

DEAR READER!

A rich chapter of the peculiar and determinant history of Kisvárda is reflected in this chronicle of the Jews in the city. Written notices mention them as far back as the 1500-s. By the 18th and 19th century the Jewish community arises in resolute numbers, playing an indelible role in the civic evolution of our settlement.

Kisvárda was one of the stations on the roadway of suffering, through, which the people of the Diaspora were to reach the homeland of Jewish fulfilling. In that small islet of Europe the Jewish settlers could find a home for a fraction of the historical times. The age-old behest - "tell it to your children" - evokes not only the tears of remembrance. The annals document civic prosperity, spiritual wealth, workdays filled with keeping of the traditions, temple-building and founding of schools.

I am convinced that the study of István Nézõ deserves the appreciation of the reader. It is validated not only by historic documentation based on a multitude of detailed sources, it likewise has a claim on a broad perspective. In addition to dealing with his main theme, the author points out the general relationship to that local society. But there is not only historical interest this study. The present-day populace may be captivated by the idea that they are citizens of a community, which has a centuries-old history of open-mindedness, a community whose prominent members were listened to, in county and state affairs.

We are all familiar with the Jewish tragedy of our century, the Holocaust, which destroyed a significant part of the Kisvárda citizenry: many of them died, and many were forced to leave their native land. Their memory did not fade in the twilight of oblivion - especially in the last years there were numerous occasions for official remembrances. I refer specifically to the twin-city joining with the Israeli community of Carmiel, a link which is growing constantly stronger.

It is quite natural that in addition to its scientific valuation, we feel a moral obligation in the fulfillment and publication of this study.

This work is a milestone in our local annals. I commend it sincerely and open-heartedly to the broadest reading audience

Kisvárda, May 1998.

Dr. Albert Oláh.

Mayor of the city of Kisvárda.

Everything written in this "Italic" type of font is not part of the original text, it is added by the translator for ease of understanding.

The translator added a G L O S S A R Y of terms at the end of every chapter, following the bibliography, in order to explain terms and names that may not be familiar to people who do not speak Hungarian and/or do not know the Hungarian history.

The FOREWORD of Dr. Péter Robert that figures in Hebrew, Hungarian and English on pages 8-11 of the original, is not included in this translation.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN KISVÁRDA.

Their life and history.

A study by István Nező.

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The following list of sources is on page 142 of the original Hungarian language version, located at the end of chapter X.

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I.

The immigration of the Jews into the Carpathian provinces.

According to the literature dealing with this topic, the immigration of the Jews is marked by four stages. The first findings from the 3d to 4th centuries allude to the presence of Jews from Syria and Asia Minor. Subsequently we know about 11-th century migrations coming from the South German provinces. That was the time when the status of the Jews was first legitimized, the first decrees referring to the Jews (prohibition of mixed marriages, the ban on employing non-Jewish servants, forbidding work on Sundays and Christian holidays) having been enacted in the year 1092 by the Council of Szabolcs. During the reign of Lajos I (*a*), there was a hiatus in the Jewish continuity, and after the battle of Mohács (*b*) the Jewish communities disappeared again.

The third period of the immigration concurred with the duration of the Turkish rule, and ceased with its ending. Our subject coincides with the fourth period of crucial importance in the history of the Jews in Hungary. It started with the expulsion of the Turks (*c*), and was determined by the loss of population in the realm. People streamed into this deserted area, and Jews were part of the tide, which had slowed down temporarily only during the freedom fight of Rákóczy (*d*).

During the next two centuries the number of Jews swelled from a couple of thousand to a seven digit number. Throughout this period one can again distinguish two stages.

The first one is the settling down, spontaneous as well as organized. It was condoned to a certain limit and degree by the Royal Chambers and the large estates. They were prompted by the requirements to provide for the needs of the army, the fiscal and mercantile adjustments, and the levies exacted from the Jews.

The next stage is oftentimes an inner migration, it is a move from the more crowded territories into the newly developing, less populated areas. The portrayal of this fourth period is made easier by the repeated conscriptions of the 18th century. This is the time when an ever increasing number of Jews can be documented in Kisvárdá.

G L O S S A R Y :

a/. Lajos I, was the second Angevine king of Hungary. He ruled in the 14th century and revoked all the privileges the Jews had previously enjoyed.

b/. The battle of Mohács was fought in 1521. Suleiman the Magnificent annihilated the Hungarian armies and Lajos II, the Hungarian king, died in the battle. It is considered to be one

of the most grievous dates in national history.

c/. The Turks were defeated and the royal city of Buda was reconquered at the end of the 17th century.

d/. The prince Ferenc Rákoczy has led an unsuccessful revolt against the Habsburg imperial rule in the 18th century.

II.

The chronicle of the Jews in Kisvárdá.

The first trace of the apparition of a Jew in Kisvárdá is noted in the year 1508. It is a notice in one of the accounting-books of a local gentry family, the Várdays. In the expense columns of the accounts of Miklós de Kyswarada, among items referring to financial data concerning viticulture, there is the following notation: "Item Judeo propter ferri dedi den XXXVII" (I gave 37 denars for iron to the Jew).(1).

The writer of these lines presumably may have been the steward of the fort, being in charge of the accounting for incomes and expenses. The notice does not provide adequate information on whether the Jew was settled in Kisvárdá proper, or if he was just an itinerant peddler.

The settling of the Jews in larger numbers occurred much later and is linked to the Eszterházy family. Miklós Eszterházy had married Krisztina Nyári, the daughter of Pál Nyári and Kata Várdy. Furthermore another family member, Pál Eszterházy, had received as mortgage the estate of Kisvárdá in 1702. The implementation of this transaction was effected in 1712, that being the date of the contract, in-between the owner and the commonalty of the estate.

During the Middle Ages, the settling of the Jews was a royal privilege. By the end of the 17th century, this task was taken over mostly by the large estate owners. In the 1698 census, 6 leasing families were recorded within the area of Szatmár county, while in Ugocsa county there were 4.

In the Hungarian realm, the first successful census - in contrast to previous failures - was effected in 1735-1739. The county archives date the existence of the first conscription to the year 1736. No data are recorded for Kisvárdá. There are two families noted in Pazony as well as in Oros, while Nagykálló, Dob, Lök, Eszlár, Berkesz and Bogdány are tallying just one family per community. At any rate, one cannot fully trust the contemporaneous census data pertinent to population numbers and fiscal information. This is even more true in reference to the census of the Jews. They must have been far more difficult to register, unlike the general population working in the fields and the vineyards.

The census was hampered by the demeanor of the Jews and by the way they exercised their trades: "The majority made a living from commerce, be it as faraway traders, as peddlers on fairs or itinerants, all of them being mostly away from their domicile. Additionally they were forbidden to own either land or house, as such it was far more difficult to count the subleasing (inqilianus) Jews" (2).

Jews as a rule had no fixed last names, next to their first name they were identified by the first name of the father, by their trade or occasionally by the name of the township they lived in. In 1787 the emperor Joseph II had decreed that every Jew who hitherto had not used a well known or acknowledged last name, as of January the first of the subsequent year, will have to opt for a German last name.

As a result of the above circumstances, the Jews, who anyway were living under the most difficult conditions, did their utmost to evade the levies imposed on them. This did coincide with the interest of the estate-owners. Any governance taxes paid by the Jews, or by any of their other subjects, reduced the income of the estates. It is not coincidental that the contemporary rosters were customarily tax-conscriptions. The list from the year 1742 can for sure be deemed to be one of those and it counted the leasing Jews. The following figures were recorded:

Kisvárdá district 12 families in 10 villages

Dada district 9 families in 8 villages

Nádudvar district 8 families in 5 villages

Bátor district 19 families in 15 villages -----

Total: 48 families in 38 villages. -----

In the year 1746 the Regency Council ordered an all-out census of the Jews, with the stated goal to learn the exact number of the Hebrews in the realm. Taxes were levied on and paid by every individual, as such counting the taxpayers was tantamount to a personal census. Every Jew - be it a child or an adult, a well-to-do or a pauper - had to pay 2 forints.

It is an established fact in the history of taxation, that by the time of the Austrian inheritance campaigns, the empress Maria Theresa viewed the original war-contributions as compulsory levies. In the year 1743, 6 forints had to be paid per family. Starting with the year 1749 the moneys were collected as tolerance duties, in fact during the reign of the emperor Joseph II the denomination was "taxa tolerantialis". By the year 1785 it was called "cameral tax", and Jews had to pay it as charged, because they were not of the Christian faith. That taxation was refused in 1828. The tolerance tax was abrogated by the emperor Ferdinand V on June 24, 1846. At that time there was a backlog of 2,5 million forints. After some bargaining, the amount was reduced to 1,2 million forints, and the Jews did pay the arrears to the treasury.

The landowners were against the levies imposed by the governance on their subjects. Consequently the county officials, composed from landed gentry and protecting their own interests, conducted the census in a manner to "substantiate" the possibly paltriest tax-base. As such, the factual number of Jews must be higher than indicated in the census of the year 1746. In the years 1746-1748, within the area of contemporary Hungary, excluding the Partium and

Transylvania, the total number of Jews registered was 14,847.

According to that census, in Szabolcs county 60 families were registered in 44 villages, bringing the total number to 202 persons.

Another registration provides the following tally (3):

Kisvárdá district 11 families in 10 villages

Dada district 13 families in 11 villages

Nádudvar district 10 families in 6 villages

Bátor district 23 families in 16 villages -----

----- **Total: 57 families in 43 villages.** -----

Within the district of Kisvárdá the effective numbers reported were as follows (4): -----

Uxor Filius Filias Servii Ancillae J.

spouse son daughter servant attendant -----

Kisvárdá Georgius Salamonovics 1 - - - -

Litke Martinus Salamonovics 1 - - - -

Anarcs Gregorius Jakobovics 1 1 - - -

Gyulaháza Martinus Herskovics 1 1 1 - -

Tuzsér David Salamon - - - - 1

Bezdéd Éliás Herskovics 1 - 2 - -

Karász Isac Abramovics 1 2 4 2 -

Tass The Jew Michael 1 1 - - -

The Jew Salamon 1 1 - - -

Tét Judeus Döri 1 1 - - -

Napkor Judeus.....(illegible) 1 1 - - -

The actual information from the year 1747, found in Vol. VII of the Archives of Hungarian Jewry, is in agreement with the data from the previous year. On September 20, 1747, Kisvárdá forwarded the census of its Jews. The data were accompanied by the remark that they were unable to collect even half of the levies imposed, because the majority of the Jews had absconded before the enforcing. Only one Jewish family did reside at the time in Kisvárdá proper, the named Georgius Salamonovics and his wife. They had no children. Jews were furthermore living within the district in the villages of Litke, Anarcs, Gyulaháza, Tuzsér, Bezdéd, Karász, Tass, Tét and Napkor, 11 head of families with a total number of 40.

Data from the mid-century indicate an increase in the number of Jews. In 1753, 21 families were living in 13 villages of the Kisvárdá district. The earlier arrivals had resided already 6-10 years in their respective location. 3 Jews were registered in Kisvárdá (Georgius Salamonovics, Simon Jakobovics and a Jew called Salamon), and they had 3 offsprings (5). By 1754 there were 30 families in the area, and 5 families were recorded as leasers in Kisvárdá. Jews lived in similar numbers in other settlements of the county, for instance there were 5 families in Ujfehérto and 6 families in Bátor. In the year 1759, 4 taxpayer families resided in Kisvárdá, where they were additionally referred to as leasers.

An all-out census on population numbers and taxpayers, pertaining to the whole county was effected in 1770. The data that resulted can be properly compared due to the standardized questionnaire. The following pertinent information can be gleaned: name, marital status, period of living in the country, the number of offspring, their sex and age, if the person owns a house, and if not on whose property is he residing, the taxes he is paying and their destination. A query is even directed at the trade the person is pursuing.

236 Jewish families lived in the 85 communities of the 4 districts, totaling 994 individuals. In the 24 communities of the Kisvárdá district, the majority of the Jews were tavern-keepers, while some were engaged in distilling brandy. There was a considerable number of servants.

59 families lived in the Kisvárdá district. There were 66 boys and 71 girls in those families. Added to these were the attendants, 10 men and 33 women; some of them were not of the Jewish faith. The wives of the head of family were registered as integral part of the 59 families but their names were not recorded. The only data entered concerned the marital status of the family-head: married, unmarried or widower.

The following data were mustered in the district (6):

 District of Kisvárdá 294 individuals 59 families 136 children: 66 boys and 71 girls District of Dada 293 individuals 75 families 132 children: 80 boys and 52 girls District of Nádudvar 165 individuals 48 families 71 children: 45 boys and 26 girls District of Bátori 242 individuals 54 families 123 children: 70 boys and 53 girls. -----
Total 994 individual 236 families 462 children: 260 boys and 53 girls -----

Districts average age of children average number per family -----

----- Kisvárdá 6.6 years 2.3 children
 Dada 4.7 years 1.8 children Nádudvar 7.5 years 1.5 children Bátor 6.7 years 2.3 children

Regarding the actual data within Kisvárdá, it is apparent that there were 9 families living in the locality (7):

Name of the family head Living in the country since Boys Age Girls Age -----

----- 1/. Georg(ius) Salamonovics since 1720 1 16 1 11 2/. Mich(ael) Herskovics since 1720 1 13 - - 3/. Jos(ephus) Salamon since 1745 1 6 1 4 4/. Abs(olon) Herskovics since 1756 - - 2 6, 4 5/. Simeon Jakobovics since 1750 3 1, 6, 8 1 10 6/. Abs(olon) Lázároovics since 1766 no family 7/. Izsák since 1755 1 10 3 2, 8, 13 8/. Mark(ovics ?) Izsák since 1758 2 2, 20 2 2, ? 9/. Mojses Farkas since 1744 1 5 -

The above data indicate 20 children, 10 boys and 10 girls; the average number of children per family being 2.2.

The conscription is listing the "familiarium", e.g. the servants, domestic helpers, relatives of associates and other family members too. The age of the 11 male (masculinus) individuals is listed as : 4 of them are 20 years old, 2 are 25 years old and the rest is 24, 22, 14, 6 and 4 years old. The female (foemin sexus) individuals are listed agewise as being 30, 25, 24, 22, 20, 18, 16, 8, 3 and 2 years old. The total number in this category thus came to 21, including the female ones. Out of these there were 11 Jewish servants: 5 male and 6 female. The remainder were non-Jewish, Catholics or Protestants.

Page 19 illustration: Facsimile of a page from the 1770 conscription of the Jews.

The wives are not named in the listing, it is noted only whether the taxpaying man is married. That was the case with all the nine above mentioned men from Kisvárdá. There is no information on possible family connections, and at a first glance one could deem that the two Herskovics's may have been father and son. One of them is living in Hungary since 1720, and as such has to be at least 50 years of age; he has a 13 years old son. The other Herskovics is living in the country since 1756 - his elder daughter is 6 years old - and his presumable age is 25-30 years. He was most probably born between 1745-50. That information, as well as the reasoning that the older Herskovics did live continually in the country, are excluding the putative father-son relation in-between the two Herkovics's. If that would not be so, one would have to presume that the year Absolon came to the country - 1756 - were his date of birth. This would not fit with a 6 years old child of his own in the 1770 conscription data.

From the above one can conclude that in the year 1770 there were 49 Jews living in Kisvárdá; at least that was the number tallied by the tax-census. The figure is totaled from the 9 head of families, the 9 wives, the 20 children and the 11 "Judeus familiarium".

In the year 1779 the bishop Eszterházy did visit the city. On that occasion it was confirmed that there are 326 Roman Catholics who go to the confessional, 92 Catholics who do not, there are 25 Greek Catholics and 189 Protestants (Calvinists); understandably no figures on residents of the Jewish faith are mentioned (8). Some improvement in the adjudgement and safety of the Jews did occur with the March 31, 1783, "Systematica Gentis Judaicae Regulatio", the so-called tolerance edict of the emperor Joseph II. With the exception of the mining-towns it did established the freedom of movement, it freed up the trades which until than were hedged by the guilds, and Jews could even rent land on condition that they till it themselves.

Significant reforms were initiated even in the field of education. That liberal-minded monarch though could not bring around major basic changes in the situation of the Jews - mostly because this ruling was later revoked. Nevertheless, spurred on by the spirit and ideas of the liberal reform movement, it was a first attempt to liquidate or at least to blunt the contrast between the Christian and Jewish societies. At any rate the last third of the 18-th century brought a significant increase in the number of the Jewish population, whether this was a consequence of the edict or not.

In the year 1785, Joseph II did order a national census. For the Jews there were separate questionnaires, with less queries than those for the general population. In Szabolcs county, Balkány was the most populous with 20 families, Buj-Mada-Nagykállo had registered 8-10 families. In Kisvárda 8 names figured on the roll which bore the name of "Conscriptio Tolerantialis Judeorum ex Parte Processus Kis Vardaensis", having registered the number of Jews existing in the district with an intent on taxation.

The names of the individuals are: Mojzes Farkas, Jacobus Mojzes, Josephus Salamon, Josephus Aron, Lebli Hersli, Josephus Lebli, Lebli Joseph, Lebli Simon (9).

In the county registry there were 314 names, but in 21 instances the families did leave, they absconded, disappeared. In Kisvárda 118 Jews did live in the years 1784-85. In Balkány there were 165 Jews, in Nagykállo 66, in Mada 84, in Lök 53 and in Ujfehérto 102 (10).

Comparing an earlier and a later conscription, one gets a better idea on the number of immigrants in the 18th century. The incomplete 1735-38 data indicated 11 thousand Jews in the tallied area. Projected to the area of the whole country, this could mean a total number of 18 thousand. The figures from 1787 however do record the presence of over 83 thousand Jews.

The first stage of the Jewish immigration from Poland, stemming from its 1772 partition, was more or less completed by the turn of the century. During this period the migration and settling of the Jews was a slow and gradual process. The data from the year 1770 indicate that by this time most of the Jewish heads of families in the county, were already born in Hungary. From the immigration point of view, Szabolcs can be considered a variegated county, half of the Jews who were not indigenous came from Galitzia. For those born in Hungary, the county was often a secondary settling, likewise many arrived from Zemplén.

Mention must be made of the fact that the authorities raised no obstacles to the arrival of Jews from evolved areas. On the other hand they preferred to keep out the indigent ones, the ones who were coming from the Eastern territories. Nevertheless those refugees from the poverty- stricken regions boosted the populace of the low-sustenance Northeastern counties. The individual

customs levy of the 18th century - every Jew had to pay 1 forint on passing through the frontier - was intended to limit the migration. Once again it was Joseph II who terminated this discriminating practice.

Jewish settlement and immigration in the 19-th. century.

The county archives reveal 3 conscriptions from the early 19-th century. The one from 1812 contains data only from a single district, while the counts from 1821 and 1832 display information on the whole county.

The census of 1821 presents the number of the Jews according to the districts (11): -----
----- District of
Kisvárdá 2955 individuals

District of Nádudvar 1425 individuals

District of Dada 3240 individuals

District of Bátor 2755 individuals -----
----- **Total 10375 individuals** -----

The years 1785 to 1840 can be considered as the second stage of the Jewish immigration, despite the fact that the 1821 census displays numbers almost identical with the 1848 one. The major increase in the numbers originated mostly around the beginning of the century. The figures from 1770 did increase almost tenfold by 1821. The data of Elek Fényes reflect the 1839 ecclesiastical composition of the Kisvárdá populace: 920 Roman Catholics, 172 Greek-Catholics, 621 Protestants, 500 Israelites and 6 Evangelicals. Thus the Israelites constituted 22.5% of the total 2219 inhabitants of Kisvárdá (12).

