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Ivan ŠUŠA – Anton HRUBOŇ

The Holocaust as a Topic of Italian and Slovak Memoir Literature After 1945¹

Slovak and Italian society underwent a dynamic historical evolution between 1939 and 1945, the consequences of which they still have to face. Even three-quarters of a century after the end of World War II, the “era of the raised right arms” is still part of their identity. While for one part of society, personal or mediated experience is the foundation of a firm anti-fascist identity, for the other one it embodies the “golden age” and the symbolic “Olympus of national history”. Fascist Italy and Slovakia were part of the same geopolitical zone during the war: they were members of the fascist-Axis Pact, the Anti-Comintern Pact, and in the flow of time, nearing the end of the war, both countries were becoming an increasingly more submissive vassal of Adolf Hitler’s Germany.

Despite some specificities in the nature of political regimes, both Italy under Benito Mussolini’s and Slovakia under Jozef Tiso’s leadership, as members of the fascist “New Europe”, became the co-perpetrators of the Holocaust which was in both countries a direct consequence of a state-supported politics of anti-Semitism, introducing the racial laws into practice. Although the path to the destruction of Jewish communities in their pre-war shape in both states took different trajectories with different developments and diametrically different results (in Italy more than 7,000 of the total pre-war number of about 47,000 Jews² were murdered during the Holocaust, in Slovakia up to about 70,000 out of 90,000 Jews³).

From the end of the war until the present, the moral burden extends to both Slovak and Italian society. Despite the fact that Mussolini’s *Partito Nazionale Fascista*’s regime did not start deportations of Italian Jews to extermination camps until the period of the fully Nazi-controlled puppet Italian Social Republic

1 The article was supported by following research grants: VEGA No. 1/0185/20 *Mýtus a kult Slovenského štátu v historicko-spoločenskom diskurze po roku 1945 (zrod, vývojové tendencie a odrazy v politickej kultúre)*, and VEGA No. 1/0214/20 *Slovensko-talianske medziliterárne vzťahy po roku 1989 v kontexte prekonávania recepčnej tradície a vzniku nových recepčných modelov*.

2 Liliana Picciotto in *Il libro della memoria: Gli Ebrei deportati dall’Italia* states that out of 46,656 Jews living in Italy, according to statistics at the time of the adoption of racial laws in 1938, 6,806 were deported to extermination camps, 322 were murdered in Italy, and 900 – 1,000 went missing. Only 837 people returned from the camps. Cit. according to CLIFFORD, Rebecca. *Commemorating the Holocaust. The Dilemmas of Remembrance in France and Italy*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 73.

3 KAMENEC, Ivan. *Po stopách tragédie*. Bratislava : Archa, 1991, p. 7.

(*Repubblica Sociale Italiana*), Italy, together with Germany as a main “influencer”, was responsible for making up the *Neuordnung* of fascist Europe, which did not anticipate the existence of Jews in a long-term vision. Even though a relatively high number of Italian Jews survived the war compared to other countries, Italian fascists (and Italian society as such) could not have avoided the justified remorse for “putting one’s hand to the work”.

Until nowadays, the reflection of one another’s fascist past – the Italian fascist past in Slovakia, the Slovak fascist past in Italy and their mutual relations – has been the domain of only a few works, analysing in particular its political and diplomatic dimensions.⁴ Even fewer articles have addressed cultural overlaps and Italian-Slovak interactions in the field of memoir literature dealing with the Holocaust after 1945, which is the subject of this paper.

The Holocaust as an Object of Research and Terminological Questions of its Literary Reflection

European historiography dealing with the phenomenon of the Shoah has been developing in different socio-political, literary-cultural, and historical

4 The interactions between Italian and Slovak fascisms have so far been reflected mainly by historian Borut Klabjan, e.g., in the article KLABJAN, Borut. Taliansko a Slovensko vo vojne. Vplyv talianskeho fašizmu na Slovensku pred druhou svetovou vojnou a počas nej. In *Historický časopis*, 2006, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 451-469 and co-author of this article Anton Hruboň, e.g., in the monograph HRUBOŇ, Anton. *Blaho vlasti – zákon najvyšší“ Národná obec fašistická a Slovensko (1926 – 1938)*. Ružomberok : Historia nostra, 2015, 205 p., or in the articles: HRUBOŇ, Anton. Fašistický mýtus znovuzrodenia v kontexte ideológie Národnej obce fašistickej a Rodobraný. In *Český časopis historický*, 2015, Vol. 113, No. 2, p. 454-487; HRUBOŇ, Anton. Taliansky fašizmus ako modernizačný prvok slovenskej politickej scény v medzivojnovom a vojnovom období. In *Vojnová kronika*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 3-13. Jaroslava Rogulová focused on the topic before him (e.g., ROGUĽOVÁ, Jaroslava. Salónny fašizmus Slovenskej národnej strany v prvej medzivojnovnej dekáde. In OSYKOVÁ, Linda et al. *Ideológia naprieč hranicami. Myšlienkové transfery v Európe a na Slovensku v 1. polovici 20. storočia*. Bratislava : VEDA, 2015, p. 69-86), by Miloslav Čaplovič (ČAPLOVIČ, Miloslav. *Branné organizácie v Československu 1918 – 1938 (so zreteľom na Slovensko)*. Bratislava : Ministerstvo obrany Slovenskej republiky, 2001, p. 83-98), or Ivan Kamenec (KAMENEC, Ivan. Vývoj a špecifické črty slovenského fašizmu v medzivojnovom období. In *Sborník k problematice dějin imperialism V. Díl 2*. Praha : Ústav československých a světových dějin ČSAV, 1978, p. 281-297; KAMENEC, Ivan. Prenikanie fašistickej ideológie a organizácií Národnej obce fašistickej do slovenského politického života v medzivojnovom období. In *Historické štúdie XXIV*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1980, p. 43-72.). We shall also mention the monograph KUBÍK, Petr. *Slovensko-talianske vzťahy 1939 – 1945*. Bratislava : Ústav pamäti národa, 2010, 356 p., which, however, is to a large extent only a chronical and not an analytical contribution on bilateral relations during the wartime period.

Only a minimum of authors in Slovakia have focused on the issue of Italian fascism. From the older generation, it was mainly Herta Tkadlečková, the author of several studies and an unpublished habilitation thesis *Talianska fašistická strana a jej politická ideológia* (more detailed on Tkadlečková’s merit as historian see: NIŽNANSKÝ, Eduard. Herta Tkadlečková ako historička fašizmu. In *Acta historica Posoniensia XV. Historické štúdie k životnému jubileu Herty Tkadlečkovej*. Bratislava : Katedra všeobecných dejín FF UK, 2011, p. 154-163). Currently, political scientist Patrizia Prando Šušová is the most active Slovak-based scholar researching the topics related to Italian fascism (e.g., PRANDO ŠUŠOVÁ, Patrizia – ŠUŠA, Ivan. *Persecuzione del diverso e propaganda razziale : il caso italiano nella „Difesa della razza“*. Brno : Tribun EU, 2013, 267 p.; or PRANDO ŠUŠOVÁ, Patrizia. Fašistický antisemitizmus v talianskom časopise *Obrana rasy* (1938-1943). In *Politické vedy*, 2018, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 95-116). Jakub Drábik also focused on Italian fascism in the most detailed synthesis on fascism published in the Slovak language so far (DRÁBIK, Jakub. *Fašizmus*. Bratislava : Premedia, 2019, 648 p.).

milieus since 1945, often confined within the national frameworks stressing their specifics in the politics of the Holocaust, or in certain ideological or worldview contexts. Nevertheless, we can select works that can be considered crucial for global context of the Holocaust history. In the post-war period, these are, for example, the works by Léon Poliakov, Gerald Reitlinger, and Hannah Arendt, followed by Raul Hilberg in the 1960s. Over the past half-century, the research of genocide of the Jews has expanded considerably, systematised and internationalized itself to such an extent that it is possible to speak about the subdiscipline of the *Holocaust Studies*.

The Holocaust historian Alessandra Chiappano divides the genesis of academic writing on the Holocaust into three categories:

1. the beginnings of the publication of works on the subject of the Holocaust (i.e., the period after the end of World War II);
2. the 1960s associated with the publication of Hilberg's monumental work *The Destruction of the European Jews*;
3. the 1970s and 1980s and the resulting currents of intentionalists and functionalists in Germany arguing about the (non-)uniqueness of the Holocaust as a genocidal phenomenon in modern history.

In her categorisation, Chiappano also names the contemporary academic wave since the 1990s onwards as "authors of the new generation". The historically and sociologically oriented works of the authors highlighted by Alessandra Chiappano (e.g., Götz Aly, Susanne Heim, Ulrich Herbert, etc.)⁵ complement a number of fundamental publications which, thanks to their impact, have significantly influenced discussions on various dimensions of the Holocaust.

In their background stood the literary aspect, which, in general, was not as popular among authors as the social aspects of the Shoah, for example. Within the spectre of literature authentically capturing the trauma of Jews interned in concentration camps, their ordinary life, customs, attitudes, and opinions, the researchers might find memoirs – or rather memoir literature on the border between fiction and non-fiction literature – a particularly valuable source.

This article primarily focuses on memoir literature depicting the environment of concentration camps, often called "camp literature". However, it should be noted that this term is not broadly accepted, and the authors argue it, too. A separate expression, i.e., the noun "camp" is semantically impoverished in the Slovak language, and it is necessary to combine it with an adjective expressing its specification – e.g., *concentration, labour, pioneer, scout* camp (and so on). Missing semantic motivation can thus lead to misinterpretation and vagueness of the term. In our article, we resort to the term "memoir literature from the environment of concentration camps". We acknowledge that in terms of economising the lexicon, it is a long descriptive name. However, exact naming is justified in this case (and not only in this case). Of course, we do not want to

5 For more details, see CHIAPPANO, Alessandra. *La Shoah*. Milano : Edizioni Unicopli, 2008, 77 p.

imply that the use of the term “camp literature” is incorrect, but it does not contain sufficient *informative value*. As we found out during research in Italy, the terminology differs (especially the designation of this type of literature, or genre anchoring), e.g., depending on the authors, scientific disciplines, subject of research, etc. In literary terminology, the terms “concentration literature” (i.e., literature written during internment in a concentration camp) and “memoir literature” (works written after liberation) often differ. However, we consider this division to be inappropriate, as some works were created during the forced stay in the camps and were not published until the post-war period.

Franca Mariano, Francesco Guerre and Raul Mordenti ponder about the terms “memoir writings” (in Italian: *la scrittura della memoria*) and “commemorative writings” or “literature of testimony” (in Italian: *la scrittura della testimonianza*) in their *Le forma letterarie nella storia*. Works by Giorgi Bassani and Natalia Ginsburg are assigned to the first group, while works by Primo Levi to the second one. Marina Beer, in her chapter *Memoria cronaca e storia* published in *Storia generale della letteratura italiana*, understands the terms “memoir literature” (in Italian: *letteratura di memoria*) and “testimony literature” (in Italian: *letteratura di testimonianza*) as synonyms to Slovak analogy “memoir literature” (in Slovak: *spomienková literatúra*).⁶ In the Slovak literary conceptual instrumentation, various terminological differences appear as well. For instance, there is a difference between the terms “memories” (*pamäti*) and “memoirs” (*memoáre*) on the one hand, and “recollections” (*spomienky*) on the other. However, other authors understand them synonymously.

We can also register differences in the inclusion of individual genres in memoir literature. For example, diaries and correspondence are also included in the forms of the memoir literature. Basically, for the first time in the Czechoslovak context, the Czech literary scholar Ivo Pospíšil managed to define memoirs, an autobiography, an autobiographical novel, a chronicle, and a chronicle novel on a genealogical basis. According to him, what differentiates memoirs from a chronicle novel is the *emphasis on unobstructed personal vision*. Yet, unlike an autobiographical novel, they move more from the personality of the narrator to the environment (i.e., through the narrator we get to the environment in which he acts).⁷ In this article, we draw on the above mentioned Pospíšil's division but take the perception of other theoreticians into consideration.

Key Works on the Holocaust of Memorial Origin in Italy and Slovakia

Although the motivation for publishing memoirs often varies, the main reason why people (mostly professional writers) who have survived the

6 BEER, Marina. *Memoria, cronaca e storia: Forme della memoria e della testimonianza*. In BORSELLINO, Nino – PEDULLA, Walter (eds.). *Storia generale della letteratura italiana, vol. XI. Il Novecento: Le forme del realismo*. Milano : Federico Motta Editore, 2001, p. 595-691.

7 See: POSPÍŠIL, Ivo. *Labyrint kroniky*. Brno : Blok, 1986.

genocide choose to publish their story is to leave a memory and a testimony of the truth for present and future generations.⁸ However, these efforts have not always met with a positive response from readers and publishers. The reasons for (not) publishing memoirs in the period shortly after 1945 may be divided into two main groups. The first was a kind of readers' "tiredness" of the horrors they experienced first-hand. After the war, they sought an "escape" from this reality, not a revival and a reminder of traumatizing experiences. The second one was, undoubtedly, an ideological aspect in the countries of the emerging Eastern Bloc⁹, including Czechoslovakia. Although some of the memoirs in (Czecho-)Slovak milieu were published shortly after the war, e.g., Alfréd Wetzler's *Oswiecim – hrobka štyroch miliónov ľudí* (1945), Margita Schwalbová's *Vyhasnuté oči* (1948), or later Júlia Škodová's *Tri roky bez mena* (1962), memoirs with the topic of the Holocaust stood in the shadow of ideologized historiography for decades due to the deteriorating Soviet-Israeli bilateral relations after 1948. This resulted into a wave of the so-called Soviet anti-Semitism, manifested in the political practice of the satellite states of the USSR by politically motivated trials with a clear anti-Jewish undertone, occurring not only in Czechoslovakia (trials against the so-called "Zionists")¹⁰ but in other Soviet-dominated countries as well. A secondary product of this Eastern bloc atmosphere was the "side-lining" of the Holocaust memory. To this day, the most fundamental monograph on the history of the Holocaust in Slovakia *Po stopách tragédie* by Ivan Kamenec could have been published in 1991, just after the fall of the Iron Curtain, although its core text – Kamenec's dissertation – was ready as early as 1971.¹¹ Despite the overall low number of memoirs regarding the ordinary life and suffering in concentration and labour camps, the memoirs published during the communist rule gained a valuable and important primacy: they somehow substituted historiography which did not pay adequate attention to the Shoah. Ivan Kamenec reflects on the pre-1989 situation as follows: "*The art, mainly literary, dramatic and film production, complemented by often factual, dry, seldom fictionalized, accounts written by survivors and rescued – as well as eye-witnesses or saviours – did more for knowledge of the Holocaust during the communist regime than professional history and science in general. For a long time, these sources, especially memoirs, art literature, film, and drama replaced*

8 Compare: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Memoáre s témou šoa vo vzťahu k autorskej motivácii. In KAMENČÍK, Marián – POSPÍŠIL, Ivo – NEMCOVÁ, Emília (eds.). *Typológia slovenských a českých textov na prelome 20. a 21. storočia z hľadiska lingvistiky, štylistiky, poetika a genológie*. Trnava : Filozofická fakulta UCM, 2011, p. 41-52.

9 In more detail, see: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Fenomén socializmu v memoároch slovenských židovských autorov. In POSPÍŠIL, Ivan (ed.). *Česko-slovenské reflexe:1968*. Brno : Ústav slavistiky Filozofickej fakulty Masarykovej univerzity, 2009, p. 201-211.

10 For example, see: ŠROMOVSKÝ, Martin. *Židovská otázka na Slovensku (1945 – 1953). Kniha II: Antisemitizmus a antisionizmus v Československu (1948 – 1953)*. Banská Bystrica : Belianum, 2015, 185 p.

11 TKADLEČKOVÁ, Herta. O Ivanovi Kamencovi – celkom neoficiálne. In IVANIČKOVÁ, Edita et al. *Z dejín demokratických a totalitných režimov na Slovensku a v Československu v 20. storočí. Historik Ivan Kamenec 70-ročný*. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV – Prodama, 2008, p. 14.

professional historiography and influenced society's awareness of the Holocaust during the forty years of the communist regime."¹²

Based on the socio-political conditions in which the memoir production had been elaborated, it is lucid that the fundamental difference between Italian and Slovak literature on the Holocaust is the quantitative difference of published memoirs. In *Bibliografia della deportazione nei campi*, Italian bibliographer Teo Ducci states that between 1945 and 1997 a total of 623 works were published in Italy. Most of them are of domestic Italian provenance, some are the translations (especially from French, English, Polish or Hungarian), translated mainly by Italian authors of Jewish origin, or with introductory or concluding comments by well-known Jewish authors, or written by non-Italian authors who (have) lived in Italy.¹³ Unlike Ducci's, the latest *Bibliografia per la storia degli ebrei* edited by Schlomo Shimonshon and Manuela Consonni, covering the 1996 – 2005 period, does not contain a brief annotation of works, genre classification, and does not capture the Holocaust period only. It is divided according to the subject (e.g., deportations, etc.), the names of Jewish authors and places that in some way relate to Jewish-related topics. The bibliography builds on the previous three works, published in collaboration with the Diaspora Research Institute at the University of Tel Aviv. The first volume focuses on the years 1964 – 1972 (published in 1982), the second on the years 1974 – 1985 (published in 1988), and the third one on a period between 1986 – 1995 (published in 1997). The edition was completed by the already mentioned newest Simonshon's and Consonni's bibliography.

Alessandra Chiappano divides the works on the Shoah in a much more detailed and systematic way, although she does not always grasp the contextual and interliterary contexts. The criteria she used to categorize the authors and works into a genre-thematic framework also seem rather questionable. If we help ourselves with the conceptual instrument of the Slovak literary comparator Dionýz Ďurišin, Chiappano uses a rather "additive principle", in combination with the selection (value) principle and concept. It lines up individual works into sections chronologically and linearly (according to the year of publication). Chiappano's classification understands the topic of the Holocaust in an interliterary (Italian-Polish and, generally, Italian-international) and interdisciplinary context (history of Jews, ghettos, camps, memoirs, didactics). On the other hand, some points in her classification of literature, emphasise an exclusively historical aspect. Of course, the classification criteria can be set in various ways, but we must evaluate Chiappano's asset positively, especially for her efforts to grasp the topic cross-disciplinary (combining history, literature, and didactics) and for a relatively unbiased selection of authors and works.

12 KAMENEC, Ivan. Fenomén holokaustu v historiografii, v umeleckej tvorbe a vo vedomí slovenskej spoločnosti. In VRZGULOVÁ, Monika – RICHTEROVÁ, Daniela (eds.). *Holokaust ako historický a morálny problém v minulosti a súčasnosti. Súčasný stav výskumu* Bratislava : Dokumentačné stredisko holokaustu – Úrad vlády SR, 2008, p. 58.

13 See: DUCCI, Teo. *Bibliografia della deportazione nei campi nazisti*. Milano : Mursia, 1997.

By the way, within the abovementioned classification, Chiappano also offers works that have (or have not) been translated into Italian from other languages. Although this fact may confuse the reader because at certain places he loses the track of origin, nationality, or citizenship of authors (which is sometimes a problem in terms of understanding the facts). On the other hand, it is contextual and emphasises the already mentioned transnational nature of this phenomenon. In memoiristic literature, Chiappano (similarly to Marina Beer) correctly and logically defines authors into the “first wave”, especially Primo Levi, Liana Milla and Giuliana Tedeschi. In the context of Primo Levi, she does not forget the well-known (relatively unknown in Slovakia) Elie Wiesel and his work *La notte*, published in Italian in 1980, concerning the deportation of Hungarian Jews and his memories of the camps Auschwitz-Birkenau, Monowitz, and Buchenwald. Six years later, Liana Milla’s memoirs *Il fumo di Birkenau* were published, describing life in the women’s part of Birkenau. Like Milla, Giuliana Tedeschi published her memories of the camp in 1988, noting double suffering: the suffering of a woman and the pain of a female member of the Jewish community. The group of so-called “women’s memoirs” also includes the memoirs by Liliana Segre (2005) and the book of conversations between Goti Bauer, Liliana Segre, and Giuliana Tedeschi, published by Daniela Padoan the same year.

A specific group of memoirs that Chiappano also notices are the memories of the members of the so-called *Sonderkommando*, collected by Carl Saletti. The book by Shloma Venezia (2007), which authentically portrays this topic, deserves attention as well. Marina Cattaruzzo, Marcello Flores, Simon Levis-Sullam, and Enzo Traverso in the already mentioned five-volume publication *Storia della Shoah* also consider a similar historiographical context with overlaps into the sociological and literary-cultural framework. Marina Beer commemorates the memoirs of Aldo Carpi, Emanuel Manuel, Pino Levi Cavaglione, Aldo Zargani, Angela Din, Giacomo Debenedetti, and Giorgio Bassani (in the case of the latter, however, it should be noted that the author leans towards fiction and many of his works are not of a memoir nature, although they incorporate some autobiographical elements). In addition to the other names which we have already mentioned in this article, Beer also emphasises novel processing by Giacomo Limentani. Besides that, the bibliography of published works on the subject of the Shoah is offered by Michele Nani in the referenced collection of the authors’ tandem Francesco Soverina – Luigi Cortesi¹⁴.

In his analysis of historiography on the subject of the Holocaust in Slovakia after 1989, the Slovak historian Marian Karcol identifies works of both professional and memorial provenance. In addition to the cited Kamenec’s “opus magnum” *Po stopách tragédie* (1991), Karcol considers a collection of documents *Vatikán a Slovenská republika* (1992) edited by Ivan Kamenec, Vilém Prečan and Stanislav

14 For details, see: SOVERINA, Francesco – CORTESI, Luigi. *Olocausto/Olocausti. Lo sterminio e la memoria*. Roma : Odradek, 2003.

Škovránek, alongside Ladislav Hubenák's *Riešenie židovskej otázky na Slovensku* or the eight-volume edition *Holokaust na Slovensku*, important. Karcol sets apart the memoirs and divides them into the memories of members of the Jewish community and of members of the majority (mainly Christian population).

