massacres and anti-Semitic demonstrations took place in Sopron, Csanádpalota, Tiszaladány, Hajdúhadháza, Mezőkovácsháza, Debrecen, Makó, Ózd – but the bloodiest pogroms took place in Kunmadaras and Miskolc.

British historian Keith Lowe recorded in his book *Savage Continent* a joke that circled in Hungary after the World War II: *The Jew returns from a concentration camp to Budapest meets his Christian friend. "How are you?", a friend*

³⁵ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁶ Róbert Szabó, *A kommunista párt és a zsidóság Magyarországon (1945-1956)* [The Communist Party and Jews in Hungary (1945-1956)], Budapest, 1995, p. 110-112.

³⁷ However, we can find exceptions in the case of 2 people (specifically: Count József Révai, a teacher of classic philology, and Count János Koronini, the owner of the local mansion).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110-112.

asks the Jew. "Do not ask," says the Jew. "I came back from a concentration camp and the only thing which was left to me is the clothes you wear."³⁹ The joke could be well understood by everyone. However, it was not a Hungarian specification; the looting of Jewish property took place throughout Europe. People who have taken Jewish property and made a profit from it refused to return it to the original owners. K. Lowe stated: "people have seen the Jews with a different degree of hostility and grumbled on the bad luck because of all the Jews who 'disappeared' during the war, just those have had to return."⁴⁰ An example of an outbreak of anti-Semitic disruptions on the basis of prior confiscation of Jewish property is the case of the town of Kunmadaras, with about 8 000 inhabitants. Of the approximately 250 Jews deported from Kunmadaras in 1944, only 73 returned after the liberation. The property of the local Jews was confiscated, robbed, sold, or scattered around the town. However, while in the big cities it was difficult to return the demolished movables, it was more possible in the small town, and some of the returnees gained a certain part of their property back through the courts. The tense anti-Semitic attitudes have fully erupted in May 1946.

On the 21st of May 1946 in Kunmadaras, a young ex-soldier with his friends started a mass fight with an anti-Semitic aim. They also spread news that the Jewish community, which was preparing to consecrate an ecclesia (sic!), killed two children. Two people were killed in the following anti-Semitic attacks and 15 people were seriously injured, Jewish shops and houses were looted and destroyed.⁴¹ The first articles dealing with this were published on the 24th of May in the newspaper "Szabad Nép". The attacks were also influenced by the very serious social situation. Eszter Kabai Tóth, who was illiterate, described the reasons of the hate aimed against the Jews, in jail to the redactor of the newspaper "Haladás": "When the Jews returned they had nothing and now they eat white bread whereas she, who is struggling, doesn't have anything". During the hearings on the 30th of May, she stated: "Several weeks before the attacks happened, rumours were spreading that the Jews were killing children of the Hungarian people because they want to plaster the roads with their skulls and that the Jews have a good life and we, the poor nation, are starving."⁴² It was the woman who first attacked the egg seller Ferenc Kuti with the charge of making sausages from Christian children. The

³⁹ Keith Lowe, *Krutý kontinent. Krv, chaos a bezprávie v Európe 1944 – 1949* [Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II], Bratislava, 2014, p. 224.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁴² János Pelle, *Az utolsó vér és a politikaipolitikai manipulációkelet-európai történetéből* [The last blood and honour feuds. History of ethnic hate and political manipulation in Eastern Europe], Budapest, 1996, p. 161.

crowd chased him to his home where Kálmán Balázs finally killed him by beating him with an iron rod.⁴³ J. Pelle also showed a Slovak connection in the case, because a certain 26-year old Zsigmond Tóth, who was born in Bratislava, was convicted of anti-Semitism in Kunmadaras. When he was captured near the Hungarian-Slovak border, near the village of Rajka, he stated that: "...*Children have also disappeared in Slovakia, but the Jews there are already hanged*"; he was also provoking people when he said that: "...*How long are you going to watch, as the Jews are making sausages of your children?*" The newspaper "Demokrácia" reported on the 23rd of June 1946 that Tóth was a member of the "Hlinka Guards" and took part in massacres in Slovakia. However, he declared that he was fighting against the Germans as a partisan.⁴⁴ After the whole incident, 120 people were arrested and 80 were detained for shorter time.⁴⁵ K. Lowe drew attention to the fact that in several European countries different ethnic groups had problems with returning their property, but the Jews were the most vulnerable. Their property was a light target during the war and was often considered to be something that belongs to everyone.⁴⁶