The # XXIX statute of the 1840 legal decrees authorized the free settling to anywhere. It referred to the Jews who were born in the country or who had obtained the legal status, excepting only the mining-towns. At the time there were Jewish communities with over 100 individuals in 310 townships, in a total of 41 counties of the realm. While that law may have influenced the number of Jews in many localities, there was no significant increase in Kisvárdá and the county. The # XXIX statute was meaningful for the rest of the land after all, with an increase from 244 thousand in 1840, to 368 thousand in 1850; the percentage of the Jews rised to be 2.8% of the total populace.

The 1848 census of the Jews.

In May 1848, the Secretary of the Interior, Bertalan Szemere, directed the counties to register the Jewish families and their relatives. The registration was performed in Szabolcs county, but the data concerning some of the communities do not exist any more. At the time the total number of Jews living in the county was 10661. Out of this figure 723 lived in Kisvárdá, 609 in Nagykálló, 366 in Lök and 223 in Nyirbátor. Additionally in 20 other communities of the county, the number of Jews was in-between 100 and 200. Israelites lived in almost every settlement even if their numbers were small. As evident from above, the largest Jewish concentration was in Kisvárdá. The 723 Jewish individuals in the township were comprised in 161 families.

The birth locality of origin for the adults is evident from the following table (13): -----

	Kisvárdá													
	Szabolcs							Zemplén						
	Ung	Bereg	Other	Abroad										
male	59	19	31	9	10	14	11	53	19	32	11	5	18	3
female	53	19	32	11	5	18	3	53	19	32	11	5	18	3
Total	112	38	63	20	15	32	14	106	38	64	22	16	18	6

Almost all the adults (95%) were born in our country. Most of them originated in Kisvárdá and Zemplén, as well as in other localities of Szabolcs county. Lower numbers came from the counties Ung, Bereg, Sáros and Abauj. 14 individuals were born abroad, in Poland, and most of them had reached Hungary in their childhood. In 51 of the families both parents had originally lived in another community. Some of them had arrived to Kisvárdá as newly weds, others came with small children. Many of them had previous domiciles in various other localities. This internal migration is readily documented from the birthplace of the children, and it happened either within the county or the Northern part of the country.

The average number of children per family is 3.2. The childless families were either young and thus had not yet offsprings, or they were old, whose children did not live anymore with them. Generally the 40-50 years old people had 4-6 children, while the younger ones had 2-3. The table below displays information on the age-group distribution of the married men, the number of men in each group, as well as the average number of children per group (14): -----

		Married Men: the ages	
		the total count	the average number of children
20-25	12	0.9	
26-35	44	2.2	
36-45	24	3.7	
46-55	27	4.2	
56-65	20	3.5	
66-75	2	1.5	

People did not marry at a young age, girls were usually wed at the age of 18-20. In more than half of the pairs counted - 83 couples - at least one of the spouses was born in Kisvárdá.

Among those who arrived by matrimony, most of them - 31 individuals - came from Zemplén. In the same category 13 were born in Ung county and 11 individuals came from other Szabolcs county localities. Those who had moved to Kisvárdá as constituted families, came mostly from Zemplén. 26 families came to the township from other localities of Szabolcs county. 7 families had arrived from Ung county, 7 as well from Bereg, 2 from Poland, and 1 family came from each of the counties Ugocsa, Bihar, Sáros and Transylvania.

The high number of young people is conspicuous - 57.4% of the total population being under the age of 18. Thus one can state that the average age of the Jewish population of Kisvárdá is quite

youthful. The following is the age-distribution of the young populace: -----
 ----- age 1-6 164 individuals

age 7-12 122 individuals

age 13-18 129 individuals -----

----- **Total 415 individuals** -----

Here are some examples of those who were born in Kisvárda: Joseph Reisman aged 78, Abraham Ellenbogen aged 67, Jacob Nagy aged 63, David Deits aged 63, the widow of Tobi Grósz 62 years old, Lazar Balkányi aged 60 and Simeon Grósz 60 years old.

Illustration page 23: Facsimile of a page from the 1848 census.

By mid-century, there was a cessation in the Jewish immigration, as evident from the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Kisvárda Jews were already born in the country. Nevertheless, the data of the following decades are showing an increase in numbers. From the middle of the 19th century there is information on the figures, shedding a light on the natural rate of increase. The following are data concerning the Israelites (year/indiv.) (16); -----

----- **Year 1851 1852 1853 1854**
1855 1856 1857 1858 1859 1860 -----
 ----- Born 51 126 159 81 102 97 155 76 174 144 Deceased 12 79 69
 42 126 29 19 33 15 22 Increase 39 47 90 39 -24 68 136 43 159 122 -----

----- **Year 1861 1862 1863 1864**
1865 1866 1867 1868 1869 1870 -----
 ----- Born 124 123 167 151 197 102 134 176 101 156 Deceased 14 33
 22 82 37 63 46 46 49 52 Increase 110 90 145 69 140 37 88 130 52 104 -----

----- **Year 1871 1872 1873 1874**
1875 1876 1877 1878 1879 1880 -----
 ----- Born 144 190 150 262 247 67 67 66 76 51 Deceased 32 86 155
 114 118 21 25 27 39 35 Increase 112 104 -5 148 129 46 42 39 37 16 -----

----- **Year 1881 1882 1883 1884**
1885 1886 1887 1888 1889 1890 -----
 ----- Born 60 54 48 50 57 69 53 57 80 77 Deceased 24 24 27 29 40 33
 45 40 37 35 Increase 36 30 21 21 17 36 8 17 43 42 -----

----- **Year 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895 1896 1897**
1898 1899 1900 -----
 ----- Born 83 80 93 102 106 114 111 134 109 114 Deceased 38 56 52 47 55 33 42 62
 57 56 Increase 45 24 41 55 51 81 69 72 52 58 -----

Adding the figures of natural growth in-between the years 1851 to 1890 (4521 individuals were born, 1898 individual deceased, resulting in an increase of 2623 souls) to the existing number of

723 in 1848, one could expect the total number of Jews in Kisvárda to be about 3400-3500 individuals. This figure was reached only at the 1920 census. The explanation must lay in the internal migration, meaning the Jews leaving and moving away from Kisvárda.

An addendum is needed to the above information on the births and deaths: they differ somehow from the registry figures of the Jewish community. The following data were found in the county archives (17):

Year.		Births Male		Female		Total.		Deaths Male		Female		Total.		Marriages.	
1877	33	32	63	13	12	25	16	1878	36	25	61	22	14	36	11
1879	26	27	53	24	25	49	9	1880	22	24	46	20	15	35	3
1881	30	26	56	24	7	1882	24	28	52	11	13	24	6	1883	27
20	39	22	19	20	39	22	1884	27	22	47	19	20	39	22	47

The official governmental registry was introduced in October 1895, and this enables us to have a closer look at some facts concerning the population data over several years.

Births (18):

Year	Males: Number	%	Females: Number	%	Total %
1896	51	12.8	63	15.8	114
1897	51	13.7	60	16.1	111
1898	64	15.9	70	17.4	134
1899	60	15.9	49	13.0	109
1900	63	14.0	51	17.3	114

Deaths (18):

Year	Males: Number	%	Females: Number	%	Total %
1896	14	5.8	19	7.9	33
1897	22	8.6	20	7.8	42
1898	29	9.1	33	10.3	62
1899	31	9.7	26	8.1	57
1900	33	8.6	56	21.0	89

According to data from the 1898 registry, the correlation between births and deaths tallied by religious denominations, was the following:

	Born: Male	Female	Died: Male	Female
Roman Catholic:	53	63	53	55
Protestant:	54	53	41	35
Greek Catholic:	18	18	12	14
Evangelical:	2	1	1	1
Israelite:	46	51	21	22

The total number of children born was 358, while 254 individuals have died; thus the natural increase was 104 individuals. To the above figures one has to add a subsequent registration of 16 Israelites and 1 Greek Catholic (19). The largest natural increase thus occurred in the Israelites, for they had only 43 death to the number of 97 children born. Within the other religious denominations the gap between the number of birth and death has been much smaller. On the other hand we have to recognize that there are significant differences between the previously displayed figures and the above birth and death numbers.

The whole county seemed to have relatively favorable death statistics compared to the past, a

fact which for sure had played a role in the natural increase. Furthermore mention has to be made of the activities of the different Israelite organizations, which supported the sick, the poor and the needy.

The total number of the Jews in Kisvárdá continued to grow until the middle of the 20th century, but their percentile numbers decreased. The progress of Jewish people was oftentimes viewed adversely, and items penned concerning the county, are valid as well for Kisvárdá proper: "...The population of the county was furthermore augmented by the increasingly intense Jewish immigration from Galitzia, saturating the racially pure Hungarian county with unsuitable individuals" (20).

Let's have a look at the development of the numbers and proportions of the local Jews throughout the centuries! -----

Year	Total number of Jews.	% increase red to previous	Nr. of population.	% the Jews.
1784	118	1029	11.4	1839
500	382	423.7	2209	22.5
1848	723	223	144.6	2413
29.9	1869	1328	605	183.7
4703	28.2	1880	1483	155
111.7	5006	29.6	1890	2091
608	141.0	6458	32.4	1900
2614	523	125.0	8257	31.6
1910	3036	422	116.1	10019
30.3	1920	3454	418	113.7
11435	30.2	1930	3658	204
195.9	14133	25.8	1941	3770
112	103.0	14782	25.5	

Matching to total numbers of the population to the data on births and deaths, we can determine the characteristics and trends in the demographic course of the Jews from Kisvárdá. -----

	Increase
Natural growth	
1839 to 1848	223 individuals
1848 to 1869	605 individuals
1851 to Jan. 1, 1869	1576 individuals
1869 to 1880	155 individuals
1869 to Jan. 1, 1880	808 individuals
1880 to 1890	608 individuals
1880 to Jan. 1, 1890	245 individuals
1890 to 1900	523 individuals
1890 to Jan. 1, 1900	523 individuals

There is no doubt that immigration contributed to the increase of the number of Jews in Kisvárdá . " The comparative figures of births and deaths are unsatisfactory. The more favorable outcome of that calculation would be only 12.6%. However it seems to be only so; that percentage is greatly diminished by the number of persons emigrating to America, and discounting the number of those who returned, the increase would have been only 8.4%. As such the number of individuals in the community were to be only 8950; the increase must be due to growth by the immigration of 1217 souls" - thus wrote the penman, when he compared the data of the 1910 census with the those of a decade earlier (21).

Settling in the locality - irrelevant of religious denomination - was contingent to a permit and the payment of a certain fee. In the extant documentation we often find notations like the following one: " The petition of settling by Gyula Grünwald was registered. The request is denied, because the petitioner could not fully prove that he will be able to support himself by his own means, without burdening the township..." (22). At any rate the permit was issued later to that person.

It is worth to have a look at the townships' populace within the first half of the 20th century,

Kisvárdá likewise had to be among those who were looking for a new homeland. For instance in the year 1938 there were five people in Kisvárdá who had received an emigration permit and four of them were of Jewish descent (25). Let's have an example of that happy notice:

"Kisvárdá, February 10, 1938

To the local board

Kisvárdá.

Hereby the addressee is notified that the Royal Hungarian Secretary of the Interior has approved the emigration permit to the United States, to Lajos Klein, b. 1906, domiciled in Kisvárdá.....

1938, II, 15.

I hereby acknowledge it.

Lajos Klein" (26).

Obtaining a passport became more and more difficult as the decade of the thirties was coming to an end. The main obstacle turned to be not so much the leaving of the country, but the procuring of the entry permit. For instance Herman Burger from Kisvárdá, had to wait for a whole year to be able to travel to the USA. Following the tragedy of the Jewish people, few of them had returned to Kisvárdá. Most of them had perished in the death-camps. Those few who had stayed alive did not come home, they left for abroad. Many of those who had returned to Hungary proper, followed suit. The number and percentage of the Jews did decrease drastically in those years: -----

----- **1946 1948 1953 1977** -----
----- 804 individuals 650 individuals 355 individuals 160 individuals -----

At the present day there are only a small number of Jews left in Kisvárdá and no one is able to practice his religion in the traditional communal way.

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GLOSSARY:

a/. Trianon: the 1919 peace treaty of Versailles that had rewritten the maps of Europe was called in the post-war Hungary 'The Trianon Decision'. Hungary ended up as a rump state, with most of the areas inhabited formerly by national minorities, becoming part of the surrounding, newly established states.

III

The religious life in Kisvárdá.

According to existing data the Jewish community in Kisvárdá was constituted in the year 1796. At that time, it would have been more correct to call it a communal association of Jews. Written documents of that community appear to be dated from that period, as noted in the 1939 county description by Dienes "the first archival recollections are 150 years old..." (1). Anyhow those documents did not survive.

The local Israelites built a synagogue as far back as 1801. The location was most probably the Serház street, currently the Csillag street. The presently existing synagogue was built on the same site a century later. The Chevra Kadisha, the Holy Society, was also constituted in the year 1796. At the time the Kisvárdá community was not yet autonomous, it was a subdivision of the Nagykállo rabbinate.

It was in the year 1840, that the Kisvárdá Jews decided to secede from their previous allegiance and create their own organization. The preceding event and implicit reason for this was the desire of the Nagykállo Israelites to elect a new rabbi, and have his jurisdiction extended to the whole county. In order to achieve that goal, the official of the county's Jewish affairs, invited the Jews of the Nádudvar, Bátor and Dada districts, to Kállo on March the 24-th. At the same time the Jews from Kisvárdá were invited on a holiday, on April the 24-th, with the intent to have fewer participants. The Jews from Kisvárdá protested this action, and on May the 5-th, they addressed the County for redress.

They did not like the candidates either, two of them were unknown. The third one was, due to his family ties, a favorite of the Nagykállo community. The Kisvárdá people though opined that: ".... besides his scant and poor erudition, he is merely known to be an elderly 70 years old, who is expected to have but a few years in his future. As such, the considerable expense to be spent by the Jews in order to bring him around, would presumably be rewarded with only a short time of his services". The fourth candidate was also "not erudite enough to become the chief rabbi of Nagykállo" (2).

The Kisvárdá people accomplished their objective, because in the month of September a different person from the previously mentioned ones, was elected chief rabbi of Kállo and the county. Nevertheless in the year 1844, Kisvárdá did secede from Nagykállo, and they elected Abraham Isaac Weinberger to be their rabbi. He was born in 1796 in Dukla, Poland; at the age of 21 he became the rabbi of Galgocz and was active in that congregation for 14 years. He was one

of the well-known rabbis of that age. His activity as chief rabbi of Kisvárda began with the foundation of a Beit Hamidrash and a Yeshiva, with an added library. The purpose of those educational institutions was to train future Jewish spiritual leaders and to establish a center of Judaism in Kisvárda. The registration of birth, marriages and deaths was introduced during his tenure in 1850. It was during the last years of his holding the office that the following branches bonded to the main Kisvárda community: Ajak, Anarcs, Dombrád, Döge, Gyulaháza, Litke, Jéke, Kékcse, Karász, Tass, Pap, Pátroha, Berencs and Báka. The rabbi did pass away in 1884. After his death his responsums and an aggadic book were published (P'nei Yizhak in 1892 and Malle Leavraham in 1913). Rabbi Lajos Seltmann created a memorial of him in his volume "Images of Human Lives".

Most of the above coincided with the fight for the Jewish emancipation by of the Jewish population and the liberal social forces, as well as the freedomfight and later the age of despotism. Although the Parliamentary Assembly, meeting in Szeged on July 28, 1849, did proclaim the emancipation of the Jews, there were no actual consequences to that.

The imperial absolutism did strip the Jewish communities of their political rights and terminated their residual political power. It turned the people towards organizing the ecclesiastical integrating drive, in fact it was the real start of community life. "Before the civic emancipation, the Jews did not identify the community as an unit solely responsible for the organization of ecclesiastical activity and the common exercising of religion. The Jewish Community (Comunitas Judeorum) was not only a common organ for the religious bonding of the people from the same locality, it was active in all aspects of the day-to-day life. Beyond liturgical, cultural and humanitarian duties it exercised administrative tasks for the Jews living in the same location. The common business was performed by elected officials and clerks, they did represent the members of the community" (3).

In November of the year 1867, the Parliament did approve without any deliberation, and in the Upper Chamber there were only 4 votes against the law # XXVI, the so-called Bill of Emancipation, which proclaimed:

¶ 1/. The Israelite citizens of the country are hereby declared to have the right to the same civic and political perquisites as the Christian populace.

¶ 2/. All legislation, customs or decrees contradicting the above are hereby abolished.

Illustration page 32: The seal of the Kisvárda community.

The religious emancipation was however not enacted, the Jew - designed by the text of the law as Israelite - was declared as an individual, to be on an equal legal footing with the Christian populace. The law did not involve the emancipation of the denomination, it did not mention the community as a congregation.

With the commencing of the civic emancipation, the Jewish communes were dissolved, their role was taken over by the Jewish communities, and the Jewish populace was integrated into the civil administration.

In December of the year 1868, a Jewish congress was convened, aiming at integrating the existing Jewish congregations into free and independent communities, similar to those existing

for the Christian denominations. The result of the protracted congress was the division of the Jews along the religious lines. Three main trends did evolve: the congressional communities, the orthodox ones and those who wanted to maintain the status quo.

Illustration page 33: A segment of the Tora ark.

The first two groupings were differentiated in matters of religious practice, ritual activities and devotional exercises, due to the strict adherence of the Orthodox groupings to the unaltered Shulchan Aruch, expecting to implement its rules even in matters of jurisdiction. The third grouping was unwilling to side with the two others, they refuted the division based on the millenium-old unity of the Jews, and they preserved their customary religious practices. The potentially fourth grouping of the Hassidic Jews, did also refrain in the end from joining any other community.

The legal and organizational status of the congressionally based Jewish communities in Hungary was governed through the regulations approved by the royal decree of June 14, 1869. In the year 1871 the basic regulations of the Orthodox communities were passed by Franz Joseph I. Kisvárdá did join this grouping as a community, having a rabbinate authorized to effect civil registration. In the year 1886, a great honor was served upon Armin Reisman, the president of the local community. On the occasion of the statewide assembly of the Orthodoxy, held in the year 1886 in Budapest, three temporary mediating members were elected: one of them was Reisman, the other two were from the capital city..

The VKM-decree # 1191 from the year 1888, stipulated that any type of Jewish community can be established only if the statutes of the intended organization are approved by the Ministry. The community itself is entitled to establish different associations and bodies. This did happen in Kisvárdá - and we shall come to it.

The ecclesiastical quarreling did intensify again at the start of the 1890-s. There was intense reaction in Kisvárdá concerning the "reception" movement (*a*). In the year 1892: "...10 members of the creed's intellectuals, issued the call and about 150 coreligionaries from the town and area congregated in the central restaurant on the 17-th of the month. At the proposition of Mor Halasi, the assembly elected unanimously Dr. Bernath Rosenblum as president and Dr. Lipot Vadász as secretary. The later, reviewing the purpose of the assembly and the direction of the movement, did present the proposition forwarded by those who had called the meeting. The assembly did accept unanimously the proposal, proclaiming that they wholeheartedly salute the recently started movement, they do associate with it and they declare their willingness to join the plea to the House of Representatives, concerning the reception. Before the acceptance of the resolution, Vincze Weinberger representing the surrounding localities, did specifically reiterate their support of the movement. After the acceptance of the above resolution, the president did dissolve the assembly" (4).

