

---

# Wariness Towards Jews as an Expression of Post-Communist Panic

The Case of Slovakia

ZORA BÚTOROVÁ\*

Comenius University, Bratislava

MARTIN BÚTORA\*

Office of the President of the ČSFR, Prague

**Abstract:** The study analyzes the problem of anti-Semitism in Czecho-Slovakia, with special emphasis on Slovakia, where the manifestations of anti-Semitism after the "velvet revolution" have been more numerous. It perceives these manifestations as the tip of an iceberg of historically accumulated prejudices against Jews rooted in the culture. Issuing from the findings of several representative surveys, the study proves the higher wariness towards the Jews among the population of Slovakia in comparison with the Czech lands. Similar to other countries, this wariness has features of an "anti-Semitism without Jews", as, due to the holocaust and several waves of emigration, the number of members of the Jewish community in Slovakia has rapidly decreased. The revived anti-Semitism in Slovakia is interpreted within the context of the "post-Communist panic" accompanying the intricate process of transition. Following the description of the specific features of traditional Slovak anti-Semitism, as well as empirical analysis of the value background of the present anti-Jewish prejudices, the conclusion is formulated that in the anatomy of Slovak anti-Semitism there have not been, despite the passing of decades, substantial changes. Anti-Jewish attitudes can be seen as a metaphorical and condensed expression of an anti-liberal orientation, lying behind which there are social and political insecurity, frustration, authoritarianism, cultural isolation, as well as general national intolerance. In order to come to terms with anti-Semitism in Slovakia, it is necessary to re-assess the period of the Slovak State (1939-1945) in view of the share of responsibility of Slovak political representatives and the general public for the tragedy of the Slovak Jews. Issuing from the empirical findings, the study shows the unsatisfactory state of the critical historical consciousness of the Slovak population.

*Czechoslovak Sociological Review*, 1992, Vol. 28 (Special Issue: 92-106)

## 1. Half a century after the Holocaust: The fading of historical memory

The desecration of Jewish cemeteries; anti-Semitic inscriptions; claims about the so-called "Auschwitz-lie"; the re-issuing of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; the distinct election success of the extreme right in some European countries; computer games modelled on the concentration camps; the interpretation of political events as the results of a Jewish-Free Masonic plot - all of these provide

---

\*) Direct all correspondence to Zora Bútorová, Center for Social Studies, Comenius University, Súkennícka 5, 821 09 Bratislava, phone + 42 7 647 45, fax + 42 7 654 92 or Martin Bútorá, Office of the President of CSFR, 119 08 Praha 1, phone + 42 2 311 92 64, fax + 42 2 311 82 32, respectively.

evidence that not even the most drastic vaccination, by the holocaust, has been sufficient to prevent anti-Semitism [Beunruhigender 1991; Gitelman 1991; Karsai 1991; Maimannová 1990; Pfahl-Traugher 1991]. Eye-witnesses are dying, historical memory is fading, and the trauma of Auschwitz after which it was "no longer possible to write poetry" (Adorno) is being overlaid by dozens of other worries.

In the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe the manifestations of anti-Semitism are all the more serious because they are part of the so-called "refrigerator phenomenon": the situation in which many significant social problems that were "frozen" by the Communist dictatorships are re-appearing now and are all demanding to be solved at the same time.

The famous dissent philosopher Milan Šimečka several months before the revolution pointed at the share Czechoslovak intellectuals' had in making the Jewish problem taboo [Šimečka 1991]: "The intellectual atmosphere of a decent country between the two world wars... ordered every decent man to ignore the origin of assimilated Jews and to respect their Jewish orthodoxy. I perceived this tradition as the best response to Jewishness even later, when the holocaust and the totally changed situation placed everything in a different moral perspective... The experience of other Central Europeans shows that openness, continuous discussions and historical study are more beneficial to the health of the national spirit".

The manifestations of anti-Semitism have not avoided Czechoslovakia either. Soon after November, 1989, the obscure interpretation of the "Velvet Revolution" as a plot on the part of dissidents and the former top communists, covered up by an international Jewish-Free Masonic mafia, was spreading [Dolejší 1991]. The Czech public has been disturbed by anti-Jewish articles in the journal *Politika* and the vilification of the Jewish cemetery in Příbram by school-goers.

The manifestations of anti-Semitism in Slovakia have been more numerous than in the Czech lands. The problem of coming to terms with anti-Semitism is deeply tied up with the issue of national emancipation. One part of the Slovak press and some politicians look back with hope to the only period of Slovak independence, the Slovak State of 1939 to 1945, which, however, is inevitably associated with the deportations of the Slovak Jews. There have been attempts to rehabilitate its president, the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso, and reduce his share of responsibility in the fate of the Slovak Jews.

A different attitude has been adopted by those Slovak politicians and intellectuals who do not deny the anti-Jewish policy of the Slovak State, but rather try to minimize the current manifestations of anti-Semitism as the excesses of marginal groups in the population. They claim that these manifestations have no resonance in the Slovak public and will fade away of their own accord - provided they are not artificially dramatized.

Finally, a third interpretation perceives the manifestations of anti-Semitism as the tip of the iceberg of historically accumulated prejudice against Jews, as a consequence of stereotypes rooted in the culture. In this interpretation, the

manifestations of anti-Semitism are set into the wider context of being a threat to democratic development in general.