Although this selection may seem dysfunctional or even unnecessary with such a small number of memoirs published in Slovakia as we have mentioned, it is of undeniable importance in understanding the differences in approach to the topic, its evaluation, and the overall social context. In the first group, Karcol includes the memoirs of Alfred Wetzler, Margita Schwalbová, Júlia Škodová (which we have already mentioned) and Hilda Hrabovecká *Ruka s vytetovaným číslom* (1998), the memoirs of Rabbi Armin Frieder *Z denníka jedného rabína* (1993), Bedřich Róna *Holokaust po slovensky* (2000), Hela Volanská/Chaja Friedmanová-Wolfowicz *Stretnutia v lesoch* (1948), Akiva Nir *Chodníčky v ohnivom kruhu* (1994) and Juraj Špitzer *Nechcel som byť žid* and *Svitá, až keď je celkom tma* (1994 and 1996, respectively).¹⁵ In this context, we consider it necessary to add other works to the list that he does not mention or were published after the publication of his study. These are mainly the memoirs of Leo Kohút *Tu bola kedysi ulica*¹⁶, Levi Gil *Osudy jednej rodiny*, Kathryn Winter¹⁷ *Katarína*, Iboja Wandall-Holm¹⁸ *Zbohom, storočie*, Max Stern *Známka môjho života* or Blanka Berger *Najväčší biznis môjho života*. The specificity of these memories, with the exception of Leo Kohút, is that they were first published abroad and entered the Slovak literary scene as translations.

As for the second group, Karcol mainly mentions the publications of political representatives of the Slovak State, such as Karol Sidor, Gejza Medrický, etc. As historian Jozef Jablonický points out, the absolute majority of these publications are written in an apologetic tone in relation to the political regime of the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, ruling in Slovakia from 1938 to 1945. All these memoirs, more or less, relativize the Slovak government's share in the Holocaust and instead of dealing with genocidal policies, focus on defending the alleged merits of the government and President Jozef Tiso in "saving the nation" during the difficult times of war.¹⁹

Newly published memoirs do not divert from this course. Memories of the former Minister of Interior and the head commander of the fascist Hlinka

15 For more, see: KARCOL, Marian. Slovenská historiografia o židovskej otázke na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945. In *Acta historica Neosoliensia*, Tomus 9, 2006, p. 277-292.

16 See: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Fenomén násilia v memoároch Lea Kohúta. In URBANEC, Jirí (ed.). *Moje oči musely vidieť...Téma a motívy násilí v české a slovenské literatúre*. Opava : Slezská univerzita, 2009, p. 158-166.

17 See: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Šoa v memoárovej tvorbe slovenských židovských autoriek po roku 1989. In *Acta Facultatis Humanisticae*. Banská Bystrica : Fakulta humanitných vied Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2010, p. 220-227.

18 See: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Dve tváre Európy Wandall-Holmovej (K memoárovej próze židovskej autorky o Osvienčime. In KOVÁČOVÁ, Marta et al. *Literatúra v kontexte slovenskej kultúry 20. storočia*. Banská Bystrica : Fakulta humanitných vied Univerzity Mateja Bela, 2009, p. 38-48.

19 Compare: JABLONICKÝ, Jozef. Spomienky a životopisy ľudáckych predstaviteľov publikované po roku 1989. In *Historický časopis*, 1995, Vol. 43, No. 2, p. 355-362.

Guard, Alexander Mach, published in 2008 by Matica slovenská under the title *Z ďalekých ciest* stand out among them. The commemorative fragments of a person who, together with President Jozef Tiso and Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka, was primarily responsible for the implementation of the Holocaust policy in Slovakia, are characterised by the so-called “selective compassion”. Similarly, as in front of the National Court in 1946 – 1947 trial, Mach, on the one hand, acknowledges his key role in the tragedy of Slovak Jews, but on the other hand, remarks that he “wanted to export Jews from Slovakia, but not to murder them”. He documents his dichotomous self-justification in several pieces of his memoirs. After the ultimate regret for his wartime policy, he, more or less, comes to a conclusion that Jews were largely to blame for their fate for never getting used to co-living with the Christian majority, they caused its social misery and, according to Mach, a large part of them supported the Hungarian irredenta throughout the 1920s – 1940s.²⁰ In addition to their controversial content, fragments from Mach’s recollections, as well as other works by former politicians of the Slovak State, suffer from an editorial handicap. At the request of relatives, the editing of these works and expert comments on them were prepared by historians ideologically connected with the regime of the wartime Slovak State, who fled to exile after World War II and worked closely with former HSĽS representatives. For this reason, the accompanying commentary to the written recollections is absolutely uncritical or completely absent. Their intention is not to provide the public with authentic sources in order to critically reflect on the dark past, but to legendarize and morally rehabilitate personalities collaborating with Nazi Germany. As Jozef Jablonický adds, they were often assisted in their efforts after 1989 by “unqualified amateurs” – supporters of the HSĽS who returned from exile – and by their home sympathisers who supported – morally and often also financially – the printing of publications of a memoir and historiographical nature.²¹

However, as Karcol also points out, published monographs played a key role in Slovakia in terms of the Holocaust awareness after 1989: apart from Kamenec’s “classic” *Po stopách tragédie*, especially the monographs *Židia v Slovenskom štáte v rokoch 1939–1945* by Ladislav Lipscher, *Židovská komunita na Slovensku medzi československou parlamentnou demokraciou a slovenským štátom v stredoeurópskom kontexte*, and Eduard Nižňanský’s *Politika antisemitizmu a holokaust na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945* among them. Furthermore, it is possible to define published monothematic academic proceedings, biographies, numerous studies and works focused on the research of local or regional Jewish personalities, or on the research of the Jewish minority in a particular city or municipality.

20 MACH, Alexander. *Z ďalekých ciest*. Martin : Matica slovenská, 2008, p. 199, 206.

21 JABLONICKÝ, Jozef. *Glosy o historiografii SNP. Zneužívanie a falšovanie dejín SNP*. Bratislava : NVK International, 1994, p. 144-145.

In this context, Eduard Nižňanský provides the following structure of the Slovak production on the Holocaust of the “post-November” period:

- a) document collections,
- b) memoirs (from the position of victims and politicians of the then Slovak State),
- c) general works,
- d) revisionist works and their foreign responses,
- e) works on local aggressors,
- f) the social background of the Holocaust,
- g) Aryanisations and deportations,
- h) works on local Jewish communities during the Holocaust,
- i) works on forced labour and Jewish labour camps,
- j) Jews and the Slovak National Uprising,
- k) works concerning testimonies of Holocaust victims (the so-called oral history),
- l) the post-war history of Jews in Slovakia and the consequences of the Holocaust.²²

As can be seen from Nižňanský’s scheme above, memoirs are considered a part of historiography and valuable material for academics. Despite some extensive editions, which we have already mentioned, the number of published memoirs in Slovakia is still relatively low compared to the hundreds of testimonies published in other countries. There are several reasons for this – from *social* (the Holocaust period is gone forever, society has to deal with other problems than history), through *personal* (many Jewish survivors of the Shoah do not want to talk about their traumatic experiences), *qualitative* (most authors are not professional writers, hence they are reluctant to publish memoirs), to *pragmatic* (financial and other reasons).

A specific case, which is currently a highly frequented approach in worldwide research, is the so-called *oral history*. We do not consider it a special genre, but a *method* used within the memoir genre. It is a set of authentic statements, collected by one or more authors. The author(s) record(s) experiences, opinions and moods on predetermined topics or questions, which, however, often (under the influence of memories, contexts, sub-questions, etc.) change the direction of the statement – respondents inadvertently deviate or supplement their opinions in communication, thus fulfilling their overall statement in the oral form of the characteristics of unprepared and spontaneous communication. Emphasis is placed on subjective experience (emotionality) and personal attitudes to the presented topic, while the factuality often stays in the background (respondents at that time usually did not have specific facts about what was actually happening around them). We thus move from the relationship of the so-called “big” histories to “small” (“human”) histories (*macro-history* versus *micro-history*).

22 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Politika antisemitizmu a holokaust na Slovensku v rokoch 1939 – 1945*. Banská Bystrica : Múzeum SNP, 2016, p. 15-26.

It is true that the question of the sociological sample of respondents is always disputable (e.g., their selection; and, also, the fact that many do not want to participate in the project for various reasons, or that data and opinions are often difficult to be verified, etc.). Nevertheless, they offer an authentic testimony, often in confrontation with the opinions of other respondents, thereby, after transcribing from oral to written form, creating an opportunity for the reader to form an overall picture of a given topic or event. In Slovakia, an extensive oral history project was implemented from 1995 to 1997 within the Milan Šimečka Foundation entitled *Osudy tých, ktorí prežili holocaust*, the outcome of which was a publication entitled *Videli sme holocaust* by Peter Salner, Monika Vrzgulová, Ivan Kamenec, Ingrid Antalová, Peter Kozmon, and Eva Salnerová. In the Italian context, *Il libro della Shoah italiana*, in which Marcello Pezzetti gathered a hundred testimonies of Italian Jews, focusing on topics such as childhood, studies, anti-Jewish laws, German occupation, arrests and deportations, can be seen as analogous and is genre-comparable with, for example, Salner's work *Prežili holocaust*. The most notable information arising from the answers of interviewees is the specific destiny of the individual, as well as the broader context – namely the moods, feelings, and perceptions of the addressed Jews.

The Shoah and the Slovak-Italian Interliterary Context

Within the framework of interliterary relations, the relations between the two national literatures on the Holocaust – Italian and Slovak – have manifested themselves in the form of publishing reports, mentions, literary-critical and literary-theoretical studies and reflections. They mainly focused on informing the Slovak recipient about Italian literature, while the opposite was rare. In the works by Slovak authors, the topic of war and partisan resistance was a reflection on the traumas experienced during World War II (in the 1950s “enriched” by the topic of communist collectivisation and so-called “industrialised” literature), but the phenomenon of the Holocaust remained almost untouched by the Slovak memoir and scholar literature. Slovak Italian studies expert Pavol Koprda points out that a notion expressing the timelessness, or rather “eternal values” of resistance ideals in literature is being formed in Slovakia. On the contrary, Italian literature had been developing in the conditions of free authors' expression and creativity which had stimulated the quest for new topics and directions and had a direct connection with the creative boundaries of authors in a democratic state. According to Koprda, there was, among other things, an obvious “*difference between the Slovak overexposed historicism and the vehemently forward-moving experiment in Italy. This discrepancy was an obstacle to intense relationship at the time.*”²³

23 KOPRDA, Pavol. *Talianska literatúra v slovenskej kultúre v rokoch 1890 – 1980*. Bratislava : Ústav svetovej literatúry Slovenskej akadémie vied, 1994, p. 115.

The reserved attitude of the communist regime Czechoslovakia towards the Jewish minority caused the marginalisation and displacement of the Holocaust phenomenon from the original literature and translation.²⁴ In this regard, Slovak literary scientist Viliam Marčok states that “until 1989, Jewish-Slovak authors did not dare to irritate the Slovak conscience, not even with their recollections of suffering in concentration camps, or in mountains [...]. The pressure of concern must have been enormous. Indirect evidence is, for example, the fact that Leopold Lahola chose the character of a gypsy-Roma (short story *Fontetieri*) to portray the problems of racial discrimination in insurgent units, when in exile and only in 1956. Even Špitzer postponed the publication of his memoirs on life in the concentration camps, which he often and vividly talked about, just after November 1989.”²⁵

Juraj Špitzer, who quotes a well-known Italian Holocaust survivor Primo Levi in his work *Svitá, až keď je celkom tma*, can be considered one of few specific intersections between the Slovak and Italian memoir literature on the subject of the Holocaust. From what is mentioned above, it is lucid that Špitzer read Levi's memories (the work *I sommersi e i salvati* was translated into Czech in 1996, other Levi's works were published after Špitzer's death). By the way, these two essayistic works – *Svitá, až keď je celkom tma* and *Potopení a zachránění* – are related in terms of genre and content, and we can assume that Levi inspired Špitzer to some extent.

A notable contact between Slovak and Italian literature are the so-called “mediated contacts”, where, as the name itself suggests, another factor appears: *the mediator*. In our case, the most important mediator is the translation, which can significantly affect the interliterary process. Memoir prose, dedicated to the memories of the trauma experienced in the concentration camps, has been very extensive in the Italian post-war literature also due to Italy's democratic nature after 1945. However, its more significant development in Italy (unlike in Czechoslovakia) was blocked by a non-ideological factor – reluctance, or even refusal of readers as well as publishers to publish war experiences and drama of the Holocaust. In the post-war euphoria, they preferred titles full of vitality and celebrations of a new life. It is therefore not surprising, for instance, that the key work of Primo Levi *Se questo è un uomo*, which later made the author famous across the world (in English *If This is a Man*), was refused to be published by the Einaudi publishing house in 1946.

Levi's first published work containing the memoir elements was *Rapporto sull'organizzazione igienico sanitaria del campo di concentramento per ebrei di Monowitz. Auschwitz, Alta Slesia*, published in 1946 in an academic journal *Minerva Medica*. Although it is essentially an academic article, Levi states that his aim was to better identify the mistakes we have been frequently experiencing

24 See: ŠUŠA, Ivan. Šoa v medziliterárnom (slovensko-talianskom) kontexte na podklade memoárovej prózy. In BILOVESKÝ, Vladimír – HARDOŠOVÁ, Mária – DOBRÍK, Zdenko (eds.). *Preklad a tlmočenie 8*. Banská Bystrica : Fakulta humanitných vied Univerzity Mateja, 2009, p. 107-113.

25 MARČOK, Viliam. Židovskí spisovatelia v slovenskej literatúre (2. časť). In *Slovenské pohľady*, 1998, Vol. 84, No. 3, p. 80.

as witnesses and victims, too. The work he wrote with his fellow prisoner from the camp, Leonardo De Benedetti, anticipated, especially thematically and compositionally, the publication of another, this time much better-known, *Se questo é un uomo*.

The result of Levi's further production are works that were awarded major Italian literary prizes and translated into dozens of languages. His book *Se questo é un uomo* was published in Slovak translation *Je to človek?* forty-three years after, *La tregua* (in Slovak *Prímerie*) thirty-nine years after, and *I sommersi e i salvati* (in Slovak *Potopení a zachránení*) seventeen years after their original publication dates. In Slovak they were published gradually in 2001, 2002 and 2003, translated by Terézia Gašparíková and František Hruška.²⁶ In 2003, the work *Hovory s Primo Levim* was published in Czech language with comments by Marco Belpoliti. This work also found its way into the Slovak milieu. One of the newest translations (again into Czech) is also a book of memories of the Greek origin Italian Jew Shlomo Venezia on concentration camps and the murderous *Sonderkommando* called *V pekle plynových komor* (2010).

It is a pity that some of the memoirs also depicting Slovak milieu or characters are unknown in Slovakia. For example, the Slovak reader has not yet learned about Liana Milla's book *Il fumo di Birkenau*, in which the author presents the superior of the camp coming from Slovakia. Moreover, Giuliana Tedeschi depicts Jewish women from Slovakia in her memoirs. In the introduction, she emphasises that it was in the first transports from Slovakia in the spring of 1942 that women were already present, and she further states that Italians were mixed into various blocks, which were occupied by Polish, Slovak and Greek women. Tedeschi also mentions the dialogue between two young girls – Slovak and Yugoslav – and their heart-touching hopes for an end of the war.

So far, the most important contact between the two literatures, apart from the already mentioned translations of Italian authors into Slovak, is undoubtedly the translation of the work by the Jewish author born in Slovakia, Rudolf Vrba (Walter Rosenberg), who, together with fellow Slovak prisoner Alfréd Wetzler (Jozef Lánik), were the first to escape from Auschwitz-Birkenau and to leave a detailed report of ongoing genocide of Jews in spring 1944. Their report was translated from English to Italian by Stefania De Franco and published in 2008 under the title *I protocolli di Auschwitz*. In his commentary annexed in the book, Alberto Melloni thoroughly appreciates Vrba's merits and courage, taking into account the overall historical context of the time.

In 1998, Slovak translator Dagmar Sabolová published a list of works of Italian provenance which at that time were still just waiting to be translated into Slovak in the journal *Revue svetovej literatúry*.²⁷ After more than twenty

26 See: ŠUŠA, Ivan – PRANDO, Patrizia. Le traduzioni di Primo Levi nel contesto interletterario slovacco-italiano. In Busetto, Luca (ed.). *La traduzione come strumento di interazione culturale e linguistica*. Milan : Qu.A.S.A.R., 2008, p. 295-315.

27 See: SABOLOVÁ, Dagmar. Čo nám chýba z talianskej literatúry v slovenskom preklade. In *Revue svetovej literatúry*, 1998, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 149-159.

years, we can symbolically “add” the books by Liana Milla and Giuliani Tedeschi on the one hand, and Juraj Špitzer and Leo Kohút on the other, to Sabolová’s list. Both literatures would thus be enriched with works leaving a timeless message. The mentioned memoirs are a reconstruction of the so-called “minor human histories”, but in their mutual synergies, they form a mosaic contributing to the fact that one of the greatest tragedies and genocides which has ever happened in Italy and Slovakia should never be forgotten.

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Preparation of Anti-Jewish Legislation in the Autonomous Slovakia (6 October 1938 – 14 March 1939)

This study focuses on the progression of the Slovak political representation after the declaration of autonomy on 6 October 1938 in the field of “solving the Jewish question”, which began to play an important role on the domestic scene before the establishment of the Slovak State. The study examines the interference with the civil and private property rights of Jews with the aim to exclude them from or restrict them in various areas of life. It was mainly the preparation of legal norms in the spheres of economics and property, or in the field of employment of the Jewish population. Representatives of the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party paid special attention to the elimination of the significant representation of Jews in the liberal professions, like notary, judge, lawyer, doctor or pharmacist. For this purpose, the Government used older and “revolutionary” legal norms, but often did not hesitate to violate applicable laws and risk serious domestic or foreign policy consequences of its decisions. The study also focuses on the activities of the Committee for the Solution of the Jewish Question in Slovakia and the draft government regulations and the law on “solving the Jewish question” submitted on the eve of the establishment of an independent state by Minister Ferdinand Ďurčanský.

After 6 October 1938, Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party (*Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana*, abbreviated to HSĽS) took over the leading role in Slovakia and immediately acceded to the gradual abolition of the democratic practice that was being applied within the conditions of the first Czechoslovak Republic. The HSĽS, which considered itself to be the only authorised representative of the Slovaks, called for the unity of the nation and the simplification of the political scene, while the result of its efforts was a surprisingly rapid transformation of the political system.¹ This was made possible by the interplay of domestic and

1 On the formation of the new regime, see e.g., NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Dvojnásobné zmocnenie sa vlády na Slovensku v rokoch 1938/39 v porovnaní s „Machtergreifung“ v rokoch 1933/34 v Nemecku. In GLETTLER, Monika – LIPTÁK, Ľubomír – MÍŠKOVÁ, Alena. *Nacionálno-socialistický systém vlády. Ríšska župa Sudety. Protektorát Čechy a Morava. Slovensko*. Bratislava : Academic Electronic Press, 2002, p. 185-211; BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián. *Od autonómie k vzniku Slovenského štátu*. Bratislava : Prodama s. r. o., 2008; GEBHART, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan. *Druhá republika 1938 – 1939: svár demokracie a totality v politickém, spoločenském a kulturním živote*. Praha – Litomyšl : Paseka, 2004; RATAJ, Jan. *O autoritativní národní stát: ideologické proměny české politiky v druhé republice 1938 – 1939*. Praha : Karolinum, 1997; ZUDOVÁ-LEŠLKOVÁ, Zlatica. *Slovensko v druhej republike (autonomistické snahy slovenskej politickej reprezentácie)*. In RATAJ, Jan – ZUDOVÁ-LEŠLKOVÁ, Zlatica – KLIMEK, Antonín. *Z druhej republiky. 1, 2*. Praha : Historický ústav Armády České republiky – Památník odboje, 1993; FIAMOVÁ, Martina. *Formovanie a činnosť ústredných orgánov štátnej správy na autonómnom Slovensku (október 1938 – marec 1939)*. Bratislava : VEDA, 2020.

foreign policy circumstances which changed the atmosphere in society and created conditions for restricting the rights of population groups described as hostile – Czechs, Jews, or opponents from among the Slovaks. The removal of “foreign elements” from society was presented by the domestic government as a solution to many problems in Slovakia at the time.²

The prerequisite for a successful takeover was the dissolution of the political opposition, “inappropriate” representatives of the local authorities or security forces (gendarmérie, army, etc.), on which the HSĽS could not rely while building the regime. The political parties, which the government considered as non-permissible, had to be banned and dissolved in a short time. Such fate befell the Communist Party, the Czechoslovak and German Social Democratic Workers’ Party, the Jewish Party and the United Socialist-Zionist Workers’ Party. At the same time, the elimination of political opponents took place in another form – by unification with HSĽS. Personnel exchange or even dissolution concerned the municipal representative bodies, business associations and elected bodies in many other institutions. Sports associations, too, did not avoid dissolution and were replaced by Hlinka Guard (HG). The newly formed guard provided the ruling power with support in the process of subordinating the political space, as well as temporary self-appointed pressure authorities on the state administration, national committees. The supervisory committees, associations and chambers carried out great cleansing among officials who belonged to the previously opposing political parties. Their places were taken by new members, or organisations came under the supervision of government commissioners. Government commissioners were appointed in all the areas that were initially not under the control of the autonomous government (financial institutions, printing and industrial enterprises, agricultural property, pharmacies, etc.).³

The promotion of an authoritarian political system in Slovakia could not be done without interfering with the civil and private property rights and freedoms of individuals. In an effort to carry out its intentions, the government used the existing or the “revolutionary” legal norms, or laws in force in Czechoslovakia in the event of a state military emergency, but sometimes did not hesitate to ignore the laws in the interest of its goals, including the constitution.⁴ From among the key norms, for instance, Constitutional Act passed on 15 December 1938 No. 330/1938 Coll. on the authorisation to amend the constitutional charter and constitutional laws of the Czecho-Slovak Republic and on the

2 ZAVACKÁ, Katarína. Právo na ceste Slovenska od demokracie k totalite. (Slovensko od 6. októbra do 14. marca 1939). In *Česko-slovenská historická ročenka*, 2006, p. 341-382; ZAVACKÁ, Katarína. Právo v rukách štátostrany od 6. októbra 1938 do roku 1945. In FIAMOVÁ, Martina – HLAVINKA, Ján – SCHVARC, Michal. *Slovenský štát 1939 – 1945: predstavy a realita*. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV, 2014, p. 165-174.

3 In more detail, e.g., PODOLEC, Ondrej. Postavenie obecnej samosprávy na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945. In *Historický časopis*, 2003, Vol. 51, No. 4, p. 647-668; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Zásahy do samosprávnych orgánov (najmä mestských a obecných zastupiteľstiev a rád) v období autonómie Slovenska 1938/39. In *Studia historica Nitriensia*, 2001, Vol. 9, No. 121-152.