The decades old legitimate requirements were regulated by law in the year 1895.

The XLII paragraph ordained:

1.# The Israelite religion is declared to be a legally accepted creed.

2.# The paragraphs 18,19,20,21 and 23 of the LIII section of the 1868 law are extended to the

Israelite religion.

3.# Only those persons who are citizens of Hungary and who obtained their accreditation in Hungary, can be pastors (rabbis) and magistrates of the community.

In Kisvárda a community of Orthodox persuasion was constituted. This can be presumably explained by the fact that in the 18 and 19th centuries, as well as later too, the immigrants came from more backward areas, from Galitzia, and they were more inclined to be traditional. Typical data for the county reveal that on December 31, 1899, there were 20 primary communities in Szabolcs: out of those 18 were autonomous Orthodox and 2 status quo ante (5). Every Jew who lived in the locality had to be a member of the community, and the admission was not even contingent on paying the assessment. The statutes of the community proclaimed that they are functioning on the basis of the Statewide Organizational Statutes, ratified by the royal decree of October 22, 1871, - as a legal framework - as well as on the fundamentals of the religious precepts of the Shulchan-Aruch.

The document did also stipulate the objective of the community: "...to enact, enable and assist all religious, educational and charitable associations which have to be supported by the mandates of the Shulchan-Aruch, either existing presently, or to be established in the future. Additionally to uphold all state laws, customs and ordinances which have to be maintained by every primary autonomous Israelite community" (6). These are the following: the establishing and functioning of the synagogue and prayer house, as well as the upkeep of the rabbinate, the circumciser, the cantor, the ritual bath and the school needed for religious education. To all of these were added the ritual slaughtering, the distribution of the kosher meat, the making of the matzo, and the upkeep of the denominational school. The statutes are proposing almost a dozen regular and extraordinary sources of income, which are intended to assure the basis for the smooth functioning of the community. The following incomes are mentioned: the gabella (*b*), the community assessment, synagogue and prayer house takes and donations, admission charges, the take from the ritual bath, wedding fees, levies on the Passover-flour, the income from the community's property, the moneys from the sale or lease of the seats in the prayer house, prayer house levies, funds from the state or from foundations. The following is such an example from 1918: "Mihály Széll, the president of the Israelite community of Kisvárda, while being called to the altar on this past Wednesday, donated in his and his wife's name an offering of 2000 crowns to the community. In Kisvárda this is the first occasion that somebody donated a fund in the synagogue, but we hope that his example will be followed" (7).

The sale or lease of the prayer-house seats originated with the custom that only those who paid for a seat could sit in the synagogue. The members of the congregation could not stand in the entrance or in the passages. That was absolutely prohibited. The members of the community were notified before the high holidays, via the press, about the lease of the seats. As far as the income of the community was concerned, the number of leases paid in the community office mattered. In any event the majority of funds for the above tasks, came not from the minor imposts or voluntary contributions, but from the community assessments.

The previously mentioned # 1191 decree of the Ministry of Cults from the year 1888, states in the paragraph No 5: "... every Israelite has to contribute to the expenditures of the Israelite community, chapter community or prayer-house association, within locality where he is residing" (8).

Illustration page 35: A passage from the statutes of the autonomous orthodox community of Kisvárdá, 1926.

The direct assessment was decided by the taxing-board of the community, and one could appeal the amount of the levy to a secondary committee, within the organs of the community. If one was appealing against the legal basis of the levy, the ultimate decision was in the hands of the state. The loudest protests concerning the assessment were tendered, whenever the remonstrations were sustained by "ideological" differences. The potential rejectionists were even "enlightened" via the press: "We hereby advise those members of the Auth. Orth. Israelite Community who consider the assessments for the year 1930 excessive, that contestations can be forwarded to the administrative committee. It is known that the high assessments are a widespread wrong and therefore we find it advisable to forward the appeal as a joint petition. This application has already been composed and those who wish to join, should address the chief medical officer Dr. Szilágyi ..." (9). Later data displayed that about 50 persons exercised this prerogative (10).

The levies could be collected through administrative measures. The so-called direct levies were due every time and whenever somebody encountered a community function subjected to charges.

The structure of the community was built in a hierarchical mode. The largest body of participants was the general assembly, consisting of the voting members of the community. The board of delegates was composed of 21 members, elected for this function by the general assembly. The board of officers consisted from a president, two vice-presidents, the cashier, the comptroller, 3 church custodians and the financial expert. These 9 officers were members of the community, elected by the general assembly. The officeholders were elected on a yearly basis and received no remuneration for their labor. There is information from the year 1936 about a convocation of the community to an extraordinary general meeting, with the stated purpose of changes in the paragraph # 14 of the statutes. That item did set the yearly elections for the boards of delegates and officers (11). We have no data on the outcome, if there was any change in the erstwhile practices.

The statutes averred that any association set up within the location of the community, be it of Jewish or non-Jewish make-up, has to present its statutes first to the Jewish community, and only afterwards to the official organs. At the same time it listed the associations operating with the approval of the Ministry of the Interior. Those were the following:

The Chevra Kadisha (the Holy Association)

The Talmud Tora Society

The Bikur-Holim (Assisting Union)

The Malbish Arumim (The Clothing of the Paupers Society)

The Ose Hesed Veemes (The Charitable Society)

The Gemilus Hasudim (Philanthropic Society)

The Kisvárdá Israelite Ladies Association.

The archives of the community were lost in the whirlwind of history and by the hands of those

who had stirred those gusts. The documents may have been blown into unknown locations. Most of the available information on the churchly life of the community and the activity of the organizations, are coming from the contemporary press. For example we learn that in the 1880-s the president of the community was Herman Reizman, a merchant and landowner. The next significant activity is that of Mihály Széll. On April 21, 1912, elections were held within the community. On that occasion: ".....Mihály Széll, the reelected president was subjected to a standing ovation. He is tireless in standing up for the interests of the community, and the thriving of the community is significantly enhanced by his work (12)". In his younger days he, together with Mor Halasi, had founded the countywide renowned Wind & Fisch agricultural products merchant group. He presided over the activity of the community for thirty years, and after his resignation, was retained as a lifetime honor president. For decades he was a member of the local elective council and the county governing body. He was the oldest and most senior member of that council at his death on September 10, 1935, at the age of 93 years. His name is connected to the establishing of the new synagogue (13).

On April 24, the next year, Mihály Széll was reelected as leader. Lajos Reizman became first vice-president, Benjamin Grosz second vice-president, Márkus Klein cashier, Nándor Ackerman comptroller, while Mor Klein and Mor Kohn became churchwardens. Members of the board were: Herman Reizman, Salamon Fried, Izrael Fleischman, Samu Steinbach, Márton Friedman, Sámuel Juda Fried, Lipot Harstein, Gyula Kemény, Herman Kesztenbaum, Emánuel Jakubovics, Mor Hochman, Herman Berger, Bernát Danciger, Lajos Weisz sen.(14). The days before the election were marred by the mourning for the second rabbi Naftali Schreiber, who, after serving the congregation for 38 years, had passed away on the 21-th of the month (15). On the occasion of next year's election, half of the above were substituted, even the president was different, the office was turned over to Salamon Fried (16).

Illustration page 37: Torah cover.

The Autonomous Orthodox Israelite community also held its yearly due board renewal in 1828. "The following were elected: president Jozsef Káin, vice-presidents Miksa Lefkovics and Káin Fleischmann, cashier Mor Kellner, comptroller Márkus Klein, wardens Herman Frieder, Mor Eichler, Ferencz Fülöp, and financial adviser Ferenc Kun. Members of the board were: Mor Hochmann, Ábrahám Friedmann, Emánuel Jakubovics, Mor Klein grocer, Jozsef Krebsz, Dr. Samu Barta, Mandel Bernát, Dániel Fleischman, Dániel Stern, Elek Berkovics, Dr. Samu Fried, Herman Berger, Sámuel Weisz jun. Bernát Danziger, Leo Rosenbaum, Adolf Salgo, Dávid Taub"(17). It is to be noted about the president that he was born in 1872 in Nyiregyháza, and he founded his beton and cement-factory in 1902 in Kisvárda. His business included commerce with lumber and wood-objects, and his crate-factory produced boxes used for conveyance of harvested fruit. As one of the important taxpayers, he was a member of the elected council, and according to data published in 1931, he was for 11 years president of the community (18).

The first fissures throughout the orthodoxy melding the community, started to emerge during the third decade of the 20-th century. This is evident from a lead article published in the Felsőszabolcs in 1923: "It is well known that in Kisvárda there is only on community, and that is the orthodox one!! Every one belonging to the Israelite religion, or more appropriately, every Jew, is a member. (The stipulation of Jew, and not Israelite, is due to the fact that a person who is considering himself not a Jew, but a Hungarian of the Israelite faith, cannot be ipso facto orthodox).... besides the approximately 400 Jewish families, I cannot deem that more than 50

families of the Israelite persuasion exist. In the past these 50 families represented not only the intellectual distinction but the pecuniary weightiness too - the landowners, bankers, lawyers, physicians, engineers and better merchants did noticeably emerge from this group. However, the grocers, the feather and potato sellers, as well as other nouveau-riches, became so affluent nowadays, that they believe to have developed a spiritual superiority paralleled by their fortunes. Consequently on the occasion of the community fall elections, they managed to cooperate in bumping the intellectuals from the leadership of the board.

Illustration on page 38: The building of the former Hassidic synagogue.

Their first job, the assessment of the community levies, was based on the slogan that the maintenance expenses of the community have to be borne by the Hungarians of the Israelite creed, meaning that only by the wrong (because they are not orthodox) Jews.... Hence arose the situation in Kisvárda, in which the Jewish group who lives and prays by the ancestral Jewish rites, sustaining not only the original religion, but preserving the entire ethnic and national attributes, is now exerting all the prerogatives, ruling in a dictatorial manner within the community. At the same time the 50 neologue Israelite families, lack the decision and the will to negate their solely anaebronic kinship with those international constituents. They rather disburse beyond their means, and are willing to incur - on behalf of and with the above mentioned - the many valid accusations summarized in the ten commandments of the awakeners" (c), (19).

The confirmation of the veracities described in the article came in the year 1929, when there was a meeting in the Szilágyi pharmacy, with the stated purpose to constitute a neologue Israelite congregation. The gathering was summoned by the physician Dr. Jozsef Szilágyi and by the pharmacists Jenő Moskovics and Lajos Szilágyi: eighteen Israelite lawyers, physicians and merchants were present. The event was preceded by: "The taxation committee of the Orthodox Israelite community, which is constituted amongst other by members whose levy does not exceed even 10 pengő, did assess many other members of the community with imposts of huge amounts, 3-4-5-6000 pengő. This, as well as the fact that the members preparing to split, consider that the present leadership of the Orthodox Israelite community does not conform to the spirit of the times, induced many coreligionaries to secede from the Orthodox community and establish the neologue one.

According to our knowledge, the members plan to introduce a Hungarian-language divine service, a more patriotic mood in the school, and a more Hungarian spirit in the activities of the congregation" (20).

At this stage about 60 members resolved to split, and it was decided to submit their statutes to the Ministry of Cults for approval, to attempt the building of a synagogue and to obtain a rabbi. The separation was discussed earlier in 1927, a declaration of secession was signed and conveyed to the chief district office. It seemed possible that even in 1929 the differences could be overcome.

The further data display a mostly unclear situation. On May 5 of the year mentioned, those who decided to split held a meeting in the main restaurant, and it was heralded as the founding of a status quo community. The organizing committee of the coming community had solicited everybody who had signed 3 years ago the declaration of secession and had declared their adhesion to the new community, as well as anybody else who desires to join the new community,

to show up at the gathering "that was reported to the administrative organs and authorized by them. The Budapest delegate of the National Office of the Hungarian Israelites will be also present at the meeting" (21).

The local press though, reported on the event the followings: "The Israelite Community based on the Congressional footing held on Sunday its constituting assembly in the main hotel. The election resulted in the following leadership. The president became Dr. Miklos Schönwald" (23). He acquired his qualification as a lawyer in 1911 and started his legal practice in Kisvárdá. He was a founder and chief executive officer of the Credit Bank Inc. of Kisvárdá, as well as a member of the local elective council. The following is a list of those elected and their position: vice-presidents Samu Kun and Nándor Ackerman, comptroller: Lajos Szilágyi, cashier: Ernő Kálmánczi, wardens: Jenő Lebovics and Elek Goldstein, members of the board: Ferenc Fejér, Bertalan Frisch, Dr. Ferenc György, Dr. Sándor György, Samu Kovács, Dr. Andor Lövei, Herman Rothbaum, Dezső Smilovits, Lajos Schwartz, Dr. Jozsef Szilágyi, Dezső Vadász, Gyula Weinstock and Zsigmond Weinberger. The newspaper reported that at election-time, the community had 67 members (23).

The congressional denomination was likewise called neologue, but the official name was the preceding one. The disgruntled ones, who had previously cleaved off from the orthodox congregation, had first instituted the congressional footing, because at the time, the autonomy of the status quo communities was not yet approved. The nationwide autonomy was assented in 1929, as such the Kisvárdá group should not have encountered problems in switching from congressional footing to the status quo.

Already at that stage, they are searching for a church servant, a shamash, and on the 26-th of May, there is a another meeting. There were over a hundred participants, many joined the new affiliation in the hope that the Ministry will approve the statutes. The president of the congressional community received his mandate and he:..." declared in his reply to the community, that he intends to and will guide the congregation in a patriotic and religious mode" (24).

Illustration page 40: electoral roster from the year 1943.

There are no later data that would confirm the eventual secession of the disgruntled group from the orthodox community. There isn't any information either on an independent status quo or congressional grouping. It is a fact though, that such drifts existed within one community, as often was the case in other congregations too.

This is reinforced by a document from 1929, where it is stated that the devout character of the locality is determined by the Hassidic movement. Nevertheless, all the practices are present within the community, and the unifying trend is achieved by the person of the chief rabbi, Mozes Chaim Rosenbaum. The Hassid's had their own synagogue in Kisvárdá. Somebody reminiscing evokes the following image: "On Saturdays and holidays it was quite an experience to view the Hassidim, clad in caftans and shtramlms, young and old, as they converged to the Klaus and the Beit-midrash of the rabbi from Kászony. The relationship between the Hassidic group and the primary community, was subject to special measures. They had their own institutions, like the Hevra Shas and various charitable associations. The Hassidim always managed to preserve their influence within the associations of the community" (25). Around the year 1905, there is mention

of Rav Moshe, head of the Jeshiva, as being the most respected by the Hassids. One of the most famous and appreciated personalities in Central Europe, the rabbi Chaim Chi Teitelbaum, was also active in the locality, he passed away here, on January 21, 1926 (26).

Amongst the Israelites in Kisvárdá there were some who practiced in the Sephardic mode. Dissent was present there too, although it was mostly characterized by personality conflicts. As witnessed to posterity by recollections, the problems emerged around the use of the Sephardic mortuary. The above group had its own pertinent association (27).

The outward apparent unity of the Orthodox community is reinforced by the county report written by Dienes in 1939: the only grouping described is that one and the number of taxpayers is put at 629 (28).

Going back to the decades of 1920-30, it is apparent that the friction was between the two main parties and their representatives. One body was guided by Jozsef Kain and the other by Miklos Schönwald. The disagreement was evident even on the occasion of the elections held in 1935. The electing was held on April the 21-t, and ballots were casted by 230 individuals from the 291 registered voters: "... there were 9 posted lists, and as a result the ballot-counting committee was toiling from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. The leadership of the community was completely revamped as the result of the elections. President: Jozsef Kain (Dr. Miklos Schöwald), vice-presidents: Márkusz Klein and Kain Fleischman (Miksa Lefkovics, Kain Fleischman), cashier: Ignác Goldstein (Ignác Goldstein), financial adviser: László Halmi (Ferenc Kun) ..." (29). (The names in parenthesis are the ones from the previous year).

There is a roster from April 19, 1943 of the Orthodox Autonomous Israelite community of Kisvárdá, displaying only 102 individuals with a voting right (30).

While discussing the community, we cannot omit mentioning those rabbis and chief rabbis who had a determining role in ecclesiastical matters. In the eighties and nineties of the 19th century the chief rabbi was Mor Grünwald (1886-1893). He was the son of the chief rabbi of Csorna where he was himself active, before being invited to Homonna. It was here that the invitation from Kisvárdá turned up, and from then on "... he was quite vigorous in spreading the religious education in our community. His erudition of the Talmud was well known in the whole of Europe, consequently he was enticed to move to the community of Huszt. He continued there his blessed work, until he was summoned to the Lord ..." was written in his obituary on the occasion of his demise on August 12, 1910 (31). Two of his studies are known: Hachono Derabo and the much quoted Arugat Haboszem.

A prominent personality of the first half of the 20-th century was chief rabbi Mozes Rosenbaum, who fulfilled this office in the years 1897-1942 (32). He graduated from the rabbinical school on Bratislava in 1883, and came to Kisvárdá from Szilágysomlyó. His arrival is described as follows: "The newly elected chief rabbi of Kisvárdá, Mor Rosenbaum was installed on the 7-th of the current month (September). The rabbi was greeted upon his arrival at the train station by Samu Reizman, foreman of the community, in the presence of a large crowd, to which the chief rabbi responded in eloquent Hungarian language. His first stop was the synagogue, where for an hour he gave a fervent inaugural address, rich in ideas. After that he received at his lodgings the delegations of the Israelite charitable associations. In the evening he saw a delegation of the Jewish young men, who greeted him with a torch-parade. The community is joyously

anticipating the travail of its new chief rabbi" (32).

Illustration page 42: Rabbi Smuel Smelke Rosenbaum.

The expectations were fulfilled. His life and travails imprinted an indelible remembrance in the Jews of the area. His high standing was proven when, on the formation of the first István Tisza government in 1903, the Autonomous Orthodox Israelite communities saluted the premier and: "the deputation was lead by Kappel Reich chief rabbi of Buda, and the festive address was presented by Mor Rosenbaum, chief rabbi of Kisvárdá" (34). He was one of the five members of the national rabbinical council and his name figured as a candidate for the Upper Chamber of the Parliament (35).

He was succeeded in his position by his son Smuel Smelke Rosenbaum (1943-1944). He had previously served the community, as evidenced from an 1937 article in the local press: "On June 20, the Autonomous Orthodox Community of Kisvárdá held an extraordinary convocation, and on that occasion Samu Rosenbaum was elected to substitute for his father the chief rabbi, who is in poor health" (36). The remnants of the Jews who returned from the death camps, were comforted and provided with spiritual solace by the next generation Rosenbaum, Pinchas-Tibor Rosenbaum. Later he departed for Switzerland and became a banker there.

As a matter of interest we mention another personality, whose career had an intermediary station in the locality: "... after many years of quarreling, fighting and excessive expenses, the Israelite Community of Kisvárdá managed to finally find a ritual slaughterer, who seemed to be manufactured by the Lord above, so much so, that not even the most fanatic tailors, or the most enlightened bankers could objection to him. Even so the godly Lipot encountered a poor reception, some even demoted him to be a long-eared owl.... He did go to Vienna, was elected chief cantor of the Viennese community, and for that we do congratulate Lipot Müller, chief cantor of Kisvárdá" (37). There is information that one year thereafter, the named person was invited as chief cantor to the Orthodox communities of Hamburg and London as well. The subsequent fate of Lipot Müller is unknown (38).

