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## **Nationalisation of the Jewish Medical Practices, Chambers and Pharmacies in Kaposvár after the German Occupation**

### **Abstract**

**The purpose of the study.** The history of the Jews, who lived in Kaposvár, is well documented. Several monographies have been already written about their history and currently there are more researches are taking place. The historians have already written comprehensive history of the local Jewish community and naturally the German occupations and the events of the following months have not avoided the attention of the historiographers. My study also focuses on this epoch, but investigates other aspects, than the previous researchers. My essay describes nationalization of the Jewish medical practices, chambers and pharmacies in Kaposvár after the German occupation, furthermore it presents the circumstances of the dispossession and its effects on the health care and the local jurisdiction of the town. The study pays special attention to the operative laws and investigates practical execution of them.

**Applied methods.** The study fundamentally bases on archival sources, which are found in the local archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Somogy Megyei Levéltára). I applied the documents, which were issued by Capital and County Government Vice-commissioner's (alispán in Hungarian language and local government. Naturally I used beyond the primary sources, relevant monographies and studies. The study begins with presentation of the historical background, so gives a hand to the reader to get knows the brief history of that era and can orientate better. In my essay thematic scheme prevails, so history of the Jewish medical practices, chambers and pharmacies are introduced in separate chapters.

**Outcomes.** By my study the reader gives a comprehensive overview about history of the Jewish medical practices, chambers and pharmacies, which were functioning when the German army arrived. My essay tells about the decrees, which were introduced after the occupation, and concerned Jewish people, who worked in just now mentioned profession. Furthermore its presents these decrees' effect to the town's health care and the local jurisdiction, so can be knowledgeable, that did these anti-Semitic directions make an any damages, and if the answer is yes, how big was these losses and what did the local governors to consolidate the system.

**Keywords:** Kaposvár, Jewry, israelite, jew, medical practice, chambers, pharmacy, deprivatisation, confiscation process, nationalization

### **The historical background**

In the 1930's Hungary built up tight connection with far-right states, included both the fascist Italy and the Nazi Germany, then at the end of the decade committed oneself to collaboration with the Third Reich. In this diplomatic connection the Great Depression and the Gömbös-era's foreign policy played important role, which led to one-sided Italian and German orientation. Another decisive factor in birth of the dependence was Germany's expansive politics in Eastern Europe. The Third Reich shown increasingly interest in this region and became more and more

aggressive. The clear-cut sign of German influence and one of the most important parts of Germany's expansion in the region was Anschluss in the spring of 1938. After Austria's annexation the Hungarian government – was ambitious of revision – had to realise, that the recapture of the territory – which was lost after the World War I. by Treaty of Trianon – could be possible only with cooperation with Germany. The collaboration with the Third Reich led to get stronger the far-right politics and latent anti-Semitism was got visible.<sup>621</sup>

From 1938 in Hungary the number of anti-Semitic laws and decrees significantly grew, which was caused obviously by the German influence. The Hungarian Jews could live in better living conditions despite the serious discriminatory measures than the Jews, who lived in the neighbouring countries in the region. In Slovakia, Romania and Croatia there were already hold bloody pogroms in the first period of the war, as long as in 1942 deportation of the Jewish citizens was started. In the Polish and Russian territories – which were occupied by Germans – the local Israelite inhabitants' setting to ghettos and deportation of them was already started in 1939. Contrarily, in Hungary bulk of Jews were not threatened by danger until the March of 1944, when German troops occupied the country. Apart from the deportation in Körösmező and atrocities in Újvidék – in which approximately 20 000 Jewish citizens were killed – there were not measures, which concerned the entire native Jewish diaspora and could be danger to their life.<sup>622</sup>