4 ZAVACKÁ, Právo na ceste..., p. 359-365; ZAVACKÁ, Právo v rukách štátostrany..., p. 165-174.

extraordinary regulatory power. If necessary (given the new conditions), it enabled the president to issue new texts of the Constitution and constitutional laws by decrees with the power of constitutional law, or to take the measures for which constitutional law was required. This did not apply in the case of the Constitutional Act on the autonomy of the Slovak Land, unless the Slovak Land Assembly gave its explicit consent. At the same time, the law empowered the Government, with the consent of the president, to issue regulations with the power of law.⁵ Within the legislative competence of the Slovak Land Assembly, only the autonomous government of the Slovak Land could issue government regulations.⁶

As already mentioned, there were only two options for political parties in Slovakia after 6 October 1938. Parties that were unacceptable to the autonomous government were banned and dissolved in 1939. As early as 9 October 1938, Minister of Justice, Social Welfare and Health of the autonomous government Ferdinand Ďurčanský, on behalf of the Prime Minister, instructed the Land Office (*Krajinský úrad*, KÚ) to stop the activities of the Communist Party in Slovakia. At the same time, the publication and dissemination of the communist press was banned in the territory of the Slovak Land.⁷ By the decision of Minister of the Interior Jozef Tiso, the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party⁸ and the *Deutsche sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* ended up similarly. At the end of November, the Land Office issued regulations on the cessation and prohibition of the political activities of the Jewish Party and the United Socialist-Zionist Workers' Party P. S. A. G. F. Z. "in the interest of maintaining public order and security in Slovakia".⁹ In the end, the Agrarians, National Socialists, the Traders, the People's Party members, the National Unification and the National Fascist Community chose the path of unification with the HSĽS "voluntarily", resulting in the HSĽS-Party of the Slovak National Unity (*HSĽS – Strana slovenskej národnej jednoty*, HSĽS-SSNJ). The Slovak National Party, which initially refused to join the HSĽS, reconsidered its position after the authorities stopped its activities on 24 November 1938 "in the interest of maintaining unity in the nation, public order and security".

5 With the exception of the amendment to the Constitution, according to § 4 of the Constitutional Act No. 299/1938 Coll., the regulations required the consent of the majority of the Slovak government.

6 Available at <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1935ns/se/stenprot/127schuz/s127001.htm>; *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení*, 1938, No. 330/1938; MATES, Pavel. *Mezi Mnichovem a Berlínem. Státoprávní problémy druhé republiky. Spisy právnícké fakulty Masarykovy univerzity v Brně. Řada teoretická*. 106. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 1992, p. 101-108.

7 Slovák, 1938, Vol. 20, No. 231, p. 1.

8 Slovenský národný archív (abbreviated to SNA), fond (abbreviated to f.) National Court (hereinafter NS), TnĽud 6/46, box. 56, p. 63.

9 See ŠUCHOVÁ, Xénia - RUMAN, Ladislav - NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Dokumenty o likvidácii politických strán v období autonómie Slovenska na príklade československej sociálnej demokracie. In *Studia historica Nitriensia*, 1997, Vol. 6, p. 217-246; BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián. Príčiny a podmienky vzniku nekomunistickej protilúdackej opozície (6. 10. 1938 – 14. 3. 1939). In *Zborník Múzea SNP*, 1989, Vol. 14, p. 27-60. See, for example: LETZ, Róbert - MULÍK, Peter - BARTLOVÁ, Alena (eds.). *Slovenská ľudová strana v dejinách 1905 – 1945*. Martin : Matica slovenská, 2006.

Immediate dissolution of the parties in Slovakia in 1938 was not possible due to the lack of “applicable” legislation. The measure that would allow the Slovak government to accede to such a decision was, therefore, prepared by the Ministry of Interior (*Ministerstvo vnútra*, shortened to MV) of the Slovak Land in January 1939. The draft regulation on political parties allowed the creation of a new entity only with the permission of the Slovak autonomous government. However, this was an unnecessary step as this issue was amended at the same time by a national statute. Initially, the issue was addressed by the Government Regulation No. 355/1938 Coll. on political parties valid only in the Czech and Moravian-Silesian Lands, but as early as 13 January 1939 the central Government extended its scope to the Slovak Land by the Regulation No. 4/1939 Coll. I.¹⁰ Both Jewish parties, the Communist Party, the Czechoslovak and German Social Democratic Parties were subsequently dissolved by a government decision and Ministry of the Interior Decree No. 25/1939 Coll. of Reg. “as the activities of these parties threatened the public interest”.¹¹ In this regard, the MV requested all other central authorities to promptly remove the members of dissolved parties within their departments.¹²

The “solution” of the activities of Jews in the economic and property sphere of Slovakia was in the centre of focus of the government’s power. In December 1938, Alexander Mach, the head of the Propaganda Office at the time, voiced the HSĽS plans with Jewish property: “*We have in our policy to radically address the Jewish question in a Christian spirit. The Legislative Assembly will issue a law in this regard. But in vain would they issue the law that we take this and that into the property of the nation, when we burn the property before it is released, when we plunder that business, when we steal those valuables. Whoever breaks a Jewish window destroys property of the Slovak Land*”.¹³

One of the first economic measures that affected mainly orthodox Jewish businessmen was the Government Regulation of late October 1938 on Sunday rest. It made it impossible for them to do business two days a week because all self-employed related work had to “rest” on Sunday, at the latest from 6 AM, for 24 hours. An exception could be granted by the Land Office upon a special request.¹⁴ This measure was preceded by an initiative of Slovak Ministry of Social Welfare (in agreement with the Ministry of Economy) that the authorities pay due attention to non-compliance with the “Sunday rest” (according to the Act of 1891 and the Government Regulation of 1931). However, the measure also affected non-Jewish businessmen, so in December the Ministry of Economy

10 SNA, f. Úrad predsedníctva vlády (abbreviated to ÚPV), box 1, No. 483/1939.

11 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Holokaust na Slovensku. Obdobie autonómie (6. 10. 1938 – 14. 3. 1939). Dokumenty. 1.* Bratislava : Nadácia Milana Šimečku – Židovská náboženská obec, 2001, document No. 24, p. 65-66.

12 SNA, f. Ministerstvo vnútra (hereinafter MV), box 24, No. 426/1939; ZAVACKÁ, Právo na ceste..., p. 351.

13 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku...*, document No. 40, p. 95-96.

14 Úradné noviny, 1938, No. 13/1938.

(*Ministerstvo hospodárstva*, MH) presented a generously designed proposal for exemptions from the “Sunday rest of self-employed work” which was to replace the original Government Regulation No. 13/1938 Coll. of Reg. The Ministry prepared the proposal after consultations with the Central Association of Slovak Industrialists, the Industrial Inspectorate in Bratislava, the Business Boards and with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bratislava. It justified its move by the general need for exceptions “*in order to avoid a complete stagnation in the course of life on Sundays and also to avoid major national economic damage, especially where technical reasons/industrial enterprises/or the public interest require it*”. In the end, the government did not discuss the proposal because the Minister withdrew it from the programme.¹⁵ The December outline was to be revised regarding the number of exemptions. The Ministry did so and sent the amended proposal back to the Prime Minister in February.¹⁶ The regulation was finally approved in March 1939 and published in the Slovak Code as a Government Regulation on exceptions to the Sunday rest of self-employed work No. 25.

In December 1938, the KÚ issued a regulation on temporary restrictions in self-employed business – protection against unfair elements, which was based on the Government Regulation No. 265/38 Coll. of Reg. on temporary restrictions in self-employed and other gainful business, while its provisions were to be strictly applied against “the ill-wishers to the Slovak nation”, especially the Jewish religion and nationality. The district offices were to examine all self-employed businesses established after 1 March 1938, as well as all new applications. In the case of the existing self-employed businesses of the “above-mentioned members”, it was ordered to take every opportunity to take away the business. “*The sad experience with the Jewish elements engaging in harmful trade... forces the authorities to proceed with all rigor, even when granting food and feed purchase permits... This edict is of a strictly confidential nature; therefore, the business officers should be notified of the directives contained therein only orally and in a confidential manner.*”¹⁷

Some drafts of the measures contained significant violations of applicable laws or could have serious national or international political consequences, which in many cases caused discrepancies between government departments (Prague and Bratislava, or only between the Slovak ones). Such was, for example, the draft Government Regulation on the listing of assets in the ceded territory¹⁸ and compensation for property damage of persons expelled by the Hungarian authorities created by the Ministry of Justice (*Ministerstvo pravosúdia*, hereinafter MP) (Appendix). The author did not hesitate to cut into the basic rights of some Czechoslovak citizens: “... *it is necessary to bear in mind the future of these refugees and to ensure for them at least what in the territory of Slovakia can be ensured, i.e. to take under an official restraint the property of Hungarian nationals, primarily*

15 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 4, No. 536/1938.

16 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 124, No. 629/1939.

17 SNA, f. Krajinský úrad (abbreviated to KÚ), box 231, No. 71000/1938.

18 The listing of property and receivables in the ceded territory was resolved by the Ministry of Economy decrees of 10 November and 29 November 1938.

the property of such people due to international restoration; but at last secondly, to provide them with the property of those Hungarians and Jews who are Slovak nationals, and to reach for this property for reasons of decency. Decency requires that when our impoverished Slovaks run from the occupied territory, they will be burdening the Slovak Land. This can only be avoided by giving them the existence from the property of the local Hungarians and Jews. Both of these population categories are to blame considerably for everything that has been happening to our Slovaks in the occupied territory personally, culturally and property-wise since the demarcation of the new borders”.¹⁹ The Ministry of Economy strongly opposed the confiscation of the property of its own citizens and unconditionally demanded that this point be omitted by arguing about the serious consequences of such a step on the economy, (e.g. Minister of Education Matúš Černák had no factual comments on the outline). The Ministry of Finance (*Ministerstvo financií*, MF) in Prague extensively explained the possible consequences of the submitted proposal to the Ministry of Justice: retaliatory measures of Hungary were threatening, where a far larger group of Czechs and Slovaks lived than Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, Hungary’s reluctance to take over part of the Czechoslovak national debt, fears of a negative reaction from abroad, especially England and the USA (“... that a connection between the actions of Hungarian official and non-official authorities in the occupied territory and the Jewish population in Czechoslovakia would hardly be considered probable”), complicating the state’s position in international trade and in negotiations on foreign credit, crippling economic life in Slovakia, etc. As far as interventions against the “Jewish race” were concerned, the MF only drew attention to the need to define a term which the Czechoslovak legal system did not yet know. Additionally, it is clear from the scope of the recommended changes that the MP did not manage the outline in terms of form. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí*, MZV) also pointed out that the damage caused by the proposed measures could be greater than the benefits. It is therefore not surprising that Minister Miloš Vančo eventually revoked the draft Government Regulation in January 1939.²⁰

Another example is the bill on adjustment of property relations of certain persons who intend to move out and on remediation in land transfers by the Ministry of Justice, which, however, did not hide its anti-Jewish focus at all. The proposal, submitted by the Ministry in February 1939, made it possible to “exchange into ownership” the leased real estate of Jews, both domestic and foreign nationals. The right to “exchange” (compensation) should have the non-Jewish landlords with domicile in the Slovak Land and, by mediation, refugees from the ceded territories. An interesting attempt is to define the category of Jew as a person who was born a Jew “regardless of whether he changed his religion himself or his parents”. According to the author of the proposal, it was not about affecting the current owners, but about “correcting the mistakes of

19 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 3, No. 63/1939.

20 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 3, No. 63/1939, No. 273/1939.

their ancestors, therefore, it was opted for an uncompromising stand, regardless of the current religion". The aim of the law was to return the land to its original owners and those who worked on it. *"The wrongdoings of the past need to be redressed in this regard. Farmers have lost their fathers' assets through merchantism and well-known innkeepers' policy in the villages of non-Slovak and non-Christian elements. Whole generations have been paying for the sins of their fathers and the sins of innkeepers...A Jew was not a landowner, he was not a compossessor, he did not work according to experience in Slovakia, on the land and he only got the shares by speculative buying. It is fair that the shares thus acquired be returned to the legal successors of the former landowners and compossessors. In doing so, the general sale value is paid, so it is not possible to speak of property damage..."* The submitter continued referring to the stereotypical perception of a Jew, who acquired the property of reckless Slovaks at auctions and by tricks. *"The outline is an iron necessity... that the land is returned to the farming people from the hands of traders, innkeepers, speculators or their descendants who have become bankers, lawyers, etc., and occupy other lucrative positions."* In the comment procedure, the proposal was subjected to extensive criticism by the central Ministries of Finance and Justice, as well as Foreign Affairs and National Defence. The Department of Justice has rightly paused over the fact why the Slovak ministry sends a proposal for a statement when it is to be accepted by the Slovak assembly, and therefore the central ministry is not competent to comment on that. However, the outline was so serious that it made an exception. Although there had been several legal norms passed in Czechoslovakia in the previous months that were "more-or-less in line with the constitutional principles" and also those that affected the Jewish community, but unlike with those, the MP's proposal was declaring a racist point of view quite openly. The Ministries' comments therefore aimed at the undisputed unconstitutionality of the proposal, its conflict with international law or possible negative foreign policy and international trade consequences. The bill was again characterized by vague wording, inaccurate terminology and weak stylistics. Not to mention that its name did not correspond with the content, as there was not a single mention of potential emigrants throughout the text. The Presidium of the Ministerial Council therefore called upon the Ministry to proceed with caution in order to not jeopardize exports. The Ministry of Justice considered it possible to only reformulate the outline without explicitly targeting Jews. The Department of Finance proposed to postpone the discussion about the proposal until the central state authorities took a final stand on the "Jewish problem" (which was to be addressed uniformly throughout the state) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also advised the plan to wait "until a more convenient time".²¹

Another discussed outline was the February draft Government Regulation on pre-emptive rights to real estate, sent to the Office of the President of the

21 Národní archiv České republiky (abbreviated to NA ČR), f. Predsedníctvo ministerskej rady (abbreviated to PMR), box 2095, sign. No. 401/1258; ZAVACKÁ, Právo na ceste..., p. 371-372.

Republic (*Kancelária president republiky*, KPR) without prior inter-ministerial proceedings or explanatory note, by which the Slovak Land reserved the priority right to all real estate in the territory of Slovakia with retroactive effect from 1 January 1939. Its aim was to prevent “trading” with real estates “*which is mostly carried out by dubious elements, especially Jews*”. The MP did not like the proposal and rejected it due to far-reaching interference with private property and interference with the free movement of property, as well as a serious impact on the domestic economy. For these purposes it rather recommended to use the Government Regulation No. 218/1938 Coll. on the temporary restriction of the alienation and leasing of certain types of real estate.²² The Government Department of Justice considered the new proposal unnecessary and feared that because of its radicality it would cause “*understandable displeasure to the entire population and may do more harm... than the intended benefit*”. According to the KPR, the Regulation would have a serious impact on economic conditions throughout the state and therefore asked the Chairman of the Assembly, M. Sokol, to justify the government’s motives for such step.²³ After receiving the justification, the KPR did not find the arguments convincing enough to justify its retroactivity. Eventually, the government replaced the proposal in February with a new Government Regulation No. 55/1939 Coll. on limiting the encumbrance of real estate, according to which the district authorities were to prevent the transfer of real estate into “foreign hands” and to do everything in their power to fall into the hands of Christians. If the acquirer or the organiser was not a Czechoslovak citizen, or despite his Czechoslovak nationality he was of Jewish nationality (religion), the district office had to reject the application.²⁴ Moreover, the MH came up with other anti-Jewish measures in the economic field.²⁵ Already at the beginning of November 1938, it made several recommendations for the government on how to proceed – e.g. regarding the conditions under which the authorities had to expel Jews of foreign nationality or to allow them permanent residence in cases when the economic importance of persons was crucial.²⁶

The effort to exclude Jewish participation from individual aspects of economic life can also be observed in the outline of the Regulation of the Slovak Government on compulsory bone collection or compulsory garbage collection which, among other things, aimed for a takeover of such businesses by Christians. At the beginning of March, the Slovak Ministry of Economy sent the KPR a draft Government Regulation banning the trade and production of Christian

22 The validity of the Government Regulation No. 218/1938 Coll. was extended by the Government Regulation No. 53/1939 Coll. of 23 February 1939.

23 SNA, f. Snem Slovenskej republiky (abbreviated to SSR), box 4, Comments of the Office of the President of the Republic.

24 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 124, No. 599/1939; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Židovská komunita na Slovensku medzi československou parlamentnou demokraciou a slovenským štátom v stredo európskom kontexte. Prešov: Universum 1999, p. 108.

25 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Holokaust na Slovensku..., document No. 35, p. 85-86.

26 SNA, f. KÚ, box 309, No. 70583/1938.

religious objects by non-Christians. Although the President's Office stated that the measure was unconstitutional, it also advised the Ministry on a clever way to achieve the goal in accordance with the constitutional charter.²⁷ With regard to the following events, the matter was resolved by the Slovak Government already in the conditions of an independent state by Government Decree No. 36/1939 Coll. of 30 March on prohibition of the production of Christian service and religious objects by non-Christians and on trading them.

However, the Jewish minority in Slovakia was not only significantly represented in economic life, but also in the liberal professions such as notary, judge, lawyer, doctor or pharmacist. As early as 18 October, the government enabled the Minister of Justice to relocate or remove from office a public notary at his own discretion within one year, which was appropriately utilized by F. Ďurčanský. He removed two notaries who were not "worthy of the trust" from office and relocated ten (with one exception) to areas ceded to Hungary a few days later. The possibility to appeal against dismissal and transfer had not been modified in any way.²⁸ Following the declaration of the Slovak State, the Government Regulation of 18 April 1939 on defining the term Jew and guidelines for restriction of the number of Jews practicing certain liberal professions prohibited Jews from working as public notaries.²⁹

The decision of the Ministry of Justice of 1 February 1939 was aimed against Jewish judges, according to which they should not be assigned a judicial agenda if they had to handle it as hearing judges. In February 1939, Minister Vančo in the Assembly's Committee on Budgets expressed his reluctance towards Jews and "foreign elements" in courts: *"As the legal solution to this issue is not yet ready and will not be possible in a short time, so I have disposed in that sense that the judges who are not Christians will not be assigned to work in such places where they deal with such legal entities, where they have a duty to teach witnesses about the sacrament, the importance of the oath in which they themselves possibly do not believe. I have arranged for these judges to be assigned to office work where they have nothing to do with legal entities."* Vančo was hinting at the missive from the main courts in Bratislava and Levoča, where he simultaneously asked for a list of the judges concerned.³⁰

In February 1939, according to the order of the KÚ, a register of Jewish owners of pharmacies and Jewish pharmacist employees had to be made. Except for personal data, the Office was also interested in their citizenship, nationality, religion and date of baptism, if they had converted. At the beginning of March, the President of the Slovak Land also ordered that the supply of medicines to

27 SNA, f. SSR, box 66, No. 63/1939.

28 Úradné noviny, 1938, No. 17/1938; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Holokaust na Slovensku..., document No. 32, p. 82; ZAVACKÁ, Katarína. Právne nástroje novej moci. Politické perzekúcie na Slovensku 1938 – 1939. In *Forum Historiae*, 2019, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 46-53. Available at http://www.forumhistoriae.sk/sites/default/files/04_pravne-nastroje-novej-moci-politicke-perzekucie-na-slovensku-1938-1939.pdf.

29 Slovenský zákonník, 1939, No. 63/1939.

30 SNA, f. SSR, box 3, Meeting of the Budget Committee of the Slovak Assembly on 8 February 1939; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Holokaust na Slovensku..., document No. 50, p. 109.

public land hospitals be regulated in such a way to exclude Jewish pharmacy owners from the process.³¹

The anti-Jewish motive can be traced in several legal norms prepared by the Slovak government at the time of autonomy, yet not all of them were implemented. Some did not show anti-Semitic elements at first glance, those are only clarified in the explanatory memorandum. For instance, the Government Regulation No. 91/1938 Coll. of the end of December on the temporary adjustment of the situation of employees of insurance companies transferring insurance in Slovakia. It was responding to the territorial changes by which insurance companies lost a large part of the agenda and had to realise the number of their employees. It enabled the dismissal of workers with the consent of the Government Commission even without the permission of the company's committees (which, according to the government, were "almost everywhere in the hands of Jewish Marxists"). The members of the Government Commission were appointed by the Minister of Interior. Any contracts or agreements which would guarantee the dismissed persons greater rights in the event of loss of employment (e.g., severance pay) were declared invalid. It is clear from the explanatory memorandum that the economic interests were not the only motives for the Regulation: *"Moreover, it is necessary to make a correction, especially within the leading positions where there are people who do not meet the current needs of Slovakia / Marxists, Jews / it is also necessary to ensure the necessary ratio of employed Slovaks to other nationalities..."*³²

On 25 November 1938, the Land Office issued a Regulation adjusting the employment of persons from the occupied territory who were employed after 1 May 1938. Their employers were obliged to report such persons to the district office and request permission to continue their employment. However, in order to obtain permission for "non-Aryan" employees, the district office had to seek the approval of the Land Office.³³ There were also other measures directed against the Jewish minority. The religious freedom of Jews was concerned in, e.g., the Regulation of the Land Office of 22 October 1938 on the prohibition of Eruv-wires³⁴, the Regulations of the Central Government No. 14/1939 Coll. I (supplementing the rules on the stay of foreigners if they were emigrants) and No. 15/1939 Coll. I (on the examination of the Czecho-Slovak citizenship of some persons). It was not only the Slovak representatives of the state who were interested in "solving the Jewish problem", but it was also presented by the Prime Minister Rudolf Beran in the Chamber of Deputies on 13 December: *"We too will address the Jewish issue. The attitude of the state to those Jews who have long been established in the Republic and who have a positive attitude towards*

31 SNA, f. Krajský úrad Krajský poradný zbor (hereinafter KÚ-A-KPZ), box 5, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Advisory Board of 9 March 1939.

32 SNA, f. ÚPV, box 4, No. 719/1938.

33 Each permit was supposed to be accompanied by the clause *"this permit can be revoked at any time without any reason given"*. Štátny archív v Nitre (abbreviated to ŠA v Nitre), f. Obecný notársky úrad Zlaté Moravce (abbreviated to ONÚ Zlaté Moravce), box 1, No. 105/38 pres.