## **2. The case of Slovakia: Increased wariness towards Jews**

The inhabitants of Slovakia react very sensitively to statements characterising anti-Semitism in Slovakia as "endemic". They also reject generalizations accusing the Slovak nation of having an inherent tendency towards anti-Semitism, similar to that of the Polish nation. Results of several surveys imply that the general labelling of Slovaks as anti-Semites is inadequate. At the same time, however, they also provide evidence that manifestations of open anti-Semitism spring from a wider background that could be characterised as increased wariness towards Jews.

This increased wariness is indicated by the results of several international and local studies. According to the survey carried out by the Time Mirror Center in September 1991 every third adult in Slovakia, again similar to Poland, has a negative attitude toward Jews [The Pulse... 1991]. According to the findings of the Prague Association for Independent Social Analysis (AISA), in January 1991 the social distance towards Jews was less significant in the Slovak Republic (hereafter SR) than in Poland, but higher than in the Czech Republic (hereafter CR) or Hungary: 32 % of the respondents in Slovakia would rather not have Jews as neighbors, versus 40 % of Poles, 17 % of Hungarians and 20 % of Czechs. 51 % of the population in the SR would not mind Jews as neighbors as opposed to 66 % of the respondents in the CR, 65 % in Hungary and 51 % in Poland [The Results of a Comparative... 1991].

The results of the survey of the Center for Social Analysis in Bratislava (CSA) from January 1992 are, in principle, very similar: one third of the population of the SR (33 %) would definitely not want to have Jews as neighbors, as opposed to 17 % of the citizens of the CR [Aktuálne... January 1992].

The increased wariness towards Jews in Slovakia is also proven by a whole range of other findings. For example, according to a survey taken by the Prague Institute for Public Opinion Research (IVVM) in November 1991 a great majority of people in the SR (85 %), as well as in the CR (88 %) takes the attitude that the Jews are equal to other citizens; however, only 46 % of the inhabitants of the SR as opposed to 64 % in the CR agree with this statement unconditionally [The Results of a Survey... 1991]. The opinion that Jews behave in a way that raises hostility was denied by 51 % respondents in the SR and by 69 % in the CR.

These differences are also portrayed in the less frequent categorical condemnation of the holocaust [The Results of a Survey... 1991]. The extreme statement that the Jews deserved their fate was rejected by 78 % of the respondents in the CR, as well as by 74 % in the SR. While the premise of a "just punishment" was unambiguously rejected by 63 % of the respondents in the CR, in the SR it was rejected by a mere 38 %. The atrocities committed on Jews during the second world war were condemned as criminal by 86 % of the respondents in the CR and 81 % in the SR; but even in this point definite condemnation was more frequent among Czech respondents (70 % in the CR in contrast to 43 % in the SR).

### 3. Anti-Semitism as a "cultural code"

This revived anti-Semitism, an unintentional and ironic consequence of the "Velvet Revolution", is taking place against the background of what Václav Bělohradský called the "post-Communist panic". The society struggling with the first stage of its transition has become unintelligible for many [Bělohradský 1991]. The rapid economic, legislative and political changes are coming into conflict with value orientations and norms of behavior carried over from the society of "real socialism", as well as from the more distant past. The abandonment of the state's paternalistic practices, the development of a market economy, the rehabilitation of parliamentary democracy - these requirements present a great social challenge. The re-definition of the codes of behavior [Mareš, Musil, Rabušic 1992], the adaptation to the "new rules of the game", is being accompanied by feelings of insecurity, a lack of self-confidence and a fear of failure.

Data from surveys in Czechoslovakia [Aktuálne... 1990, 1991, 1992] show the generally widespread feeling of the alienation of the "new power elite" from the everyday needs of the people. It is joined by the syndrome of impoverishment: the fear of the coming of ruthless capitalism and merciless competition, which will lead to social inequality. Strong also is the fear of negative economic, political and cultural consequences from the overcoming of autarky. The general feeling of insecurity is magnified by worries about the escalation of national and racial hostility. Trust in parliamentary democracy has been low so far; the disillusionment arising from the hitherto weak functioning of the democratic regime is leading to a well-known nostalgia for authoritarianism [Bútor 1992].

These feelings are more frequent in Slovak than in Czech society, a fact to which the harsher impact of the economic reform on the Slovak population (an approximately three times higher rate of unemployment, problems with the conversion of military industries, the loss of the Eastern market, etc.) has undoubtedly contributed. They may become more significant as a substantial part of the Slovak population finds the explanation for the current difficulties in one common denominator: the perception that the social transformation threatens the national interests of Slovakia.

In every situation involving profound social change, a need appears to find the simplest possible explanation for complicated problems. Among such "explanations" is the search for an enemy,<sup>1</sup> for scapegoats, which has traditionally been suitable ground for reviving prejudice against Jews. People adversely affected by change - whether materially or ideologically - have a greater chance of succumbing to these prejudices: those who feel personally threatened by the disintegration of traditional values and links; those who are searching for new possibilities of identification and orientation; and, finally, those who have what have been called authoritarian personalities [Pfahl-Traugher 1991].

---

1) The syndrome of the enemy image includes the following elements: distrust, placing guilt on the enemy, negative anticipation, identification with evil, zero-sum thinking, de-individualization and refusal of empathy [Spillmann, Spillmann 1991].