Following these events, there was a huge increase in anti-Semitic outcries in the spring and summer of 1946 in Hungary. The newspaper "Szabad Nép" reported on the 30th of May and 2nd, 9th, 14th and 16th of June 1946 about anti-Semitic attacks in the following areas: A 45-year old woman living in Hajdúhadház, wife of Gyula Kovács, was supposedly seduced by "fascist people" to spread false information about the Jews. On the very same day, two women came to the police station in Hajdúhadház saying that their daughters have been kidnapped by Jews. Two policemen were sent out to investigate but later found out that the children were only playing on the main square after school. Similar messages started to spread in Sopron, stating that Jews "were capturing children and making sausages from them." Police investigation showed that this false information was spread by the wife of László Kléh. After the situation has been explained and solved, the people became calm and demanded that the perpetrators be punished. In Csanádpalota there were rumours that "illegal" persons, who came from Budapest, spread false information that Jewish doctors were vaccinating children with poison.⁴⁷ In Debrecen, it was said that in the cellar

⁴³ Keith Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁴⁴ Zs. Tóth emigrated abroad after he was released in October 1956. He died in Slovakia in the early 1970s.

⁴⁵ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158, 163, 165.

⁴⁶ Keith Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁴⁷ Similar false notes stated that a Jewish doctor was giving children poisoned inoculation started the pogrom in the town of Topolčany in Slovakia on the 24th of September

of Jenő Freiländer were some “children heads”. András Orosz from Tiszaladányi created rumours about a child’s nail, which was supposedly found in a sausage by one of his friends from Budapest. József Mucsi, together with his wife from Mezökovácsháza⁴⁸, was spreading news according to which Jews were calling children into secret cellars where they killed them. A local teacher, wife of Béla Sommer Iglói, told children to avoid the Jews, because they would cut off their heads.⁴⁹ According to P. Kende, certain Oszkár Bethlen informed that new anti-Jewish mottos were spreading like: “*Away with the Jews! Long live Auschwitz!*”⁵⁰ A certain trafficker József Rusznyák was arrested in Csanádpalota, because he said that Jew citizens kill Christian children. He swore he saw the heads of children in the cellar which belonged to a Jew. The same András Orosz spread a rumour according to which a certain Jew merchant sent a Christian girl to his friend with an envelope. In a letter, there was a message: “I send you one small delicate creature.” That girl, the “delicate creature”, was to be killed by this man, but the letter fell into the hands of the girl's mother, and the act of murder was avoided.⁵¹

J. Pelle mentioned the fact that anti-Semitic outcries were reported from Mezőberényi, Hajdúhadház, Kiszombor, Karcag and Szentes. Most of the participants were farmers with little political interest, who wanted to protect their properties that previously belonged to the Jews. They were not interested in killing Jews, but only wanted to frighten them and oust them from the villages. The investigation agencies were trying to show this as a conspiracy to eliminate political enemies. The Communist Party charged the Farmers Party for starting the social unrest.⁵²

The events in Miskolc were caused by the bad financial situation and the inflation of the pengő. The rich people and illegal merchants (“*feketézők*”) were accused of being responsible for these things. New mottos started to appear like: “*Death to the illegals! Hang the speculators!*” Jews were usually suspected to be the speculators according to prejudice prevailing at that time. The Hungarian people

1945. More can be found in: Jana Šišjaková, “*Prípád Topolčany*”. *Protižidovský pogrom (nielen) z pohľadu dobových dokumentov* [“The case of Topolčany”. Anti-Jewish pogrom (not only) according to contemporary documents.], in: *Acta historica Neosoliensia*, nr. 10/2007, Banská Bystrica, 2007, p. 232-240. News regarding the killings of Christian children by the Jews appeared only sporadic in Slovakia compared to the extent in Hungary and Poland.