Amidst further data on ecclesiastical facts in Kisvárdá, mention has to be made of the local publishing house of Gyula Klein: it had issued a number of books that dealt directly with religious practices of the Israelites, or were involved with religion, in theory as well as historically. The plant started to print in 1897, but we have exact data concerning the above mentioned publications only for the period 1921-1944. During that time we know about 44 volumes dealing with those topics. Some of them are the work of the rabbi Mor Mozes Hers Landau of Kisvárdá. He was born in 1873 in Ökörmező, his father was Sulem Landau, his mother Adlya Steinberger. As of 1897 he was domiciled in Kisvárdá, and works published locally are: K'vod m'lakhim, Likut miposkim haaharonim al injane k'kijum hamicvot... Kisvárdá 1934. Also by him: (Misna) M'vaser Shalom, Al haavot, Al haimahot v'sivte Israel - Kisvárdá 1927. Some other titles: Zeev Horovitz: Nahalal' Israel, 1937. Andor Klein: Talmudical hermenautical reconciliation of contradictory Biblical locations, 1930 (39). There was even a tome that had reached the headquarters of Christianity: "the well-known Talmud-scholar Zsigmond Schwartz from Kisvárdá, had forwarded some of his works to the Library of the Vatican, and had recently received the following Italian-language letter: Highly esteemed gentleman! I have the honor to advise you that the books mailed by you did arrive to the Apostolic Library, and they are a valuable addition to our holdings. Please accept our grateful

appreciation for your esteemed offering. Sincerely yours: the supervisor of the Library" (40).

Illustration page 43: The title page of the tome by Béla Klein, titled: My reminiscences from the Holy Land.

During the period between the two World Wars, there were four printing plants in Kisvárdá - Berger, Klein, Preisz, Weisz, but only the Klein one possessed the requisites for printing Hebrew texts.

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G L O S S A R Y:

a/. Reception: in the year 1895, the Jewish religion was officially accepted as equal to the other religions in the country. The legal formula was called "The Law of Reception".

b/. Gabella: the name comes probably from the medieval salt-tax. In its present application it denoted the incomes deriving from the "kashrut" certification.

c/. Awakeners: a staunchly nationalistic and intensely anti-Semitic grouping evolving in the third decade of the 20th century in Hungary.

IV.

Buildings, institutions, sites associated with the religious life.

As mentioned before - the community that was initiated in 1796, has built a synagogue in 1801. The existence of this place of worship is asserted by Elek Fényes, in his geographical lexicon he refers to a "synagogue" in Kisvárdá, in the mid-19-th century. Over the time, the Jews converged into the vicinity of the ecclesiastical activity, the Serház, the Posta and the main streets.

A letter dated from the year 1912 provides information on the area of the churchly building. The letter was addressed to István Diner, and its purpose was to help resolving a disagreement between the community and Mrs. Samu Kun: "The 280 square fathom area, No. 59 in the old land-register of Kisvárdá, was surveyed under # 56 in the registry. It is owned by the Duke of Eszterházy, the right of usage and superstructure were retained at the time by Leopold Spitz" (1).

The real-estate title was handed over from Pál to Miklos Eszterházy in 1869, and in 1871 it was transferred to Mor Wahrman. It was inherited from him by Renée Wahrman (her names changed with subsequent marriages to Mrs. Izidor Krausz, Mrs. Béla Fáy and finally to Mrs. Endre Beretvás). In the year 1906 Mrs. Samu Kun became the holder. The superstructure belonged to the heirs of Leopold Spitz, according to the Curial decision # 3102/1871. The prayer-house was built after the surveyance, on the above mentioned land-registry location # 59, back in the times when owned by the Duke of Eszterházy. In the year 1879 Mor Wahrman waived the previously paid fees by the community, and had asked for a yearly symbolic compensation of 1 Austrian forint, as acknowledgment of property rights. He stipulated though, that if the real-estate were not to be used as a prayer-house, the old contract from the years 1842-1861 (tacitly renewed) would again be valid for the usage of the property. In due time the holding was acquired by Mrs. Samu Kun from Mrs. Endre Beretvás, and she was also to receive only the yearly 1 forint, for as long as the prayer-house stood on the property. According the president of the community, Mihály Széll, that amount was paid even after 1906 to the estate.

The increase in numbers and economic strength of the Jews before the turn of the century, may

all together have resulted in the decision to erect a new synagogue. It was written in the *Kisvárdai Lapok* in the year 1899: "The architect Ferenc Grósz, born in our county, did tender a plan for the Budapest Stock Exchange edifice; the same young architect executed the plans for the projected construction of the new temple by the Jewish Community" (2). Bids were asked for the execution: "The Jewish community of Kisvárdá had decided to build a new temple. Proposals are invited for the works involved: ground, bricklayer, placer, stonemason, carpenter, iron and tin smiths, joiner, locksmith, glazier, sculptor, over layer, glasswork, decorator and other jobs are presently open for public tender. Those interested are hereby advised to forward written, enveloped and sealed bids for these jobs to Mr. Salamon Fried, member of the committee, no later than 12 noon, on September 26, 1900. The timetable is important, because subsequently proffered bids as well as those coming by telegraph or secondary ones, will not be considered. Offers can be made for the whole project, for categories or sets of the work. Mihály Széll, president of the community, Herman Reisman president of the building committee" (3). Benjamin Grósz, Salamon Fried, Lajos Reisman, József Fried and Soma Grünwald were named in a memorial book as other members of the building committee (4). Further data are incomplete and mostly missing, as such we cannot know more about the building of the synagogue.

Illustration page 46: The building of the Synagogue.

Already in April of the next year, the local press is telling about the coming up of the temple and heralds that two older buildings behind the new erection were demolished. The stately, 18x30 meter, large synagogue, was completed in the same year. The details of the edifice are thus described in a book: "It soars high above the abutting ground-floor houses and conveys the influence of the synagogues from neighboring towns like Miskolc and Szatmár. The even brick-plane of the walls is segmented by opening frames hewed of stone, nooks, and powerful risalite-margins and their symmetric partitioning renders the architectural effect. Atop a romanticizing row of curvingly accented arches, the building is topped by an arced roof similar to the synagogue of Tokaj.... The floor-plan follows the setup of the traditional synagogues. The women's gallery can be ascended by stairs on the two side-frontals. The inner aspect is encompassed on three sides with cast-iron pillars supporting the gallery. At the time of the building conversion, the housing of the Torah was dismantled and the box was walled in. As such, when trying to envision the original standings we have to rely on archival photos" (5). The walls were built from red bricks, and the beautiful, large and colorful windows were remarkable.

The events of the First World War were detrimental to the local religious groupings, and even more onto the churches proper: "During the war, numerous bells were requisitioned from the Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Greek Catholic churches, likewise the lightning-rod as well as liturgical objects were seized from the Jewish temple. The congregations are limited in their fiscal means, those objects are necessary, as such the communities need not dodge the endeavors of replacing them... (6). The above mentioned churches, including the Evangelicals, did receive in the year 1922, an assistance of 15 thousand crowns each, meant to offset the losses.

The prayer-house was an important locale in the religious life of the Jews; it can be assumed that it started functioning concurrently with the inception of the community and most probably the setting was originally not intended for this purpose. A proper prayer-house came up in the first half of the 19-th century, at the location and in the way as mentioned above on describing the property-rights. The new prayer-house was erected at the turn of the century. A prayer-hall for the winter was built on the tract adjoining the synagogue, while on the eastern lot a house was

built for the rabbi, including a prayer-room. The turn of the century date is reinforced by: "The Israelite community of Kisvárda decided to build a house for their rabbi. In order to effectuate this a tender is proffered: all local contractors who would like to be considered for the construction, should forward by September 24 their sealed bids, provided with a 50 kr. stamp, to the president of the community" (7). The expenditures were estimated to amount to the sum of 8500 forint. There are some extant documents about a "Sephardic" prayer-house, but the information is limited to a contract from March 21, 1888, ensuring passage to the prayer-house built on the plot # 828 (8).

Illustration page 47: The building of the erstwhile prayer-house.

It seems that this was a general period beckoning construction, a climate of renewal and possibilities, because we have contemporary data on the ritual bath, despite the fact that it must have been preexistent. A appeal was put forward in the year 1890, the members of the community calling for the building of a ritual bath, with a projected a expenditure of 6-7000 forints for the plan (9).

The mikvah was still in the process of being built, nevertheless in the year 1892 the leaders of the community published the following announcement: "...the ritual bath and possible steam-bath of the Israelites of Kisvárda is to be leased for 6 years...."(10). Four years later they wanted to lease the bath together with an apartment for 3 years (11). The new bath apparently had a funding, as indicated by the fact that in 1914 Salamon Fried was elected president of the community; invoking his age he declined the honor, however he donated 1000 korona to the funding set up by him (12).

Non-Jews were supposed to use the bath too, since besides the division used for ritual cleansing, there were sections where those who had no facilities at home could come and take a bath. Considering this usage one has to look at the evidence written by a contemporary: "... this township has a so-called ritual bath, where, according to a most generous calculation, on the average 35 people are bathing daily, and more were not even able to do so..... about 50% of the population "as principle" would not frequent the ritual bath..." (13).

This figure is reinforced by the itemizing of the Hunek study from the year 1931, stating that: "Jakab Braun is the manager of the ritual bath. From the year 1916, he is superintending the bath which can accommodate 30 individuals" (14).

There is extant documentation showing possible other reasons of avoiding the use of that cleansing facility: "Kisvárda has actually no bath, unless one were to call the ritual bath facility as such, in spite of the dirty and cracked vans, the broken showers, the rusty pipes and the grimy access. Taking a bath there would be tempting fate and assailing our health. What may be the reason that the authorities have up to now failed to shut that location, which is breeding and spreading bacteria? Who knows how many decent people have forfeited their health there?" (15).

In considering this adverse picture, there may be some truth in the description, even if we take in account the usual hyperbole of the newsmen. There were other articles too, criticizing the mikveh. These writings, all together with the real situation, may have resulted in a refurbishing of both the interior and the outside. A new, 105 meter deep well was bored, its waters according to specialists being suited not only for bathing, but outright salutary. Presently on the location of

the former bath there is a store retailing merchandise for the needs of agricultural production.

Illustration page 48: The building of the erstwhile bath. In the meantime it was expanded with a second store.

There are furthermore data on the Jewish cemeteries - there were two of them. The first one was started on March 10, 1824, and here is an excerpt of a contemporary protocol-book: "The application of the Jewish community, wherein they beseech a designation for a proper new Cemetery site to replace the presently filled cemetery, was read. It is evident that until now, the Jewish people had leased the previous site from certain landowners, paying a yearly rent; as such they are directed to do the same again" (16).

Illustration page 49: The Jewish cemetery - today.

Such a cemetery was a section of a courtyard behind the Farkas-house, later the Kopácsy- house, that, though not used anymore, existed as late as the 1930-s. The petition of the Jews was approved by the landlords 15 years later, in 1839, setting the location of the Jewish cemetery at its present spot. Another source confirms the news about the first cemetery of the Jews: "The Jews buried their dead in the southwest corner of the large tract belonging to Náci Farkas, close to the homes in the Szöllöskert Street; it was typical of the eccentricity of the owner, and detrimental to the public health... The cemetery of the Jews was closed during the Bach-era (*a*)" (17). This lot is furthermore mentioned in the Kisvárdai registry: The cemetery of the Szöllöskert Street, figures under # 235, has an area of 794 square fathoms, is indicated as being owned by the Chevra Kadisha; according to the documents it was bought by the association on March 3, 1885, and was recorded in the land-registry on October 1, 1886. Naturally at that time it was no more in use (18). There is a map from that period, where the site of the first Jewish cemetery is well visible.

The new cemetery was somehow afar from the center of the locality, close to the future Vásár Square. It too became filled with the passage of time, as such the community had to buy another 1.4 acres of land to enlarge the cemetery. The chief rabbi Mozes Rosenbaum did the ceremonial opening on May 3, 1920, in the presence of large crowd. Thereafter the Israelite community distributed 1500 crowns amongst the destitute people. It is plausible that the people from other localities were also buried in the cemetery of Kisvárdai; it is written in a book about the history of the township of Pap: : "... the others probably were interred in the cemetery of Várda, Their clergyman is Chaim Mozes Rosenbaum, the rabbi of Kisvárdai" (19). The burials and the care of the cemetery were done by the Chevra Kadisha. The cemetery was divided into sections, and the selection of the lots was done by a committee. Erecting a tombstone, a tablet, or any other object and construction was to be done only after a prior approval by the committee; its competence extended even to the text to be engraved. No permit was issued for a tombstone without a Hebrew text and scripture.

The slaughterhouse.

The keeping of the ritual precepts called for the existence of a slaughterhouse. The oldest reference to it is from the year 1889, although it must have existed prior to that date. At the above date - as an indicator of the general upswing - the community decided on the establishment of a butchery, and a tender was proposed for the labor (20). The "institution" had

to be operative, and therefore they sought a contractor who can provide adequate kosher meat to the whole community; he was to be given a proper place with an ice-pit, and likewise may be entitled to other benefits too (21).

In December of 1903, there was again a tender for the four butcheries owned by the community, as well for the lease of the gabella-income, for one or for three years. Apparently it was unsuccessful, because in February of the next year the bid was still around, and this for sure was not due to the expiration of the lease period. The meat and the gabella must have been a constant topic of contention for the members of the community, as proven by the writing entitled: "A perpetual complaint in a new attire". The author of the article states that the kosher beef sold by the local butchers to the Israelites is too expensive, despite the fact that they comprise the bulk of the customers; presently they don't even want to sell anymore, because they don't have the gabella. This unfortunate situation is due to the leadership of the Israelite community, because: "...disregarding the welfare of the members of the community, they sold the gabella to the highest bidder, uncaring, without setting stipulations, and the consumers are exposed to the endless fight between the butchers and the gabella leaseholders - as presently manifested" (22).

It is intriguing to notice a complaint from the other side too: "It is well known that the authorities have fixed the price of a kilo beef at 1800 crowns. The Jewish butchers display the same price of 1800 crowns, but when it comes to paying, they ask for 2400 crowns. This procedure is more than a mere oddity. We think that these occurrences should be brought to the attention of the authorities " (23).

The Jewish community decided in the year 1909, to have a butchers' shop built in the ritual slaughterers' courtyard, inside the lot of the Csillag-street: "Parties interested in securing these construction jobs, are herewith invited to tender their bids by September 15 of this year to the undersigned president of construction.

A plan of the execution and the itemized budget can be viewed at the Popular Bank of Kisvárdá. A total amount of 10000 crowns will be provided for the construction. Published September 3, 1909. Vilmos Grósz, president of the construction" (24).

Concluding this chapter is a document filled out in the year 1920, listing the real-estate tracts owned by the Israelite community. The following properties were itemized: (25)

Reg.	Designation	Address	Area in sq.	Registry	net	Income in	Year of	fathoms	term	fillér	
acquisition											
-----	840/1	Prayer house	Deák F. St. 187	- -	1900	and yard.	840/3	Yard.	Deák F. St. 278	- -	
-----	1901	842 House & yard.	Deák F. St # 5 333	- -	1894	855 House & yard.	Deák F. St. # 15 326	- -	1891	856 House. Deák F. St. # 15/a. 37	- -
-----	1891	857 Arable.	Deák F. St. 72	- 80	1891	858 Arable.	Deák F. St. 204	1 8	1891	865 Arable. Deák F. St. 94	8 92
-----	1880	866 House & yard.	Deák F. St. # 21. 387	- -	1880	867 House. Deák F. St. # 21/a. 45	- -	1880	1051/1	School Posta St. # 4. 854	- -
-----	1862	and yard.	1051/2	Arable. Posta St. 519	5 84	1904	-----				

The above data must be complemented with the information that the school and its yard parcels were not procured at the same time, but in successive acquisitions. The named date (1862) marks

the first purchase; the further square-fathom enlargements of the parcel, date from November 20, 1904, October 4, 1905, March 8, 1905 and July 5, 1906.

It is evident that the local community was not well endowed with real estate property, but such was the general situation of the Israelite communities. This is handily proven by the following statistical chart from the year 1935, which gives accurate information on the real estate owned by the different congregations. For a more genuine general picture we display the statewide and local data: (26)

Roman Greek Protestant Evangelical Israelite Cath. Cath. -----
----- Statewide area (in kat.hold) (b). 862704
14590 102775 21055 1194 Area in Kisvárda (in kat.hold) 116 42 72 15 3 Arable area statewide
(in kat.hold) 348322 9720 78491 15858 700 Arable in Kisvárda (in kat.hold) 80 36 50 15 1
Number of real-estate holdings 4 1 1 1 2 Gardens (in kat.hold) 6 - 1 - - Meadows (in kat.hold) 18
- 15 - - Area exempt from real-estate tax (in kat.hold) 12 6 6 - 2 Leased area (in kat.hold) 16 - - -
- Net registered income in Kisvárda (in crowns) 1058 288 532 77 21 -----

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G L O S S A R Y:

a/. Bach era: Ten years of absolutist rule by the Austrian imperial authorities, following the defeat of the 1848-49 Hungarian uprising.

b/. Katasztrális Hold: the commonly used Hungarian measure of land-acreage; 1 hold is equal to 1.4 acres.

The Jews of Kisvárda and the significant historical events; their role in society, their assimilation, integration and the local manifestations of the anti-Semitism.

The first Jewish settlers in the area were to a certain degree protected, mainly by the estate-owners who had taken in and settled them, but before the year 1840 they had not many legal securities. During the first half of the 19th century, the Jews were exercising trades and adjusting to the economy, seeking to fill out voids; this, together with their increasing numbers eased the social adaptation. It coincided with the strong lure of the reformatory age and the contingency of civic enhancement. The whole process seemed to be apparently smooth, although in reality it was quite complex. A telling example is the local Social Club.

A Reading Circle was established at the end of the year 1838, changing its name in 1844 to Social Club. From the very beginning there were Israelite members (Venczel Glück- educated Jewish merchant, Adolf Friedland-physician, Lizi Rózman- Jewish lady, Dávid Eisenberger-leaseholder, Káin Grósz-leaseholder, Izrael Ungár-leaseholder), nonetheless during the first decade of the second half of the century, the admission of Jews waxed into a drawn-out affair. The local Club was closed for most of the absolutist era; when finally on January 17, 1858, the assembly was opened by the chief district officer, a president was elected in the person of Jakab Gnant. A member of the Club, who is writing its chronicles, remembers the epoch: " ...Those were notable times, among other things for straightforwardly banning the acquisition of real-estate by the Jews in the empire, as published in one of the issues of the Viennese Reichsgesetzblatt. It had multiple effects, likewise on the question, whether one should or should not admit Jews to the Social Club? Apparently they did not consider their physician a Jew, and they were embarrassed to discuss the others. Finally they solved the problem by declaring that it became too late and this issue will be discussed again at the next general assembly" (1). The physician mentioned was Dr. Bernát Rosenblüth.