The appearance of modern anti-Semitism in Europe was historically associated with a similar situation of revolutionary change, i.e. the disintegration of feudal society and the coming of liberalism and industrial urban society. Doing away with the Jewish ghetto and emancipating the Jews were both aspects of creating a modern civic society [Rürup 1990]. The process of the emancipation of the Jews, however, came into conflict not only with prejudices rooted in the national and religious culture, but also with the strong resentment of the middle classes who sensed economic competition. Modern anti-Semitism, Michael Riff claims [Riff 1990], was thus "more than just a racially, culturally and religiously motivated hatred of the Jews. It became a cultural code for the rejection of bourgeois liberalism and industrial society".<sup>2</sup>

Anti-Semitism in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had some additional specific features. It was incorporated in the appearing process of national self-consciousness and emancipation. In oppressed nations Jews were often identified with the ruling elite of the dominant nation. Thus they appeared to others both as exploiters and national oppressors.<sup>3</sup>

As Eduard Goldstücker says, "in the course of national emancipation, the nations of Eastern Europe had to form a class that would run the economy and start by accumulating capital. The new middle class had to take certain posts in economic life and the first ones were in village trade, which was in Jewish hands" [Goldstücker 1991].

In the liberal conditions for economic development in Hungarian-controlled Slovakia, Jews had achieved success in banking and trade, industrial and agricultural production, as well as in the free professions - as lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, veterinarians, journalists and artists. In fact their competition had become omnipresent. The inhabitants of this region perceived this competition much more than the objective contributions of their Jewish fellow countrymen to the society's progress. As it is summarized by I. Kamenec, anti-Semitism in its conscious or unconscious form thus gradually developed in practically all classes of Slovak society, in which it had predominantly an economically defensive character and a strong national and anti-Hungarian accent. It was precisely this kind of anti-Semitism that brought success to Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, which was

the most skillful in playing the anti-Jewish card... encouraging the economically and socially frustrated petty bourgeois and middle classes, as well as the intelligentsia which had been waiting in vain for its full self-assertion. This was also the breeding ground for criticism of the "liberal capitalism" that enabled Jews to take strong positions in economic and public

---

<sup>2</sup>) The connection between anti-Semitism and an anti-liberal orientation escapes the attention of J. M. Bochenski, who restricts the causes for anti-Semitism to personal qualities, the abilities of the Jews and their share in power in Communist parties [Bochenski 1991].

<sup>3</sup>) The Slovak literature of the last century and the beginning of this one is full of genre scenes depicting Jewish pub owners who were turning Slovak villages to alcoholism and destroying them economically. In the period of intense and forceful Magyarization, Jewish pub owners had become a reliable support-group for the ruling power. The appearance of specific "anti-pub owner anti-Semitism" can be dated back to that period [Bútorá 1989].

life. The People's Party also made the most of the surviving elements of religious anti-Semitism, passing itself off as a defender of the Slovak nation not only against its economic and national adversaries but also against religious enemies [Kamenec 1991].

The official policy of the Slovak state then completely deleted from memory any Jewish economic and cultural contribution to the development of Slovak society, and finally escalated through laws discriminating against non-Aryans to labor camps and deadly deportations.

#### **4. The anatomy of present-day anti-Semitism in Slovakia and the Czech lands: Similarities and differences**

##### **Too successful, too influential**

In the minds of a large majority of the population, Jews currently appear as those who "can always obtain decent living conditions for themselves". This is the view held by 83 % of the respondents in Slovakia and 75 % in the CR [The Results of a Survey... 1991]. The Jewish issue is perceived, particularly in Slovakia, as one relating to their excessive share in power.<sup>4</sup> According to AISA findings [The Results of a Comparative... 1991], the conviction that Jews have too strong an influence on the economic life of the society was held by 42 % of the population in the SR in contrast to 12 % in the CR at the beginning of 1991; the influence of Jews on political life was considered too big by 38 % of the inhabitants in the SR in contrast to 9 % in the CR. The share of people convinced of too large of a Jewish influence on culture was substantially lower (20 % in the SR and 10 % in the CR).

Regarding the future, the inhabitants of Slovakia admit more frequently the possibility of an excessively strong Jewish economic and political influence and express worries about it: in May, 1991, 60 % of respondents admitted such fears, while 36 % expressed them with full decisiveness. By January, 1992 the share of persons fearing Jews had decreased slightly (53 %), but nevertheless remained three times higher in Slovakia than in the Czech lands (16 %) [Aktuálne... 1991, 1992].

The anti-Semitic vision also affects, to a considerable extent, the interpretation of the "Velvet Revolution": 24 % of the inhabitants of Slovakia assumed (in May, 1991) that lying behind the events of November 1989 were Jews, who influenced the course of the events much more distinctly than other groups of the population; according to 13 % the Jews profited most from the breakdown of the Communist regime. For 20 % of the adults in Slovakia, the Jews present a

---

<sup>4</sup>) The conviction of an excessively strong Jewish influence can be found in the background of anti-Semitism in other countries as well. For example at the time of the Great Depression in the USA, when anti-Semitism flourished, every third American assumed that the Jews had too much power (Le Nouvel Observateur, quoted according to [Antisemitismus 1991]). According to the findings of the Center for Public Opinion Research 20 % of people in today's Poland are convinced that Jews have the greatest influence on government activity and one third consider the Jewish influence too big (Życie Warszawy, quoted according to [Antisemitismus 1991]).

danger for further political development (although for only 4 % in the CR) [The Results of a Comparative... 1991].