⁴⁸ The author J. Pelle identified his name as József Muti (not Mucsi).

⁴⁹ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 74-75.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵² Róbert Szabó, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

were starving and the Jews were supported by the organization "Joint", which gave them food, clothing and sometimes chocolate and cocoa.⁵³ In Miskolc people were truly suffering from hunger, but the Jews were doing well. According to contemporary news, the Jews were careless because they were sitting in coffee shops in good clothes, exercising illegal trade. The people became outraged and stopped pitying them and from then on the Jews were seen as the enemies.⁵⁴

On the 21st of July 1946, there was a meeting of workers from northern Hungary in Miskolc, where Mátyás Rákoci had a speech. He defended the value of the new forint, which was supposed to become used in ten days. Speculations with the forint were to be severely punished. Between the 30th of July and 1st of August 1946, the workers organized several manifestations aimed against illegal merchants (often identified as Jews) that resulted in anti-Semitic pogroms and the death of two people. According to the "Szabad Nép" from the 28th of July, two people were captured: Sándor Rejtő, owner of the *Flórián* mill, was interned for illegal trade with flour, and Ernő Jungreis was interned as the operating manager. People were convinced that they illegally sold flour was made from imported grain. On the 30th of July, the workers from Diósgyőr who did not receive payment for some time, protested against illegal merchants and illegal grain trade. They expressed support for the new forint as well. The workers marched towards Miskolc and accidentally met Jungreis and Rejtő who were just being transported to the internment camp. The demonstrators subsequently escorted S. Rejtő and E. Jungreis to the town hall in Miskolc. Under the influence of a few radicals, the demonstrators started a civil disorder. S. Rejtő was beaten, but saved by policemen and Soviet soldiers who escorted him to the hospital. He was lucky because the demonstrators thought he was already dead. However, E. Jungreis was beaten to death. The police arrested several attackers. Artúr Fogarasi, who was the investigator and was of Jewish descent, was charged for beating two suspects of the attack. Following this, new protests started the next day. The angry mob then took over the police station and destroyed it. The results were mass arrests. Fogarasi was also attacked and the next day he died because of his wounds.⁵⁵ As it was clear that Rejtő survived, the workers of the Iron Works in Miskolc created a team which was charged with the elimination of Rejtő. The team was threatening to kill the head physician if he does not "take care" of this Jew (meaning that he should kill him in hospital). The People's Court judge, Pál Ágost, was later successful in saving Rejtő by transferring him to the hospital in Budapest. According to J. Pelle, the anti-Semitic unrest continued in Miskolc up

⁵³ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 74-75.

⁵⁴ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, p. 198-199.

⁵⁵ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 201.

until the 1st of August 1946.⁵⁶ On the 4th of August, József Révai, a prominent member of the Communist Party, wrote an article entitled *Párizsés Miskolc* [Paris and Miskolc] in which he described these attacks as anti-Jewish pogroms.⁵⁷

The Hungarian Communist Party started a campaign for the defence of the forint in July 1946 in the city of Mátészalka. The local police built some gallows for illegal merchants in the trade district. The merchants themselves were controlled more often, as it was stated in the local newspapers. There were some arrests which included the Jews: Gyula Erlich, a potato merchant, and Ábrahám Kaufmann, a shoemaker.⁵⁸

The flashpoint of the anti-Semitic manifestations in Makó was the burning of the Jewish synagogue in Deák Street on the 31st of May 1946. The synagogue was reopened with two additional chapels only in 1945. In Hungary, this incident was compared to the one in Kunmadaras. The Hungarian newspaper “Világosság” wrote that the responsibility lay with a “hidden centre” that organized the pogrom. Spilled petroleum caused the fire. The alleged perpetrators were students of a school and the police arrested some of them. According to the newspaper “Szegedi Népszava”, the leaders of the local Jewish community Zoltán Markovics, Pinkász Stuhl and József Weinberger did not accuse anybody specifically regarding the fire. However, they did not deny the fact that the local students and teachers were anti-Semitic. The newspaper “Haladás” brought up the information that the Jews themselves might have burned the synagogue and did not call the fire-fighters so that they have enough time to kill Christian children. Despite the fact that the situation in Makó was tense, the police was not able to find the culprits and only two Jewish representatives were charged; for that reason, the Jews wanted to leave the city. Conforming to the charges, the representatives did not allow the cleaning maid to put out the candles after the prayer. The results of all this was that the fire in the synagogue was deliberately started. One possibility was that it was aimed at “wounding” political enemies of the Hungarian Communist Party. According to J. Pelle this opinion was supported by the place where the fire started, the “accidental” presence of students, but this was only speculation.⁵⁹ P. Kende presented a different case. On the 14th of August 1946, a few anti-Semitic pamphlets were spreading in the Heves County. The police investigation showed that the author was Sándor Inotai, a notary from Budapest. People responsible for spreading the pamphlets were: Lajos Gál, Miklós Gál (teacher), Dr. Elemér