34 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Židovská kominuta na Slovensku..., p. 20.

the needs of the state and its nations will not be hostile."³⁵ On 10 January 1939, the central government took note of the information that two special sub-committees had been set up within the existing committee for the study of the Jewish question. One of them (with the participation of the Minister of Trade, Finance and Agriculture) was to discuss the conditions of the property export permit for Jewish emigrants with the Slovak Minister Pavel Teplanský. The second one, in which the Minister of Interior and Minister Jiří Havelka worked, was to prepare a proposal with Karol Sidor to resolve the Jewish question in its entirety.³⁶ A few days later, the Presidium of the Ministerial Council in Prague determined the economic conditions under which Jewish persons could emigrate from the Republic.³⁷ The Slovak government, which established the Committee for the Solution of the Jewish Question in Slovakia on 23 January 1939, proceeded similarly. Its members were Minister K. Sidor, Minister of Economy Mikuláš Pružinský, Minister of Finance P. Teplanský, Minister of Transport and Public Works F. Ďurčanský, and advocate Julius Virsík. On 3 March, Ďurčanský submitted eight draft government regulations and a bill on "solving the Jewish question" to the individual ministries of the autonomous government. It was a bill on acquiring nationality and right of domicile in the territory of Slovakia (§ 3 of the bill contained a definition of a Jew based on the confessional principle), government regulations on partial adjustment of ownership and possession of land property in the Slovak Land, on the export of property from the Slovak territory, on the temporary adjustment and revision of roll of lawyers on the adjustment of medical practice, on the adjustment of certain business concessions of the self-employed persons, on partial adjustment of private employees and government regulation on exclusion of certain persons from the state, public and other services in the Slovak Land. At the same time, Minister Ďurčanský emphasized that *"in order to solve the Jewish problem, the necessary measures still need to be taken regarding pharmaceutical concessions, introducing stricter disciplinary procedures in bar associations, and making a proposal to demote all military officers and non-commissioned officers (including those in reserve) – Jews"*.³⁸

The bottom line of the bill outline on acquiring nationality and right of domicile in the territory of the Slovak Land was that only a non-Jewish person with an existing right to domicile in a municipality within the Slovak territory on the day when the law takes effect was entitled to a nationality. The term Jew included the list of people who were of the Israeli faith after 1 January 1920, or who were descendants of such a person; who were not of the Israeli faith after 1 January 1920 but pretended to be non-denominational and had at least one parent of the Israeli faith; or those who entered into marriage with such persons

35 Available online at <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1935ns/ps/stenprot/156schuz/s156003.htm>.

36 NA ČR, f. PMR, box 4146, Minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 10 January 1939.

37 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku...*, documents No. 42 and No. 43, p. 97-98.

38 *Ibid.*, document No. 45, p. 103-104; document No. 60, p. 130-150; ZAVACKÁ, *Právo na ceste...*, p. 370-371.

before the law took effect (as long as the marriage lasted). Persons who married a Jew after the effective date of the law (even if their marriage would later be legally separated) and those who lived with a Jew in an extramarital relation also fell under this term. According to the explanatory memorandum, when defining the term "Jew", *"the Christian principles were also taken into account, hence the date of 1 January 1920 is considered a milestone. Persons baptised before that date are considered to be Christians. It is based on the view that the Jews who have been baptised to this day probably did so out of the motives of the non-speculative and perhaps ideal, as they did so at the time when Judaism was at the height of its power, or was rather reaching this point and had the best prospects in the political constellation of European states and in world politics. Meanwhile, those Jews who have not been listed as Israelites, but hid under the guise of people without denomination, are not forgotten here. Such persons will remain Jewish. It is difficult to prove in the cases of illegitimate children³⁹ born out of wedlock. Next, there are married partners, one of whom is not a Jew according to the current understanding. In this case, the law addresses the matter as follows: Such marriage, which was entered into before the law came into force, gives the non-Jewish partner the opportunity to cease being a Jew. However, from the mixed marriage that is concluded after the effectiveness of this law, the so-called non-Jewish partner cannot cease being a Jew, not even if this marriage is legally divorced. This enactment seeks to prevent the proliferation of such mixed marriages. Furthermore, this enactment also concerns cases of living communities, so that the law does not circumvent concubines and thus prevents further devaluation of the race."*⁴⁰ Despite the fact that the proposals submitted by Ďurčanský were not implemented due to the development of events and the establishment of the Slovak State on 14 March 1939, it is remarkable to compare them with the legislation that came out in the following months. This primarily concerns the Government Regulation of 18 April 1939 on defining the term Jew and guidelines for restriction of the number of Jews practicing certain liberal professions which was clearly inspired by the March outlines. The Government Regulation No. 63/1939 Coll. defined the term Jew as follows: *"§ 1. (1) The following shall be considered a Jew, regardless of sex or nationality: 1. who is or was of the Israeli faith, even if he converted to Christian faith after 30 October 1918, 2. who is or was without a denomination and has at least one parent of Israeli faith, 3. who is a descendant of a person referred to in points 1 or 2, (except for such a descendant who himself converted to Christian faith before 30 October 1918), 4. who has married a person referred to in points 1 to 3 after the date of entry into force of this regulation for the duration of that marriage, 5. who, after the date of entry into force of this regulation, lives with the person referred to in points 1 to 3 in an extramarital partnership, as well as the descendants*

39 There is an addendum at the edge of the document *"...begotten by Jews, the milestone period of this law is determined because the control in this direction and paternity will now be possible, especially for children..."*

40 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku...*, document No. 60, p. 132-133.

begotten in such partnership."⁴¹ Another bill proposal focuses on the adjustment of ownership and possession of land property in Slovakia,⁴² forbidding Jews "to be owners, co-owners, shareholders, leaseholders, or users of land, agricultural or forest property located in the Slovak Land". Such property was to be taken over by the Slovak Land which acquired the right to "take it over, allocate it, or put it in a lease, use or other legal relationship". Alienation, lease, encumbrance and division of the occupied, to-be occupied and withdrawn-from-possession property was possible only with the consent of the Land Office. The outline (almost like all others) imposed severe penalties for violating its enactments – fine of up to one million crowns and, in the event of uncollectibility, the penalty of forced labour of up to 20 years. The claimant justified his action by stating that "(t)his regulation is based on exceptional circumstances and on established principles of international law because similar measures are being adopted in other Central European countries, hence such regulations are needed in order to maintain or establish good relations with other countries, but especially with the neighbouring countries. In addition, this measure is also justified by the fact that seizing part of the territory by the Hungarians in the autumn of 1938, about 800 families of Slovak colonists were left without funds, and besides, it is a matter of depriving Jews of ownership or possession of land for understandable reasons. Otherwise, other things can be seen in the outline based on the legal enactments on land reform, which can similarly be used in this regard almost unchanged."⁴³ Despite the fact that the Land Reform Act was passed by the Slovak Assembly in 1940, it shows some common or similar points with the proposal of Minister Ďurčanský (e.g., the intention to create hereditary farms, determining compensation for the land property taken over).

The outline of the Regulation on the export of property from the territory of the Slovak Land made the export conditional on the permission of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Land. Also, if it exceeded the value of 50,000 crowns, the MF was to be additionally informed about the export of property after 1 August 1938. According to the explanatory memorandum, such a measure required exceptional circumstances and, in particular, the fact that "after 1 August 1938, when certain political changes could already be foreseen, many property values were exported from the Slovak Land, especially by Jews".⁴⁴

41 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard – MŇAHONČÁKOVÁ, Jana. Vymedzenie pojmu Žid na Slovensku a v Chorvátsku – pokus o porovnanie. In NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Z dejín holokaustu a jeho popierania*. Bratislava : Stimul, 2007, p. 107-130; Slovenský zákonník, 1939, No. 63/1939.

42 In January 1939, Pavol Teplanský pointed out the unequal distribution of ownership and land lease in Slovakia and the intention of the Slovak government to limit its ownership in some categories to 150-200 jutro and rent to 300 jutro of the land at the Ministerial Council meeting. The Minister of Agriculture Ladislav Feierabend then offered his Slovak colleague a proposal to secure land drafted for Bohemia and Moravia, which the Slovak government could use as a basis for its regulation. However, he recommended that the measure be motivated only by the need to regulate land tenure and not by the racial affiliation of part of the population. NA ČR, f. PMR, box 4146, Minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 13 January 1939.

43 NIŽŇANSKÝ, *Holokaust na Slovensku...*, document No. 60, p. 134-143.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 143.

According to the author, the draft Government Regulation on the transitional arrangements and revisions of the roll of lawyers aimed to “solve one of the most glaring issues of the disparity between Jews and members of the domestic population in professions in the territory of the Slovak Land. According to the known statistics, the percentage of Jewish advocates far exceeds the percentage of Christian advocates, although these make up about 95% of the population, while Jews make up the rest.” He did not avoid the widespread stereotype: “At the same time, it is known that Jewish advocates carry out their practice in a non-solid way, even beyond their duties or rather under their rights. Cases of Slovak villagers being ruined by Jewish advocates were happening daily and are already a matter of tradition, these roots grow deeply in the life of the Slovak Land.” Barristers and trainee advocates registered with bar associations (or applying for registration) had to submit personal evidence to the Bar Association by 31 March 1939 as to whether they were Jews. “The aim is to stop all Jews from practicing law, and because in some places there would be a shortage of non-Jewish advocates, the Bar Association is given the opportunity to appoint young advocates so that we have Christian advocates everywhere, lest we be compelled to keep Jews because of scarcity.”⁴⁵ A little later, interventions against this group resulted in the aforementioned Government Regulation No. 63 of April 1939, which, among other things, reduced the number of Jewish advocates to 4% of the total number of lawyers in Slovakia.⁴⁶

A similar proposal also applied to Jewish doctors, although “the reasons for the outline of the Regulation on the adjustment of conditions of advocates apply with the only difference that it will not be possible to make a correction as fast as with advocates, because there is still a shortage of non-Jewish doctors.”⁴⁷

The outline of the Government Regulation on the amendment of certain self-employed business licences terminated a number of business licences on 31 December 1939 (e.g., chimney sweep, butler, inn and tap, trade of dental technicians, etc.), the renewal of which had to be requested from relevant authorities. The significance of this measure was to withdraw the concession to “Jews and other elements that are detrimental to proper life in the Slovak Land... Next, it forces Jews to pay taxes and public burdens in general. However, it allows exceptions to be made in some cases, that is, for Christians who have tax and other arrears and because of the Jewish competition that is still here today they will not be able to settle them until the end of 1939. Additionally, this measure, since it is not directly aimed against Jews, does not impair the proper running of self-employed businesses. After 1 January 1940, only those self-employed businesses of Jews that will be necessary in the interest of the proper running of economic and business life in the Slovak Land will be permitted.”⁴⁸

45 Ibid., p. 145.

46 Slovenský zákonník, 1939, No. 63/1939.

47 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Holokaust na Slovensku..., document No. 60, p. 146.

48 Ibid., p. 147-148.

The Regulation on partial adjustment of the ratio of private employees forced the owners of self-employed businesses, commercial, financial, banking, insurance and related institutions to employ within one year in their companies such a number of employees of Slovak nationality *“as is the percentage of the Slovak nation in the territory of the Slovak Land, and according to this ratio do so in all categories and salary scales of employees”*. The measure was to *“bring about a balance between employees in private companies, where non-Jews are also employed in Jewish enterprises, offices, institutes, funds or facilities, but only mostly in lower categories, while better paid jobs are held by Jews. The 1-year deadline gives the opportunity to teach Christians in all directions so that they can hold better, higher and more balanced positions.”*⁴⁹

As of 1 April 1939, the latest draft Government Regulations excluded Jews from performing active service in the territory of the Slovak Land in all state and public offices, institutes, funds, enterprises and facilities. *“This Regulation stems from the need to solve the Jewish problem in the Slovak Land, which is desirable not only for internal reasons, but also for the establishment of a good relationship with foreign countries. This is based on the development of international law, which understands this matter as stated in the outline...”*⁵⁰

At a meeting of the Committee for the solution of the Jewish Question in Slovakia on 5 March 1939, another draft Government Regulation (law) on ensuring social and economic balance in connection with the Jewish question was adopted by Karol Mederly. This draft was discussed by the autonomous government two days later and decided to hand it over to the Legislative Department.⁵¹ The Ministry of Economy’s undated comments on Mederly’s document state that it would be useful to address the issue of the placement of Jews who will lose their existence as a result of the inquiry norm and will not be able to move out. For these persons labour camps were to be set up.⁵² During this period, the government supported the expulsion of the Jewish population from Slovakia, however, the organised transports were meant to concern primarily the persons of disputed nationality, refugees, emigrants from Germany and Austria, people who were to lose their citizenship as a result of the Government Regulation No. 15/1939 Coll. I on reviewing the Czechoslovak citizenship of some persons, or they were undesirable in Slovakia for another reason.⁵³ Prime Minister J. Tiso also addressed the topic of the “Jewish question” in the Government Statement in February 1939: *“...the solution is a matter of days to come. It is a question of a more or less international nature, as every nation is already involved. The Slovak nation is not avoiding solving the Jewish question either. It cannot follow the example of any other nation in solving this question, given its position among the nations*

49 Ibid., p. 148-149.

50 Ibid., p. 149.

51 Ibid., document No. 61, p. 150-156.

52 Ibid., document No. 62, p. 156-158.

53 Ibid., document No. 54, p. 113-114.

and the possible consequences of solving it in the life of the nation. The proof of the maturity of our nation is that, despite all the provocation, the Slovak nation has waited for a legitimate solution to the Jewish question, and I assure the Slovak nation that nothing else will guide us in solving this than the interest of the Slovak nation...Considering the efforts of a large part of the Jewish population to move out of Slovakia, the government does not intend to hinder these efforts, but will instead support them, and for this purpose will also use the help of local and foreign Jewry to help solve this problem more easily. Though, at the same time, the government will make sure that economic enterprises in Slovakia are not destroyed as a result of emigration.”⁵⁴

Interventions against the Jewish community during the period of autonomy covered all areas of its life. They were accompanied by attacks by the ruling party and the HG, and sometimes by hate propaganda. Such approach resonated with the general public and manifested itself in growing intolerance of this minority. In connection with anti-Jewish riots, for example, the District Gendarmerie Headquarters in Nové Mesto nad Váhom characterised the situation as follows: *“People interpret the current situation in such a way that anything can be done with impunity against Jews in the present times because Jews are no longer protected by law.”⁵⁵*

54 Available online at <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1939ssk/stenprot/002schuz/s002001.htm>

55 SNA, f. KÚ, box 309, No. 1103/1939.

Appendix

Ministry of Justice⁵⁶
Of the Slovak Land

Regulation of the Slovak Government of January 1939.

on the listing of assets that come into official settlement in connection with the adjustment of the population that resides or resided in the territory ceded to Hungary by the Vienna decision. The Government of the Slovak Republic on the basis of Section 2 Article II of the Constitutional Act of 15 December 1938, No. 330 Coll. orders:

§ 1.

Citizens of the Slovak Land, i.e., those citizens of the Czecho-Slovak Republic who have domicile in the territory of the Slovak Land, as well as those who may have had domicile in a municipality in the territory ceded to Hungary by the Vienna decision, have a legal right to compensation for property damage caused by them being expelled, deported, removed, banished from their place of residence in the ceded territory by the Hungarian authorities, or were driven away by the conditions and unrest there, or their free right over their property was legally ruled out or limited to them by the mentioned factors or conditions.

The above listed can claim this right to compensation only when they have settled in the territory of the Slovak Land, they have received an official permanent residence permit there and have been granted this right by the Commissariat established at the Bureau of Prime Minister's Office of the Slovak Land /: § 5: /.

Even the granted claim for compensation is not enforceable against the Slovak Land or against the treasury of the Czecho-Slovak Republic.

§ 2.

To ascertain all property changes marked in § 1 as well as to secure any claims arising from them, an official listing is ordered:

a / all property damages referred to in § 1 of this Regulation;

b / all movable and immovable property, including rights, requirements, etc., which belong in the territory of the Slovak Land to all Hungarian nationals, as well as to those who have become Hungarian nationals as a result of territorial ceding;

c / all movable and immovable property, including rights, requirements, etc., which belong to members of the Hungarian language category or members of the Jewish race in the territory of the Slovak Land, even if in this point c /, the nominees are Czecho-Slovak nationals with nationality in Slovakia.

56 SNA, f. ÚPV, No. 63/1939, Property listing

§ 3.

Compensation claims granted under § 1 Section 3 will, in the first place, find satisfaction in the property values indicated in point b / § 2 and, secondly, in those values which fall under point c / § 2 of this Regulation.

§ 4.

These listings will be started by municipal boards on official forms and then hand them over to the political offices of the First Seat.

These will examine them, or supplement them, correct them and send them to the Commissariat established at the Bureau of the Prime Minister's Office of the Slovak Land /: § 5: / for further processing.

The political offices of the First Seat, as well as the Commissariat, are obliged to ask the district courts /: Land Registry Departments: / to mark the official restraint for real estate listing /: point b: /, c / § 2: /.

District courts are obliged to comply with these requests. When marking this official restraint, they may only notice a possible land registry obstacle based on the disagreement of the person against whom the restraint is being enforced.

By making the listing of the movables and marking the restraint on the immovables according to points b /, c / § 2, the right of disposition passes to the Commissariat /: § 5: /. Only with its consent and permission can the current beneficiary dispose of either the substance or even the use of the listing.

Any such listing, similarly to the marking of the restraint, is to be declared in the usual way in the municipality in which the listing was made and in the district court that ordered the marking of the restraint.

Restrictions on immovable property rights under this Regulation are valid from the date of publication of the present Regulation. From this statement, it is necessary to assess the claims of third parties acquired in the future, as well as the fact that the marking of the restraint in some land registry inserts may happen.

§ 5.

Compensation Commissariat for record-keeping is established at the Bureau of the Prime Minister's Office the Slovak Land. Administration and resolution of all property issues of citizens coming from the territory ceded to Hungary /: § 1: /.

This Commissariat may, if necessary, establish a branch at the headquarters of a district office. The President of the Commissariat, his deputy and members shall be appointed by the government of the Slovak Land, as needed; the Chairman of the branch and its members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Compensation Commissariat, as needed.

The Compensation Commissariat is an establishment. It is subject to the Ministerial Council of the Slovak Land. Its president or his deputy and at least two members sign a substantive decision during carrying out official services.

The branches of the Commissariat are only administrative bodies for assessing claims, securing assets for the preparation of agreements. Branches are not entitled to make a substantive decision.

§ 6.

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day of its publication. It will be executed by the government of the Slovak Land.

Explanatory memorandum

The personal and property adjustment of the population, which belongs to the territory ceded to Hungary by the Vienna decision, is not proceeding decently and smoothly. On the contrary, members of the Slovak nation are personally exposed to the gendarmerie, police, but also to the ill-wishing Hungarian authorities. There are also cases of outright brutality.

The settlement of personal and property issues between our establishments and the establishments of the Hungarian state is left to mutual agreement and thus to an international agreement.

However, it is also necessary to remember such cases when the executive authorities of the Hungarian state, neglective of enactments of such international convention *via facti*, tyrannise, terrorize our Slovaks, or crudely force them to run away from there, usually without any assets, only with a bare life. These refugees usually leave everything that was necessary for their livelihood there, and with their dear life they run to the territory of Slovakia.

For reasons of decency but also for reasons of national togetherness, it is necessary to bear in mind the future of these refugees and to provide for them at least what can be provided for them in the territory of Slovakia, i.e. to take under the official restraint the property of Hungarian nationals, primarily their property due to international retorsion; but ultimately, secondly, to provide them with the property of those Hungarians and Jews, even though Slovak nationals, to reach for this property for reasons of decency. Decency requires that when our impoverished Slovaks come from the occupied territory, they become the burden of the Slovak Land. This can only be avoided by providing them with living conditions of the local Hungarians and Jews property means. Both of these categories of population are to blame for a considerable amount for everything that has happened to our Slovaks personally, culturally and property-wise in the occupied territory since the demarcation of new borders.

This listing and the confiscation of immovables under the official restraint would provisionally restrict the right of disposal of Hungarian nationals, as well as the right of the local Hungarians and Jews over their property. It can be expected that these elements would be completely aware of legal consequences and would influence the Hungarian government and political circles there to cease the brutalities against the Slovaks in the occupied territory. If this goal were achieved, there would be no need for further implementation of the present Regulation.

If the brutalities against the Slovaks in the occupied territory would not cease, the Compensation Commissariat, as an establishment, would take the listed property of the Hungarian nationals. It would be entitled to take

possession of this property: and from the net proceeds give compensation to the expelled Slovaks from the occupied territory.

If this method of compensation were not sufficient, similar approach would be taken in the realisation of property listing belonging to the local Hungarians and Jews, but different approach would be taken regarding Czecho-Slovak nationals staying or residing in the territory of the Slovak Land.

All the enactments of this Regulation, without further explanation, are quite clear and aim at the means to capture the basis of compensation, how to administer, manage, implement and enforce it.

Bratislava, 30 December 1938.

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Slovenský zákonník

Slovák

Úradné noviny

Leonid REIN

Holocaust in Slovakia on the Pages of Belaruskaia Hazeta

Belaruskaia Hazeta, until February 1942 published under the name *Menskaia Hazeta*, was a major Belarusian-language newspaper published under the German auspices.¹ It was but one element in the Nazi propaganda machine which was created by Joseph Goebbels long before the German invasion into the Soviet Union and used various media and the newest achievements of technological progress. Even though Nazis regarded the population of the occupied territories of Eastern Europe, especially Slavs, subhumans there to serve their German masters and whose opinion mattered little, still, they understood fairly quickly that the stick alone would not suffice to rule the peoples there and that some explanatory work would also be needed. As time passed, propaganda became one of the most important elements of occupying policies. The occupying authorities also soon concluded that their aims would be best achieved if the propaganda were carried out in the native language. One of the primary goals of *Belaruskaia Hazeta* was to explain the German occupying policies to the population and to convince the Belarusians of the necessity of the measures adopted by occupying authorities.

When discussing the content of *Menskaia/Belaruskaia Hazeta*, we must consider the fact that it was closely controlled by the German occupation authorities practically from the beginning. The publication of *Menskaia Hazeta* was initially monitored by the military propaganda division "W," which imposed rigid frameworks upon the newspaper's publications, prescribing the topics that were allowed and those forbidden. The newspaper itself was published by the Minsk Country Publishing House, which was created in July 1941 and was integrated into the propaganda department of the General Commissariat

1 *Belaruskaia Hazeta* was published from July 1941 to February 1942 as *Menskaia Hazeta* and as *Belaruskaia Hazeta* from February 1942 to June 1944. The first editor-in-chief of *Menskaia Hazeta* was Aljaxej Syankevič, replaced in fall 1941 by Uladzislau Kazlouski who stayed there until his assassination by Soviet partisans in November 1943. After Kazlouski's death, the editorial office was taken over by Aliaksandr Dzemchanka and later by Mikalai Shkialenak. From the beginning, publications in *Menskaja/Belaruskaia Hazeta* were closely monitored by German occupying institutions, first by military propaganda division and later, with the establishment of civil administration in western and central parts of Belarus, by the propaganda department at the General Commissariat for White Ruthenia. See: ZHUMAR, Sergei. *Okkupatsionnaia periodicheskaia pechat' na territorii Belarusi v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny*. Minsk, 1996.

for White Ruthenia in late 1941.² In March 1942, the head of the propaganda department of the General Commissariat for White Ruthenia, Hans-Joachim Schröter, established the Minsk Press Publishing House to control the local press more effectively.³ German control over the local press was tangible, even physically – the editorial offices of *Menskaia/Belaruskaia Hazeta* occupied the third floor of the building at 2 Rogneda St.,⁴ merely a few house blocks away from the offices of the General Commissariat for White Ruthenia. Many of the items published in the newspaper were translations of propagandistic materials from German and other languages, including the speeches of Alexander Mach and Jozef Tiso to which I would refer below.