On April 5 of the same year, there was another general assembly and the Jewish question was raised anew: "It was Dr. Rosenblüth who wanted to get to the bottom of this humane issue. The Club association could not duck this problem - a social one too - but one does not like to answer such a question with a decisive rejection. One member of the club proposed, that were a Jewish man to ask for admission as a member, the club should act like the 'nye pozvolim' of the erstwhile Polish Seims did, where only a 'consensu unami' could enact a law. This proposal was opposed by most of the members, pointing out that the club has basic admission rules, one should stick to them" (2). Those rules decreed that - by a two thirds decision - the board could admit anybody, with the hope of an ulterior acceptance by the assembly. In the case of the Jews, this rule were to apply - in fact to be changed - thus, that the admission "... should be made by an out-and-out decision of the board members. In truth, faced with this type of limitations, no self-respecting Jewish man, wanted such favors" (3). On January 6, 1860 "It is to be noted, that a multitude of Jewish intellectuals asked for admission, but due to the requirement of unanimity, none was accepted" (4). On the occasion of the next years' meeting on January 9: "The issue of Jewish membership recurred again. That is, a proposal was forwarded, suggesting that the majority rule of secret balloting valid for all the others, should also be true for the Jews. After drawn-out peripatetic speeches, the assembly resolved that a decision should be deferred for another date" (5).

Illustration page 54: The statutes of the Social Club.

The problem of admission was rekindled within the same year. On August 4, Dr. Simon Rosenblüth proposed to suspend the extraordinary resolution requiring unanimity in the admission of Jews. "While putting forward his proposal, the Doctor pleaded in an exalted manner on humanity, on the eternal divine principles, on the oftentimes voiced brotherly love, on the general acceptability of educated men, and on the socially requisite function fulfilled by the human race. Finally he declared that it would be supremely painful to his heart, if even one amongst the many Jewish individuals of superior intellect who are desiring membership, were to be rebutted just because they are Jewish" (6). The members of the Club responded with the perennial solution. They decided: "...taking into consideration the absence of some members, the resolution of this important issue is to be adjourned to the next quarterly assembly" (7).

There is no information on when the resolution discriminating against Jews was finally banned. Most probably this happened at the next yearly assembly, but the chronicler of the club gives no mention of that or of the contrary; the protocols perused by him are no more existing. Fact is that even at the time there were Jewish members in the club, and their number increased significantly after the emancipation. At the time of the Second World War, when some individuals wanted to run the Club in the Christian-national spirit, it was noted on the occasion of a festivity: "Where are those times, when Jews made up two thirds of the Kisvárdai Club" (8).

With regard to the assimilation, it is worth while to look at how the Jews did participate in the political activity of the city, were they involved in the elective assemblies, what position did they represent amongst the well to-do, how did they perform in the bustle of the major historical incidents? During the events of 1848 (a), the Jews of Kisvárdai were able to gain and use their political prerogatives. It was noted about the judicial election: "...It was here that the Jews amounting to almost thousands, had voted for the first time. It is odd that under the same leadership, the Jews in the neighboring localities were not allowed to vote. Despite the fact that they were not able to defeat some of the Christians, the powerful legion of David amongst a number of Christian fellow-citizen had demonstrated by sheer endurance and numbers, that if holding together as Israel, they may have a decisive might... As such more attention has to be given to this small town! and Szabolcs has to show who is the stalwart one in Kisvárdai" (9).

In the year 1848, the Public Bravery Board of the county, while organizing the National Defense Army, was patently concerned with the Jews: "...their admission should be done at the level of local corps, and if those troops proffer no affection for them.... they can be enlisted to the mobile force in a separate division" (10). The lauding words for the Jews of Szabolcs by György Klapka corroborate their standing in the Freedom Fight. There were a number of Jews in Kisvárdai too, who volunteered from the very beginning as soldiers: Bernát Blaum farmer aged 23, Salamon Fried tailor aged 20, Ábrahám Grósz pipe maker aged 18 (11). Moreover Mór Danziger and Lipót Propper have to be mentioned. The later was an officer at the National Defense battalion No. 48.

The following document referring to the freedom fight concerns a Jewish merchant: "...The undersigned hereby authenticate, that as requested by the local merchant Jozsef Klein, we called upon Jozsef Asztalos, Mihály Bandzsák and Ferencz Válenzky to acknowledge their debt of 557 frt. & 28 kr. to Jozsef Klein, originating from the year 1848, with the amount of 336 frt. liability still outstanding....?"(12). The continuation of the document shows that the local leaders had bought at the time cloth and other articles for the Kisvárdai members of the 1848 National Defense battalion, and they do acknowledge this on September 11, 1851.

During the time of the absolutist rule (*b*) the Jews, a mobile body, were affected differently than the other elements of the population; they were more impeded in the travel, international as well as within the country. The trading activity was hampered by the lack of official papers and passports, or by the difficulties in obtaining them. Nonetheless they were on the move, as proven by available data, located in the Rètközi Múzeum on Kisvárdá (13). The free enterprise arising subsequent to the Compromise (*c*), created the conditions for a full-scale continuation of the above activity, inducing at the same time political and public life changes. In the year 1870 virilism (*d*) was introduced, enabling the highest taxpayers to make up half of the membership in the legislative committees and representative councils of the organized cities and townships. A modification was enacted concerning the counties and legislative-enabled cities in the year 1929. The lists drawn up every year had to be published, enabling the officials to make the opined corrections. These rolls afford a suitable picture on the position of the Jews and the extent of the unfolding of the bourgeoisie.

In the year 1888 the following individuals from Kisvárdá were virilists of the County Council, paying the taxes in forint amounts: Herman Reizman merchant 1416, Károly Liptai landowner 1312, Ignác Fried landowner 1141, György Rézler lawyer 957, Rudolf Hrabovszky lawyer 744, Mihály Szepessy landowner 697, Menyhért Harsányi lawyer 486, Rezső Somogyi pharmacist 425, István Kastal landowner 410, Farkas Balkányi merchant 307 (14). Amongst those not mentioned in the roster there are only three names ahead of the Jew Reizman (the count László Forgács, the count Ádám Vay and Menyhért Okolicsányi). Next to him the other Jew on the list is the merchant Balkányi.

In the year 1907, the ensuing virilists were members of the local representative assembly paying the following amounts in taxes: Herman Reizman 6454 Kr. 12 fil., Mrs. Béla Fáy 4673 Kr. 68 fil., Guidó Hrabovszky 2147 Kr. 68 fil., Dr. Lipót Vadász 2100 Kr. 4 fil., József Szikszói Szabó 1337 Kr. 92 fil., Widow Mrs. Rudolf Hrabovszky 1191 Kr. 38 fil., Károly Halasi 1190 Kr. 80 fil., Adolf Radó 1181 Kr. 78 fil., Mór Vadász sen. 1077 Kr. 21 fil., Rezső Somogyi 994 Kr. 92 fil., Mor Halasi 948 Kr. 42 fil. Benő Nagy 919 Kr. 76 fil., Lipót Rochlitz 818 Kr. 91 fil., Lajos Kovács 785 Kr. 76 fil., József Fried 747 Kr. 54 fil., Benjamin Grosz 733 Kr. 18 fil., Vilmos Grósz 668 Kr. 74 fil., The Ind. and Com. Bank of Kisvárdá 656 Kr. 44 fil., Samu Kun 627 Kr. 97 fil., Gyula Balkányi 563 Kr. 43 fil. Alternate members: Imre Heller 546 Kr. 80 fil., Dr. Dániel Zsiday 531 Kr. 36 fil., Farkas Balkányi 529 Kr. 4 fil., Béla Barcs 518 Kr. 6 fil., Soma Grünwald 501 Kr. 52 fil., Adolf Reizman 488 Kr. 5 fil. (15).

We may quote data from other years too, previous or subsequent ones, altogether proving the weighty number of Jews amongst the virilists. Mention has to be made of the fact that the aggregate of taxes was reckoned double for those individuals who had a professional qualification - pharmacist, physician, teacher, clergyman, judge, lawyer, etc. It was noted on the occasion of the election of the representative assembly members in the year 1882 - that was before the events leading to the Tiszaeszlár trial (*e*): "...László Szabó, alias Lacika, the little György Dózsa (*f*), who rallied popular gatherings before the election of the representative assembly, and who incited the lower-class citizens against the gentry and the Jews, and who used to agitate despite his lack of interest in intellectual matters, was defeated in the latest election to the representative assembly, and is therefore nowadays laying low".

There is no information on local antisemitic stirrings during the days of the Tiszaeszlár trial, but there is an increase in anti-Jewish statements after the turn of the century. They were either

individual voices or expressing opinions of groupings. The former is exemplified by the leaseholder of the castle garden who: "... stated that he removed the sitting-benches - which are not even his property - from the walking paths, because he does not want them be used by Jews" (16). The local press, that was molding and somehow reflecting the public opinion, swiftly retorted: "We will not comment on the mentality of the castle-garden leaseholder - although it is the Jews who enable his living by extending the credit for his beverage requirements, and who make up the better half of guests on the occasions of his parties - we just smile upon it and find it pitiable. However if the pampered leaseholder of the public property dares to voice such utterances, perhaps some of the affected commonalty may be curious to find out if it is the castle-leaseholder himself who is thusly responsible?" (17).

Apparently the negative posture of that individual concerning the Jews, was supported by a similar stance of many others. Even if this cannot be documented here, the next instance demonstrates an evident and real difference of opinion and interest. The matter emerged as a direct political power display on the occasion of an election for the representative assembly. The process of wealth-enhancement brought forth besides the financial one, social advancement too, allowing the incorporation of the Jews into the local and national political life. This process was not met by unequivocal approval. The local press extended wide coverage of the incident and both affected parties could elaborate their opinion.

During the elections there were abuses and irregularities, which resulted in Jewish representatives being elected in greater numbers than usual. The public of Kisvárda reacted: "I carry no personal grievances against the elected city representatives, indeed I would like to believe that each one as an individual is an absolutely honest and reliable man, but together, in this assortment: I can only look upon them as instances of a sickly social manifestation... This percentage proves, that the whole electoral campaign is done by people who have immature minds, are rapacious, greedy or shortsighted... an extravagant grouping is bestowing sectarian make-up on a contest that has a social aspect..." (18). This article was rejoined by Ármin Füredi (previously Fischer), school principal and editor of the newspaper; he charged the writer of the above article with sectarianism and argued that: "...taking in consideration that out of the 404 votes cast only 133 belonged to the congregation thus belittled by him, and that during the contest 271 votes had the power to decide the result of the election according to the percentage desired by the writer.... It would be indeed a sad state of affairs in our community if the basic policy would reckon not with aptness but with the congregational affiliation" (19).

The winners of the elections were two lawyers, one engineer, one pharmacist, three merchants, three artisans and three farmers. They were the following: in the first district with 191 votes cast Dr. Ferenc György lawyer, Mihály Bencs merchant, Simon Frigyesi, László Szelfrid artisan, Jenő Barta. In the second district with 213 votes cast Samu Kun, Zsigmond Fodor, Albert Széll, Dr. Miklos Werner lawyer, Ferenc Maklári artisan. Alternate members: János Illés, Bálint Orgován, Jozsef Klicsu (20).

The dispute went on: "... an election which was settled with only 8 representatives of Christian faith out of 40, would not be acquiesced neither in this nor in any other country... Why is no attention directed to the fact that out of the 404 voters many did not even visit the voting locale, but cast the suffrage with a ballot wrung from them? And to the fact that certain voters were carried with transports paid for? And how about the fact that the smarter people abstained almost completely from balloting? It would be easier to understand why out of 1300 voters only 404 had

cast ballots?" (21).

One has to agree with the last argument, when looking at the end results. "A number of big-mouth members of a weighty congregation in Kisvárdá, joined in a shrewd move and defaulted the Roman Catholic as well as the Protestant pastors, ushering into the representative body 7 members of their own faith... I am asking, do I foment strife.... or are they the ones who embark on steering an election without foresight?" (22). In the aftermath of the affair, the election was voided by the validation board on legal grounds. The elected ones forwarded an appeal, but the higher authority turned down their suit and a new election was proclaimed (23).

Quite often the ethnic-religious antagonism was concealing the contest for economical positions. This is reflected in the dispute which took place under the pretext of the consumer cooperatives. The author of the editorial in the 'Kisvárdá és Vidéke' holds that the concept of the cooperative is succored by reasoning and agitation like "The Jewish merchant is cheating the people" "The Jews enrich themselves on our account" "Let's take away the source of their wealth and power, their stores" The naive people are taken in, they will establish the cooperative and the end: a total fiasco.... "...If we are distressed by our lagging behind, let's not use such artificial means, but let's learn from them the diligence, ambition, practicality.... let's direct our sons to the commerce and let's raise merchants who can serve best the public.... We can't anyway supersede the Jew, at best we push them upward. The merchant may become lessee, landowner, clerk or anything else, but it is always an upturn and not down. The project of a consumer cooperative is dreary and unproductive. Live and let live. Let the Jewish grocer subsist, and we should be concerned with our lives and the livelihood of our people, by heralding and promulgating the virtues of toil, industriousness, drive and collaboration..." (24).

Obviously the ideas put forward by the article - everybody should try to make it, but the interests of the Jewry should not be upset - provoked the reactions of those who reasoned differently. The following phrases are quoted from the writings of a certain cleric by the name of Kálmán Molnár: "The author of the article pointed to the animosity against the Jews as the sole source that.... would lead to the canvassing for the consumer cooperatives. Thwack the Jew wherever you can, and the artless public will immediately agree. The fact is that the Jew is more educated, soberer, smarter and more resourceful than the peasant. The above indictment is only valid, inasmuch as a conscious or unconscious defense of the peasants' general psyche. To see in the cooperatives only the anti-Jewishness, is prejudice comparable to the bias and bigotry of creating a cooperative for the sole purpose of hurting the Jew. It is possible that their interests will undergo strong competition, it may be even harmful to them. I do not wish to join the dispute, I just wanted to have a look from a higher vantage point at the idea of the cooperatives, their financial and moral benefit" (25). The reaction of the editors was amongst others; "The concluding phrase of the article, that Hungary should belong to the Hungarians, seems to point to the idea confirmed by our article that the source of the motion for the cooperatives is anti-Semitism" (26).

We may wrap up that above issue by concluding that no side could convince or defeat the other side. It is to be appreciated, that although the newspaper owned by Jewish interests had published the first article, it also allotted space to those representing the opposite opinion.

The Jewish-gentile contrariety was generally not voiced during the First World War; exception was only when merchants and other entrepreneurs tried to pocket larger than usual profits, or

tried to do business by dodging the regulations. They were pilloried by the local newspaper: "In the cellar of the restaurant-keeper Sámuel Adler of Kisvárda, the requisition agent had found amongst the vine-barrels, a cask of 235.6 liters, filled with grain (rye) instead of vine or liquor. The agent, as requested by law, did seize the hidden grain and reported the instance to the district magistrate..." (27). Often judgment was entered against those Jews who had fled to Kisvárda from Galitsia, and transgressed against the existing ordinances, trying to do business illegally. The most widespread offenses were speculation with foodstuff, and the common punishments were jail-terms for a couple of days, fines and expulsion from the district. For example this had happened on February 26, 1915, to Sanders Goldreich and Leib Erlich, both Austrian subjects.

Most of the population was equally affected by the ordeals. 38 Jews from Kisvárda lost their life on the battlefields. In the first year of the war, a teacher of the high school was amongst them: "The Teacher's Board of the Hungarian Royal High School of Kisvárda, announces with a broken heart, that our beloved colleague, Mór Nemes, teacher of the High School, reserve lieutenant... died in his 33-d life year, a hero's death, November 3, on the Serbian front" (28).

Let's have the names of those who had sacrificed their lives on the 'altar of the homeland' (29):

Vilmos Ádler - born 1895, single, the 85-th common infantry regiment, on the Russian front, July 31, 1916.

Dr. Ernő Balkányi

Mór Bernát - single, 24 years old, the 32-th common infantry regiment, the forest of Balkov, August 24, 1916.

Márton Czóbel

Sámuel Engel

Dezső Feldman - married, 41 years old, militiaman, Ur-valley, October 15, 1916.

Herman Feldmann - single, 20 years old, the 11-th National Defense regiment, platoon leader, Italian front, Cetamciller, June 1, 1918.

Béla Fischer - married, 37 years old, 15-th National Defense regiment, first lieutenant, Maroshéviz, November 2, 1916.

Dr. Gyula Füredi

Izrael Grósz - married, born 1883, the 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Csernovitz, July 15, 1916.

Zoltán Grüner - born 1882, married, the 65-th common infantry regiment, corporal, Krasznojarszk, 1920.

Rezső Heimlich - married, 26 years old, the 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Lancsika, July 1915.

Kálmán Hercz - single, 24 years old, the 4-th mountain-ranger regiment of Tyrol, Italian front, Montepriafora, June 2, 1916.

Antal Iczkovits

Ferenc Klein - 31 years old, married, 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Lemberg, August 1914.

Izidor Klein - single, 17 years old, the 65-th common infantry regiment, infantryman, Korotojak, 1916.

Lajos Klein - 18 years old, single, the 65-th common infantry regiment, infantryman, Italian front, August 26, 1916.

Mór Klein - 47 years old, married, infantry militiaman, Kovel, September 14, 1916.

Sándor Klein - militiaman, the Vukovar hospital, August 12, 1918.

Dániel Krausz

Sámuel Kun - 22 years old, single, 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Lublin, August 26, 1914.

Dr. Miksa László - 29 years old, single, 11-th National Defense regiment, junior officer, Dukla, November 15, 1915.

Samu Lebovics - 19 years old, single, the 65-th common infantry regiment, corporal, October 1915.

Márton Markovits - 48 years old, married, militiaman, corporal, November 17, 1917.

Mór Nemes - 33 years old, single, the 28-th militia regiment, commanding officer of the 7-th company, Mitrovica, November 3, 1914.

Áron Pollák

Aladár Révész

Herman Spiegel

Izidor Stern - 22 years old, single, the 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Ravaruszka, 1916.

Béla Schwarz

Jakab Schwarz - born 1886, married, the 65-th common infantry regiment, infantryman, Dolina, April 27, 1917.

József Schwarz - 28 years old, married, the 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Russia, 1917.

Lipót Schwarz

Samu Schwarz - born 1892, single, the 65-th red infantry regiment, lieutenant, Vienna, November 27, 1914.

Lajos Thaler - 28 years old, single, the 11-th National Defense regiment, infantryman, Kozmerczy, August 27, 1915.

Ignác Weinr b

Ignác Weisz

Samu Wiesner.

Another 21 Jewish individuals, lived and suffered for the rest of their lives as disabled veterans.

The life of the community was affected by the general shortcomings of the food supply, as likewise indicated by the following announcement from February 2, 1917: "The National Public Food Supply Authority had ordered that all those of the Israelite faith, who use matzoth instead of bread for the Passover, have to declare their names, as well as their families, servants and household employees by name and numbers... The authorities will allocate flour only to the stated individuals. Mihály Sz ll, president of the community" (30).

In the year 1918, representatives of the Jews in Hungary had convoked a meeting in Budapest, with the intent of establishing a Jewish National Defense Association. It's objective was to safeguard the wholeness of the country and to protect the Jews. The Jews from Kisv rda proclaimed that "... they favor the national movement by joining it..." and accredited the president of the community, Mihály Sz ll to represent them in the capital city. He was accompanied by many co-religionaries (31).

In the wake of the October events (*g*), the local response brought forth the constituting of the National Council in Kisv rda. Many Jewish citizens did participate in it's activity - likewise as they have done in the previous self-governing bodies. Amongst the members: Ern  Milhoffer, Dr. M r F ldes, Dr. Ferenc Gy gy, M r Halasi, S ndor K lman, Ferenc Kun, S ndor Bartha, M zes Rozenbaum chief rabbi, Mihály Sz ll, P ter Gl ck, Adolf Rad , M r Vad sz, Herman Berger.