⁵⁶ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁵⁷ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁵⁸ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, s. s. 121.

Szabó (physician), János Endrész (county notary). They stated that they only wanted to harm the Communist Party during the investigation.⁶⁰

From the previous information it is clear that the best place for the rebirth of anti-Semitism was the smaller towns, especially in north-eastern Hungary. These notions were spreading mainly from Budapest, where most Jews returned from the concentration camps. In Budapest however, the Jews were not so severely persecuted and charged for alleged crimes.⁶¹ The years 1945 – 1948 represented fear and insecurity. The Jews did not react unanimously to these situations. A part of the Hungarian Jews (approximately 40,000) was not able to adapt to the post-war situation at home because they hardly coped with memories of dead relatives and with the knowledge that their denunciators or deportation guards live unpunished. But they also struggled with the hostility of the society. They rather emigrated to Palestine or other western-European or overseas countries. After 1945 Hungary allowed free emigration and creation of Zionist organizations. The other part of the Jews remained in Hungary, where they wanted to continue their previous lives. They accepted their double Hungarian – Jewish identity, but most of them wanted to be assimilated. They used various strategies, like the membership in the Communist party, workers movements and the separation from their Jewish heritage. Hungarian Zionism found itself in a curious situation. From the 37 000 Zionists, around 12 000 were members of the Communist Party and several more thousands were members of other political parties.⁶²

The year 1947 was a peaceful one for the Jewish religious organizations, as Hungary accepted the law for their equalization. The president of the republic, Zoltán Tildy, named representatives for the Jewish state fund for renewal (*Országos Zsidó Hely reállítási Alap*). The *World Jewish congress (Zsidó Világkongresszus)* welcomed the new Hungarian representation. P. Kende stated

⁶⁰ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁶¹ In comparison in Bratislava was a great anti-Jewish manifestation during the 1st Slovak partisan rally, which was taking place at the same time as the 2nd annual celebrations of the Slovak national uprising in august 1946. Look in: Ivica Bumová, *Protižidovské výtržnosti v Bratislave v historickom kontexte (august 1946)* [Anti-Jewish manifestations in Bratislava (august 1946)], in: *Pamäť národa*, vol. III, 2007, nr. 3, p. 11-27; Michal Šmigel', *Protižidovské výtržnosti v Bratislave v rokoch 1946 a 1948 (v kontexte povojnových prejavov antisemitizmu na Slovensku)* [Anti-Jewish manifestations in Bratislava during 1946 and 1948 (In the context of post-war anti-Semitism in Slovakia)], in: *Fenomén Bratislava*, (ed. by M. Medvecký), Bratislava, 2011, p. 251-273.

⁶² János Gyurgyák, *op. cit.*, pp. 582, 585-586.

that between 1946 up until the half of 1948, 4,000 Hungarian Jews emigrated to Palestine and the same number to other countries. After some time, the economic situation in Hungary improved and so did the social one. The newspapers did not mention the “Jewish question” anymore. The open anti-Semitic attacks transformed into “hidden anti-Semitism”. The last small anti-Jewish attacks happened in the countryside during 1946 – 1947 and were aimed against higher representatives. The newspapers did not mention their possible Jewish ancestry. These attacks were not described as anti-Semitic ones, but rather as fascist ones.⁶³

