

IN A DOUBLE DIASPORA WITH TRIPLE IDENTITY

Jews of Bácska after Trianon (1918–1941)

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Content

Jews lived for two thousand years in Diaspora until it had again a mother country. Part of it lived these two thousand years by giving up the possibility of the reconstruction of this new mother country, while the other part kept on believing in reformation. However, ‘The Country’ has always lived strongly in the collective memory and it remained a point of reference as such, even for those who were willing to commit excesses in self-surrender (until the extension), who had suffered from the trauma of dual identity, which every time and everywhere generates a kind of neurosis when the leader-organizer forces of a community are unable to handle or educe it appropriately.

Southland, with the Jews of Bácska within, found itself in an extremely difficult situation because of Trianon: lost its second mother country (Hungary) too, forced in a dual Diaspora which made them hesitating, and the new situation urged them answer in various ways (eg. Zionism, communism); on the other hand, the generations socialised in the old order remained Jews of Hungarian identity until the end, and only the younger generation, that grew up between the two wars, started sharing destiny cooperating with the whole of Jews of Yugoslavia.

Key words: keeping common customs, historic memory, ethnic consciousness, European Jewish communities, of Ashkenaz, Hassid, Neologist.

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Jewish Diaspora of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era

The Diaspora in the Middle Ages was far not unified, but between the scattered communities existed a loose relation, which completely ceased as a result of the wars and migrations to be strengthened later exactly because of these reasons. This relationship certifies the survival of the ethnic consciousness, which was nourished by keeping the common customs of the Ancient times and by the historic memory. It didn't react to the surrounding changes (historic events) as a unified, organized big community, but the ‘answers’ composed in the communities, the reactions born there – even if not with the speed of a wildfire – spread among the European Jewish communities relatively in a short time in forms of migration movements (in the direction of West-East and later East-West), and intellectual movements (movement of Sabbatáj Cvi submessiah, Hassidim, Haskala).

In the self-determination of the Jews of the Middle Ages and the Modern Era both the ethnic and religious elements were important, as well as for its receptive (or extruding) circumstances, however religion at all rates was emphasized: for example when we are talking about the anti-Semitism of the Middle Ages, first of all we are talking about anti-Jewry (about the disagreement with the Jewish religion). In the Modern Era this trend is rather leading to the strengthening of religious self-identity, partly because the need of integration is appearing from the side of Jewry, and partly because a willingness from the side of the country (people) is revealing not only to resist (either as a constant or temporary situation), but to integrate it.

New Identity on the way

The 19th century is the age of equal rights for the Jewry all along Europe, but within the frames of the nation state – until then Jewry was a tolerated foreign religious-ethnic element (like this together), but with equal rights it was expected to be assimilated more or less without conditions everywhere. Basically this is how the Kossuth- administration imagined the ‘organisation’ of the situation of the Hungarian Jews, and a significant part, the Hungarian Jews – with some conditions- shared this concept:

“We are Hungarians and not Jews, not of a separate nation, because we are only of a separate religious congregation, when in our houses of worship we communicate our acknowledgement and our deepest gratitude to Almighty for his grace that he sprinkles on us and our home, but in any other terms of life, compatriots, we are only Hungarians”¹

Under this, their majority supported the issue of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence by their participation or indirectly, by finance and suffered together with the Hungarians the retaliations after the repression of the war.² It was a significant turning-point: in fact since this time can we talk about sharing destiny consciously undertaken by the Jews.

The law about the Jewish emancipation, born in the year of the Austro-Hungarian Reconciliation (1867), and in the interest of the arrangement of the Jewish congregation took place the so called convocation of the Jewish Congress (1868), which, however, instead of managing the situation, brought a decisive schism. This time turned out that the Hungarian Jewry is far not unified in the questions concerning the social modernisation: on account of the differences brought to surface the Hungarian Jewry tore into three parts: to the communities of Neologists (“of Congress”), Orthodox and Status quo Ante. In the course of time, all believers of the three tends became organized into separate communities of faith. Emancipation meant only equality of rights before law, however Jewish religion was still not a accepted congregation, although denominational life would have been an important pillar for the integration of the Neologists, for this they started a conscious campaign to transform the Jewish religion into “equal”. Nevertheless, for the pass of the law about the reception they had to wait until 1895, and it belongs to the truth that resistance of the Catholic Church could only be broken because the Protestant churches led a similar struggle for the equality of rights in religious life.