The launch of *Belaruskaia Hazeta* under this name practically coincided with the start of the second wave of annihilation of Belarusian Jews. Hereby, not only Jews who lived for centuries in the Belarusian territory but also Jews deported from Nazi-controlled Central Europe were murdered here. Even though the mass murder of Jews was not mentioned on the pages of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, numerous articles published in it were purported to convince the readership that the removal of Jews is necessary and that Belarus would be much better without the Jews. A point made by the contributors to the newspaper was that Jews are not only a Belarusian problem but a global problem that would demand a global solution. Hence, they gleefully registered every manifestation of anti-Semitism worldwide and every anti-Jewish measure adopted by various governments.

The main providers of the radical anti-Semitic content for *Belaruskaia Hazeta* were members of the Belarusian National-Socialist Party, a marginal group created in 1933 in Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania), then part of Poland, by people around Fabian Akinchyts⁵, former Agrarian-Socialist turned Nazi. In their ideology, Belarusian Nazis largely emulated their German like-minders,

2 Zhumar' erroneously speaks of the press department of the General Commissariat for White Ruthenia, which was a sub-department of the propaganda department; see ZHUMAR, *Okkupatsionnaia periodicheskaiia...*, p. 21.

3 Ibid., p. 25-27.

4 The editorial offices of *Menskaia/Belaruskaia Hazeta* were next door to the offices of the Minsk municipal auxiliary police, and the newspaper frequently published the police's recruitment announcements.

5 Fabian Akinchyts (1886 – 1943) started his political career in the Belarusian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries, an agrarian socialist party. In the 1920s, he was among the Belarusian Peasant and Workers Party leaders, a *de facto* legal socialist group of the clandestine Communist Party of Western Belarus in Poland. In the early 1930s, Akinchyts toyed with the idea of Belarusian autonomy within the Second Polish Republic before becoming an adherent of the creation of the Belarusian State, along the lines of Nazi Germany, in 1933. He was a founder and the leader of the Belarusian National Socialist Party. Since 1938, Akinchyts headed the Belarusian desk at the German Ministry for Education and Propaganda. In late summer 1941, Akinchyts led a half-a-year training course for Belarusian propagandists in Wustrau near Berlin. On 5 March 1943, Akinchyts was assassinated as a result of the conflict between Belarusian collaborators. See: KAZAK, Pyatro. *Belaruski Natsyianalizm*. Available online: https://knihi.com/none/Bielaruski_nacyjanalizm_Daviednik.html#chapter5. On Akinchyts' and his adherents' activities before and during the German occupation of Belarus, see TURONAK, Iury. Dzeinasts' hrupy Fabiana Akinchytsa (1939–1943). In *Belaruski historychny ahliad*, 2007, Vol 14, No. 26-27, p. 81-96. Available online: <http://www.belhistory.eu/tom-14-sshytki-1-2-26-27-snezhan-2007/>. (cit. 20. 11. 2020).

envisaging the creation of ethnically homogenous Belarus and regarding Jews as one of the primary enemies of the Belarusian nation, blaming them for all the troubles that befell the country through its history. The first two editors-in-chief of *Menskaia/Belaruskaia Hazeta*, Aleksei Siankevich⁶ and Uladzislau Kazlouski⁷ were among the founders of BNSP, while Mikhas Hanko,⁸ who in 1943 became chief of the Union of Belarusian Youth, Belarusian copy of German *Hitlerjugend*, and who supplied the most radical, openly genocidal texts to *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, was a late convert to Belarusian Nazism, being exposed to Akinchyts ideas while in a camp for Soviet war prisoners⁹.

Slovakia did not figure prominently on the pages of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*. Actually, it hardly figured at all. From the point of view of Belarusian nationalists, the Slovakian case was interesting only insofar as it was a small agrarian nation that received its statehood under the aegis of the Third Reich, even if this amounted to little more than the client statehood of Nazi Germany. The persecution and annihilation of Slovakian Jews¹⁰ were related to in *Belaruskaia*

6 Alexei Siankevich (1904 – 1991) was one of the founding fathers of the Belarusian National Socialist Party. During the German occupation of Belarus, he edited several newspapers, such as *Menskaia Hazeta* and *Holas Vioski*. In 1943 – 1944, he led a Minsk district committee of Belarusian Independent Party which inscribed the full independence of Belarus on its banners. In 1944 was a member of the Belarusian Home Guard. Siankevich died in the USA in 1991. KAZAK, *Belaruski Natsyianalizm*, https://knihi.com/none/Bielaruski_nacyjanalizm_Daviednik.html#chapter80.

7 Uladzislau Kazlouski (1896 – 1943) was active in Belarusian national circles in Wilno (today Vilnius) in the 1930s and was among the founders and leaders of Belarusian National Socialist Party, editing its newspaper *Novy Shliakh*. In 1941 – 1943, he served as editor-in-chief of *Menskaia/Belaruskaia Hazeta*. On 13 November 1943, Kazlouski was assassinated by Soviet partisans. KAZAK, *Belaruski Natsyianalizm*, https://knihi.com/none/Bielaruski_nacyjanalizm_Daviednik.html#chapter42.

8 Mikhas Hanko (1918 –?) studied medicine at Wilno University on the eve of the German-Soviet war. He was mobilised into the Red Army at the start of the war and later captured by Germans, released from the POW camp on the initiative of Fabian Akinchyts and underwent a Belarusian propagandists' training course in Wutsrau near Berlin. From 1942, he was working in the propaganda department of the General Commissariat for White Ruthenia. In 1943, Hanko became a chief executive of the Union of Belarusian Youth, a Belarusian copy of Hitler Youth. Under pseudonyms Aganiok and Volat, he edited the magazine *Zhyve Belarus*. Until early 1945, when he became a member of the Belarusian Independent Party, Hanko was an adherent of unconditional collaboration with the Germans. He left Belarus together with Germans in June 1944 and joined the Abwehr-sponsored Belarusian airborne battalion for special disposal "Dalwitz", which had to carry out intelligence-gathering and sabotage missions in the Soviet rear. Hanko's ultimate fate is unclear. According to some information, he was killed in 1945 near Prague.

9 On Belarusian Nazism see: REIN, Leonid. *The Kings and the Pawns. Collaboration in Byelorussia during World War II*. New York, 2013, p. 232-233.

10 On the issue of the Holocaust in Slovakia, see e.g.: ĎURICA, Milan S. *Der slowakische Anteil an der Tragödie der europäischen Juden*. München, 1986; FATRAN, Gila – KAMENEC, Ivan – NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Toldot ha-Sho'ah : Slovakiah*. Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, 2015; HAUSLEITNER, Marianna – HAZAN, Souzana – HUTZELMANN, Barbara. *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933 – 1945. Band 13, Slowakei, Rumänien und Bulgarien*. Oldenbourg : De Gruyter, 2018; HILBERG, Raul. *Vernichtung der europäischen Juden. Band 2*. Frankfurt am Main : Fischer, 1994, p.766-793; HOENSCH, Jörg Konrad et al. *Judenemanzipation – Antisemitismus – Verfolgung in Deutschland, Österreich-Ungarn, den böhmischen Ländern und in der Slowakei*. Essen : Klartext, 1999; KAMENEC, Ivan. *On The Trail of Tragedy: The Holocaust In Slovakia*. Bratislava : Hajko & Hajková, 2007; LIPSCHER, Ladislav. *Die Juden im Slowakischen Staat 1939 – 1945*. München - Wien, 1980; NEUMANN, Oskar. *Im Schatten des Todes. Ein Tatsachenbericht vom Schicksalskampf des slowakischen Judentums*. Tel Aviv, 1958; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Der Holocaust*

Hazeta in the context of the propagated idea that the Jews are enemies not only of Belarusians but of the entire humankind and that the Jewish question should be and was being solved globally.

In the fall of 1938, in the aftermath of the Munich agreement which robbed the Czechoslovakian state of the Sudeten region, Slovakia got its autonomous status within Czechoslovakia and a Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso,¹¹ one of the leaders of the far-right Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (*Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana*, HSĽS) became a prime minister of the autonomous Slovak Land.¹² From the beginning, Tiso and his party, regarding Jews as Christ-killers and exploiters of the Slovaks, embarked upon the course of ethnic cleansing of Slovakia. After Slovakia gained autonomy, the discrimination of Jews started almost immediately. Jewish employees were fired from their jobs and the debates on anti-Jewish legislation started. The secession of southern parts of the Slovakian territory to Hungary as a result of the First Vienna Award in November 1938 was followed by pogroms in Bratislava, while Jews were traditionally accused by Slovaks of pro-Hungarian sympathies. As early as November 1938, 7,500 Jews from the border regions of Slovakia were deported to the Hungarian controlled territory. About 6,000 of the Jews who remained in Slovakia were expelled from Bratislava and placed in special camps.¹³ Since March 1939, when Slovakia proclaimed its independence from Czechoslovakia destroyed by the Third Reich,¹⁴ its 89,000 Jews were exposed

und die Slowakei. In WEISS, Lotte. *Meine zwei Leben*. Berlin : LIT, 2010, p. 173-194; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. On relations between the Slovak Majority and Jewish Minority during World War II. In *Yad Vashem Studies*, 2014, Vol. 42, No. 2, Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, p. 47-90; ROTHKIRCHEN, Livia. *The Destruction of Slovak Jewry. A Documentary History*. Jerusalem, 1961; ROTHKIRCHEN, Livia. The Situation of Jews in Slovakia between 1939 and 1945. In *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 7. Frankfurt am Main : Campus, 1998, p. 46-70.

11 Jozef Tiso (1887 – 1947) was a Slovak politician and Roman Catholic priest who was the President of the Slovak Republic, a satellite state of Nazi Germany during World War II, from 1939 to 1945. From October 1938, Tiso was already the Prime Minister of autonomous Slovakia (under Czechoslovak laws), became the Slovak Republic's Prime Minister (from March to October 1939). He was head of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party. From 1942, a „Führer“ by law. Tiso collaborated with Nazi Germany in the deportations of Jews from Slovakia. In 1947, after the war, he was executed for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bratislava. See e.g.: HOENSCH, Jörg Konrad. *Studia Slovaca. Studien zur Geschichte der Slowaken und der Slowakei*. Oldenbourg – München, 2000; WARD, James Mace. *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*, Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2013; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Die Vorstellungen Jozef Tisos über Religion, Volk und Staat und ihre Folgen für seine Politik während des Zweiten Weltkriegs. In *Religion und Nation: Tschechen, Deutsche und Slowaken im 20. Jahrhundert*. Essen : Klartext Verl., 2015, p. 39-82.

12 NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Die Machtübernahme von Hlinkas Slowakischer Volkspartei in der Slowakei im Jahre 1938/39 mit einem Vergleich zur nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung 1933/34 in Deutschland. In *Geteilt, besetzt, beherrscht*. Essen : Klartext Verl., 2004, p. 249-287.

13 See BODENSIECK, Heinrich. Das Dritte Reich und die Lage der Juden in der Tschecho-Slowakei nach München. In *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1961), pp. 249 – 261; BROSZAT, Martin. Das deutsch-slowakische Verhältnis und seine Rückwirkung auf die slowakische Judenpolitik. In *Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte*, München 1958, pp. 221 – 229; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Die Deportation der Juden in der Zeit der autonomen Slowakei im November 1938. In *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 7. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1998, pp. 20 – 45; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Die jüdische Gemeinde in der Slowakei 1938/39. In *Jahrbuch 2000*. Wien: DÖW, 2000, S. 116 – 133.

14 A “Protection Treaty” (“Schutzvertrag”) was signed in March 1939 between the Slovak State and Nazi Germany, according to which Slovakia had to coordinate its foreign and military policy to

to persecutions, discrimination and expulsions. Soon after, in September 1941, a Jewish Code, a Slovakian variant of the Third Reich's Nuremberg Laws was promulgated.¹⁵ Jews of Slovakia were robbed of their property¹⁶ and were forced to wear a yellow badge in the form of the Star of David on their clothes.

At some point, Slovakian anti-Jewish policies and its aspiration for ethnic purification of the country converged with the anti-Jewish policies of Nazi Germany. After the German armies invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 (an invasion in which the Slovakian troops took part too), the policies of the Third Reich towards the Jews quickly developed into total physical annihilation. In early 1942, a conference was convened by the head of Reich's Security Main Office, Reinhard Heydrich, in Berlin's aristocratic suburb Wannsee, during which it was decided to pursue the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" on a global scale. Soon afterwards, the Slovak government offered Germans its Jews as forced labourers. Hereby, Tuka's¹⁷ government intended to kill two birds with one stone – both to satisfy German long-standing requests for labour forces and to get rid of at least part of the Jews. After prolonged negotiations with Adolf Eichmann's representative, Dieter Wisliceny¹⁸, the first trainload of Slovak Jews of both genders fit to work departed toward Auschwitz on 25 March 1942.¹⁹ Deportations were executed between 25 March 1942 and 20 October 1942. Roughly 58,000 Jews were deported from Slovakia to Auschwitz and the Lublin District. The Slovak Republic was the first state outside direct German control to agree to the deportation of its Jewish citizens.

that of the German Reich. In Slovakia, the German military garrison was permanently stationed in the "protection zone" between Slovakia and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Slovak Republic thus became a satellite of Nazi Germany, its army took part in the battles against Poland (1939) and against the Soviet Union (from June 1941). For the text of the "Protection Treaty", see NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard et al. *Slovensko-nemecké vzťahy 1938 – 1941 v dokumentoch I*. Prešov, 2009, document No. 96.

15 See NEŠŤÁKOVÁ, Denisa – NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Regulating of sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews by ordinance Number 198/1941 Coll. of Slovak laws in times of the Slovak State. In *Judaica et Holocaustia 7. Women and World War II*. Bratislava : Stimul, 2016, p. 89-118.

16 DREYFUS, Jean-Marc – NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Jews and non-Jews in the aryanization process comparison of France and the Slovak State, 1939-45. In *Facing the catastrophe: Jews and non-Jews in Europe during World War II*. Oxford : Berg, 2011, p. 13-39; NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Die "Arisierung" jüdischen Vermögens in der Slowakischen Republik. In *Eigentumsregime und Eigentumskonflikte im 20. Jahrhundert: Deutschland und die Tschechoslowakei im internationalen Kontext*. Essen : Klartext Verlag, 2018, p. 373-412.

17 Vojtech "Béla" Tuka (1880 – 1946) was a Slovak politician who served as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic between 1939 and 1944. Tuka was one of the main forces behind the deportation of Slovak Jews to Nazi concentration camps in German-occupied Poland. He was the leader of the radical wing of the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party. Slovak government was to pay five hundred Reichsmark per deportee.

18 Dieter Wisliceny (1911 – 1948) was *SS-Hauptsturmführer*, Advisor (*Berater*) for the Jewish Question in Slovakia (1940 – 1943).

19 See: CESARANI, David. *Final Solution*. New York, 2016, p. 524-525; BÜCHLER, Robert. The Deportation of Slovakian Jews to the Lublin District of Poland in 1942. In *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 1991, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 156-163; BÜCHLER, Robert. First in the Vale of Affliction: Slovakian Jewish Woman in Auschwitz, 1942. In *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 1996, Vol. 3, p. 299-325; ROTKIRCHEN, Livia. The Slovak Enigma: A Reassessment of the Halt of Deportations. In *East-Central Europe 2-3*, 1983, p. 3-13.

About a week after the start of the deportations of Slovakian Jews, on 2 April 1942, *Belaruskaia Hazeta* published a small article under the title “*They have to work*” on its third page. The article was dedicated to the address of Slovak Interior Minister Alexander Mach,²⁰ who played an important role in the negotiations to deport Jews from Slovakia, made on 25 March 1942, the day the deportations started, to the Hlinka Guard, a paramilitary organisation of Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party. The text of the article read as follows: “*In his radio address to the Hlinka Guard on Wednesday, Interior Minister Mach touched upon the Jewish question. In sharp words, Mach went against the efforts of Jews to raise sympathy towards them in society. According to Mach, Jews are claiming to be threatened by horrible fate, that they are going to be sent to some mysterious swampy area. That there is no danger threatening Jews, but they will have to work. They would not be able to dodge it even by baptism.*”²¹

This excerpt from Mach’s address was published not only at the start of the deportation of Slovak Jews to Auschwitz, but also at the start of the second wave of annihilation of Belarusian Jews. Merely a month before its publication, about 3,000 Jews of Minsk were slaughtered mainly inside the ghetto situated not far from the newspaper’s editorial offices²². Even though mass-murders of Jews in Belarus, like in other Nazi-occupied Soviet territories, were carried out in the open, still, Nazi propaganda both in German and in vernacular languages of occupied countries referred to them in Himmler’s words as “unwritten and never to be written page”, which should be kept strictly secret, even if it was an opened secret. Thus, publishing Mach’s refutation of a “horrible fate” threatening the Jews in *Belaruskaia Hazeta* was intended for internal consumption. Additionally, Mach’s speech as published in *Belaruskaia Hazeta* touched upon the stereotype of Jews as “work-shy”, as aversive to any kind of physical labour. This stereotype was widespread in Belarusian society and was widely propagated on the pages of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*²³. In Nazi and Nazi-controlled propaganda, forced work of the Jews was perceived much more as a pedagogical so to say, and not just a purely utilitarian step. Forcing Jews to work meant to teach them manual labour. Hence, here too, Mach’s words as published in *Belaruskaia Hazeta* about Jews not being able to “dodge” the work even through baptism were intended for the local eyes in Belarus itself.

20 Alexander Mach (1902 – 1980) was a member of the radical wing of the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party; in 1938/39 he was the head of the Propaganda Office, from 1938 – 1940, 1940 – 1945 Head of the Hlinka Guard (a paramilitary organisation of Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party). From July 1940 to 1945, he served as Interior Minister. The Ministry of Interior independently deported Jews in 1942 without any active assistance from Nazi Germany. The Ministry prepared deportation lists and created concentration centres (Bratislava – Patrónka, Nováky, Sered’, Poprad, Žilina) through which Jews passed before deportation. The Ministry of Transport has prepared six deportation trains. Mach also prepared a proposal for a constitutional so-called Deportation Act, which was approved by the Slovak Parliament and signed by President Jozef Tiso. On its basis, Jews could be deported and lose their Slovak citizenship.

21 Yad Vashem Archive, sign. C-272, *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, 2 April 1942.

22 See hereby GERLACH, Christian. *Kalkulierte Morde*. Hamburg, 1999, p. 691.

23 See the editorials of Uladzislaŭ Kazloŭski the editor in chief of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, published on 23 October and 1 May 1943 in Yad Vashem Archive, sign. C-762, *Belaruskaia Hazeta*.

Slovakia's anti-Jewish policies figured at the pages of *Belaruskaia Hazeta* one more time, in the 29 November 1942 issue. The article entitled "Slovakian president Tiso on Jewish question" was published on the newspaper's second page quoting excerpts from Jozef Tiso's speech at the ceremony of consecration of the church in the town of Holič: "The love is for ourselves a God's commandment and this love commands us to reject everything harmful for us, hampering our life. I think nobody doubts that the Jewish element threatened the life of Slovaks. For hundreds of years, Jews in Slovakia multiplied themselves tens or even hundreds of times. However, they did not toil in the fields but were merchants, bankers, clerks or doctors. Three million Slovaks shared 62 per cent of national income, while the Jews (5 per cent of the entire population) shared the rest of the national income (38 per cent). This lack of proportion has only been exacerbated in recent years. It would be much worse if we did not remove the Jews in time. We acted hereby according to God's commandment: "Slovak, liberate yourself from your enemy!" In this sense, we are establishing order and will continue to do so, and whoever thinks that that is something new, is mistaken."²⁴

At the time of Tiso's speech and its publication in *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, the information about the true fate of the Jews deported earlier that year started to reach Slovakia, arousing indignation and protests, especially among the Catholic clergy of the country who still believed in "Thou shalt not kill" commandment. It was them that Tiso's speech was directed at. At the same time, it was also the peak of the second wave of mass-murder in Belarus itself. Around the date of the publication of an article, the Hlybokoye region in the northcentral part of Belarus was cleansed of the Jews²⁵. In Belarus, where the population was from the start directly exposed to the mass-murder of the Jews who in their turn, contrary to Slovakia, were not deported anyway but murdered on the spot too, the voices started to be heard protesting against the indiscriminate murders. The documentary base does not allow us to conclude how strong religious motives were in these protests or what was the position of Russian Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Belarus generally, and of individual members of the clergy towards what they saw before their eyes, but it can be assumed that in Belarus, too, religion played its role in reaction to the Holocaust on the part of the local non-Jewish population. Hence, the publication of Tiso's speech in *Belaruskaia Hazeta* was intended not only to depict the official Slovakian position on the Jewish question but also to justify the "removal" of Jews from Belarusian society. And then again, the motives of Jewish alleged overrepresentation in free professions vs their alleged underrepresentation in manual jobs used by Tiso in his speech were too familiar for the Belarusian readership of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*²⁶ as well.

24 Ibid., *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, 29 November 1942.

25 GERLACH, *Kalkulierte Morde*, p. 705.

26 Thus, for example on 25 March 1943, a "folklore" rhyme was published in an issue of a newspaper, summarizing professions and occupations allegedly preferred by the Jews such as "street organ" player, "state bank manager", "doctor, engineer [and] an actor", "profiteer and CheKa member", and concluding that "One can never see a Yid ploughing the field". In Yad Vashem Archive, sign. C-762, *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, 25 March 1943.

Slovakia was not of much interest to the editors and contributors of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*. The events in this country never appeared on the front pages of the newspaper, which was usually reserved for war reports and some special occasions such as Belarusian national and religious celebrations or Hitler's birthdays. The Slovak anti-Jewish policies, if mentioned at all, occupied little space on the newspaper's inner pages. It was stressed only to promulgate an idea of Jews as an enemy of the entire humankind and of anti-Jewish policies as part of an international effort to solve the "Jewish Question". Even though the two articles I mentioned here referred to the events in Slovakia, the publishers of *Belaruskaia Hazeta* made them look relevant also for the readers of *Belaruskaia Hazeta*, *inter alia*, by using the stereotypes widespread in Belarusian society. At the same time, a careful reader could notice parallels with the events in Belarus in the same period.