The Hungarian society were not opposed to the anti-Semitism laws and decrees, which introduced because of cooperation with far-right states and the German occupation, moreover Israelite community also accepted them. The reason of the Jewish's moderate reaction was explainable with their trust in the Hungarian State. The members of the Jewish minority – although they had to face serious indignity and their economic potential were hindered - could not imagine that the government made an attempt to their physical destruction. The Jewish citizens hoped, they could overlive the war, so they tried to cooperate with *the Kingdom of Hungary*. By the way they had not got real opportunity to resistance or make a demonstration. The Hungarian people showed passive attitude and they tried to cooperate with different governmental bodies, because they hoped, that they could get the Jew's properties, but the effect of the anti-Semitic propaganda was also very strong. Police forces counted widely on bulk of civil people's assistance, namely the majority of the non-Jewish people not only shut their eyes to measures, which hit their Israelite fellow citizens, but they tried to help – mainly with reports – competent authorities' work as well. The Christian citizen's behaviour was motivated by personal revenge in lots of situation, but they also knew, that if they got previous Jewish properties, they could live on higher living standards and could reach certain existence without they should make more serious effort.<sup>623</sup> „*From this time a great part of the Hungarian society became accustomed to the fact that it is not only possible to establish an existence through work and enterprise, but also by taking someone else's already established existence and then denouncing him, questioning his grandparents, throwing him out of his job, claiming his business, possibly interning him, and taking possession of his existence.*” – summarized István Bibó – who was a notable Hungarian lawyer, politician and political theorist in the 20th century

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621 Gergely, J. (1997): 205–208.

622 Romsics, I. (2019) 345.

623 Karsai, L. (2005): 140.

– *who also researched* the anti-Semitism's affection to social and economic life in Hungary.<sup>624</sup> Naturally his diagnose also concerned medical practices, chambers and pharmacies, their arrestment offered opportunity to Christian rivals to take their former property, praxis's and pharmacies, beyond reduced concurrence, so Christian professionals got really good chance to built up a more certain existence and a better life.

### Elimination of the medical practices

The elimination of the doctors – who lived in Kaposvár – was started in the first part of April by the Capital and County Government Vice-commissioner's (alispán in Hungarian language) with the direction introduced on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1944, which based on the Prime Ministerial Decree no. 1210/1944. The new regulation declared that a person, who was regarded as Jewish henceforth is not employed as a public servant. According to the order Israelite citizens could not pass in to the public sector, so long as the Jews – who had got active labour relations – had to remove from their workplaces. Naturally the law concerned the doctors, who also worked as public servants, so their labour relations also had to end.<sup>625</sup>

In Somogy county the direction was also implemented – according to the mentioned decree of the Capital and County Government Vice-ispán – so the Jewish people's removal from the public sector.<sup>626</sup> The decree's practical implement led to chaotic states, because of the lack of doctor's numerous patients did not get the necessary medical attendance. These problems were claimed fast and effective solution. Accordingly, county and town authorities put to survey of the number of Israelite doctors, who lived in Kaposvár. In the middle of May, the Capital and County Government *Vice-commissioner* ask the Chief Medical Officer to do a survey about the number of Israelites, so long as the town put to the local police to make a report about the number of the Jewish doctor's offices. According to the survey – which it was made by the local council – in Kaposvár from 57 doctors 25 was Jewish. Nearly half of the doctors – who practiced in the town – were held Jewish, punctually 44% of them was Israelite. In the light of these numbers, it was not strange at all that the implement of the decree led to collapse of the health care system in the town. The survey also reported the doctors' number, who currently made statute-labour. According to the report 5 former removed doctors made statute-labour at this time. The competent authorities in order to get the medical attendance smooth and calm again passed upon the removed doctor's call-up. The doctors – who started work newly – were employed in their previous workplace.<sup>627</sup>

Worthy of note the legal context of the statute-labour, which was introduced in 1939 by the defence law. The men, who were unemployable for effective military service had to achieve their duty by statute-labour. The law did not make any difference between Jewish and non-Jewish people, but the latterly 1942 c. XIV. made opportunity to the discrimination. In pursuance of the regulation the Jewish citizens could do justice to their duty by non-combatant

<sup>624</sup> „Ettől kezdve szokták meg a magyar társadalom széles rétegei azt, hogy nemcsak munkával és vállalkozással lehet egzisztenciát alapítani, hanem úgy is, hogy valaki másnak a már kialakított egzisztenciáját kinézi magának, s aztán az illetőt feljel

enti, nagyszülőit kikutatja, állásából kidobhatja, üzletét kiigényli, őt magát esetleg internáltatja, egzisztenciáját pedig birtokba veszi.” Bibó, I. (2001): 50.

<sup>625</sup> No. 1210/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 1. §.

<sup>626</sup> HU-MNL-SVL IV. 405. b. 4154/1944.