The price of the integration would have been converting the Jews into Hungarian “Israelite believers”, so into such Hungarians that can be distinguished from the others by their religion. Neologists were willing to pay this price, but the Orthodoxy resisted since in the lurid self-surrender, commanded by the Neologists, they saw the not too far image of future of assimilation, and for this they didn’t consider the question completely solved.

Following the Reconciliation – leaning towards an intense liberalism – the general atmosphere favoured the Jewish ambition of integration, so the appearance of political anti-Semitism didn’t have serious consequences. Everybody considered the initial success of the Anti-Semitic Party of Győző Istóczy as

¹ Editor Márton Hegedűs is citing manifest of the Hungarian and Transilvanian Jews of March 17, 1848: *A magyar hadviselt zsidók aranyalbuma az 1914–1918-as világháború emlékére I.* Budapest, 1941-42. (*The Golden Album of the Hungarian Belligerent Jews in memoriam of the 1914-1918 World War I.*) added: “This is what we all profess, feel today as well!”

² Here it is not only about the indemnity imposed by Haynau on the Jewish communities, but about the real victims too, even during the battles; eg.: in Zenta which was captured by the Serbians on 1st February in 1849 and since the defenders did not surrender, a terrible massacre was organised, to which about 35-40 local Jew fell prey, that not only as “collateral” loss was proved by that about sixty Jews were hauled from the previously captured Ada to Zenta, and they finished them off here, so definitely a retributive intention led them. (Attila Pejin: *A zentai zsidóság története.* Zenta, 2003. p. 40.) (*History of the Jew of Zenta*)

temporary (which became true finally), and the lawsuit of Tiszaeszlár was handled with a bigger success by Hungarian politics than the Dreyfus-case by the French. Of course it was not only the question of atmosphere, there was some pragmatism included too. Partly due to the high ranking social and economic mobility of the Jews they became indispensable in certain spheres of economy (commerce, money institutions and some branches of manufacturing industry). On the other hand Jewry – after having claimed themselves Hungarian- was able to improve the ratio of nation.

Naturally the mentioned above are valid for the county of Bács-Bodrog (more or less its territory became later Bácska), where the situation was complicated by the variegated ethnic composition, enhanced: the majority of squatters didn't contain Hungarians, but Germans and

Bunjevacs set it up. Here the majority of the Jewish was Neologist: only in some municipalities, towns along the Tisza gave the Orthodoxy the majority (eg.: Ada, Mohol, Péterréve, Zenta).

All in all: the ambition for integration of the Hungarian Jewry (even if we look at it from the viewpoint of the Jews or of the non-Jewish society) is a success story only for a superficial observer, and the developments after Trianon demonstrate how shaky social 'reconciliation' it was based on.

But it had already had a craggy signal before Trianon about which the go-around of *Twentieth Century* directed by *Oszkár Jászi* bore witness. They communicated the cardinal question to outstanding persons of public life, to intellectuals with different political views – Jews and non-Jews- asking: Does a question of Jews exist in Hungary? Naturally the debate provoked around this go-around and the given question did not solve anything, did not show further ways; it was rather an observation that proved: the society is divided in this question (too). Basically this was the last significant event that the Jews of Bácska experienced together and later on the events accelerated and went in an unfavourable direction for the Jews of Bácska.³

The Experience of Trianon

In the centuries of Diaspora the Jews in fact could get used to be defenceless against the own pleasure of the populations, the situation of being tolerated, their staying in some places was temporary; it can keep for centuries but sometimes only for decades. In the Middle Ages, a Jew could only expect peace, if they completely "surrendered themselves", so baptised out, but even thought he still wasn't safe. For this, they generally remained behind the walls of the ghettos constructed on their own or by their surroundings, living their completely own, autonomous culture, speaking their specific "mother language" (Jiddish, Ladino).

However, the Europe of the Modern Era – seemed – to have brought settlement for them finally. In Western Europe, and in the major part of Central and Eastern Europe a great proportion of the Jews didn't step on the way of assimilation, but leastways they acculturated: accepted the language of the certain country as mother language, acquired its culture, enlarging that with actions in many places in the fields of literature and arts. It was extremely valid for Hungary too, where it's not an exaggeration to claim that the special pulling force of the Hungarian culture was exactly the Jewish intelligentsia.