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Katarína BOHOVÁ

Rather be Sick than Getting Help from a Jew? The Case of the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the District of Piešťany in 1943

It is interesting when we can reconstruct the forms of influences and consequences of anti-Semitic ideology and politics in Slovakia on the daily life of the majority population. Anti-Semitism, as one of the forms of hatred against Jews, was an integral part of the regime of the Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945) which defined Jews as its main enemy. Negative prejudices against the Jewish community manifested themselves in the economic, political, religious (anti-Judaism) and national spheres. Most of them were deeply rooted in the Slovak socio-cultural structure since the 19th century.¹

However, with the establishment of the Slovak State, the ideology of anti-Semitism took on a completely new qualitative dimension. Its instrumentalization resulted in political persecution of the inhabitants of the Jewish minority, who were expelled from Slovak society and later completely deprived of all rights (civil, property and human), and were eventually deported to concentration camps. Few of them returned home alive.

With this document, I would like to offer a space for reflection on the consequences of anti-Semitic propaganda in combination with other factors. In addition to the fact that the ideology and politics of anti-Semitism proved to be an effective means of the regime's intentions to exclude Jews from its society, it also had "secondary" side effects in a specific area, namely health.

A document from 22 February 1943 was found in the State Archives in Trnava and it responded to the report on the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the district of Piešťany. From the record of the Internal Public Administration Commissioner of the Piešťany District Office, Rudolf Šalát, we learn that a midwife² from Dobrá Voda informed him verbally about the occurrence of venereal diseases in the local community, especially among the working and farming population. The midwife assessed the epidemiological

1 KAMENEC, Ivan. *Po stopách tragédie*. Bratislava : Archa, 1991, p. 283.

2 I have not been successful in identifying the person's name.

condition as dangerous and uncontrolled, and the infection was also affecting fetuses of pregnant women. She saw the problem in the fact that the inhabitants remained completely untreated, avoiding a visit to the doctor because the general practitioner was a Jew.³

At this stage of the research, it was not possible to reconstruct the case in more detail as only one document has been preserved and, moreover, it has the nature of an internal report.⁴ However, it is clear from the document that, in this case, negative anti-Semitic prejudices played a key role in neglecting treatment and the subsequent spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The inhabitants of Dobrá Voda, apparently, did not trust the Piešťany District doctor because he was a Jew. In this sense, the regime-driven systemic spread of hatred against the Jewish population also had such effect.

The health sector was affected by anti-Jewish legislation in a specific way. From the point of view of social stratification, Jews already had a dominant representation in the medical professions in the interwar period.⁵ This was due to their cultural and educational tradition, in which healing played an important role. According to statistics as of 6 October 1938, 44.53% of the total number of

3 Štátny archív v Trnave (abbreviated to ŠA TT), fond (hereinafter f.) Okresný úrad Piešťany (abbreviated to OÚ), box 103, file No. 290/43 pres. venereal disease spread.

4 However, it seems that in early March 1943 the District Office in Piešťany instructed to investigate the situation – to find out from the mentioned midwife which persons were affected by the disease. Records of the efforts of the Notary Office in Chtelnica to contact the Jewish district doctor in writing have also been preserved, however, the content of this correspondence is unknown as well. The following collections were examined: ŠA TT, f. OÚ Piešťany, box 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106 presidium files, records not found; box 175, 176 administrative files, no records; the presidential and index protocol in 1943 does not even contain the regular sending of monthly situation reports by the District Chief Gejza Konká to the State Security Headquarters (*Ústredňa štátnej bezpečnosti*, ÚŠB). There have been records of sporadic shipments of such materials, which have not been retained in the collection; ŠA TT, f. Četnícka a žandárska stanica v Dobrej Vode, no case records; ŠA TT, f. Obecný notársky úrad (abbreviated to ONÚ) Dobrá Voda (Dobrá Voda Municipal Notary Office) even contains a “record of contagious diseases” as a separate individual within the records – no entry has been made in it, the book is without any intervention. Protocols and indices for 1943 have not been preserved within the collection; ŠA TT, f. ONÚ v Chtelnici, box 95, pres. files (1 box is preserved for 1943), admin. files, box III; Štátny archív v Bratislave (abbreviated to ŠA BA), f. Oblastné žandárske veliteľstvo v Trenčíne – no case records; Slovenský národný archív (abbreviated to SNA), f. ÚŠB, box 707 – general reports on the political situation in the districts, including Piešťany in the years 1939 – 1945, documents for the case were not found; SNA, f. Ministerstvo vnútra – V. Health and Social Department, box 1466, 1488, 1516, 2038, 2039, 2047, 2051, 2052 – I did not find any records; SNA, f. Národný súd (hereinafter NS), box 81 in the context of situation reports addressed to President Tiso – records of the report from March 1943, which should reflect the situation in Dobrá Voda, or Piešťany District, have not been preserved; Archív mesta Bratislavy, f. Spolky v Bratislave, Policajné riaditeľstvo, box 47 – Slovak Country Association against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (does not contain any records about this case).

5 In 1936, the Medical Chamber registered 1,805 physicians in Slovakia, which represented only 16.6% of the total number of physicians in the First Czechoslovak Republic. The number of Jewish doctors in Slovakia represented 39.7%. According to data from 1937, there were 1,819 inhabitants per one doctor in Slovakia. In this sense, the Piešťany District had the 4th most favourable position, as there were 1,007 inhabitants per doctor. The Piešťany District had 44 doctors at that time. SULÁČEK, Jozef. *Biele plášte. Tragické osudy židovských lekárov na Slovensku v období druhej svetovej vojny. I. časť*. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2005, p. 29, 33; See also: LIPSCHER, Ladislav. *Židia v slovenskom štáte 1939 – 1945*. Banská Bystrica : Print-servis, 1992, p. 40.

doctors in the Slovak Medical Chamber were Jewish.⁶

In order to enforce the nationalist concept in Slovak society, shortly after 6 October 1938, the Slovak autonomous government tried to reduce the number of Jewish members in the medical profession according to the principle of *numerus clausus*, that is a quota of 4%. By Regulation No. 74/1939 Coll. of 24 April on the exclusion of Jews from public services, doctors lost the opportunity to be employees of the state, public self-governing corporations and institutes. Only the relevant ministries could grant them an exemption.⁷ However, crucial was Regulation No. 184/1939 Coll. of 25 July 1939 on regulations on the number of Jews practicing medicine, which legislatively implemented the four percent limit on the representation of Jews in the profession. Other doctors, outside the established framework, lost the right to practice in the Slovak State and also membership in the Medical Chamber.⁸ Even the Ministry of Interior was authorised, at the instigation of the Medical Chamber, to ban the treatment of “Aryans” by Jewish doctors.⁹ That is when some serious cracks in the availability of medical care showed up.¹⁰ Eventually, Regulation No. 198/1941, known as the Jewish Code, applied an absolute ban on the performance of veterinary and medical activities by Jews.¹¹ In 1942, numerous doctors, deprived of their jobs, were deported to concentration camps.

Not surprisingly, the majority of the population held distrust of Jewish doctors, as these citizens were being regularly persuaded within the persisting confessional anti-Judaism stereotypes that Jews were trying to poison Christians’ wells. Statements of Ľudovít Mutňanský, the broadcaster of the Reich-German transmitter, also carried the main methods of propaganda - to build fear and resistance against the enemy: “A Jew hates a Christian. A Jewish doctor has never been interested in healing a Gentile and has never been interested in the health condition of the Slovak nation.”¹² In 1943, after the first wave of deportations, there were Jewish doctors in Slovakia with the so-called economically necessary status.¹³ Nevertheless, the regime representatives were repeatedly challenging

6 Ibid.

7 *Slovenský zákonník*, 1939, p. 88.

8 In addition, Regulation No. 23/1941 Coll. authorised the Central Economic Office (*Ústredný hospodársky úrad, ÚHÚ*) to order a forced sale of medical and dental instruments and tools of these Jewish doctors. In *Slovenský zákonník*, 1941, p. 106.

9 For violation of individual enactments, the penalty was a financial sanction of 500 to 20,000 Ks, or a sentence of imprisonment for 6 months. In *Slovenský zákonník*, 1939, p. 372-373.

10 SULÁČEK, *Biele plášte...*

11 The so-called Jewish half-breeds - persons with two Jewish grandparents - were excluded from medical practice. For violating the provisions of the regulation, the penalty was a financial sanction in the amount of 500 to 50,000 Ks, or imprisonment for 5 to 30 days. In *Slovenský zákonník*, 1941, p. 643-683.

12 MUTŇANSKÝ, Ľudovít. *Tu ríšsky vysielateľ Viedeň... (Boj vo svetovom éteri o slovenskú pravdu a budúcnosť)* Vienna : self-published, 1939, p. 44.

13 This status was granted to persons needed by the state to guarantee the smooth running of the regime’s economic or public sector. They could be awarded by the president, the Central Economic Office or various ministries. These persons included doctors, dentists, veterinarians, various technicians, etc. NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. *Politika antisemitizmu a holokaust na Slovensku*. Banská Bystrica : Múzeum SNP, 2016, p. 57-58.

their legitimacy in the anti-Semitic propaganda: *“Two months ago, the Party organised a joint questionnaire event with the Guard. Its aim was to find out if and where Jews were needed as economic experts. The answer given by the leaders of the Party and the Guard was unanimous: They are not necessary; they can be easily replaced! (...)”*¹⁴

However, these events took place in a certain social context, the atmosphere of which was also created by other factors. The incidence and spread of sexually transmitted diseases was a complex socio-health problem stemming from the diverse economic and social situation in the state.¹⁵ The conservative-authoritarian regime of the Slovak Republic (1939 - 1945), led by a Catholic priest, understood its national identity as exclusively Christian and thus defined it in the preamble of the constitutional charter.¹⁶ In this sense, family had a special position in the Slovak society as the *“basic unit of the state”*¹⁷ and the bearer of the nation.

As part of the Slovak Family Day celebrations, J. Tiso praised the cult of the Slovak mother, Christian religiosity as the fundamental feature of the Slovak family, or of the Slovak identity in general: *“We celebrate the Slovak family, because just as Slovak mothers are healthy, so is the Slovak family, (...) because it lives morally according to God’s commandments (...). And this is a Slovak attribute. (...)”*¹⁸ The ideal of marriage and an orderly family, inspired by the papal encyclical *Casti connubii*, was an inseparable union in the context of the Slovak society according to Christian morality. Divorce and separation were literally seen as a threat to the state. The same was true for extramarital affairs and infidelity, which were criticised by political and spiritual elites.¹⁹

That is why the regime sought to take sole control of the country’s population policy and birth rate. The epicentre and culmination of these tendencies was the toughening of abortions. Act No. 66/1941 of 26 April 1941 on the protection of the foetus prohibited abortions, except in extreme cases, as well as the use, production and distribution of contraceptives under threat of financial sanctions or imprisonment in some cases for up to 15 years.²⁰

No less important were the attitudes towards prophylaxis. Legislators eventually adopted a pragmatic position on the use of condoms within this

14 Vážny hlas! In *Gardista*, 1943, Vol. 5, No. 168, p. 3.

15 FALISOVÁ, Anna – OZOROVSKÝ, Vojtech. Venerické choroby na Slovensku v minulosti a efekt akcie PN. In *Historický časopis*, 2021, Vol. 69, No. 1, p. 99-118.

16 *“The Slovak nation, under the protection of God Almighty, has endured in the living space designated for it, where with the help of Him, from whom all power and law come, he has established his free Slovak State. According to natural law, the Slovak State unites all the moral and economic forces of the nation into a Christian and national community (...)”* In *Slovenský zákonník*, 1939, p. 375.

17 ŠKORVÁNKOVÁ, Eva. Propagácia materstva v období prvej Slovenskej republiky (1939 – 1945). In TIŠLIAR, Pavol (ed.). *Populačné štúdie Slovenska 3*. Bratislava : Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo, 2014, p. 33.

18 Náš záujem. In *Slovák*, 1943, Vol. 25, No. 125, p. 1.

19 ŠKORVÁNKOVÁ, Propagácia materstva..., p. 33-111; ŠKORVÁNKOVÁ, Eva. *Strážkyne rodinných kozubov? Ženy v ideológii a politike Slovenského štátu*. Bratislava : Veda, 2021, p. 270; SZABÓ, Miloslav. *Potravy. Dejiny slovenských kultúrnych vojen od Hlinku po Kuffu*. Bratislava : N Press, Ltd., 2020, p. 127.

20 *Slovenský zákonník*, 1941, p. 291-292.

restrictive legislation. In the end, condoms were not explicitly classified as contraceptives, although there was pressure during the law-making process to explicitly ban them. Historian Miloslav Szabó cites the statements of the Catholic theologian Alexander Spesz, whom the state authorities invited to meetings at the time of drafting anti-interruption legal norms. He commented on the section on criminal sanctions for the production and distribution of the means of preventing conception: *“Christian morality does not acknowledge the difference between the means that are used exclusively for conception and the means that are also intended to protect against sexually transmitted diseases (...) Anyone who wants to prevent fertilisation can argue that they used the product only against infection. (...) I, therefore, propose this to be “exclusively” omitted from the paragraph in question.”*²¹

Ultimately, the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Hlinka Guard, Alexander Mach, also made efforts to standardise certain social attitudes and to “optimise” the sexual behaviour of the population in Slovakia. In April 1941 he said: *“The greatest treasure of our state is the health of the nation and the largest number of healthy children. These days, we are having all the means by which unborn children were killed seized,²² and we cannot be fooled by the arguments that these means protect people from an infection. (...) Whoever cannot have a wife and children through his own fault will be the last in the nation. The unmarried and childless through their own fault are inferior and they will be made to experience this feeling at every step of their lives.”*²³

Even among doctors in the field of dermatovenerology, there was no clear consensus on the relationship between the spread of venereal diseases and the restriction of access to condoms. The assistant at the clinic of dermatovenerology in Bratislava, Imrich Klučík, analysed the problem of the increase in diseases in selected territories after 1941. He claimed that he was not convinced of the direct effect of the restrictions on the rise of diseases because, according to the case history, the peasantry and working classes did not use condoms even before 1941. On the other hand, he acknowledged that when *“condoms are to play a vigorous role in reducing diseases, a broad-based propaganda action should be set in motion (...), which I do not know if it should be supplemented by handing out condoms or, more thoroughly, their distribution to succeed.”* At the end, he reiterated the complexity of the problem: *“the issue of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases cannot be placed on the narrow basis of the use or non-use of condoms (...).”*²⁴

The head of this clinic and chairman of the Association for the Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Ján Tréger,²⁵ as an addressed expert in the context of rising diseases of soldiers on the Eastern Front and on official obstructions by

21 SZABÓ, *Potraty*, p. 76.

22 Condoms gradually became undercounter goods.

23 Prísaha kurzistov HG v Skalici. In *Gardista*, 1941, Vol. 3, No. 91, p. 5.

24 KLUČÍK, Imrich. K stavu pohlavných chorôb. In *Slovenský lekár*, 1942, p. 575-579.

25 Archív mesta Bratislavy, f. Spolky v Bratislave – Policajné riaditeľstvo, box 47, No. 175, Slovak Country Association Against Venereal Diseases.

the state to provide condoms, wrote: *“Based on clinical experience, confirmed by foreign literature, we are of the opinion that the prophylactic agents used in practice (...) are not sufficient means of protection against infection.”*²⁶

In March 1942, the head of the Pharmaceutical Administration of the Ministry of National Defence, cpt. doctor Viliam Kraus admitted that *“the provision of condoms in the summer of 1941, which I sent to the field, was made impossible to me and literally forbidden /Min. Econ., Min. Interior /”*.²⁷

After the intervention covered by expert opinions, the state finally provided supplies for the soldiers on the Eastern Front, to which also the Diocesan Archbishop of Nitra, Karol Kmeťko, reacted reluctantly. In November 1943, he made a remark to President Tiso: *“We have a law banning contraceptives. Yet, it is rumoured that such [contraceptives] are being “officially distributed” to soldiers at home and at the front.”*²⁸

That is why these two types of policies were necessarily about to meet at some point and find their intersection in the daily practice of the inhabitants of the Slovak society in 1939 – 1945. Such a case may point to the consequence of the combination of strongly rooted, state-implemented anti-Semitism on the one hand, and the atmosphere of the society-wide stigma, which was driven by restrictive legislation as well as the religious-conservative character of the state.

In the current state of research in this area and on the basis of the problematic reconstruction of the presented case, I will not allow myself to express generalising thesis regarding the thinking of the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic 1939 – 1945. The text is intended to be a rather hypothetical contribution to the reflections on the effects of different types of policies and on society in the period 1939 – 1945.

26 Vojenský historický archív (abbreviated to VHA), f. Ministerstvo národnej obrany, box 290, No. 92, confidential.

27 VHA, f. Ministerstvo národnej obrany, box 290, No. 92.198/25-1942, confidential.

28 SNA, f. S, No. 424-3.

Appendix

Official record of the Internal Public Administration Commissioner of the Piešťany District Office from 22 February 1943 on the occurrence of a venereal disease in Dobrá Voda.

Official record²⁹

On 21/11/1943, at the HSĽS political school in Dobrá Voda, the midwife there reported me the following:

“There are many cases of venereal diseases in the village of Dobrá Voda, mainly among the labour workers, but also among the agricultural workers. These diseases are now being untreated and are spreading very dangerously. The local district doctor Dr Kulka³⁰ from Chtelnice as a Jew is not being called by the population and the population is not getting treated. Children are already being born with venereal diseases.”

It would be needed that the district doctor orders a check-up of those persons suspected of having venereal diseases and orders their treatment. The treatment of these patients is in the public interest.

Piešťany, on 22/11/1943

On guard!³¹

Int. Pub. Adm. Com.³²

29 ŠA TT, f. OÚ Piešťany, box 103, file No. 290/43, pres. venereal disease spread.

30 MUDr. Ľudovít Kulka (1901 -?) graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Brno in 1925. From 1927, he worked as a district and hospital physician in Chtelnice. In 1939, he received a work permit, and in 1940, based on a decision of the Ministry of Interior, he was placed in the quota according to the principle of *numerus clausus*. Since 1942, he had worked on the basis of a granted presidential exemption (since 1943 only a partial one). He survived WW II and later worked as a district doctor in Chtelnice, Piešťany and Nováky. SULÁČEK, Jozef. *Biele plášte. Tragické osudy židovských lekárov na Slovensku v období druhej svetovej vojny. II. časť*. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2006, p. 58.

31 There is a handwritten instruction on the front of the document saying: “After the findings provided by the midwife, examine which persons are concerned and provide a detailed report. On guard!”

32 The position of Internal Public Administration Commissioner of the Piešťany District Office was entrusted to Rudolf Šalát.

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Daniela OZACKY-STERN

"My Experience in 1942-45 Granted Me a Clear Vision of Life that I cannot Escape from, for Better or Worse": Shmuel Ramati's Long Journey from Nováky Camp to Israel with no Legs

Teodor Neumann was born in November 1929 in Topolčany, Slovakia, and died as Shmuel Ramati in December 2012 in Bitan Aharon, Israel. In between, he had led a remarkable life, survived wars and adversities, and overcame losses and severe physical disability. As a child when World War II broke out, he was imprisoned with his family in the Nováky forced labour camp where he spent, according to his testimony, a relatively unconcerned life. When the Germans approached Nováky in late August 1944, the gates were opened, and the Jews were able to escape. The Neumann family was split – mother and sister stayed in a nearby village and were later transported to Terezin concentration camp, while father and Shmuel started the long journey to the mountains to join the partisans. The elder brother who was a communist activist joined the Red Army.

Not long afterwards Shmuel lost his father and his two legs. He spent the last year of the war in hospitals and when he could walk again on the prosthesis, he immigrated to Israel in 1946 to join the Palmah, a Jewish underground organisation, and in 1948 fought in the war of independence. All this time, he tried to hide his disability from his friends and commanders and functioned as a regular soldier.

He later studied and became a much-loved teacher and educator, a talented sculptor and a family man, father to four sons. His incredible life story is a model of the triumph of the spirit over the body. He used to talk about his experience during WWII in Slovakia to students and varied audiences around Israel, underlining its lessons and morals and not the suffering and hardships. His widow, Edna Ramati says that he had always tried to find the bright side in every trial, even in his own memories of the Holocaust, and used to say that keeping their humanity was the true victory of the survivors.¹

1 Interview with Edna Ramati, Bitan Aharon, Israel (2 May 2021).

Ramati gave two testimonies about his life in Slovakia. The first was in script, in 1957, when Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial institute, held a writing contest called "Youth under the shadow of gallows". He wrote in a literary style about his life as a youngster in the Nováky camp. The testimony ends on the day of liberation from the camp and does not tell the rest of the story. The second document is an interview held in 1963,² in which Ramati told the full story of what he and his family had gone through in 1941 – 1946, including during the Slovak National Uprising and among the partisans.³

Reading the two documents leaves an unsolved enigma: in none of them Ramati says that he was injured while attacking and killing a German sentry, a version he told in later years to his family and students. He just briefly mentions that his legs had been frozen when he fell into a stream. This will be further discussed in the paper.



Alinko Neumann - Shmuel's brother

Shmuel Ramati Testimony to Yad Vashem, 1957⁴

In an attached letter to the story Ramati wrote, he briefly presented himself as follows:

"I am 26 years old, a teacher of humanities in the high school of kibbutz Ein Ha'horesh. I was born in Topolčany, Slovakia, to Jacob Neumann and Yulia Volstein.

When the war broke and deportations started, I moved with my family to Nováky labour camp for Jews where we stayed till the beginning of the Slovak

2 Interviewed by Yeshayahu Jelinek. The full text in Hebrew can be found in: Moreshet Archive, sign. A. 177.

3 This interview is part of a corpus of several dozen interviews held by Prof. Yeshayahu Jelinek and Akiva Nir for Moreshet Archive in Israel in the early 1960s, which had been hardly used in research. Ramati's testimonies were not even known to his own family.

4 The original text in Hebrew can be found in: Yad Vashem Archive, sign. O.39-119.

Uprising on 28 August 1944. I later served as a guard among the partisans, in Nováky and Banská Bystrica. When the uprising was over, on 25 October 1944, I went out to the forests with my father. He died there and I joined a partisan unit with whom I lived and fought till 11 November 1944, when they took me to a hospital in Banská Bystrica because my feet froze. There, being a POW, they amputated both my legs under the knees. I stayed in the hospital till liberation. Then I moved to a hospital in Topoľčany for a few months and later joined a youth training centre in Bratislava. On 1 April 1946, I left Czechoslovakia and arrived in Israel on 23 April legally with a certificate. I was under the "Youth Aliyah"⁵ organisation in kibbutzim... and learnt to be a shoemaker. In August 1947 I was recruited with my group to the Palmah,⁶ studied radio operation and participated in escorting convoys. When the Egyptian invasion started in the south,⁷ I was stationed with my group at the 7th Regiment and was appointed Officer of Communication.