<sup>627</sup> HU-MNL-SVL V. 73. The reference number is not readable.

service for the Hungarian army. This duty mainly meant such a task, which had to be accomplished for the troops on the front, but it did not only contain strategic mission, but another sort of the duty as well as, for example medical works.<sup>628</sup>

Pál Stephaich, Capital and County Government *Vice-commissioner* made a new decree on 24 May, which aimed to guarantee function of the public health care in the city, and in the county. The decree declared, that Israelite doctor had to give their real estates and their offices to the Christians doctors, as long as their medical personalities– for example their x-ray and electrocardiograph machine; their other surgical instruments; and their medicaments too – had to be collected and surrendered to director of the hospital to 3<sup>th</sup> June at latest. The director had to take care professional storage of the instruments to the further measure.<sup>629</sup>

The crucial stage – which was evolved in the county –was typified very well by the Chief Medical Officer of Somogy County (megyei tisztifőorvos in Hungarian language) brief to the Capital and County Government *Vice-commissioner* on 28 June. The Chief Medical Officer reflected in his brief to the Prime Ministerial Decree no. 2250/1944, which was made some days ago, before 23 June. The mentioned decree declared, that Jewish doctors only treat other Jewish people. The regulations did not concern the case of first aid, and the home defence statute-labour (honvédelmi munkakötelezettség in Hungarian language) were also exceptions. The decree also said, that after the regulations came into effect Jewish doctor could not join to the medical associations, furthermore the Israelite doctors, who were registered formerly did not wear any position in the organisation and they were also deprived of the right to vote.<sup>630</sup>

The Chief Medical Officer revealed in his brief, that if the decree would be implemented, there would not be otolaryngologist in the county. Namely in Somogy county at this time there was only one specialist worked, Jenő Magyar, who was regarded as Jewish by laws. The Chief Medical Officer also worried about five pharmacies, which were closed because of former owner's move to ghetto.<sup>631</sup>

### **The nationalisation of the pharmacies**

By analyse of the anti-Semite laws – which influenced to the health care system – we must also pay attention to the nationalization of the pharmacies. The Jewish drugstores were brought under regulation on Prime Ministerial Decree no. 1370/1944, which was introduced on 14 April 1944. The decree declared that Ishmaelite people could not get licence to operate a personal pharmaceutical right (személyjogú gyógyszertár in Hungarian language) and they also could not get usufruct either, furthermore it was not allowed them, to get real right pharmaceutical right (reáljogú gyógyszertár in Hungarian language). However, the Jewish pharmacists had to operate their drugstore until the competent authorities give out new licence to operate the pharmacy for somebody else or assign official inspector (hatósági vezető in Hungarian language) to manage it. This measure was necessary so that in order to local inhabitants could obtain their medicines. In addition the Ishmaelite owner had to preserve devices and equipment

<sup>628</sup> 1939 c. II. 230. §; 1942. c XIV. 3–5. §.

<sup>629</sup> HU-MNL-SVL IV. 405. b. 11118/1944.; 11119/1944.

<sup>630</sup> No. 2250/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 1. §; 3. §.

<sup>631</sup> HU-MNL-SVL IV. 405. b. 10757/1944.

of their drugstore and the material inventory – which was belonged to the pharmacy – could sell in normal quantity for current prices.<sup>632</sup>

Worthy of note is the Public Health Act 1876 – which was hallmarked by József Fodor – made binary structure. According to the Act personal and real pharmaceutical right could work in the country. Personal licence was obtained by application, but only the dispensing chemists had opportunity to apply for it. The licence belonged to a concrete person, and it was not possible to sold, alienated, or inherited it. The real-pharmaceutical-right pharmacy was ~~able to~~ saleable and lettable. The owner could be not only a druggist, but in case of the lack of necessary qualification he had to employ dispensing chemist.<sup>633</sup>