Some of the Jews had leading positions in the dictatorship, nonetheless they were hurt in the upshot of the political events of 1919 (*h*). Jews had also participated locally in the wielding of the power. The following were members of the command in Kisv rda: Jen  Flamm, Jen  Bog ti, Gyula Egri, Elem r Bog ti, S ndor Kerpel, Ferenc T th, Bern t Lefkovics (32). Mention has to be made of the fact that the oppression was not directed in general against the Jews as such, but was stemming from their financial situation and economical status. The red terror was directed primarily against the real or imagined political foes, locally the Jews were not so much affected, more important was the trend of the dictatorship to collectivize.

The nationalization did affect mostly those who owned property, liable to be subjected to communal usage. Many Jews in Kisv rda too were in this position: "Merchandise in the value of about three million korona was inventoried in the stores of Kisv rda ... The stockpiles of the two largest food outlets - the shops of Rad  and Weinberger - are not yet included in the inventory, as such the general value of the wares existing in the stores can be estimated to be around five millions" (33).

At the time there were in the locality a number of banking institutions where the Jews had a

significant interest, as such they were further affected by the expropriations: "... we started to implement the mandates of the Revolutionary Governing Council. Private property is abolished, the bank deposits do not belong any more to private individuals. The construction of the high school was started back during the war.... Now the command council bade the immediate continuation of the construction work. The funds needed for the current expenses were taken from the bank..."(34). These policies prove that even with the best intentions, not all procedures are acceptable, and we cannot be sure that the intentions are indeed good.

The dictatorship of the proletariat did not interfere with the ecclesiastical life. This was proven on the occasion of the community elections: the Israelite Community of Kisvárdá intended to proceed in the usual manner, with the financial status determining the balloting rights. When they asked for authorization to do so, the executive committee of the Kisvárdá District Council asked the opinion of the Commissar of the Interior: should they accede or should approval be denied? The response of the higher authority was that the religion and church are private matters, one should not interfere in the elections of the Israelite community (35). At any rate the 'glorious 133 days' were only a speck of dust in the hourglass of history and soon the Israelite citizens were to face further, different dangers.

With the passing of the red dictatorship, the conduct of the Jews in the events of 1918-19 was scrutinized and accounted for by the new masters of the authority. If a person seemed to have been involved, he was punished, like one of the local educators: "The disciplinary matter of Jakab Weisz, formerly a teacher of the State Elementary School of Kisvárdá, was presently processed by the public prosecutor and dealt with by the Ministry of Religion and Education. His employment as a teacher was terminated by the decision 191.422/921. VIII tc. on account of the unpatriotic statements of Jakab Weisz during the dictatorship of the proletariat. This makes him unfit to build up the devout and moral thinking of the children" (36).

We will forgo for a while the time-sequence of the events, since the anti-Semitic laws of the Horthy era, as well as the incitement and molding of public opinion of the given period, will be considered in another chapter. However we shall not desist in additionally conveying the repulsion towards the Jews.

Even the numerical increase of the Jews was looked upon with a jaundiced eye by many, mainly because coincidentally certain Jews had gained prime standing in the economy: "... My present subject are not the nationals, but those who in the last decades have sneaked, ghoulish-like, within the borders of our homeland. Settling here, instead of becoming useful citizens of their new country, they had waxed into its frightening monsters, its gouging usurers, its hateful fiends... The immigrants from Galitsia, coming with a small capital, practiced their usury incrementally on the simple, inexperienced peasantry. Within a short whirl of time, in default of assuming the language of the Hungarian nation, its customs and its attributes, the immigrants are becoming natives, landowners, without becoming perceptive citizens of their new country" - thus was somebody writing at the end of the first decade of the 20-th century (37).

All the same more sober opinions were too voiced on the pages of the local press: "The former gentry... had to yield their standing to those who were better able to exploit the contingencies of the economy and who adapted their requisites' to their financial status. Through industriousness, thriftiness and commercial spirit they were able to seize the leadership of the provincial social life, held previously by the erstwhile gentry.... a new class was born that is - let's state it clearly -

composed mostly of Jewish constituents, landowners, leaseholders, merchants, industrialists and other individuals of intellectual pursuit" (38).

At the moment of the ebbing of the political and economical stability, there was an upturn in anti-Semitic manifestations, evoking the "good old" arguments for explaining their own principles. The year 1922 saw in Kisvárdá the launching of the Association of the Awakening Hungarians (*i*); in conjunction with that the local press deemed the nation's defeat in the World War and the later events, as consequences of: "the policies of forbearance towards the non-Hungarian elements". It proclaimed that it is the non-Hungarian segment which "holds the largest portion of the tangible goods".

Just to dispel any doubts the reader may have had - and for sure they did not have any - it is clearly spelled out: "The majority of the Hungarian Jews... is first of all Jewish, and only secondarily Hungarian, and than only inasmuch as allowed by their profits. I conclusively contend that the Orthodox Jew is Hungarian only because he is apprehensive of the punishment whenever he trespasses the Hungarian law "(39). This argumentation will reoccur whithin twenty years.

On the question of Hungarian and being Hungarian, we would like to quote somebody who for sure had no doubts about her own feelings.

Sári Fedák (*j*) is writing in the Pesti Hirlap: "... In all honesty I haven't seen for a while such an enthusiasm as in Kisvárdá. They could not be satiated with the songs, and the Rákoczy March (*k*) elicited such an fervent response, that I am not sure they were even aware of their doings. Na!... And all this, despite the fact that 70 percent of the public in Kisvárdá is of the Jewish faith. That city for sure deserves the exclamation on the pages of the Pesti Hirlap: Bravo Kisvárdá! I am proud of you!..."(40).

In addition to their different faith and position in the economy, the Jews were set apart and even alienated amongst the Hungarian speaking community by the fact that they used the German or Hebrew languages for day-to-day dealings and religious services. The first time when a Hungarian language Jewish orator was heard in Kisvárdá, was brought about in the year 1891 by a death, well before the turn of the 19-th century. Lajos Veneczianer was invited from Budapest for the burial of Lipót Propper, and: "... his emotional sermon won the devout attention of those present" "This sad occasion was the first instance for the Kisvárdá people, to hear a Hungarian language oration by a Jewish clergyman" (41).

Dissent is sown in 1898 by stating that the Jewish merchants: "..... are doing their accounts in the German language, with 'soll und haben', that the German language is used for their correspondences' and even social intercourse" (42).

This charge was refuted by one of the involved, the prominent Mór Halasi (Fisch): "These accusations were exaggerated, even if presented 50 years ago in a German-speaking township and not in a Kisvárdá newspaper... The writer of that article in the Kisvárdai Lapok, should look into the accounting of the most notable merchants of Kisvárdá.... and his patriotic heart will find no reason for wailing, those books are carried on in the Hungarian language, he should look at the notarized accounting extracts at the royal district offices, and he will not be saddened by finding papers translated from German into Hungarian..." (43).

Usually the editors of the newspaper have the last word, and it happened on this occasion too: "The commercial establishment of Kisvárdai made huge strides during the last decades in the matter of being Hungarian, we are pleased to avouch that all the signboards in Kisvárdai are in Hungarian and all the merchants are doing their accounting in Hungarian.... But....There are numerous paltrier people who are dealing amongst themselves in German, and in a defective German, instead of the Hungarian language.... Just go and listen on certain spots of the street to the 'petty exchanges', they are using the same German language as the Stock Exchange in Budapest. Also go and have a look at how a considerable group of the Kisvárdai merchants are corresponding not with the Viennese, but with the Budapest wholesalers! Well, it is more in the German than in the Hungarian language..."(44).

We could cite more from these contradictory arguments, but this should suffice for displaying the antagonism. Adding interest to the matter is the fact, that the owner and editor of the *Kisvárdai Lapok* was the Jew Lipót Vadász (Weinberger), while his opponent and debater was the Jew Mór Halasi. It was the same person, who in the year 1891 denounced the Israelite elementary school to the authorities, charging its German teaching language, and its lack of Hungarian spirit.

The topic of the Hungarian language was raised later again. It emerged even in the year 1917: "... It is a constant practice that during the religious services in the local synagogue, the sermon is given in German. This is indeed an offending matter for most of the Jewish citizens, the more that it has no ritual footing, except the plain usage. Moreover the majority of the Jewish public supports the Hungarian-language addresses. Let's hear the Hungarian word in the synagogue too! It will bring down a large dividing wall and the local Hungarian Jewish citizens will get one huge step closer to the people of other faiths'..." (45). This article was written by the Protestant László Császay.

All of the above are indicators more of the unusual than of the common usage. The general impression was that the Jews of Kisvárdai spawned both socially objectionable, as well as highly educated, well-accepted and respectable citizens. We can present some of the families, to prove how certain members of the Kisvárdai Jewry scaled the real social and economical stepladder, and how they adjusted to the changing national circumstances. Occasionally this induced the change of religion and last name, one more proof of their propensity to assimilate.

A well-known family in the locality was the György lineage. Vilmos Grósz who died on December 1, 1909, descended from the marriage of Bernáth Grósz and Debóra Heimlich (46). Up to his last day, he was the CEO and managed the Popular Bank of Kisvárdai and he was a member of the county judicial board. For many years he was one of the leaders of the Jewish Community who: "... took pains to guide his coreligionaries on the path to enlightenment" (47). His consort was Etelka Kun and they had three sons: Jenő born 1878, was an engineer and he converted to the Protestant faith, Sándor and György were lawyers. The sons changed their last names in 1907 to György (48), and under this name became respected members of the locality. Dr. Sándor György was born in the year 1883 in Kisvárdai. He graduated the high school in Nyiregyháza and studied law in the capital city, in Eperjes and Kolozsvár. There he acquired a doctorate, in 1909 he sat for the bar exam and the following year he opened his law office (49). His death in 1930 was precipitated by a car accident. "In his person the city has lost one of its most vigorous and respected beings, a participant in all social activities; the deepest and most sincere bereavement was shown... he is bewailed by the sportsmen's fellowship of Kisvárdai

wherein he was for many years the guiding force and leader of the KSE, the Civic Club grieves for the loss of its board member and secretary, and in his person an important member of the representative assembly, as well as of the county legislature is gone" (50).

Dr. Ferenc György (married to Paula Rosenfeld) was a man of similar caliber. He was born in 1881, he graduated from the high school in Nyiregyháza, studied law in Debrecen, Kolozsvár and Budapest. He got his doctorate in 1902 in Kolozsvár and passed the bar exam in the capital city in the year 1906. The chief county executive appointed him honorary prosecutor in 1906; in the year 1909 he was an active participant in the founding of the Popular Economic Bank of Kisvárdá becoming its chief executive officer in 1925 and subsequently filling the same position at the Savings Bank of Kisvárdá. He was a member of the county legislature, of the board of the Nyiregyháza Bar Association as well as a member of numerous select committees and board of directors at various institutions. He was an editor of the local Felsőszabolcsi Hírlap, but on the occasion of the communist takeover of the newspaper in 1919: "...he instantly left the paper, since his beliefs were fundamentally opposed to the communists. Dr. Ferenc György being an eminently middle-class man, was persecuted by communism and had to flee. He returned to Kisvárdá only after the ending of the commune" (51). He passed away in the year 1935 after a prolonged illness (52).

The advancement is also properly represented by the Klein-Kálmán family. Their ancestor originated the Sárgabolt firm in the year 1802. It was continued by his son József, and later on by his grandson Mór Klein 1840 - January 2, 1915 (52), who operated the business up to the time of his demise at the age of 76. The offspring of Mór Klein and Fáni Róth were: Sándor, Samu and Ignác. Sándor who was born in 1872, became the managing director and later the chief executive officer of the Economical and Credit Institute. Both he and his brothers - who stayed on to manage the family enterprise - changed their last name in the year 1901 to the Hungarian sounding Kálmán.

The uppermost prominence was achieved by a Jewish man of Kisvárdá called Dr. Lipót Vadász. His father, Bernáth Weinberger (1837-1904), was a respected merchant in Kisvárdá. Lipót was born on July 2, 1861. He changed his name to Vadász in 1882. He studied at the Premontre Fathers' high school in Kassa, and acquired his law degree in Budapest. Subsequently he started his law practice in Kisvárdá, and soon after he was one of the most sought after lawyers in the county. In the year 1897 he organized the Mutual Help Society, which operated as a cooperative for those who had garnered some small savings or needed credit. He was the president of the Industrialists' Federation, secretary of the Area Farmers' League of Kisvárdá, a member of the representative assembly as well as of the county legislature. As an appointee of the National Worker's Party, he was elected to the National Assembly in the year 1910. He became a personal associate of István Tisza (I), and was appointed in 1913 Undersecretary of Justice. This appointment was due partly to his position, as well as to his parliamentary work. His work for the good of the state was rewarded with a number of high honors and he was received at a personal audience by the emperor Franz Joseph.

Illustration on page 65: Lipót Vadász.

The fall of the Tisza-government, had terminated this position. He intensified his work with the Hungarian Israelite Literary Society and became its cochairman. This came as no surprise, the first newspaper in Kisvárdá, the Kisvárdai Lapok was started by him in the year 1888. In the last

years of his life he retired from the political life, and died in Budapest, on August 29, 1925, after a prolonged illness (55).

The previously listed instances are a testimony of how the Jews in general and those of Kisvárdai in special, tried to integrate themselves into the multinational society, and strived to assimilate to the primary ethnic group, the Hungarians. There is scant research on the other side of the goings on, namely what influence the Jews had on the layout, culture and economical views of the local gentile middle-class.

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G l o s s a r y.

a/. The year 1848 saw a Hungarian uprising against imperial Austria; the event figures in the national history as 'The Freedom Fight' . A republic was proclaimed, and for a year and a half, the Hungarian National Defense forces fought against the Austrian and later against the Russian imperial armies. The rebellion ended in defeat.

b/. Absolutist era: The Bach era, referred to in chapter 4.

c/. Compromise: In the year 1867 an agreement was reached between the Austrian empire and the Hungarian nation. It gave birth to the Dual Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, with Franz Joseph the 1-t, as emperor of Austria and king of Hungary. In the new, complex state, finances, foreign affairs and the military had common ministries, while all the other matters were governed by separate administrations.

d/.Virilist: a citizen paying a high amount in taxes; he (or she) could become a non-elected member of the local legislative bodies.

e/. The Tiszaeszlár trial: The disappearance and death of a gentile servant maid in 1882 generated a blood libel lawsuit. Several indicted Jews were tortured and the 13 years old son of the main accused was induced to slanderously testify against his father. The trial unleashed an intense anti-Semitic agitation, and a few upright Hungarian politicians stood up for the innocent victims. After a spectacular trial, where the defendants retracted their coerced confessions, all of

them were acquitted.

f/. György Dozsa: The leader of an 1514 peasant rebellion against the landed gentry and nobility. The uprising was quelled, and the leaders were put to death in the utmost cruel manner.

g/. The October Events: The Hungarian politicians realized by the fall of 1918 that the war was lost, they dissolved the Dual Monarchy, declared an independent republic and asked for an armistice, that was signed 8 days before Germany surrendered. The change occurred in a bloodless manner and was called the "Aster Revolution" after the asters worn by the marchers.

h/. The Events of 1919: By February 1919, the Hungarian political life was taken over by the communist party. They declared a "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and a "Red terror" was unleashed. Armed intervention by neighboring Romania brought down this regime in less than four month. The reaction to the events was a reactionary, fascist government, that spawned the "White terror".

i/. The Association of the Awakening Hungarians: A right-wing nationalist group that was virulently Anti-Semitic in its manifestations. They were most active during the 'White Terror' in the first years of the proto-fascist regime of the Admiral Horthy.

j/. Sári Fedák was one of the most famous actresses and theatrical personalities of her time, active in the first 3 decades of the century.

k/. The Rákoczy March: Ferenc Rákoczy was a Hungarian freedom fighter in the 18th century. A revolutionary piece of music from his time was included into the Damnation of Faust by Berlioz and this rousing march became a rallying music for the Hungarian nation.

l/. István Tisza: Hungarian prime minister during most of the first decades of the 20th century.;

VI

Jewish societies in Kisvárdá.

The founding of various societies in Hungary goes back to the beginning of the 19th century, however they really started to multiply in the last decades of the century. Their thriving was correlated to the economical growth, as well as to the evolution and strengthening of the middle class.

An ordinance from November 26, 1853, valid until the year 1867, regulated the launching of societies: the cultural organizations needed imperial authorization, while all the other ones required approval of the Ministry of the Interior. After the Compromise, the Ministry of the Interior was in charge of all the associations, while the professional societies were subordinated to the ministries of specialty. All matters pertaining to the inception were governed on a broad scale by the Interior Ministry decree # 1508/1875. This decree asserted the right to associate and

the need for prefatory approval of the associations' basic statutes. The ministry had the uppermost prerogative of supervision, while the judicial authorities had direct control and were keeping the records.

The congregational aspect may have been involved in the possible grouping of the societies, as evident in our study. The public organizations we are looking at, were engaged in the social integration and alliances within the Jewish associations. Some of the societies were involved in ecclesiastical pursuits, but the main concerns were the social and supportive purposes. This was true even when in order to obtain the desired results, certain cultural programs were utilized.

Chevra Kadisha.

The oldest association was the Chevra Kadisha. Some sources date its origin to the year 1796, however the seal bears the date of 1805. The county newspaper informs in 1882, that the Ministry of Interior has approved the statutes of the association (1).

There is an obvious discrepancy between the effective onset and the date of the official government sanctioning. The year 1796 has to be accepted for the genuine launching, inasmuch as it is inconceivable for a Jewish community to exist without a funeral arranger.

The association had its own, autonomous statutes. Despite the apparent independence from the community, their activities were coordinated in multiple ways. Amongst the main objectives were the care for the sick Israelites, to pray for them and to assist the needy ones. The expenses were covered by donations, admission and membership fees - determined by the financial status of the candidates. The association attended to the burials, its members cared for the maintenance of the cemetery, all in accordance with the ancestral custom. Under certain circumstances the Chevra Kadisha extended assistance to the non-Jewish populace too.

Admission to the association was open to any man of Jewish faith living in Kisvárda or its surrounding, conditions being impeccable behavior, Hungarian citizenship and membership in one of the orthodox congregations. If a member moved away, but continued to fulfill his obligations, he could maintain his membership including the electoral rights, but could not become an officer of the association.

New members were admitted upon the recommendation of two board members. The entry fee was commensurate with the financial status of the candidate. The information on that matter appears in the statutes approved in the year 1937: the amount varied between 50 and 1000 gold pengő. One quarter of the corresponding sum had to be paid on admission, the remainder within 3 month. If somebody was delinquent with the later amount, his membership was voided and he forfeited the initial sum too. Besides these assessments, there were yearly levies imposed by the general assembly, with a smallest payable amount of 5 and a maximal of 20 golden pengő.