After 10 days of battles,⁸ I was sent to a hospital where they operated on my legs again and stayed in the rehabilitation ward until I was released from the army. After that, I studied art and history in a teachers' seminar (tuition paid by the Ministry of Defense) and moved to kibbutz Bar'am⁹ where I had lived until 1956 and worked... A year ago, I left the kibbutz and now I am in Ein Ha'horesh."¹⁰

In his attached testimony, Ramati wrote in length about his adolescence in the Nováky camp. The first encounter was traumatic but soon he, like other children, had managed to lead a "normal" life and his memories are painted in nice colours and even a kind of nostalgia. Edna, his widow, recalls that whenever he spoke about that time to his own children, he used to tell only the positive aspects of life in the camp – like the solidarity and mutual help, and the freedom he felt despite the barbed wires. His testimony is written in a good and rich Hebrew, poetic and accurate. It ends on the day of liberation from the camp.

Following are combined excerpts from Shmuel Ramati's two testimonies about his experiences during WWII.¹¹

5 A Jewish organisation that rescued thousands of Jewish children from the Nazis during and after the war and arranged for their resettlement in Israel kibbutzim and youth villages that became both home and school.

6 Underground resisting the British Mandate in Palestine.

7 The Arab invasion started on the night of 15 May 1948 following the day of the Declaration of Independence of Israel and the evacuation of the British army from Palestine. The Egyptian army headed from Gaza towards central Israel but had been stopped.

8 Battles that took place between 8 - 18 July 1948 all over the country and had changed the strategic situation in favour of the Israeli army.

9 Bar'am is situated on the border with Lebanon in the north of Israel. Ramati was one of its founders after the war of independence.

10 *Yad Vashem Archive*, sign. O.39-119. A letter to Yad Vashem, 1957 (no exact date).

11 Shortened and translated by the author of this paper.

First Days in the Nováky Camp

“When restrictions against the Jews were issued, they nevertheless kept one law – to let families who lived within the borders of Slovakia stay together. So, if one family member was an essential worker for the economy and the war effort, most cities preferred to move them to the place of work. In our region, they concentrated the Jews in three main forced labour camps: Nováky, the largest, Sered’ and Vyhne. My 18-year-old brother Alinko Neumann was recruited to the Nováky camp as a metal worker, thus, our family had to move there as well.

One bright day in February 1942, about 40 families were loaded on animals’ train cars and led under heavy guard of the *Hlinka* fascists to the train station in Nováky. Arriving there, we were thrown out under screams and whips and started a march of six kilometres to the campsite.

More Jewish families from other parts of Slovakia were there, altogether about 100 families with small children and old people. All went through a humiliating process of stripping naked, intimate body search in public, looting and then registration. It was meant to deprive us of our human nature. No one had an idea what would be the next step – would we stay in the camp or be deported to Poland for extermination? I remember how cold it was, freezing outside and cold inside, people were trembling out of fear and chillness and the fascists were just laughing.

We were taken to a huge dark shack with nothing but straw on the floor. Families took their poor belongings and found a corner to stretch on the ground exhausted. Soon all talks and whisperers subsided, and a heavy silence fell upon the place. Children fell asleep fast, but the adults lay awake for hours worried and terrified.

In the morning, the sun shined, we, children, were curious to look around that strange place. We already knew that we were different from the Jews in the other part of the camp, who were to be deported to Poland. Our group was more “privileged”. On the second day, the adults elected a committee and its head gave his first speech saying that we must prove our productivity so the Germans and their Slovak collaborators would not have any claim against us. Everyone agreed silently. So, in the following days, they started acting in subdivisions spreading around the country holding special documents, to purchase goods from Jewish farms and factories. Sometimes, they brought with them the owners themselves to help build what had become a small Jewish economic “superpower” to meet the German demands.

Daily Life in Nováky

Soon we could witness a growing industrial enterprise, huge factories of textile sewing uniforms, underwear and more. A carpentry and locksmith’ workshops, a quarry, bricks factory and much more. Otto Mendler, an engineer, was one of the main organisers.

All this time transports from the adjacent camp to Poland continued. In time, they had stopped and the three parts of the Nováky camp were united to what the big sign at the southern gate read: "A labour camp for Jews in Nováky". Jewish Police were formed, its members wearing blue uniforms and holding whips. We heard that in the camps in Poland the Jewish police used to assist the Germans in their plans, but our police never raised their whips on us.

While the grownups were busy strengthening the community and economy, we, the kids, had to go back to school. But there were those, including me, who refused and preferred to work.

At first, I worked in the uniform factory under one of the best tailors in Slovakia at the time, but soon I was bored. One day I collected pieces of cloth, leftovers from the sewing machines, and made small mice. I threw them in beds of old women who became hysterical, and few even needed medical treatment. That was the end of my tailoring career.

We were a group of kids who decided to start our own initiatives. One of us used to grow silk worms and we had an idea to create a workshop to produce silk. We went to Mendler who was very sympathetic and gave us a place to work. The carpentry made special tables for us. A time of freedom started. We were allowed to go out of the camp and look for eggs and worms and then to collect mulberry leaves for them to eat. As it has developed and we were about 30 kids engaged in this project, an adult was nominated to run it. He arranged for wagons, and later trucks, to bring the food to the growing number of worms who grew hungrier and fatter. In the end, when they turned into cocoons, they were moved to another factory to produce the thin delicate silk threads, and our beautiful shack remained empty.

Thinking of an alternative we came out with the idea to raise angora hares. Again, Mendler agreed to help and in two weeks we got two dozen pregnant hares. We took good care of them and soon they multiplied and gave a lot of angora wool. The first crop was 20 kilograms. Mrs Fridman, who was experienced in spinning, got a primitive spindle and made beautiful sweaters and pullovers. She guided other women and the factory prospered and had become profitable. However, there was pressure on us to go back to school despite our success, and after long negotiations, we agreed, on the condition that twice a week we would be allowed to work. The school was now bigger and more organised with good teachers who taught all topics. We had exams, grades, and certificates. Gradually, they managed to create for us a kind of "normal" world. There were sports fields and in the second summer even a swimming pool had been dug, almost by hand with the entire camp population volunteering to work. We even published a school newspaper. I think that we were the only Jewish kids in Slovakia at that time who could express themselves in writing. It filled us with a sense of importance. We had to submit the material to the censorship of the fascist commander but, nevertheless, managed to type, print, and distribute it weekly.

In the summer of 1943, children of the camp were allowed to spend a vacation in the homes of Jews who stayed in the cities due to their importance to the economy. I was sent to Banská Štiavnica, a beautiful mountain place in central Slovakia, where there are mines, including pits of gold. I remember watching how gold was melted to make coins. The most surprising thing was that those Jews, who lived outside walls and fences, seemed to have a worse life than ours. For the next summer of 1944, we invited 140 of these Jewish children to spend their vacation with us in Nováky camp. We took them for trips in the forests and played outside. They enjoyed it a lot.

And then came August.

The Underground in Nováky

As youngsters who were wandering in and out of the camp, we were sometimes sent to do errands for the underground organisation. We did not know what they were planning but could tell that something was going on. They would send us to take messages to people outside the camp, near the coal mines. We always went in groups and played in a certain place where vast meadows stretched between the trees. While playing, someone would approach us and ask if there is something for him and we would give him the note without knowing its content. As far as I know – none of us dared open those notes.

The main person in touch with us in these matters was Špitzer.¹² Many evenings we had gathered, and he would play the guitar, sing, and tell us stories about the civil war in Spain. It was a kind of “education for freedom”. He also guided us on how to behave when Dieter Wisliceny visited the camp and how to keep secrets. Our teachers were also involved in those preparations towards visits of high-rank officials and instructed us not to give away any information.

Towards the end of 1943, we heard rumours about partisans approaching the area, Russians among them. I remember one Russian who visited the camp, played volleyball with us, took part in our singing evening, and even went with us to the meadows. There were whispers that he was a partisan but as children, we did not pay much attention. We realised that it was true only later, on 29 August, when he showed up in the camp with a group of partisans, wearing Russian boots and a red star on his clothes.

I knew about two underground groups in the camp – one small Jewish-Zionist with its centre in Sered', and the more established communist group, some of its members had participated in the civil war in Spain. They were better organised, and their main activity was forging documents for Jews and others so they could escape. But this was stopped when someone was arrested and interrogated and confessed that he gave his documents to another man. This other man was my brother and they arrested him for a few days and searched his room where he kept Marxist literature. My brother joined the Communist Party back in 1938.

12 Juraj Špitzer later wrote his memoirs from the camp in his book: ŠPITZER, Juraj. *I did not Want to be a Jew*. Pittsburgh : Dorrance Publishing, 1997.

They soon released him because he was a prisoner in the camp anyway and also because he was the only electrician in the camp, and they needed him for work.

Since I lived with my brother at the same barrack, I knew about their efforts to smuggle arms. Every now and then, when I was cleaning the room, I would find parts of pistols or guns, Nagans (revolver) and Parabellums – never full weapons, only scattered parts. My brother did not send me on missions because it was not customary to risk one's family member. There was a silent understanding between us – he knew that I was aware of his underground activity, but we never talked about it. Most of the young people who lived in our barrack were part of the underground.

Last Days in the Camp

Huge unrest had been felt at the camp since the end of July – early August 1944. There were rumours that Slovakia might change sides and support the Soviet Union (like Romania did). It was already known that the Germans must withdraw via Slovakia and if they took control, they would implement the "Final Solution" against the Jews. In addition, it was understood that the Soviets also must cross Slovakia if they wanted to push the Germans further. Therefore, everyone was alert and a semi-organisation of mass escape started and plans to join the resistance were made.

On 25 August 1944, they announced the Slovak government's decision to withdraw from its pact with Germany and the Nováky camp became unrestful. The gendarmery was afraid that the whole camp population might run away, and they wanted to calm us down. One day we heard on the camp loudspeakers the commander declaration that the Jews must not fear, and he swore to let us escape if there is a danger of Germany occupying Slovakia. He also ensured us that he is keeping telegraph contact with the authorities, so he should know when danger is coming. In a few days, people stopped working and were prepared to leave with their luggage ready. Updates from the front were given constantly over the loudspeakers.

Soon we heard that the uprising had started. No one was thinking about the future and what it entails for us, we were so happy, it felt like instead of blood we had joy and fire flowing in our veins.

The Night of the Escape

On the night of the uprising, my brother and his friends were running around to collect the parts of the arms hidden in different places and they assembled them all night. In the morning, 70 camp inmates were armed and went out to their first battle near Baťovany. It was their first military experience.

Only on that night, we realised that the missions we had carried out as children were part of the underground activity. As far as I know, most camp inmates did not support the underground and resented it. The visitors from the

Jewish Center – Oscar Neumann and Rabbi Fridel always warned us not to be dragged by the hot-tempered youth and not to endanger the life we have had. I remember Neumann's speeches, how he said that there are people who think only about themselves and forget the public interest.

The common knowledge among the public was that if and when they escape – it would be together and under the order of the headquarters and that anyone who takes the initiative to run away separately puts the others in danger. This was odd, because how did they imagine such a huge crowd escaping together? They were sure to be discovered and caught.

On the last evening, we heard shots of machine guns. I remember thinking that this was the first time I hear shots. We, the young ones, were posted by the telephones in case someone calls and gives orders. I myself was a go-between who delivered messages and notes in the middle of the night.

At 3:30 at night, the partisans entered the camp. The next morning a siren was heard followed by announcements saying that all restrictions are lifted and that everyone is free to leave. They also explained where trains are to be found and which are the areas controlled by the revolutionary government. The camp commander ordered the guards to stay inside and not to take their posts. However, he refused to give the guards' weapons to the partisans, but they took them anyway without any resistance. They left the guards imprisoned in the camp for three days, while the inmates had left.

At 10 o'clock in the morning, the last Jew left and had the honour of taking down the big sign from the gate which said "Nováky Labour Camp for Jews". This labour camp no longer existed, and its inmates were set free.

First Days of Freedom

On that same day, my family moved to a small village nearby Cigel'. The next morning, I returned to the camp to bring my sister who stayed behind and to find out what was going on and what could we do next, because there was no point in staying in that remote village and waiting for the mercy of God. The camp was almost empty but for a group of partisans who were foreigners to us.

I found out that they needed people to guard and defend the camp and its property, so I got a job with a few other young Jews. They gave us arms and short training, a real fighting training, we regarded it as an adventure. They gave us an assignment to accompany the camp's former guards to Topolčany. When we arrived there, we met armed units, some of whom we met later in Banská Bystrica, they were active in the uprising.

Back in Nováky, a military man trained us further how to use guns, move and cover, attack, entrench, use hand-grenades – the basic fighting actions. We were mostly 14 – 17 years old boys and some adults. The training was short and after 4 – 5 days I was posted for a night watch. The camp held valuables – the private possessions of the former inmates and the factories' equipment. We guarded against looting by the locals. But the locals looked upon us with sympathy, they

themselves were recruited to build fortifications and trenches. However, we also encountered anti-Semitism and complaints were heard that everything is done to protect the Jews and liberate them, but they are not taking part in the hard work. True, there were Jews who did not work because they were busy looking for shelters for themselves and their families. I cannot judge them now, but in retrospect, they might have been right. The fact of the matter is that I and my father could not take my mother and sister along with the military unit when the defence lines collapsed in Zemianske Kostolány and had to leave them behind while we withdrew. They were caught by the Gestapo and never saw father again and I ended up badly. Maybe, if we had taken care of the family those days – it might have been different.

The Journey to Banská Bystrica

I walked to Kostolány and met my father and brother on the very day they blew the petrol containers so the Germans would not seize them. There was already a German bombardment. The withdrawal was chaotic, with no discipline whatsoever, the units collapsed, the area was surrounded by Germans and only one direction remained open – towards Handlová. People just tried to save themselves.

I stayed with my brother for a few days but later he went with his Jewish unit to another place. I know that he visited the Gestapo disguised and brought my mother and sister some food and clothing. At the end of December, he flew to the USSR and was trained politically and militarily, then returned with the Soviet Red Army as an NKVD officer and proceeded to Vienna with the army as a politruk. Later he came back and got a governmental job in Czechoslovakia where he stayed after the war and married a local woman. My brother's end was tragic. After years of serving the communist regime which collapsed in the early 1990s, he was murdered and drawn in the Danube by its opponents and his corpse was found in Hungary.

My father and I started our journey to Banská Bystrica because there were people there engaged in saving Jews and we wanted a solution for my mother and sister. We met many Jews on the way and used to take random rides with trucks and carriages until we arrived.

In Banská Bystrica a new chapter started. We were put in the local Jewish school with many others and approached the partisan headquarter. They immediately sent me to work as a guard of what they called "unreliable elements", former *Hlinka* members or *Volksdeutsche* who were employed in digging trenches and building fortifications. At first, there were not enough weapons for all the guards, but that had changed when the first German Prisoners of War arrived, and we were given their guns. My father held a different task – he was an expert in quarries, so they took him to advice and inspect the drilling of pits around a big train tunnel in order to blow it up when they withdraw. He was not paid but got food stamps. Both of us were employed till 23 October.

As far as I know, Jews refrained from joining the Slovak Army and I guess the army too was not eager to take them. After all – this was an army of a fascist regime. The partisans, non-Jews as well, resented the army because it was bureaucratic and concerned mostly with officers' roles and procedures instead of posting soldiers in strategic places. Also, it was obvious that there was a rift inside the regime itself which would later influence the uprising and lead to wrong moves.

Most Nováky Jews who lived in the school in Banská Bystrica did not join the partisans, many of them were underaged. They always stuck together, even after the war. They were very productive and knew each other well, so they figured that living together would benefit them.¹³

About the Jews' attitude towards the uprising: there were those who participated and others who thought they should wait for a solution to the Jewish situation and that recruitment would not solve their problems.¹⁴ Indeed, during the uprising, there were many incidents of anti-Semitism, even though it was not allowed officially among the partisans. It was less felt in Banská Bystrica, due to its Lutheran population which was not under the Catholic hegemony.

After the Uprising

After the failure of the uprising, we withdrew to Staré Hory where we heard that all roads were blocked, and it was better to reorganise in the forests. Again, a chaotic withdrawal occurred, families were torn apart, robbery and stealing of food arose, there was no order whatsoever. German bombardments caused a real massacre. We found refuge in a shack inside the forest and met many Jews and others hiding. There was a harsh argument about whether it is safe to hold on to whatever arms we had or to get rid of them in case the Germans captured us. My father, I and our friends collected arms because we knew that the German would kill every Jew anyway – armed or not. So, I held on to my gun for hunting for food and for committing suicide if I was caught.

On 29 November, we started towards Prašivá, a steep crossing in the mountains. It was raining and snowing hard. Suddenly, we heard shouts in German: "Go down, do not climb up!" No road could be seen only a slippery meadow. It was so crowded, people hung to each other's legs and instead of helping themselves, they hampered the others. Suddenly, we heard the shouts again – "go down!" It was obvious that no friend would advise us to do so. Most people continued to climb. Later, when all was over, we saw a dreadful scene – the Germans shot indiscriminately at the crowd who went down, impossible to estimate how many were killed or captured. After the war, they discovered a large mass grave there.

13 200 Nováky Jews took part in the Slovak National Uprising in an organised unit. See OZACKY-STERN, Daniela: Testimony from the Moreshet Archive: Jacob Spira, a Medical Doctor in Nováky Forced Labour Camp. In *Judaica et Holocaustica*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 66.

14 More about Jews participating in the uprising see for example: BÜCHLER, Yehoshua (Robino). Jewish fighting and the fighting of Jews – the case of Slovakia In *The Book of the Jewish Partisans Vol. 2*. Merchavia : Sifriat Po'alim, 1959, p. 291-314; Moreshet Archive, sign. D.2.1263.

I still cannot understand how we managed to climb; it was only by the force of awareness of the dangers awaiting us. When we reached the top, we saw a huge plain encircled by forests. We walked in the fog to an unknown destination, met people who warned us of Germans here or there, and people turned around walking in different directions... I would never forget this sight, human beings wandering around with no control of themselves, it was inhuman. We had nothing to lose, we spent so much energy on this aimless walk, and it was getting dark. In the first place seemingly fit, we dug a small burrow, me and my father, and fell asleep.

With the Partisans and the Injury

A partisan we met the next day started organising us into a unit, we were about 80 people. We did not identify as Jews and did not ask others for their religion. Our main roles were to disrupt German transportation on the roads and guard the partisans who were concentrated there. We did harass German transports, attacked their heavy vehicles, and caused them fatalities. They would leave their dead behind, and we would take their arms.

On 11 November, all our provisions were gone, and we remained without food for several days, every now and then hunting or eating snow. It was very cold, and we were ordered not to take off our shoes and clothes, so we don't freeze. We slept in the open under the snow, it was comfortable, warm. One day when we were posted on guard, my father disappeared. I was permitted to look for him, found pieces of his clothing but did not find him. I suppose he died freezing, or maybe was killed by the Germans, I never saw him again.¹⁵

I was left alone.

Someone from the group took his shoes off and his feet got immediately swollen and frozen, he could not walk again, lost his mind, and died. I saw this and decided not to follow suit and to keep my shoes on all the time. This was my predestination because during the days my feet got wet and at night they froze, so it felt like an icy bandage.

On 14 November, the unit decided to go down to the village of Moštenica not just to get provisions, but to occupy the whole place. I was the youngest, less suspicious, so they sent me forward to check if there were Germans on the bridge that led to the village. I was given a pistol and had to jump over the stream to the main road. If I saw a German sentry – I should get rid of him, that was the order. I was a good athlete, so I believed that I could jump over the creek which was a few meters wide. But my legs were heavy and rigid and one of them hit the water. I immediately felt a huge pain but continued walking.

¹⁵ In later years, Ramati told the story about his father hearing at that time that his wife and daughter were taken to a death camp and could not tolerate this. He ran away crying and shouting and then disappeared never to be found. The wife Julia and daughter Pnina survived the war and immigrated to Israel in 1949.

- 2 -		- 3 -	
Osobný popis Person's Description		Manželka Partner - Wife	
Zaměstnanost Profession Occupation	<i>kurant</i>	Fotografie Photographic Photo	
Rodišisko a datum narození Last et date of birth	<i>Spolčany</i> <i>20. II. 1929</i>		
Bydliště Domicile Place of residence	BRATISLAVA	 Podpis manžela Signature of partner - Signature of the husband <i>Teodor Kuzman</i> a jeho manželky of de us Kuzman - and of his wife	
Obličej Visage Face	<i>čistě round</i>		
Hlava očí Colour des yeux Eyes	<i>šedá</i>		
Hlava vlasů Colour des cheveux Hair	<i>hnědá</i>		
Zvláštní známenka Signes particuliers Distinguishing marks or features	<i>bez nále některých předků</i>		
Deti - Enfants - Children			
Město Name - Name	Věk Age		



Shmuel's Ramati passport

that I need to be sent to a hospital, he came to see me and said: "they are going to kill you there, you are a partisan!" to which I answered - it could not be worse,

There was no guard on the bridge.¹⁶ Before going back to the forest, I collected some information and found out that the Germans had left the village. I told my friends, and the whole group went down to a local inn where they gave us food and drinks. I wanted to take a shower. It was over three weeks since I had washed. During that time, I cleaned myself only with snow. I knocked on a locals' door. I must have looked miserable, so they welcomed me with food and let me wash myself. For that, I had to take my shoes off. Looking at my bare feet I noticed cold blisters and stage 2 burns (I could tell based on my experience in the scouts) and knew that I needed emergency medical treatment or else I die. I asked my hosts to tell the unit commander

¹⁶ See another version of the story and a discussion later.

I need to get to the hospital. So, the local villagers took me by carriage to a nearby town. On the way, we encountered German guards and the villagers told them that they are taking a sick man to the hospital, so they let them pass.

In the hospital, they asked me how it happened, and I said: "I was in the forest, I am a partisan, and this is what happened." They registered me as a POW and put me in a special shed of prisoners. I gave a false name and said that I have no papers. On 21 November, one day after my 15th birthday, they amputated one leg and five days later – the second leg. I stayed there up until the liberation of Banská Bystrica on 25 March 1945.