According to the regulation the Interior Ministry had to invite national applications to operate former Jewish personal-pharmaceutical-right pharmacies until 5 May 1944. The Ishmaelite's personal-pharmaceutical-rights were cancelled independently of the result of the application at latest 30 June 1944. The major had to assign an official inspector to coordinate the pharmacy. The Prime Ministerial Decree no. 1370/1944 said ~~next~~ the followings about the new licensee occupation: „*the new licensee have to take from the material inventory of the pharmacy for daily trade prices and its devices and equipment by the valuation, which was determined by Public Health Council's [Országos Közegészségügyi Tanács in Hungarian language] competent advisement with regard to the real circumstances.*”<sup>634</sup> In the words of the decree the Interior Ministry had to declare the type of the payment and the deadline of it. The Interior Ministerial Decree no. 550/1944 was introduced on 3 June 1944.<sup>635</sup> In Kaposvár it was possible to apply for one personal-pharmaceutical-rights drugstore, this was called Kígyó Gyógyszertár (Snake Pharmacy).<sup>636</sup>

The procedure in the case of the real-pharmaceutical-right pharmacies was completely different. The Interior Ministry had to assign an official inspector to the drugstore's management. The official inspector had to give effect to those measures, which was necessary for the pharmacy's calm and smooth functioning. Their salary was declared by the mayor, who in his decision had to take notice of the current salary in this profession.<sup>637</sup> The decree concerned 4 real-pharmaceutical-right drugstores in Kaposvár.

We have not got another relevant information about the future of the local pharmacies, but the Chief Medical Officer mentioned brief let us to make a conclusion. The shift, which concerned the former Israelite drugstore was not trouble-free. The application process was really slow and the assignment of the official inspectors was also problematic. This situation evidently led to the concerned drugstores impermanent closure, which could rush local people into danger, who needed medicament. It could not determine, that how long ~~was~~ these drugstores was closed, but according to the available sources we can calculate more weeks. In pursuance of the Chief Medical Officer's brief – which he wrote on 28 June 1944 – the pharmacies were closed after the former owners had moved to the ghetto. According to the mayor, György Kaposváry Véték's

<sup>632</sup> No. 1370/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 1. §; 7. §.

<sup>633</sup> Gecsei, L. (1986): 8.; 1876 c. XIV.

<sup>634</sup> „az új engedélyes köteles a gyógyszerertár anyagkészletét a napi kereskedelmi árakon, berendezését és felszerelését pedig az Országos Közegészségügyi Tanács megfelelő szaktanácsa által a tényleges viszonyok figyelembevételével megállapított becsértéken átvenni.” No. 1370/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 4. §.

<sup>635</sup> No. 1370/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 3–4. §.

<sup>636</sup> *Új-Somogy* 2 May 1944. 2.; No. 550/1944. Interior Ministerial Decree.

<sup>637</sup> No. 1370/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 5. §.

direction „*the Jew, who was obligated wearing discriminatory signal*”<sup>638</sup> had to move to the ghetto at latest 22 May 1944. Between the birth of the Chief Medical Officer’s brief and the deadline – which was determined by mayor’s direction – almost six weeks elapsed, so these pharmacies had to be closed for a month and a half at the lowest estimate.<sup>639</sup>

### Oppression of the Jewish chambers

The oppression of the Jewish chambers also started with the Prime Ministerial Decree no. 1210/1944, which was declared the removal of the Jewish public servants. The decree said that Ishmaelite citizens could not be employed in the bar any longer, as well as the Jews – who was applied in the bar before implementing the decree – had to be removed until 31 May 1944 by the bar’s committee. The regulation also concerned the deputy lawyers (helyettes ügyvéd in Hungarian language) and clerks.<sup>640</sup>

*Somogyi Újság* – which was one of the two decisive local paper in the town between the two world wars – was interested in the practical implementation of the decree, so the employees of the newspaper publisher saw the president of Bar Association of Kaposvár, dr. István Boross about information of the implementation at the beginning of April. „*We have not made concrete measures referring to the member’s revision by Bar Association of Kaposvár yet, because we have waited for a direction from the attorney general. We have to implement members’ deletion to end of May, so we have not known exactly, that how many members we need to delete*” – the president informed the local paper.<sup>641</sup> According to Boross’s report the Bar had got 120 members. The president calculated on 50–60 people to remove, who had to be removed till the end of May. He mentioned a shocking number concerning deputy lawyers, in his estimation the Bar had got 20 deputy lawyers and 18 of them was Jewish, whom membership had to be cancelled to the deadline.<sup>642</sup> One week later another local paper, called *Új-Somogy* also made an interview with the president about this theme. Boross made the next statement: „*We do not implement the law immediately, the reason is, that we bear in mind the public’s interest, because there are such a lot of lawsuits in progress, which we have to give to their practices’ caretakers in the fullest detail by Jewish lawyers. In any case we debar the Jewish lawyers from the Bar within the deadline, which was declared by the law.*”<sup>643</sup>