The business of the association was conducted by an unpaid body composed of a president, 2 stewards, cashier, comptroller and board members - the later varying in numbers during the years. The yearly election of the above was done in secret balloting. The most important tasks were related to the burials. We will presently ignore that facet and will deal with matters related to health care. The association was instrumental in securing a separate section for the Israelites in the general hospital of Kisvárda, where such patients could abide and eat according to their religious practices. A first mention of the hospital occurs in the year 1887, when owing to lack of

funds, the public and the holy association wanted to hand it over to the county. The matter was successfully concluded in 1894 with the opening of the general hospital. Further development was attained through the intervention of the Israelite Holy Society, gaining in 1897 the separate Jewish section. On January 8, a tender for the works was published, the deadline of the "bidding" being 2 p.m. on January 17, at the offices of the association. The security to be deposited was 100-100 forints for the bricklaying and carpentry work, as well as 50-50 forints for the joiner and locksmith works (2). We quote the opening event from the local press: "... the local Israelite Holy Society had obtained the authorization to erect an adjoining wing to the general hospital with the prerogatives of separate cooking. The foundation-stone ceremony did take place on the 16-th of the current month (March)... Upon his arrival to the hospital building, the county executive was greeted in the name of the Israelite Holy Society by Mór Halasi... The county executive, the president of the Israelite Holy Society and the president of the Israelite community effected the first battering for the foundation-stone; subsequently they signed and placed the document describing the story of the building. After the ceremony there was a brunch at the home of Herman Reizman, the president of the Holy Society..."(3). The number of hospital beds was thus raised to 87. To boot during the year 1896, the institution had admitted for treatment 424 Protestant, 252 Roman Catholic, 152 Greek Catholic, 78 Israelite and 8 Evangelical patients.

During the year 1906, the association did disburse 1183 korona and 71 fillér for medicines and physicians, in addition to the 758 korona and 80 fillér spent of kosher food. At the general assembly of March 17, 1910 it was reported that: "... In the Jewish ward of the county general hospital we were able to provide 3976 days of kosher food for 233 patients, and a total of 208 sick brothers of ours were able to regain thus their health...Additionally, the benevolent activity of the Chevra Kadisha managed to send very sick patients to Budapest and to extend medical help and medication to outpatients. All these assistances represent comprehensive expenditures, that could not have been covered by the individuals. Such a deed can be achieved only by an association with 127 local and 26 outside members"(4). The report states furthermore that five individuals: Samu Rochlitz, Simon Frigyesi, Vilmos Grosz, board members, as well Adolf Ackersman and Dezső Grün, ordinary members - did depart forever from the association.

Information about the leadership of the association is available mostly through the reports pertaining to the elections within the Chevra Kadisha. In the year 1910 the president was Herman Reizman, stewards: Salamon Klein, Salamon Juda Fried, cashier: Salamon Fried, comptroller: József Molnár, secretary: Ármin Füredi. Members of the board were: Samu Reizman, Mihály Széll, Izrael Fleischmann, Bernát Zuckermann, Lipót Harstein, Márton Friedman, Henrik (Mándok) Rochlitz, Mór Weisz, Ignác Lebovics, Mór Hochman, Herman Hartman (5).

The previously mentioned president passed away in April 1914. In the eulogy, we can read amongst other things that: "The firmament above the economic and commercial life in Kisvárdá and its surrounding, had suddenly darkened in the afternoon of the 7-th of the current month; at this time a shining star, the sparkling soul of Herman Reizman, departed its earthly receptacle... His momentous willpower had achieved tremendous results; amid the standard pre-60-s agriculture, his model farm stood out and served as an example to numerous other farmers, leading to the undeniable amelioration of general prosperity... His conservative mentality coexisted with the spread of enlightenment, in the 80-s he had founded the local Israelite school and was its dynamic president of the board, until his death. He lovingly cared for the Holy Society of the local Israelites, being its president for 30 years. His activity resulted in the creation

of the Jewish wing attached to the local general hospital, wherein many thousand sick people of his faith did regain their good health. His beneficence extended to all and sundry residing in the locality, countless indigents receiving stealthily money, firewood and food. He was charitable as mandated by the Holy Scripture, inasmuch as he wanted the left hand to be ignorant of the right hand's giving..."(6).

In the year 1929 the ensuing ones constituted the leadership: president: Mihály Széll, stewards: Sámuel Fried, Gyula Klein, cashier: Márkus Klein, comptroller: Miksa Lefkovichs. Members of the board: the president of the community Samu Reizman ex offo, Dr. Samu Fried, József Fried sen., Izráel Fleischmann, Ábrahám Friedmann, Mór Hochmann, Simon Schatter, Mór Kellner, Mór Klein, József Molnár, Mór Neumann, Dr. József Szilágyi, Adolf Salgó, Herman Berger, Henrik Hartman (7).

Approximately twenty year had passed between the two rosters, yet it is evident that some of the names are listed in both. Let's cite just one person from the roster, namely József Molnár, who in due time was to become the president of the association. Born in 1853 in Ungvár, he came to Kiszvárd as a chief accountant, later as senior partner of the Spiegel and Moskovitz company helping to develop it into a major enterprise; subsequently he became director of a bank (8).

As specified above, the blend of missions carried out by the Chevra Kadisha encompassed aspects of charitable, pious and reciprocal assistance societies.

The Israelite Women's Association.

The Israelite Women's Association, founded in 1877, pledged itself to public charitable activity. Their purpose was: "... to alleviate the wretchedness of local paupers of Israelite faith who have impeccable morals, to assist families and individuals who became destitute through no fault of their own, to providence for the good behavior of the helpless orphans and save them for society" (9). The statutes avowed that: "... the moment there are fifty persons joining on behalf of the above goals, the Israelite Women's Association of Kiszvárd considers itself to be constituted and will elect its officers" (10).

The Association was active even before obtaining its approval by the authorities. On March 7, 1883, there was a general assembly with the participation of 26 persons. The interim president, Mrs. József Fried, presented the objective of the assembly, which was to root its activity on a legal footing. This can be achieved by formulating statutes that are approved by the Ministry. Some of the members had already prepared a blueprint, it was presented to the assembly and adopted. Keeping in line with the statutes, a leadership was elected: president: Mrs. Herman Reizman, vice-president: Mrs. Vilmos Grosz, cashier: Mrs. József Fried, secretary: Péter Glück. They were assisted by a board of 12 members. On April 10, 1884, the Ministry set the seal of approval on the statutes, and hence the activity could go on within the bounds of legality.

A financial background was needed to implement the agenda. The income was attained from endowments, their interests, yearly membership fees, donations and "extraordinary gains realized through actions of the board". A founding member had to pay 25 forint, either in a lump sum, or in 5 monthly installments. A patron had to disburse for 6 years at least 5 forint per annum, ordinary members were to pay 3 forint admission and a monthly fee of 20 krajcár into the cash-box of the association. Male or female persons were accepted as members in any of the three

categories. A statement from the year following the founding, reports that the association possesses a total of 600 forint. Expenses were 283 frt. 25 kr. incomes 329 frt. 40. kr. There were 104 ordinary members (11).

In the year 1888 the leadership of the Women' Association was: president: Mrs. Mózes Klein, vice-president: Mrs. Mihály Széll, cashier: Mrs. Náthán Fried, secretary: Péter Glück. The newspaper *Egyenlőség* reported that like every year, in the past one too, the association had organized a collection for the clothing of destitute children. It was successful, on the occasion of the board meeting of December 19, a festivity was arranged for the distribution of winter clothes to 26 youngsters. On the same occasion the board donated 40 forints to each of two needy women (12).

In the year 1892 the *Kisvárdai Lapok* is reporting that Mrs. Mihály Széll was elected president, Mrs. Lipót Harstein vice-president, Mrs. Fülöp Lázár cashier and Ferencz Rosenthal secretary. The yearly report states that the association had spent 500 forint for charitable purposes, while the interest-bearing holdings rose to 1167 forint (13).

The local press kept track of significant events in the annals of the association. Most prominent were the deeds occurring in December when such events took place like: "... On the 19th of the current month, the Israelite Women's Association supplied clothing for 26 girls in the locale of the association. The secretary of the association, the lawyer Péter Glück, expressed in a beautiful oration his thanks to the noble-spirited donors..." (14).

The articles of clothing originated through a collection, some also gave money and food- stuff, providing for the gifts. Occasionally, on the death of a more weighty Jewish person, either him or his inheritors gave funds to the Women's Association, or another society. For instance in 1891, the heirs to the merchant Simon Rosenblüth donated 50 forint that was used to dress up 13 schoolchildren. In 1902: "The late Mr. Mór Altman bequeathed in his will 1333 K. 33 filler, for charitable expenditures to the Israelite Women's Association of Kisvárdá; in the name of the heirs, Mr. Ede Altman disbursed this amount into the cash-box of the Women's Association..."(15).

Illustration, page 71: The basic statutes of the Israelite Women's Association of Kisvárdá.

A significant amount of the income was derived from organized evening affairs. A soiree with a program was followed by dance. In the year 1896 it was a first in Kisvárdá, when the lights of the party were provided by electrical illumination (16). In later years too, parties were a favorite moneymaking way of the association.

In December 1930, the Women's Association assisted by local amateur artists, organized a cabaret-soiree with charitable objectives. Amongst other program items they presented scenes from 'Marshall' by Ferenc Molnár (*a*), 'The tail-coat' by László Vadnay (*b*) and 'The antenna scamp' by Károly Nóti (*c*), (17).

In the year 1935 the Women's and the Girl's associations held a joined tea-party for the benefit of the soup-kitchen. These functions were meant to provide entertainment for young people, and enable those who had the resources to be charitable. This affair was a success: "The public participated in large numbers and the whole society of Kisvárdá was well represented..." as reported by the newsman in the local paper (18). The young people of the city had a good time

all-together, notwithstanding their different creed. This seemed to be proven by the composition of the amateur jazz-band attending to the music: Klári Sándor, József Bodnár, Ferenc Klein, László Lunczer.

The proliferation of the financial institutions brought forth the custom of monetary contributions to different organizations, and as such to the Women's Associations too. These contributions and the amounts donated were always published in the press by the recipients and thanks were expressed to the donors. Mrs. Zsigmond Láng, the president of the association did thus: "... This year too, the management of the Kisvárdai Industrial and Commercial Bank did not forget our needy and on the occasion of the yearly accounting, they disbursed 200 korona to the cash-box of the Women's Association..."(19). Occasionally the Women's Association acted without consideration for the religion: " The Israelite Women's Association proved their unmatched largesse, deciding on their board meeting to provide tea-snack to all girl students in the city, irrespective of their faith. Extra praise is not needed for such a charitable organization" - was written about the action on the occasion of the Millennium (*d*), (20).

Illustration on page 72: A contemporary notice in the newspaper.

They thought also about providing for the wedding of the penurious girls, and it appears that a separate fund was set up for this purpose. One of the many notices about this matter imparts that the following collections were made for the wedding fund of indigent girls: at the wedding of Mr. Ignác Grosz, the "misses" Relli Stark and Gizella Salgó garnered 44 kor. and 43 fillér, while at the nuptial house of Mr. Mór Reisman, 22 kor. and 60 fillér was collected by Rezső Reisman (21).

This fund existed in later years too, there are notices about it. One information from the year 1930 imparts that Ilonka Grünwald and Helénke Markovics collected 10 pengő at the Goldman wedding house, while Jolánka Csillag and Irénke Schwartz collected 11.78 pengő at the wedding house of Ármin Schwartz (22). The Women's association was in the habit of donating for noble causes. They did respond to the call of the Israelite community for firewood: "On the 13th of the current month, at the board meeting of the elected leaders of the Israelite Community, as proposed by the president Herman Reizman, two committee members were dispatched to collect - as in any other year - donations for the purpose of providing the destitute Israelites with firewood. Lajos Weisz and Benjámín Lebovics were delegated to the task, and their efforts resulted in 160 forint for this noble endeavor. Amongst the donors are also charitable societies within the community proper" (23).

The association also sponsored programs unrelated to charity, furthering public education and general knowledge. On January 10, 1932, in the locale of the food-kitchen, Melanie Vámbéry imparted her "Experiences in Ireland", and on February 21 it was Mrs. Dr. Henrik Hübös talking about her travel experiences concerning Paris and the Colonial Exposition and: "... the large number of attendees listened with the greatest rapture and relish to the thrilling, edifying and instructive lecture, delivered directly by the speaker. At the end of the address, frantic clapping expressed the enjoyment derived"(25).

The statutes underwent repeated changes during the lifetime of the association. The first change occurred in the year 1884 and the next one in 1897. These alteration in the statutes did not affect the activity of the association. The most active movers of the association are displayed in the

minutes of the meetings and the notes in the press. The name of the lawyer Péter Glück was already mentioned, for many years he was the secretary of the association. The basic statutes provided that this job has to be filled by a man, all the other functions by women. He was a member of the board of directors at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of Kisvárdá, which enabled him to obtain from them donations for the association. In the 1880-s, the president of the association was Mrs. Hermann Reismann, the spouse of a respectable and well to-do merchant. Her husband was also a member of the board of directors at the Savings Bank.

Amongst the members mention should be made of Mrs. Dr. Bernáth Rosenblüth whose husband, a physician, was also on the board of directors of the Savings Bank, Mrs. Ignác Berger whose husband owned a typography as well as a book and paper emporium, Mrs. József Fried - the husband a pharmacist, Mrs. Benjámín Lebovics - the husband a landowner, Mrs. Hermann Windt - the husband grain wholesaler, Mrs. Ignác Schwartz - the husband a restaurant-keeper, Mrs. Simon Frigyessy - the husband a merchant of spirits, Mrs. Zsigmond Lázár - the husband a merchant, Mrs. Samu Reizman - the husband a merchant. The later lady was for a number of years president of the association.

The widowed Mrs. Samu Reizman (Erzsébet Leveleki) died on March 28, 1936. It was noted about her that: "The deceased was a much esteemed and respected member of the Kisvárdá society. She was an sympathetic benefactor of the poor and needy, and as a president of the Women's Association of Kisvárdá, for long years had carried on a worthy charitable activity..."(26).

It is evident that the previously mentioned ones came from a class of people, who were able and willing to make financial sacrifices for a cause they considered important and worthy. The circle of the occasional donors and supporters was far larger, it included almost the entire society. Everybody gave to charitable causes according to their means.

The Food-kitchen.

The launching of this institution was also done by the Women's Association. The unanimous decision to establish a food-kitchen was enthusiastically approved at the general assembly of January 31, 1909. The Women's Association: "...in agreement with the local Israelite Community, will add a building to the Israelite elementary school janitor's home, which will be used for the food-kitchen. To procure the needed funds, the Women's Association has put out lists of subscription..." (27).

There was already a previous initiative in Kisvárdá, again achieved by the Jews: "...already for the duration of four years there exists a privately set up institution at the Israelite school, with noticeably beneficial effects on the children..." (28).

The food-kitchen became operative within a year of the idea having been started: "The approved basic statutes of the Israelite Women's Association food-kitchen, arrived back this week to the authorities" - as written in the month of December (29). On December 8, 1909, in a leased locale the kitchen indeed started its beneficial work, providing at the time daily wholesome food for 35-40 hungry children.

Let's remember those who had a significant share in the fulfillment of this civic institution: "... we have to think of the boundless charitable heart of Mme. Ede Diner, president of the Israelite

Women's Association who had dried the misery-tears of countless human beings, we have to look with our spiritual eyes to the enthusiastic and charitable ladies who form the board of the Israelite Women's Association, we have to think of the president of the Israelite community, Mihály Széll, for whom charity is a vocation and who not only is a model, but knows how to masterly induce broad-encompassed beneficence and we pay attention to the agile activity of the Israelite Women's Association enthusiastic secretary, Soma Kovács. Considering the above, we can confidently state that the time will come, when the presently started food-kitchen will transcend its limited circle and will expand charity universally..."(30).

The press reported about the beginning in the next year: "The food-kitchen sponsored by the Israelite Women's Association was inaugurated on December 4, 1910. Mme. Benjamin Grosz offered the first meal from her own provisions. 19 children from the Israelite elementary school under the supervision of the teacher's body, 24 Israelite girls from the governmental school, lead by the principal Lajos Bán, and 9 children from the Talmud Study school headed by the chief rabbi did partake in the lunch. It became a festive occasion with the participation of the president of the Israelite Community, Mihály Széll, who sat down to share the meal with the children" (31). Gyula Diner and Herman Reizman also had a decisive part in the inception and operation of the food-kitchen. The kitchen was organizationally separated from the Women's Association. It had its own statutes and a committee was in charge of the management. The members of that committee were the presidents of the Women's Association, of the Community, of the Chevra Kadisha, of the School Board and the chief rabbi. The main task of the food-kitchen was to provide fare for the needy Israelite pupils, for the aged and the sick ones. The expenses were covered from many sources.

Ordinary members paid a fee of 10 korona for six years, a founding member was supposed to pay 200 korona, while a patron was expected to contribute 100 korona. Donations were accepted as well, and it was possible to give utensils, furniture, foodstuff. There were instances when a person covered the expense of one meal. In December 1911, 19 pupils of the Israelite elementary school, 24 of the governmental school and 9 pupils of the Talmud-school partook of a meal. The president of the community, Mihály Széll, was present at the event, he shared their meal, raising the level of the charitable action. Afterwards: "... praising the good taste of the food, he raised to speak and praised the heroine of the day who had prepared the meal out of her own resources, served it herself to the many children, even approached them with a smile when the clumsier ones needed encouragement in using the knife and fork" (32). It is worth while mentioning that the municipality gave a helping hand to the food-kitchens maintained by the different congregations. For instance in the year 1939, each of them had received 200-200 pengő in order to better accomplish their task (33).

For a long time the food-kitchen had no place of its own. The permanent locale came as a "result" of a misfortune. Dr. Sándor György had passed away in a motor vehicle accident, and on that occasion - as a memorial to his person - came forth the idea of putting up a permanent locale for the Israelite food-kitchen. The real estate was offered by the community, the widow as well as his brothers and friends participated with money to the new locale, which was then inaugurated on December 8, 1931 (34). From that day on, the institution was called the Dr. Sándor György Food-kitchen. The enterprise gained significant importance during the years of the financial crisis. The account of the yearly general assembly gives some information on the number of persons who were fed there. From the start of the year 1933 till the spring, the

Women's Association disbursed 2080 pengő aid, while in-between December 18, 1932, and March 24, 1933, the food-kitchen provided 5889 meals to the needy (35).

There are no exact data on the number of Israelites who were considered to be paupers. There is one roster from the year 1929 registering the indigents of the township and subdividing them into three categories of neediness. This was done in order to facilitate the corresponding giving, but we have to be skeptical about the matter. According to the above there were 7 individuals in the first group with one Israelite amongst them (the widow Mrs. David Schönberger, 80 years old), 22 persons in the second group, again with one Israelite (Kati Hartman, 60 years old) while the third group comprehending 24 souls has also only one Israelite (József Burger, 75 years old) (36).

The above data are probably untrustworthy, at the time the township had about 14 thousand inhabitants and the 53 individuals considered paupers are probably far less than the real number. The only thing that appears to be sure is the insignificant number of Israelites on the roster.

It is plausible that the associations and organizations of the community, as well as the more affluent Jewish citizens were able to assist the poverty-stricken in such a manner, that they were in no need to receive the total amounts allotted by the township: monthly 21 pengő per capita, respectively an assistance of 8-12 or 1-4 pengő per month. Looking at the above mentioned 2080 pengő, and breaking it down to monthly amounts it will be evident that this 700 pengő a month is more than the total sum allotted by the township for assistance: adding up those maximal figures would result in $147+264+96=$ a total of 489 pengő.

The Israelite Girl's Association.

Mention has to be made of the Israelite Girl's Association too; we don't have the date of its founding, but recollections place it around the years subsequent to the first World War (37). The initial enthusiasm was followed with indifference, so much so that the society practically ceased to operate. It underwent reorganization in the 1930-s, whence their existence became noticeable. They too had charitable goals, they organized all kind of affairs and those incomes covered the expenditures. The newspaper Felsőszabolcs announced these soirees, like the one on March 3, 1933: "...a diversified program flush with local references, 'Animated radio-evening' with the participation of the best local amateur performers". We are citing this as proof of a successful collaboration, irrespective of the religious denomination. Within the program of 'superb achievement' the Israelite individuals cooperated with people like: Gyula Teremy, Lajos Bakó, József Bódnar (38).