The Hungarian Communist Party consolidated its power from 1948 onwards. The party dealt with the Hungarian political opposition and started political processes even against its own members. The first condemned members had to be Jews of course, namely András Szalay and Tibor Szőnyi. According to P. Kende mainly because the Hungarian population would not feel that “Jewish functionaries are killing non-Jewish citizens.”⁶⁴

In 1948 there was an anti-Semitic event in Szegvár. Viktor Klein, the owner of a clothes shop, allegedly killed Mancsi Kovalcsik, a young 24-year old woman. She was last seen leaving her grandparents' house for a hairdresser. Many people claimed to have seen her entering Klein's shop. Rumours started to spread the following day about a ritualistic Jewish murder. Later, the girl's bicycle was found near the church, in the neighbouring town of Mindszent. Her body was found five days later in the river Tisza. The pathologist discovered that she was already dead when she was thrown into the river. The investigation was supposed to prove the charges of ritualistic murder.⁶⁵ It was led by Antal Fazekas, who believed the charges against the Jews and was persecuting the family of Viktor Klein.

Hungary cancelled the right for free emigration to Palestine in March 1948. For some time, it was possible to move there illegally through Bratislava and Vienna.⁶⁶ Later, in November 1949, according to the Hungarian – Israeli agreement, it was again possible to legally move to Israel by following a strict quota.⁶⁷ In 1948, the state nationalized the private economic sector. The process of nationalization included all companies employing more than 100 people. One year later, even smaller businesses employing more than ten people were

⁶³ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 82. The author shows the fact, that the Jews in Hungary were printing their own newspaper *Új Élet (New life)*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶⁵ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, p. 253-255.

⁶⁶ Regarding illegal emigration of Hungarian Jews through Slovakia into Austria during 1948 – 1949 look in: Anton Baláž, *Transparty nádeje* [Transports of hope], Bratislava, 2010, p. 118-136.

⁶⁷ Péter Kende, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

nationalized. Because of this process, the small entrepreneurs, industrialists and merchants lost their properties.⁶⁸ In 1948 Hungary signed an agreement with the Jewish religious community stipulating that they will not be persecuted and may follow their religious needs. Since 1949, this agreement was included in the Hungarian Constitution.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the life of the Hungarian Jews was still complicated by prejudice and stereotypes. A better interpersonal relation existed in villages with non-Hungarian populations like in Tótkomlós (Slovak: Komlós). This fact was expressed in the work of István G. Benedek, the descendant of the Jews who were living in Tótkomlós. According to him this was caused by the minority status of the Slovaks in the region.⁷⁰

In his study *A szembenézés kudarca* [Failed confrontation], Áron Monori pointed out the opinions of István Bibó⁷¹ that anti-Semitism in Hungary after 1945 had a different character than the so-called institutional anti-Semitism of the Horthy's regime. From 1945 onwards, the hate against the Jews was plebeian; it came from "the people". The causes were various, but the main ones were economic and social (for example people who were living in former Jewish homes, were afraid to lose them), so new anti-Semitic call words were created: "More of them returned, than went away."⁷² The year 1945 symbolised freedom for the Jews, but meant military occupation and Soviet domination. The Jews were seeing the Soviets as liberators and saviours from certain death and fascism; therefore, they adopted the new situation more readily regarding the Soviets. The most reliable people in terms of finding and sentencing fascists and collaborators were the Jews, because they had the biggest interest in finding those people.

According to Hungarian authors, the "Jewish question" in Slovakia was similar to the Hungarian one. As they stated, the main differences were in the numbers of the Jews who survived the concentration camps and returned, and in the numbers of pogrom victims. However, both countries suffered less Jewish victims than Poland. János Pelle considered that the post-war anti-Semitism came to Hungary from Slovakia, where it was prevalent since autumn 1945 and

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92-93.

⁶⁹ *Templomból istálló, és a kommunizmus 'zsidó üldözöttei'* [From Temple to Stable, and Communism 'Jewish Persecutions'], in: http://www.hazankert.com/200702_templpm.html [Accessed in 10.09.2010].

⁷⁰ István Gábor Benedek, *A komlósi tóra*, Békéscsaba [The hops Torah], 2003, p. 15.