Trianon, therefore, meant a dual trauma for the Hungarian Jewry, and here we think about the part which was torn to the descendant states. The division of Hungary confused them again; the security of settlement was ceased. Since then, again anything seemed to be possible. With Trianon, the system of relationships terminated, which they constructed in 100-150 years not only among themselves, but with the non-Jews as well (Hungarians too). What can be waiting for them in their new home where they ended if they do not even go out of their homes? The other problem seemed to be even much more serious, and firstly affected the Neologist Jews, since they arrived the furthest in acculturation: in spirit they arrived as real Hungarians and their passionate experience of Trianon was not too different from the non-Jewish Hungarians. Can a language, a culture be replaced from one day to another? Jewry had not had such a historic experience yet, and this is what (already) a Rumanian, a Czechoslovakian or a Yugoslavian Jew had to cope with.

The number of Jews living in the newly created Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom (from 1929: Yugoslavian Kingdom) in 1921 was 64 746; two thirds of it originated from the territory of the Monarchy.⁴ From cultural viewpoint, it was divided similarly as the non-Jewish society: only the religion was common, the spoken language was distinct in some places. Hungarian, apart from Bácska, was spoken in the Banat,

³ Géza Komoróczy: *A zsidók története Magyarországon II. (The History of the Jews in Hungary II.)* Bratislava, 2012. pp. 342–345. cf. *Twentieth Century*, year XVIII. (1917) number 1-2.

⁴ The number of Jews lagged behind the other minorities (505 790 German, 467 658 Hungarian, 439 637 Albanian, 234 068 Rumanian, 115 532 Czech and Slovakian, 105 322 Turkish). See: Nebojša Popović: *Jevreji u Srbiji 1918–1941*. Beograd, 1997. p. 144.

Syrmia, Slavonia and parts of Croatia, and the area of the Mura (the so called Southland territories); the others spoke the language of their closer surroundings, which was a kind of southern-slavish language. Due to this, communication was difficult at the beginning, in this viewpoint, the Jews of Bácska were the odd-ones out, because here (apart from the larger centres) especially the Hungarian language dominated, mostly in settlements along the lands of Tisza.⁵ But there wasn't harmony in point of religion neither, since in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and in the southern district of Serbia (including Kosovo) lived Sephardic Jewish communities with a large number, with different order of prayer from the Ashkenazi Jews, and although not with a huge number, but we can find Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews (with lower number Hassids) exactly in Bácska, along the Tisza (Zenta, Mohol, Péterréve), where they are more comparing to the Neologists. It can be concluded that the Jews of Bácska in many points- with right- was confused, lonely.

Thus it is not a surprise that the older generations, which grew up and socialised in the Monarchy, remained having Hungarian identity, many of which were irredentas and we could find them for a while in the Hungarian Party. They participated in the work of Hungarian unions, in theatricals, released and wrote newspapers in Hungarian (the radical Serbian press mentioned these as Judeo-Hungarian press), monitored the life of Hungarian Jews, but the Hungarian events as a whole too – in fact they continued fulfilling the role that they had before 1918, so by all meanings they strengthened the number of the already minority of Hungarians in Bácska, until partly the power, partly the pressure of Yugoslavian Jews took over.⁶ This endless attachment could be rather called a desperate clinging-search than a reasonable ambition, because it seemed to be quite unilateral.⁷

On the other hand, hardly came reassurement from over the borders: the Hungarian state in fact was only trying to secure the interests of the Hungarians of the torn territories, gave up on the Jews, since they were not necessary for improving the ratio (and the status of the Hungarian Jews was redefined in this meaning too, pronouncing them as “race” – nation, and following this took place the “*numerus clausus*” and later on the laws over Jews.)⁸ Concerning the situation of the relation between the Hungarian Jews and the Jews of Bácska (Vojvodina), the situation was somewhat different. These were not intensive, because the Yugoslavian power kept an eye on the Jews of Vojvodina, but still they existed. As an example, already three years after the war the idea of counting the Jews who participated in the war was born, and we also know that this circular letter was sent over the borders too, and in the end in 1939 in the Israelite Synagogue of Pest was created the Committee of Warfare, the aim of which was the review of the Jewish participators in the First World War. Following this was released the *Golden Album of the Belligerent Jews*.⁹ The collecting of data for the *Jewish Cyclopaedia* could be similar.¹⁰