The conception of the Jews as too successful and influential contributes to the wariness towards them much more significantly than the perception of their racial difference.<sup>5</sup> As well, their religious difference is also a rather marginal characteristic for the inhabitants of Slovakia.<sup>6</sup>

### Epidemiological Findings

Which groups of the population are more likely to share in anti-Jewish attitudes? Repeated surveys [Aktuálne... 1991, 1992] confirm that the prejudices find more fertile ground among older people,<sup>7</sup> those with lower education,<sup>8</sup> unqualified manual workers and inhabitants of small rural areas in Central Slovakia. It can be assumed that anti-Semitism in Slovakia is connected with inertia, cultural backwardness and isolation. All these links proved to be statistically significant for the social background of anti-Semitism in Czech society as well.

An increased occurrence of anti-Jewish attitudes is recorded among citizens of Slovak nationality in comparison with those of the Hungarian minority. The more moderate attitude of the Hungarians towards the Jews may be caused by the awareness of the more intensive participation of the Jews in the development of Hungarian culture [Kárady 1991].

It can be further stated that people of the Catholic faith succumb to anti-Jewish prejudices more frequently than Protestants, atheists or people with an unclear attitude towards religion. This finding suggests that the Catholic Church and politicians are insufficiently participating in the process of overcoming anti-Jewish prejudices and creating a positive image of Jews.<sup>9</sup> There is also insufficient

---

5) Unfortunately we are not familiar with any Czechoslovak surveys devoted to a more profound analysis of the racial aspects of this phenomenon. Findings of this kind are available from Poland [Antisemitizmus 1991]. Although the awareness of the racial difference of Jews is considerably developed (one half of the Poles consider Jews to be a different race), in most cases it does not induce a feeling of the superiority of the Aryan race (only 4 % of the Poles classify the Jews as the "worse" race).

6) The extent of religious tolerance towards the Jews is slightly lower in Slovak society than in Czech. According to the findings of AISA [The Results of a Comparative... 1991], 73 % of the inhabitants of the SR, in comparison with 89 % in the CR, agreed with the view that Jews should have a chance to practise their religion quite freely; only 43 % of the inhabitants of the SR, in comparison to 69 % in the CR, agreed with it unconditionally.

7) Our findings do not confirm the conclusions of the Times Mirror Center [The Pulse 1991], according to which the greatest hostility against the Jews is found among middle-aged persons.

8) A similar connection was also revealed by the Times Mirror Center [The Pulse 1991].

9) It would be useful to focus sociological analysis on the formation of attitudes to the Jews during primary and secondary socialization. The Polish sociologist K. Daniel has studied the participation of the Catholic Church and the school in the formation of xenophobic, nationalistic and anti-Semitic attitudes among school-goers. She claimed that the Church prefers a simplified, out-dated view on the Jewish issue: the priests concentrate only on biblical topics and the crucifixion of Jesus. In her opinion the Polish Church does not

resolve for coming to terms with the character of the Slovak State and the inhuman solution of the "Jewish question" of those days [Frišová 1991].

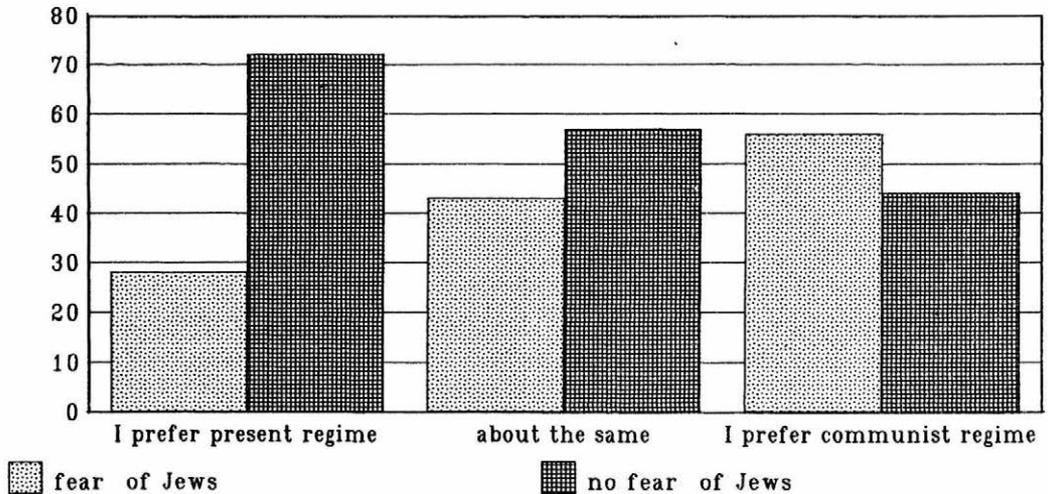
**Who needs the "image of the enemy"?**

**(The value background of anti-Jewish attitudes)**

More than by social-demographic characteristics, people with anti-Semitic prejudices are determined and united by their specific value background [Aktuálne... 1991, 1992].

1. They are more frustrated by the developments after November 1989 and stress the shortcomings of the present political regime, as compared with the communist one.