Finally, the Bar Association decided on the expellable members on 30<sup>th</sup> April. The Israelite lawyers had got two weeks to appeal and after that the decision became final. In pursuance of the decisions 54 lawyers’, 5 deputy lawyers’ and 7 clerks’ membership were deleted in Somogy county. The bulk of the legal practitioners – about half of them – lived in Kaposvár. In the town 27 lawyers, 2 deputy lawyers and 3 clerks had to step out the Bar and had to finish their career.

<sup>638</sup> „megkülönböztető jelzés viselésére köteles zsidó” HU-MNL-SVL V. 73. 9737/1944.

<sup>639</sup> HU-MNL-SVL IV. 405. b. 10757/1944.; HU-MNL-SVL V. 73. 9737/1944.

<sup>640</sup> No. 1210/1944. Prime Ministerial Decree 5–6. §.

<sup>641</sup> „Még konkrét intézkedéseket nem tettünk a kaposvári ügyvédi kamaránál [sic!] a tagrevízióra vonatkozóan, mert erre igazságügyminiszteri rendelkezést várunk. A tagtörléseket május végéig kell végrehajtanunk, így még pontosan nem is tudjuk, hogy hány tagunk kerül a rosta alá.” *Somogyi Újság* 8 April 1944. 5.

<sup>642</sup> *Somogyi Újság* 8 April 1944. 5.

<sup>643</sup> „Hogy nem azonnal hajtjuk végre a törvényt, annak oka az, hogy a közönség érdekeit tartjuk szem előtt, mert hiszen sok olyan nagy per van folyamatban, amelyeket a zsidó ügyvédeknek az irodájuk gondnokának a legnagyobb részletességgel kell átadniuk. Mindenesetre a zsidó ügyvédeket a törvény által megszabott határidőn belül a törvény rendelkezéseinek megfelelően kizárjuk a Kamarából.” *Új-Somogy* 15 April 1944. 2.

The Bar entrusted the guardians with maintenance of the removed legal practitioners' office. Less people lost their job, than was estimated by the president. The Bar decided fairly late and named the members, who had to leave the association. Consequently, the local Jewish lawyers had a share in numerous legal transactions. Boross's pronouncement also give countenance to this assertion. Accordingly, the Bar tried to decide on the members' exclusion with necessary circumspection and tried to prepare Christian lawyers for their new duty, namely management of the lawsuits, which previous were coordinate by Ishmaelite lawyers.

We cannot determine with the lack of sources, that how much was the effect, which the oppression of the Jewish chambers effected to the local justice, but we can likely to say the change was not smooth. The clerks' dismissal could cause problems in the future.<sup>644</sup>

### Summary

In Kaposvár the socialisation of the Jewish medical practices, chambers and pharmacies obviously was not trouble-free. Elimination of the Jewish doctors caused serious difficulty on area of health care, as long as oppression of the chambers could led to confusion in jurisdiction. The Jewish pharmacy was also closed, which could be a danger to local people's medicine supply. There is no doubt, the nationalisation, which was made by the government over against Jews, who worked in mentioned profession caused impermanent confusion. By the way this conclusion is true in the case of all anti-Jewish laws because these laws were executed fast and concerned mass of citizens, so they necessarily led to difficulties. I would also like to say these anti-Semite measures – which caused basically short-term problems – were not taken just ideology reason, without any rationality, but on the contrary, they seriously took notice of economic aspects. The Hungarian State could compensate his casualties by Jewish people's deprivation of law and confiscation process, as long as their citizens could make serious profit with acquisition of previous Jewish property, included both their real estate and personalities. Hungarians had to – for the profit, which was accountable in the economic sector – paid high price. They suffered irreparable damages in aspect of social, cultural and moral. The anti-Semite politics led to almost complete perish of the Hungarian Jewish diaspora, furthermore thousands of Hungarian citizens became accomplice in the largest genocide of the world-history.<sup>645</sup>

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