⁵ In 1931 as an example, among the Jews of Vojvodina, 43% declared themselves of Hungarian, 29% German and only 13% Serbian mother language. See: Popović p. 176. Though Bácska is not present in the separate subdivision, it is obvious that the “Hungarians” mostly came in large numbers from here

⁶ The work of János Csuka (*A délvidéki magyarság története 1918–1941*. Budapest, 1995) [*History of the Southland Hungarians 1918-1941*] cannot be reckoned by long scientific work, despite this it cannot be passed around because about the Southland Hungarians many times he talks in such references that cannot be understood always based on only sources of archives. He does not pass around the question of the relations between Hungarians and Jews neither (398-401.)

⁷ Moreover, from part of the other side sometimes extreme: sparsely in farming towns with Hungarian majority, villages in this period, the accuse of blood cropped up (?), sometimes interestingly combined with the motives of ballad of the human sacrifice, for example in Péterréve where at the end of August a servant disappeared, and it was rumoured that the local Orthodoxy killed her, took her blood and used for the little synagogue being constructed in Zenta. Fortunately, the police prevented the public atmosphere from becoming pogrom, and in the end the girl reappeared living. (5th and 12th October, 1928, publication of *Židov*)

⁸ Komoróczy II. 415-503. See more János Gyurgyák: *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. Politikai eszmetörténet*. Budapest, 2001. pp. 197–208. (*Jewish Question in Hungary. Political conceptual history*)

⁹ Hegedűs 8-10. The Yugoslavian ministry of internal affairs also registered this relationship and ordered the local organizations to communicate to the communities of worship in Vojvodina: not to send such information to Pest because it was about irredenta-like action. See Popović p. 175.

¹⁰ Editor Péter Újvári: *Zsidó lexikon. (Jewish Encyclopedia)* Budapest, 1929 (reprint 1987). About the consequences of this unfortunately we do not have information (yet). The entry words concerning the Jews abroad are quite unbalanced: exists a special entry word about the Yugoslavian Jews, about some settlements too, quite a lot of towns, however locality is missing (eg. Zenta too), and maybe appears only tangentially. It can refer to that the Yugoslavian ministry of internal affairs had knowledge of the collecting of data, and similarly to the other – qualified irredenta – tried to hinder.