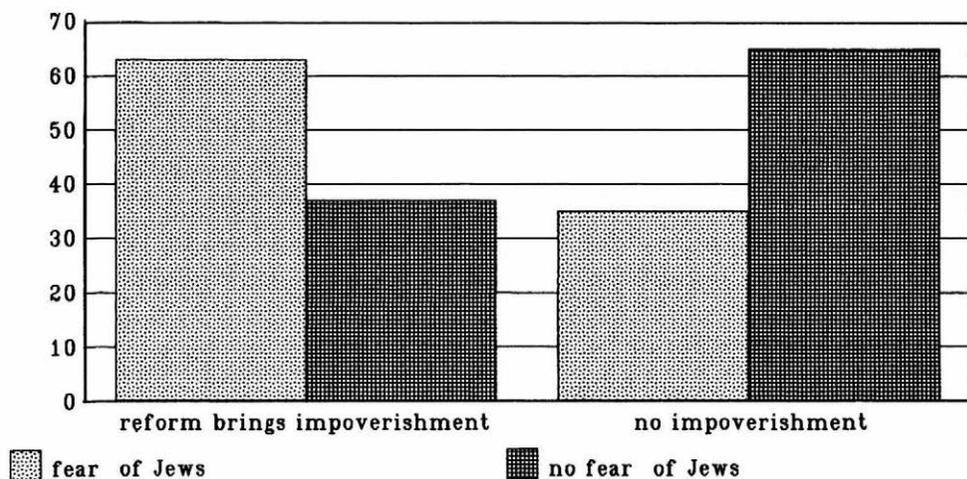
Chart 1. Are you Afraid of Too Strong of a Jewish Influence?  
- according to attitudes to the regime in Slovakia (CSA 1992)



2. They more often experience social and economic uncertainty; they are more pessimistic when evaluating their personal chances under the conditions of radical economic reform; they emphasize all its potential negative impacts, especially the deepening of social inequality, as well as the sale of national properties to foreign capital. They prefer state ownership of companies and believe in the capabilities of a centrally managed economy. They are sceptical about the chances of being successful in the labor market as a result of individual effort and skills and more frequently give their allegiance to the political left.

participate in creating a positive image of the Jews in terms of the Declaration of the Bishops Conference Nostra Aetate from 1965 [Daniel 1991].

Chart 2. Are You Afraid of Too Strong of a Jewish Influence?  
- according to attitudes to the reform in Slovakia (CSA 1992)



3. They accept to a lower degree the necessity of overcoming economic, political and cultural autarky and feel increased worries of American and German influence and the loss of national identity and culture in an integrated Europe. Their mistrust is also higher towards the European Community and NATO. The interconnection between anti-Semitism and anti-western isolationism is apparently also a consequence of the brainwashing against Zionism practiced for many decades.

Chart 3. Are You Afraid of Too Strong of a Jewish Influence?  
- according to SR citizens' fears of too strong US influence

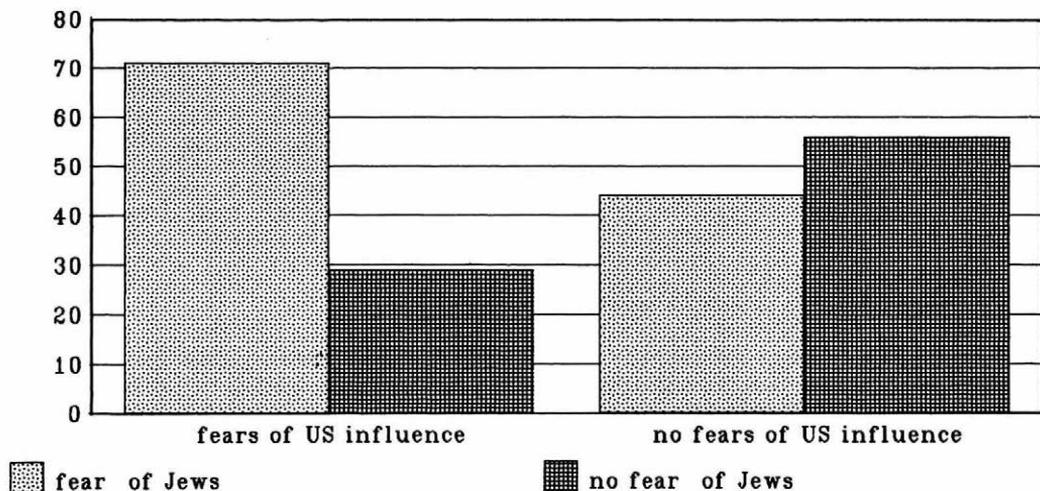
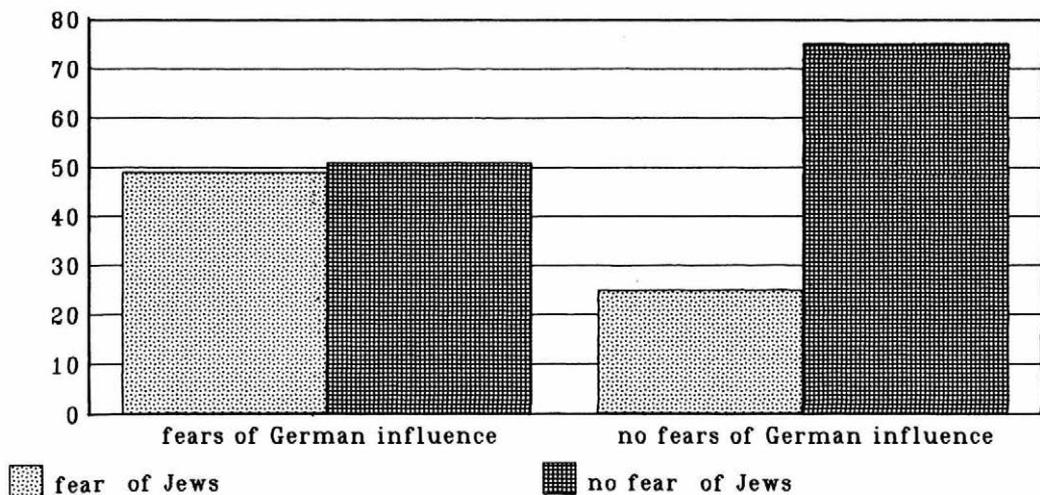