⁷¹ In his publication *A zsidó kérdés Magyarországon 1944 után* [The Jewish question in Hungary after 1944].

⁷² Áron Monori, *A szembenézés kudarca* [Failed confrontation], in: <http://www.beszelo.c3.hu/04/0708/10monori.htm> [Accessed in 03.10.2010].

gradually it “infected” a considerable part of the population.⁷³ The “Haladás” newspaper from Budapest was dealing with anti-Semitism in Slovakia in the article written by Béla Zsolt: *Szlovák pogromnaptár I-II*. [The Slovak pogrom calendar I-II]. The author believed that the anti-Semitism in Slovakia was also influenced anti-Hungarian notions, because several slogans started to appear for example in Prešov (“*Hungarians belong behind the Danube and Jews into the Danube or Palestine*”) or in Bratislava (“*Beat the Jew and chase the Hungarian*”). The newspaper stated that the Slovaks were blaming the Hungarians for the pogrom in Komárno. In Nové Zámky the local Jewish community was supposedly forced to blame the Hungarians for the persecutions. The article was emphasizing the biggest “Slovak” massacre, which happened in Kolbasov (in north-eastern Slovakia) in December 1945, which left eleven dead. This was supposedly caused by “the supporters of Stepan Bandera” – the Ukrainian anti-communist nationalists.⁷⁴ However, the author was putting emphasis on the “Slovak” dimension of the situation so he mentioned that “members of the Hlinka Guards” also took part.⁷⁵ In our opinion the allegations of the Hungarian press regarding the “Slovak” dimension or influence regarding anti-Semitism in post-war Hungary are only constructs without any reasoning.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

In spite of the fact that post-war anti-Semitism in Middle-Eastern Europe had similarities in various countries, it is clear that the specific social, economic, political, and cultural influences were different in each of these countries. Historical facts show us the deep backwardness and prejudice of the Hungarian population living in the countryside and in the “weakest” areas of Hungary. Further factors contributing to post-war anti-Semitism were: the state supported anti-Semitism that was strong in Hungary since the 1920s after the rise of the Horthy's regime, people's anti-Semitism with its roots in the years of the monarchy, and the situation of forming the post-war communist movement in

⁷³ Compare: Michal Šmigel', Jana Šišjaková, *op. cit.*, p. 197-217.

⁷⁴ Look in: Michal Šmigel', *Vraždy židov a komunistov na severovýchodnom Slovensku v roku 1945: Kolbasovská tragédia* [The murders of Jews and communists in north-eastern Slovakia during 1945: The tragedy of Kolbasov], in: “Acta historica Neosoliensia”, nr. 10/2007, Banská Bystrica, p. 217-231.

⁷⁵ János Pelle, *op. cit.*, p. 253-255.

⁷⁶ Hungarian post-war anti-Semitism culminated in May and June 1946, in Slovakia during late July – early August 1946. Michal Šmigel', *Protižidovské výtržnosti v Bratislave...*, p. 251-273.

Hungary (especially the high percentage of Jewish people in leading positions of the Communist Party, administration, police and judiciary).

In the 1950s the religious persecution of the Jews continued as a unifying anti-religious campaign of the communists. This was followed by the destruction of their cultural landmarks, especially cemeteries and small synagogues, or sometimes the synagogues were just used as the warehouses.⁷⁷ New wave of anti-Semitic notions arose after the well-known "pre-mortal" campaign of Stalin aimed against Jewish doctors and Zionism, which also influenced the satellite countries. The leader of the communists, Mátyás Rákosi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his own colleagues to the "security forces". After Stalin's death, two politicians had to leave the "leading four" (Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas, Révai) of the Communist regime in Hungary: Farkas and Révai. The Soviet comrades saw as a problem their Jewish origin in the "country with deep roots of anti-Semitism".⁷⁸ It is certain that these circumstances have led to new persecutions and pogroms in Mátészalka in April 1954 and Hajdúnánás in 1956. Because of this, many members of the Jewish community decided to leave Hungary during the 1956 revolution.

⁷⁷István Gábor Benedek, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁷⁸Richard Pražák, *op. cit.*, p. 341.