Searching(s) for Way Out

The first (natural and universal) answer to the questions generated by the situation of Trianon would have been the integration into the society of the new state, into a society which was ethnically divided, with such a Jewish community that – as we could see it previously – was heterogeneous as well. This ambition, however, was possible to work out in condition how the directors of this new state opine about it. The Serbian Jews had already created the way basically, since their integration into the society had started before 1918 (although here the Jews got equal right since 1878). Furthermore, many of them participated, serving in the Serbian army, both in the Wars of the Balkans and the First World War, demonstrating their patriotism. In Serbia, the political anti-Semitism was not present, if yes, only in a very low level. Due to its low number, the Jews did not mean a serious competitor in any of the spheres of economic life. Since in the new state the Serbian elite played significant role, it determined decisively the relation with the whole of the relations Yugoslavian Jews too, which has to be examined in the view of ethnic-based power relations. So the relations forward the Jews basically was not much different from the relations forward the other national minorities: for the new power the loyalty of the given minority was important. We have seen that for the Serbian Jews such doubt did not even evoke, and it can be claimed that the situation was similar among the Jews of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia too. On the contrary, Jews of the Monarchy were handled with a high mistrust (as we could see, not without reason), mostly the Jews of Vojvodina, within that the Jews of Bácska deserved the predestinated attention of the ministry for home affairs, eg.: written above, at the collecting of data related to the participation in the First World War. But we have another example from the same period. At the beginning of 1922, the minister of home affairs, having considered the report of the sheriff of the county of Bács about the Jews living in the territory of the county, stated the following ascertainments: a huge amount of Jews have turned around in Bácska during and after the war and settled down there, many of them came from abroad..., their majority does not have the permission of settlement, many of them works in a less productive profession (commerce), the town of Zenta has released a huge amount of permissions of settlement for them, which highly harms the nationalising of this area, because otherwise it is full of anational elements.¹¹ The “anational element” viz. the non-Serbian, starting from the logic that Serbian Jews are Moses-believer Serbians, and as such they are loyal citizens, the Hungarian Jews were treated similarly, as Moses-believer Hungarians, with a natural suspicion. The new power was also aware of that this is simplification, so – although Jewry was religious congregation by public law, it was treated as political minority – started off detaching the Jews here from the “Hungarian nation” reducing the numbers of the Hungarians. School proved to be a good device for this: students with non-Hungarian second name could not inscribe to Hungarian faculties, and this affected a great number of Jews (but of course some Hungarians as well). And that they opposed the work of Zionist organisations, while sometimes supported the movement (the state greeted the Declaration of Balfour), served similarly these ambitions. Since the centre of Yugoslavian Jewish communities was in Belgrade, the power, through this organisation, could put pressure on the members of the Jewish communities of Vojvodina, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. In 1931, in relation of a speech in the Hungarian Parliament (speech of Sándor Pál), according to which the Southland Jews are still the bearers of the Hungarian statehood and the notion of nation, some Jewish integrationists felt the need of organising programs all along Vojvodina, where the local Jewish could prove their loyalty for the state power. With this object, on 25 March, Adolf Klein, ban councillor (at the same time the president of the congregation of Subotica), summoned an assemble in Subotica. With his presence, Isak Alkalaj, Yugoslavian Senior Rabi supported the event too. The smaller-greater pressure, which was manifested sometimes in the attacks through the Serbian press, resulted in that the elderly people of Hungarian identity took on less times their Hungarian identity (eg.: many of them dismissed from the Hungarian identity, or remained members only in secret, but not only in Subotica, in other places they started to be missing from the life of Hungarian dilettants both as performers, both as audition.¹² But it cannot be said that the generations would have changed emotionally.

With the juveniles, it was a little bit different, since if they didn't want to go abroad (and not many of them could have afforded it) they had to continue their university studies in Zagreb or maybe in Belgrade. The juveniles of Southland, especially the ones of Bácska preferred mostly Zagreb, allegedly not only

¹¹ Popović 174. Of course the new power did not take any chance, intended to change the unfavourable ethnical ratios from several front lines, for example when it settled „colonists” on poor, high and dry areas of Vojvodina, so in Bácska, first of all Serbians, Montenegrins.

¹² Csuka, pp. 398–401.

because there were high quality faculties that they could choose, but because of the familiar, homey – K und K – environment too. They revealed to be more capable for changing the language (and they were obliged to do it), but Zagreb was the seat of the World Zionist Organization (here was published its organ of press, the *Židov* as well), so the students here were especially under the effect of Zionist notions. It was an interesting turn, because it became a possible answer for the Jews in the successor states for the “question” of Trianon. That in Hungary and in the successor states the previous trend related to the Jews has changed, so instead of religious they were treated as national minority, meant a retrace comparing to the previous actions. The Yugoslavian relation forwards them, from such point of view, is contradictory since on one hand they would have been integrated, on the other hand by handling them as national minority, their difference was emphasized, so the Jews were almost demotivated, which was intensified by Zionism, viz. by its ideology it offered a new type of national identity with a long ago lost, but now re-outlining mother country (“ancient-new-country”), and this found an extremely fertile ground among the Jews of Bácska. However the Zionist movement itself was not unified neither; in Bácska for example, all tendencies of it could be found, and interestingly, in the 30’s, the revisionist tendency led by Zsabotinszj (it could be also called radical right) found more and more supporters, which having separated from the main stream created a new organization in Yugoslavia too, its centre was in Novi Sad and here were released – with token cuts – its papers, the *Ever Hajarden* and the *Malchit Jisrael*. With certain conditions part of the Orthodoxy did not refuse Zionism neither (apart from the “ultras” who denied the possibility of the worldly reconstruction of Israel) and as with the highest number they lived in Bácska, here were created their strongest organizations: the Agudat Jisrael and the Mizrahi.¹³ If we compare all these with the Hungarian relations, we can conclude that the differences were giant: Hungarian Jews, within them especially affluent Neologists, expanded an enormous resistance contra Zionism that formulated a national program, since they continued insisting to the “Jewish Hungarian” self-definition, despite that the contemporary Hungarian political elite had deprived them of it. On the contrary, the younger part of Hungarian Jews of Vojvodina (Bácska) accepted it and only the elderly people reacted similarly as their Hungarian brethren. The Yugoslavian Zionists, by the way, belonged to the most organized ones in Europe (every tenth Jew was Zionist), their Zionism however was rather salon-Zionism which was not manifested in emigration (until 1939 only 1% of them Alijaed). Besides, they were quite active: they organized preparation camps for life in Palestine (*háhsára*), countless cultural performances and contributed to various Zionist foundations.