The doctors and the director of the hospital were Slovaks, but they were under the inspection of the Germans. They never asked me if I was Jewish, but I am certain they knew the truth. The director was an extraordinary man.¹⁷ I know that there were a few more Jews there, one of them with forged papers and another who identified as a Jew and was also considered a POW. The priests – both Lutheran and Catholic – used to bless me and pray for me and execute all the holy ceremonies beside my bed. After the war, they confessed that they knew I was Jewish but said that saving a human soul is more important. They had shown nobility and sanctity. The Germans did not interfere with the hospital day to day work, all they did was to post guards outside it.

***Author's note:** The Ramati family and all his friends heard another story about the day of the injury: When Shmuel approached the bridge, he saw a German guard walking. He attacked him and they both fell to the water. The German drowned and froze to death and Shmuel managed to get out and inform his colleagues that the road was clear. Edna insists that this is the only story she had heard from him and that when they were in Slovakia, he took the family to that very place and recounted the details of the event.*

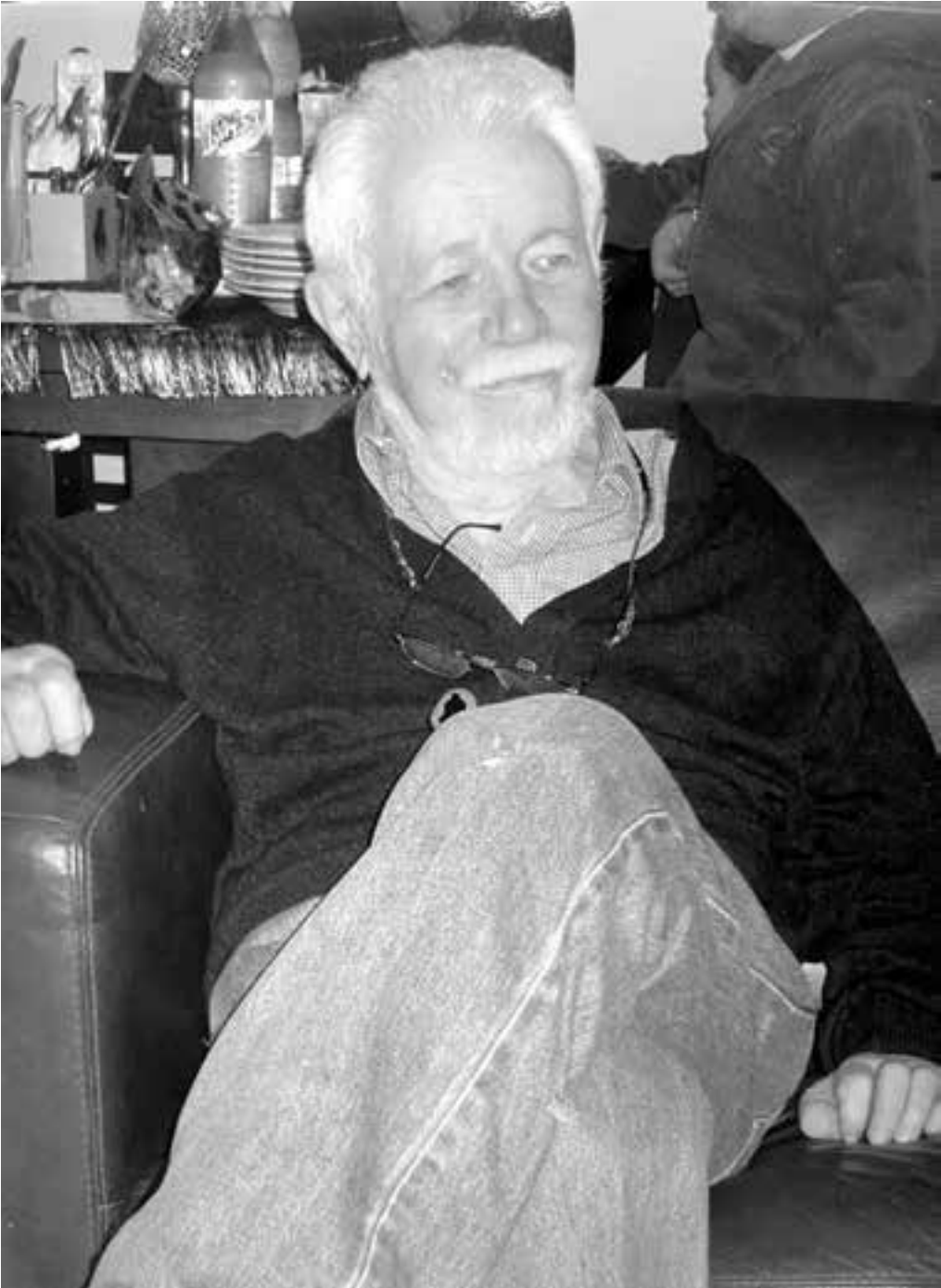
If this is the truth, it is a heroic story, so why did he conceal it in both testimonies and only told it much later? His wife presumes that being a gentle and sensitive person, he did not want to admit to killing a human being, even though he was an enemy. On the other hand – if there was one German on the bridge, it is probable that there were others in the village. It seems like this riddle would never be solved.

After the War

When the war was over, I got military transportation to Topolčany... and was taken to the local hospital. My mother and sister came back from Terezin and my brother returned from the USSR. They took me to Bratislava where I got a prosthesis.

There, I was registered as "partisanski". When I recovered and decided to emigrate to Israel, the Slovak Foreign Ministry forced me to apply for citizenship and when I got it, I had to yield and sign a paper giving up all the rights I was entitled

¹⁷ Edna remembers Shmuel telling her that the doctors put a sign on his room door which read "Typhoid", so no one dared enter to check his identity.



Shmuel Ramati

to as a citizen and a war invalid. Much later, I tried to apply for some pension, but they refused and showed me that document signed by me, so I was done with them! I came to Israel (which was then under British Mandate) in April 1946.

In Retrospect

When asked about his feelings looking back at what he had gone through, Ramati did not hesitate:

In Nováky I encountered my Jewishness for the first time. I grew up in a secular home and joined a Socialist Zionist Movement. Only in Nováky, I have learnt to appreciate the good Jews who could organise their economic, social, and cultural life splendidly, despite living in a wired camp. My parents too regarded Nováky as a unique experience where we had discovered the sources of vitality and solidarity in us, qualities that we had not realised we possessed. The climax was during the uprising – when our best fellows took part in it. This meant that we still had hope, that we are not alone, and that we can find a collective solution together. In Nováky, I learnt to love my people, it still grants me strength even now. I also learnt that as much as I succeeded to disguise as a non-Jew, as a citizen like everyone in Topolčany, in the uprising and after the war – the moment they found out that I am Jewish, things had changed.

The life experience I acquired in 1942–45 had directed me in a clear way of life that I cannot escape from – for better or worse. I could have stayed in Slovakia and enjoyed the status of a former partisan. My brother, who married a Slovak woman and stayed, begged me to do so and go back to school. The government also encouraged it, but I was guided by my experience and was determined to go to the land of the Jews.

In the Holocaust period one kind of Jewishness had been eliminated, but here and now we are creating a new kind!

In September 1994, Nováky camp survivors in Israel gathered in Ramat Ha'sharon, a city in central Israel. In his opening speech, Juraj Špitzer contemplated the memories from the camp and their meaning: "Despite the oppression, hate and fear", he said, "for me, Nováky symbolises the creation of a new culture, a new nation. We were a random group of people who had overcome loss and depression, but chose life, formed a creative community, active in culture, education, and sports, never surrendered to slavery. We were a semi-independent people who, towards the end, even established its defence force. This was the place in which, with all regret, we had grown up and matured."¹⁸ These words seem like an echo of other survivors' feelings as well and correspond with the way Shmuel Ramati interpreted his two formative years in the camp.

When he left Czechoslovakia in 1946, Ramati vowed never to return. But in 2003 – 2004 after his retirement, he suddenly suggested to his wife to go there and

18 ŠPITZER, Juraj. Stretnutie Bývalých väzňov konc. Prac. Tábora Nováky 29. 9. 1994 v Izraeli In *Koncentračný a pracovný tabor pre židov Nováky 1942 – 1944*. (privat publishing, no date).

stay for a year, which had expanded to three years, “the best time of my life” says Edna. They visited all the milestones of his early life, sometimes with their children, and he told his story time and again. After all, this was the place where he had been shaped as a person, where, according to his testimony, he got “a clear vision of life that I cannot escape from, for better or worse”.

In the last years of his life, Shmuel and Edna Ramati had lived in an assisted living facility in central Israel. He had time to devote to his art and kept a sculpture workshop where he had spent long hours. With four sons and nine grandchildren, life was good and busy.

One ordinary day, Shmuel was lying on a high treatment bed and when he was done, he stretched his arms to take the prosthesis standing aside. For an instance, he lost his balance and fell, hitting his head badly. A few days later, at 83, Shmuel Ramati died due to his injury of 68 years before. Thus, the cycle of his remarkable life was completed, leaving a heritage of extraordinary courage, optimism and hope.

Judaica et Holocaustica**Reviews**

KARLÍČEK, Petr. *Napíná Doba. Politické Karikatury (a satira) Čechů, Slováků a Českých Němců (1933 – 1953)*. Praha : Nakladatelství Universum, 2018, 328 p. ISBN 978-80-242-5996-3.

The monograph by Petr Karlíček, a Czech historian – archivist who specialises in cartoon humorous genres, Czechoslovak-German relations, and the Czech-German border area – is based on the author's dissertation finished in 2015 at the Faculty of Arts of the Ján Evangelist Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem.

The title suggests that Petr Karlíček is mapping an extremely difficult time period, full of political, ideological, social, but also cultural or mental changes. Twists that kept pushing the boundaries, not just the physical ones. The author analyses this stage of history through a visual tradition. At the centre of his interest are political caricatures as unique sources illustrating in a specific way not only the time in which they were made but the key actors of that period as well.

Petr Karlíček included three historical periods. He follows the moment when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 and concludes the work with the end of the Stalin era in Czechoslovakia, in 1953. In terms of territorial boundaries, the book monitors the area of Czechoslovakia, although the author pointed out in the introduction that the nature of the preserved source base allowed him to include only limited facts within the researched framework – the creation of Czech and Slovak provenance as well as the production of Czech Germans. It must be said that the publication in question is not a comparative work. In terms of proportional balance, the author mainly uses sources from Czech provenance.

Since the nature and type of this review allow me to deal with the monograph only to a narrow extent, I will focus on some particular parts. I will, however, concentrate on the period 1938 – 1945 specifically.

The publication is divided into five main chapters and several smaller units. Its structure is chronological-thematic. In the first chapter, entitled *Fenomen karikatury* (The Cartoon Phenomenon), the author discusses in detail the issue of anchoring the concept. Moreover, the author does not avoid the reflection of the contemporary understanding of related terms, their semantic overlaps, as well as various views on the functions of political caricature. He shows that the defining frameworks of this phenomenon are far from self-evident. This part could be given a brief reflection on the place of caricature and humorous

genres in historical research. As part of the content categorization of caricatures, Karlíček does not hesitate to offer the reader his own – as he himself claims – somewhat less complex typology (p. 16).

The chapter also provides an introduction to the profession of caricaturists, the various pitfalls of their work, which makes it all the more flexible and especially dynamic. It outlines common stereotypes, including national symbols through their standardised characters. It briefly characterizes the media environment, the mechanism of its gradual power control and, subsequently, central management. It also deals with a detailed description of selected magazines. Here, within the methodology, I would like to remark that I am a little disturbed by the lack of justification for the choice of the analysed material.

In the second, truly fruitful chapter, *Náměty karikatur a politických kampaní* (Themes of Caricatures and Political Campaigns), the author goes through the interwar Czechoslovakia. He addresses international tensions and fears of another devastating conflict, including the response to Italy's aggression against Ethiopia and the Spanish Civil War. Subsequently, the reader will be guided through the war period, the atmosphere after its end, the post-war euphoria, the desire for peace, but also the terrible image of poverty, destruction, national and racial hatred, or another stage of armament, this time in the "cold conflict". Election campaigns and exile works, which the author did not originally plan to include in the book, are also an interesting passage (p. 10). Eventually, the opposite decision has proved to be beneficial. In the third chapter, Petr Karlíček sets aside the period of the Sudeten crisis, the Slovak National Uprising and the February 1948 elections as *key events*. The chapter on the reflection of the events of the Slovak National Uprising in the Protectorate press, which brings hitherto lesser-known or completely unknown facts, can certainly interest the Slovak reader as well. The fourth chapter deals with selected exhibits of caricatures from each chronological stage. He concludes the last – fifth – chapter with medallions of the creators of cartoon humour of that time.

The book is written in an engaging, sophisticated and mostly straightforward style. The author chose a clever division of the text, thanks to which the reader can easily find his way around the work. Nevertheless, he did not avoid a few, mostly formal mistakes. It is mainly the tendency to adopt the stylistics and language of the source – however, this is a problem for many experts, whose works are literally based on the analysis of historical documents.

The text would benefit from clarifying some terms in several places (I will not focus on all of them). The work was created from a dissertation that was originally intended for a professionally knowledgeable reader. In this context, I, therefore, find it acceptable that the author did not have to explain what *Volkssturm* is (p. 220), to clarify the background by the period propaganda of the constructed case of Alice Masaryk, accused of homosexuality and organising orgies in Jasina (p. 195), or to translate the German statement of Wolfgang

Wolfram von Wolmar (p. 221). However, a curious reader from a wider audience, whose attention, I assume, the monograph also seeks, would be in a difficult position in this regard. The realities of the interwar Locarno Conference or the Montreux Convention remain unclear. I am worried about the issue of an ignorant addressee, who would therefore not fully understand the meaning of a replica in a caricature demonstrating the decline of the League of Nations (p. 87). Similarly, the missing contextualization of the satire on “Churchill’s political blindness” in the *Ejhle* magazine (p. 122) also falls into this category. I admit that reading them forces me to ask myself whether such a recipient would miss the metaphor of that language, the depth of irony, the dynamics, or worse, the point of the caricature itself if he did not know what the Atlantic Charter is, which Churchill symbolically steps on in the illustration. Furthermore, if he has only a little information about the Katyn massacre, let alone detailed knowledge about its diplomatic-political context. It would therefore be a real pity for a publication with a serious potential of having an extensive readership if these shortcomings reduced the reader’s attraction.

In the section on anti-Semitism and racism, Petr Karliček mentions that there are several types of anti-Semitism within the time period observed. He divides it into *national*, *economic* and *Christian* (p. 197). However, in the definition of the *national*, or rather a national-linguistic anti-Semitism, the ethnic connection of Jews with the Hungarians as the main argument of the stereotype is a certain type of simplification. Naturally, the reference to the support of the Hungarianisation processes in Slovakia by the Jewish minority in the propaganda of that time has its justification. But the foreignness – “non-Slovakness” of Jews in the epicentre of the particular archetype’s attention was personified by both their “Hungarianness” and “Czechoslovakism”. According to such narrative, Jews sympathised with Prague’s centralism, especially in the interwar period. It was the “Czechoslovakist” element in connection with Jews and the person of Edvard Beneš, which the author deals with in the section on exile (p. 170 – 174), that could then provide another interpretive framework for political caricatures.

The formulation of a commentary on the caricature of the acting couple Jiří Voskovec – Jan Werich raises concern in the reviewer: “*The most famous characters are Hugo Haas and ‘the Jews Voskovec and Werich’, who were also Bolsheviks and they would dull the audience on Beneš’s behalf*” (p. 193). At this point, the author avoided not only the linguistic but also the factual transfer of the claims of contemporary propaganda. The Jewish origins of both actors are untrue and have been fabricated by the anti-Semitic propaganda.

The passage on the deportations of Jews in Slovakia would require clarification in the sense that in its so-called first wave in 1942 it was happening under the direct responsibility of the Slovak government authorities. The “active participation of the Slovak security forces” (p. 202) in anti-Jewish atrocities is more apt in connection with the so-called second wave of deportations, which

occurred after the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising and the occupation of the country by Nazi occupation forces. This time, the “act” of deportations was logistically in the hands of Germans and was happening with the support of a part of Slovak authorities, gendarmerie or Hlinka Guard Emergency Squads (*Pohotovostné oddiely Hlinkovej Gardy*, POHG).

Regarding Jozef Tiso's attitudes towards deportations, and in order to provide clarification of such a deeply discussed and controversial issue, I find it unfortunate to rely on Alexander Mach's highly subjective memoirs *Z ďalekých ciest* (From Distant Trips) as the only cited source without a proper analysis of Mach's statement (p. 201).

In addition to the above-mentioned sections, the book also contains a foreword by Ivan Hanousek, the founder of the Czech Union of Caricaturists, an introduction, the author's conclusion and an afterword written by historian Martin Veselý. I consider the carefully selected rich and colourful reproductions to be the undisputed strength of the monograph. The nine-page list of literature is of good quality, although the masterpieces of the historians on the political history of the Slovak State, Ivan Kamenc and Ladislav Lipscher, definitely deserve more attention.

I appreciate that Petr Karlíček acquaints the reader with the fate of individual magazines in many cases. He brings the reader into the everyday professional life of political illustrators and caricaturists of the first half of the 20th century. As the author himself claims, the caricaturists often had to deal with the challenging requirements of mass communication demand and readers. Interventions by press owners or publishers in the production process, and particularly the presence of constant “omnipresent ideological pressures”, were also common practice (p. 17). It shows that it has not always been easy to estimate the wishes of propaganda contracts. As an extreme example of such consequences, Petr Karlíček mentions the case of the arrest and actual indictment of the *Dikobraz* magazine caricaturist Jozef Molín by members of the State Security (*Štátna bezpečnosť*, ŠtB) for the crime of outrage against the Republic in the autumn of 1950 (p. 69 – 70). The author draws a link between the reality and authenticity of the profession of contributors to magazines and the interconnectedness of professional relationships, more or less unwritten rules of the industry of that time. He does not avoid more delicate topics such as the problem of plagiarism – taking over motifs or downright re-drawings of the already existing works of others (p. 19 – 30).

It is good that Petr Karlíček notices the “drifting” in some of the stereotypes, the shifts in the content and terminology in contemporary narratives, which is, with a few exceptions, not systematically emphasized in propaganda research.

The hitherto unknown and unpublished knowledge about the masked “twin” of *Dikobraz* magazine – the uncensored, opposition-oriented *Dikobraz* (p. 72 – 80) should be considered a rare contribution of Petr Karlíček's monograph into the history of Czechoslovak propaganda and caricature. Reading about the –

sometimes – sharp humour of unknown employees of the local editorial office, aimed at the ranks of the prevailing regime, or their ingenuity in dealing with the issue of distribution which was an attempt to camouflage the magazine's visual and disguising it as the official *Dikobraz*, is a fun and interesting fragment of the story of political caricatures. Moreover, the author focuses on the issue of the attitudes of German caricaturists – emigrants – towards the post-February development in Czechoslovakia in 1948 as a non-monitored topic.

Even despite these reservations, Petr Karlíček's monograph represents a significant and enriching contribution not only to the history of propaganda and visual arts in the 20th century but also to the political history of Czechoslovakia. The author has demonstrated the skill and ability to grasp political caricature in a desirable way. The works of art are set in a broader historical context in such a way that he managed to present the development and characteristics of the complicated 20th century with all its various shades and manifestations.

Katarína Bohová

Judaica et Holocaustica

Publication Guidelines for the Authors

An article to be published in *Judaica et Holocaustica* edition should only be sent in electronic form as a.docx or.doc text formats (preferably in English).

The optimum extent of the paper is about 20 standard pages (Times New Roman font type, size 12, spacing 1.5), including footnotes.

The text has to contain:

- an abstract in English – about 700 characters
- Key words
- list of References in alphabetical order at the end of the text
- information on the author(s) – author's first name and surname, institutional affiliation, brief professional bio

In-text quotes and citations (from literature, authors, print) should be defined by quotation marks and written in italics.

Bibliographic references should be featured in the form of footnotes (Times New Roman font type, size 10), please respect the following guidelines:

Reference to a monograph (up to three authors)

SZABÓ, Miloslav. *Od slov k činom : Slovenské národné hnutie a antisemitizmus 1875-1922*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2014, 251 p.

BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián – MICHELA, Miroslav – SCHVARC, Michal. *Rozbitie alebo rozpad*. Bratislava : Veda, 2010, 575 p.

Reference to a monograph (more than three authors)

HOLEC, Roman et al. *Stopäťdesiat rokov slovenského družstevníctva : Víťazstvá a prehry*. Bratislava : Družstevná únia SR, 1995, p. 201-202.

Note: Include ISBN in the list of references at the end of the paper.

Reference to a study in proceedings or collective publication

NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard. Dvojnásobné zmocnenie sa vlády na Slovensku v rokoch 1938/39 v porovnaní s „Machtergreifung“ v rokoch 1933/34 v Nemecku. In GLETTLER, Monika – LIPTÁK, Ľubomír – MÍŠKOVÁ, Alena. (eds.). *Nacionálno-socialistický systém vlády: Ríšska župa Sudety, Protektorát Čechy a Morava, Slovensko*. Bratislava : AEP, 2002, p. 185-211.

Note: Names of multiple authors are listed with a hyphen with a space on either side of the hyphen, range of pages also hyphenated, but no spaces

Reference to a study published in a periodical

BAKA, Igor. Mechanizmus, ciele a metódy pôsobenia ľudáckej propagandy v rokoch 1938 – 1939. In *Historický časopis*, 2003, Vol. 51, No. 2, p. 277-294.

Reference to an Internet source

KUCIANOVÁ, Anna. Personálie v elektronickej súbežnej Slovenskej národnej bibliografii. In *Bibliografický zborník 2000 - 2001* [online]. Martin : Slovenská národná knižnica, 2005, p. 136-139. Available online: <http://www.snk.sk/nbuu/Zbornik_2000_2001.pdf>. (cit. 20. 5. 2014).

Reference to an already mentioned source

SZABÓ, *Od slov k činom*, p. 36.

NIŽŇANSKÝ, Dvojnásobné zmocnenie sa vlády na Slovensku, p. 190.

NB: If the same source is mentioned several times in succession, use "Ibid.", if the quoted page is changed, indicate its number as well.

Reference to the archive periodical press

ZLATOŠ, Štefan. [when name is indicated] Kresťanská spravodlivosť a židovský zákon. In *Slovák*, 1939, Vol. 21, No. 106, p. 4.

Ťažká práca zahraničnej HG. In *Gardista*, 1939, Vol. 1, No. 9, p. 9.

Note: Titles of the periodicals mentioned in the text should also be written in *italics*.

Reference to an archive source

When referencing an archive source for the first time, specify the archive, name of the fond or collection, box, signature number.

Slovenský národný archív (abbreviated to SNA), fond Ministerstvo vnútra (abbreviated to MV), box 1, No. 1111/38.

When referencing again, use only abbreviations

SNA, fond MV, box 33, No. 1111/42.



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