Chart 4. Are You Afraid of Too Strong of a Jewish Influence?  
- according to SR citizens' fears of too strong German influence

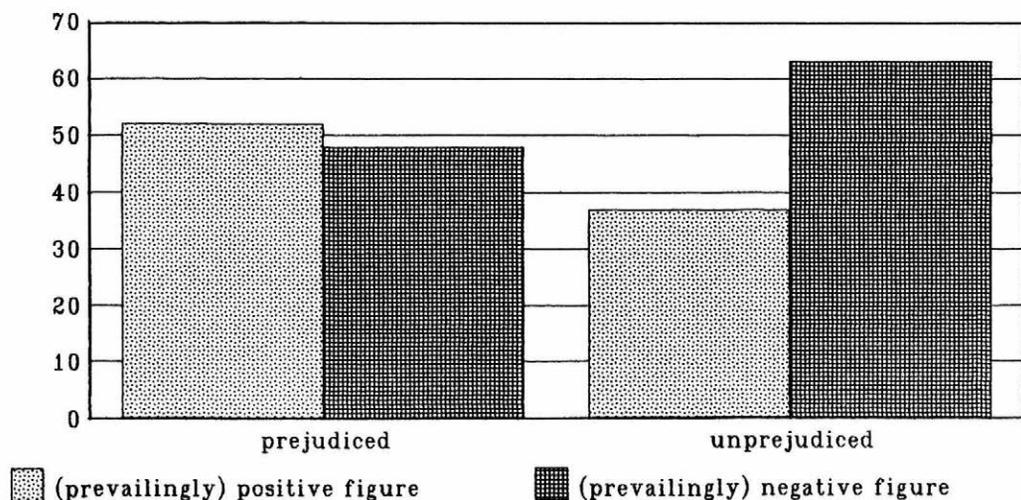


4. People with increased wariness of Jews more frequently share the conviction that the new power elite has become alienated from the interests of the rank and

file. They feel politically threatened and insecure and have a higher distrust of all the top political institutions of executive and representational power. They incline to authoritarianism, desiring more than others a strong leader who would guarantee order and prevent chaos, even at the cost of restricting citizens' rights. The appeal for order is linked with stronger political radicalism, i.e. with a higher readiness to join economic and political strikes.

5. Anti-Jewish prejudice goes hand in hand with more outspoken nationalist tendencies. The data for Slovakia show that prejudiced individuals express an almost narcissistically weakened sense for criticism of their own nation and a higher intolerance towards others - the Czechs, the Hungarian minority, the Gypsies and foreigners. As far as the Czech society is concerned, the people with anti-Jewish attitudes share a more negative attitude towards the Germans: they emphasize their feeling of superiority, geo-political and economic threats and the impossibility of mutual forgivingness.
6. In Slovakia people with increased wariness towards the Jews differ from others also by their interpretation of history. They have a more favorable view of the Slovak State and its president, minimizing the fate of the Jews during the second world war. To a higher extent than others they describe Czech-Slovak coexistence as permanently disadvantageous for the Slovaks. More often they reject the first Czechoslovak Republic and its President, T. G. Masaryk. They blame the Czechs for enthroning Communism and deforming the federation declared in 1968. They stress the unequal position of Slovakia within the framework of the CSFR and support loosening the links between the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Chart 5. Prejudices Against the Jews among SR citizens with different attitudes to J. Tiso (CSA 1992)



Such is, in rough outlines, the value background of anti-Semitism in Czechoslovakia. If we focus on Slovakia and compare the present anti-Semitism with the quoted characteristics of anti-Semitism in the past, we can say that in the anatomy of this phenomenon there has not been, despite the passing of decades, substantial change. Even today anti-Jewish attitudes seem to be a metaphorical and condensed expression of an anti-liberal orientation, behind which lie social and political insecurity, frustration, authoritarianism, cultural isolation, as well as a general national intolerance magnified by these circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

### **5. Critical historical consciousness as a prevention against prejudice**

We are speaking about the need to come to terms with anti-Semitism in spite of the fact that, similarly to many other countries and due to the holocaust and several emigration waves, the number of members of the Jewish community in Slovakia has rapidly decreased. Out of approximately 100,000 Jews who were living in this region before the second world war, there remain today, according to the minimum estimate, 3000, and according to the maximum 7000 to 10,000. Thus we are witnessing - similar to elsewhere - an "anti-Semitism without Jews": the concrete home subject of the hostility has disappeared, the real Jew has been replaced by an imaginary Jew [Špitzer 1992]. More irritating for the militant anti-Semites are the concrete public personalities who express allegiance to their Jewishness.