In Bácska, existed some, who, following communist ideologies, tried to find answers for the questions of Trianon, viz. in the spirit of internationalism published equality would have cleared all national-religious differences and it would have solved the “Jewish question” too at one blow. The number of communist Jews or those who sympathized with its ideology was not very high here, the ratio of participation of the Hungarians in this movement was much greater. In spite of this, in autumn of 1941, when during a well-organized clearing action almost all the basic organisms of Northern Bácska were successfully eliminated, the libels mentioned with predilection Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy, and although among the arrested people we can find mostly Hungarians and Serbians, the number of Jews was irrationally high among the executed ones: in Zenta for example, out of six executed five were Jewish and supposedly only three of them were communists, the other two only sympathizer.¹⁴

We have to mention finally the Hassid community along the Tisza, which, in contrast, lived separately, it kept relations with the world only as much as it was necessary for survival, they were supposedly listless about the changes of Trianon, since because of existential reasons the Hassids have got used to migration. For them, self-definition was not questioned: they defined themselves as separate ethnical-religious community, and living their everyday life, they are waiting for the Messiah, who is going to reestablish for them the lost Country, Jerusalem is going to be reconstructed, with the Temple too. For this it is obvious that both as the spokesmen of integrationism and Zionism would have experimented with them in vain to win them for themselves.

The Scale

The number of Jews living in Yugoslavia between 1931 and 1941 was 68 400-73 000, with not too high increase, and in Bácska, at the end of the age, in 1941 about 12 500 Jews lived three quarters of which in

¹³ Attila Pejin: *History of the Jews of Zenta*. Zenta, 2003. pp. 185–199.

¹⁴ *ibidem*. p. 200.

larger cities: in Novi Sad (3621), in Szabadka (3549), in Zenta (1432) and in Zombor (1011).¹⁵ If we make superficial comparisons, correlating to the data of 1921 it is seen that the ratio living in the Northern (separated) areas has reduced comparing to the others. This can not only be explained by the different natality, but maybe by the internal migrations provoked by economic necessity. The decrease of those declaring themselves with Hungarian mother language is not significant, so the Yugoslavian Jew-politics did not reach their aim, only started a process for the end of which not much time remained. On the other hand, as a consequence of the push forwards the right, there were born some Jewish Laws (although much softer than the ones of Hungary), which controlled the number of Jews in secondary and higher education, in commerce which did not leave too many illusions about that the integration of the Jews into the new society would be only a token success, unstable in long term. But this however was not yet failure. And there came the spring of 1941, the beginning of such nightmare that many times exceeded the one of Trianon, the common in them was only that similarly to the Holocaust, the Jews had not had any historical experience neither related to such a systematic genocide. The powers running through Yugoslavia divided the country between themselves: Hungary despite the expectations did not receive back the whole Southland, only Bácska, Baranya and the area of Mura (Syrmia fell to the Independent State of Croatia, and the Bácság of Yugoslavia fell under German public administration).

The new change of imperia bought disappointment mostly for the Jews of Bácska; they knew about the Hungarian Jewish Laws, but the humiliation experimented during some months of the military public administration, the expansion of the Jewish Laws in the fed back Southland in 1941, the raid in Novi Sad, the call of military aged men for labour service, then the deportation of children, women and old people hanging back, gradually but drastically, harshly deprived them of all kinds of illusions, if there still remained any. This is how the narrative of Trianon ended, the narrative of the Jews of Bácska of Trianon. Significant part of the low number of the returning Jews from extermination camps or labour service emigrated in the years following the war – after the creation of Israel – not only to Israel, but to Western-European countries and to the United States too (many of them had taken different direction during their way back home and emigrated). The Jewish state, based on tectonic ground from political views (as later it was revealed) was at least their own state, and meant later handrail, gave the feeling of safety for the Jews still living in Diaspora, especially after the unprecedented sacrifice of the Holocaust.