The reaching of a consensus in rejecting anti-Semitism in Slovakia is not possible without a critical re-assessment of the Slovak State in view of the fate of the Slovak Jews. The post-November period has brought to the surface several pieces of evidence showing the self-sacrifice of non-Jewish fellow Slovaks towards their neighbors carrying the yellow star, even proving the help of part of one group of the clergy and some political representatives. It cannot be claimed that the Slovaks as a nation did not show sympathy and compassion in those tragic times. Even more, however, it is necessary to see things truthfully and speak about the crimes, indifference or support of evil where they happened.

Critical national self-reflection has been prevented until recently by the Communist regime. For decades the representatives of Tiso's regime were condemned predominately for their clericalism and anti-Communism, while the totalitarian character of the regime was, for obvious reasons, avoided by Communist interpreters.

The fall of censorship made it possible to do away with this taboo. Simultaneously, however, efforts glorifying the Slovak State were gaining publicity. The dispute about the Slovak State has become one of the key points in the discussions about the national character of the Slovaks, their national identity and the spiritual streams that form the foundation of Slovak history.

---

<sup>10</sup> A similar cluster of attitudes was found among Muscovites by R. J. Brym. Anti-Semitism is overlaid with authoritarianism, anti-western attitudes and extreme Russian nationalism [Gitelman 1991].

It seems, however, as if these discussions did not touch the historical consciousness of the general public. As has been shown by repeated surveys in October 1990 [Aktuálne... 1990], May 1991 [Aktuálne... 1991] and January 1992 [Aktuálne... 1992], the distribution of opinions about the Slovak State shows a remarkable stability: only 39 % of the citizens of the SR ascribe to the Slovak State more negative than positive features; according to 33 % the merits of the Slovak State outweighed its shortcomings; 28 % are not able to take any evaluating stance to this period. The distribution of opinions on the historical role of J. Tiso is similar: only 42 % of the adults in Slovakia assume a critical approach towards him; on the other hand, 29 % interpret him as a positive historical personality and for the rest of 29 % he has remained a vague and indistinct character (data from January 1992).

The defenders of the Slovak State stress mainly the state is independent and the relative material prosperity of the non-Jewish population. They interpret fascism in Slovakia as something imposed from the outside.<sup>11</sup> How incomplete the knowledge of the character of the Slovak State is, can be illustrated by the distribution of opinions on the fate of the Slovak Jews in the second world war: 63 % of respondents were aware that Jews were afflicted more than other people; a further 37 % either rejected this (18 %) or had no knowledge about it (19 %).

## **6. Conclusion**

The health of every society depends on its ability to maintain its memory. An old historical proverb says that those who turn a blind eye to the past become blind to the present as well. Those who are reluctant to remember inhuman conduct are prone to a new dangerous infection again (Weizsäcker - [Mareš, Musil, Rabušič 1992]).

In view of all the mentioned facts, the attempts to minimize the manifestations of anti-Semitism as a marginal phenomenon must be rejected. The idea that for the suppression of anti-Semitism it would suffice to introduce legal sanctions against those who openly propagate it must also be seen as simplistic. Legal sanctions without widely shared moral condemnation can call forth counter-productive effects and cause a shifting of anti-Semitism into the hidden, latent positions in which it has been surviving for decades.

The increased wariness toward Jews, as well as the lenient attitudes to the Slovak State should be interpreted as a cultural code, a symptom of the critical state of a Slovak society that has not, by far, won the struggle for its efficient functioning and moral health.

---

<sup>11</sup>) This fact is also obvious in the distribution of opinions on the Slovak National Uprising of 1944 (SNU) [Aktuálne... 1991, 1992]. On the one hand, the majority of the population (77 % in January 1992) accepts the SNU as a manifestation of resistance against fascism. On the other hand, however, the recognition of the anti-fascist character of the SNU shows only a relatively weak connection to the critical assessment of the character of the Slovak State: a positive relation to SNU is to be found not only among the majority of critics of the Slovak State (approximately 80 %), but also among a majority of its admirers (approximately 65 %).

The forty years of taboo on this discussion did not teach Czechoslovak society how to "handle" anti-Semitism, how to come to terms with it. Therefore it is a task of topical relevance to stimulate the capacity of the general public, media, courts and political representation for facing this and other forms of prejudice and to prevent national/racial discrimination.

ZORA BÚTOROVÁ is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, Comenius University, Bratislava. Her major fields of interest have been the sociology of innovations, the sociology of science, the sociology of politics and ethnic and nationality issues.

MARTIN BÚTORA is the Assistant to the President for Human Rights at the Office of the President of the CSFR and an external teacher at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague. His major fields of sociological study have been social deviance (alcoholism, drug addiction), self-help, volunteerism, civic initiatives and ethnic and nationality issues.

### References

- Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska - november 1990.* 1990. Správa zo sociologického prieskumu (Topical Problems of Czech-Slovakia - November 1990. News from Sociological Research). Bratislava: CVPS.
- Aktuálne problémy slovenskej spoločnosti- máj 1991.* 1991. Správa zo sociologického prieskumu (Topical Problems of Slovak Society - May 1991. News from Sociological Research). Bratislava: ÚSA UK.
- Aktuálne problémy slovenskej spoločnosti- január 1992.* 1992. Správa zo sociologického prieskumu (Topical Problems of Slovak Society - January 1992. News from Sociological Research). Bratislava: CSA.
- "Antisemitizmus na ústupe. Židia v dvoch rozdielnych spoločnostiach." 1991. (Anti-Semitism in Retreat. Jews in Two Different Societies). In *Výber* 1991/24.
- Bělohradský, V. 1991. "Postkomunismus jako panika" (Post-Communism as a Panic). *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 12. 6. 1991.
- "Beunruhigender Antisemitismus" 1991. (Disturbing Anti-Semitism). In *Der Standard*, 25.-27. Oktober 1991.
- Bochenski, J. M. 1991. "Stručný slovník filozofických povier" (A Brief Dictionary of Philosophical Superstitions). In *Fragment* 1991/9.
- Bútor, M. 1989. *Mne sa to nemôže stať. Sociologické kapitoly z alkoholizmu* (It Can't Happen to Me. Sociological Chapters on Alcoholism). Martin: Osveta.
- Bútor, M. 1992. "The Delayed Return of Prodigal Sons: Reflections on the Emerging Democracies in Central and Eastern Europe." In *Politics in Transition: The Democratization of Central and Eastern Europe. The American University Journal of International Law and Policy*, June 1992 (in print).
- Daniel, K. 1991. *On the Task of the School and the Church in the Formation of Xenophobic and Nationalistic Attitudes of the Young Generation in Poland.* A Paper at the International Conference "Quo vadis, Mitteleuropa". Wien, November 1991.
- Dolejší, M. 1991. *Prevrat 1989 alebo História sa opakuje?* (1989 Coup or History Repeating Itself?). Bratislava: Agres.
- Frišová, M. 1991. "List biskupovi" (A Letter to the Bishop). In *Fragment* 1991/2.
- Gitelman, Z. 1991. "Glasnost, Perestroika and Anti-Semitism." In *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1991.

- Goldstücker, E. 1991. "Skúsenosti Stredoeurópana" (Experiences of a Central European). In *Literárny týždenník* 1991, January, 3.
- Kamenec, I. 1991. *Po stopách tragédie* (In Traces of Tragedy). Bratislava: Archa.
- Kárady, V. 1991. *Jewish Identity, National Identity, Communist Power*. Paper at the International Conference "The Anatomy of Prejudice. Central European Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust". Dunajská Streda, October 1991.
- Karsai, L. 1991. *The Jewish Issue 1945-1991*. Paper at the International Conference "The Anatomy of Prejudice. Central European Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust". Dunajská Streda, October 1991.
- Maimannová, H. 1990. "Od fámy k pogromu. Strach z krištáľovej noci. Antisemitizmus v Sovietskom zväze I.-II." (From Rumour to Pogrom. Fear of *Kristallnacht*. Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union). In *Střední Evropa* 1990/16-17.
- Mareš, P., L. Musil, L. Rabušic 1992. *K redefinici kódů chování v procesu sociální transformace*. (On the Re-Definition of the Codes of Behavior in the Process of Social Transformation). A Paper at the Congress of Czech Sociologists. Prague, March 1992.
- Pfahl-Traugher, A. 1991. "Die neue/alte Legende vom Komplott der Juden and Freimauer. Zur Renaissance des antisemitisch-antifreimaurerischem Verschwörungsmythos in der Sowjetunion." (The New/Old Myth about the Plot of Jews and Free Masons. On the Renaissance of the Anti-Semitic and Anti-Free Masonic Myth of the Plot in the Soviet Union). In *Osteuropa* 1991/2.
- The Pulse of Europe* 1991. "A Survey of Political and Social Values and Attitudes." Times Mirror Centre for the People & the Press. Washington, September 1991.
- Riff, M. A. 1990. "Antisemitism." Ed. by M. A. Riff, in *Dictionary of Modern Political Ideologies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Rürup, R. 1990. "Emancipace a antisemitismus: historické spojnice." (Emancipation and Anti-Semitism: Historical Links). In *Střední Evropa* 1990/16.
- Spillmann, K. R., K. Spillmann 1991. "On Enemy Images and Conflict Escalation." In *International Social Science Journal*, February 1991: 57-77.
- Šimečka, M.: "Původ nejistoty" (The Origin of Insecurity). In *The Fate of the Jews in the Protectorate of 1939 to 1945*. Prague: Institute for Modern History 1991.
- Špitzer, J. 1992. "A Contribution at the International Symposium Held on the 50th Anniversary of the Transport of Slovak Jews." Banská Bystrica 1992. In *Národná obroda*, 6. 4. 1992.
- The Results of a Comparative Survey of Political and Economic Attitudes in the ČSFR, Hungary and Poland. III. - Attitudes to the International Situation and Racial and National Minorities*. 1991. Material for a Press Conference held on 23 May 1991. Prague: AISA.
- The Results of a Survey of Attitudes to National and Racial Minorities - November 1991*. Prague: Institute for Public Opinion Research.
- Von Weizsäcker, R. 1991. "Prejav 8.mája 1985 na Nemeckom spolkovom sneme pri príležitosti spomienkového zhromaždenia k 40. výročiu skončenia druhej svetovej vojny" (Speech on May 8, 1985 in the German Federal Congress on the Occasion of the Memorial Assembly held on the 40th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War). In *Fragment* 1991/2.