Finally – as a conclusion- let's see if it was reasonable to talk about dual Diaspora and triple identity in case of the Jews of Bácska in the period between the two world wars.

In today's meaning, Diaspora is usually paraphrased and correlated to the mother country. The situation of the Jews before the birth of Israel, from this viewpoint, was only different from the "regular" in that in physical sense they had lost their mother country at the end of the Ancient Times, though that virtually-through the practice of religion, the respect of traditions- continued to exist, therefore we can say it correlated its existence in Diaspora to the mother country, reckoned its status temporary, and in the majority of times it did not intend to integrate into the societies that accommodated them, not even when they showed willing (obviously not in the Middle Ages). This base of reference was weakened in the 19th century when part of the Western and Middle East European Jews undertook the programmatic integration in condition of becoming citizens of the society with equal rights. The diversification within the Jews however hindered the complete fade of the image of the mother country and after the Declaration of Balfour, this image strengthened again. The Jewry – with almost completely Hungarian identity- of Bácska was affected by the changes of Trianon in the dawn of the new Jewish state, and the older people, totally transfixed by the Hungarian culture, reckoned in fact Hungary as their mother country.

However, in the Jews of Hungarian identity still remained the dual identity, since already the Neologists, who wanted to set their practice of religion to their environment in its externals (and "desecrated" their most sacred event, Saturday, with work), they defined themselves as Jews as well, in their religion since in ethnical sense they declared themselves Hungarians. It is true, they could not even forget it because their surroundings sometimes reminded them of their Jewry: it has to be known that the posing of the "Jewish question" was still actual at the beginning of the 20th century in Hungary. On the other hand, to Yugoslavia, "breaking up", the Jews of Bácska faced the everyday reality, the need that if this change had already

¹⁵ Milan Koljanin: *Jevreji i antisemitizam u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*. Beograd, 2008. pp. 48–55. and editor József Képes: *A zsidó népesség száma településenként (1840–1941)* Budapest, 1993) [*Number of the Jewish Population by Settlements (1840–1941)*]

occurred, they have to adapt to the newly turning out situation: set themselves according to the expectations of the new state, the new power, to but the other Jews living in Yugoslavia as well, with which they had to share a mutual community since then. Willy-nilly, they stepped on this way taking up a kind of new identity (Yugoslavian or Serbian), without, however, the cessation of the Hungarian. Therefore in this status – or at least in case of the older people – we can talk about triple identity with reason. Nevertheless, the young people, diverged from the Hungarian culture, seemed to be willing (and they were able to from aspect of language) to get to know the Yugoslavian civilization, communicate with it but first of all, to approach the other Jews living different areas in Yugoslavia. The most important device of it was the increasingly popular Zionism, which basically prevented their complete integration into the society of the new country. To shade the image further: not one of them (even if not in a large amount) took on activity in communist organisations in illegality in compulsion.

However, there were some – truthfully, in infinitesimal number- whose identity in consequence of changes of Trianon was harmed or changed less, since they had been listless before about the changes of internal and external affairs. For the Hassids it was obvious that only one mother country exists: Israel, namely not the one dreamed by the Zionists, and the Country born indeed in 1948 but the further created one after the arrival of the Messiah (based on them the Ultra-Orthodox Hassids denied the justification of Israel) In the question if identity cannot be dilemma neither: even if they spoke the language of their environment, among themselves they continued to communicate in German, Jiddish, and guarded firmly as rock their Jewish identity. And it was obvious too that among the survivors of the Holocaust they were the moral winners (if it is possible to talk about it in such a terrible context), since the sacrifice of six million Jews, eventuated in contempt of the self-surrender of many of them, but the Hassid survivors – if they were not shocked in their religious faith after the unexampled genocide of the Jews – they could declare it with reason: Thou, they were right.

Translated by Benigna Horváth

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Thank you for your kind collaboration. *Editor-in-chief*