At the time the board was composed of the following individuals: president Dr. Mrs. Sándor Szőke, co-presidents Dr. Aranka Rothfeld, Elza Földes and Margit Rónai, vice-presidents: Mrs. Lajos Szilágyi, Rella Eichler, Manyi Fried, secretaries: Dr. István Szilágyi and Dezső Goldstein, keepers of minutes: Böske Klein, Sári Eichler, cashiers: Magda Friedmann, Magda Kroo, legal adviser: Dr. Vilmos Reismann, overseers: Elza Steinbach and Klári Szabó, comptrollers and members of the control board: Erzsébet Fried, Böske Molnár, Sári Rácz, Olga Salgó, Lujza Weisz (39).

On November 17, 1937, there was a general assembly for reelecting officers "... and on this occasion Mrs. Dr. Sándor Szőke, the enthusiastic and untiring leader was again elected as

president. There were no changes either in the presidium or in members of the board, the previous management had stayed on" (40). The regular way of raising funds was the so-called tea-party, where tea and cakes were served, and the "attraction" was some kind of amateur program. Interested parties were invited for such an event in December 1936: "The soirees of the Girl's Association are year after year a great success, as such it is understandable that there is great anticipation toward the forthcoming affair. There will be an innovation concerning the function, inasmuch it will be held in the locale of the coffeehouse and the adjacent hall, instead of the theater-hall of the Main Hotel. There will be a children's cabaret during the tea-party..."(41). Besides the children's cabaret, the program also included declamations, for example Irén Rosenwasser recited poems by Ady (*e*) and songs. The program was followed by dance and the participants donated money for charitable purposes. (Malicious tongues claimed that the participants consumed many delicious sweetmeats in order to allot some bread to the needy).

The ice-cream evening was an event similar to the tea-party. In the year 1935, such an occurrence was organized in the summer garden of the Main Hotel. After partaking of the ice-cream, there was music and dance. The jazz-orchestra of the Old Student's Club and the gypsy-band of the chief István Csorba provided the tunes (42).

The organizations that had similar aims were assisted by this association. In the last month of 1934 they did organize a tea-party for the benefit of the food-kitchen. On December 29 of the following year, there was an action of the Society for Clothing Indigent Children at the Israelite Elementary School; it provided winter clothes, shoes and underwear for 160 kids. On this occasion the Girl's Association donated 200 pengő to the society.

The Women's Association, the Food-kitchen and the Girl's Association did function until this was possible. They were active even during the Second World War, although the actions were less effective, the situation of the Jews deteriorated steadily, the givers declined and the number of needier rose. In time the local authorities discriminated against the food-kitchen, in the year 1942 they received 200 pengő, the same assistance as the other congregational food-kitchens (44). In the year 1943, the Israelite food-kitchen does not figure among those receiving assistance (45). Within a year all Israelite associations and organizations were fated to be terminated.

The Chevra Mezonot and the Malbish Arumim.

The Chevra Mezonot, the Feeding Association, had objectives similar to the food-kitchen. Its main goal was to feed the poor Israelite students, but first of all the pupils of the yeshiva of Kisvárdá. Those who were not willing or able to "eat days" (*f*) at the more affluent Jewish families, were fed through the assistance of the Association. The individuals who accepted support from the association were given: "... every day a voucher for 9 krajcár in one of the basement sites. In one location 2 krajcár bought in the morning a glass of milk with a crescent-roll and the same in the evening, while at noontime the residual 5 krajcár sufficed for a plate of soup and a slice of bread" (46).

The Malbish Arumim, denoting an Association for the Clothing of the Destitute Israelite Schoolchildren of Kisvárdá, was a quintessentially charitable society. In the year 1898 the Ministry of Interior withheld its approval, having raised some objections concerning the statutes,

for ex.: the way of certifying the minutes, the methods of supervision. After having cleared these matters, the document was approved on March 10, 1899, and the Association was officially born (47). The name of the society reveals its objective, officially it was described: "... to dress those impoverished Israelite schoolchildren, who are unable in part or altogether, to go to school due to the lack of garments "(48).

The sequence of the recipients was set in the statutes: the first ones to receive assistance against the cold of winter were the boys frequenting the Israelite elementary school, next Israelite boys studying at any other school and finally if there was money left, the pupils of the Talmud-Tora were to receive succor. The roster of the potential recipients was arranged by the president of the school board "...featuring in sequence primarily the helpless poverty, furthermore the need to wear and the diligence..." marking what items of clothing are needed (49). A bid - public tender - for the least expensive company to tailor the stuff, was published four weeks before the distribution of the clothes. Providing the needier ones did not strictly entail new clothes. In the years of the worldwide recession, appeals like the following were also launched: " The Malbish Arumim, the Association for Clothing the Destitute Children, is hereby asking those members of the Israelite Community who display a noble spirit, to donate used, defective or unneeded clothing for men, women and children to our society. Under the present difficult economic conditions, the society would not be able to clothe the indigent children in the usual way. The donations should be sent to Herman Berger, the president of the association, or he should be notified in order to arrange a pick-up" (50). Presumably the garments were altered, the cloth being tailored into children's garments.

Illustration page 78: One of the statutes of the Malbish Arumim.

The "attiring" was a festive event, it occurred in the first half of November, when the weather usually turned chilly. This timing set by the statutes was not always observed, often the event was held on December 6, or at Christmas. On the occasion of the gift-giving, the recipients were counseled to continue their pious zeal, patriotism, good behavior and diligence. Ordinarily the locale of the events was the Israelite Elementary School. With the advent of winter, the following announcements appeared frequently in the local press: "The Association for the Clothing of the Destitute Israelite Children of Kisvárdá... is hereby asking the support of the noble-spirited donors. For gifts in kind they came to the domiciles. The pledges should be conveyed to the president, Herman Berger" (51).

It can be said that the work of this society was successful, inasmuch the neediest were indeed supplied with some of the most necessary warm clothing. "... this years clothing was held on the afternoon of January 3, in the Israelite Elementary School. On this occasion 170 children were given assistance in the form of clothing or shoes, and many received even underwear... more children had been given help than in the past year, despite the difficult circumstances..."(52).

The association: "... on the 4-th of the current month, handed boots to 40 destitute children, thus helping to alleviate the suffering of the innocent wretched youngsters for the fourteenth time. The dressing festivity that took place in the presence of numerous enlightened guests had started with the singing of the Anthem. Next, Ármin Füredi, the principal of the elementary school, in an emotional address, expressed gratitude for the charitable action of the society. Dr. Lajos Spitz, the meritorious president of the association, replied with wonderful, compassionate words. At 7 o'clock in the evening, there was a communal dinner, and on that occasion further 140 korona

donations were collected." - was written in December of 1910 (53).

The expenses were covered from regular fees, as well as from individual pledges and occasional collections. Regular members paid 10 krajcár on registration and 1-30 frt. admission charges, depending on how the board assessed the financial status of the potential member. Furthermore the monthly fee was 1 frt. and 20 krajcár. A patron paid at least the twofold, while a founding member had to disburse minimally 10 frt. The last two groups were exempt from registration and admission fees. A honorary member did not pay any amounts, previous charitable activity for the children was adequate.

There were also individuals who did not wait until the appellants knocked on their door: The "Malbish Arumim", the Association for the Clothing of the Destitute Schoolchildren of Kisvárdá, was given 50 korona by an anonymous benefactor, commemorating the wedding of his daughter. The unnamed individual is to receive the most ardent gratitude of the association, and we will solicit the Lord, that the Almighty should bless him and his family with all the best. Thus Ármin Füredi, the secretary of the Association (54).

In the local press scant information was extant on the association; there was one notice immortalizing the election of the leadership. On January the 1-t, 1911, the following were elected: president: Dr. Lajos Spitz, vice-president: Gyula Kemény, secretary: Ármin Füredi, cashier: Leó Rosenbaum, comptroller: Márkusz Klein, members of the board: Gyula Klein, Samuel Beck, Mór Kellner, József Berger, Ignác Schwartz, Jakab Schwartz, Jozsef Jakobovics, Elek Berkovics, Ignác Kálmán, Jakab Klein, Herman Berger, Ferenc Pollák, Mór Eichler, Lipót Kastenbaum, József Danziger, Sámuel J. Fried (55).

The association was closely linked to the community. Notices to the members were announced in the foyer of the prayer-house, the president of the electoral commission on the occasion of board elections was the local chief rabbi, and it was written in the statutes that: "... the activity of the association cannot contravene any particular of the Jewish religious and ceremonial that are included in the codex called Shulchan Aruch" (56).

The Gemilus Hasodim and the Ose Hesed Veemes.

The Gemilus Hasodim was an important self-rallying grouping, the name could be translated into Humanitarian League. Its activity consisted in assistance to the impoverished persons. This was done by lending interest-free against pawned objects, to those people who needed a loan but had difficulties obtaining it otherwise and interest-free. Thus they were able to rescue many an impoverished person and let them keep the paltry valuables they may have had. On January 3, 1937, the association celebrated its 70-th anniversary with a festive assembly. On this occasion: "...following the address of the president Menyhért Schwartz, a festive oration was given by the honorary president of the society, Dr. Sándor Szöke... The secretary, Sándor Unger, did expand on the 70 years history of the society, reporting in detail on the tasks performed. Dr. Samu Fried, detailed in stirring terms the noble aims of the association and asked for further support. The lengthy speech of József Káin, president of the Israelite Community, was attentively listened to..."(57).

In the year before, the Jews from Kisvárdá did commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Ose Hesed Veemes, the Charitable Society. On February 8, 1936, the memory of the founders was

solemnized at festive dinner in the locale of the prayer-hall. That is how the past was looked back on: "... twenty-four goodhearted, selfless and enthusiastic men of modest means came together in order to succor the destitute, the unprotected, the needy, to take care of the sick and to exercise all possible charitable actions in the spirit of devotion" (58).

Little was written in the local press about the activity of the Society, and the minutes of the meetings did not survive the turbulent times. In the first years - in 1897 - Jakab Klein was the president, and Ármin Fischer functioned as secretary. From a story in the # 48 of the *Kisvárdai és Vidéki*, it appears that on November 26, 1911, there was a leadership election: Sámuel Beck became president, Ignác Schönberger vice-president, Miksa Lefkovics cashier and Lajos Újhelyi comptroller. Furthermore 3 accountants and 14 board members were elected. At that time the society numbered 226 members (59). On the occasion of the above mentioned anniversary the figures and strength of the society had greatly increased as compared to the initial days, the number of participants was around three hundred. Eight founding members were still alive. The president of the society was Sámuel Weisz. Let's have a look at the foregoing events.

The first statutes were formulated in 1896, but those were returned by the ministry due to the assistance system and the establishment of monetary fines: these were disapproved because private societies were not entitled to them. Furthermore it was mandated that the date of the yearly general assembly in the month of "Kislew", should be spelled out in the Hungarian language too. By the month of August of the following year, they already have received the approved statutes. The official name was The Ose Hesed Veemes Charitable Society of Kisvárdai, established by citizens of modest means in Kisvárdai in order to assist each other and carry out devout actions.

Those members who lost their means of livelihood, received 2 forint weekly for the duration of 4 weeks, the widows could expect a terminal payment of 15 forint. This was done in the following way: "... the official of the society, had to convey a closed money-box containing money, as well as an open money-box containing the amount of the terminal payment due to the respective person. That person could thus take the money from the open box and use it for her own needs, or transfer the money to the closed box. This made sure that the acceptance or nonacceptance of the money stayed a well-kept secret. The unused amounts were intended to augment the capital of the society" (60).

The statutes stipulated that in case of an epidemic the board is entitled to lower the amount of the terminal payment. This was to ensure that the extraordinary increase in expenses should not deplete the capital of the society, and all the needy ones shall receive assistance.

The society was involved in numerous tasks upon the death of a member. Ten men had to be garnered for prayer at the home, if the deceased had no male offspring the funeral prayer (Kadish) had to be told, the dead person was attended at the funeral and a tombstone had to be erected at the cost of 10 forint.

All these expenses were covered by the fees: admission for ordinary members 5-50 frt. with a monthly contribution of 10 krajcár, patrons paid 5 frt. and founding members 25 frt. The community gave a special permission to collect near the Torah even on Saturdays.

Like other associations, they did accept donations too. This kind of contributions were thanked

for in the year 1911 on the pages of the Felsőszabolcsi Hirlap: "In the past year more substantial monetary donations were offered as gifts to the Ose Hesus Charitable Society. The gentlemen Gyula Diner, Sámuel Reizman, Mór Halasi, Mihály Széll, Vilmos Bozsán, Ignác Grósz and the Commercial Credit Institution 50-50 korona. Mr. István Diner, the Savings Bank, the Financial and Commercial Credit Institute 30-30 korona. The Popular Bank of Economy 10 korona. Please accept hereby the grateful thanks of the Society..." (61). Nonpayment of the fees was punished severely. Three month of arrears carried loss of the right to assistance, while nonpayment of six month brought dismissal from membership. Other societies had more lenient statutes, for instance the Bikur Holm expelled a member only after 3 years of non-payment, until then the only consequence was the loss of voting rights.

The Bikur Holim.

Finally we have to mention the Jewish Bikur Holim support organization. It was founded legally only in the year 1894, a beginning was attempted already in 1885. At the time the Ministry of Interior withheld the approval with the motivation: "In Kisvárda, there is already a Chevra Kadisha Association which, having approved statutes, is in charge of the nursing-care as well as of the charity concerning the Orthodox Jews; the local circumstances do not warrant another society with similar aims" (62). This was a typical instance, when higher authorities are deciding what is needed or not in a certain locality.

On March 5, 1893, the members of the society held an extraordinary meeting, where obviously the main topic was the formulation of basic statutes. At the time the president was Dezső Grün, the secretary was Lipót Révész. The gathering yielded success, Herman Reizman as president of the community approved the planned statutes, and lastly the Ministry of Interior gave its final sanction on May 4, 1894 (63).

There are minutes of a previous constituting meeting from the year 1890, which states that some 40 individuals took part in the event. The function of the president was filled by the merchant Simon Spitz, the secretary was Lipót Rosenberg, the cashier Vilmos Grósz. Amongst the members was the physician Dr. Sámuel Burger, an individual who for sure knew how to care for a sick person (64).

The objectives were indeed similar to those of the Chevra Kadisha, and initially they even planned to have the wording "nursing-care" in the title, hinting at further analogy, but in the end that was dropped. The support meant that in case of a diseased colleague, the members shall care for each other and even extend financial assistance. A more faraway objective was specified, with medical care and supplying medication too: "... if the capital of the association were to exceed 600 korona (gold); mention has to be made of the intent to assist even those poor and sick people who are not members of the association. This will be decided at the wise discretion of the president, who will subsequently inform the board" (63). The purpose was not so much charity but reciprocal assistance, as such they couldn't count too much on funds coming from donations. The member's fees constituted the income. Information on this derives from the statutes from the year 1893. Ordinary members could pay no less than 10 and no more than 100 gold korona for the admission. A patron was to pay at least 6 gold korona a year. A honorary member could be elected - mainly from the roster of members - at the recommendation of the board. In addition each member had to contribute 20 fillér a month, for the current charitable expenses. The members had to assume care of the sick at the time and on the location directed by the president,

and it was to be done in alphabetical order. If someone was unable to participate in the care, he had to redeem it with monetary compensation. The amount was 80 fillér in winter and 60 fillér in summer. The founding capital of the association at the inception was 300 forint, and this amount was untouchable; from any sum exceeding the above, no more than 10% was to be spent on a single patient.

Illustration on page 82: The basic statutes of the Bikur Holim.

In the year 1907, the regular elections brought forth as president Sámuel Singer, 1-t acting president Elek Berkovics, 2-d acting president Herman Berger, cashier Adolf Salgó, steward of the capital Emanuel Weisz, comptroller Jakab Klein, secretary Ignác Weissshaus, accountants Gyula Klein, Ignác Berger jun., Ignác Lebovics. Members of the board were: Herman Ch. Schwartz, Adolf Ellenbogen, Zsigmond Grosz, Henrik Roth, Mór Reisman, Jenö Friedman, József Weinberger, József Rosman, József Fischer. Alternate members were: Juda Braun, József Burger, Herman Frieder (66).

It is furthermore of interest that in addition to the elections, on January 29 of that year, the association celebrated its 25-th anniversary, meaning that they considered 1882 as the onset of their activity. On the occasion of the social evening linked to the festive general assembly; "...the secretary Ignác Weissshaus, presented in a nutshell the history of the association. The chief rabbi, Mózes Rósenbaum explained the associations in ornate terms and elaborated on the importance of the 25-th anniversary of this society. As the president of the community, Mihály Széll hailed the charitable and exalted activity of the society. Herman Berger, the currently elected president, presented in captivating remarks his platform-address. Further suitable speeches were given by Naftali Schreiber assistant rabbi, Lipót Rosenbaum the rabbi of Tálya, and Mór Landau of Kisvárdá. The social evening netted an income of 610 korona" (67).

On February 7, 1909, the followings were elected: honorary president Adolf Ackersman, 1-t acting president Herman Berger, 2-d acting president József Danziger, cashier Dezsö Elek, steward of the capital Jenö Friedman, comptroller József Berger, secretary Ignác Weissshaus, accountants Bernát Danziger, Dezsö Smilovits, Adolf Ellenbogen. Members of the board: Elek Berkovits, Sámuel Beck, József Jakobovics, Ignác Kálmán, Mór Kohn, Adolf Salgó, Leó Rosenbaum, Juda Braun, József Weinberger, alternate member Mór Eichler (68).

In the year 1912, the elections resulted in: president Nándor Ackersman, vice-president József Danciger, secretary Barna Facher, cashier Adolf Salgó, comptroller Mór Reisman, steward Bernát Danciger, accounting committee: Elek Berkovics, J. Rosman, Mór Eichler, members of the board: Herman Berger, Mór Kohn, B. Berkovics, József Weinberger, Jakab Klein, Gyula Klein, Jenö Friedmann, Leó Rosenbaum, Vilmos Malcz, alternate members: Samu Steinbach, Henrik Rosenbaum (69).

In the year 1933 the governance of the Bikur Holim was composed of: president József Hartman, vice-president Bernát Mandel, steward of the capital Leo Rosenbaum, cashier Mór Klein, comptroller Ábrahám Stern and secretary Ébi Moskovits. The nine members of the board were: Herman Berger, Mór Eichler, Ignác Goldstein, Illés Grosz, Gyula Klein, József Kain, Ignác Prerau, Dr. Sándor Szöke, Sámuel Weisz jun. (70).

The Pro-Palestine League.

This society was basically different from any previously portrayed grouping, inasmuch its nature was determined by the concept of Zionism. The national organization was started in 1926, with the main purpose of "involving the broadest Jewish ranks of the land, into the work of reconstructing Palestine" (71), thus helping the Zionist objective, to enable the Jews of the world to live on the territory of an independent Jewish state.

In the year 1929, there was an occasion in Kisvárdá, when the league presented one of their movie-pictures on the Holy Land (72). The March 12, 1933, issue of the *Zsido Szemle*, reports on the initial Purim program of the local league. We quote one of its passages: " András Farkas opened with a short but poignant review of the society's objectives, that was followed with Erzsike Kállosi and Andor Hartman expertly performing works by Hubay and Rubinstein. Vera Széll and József Róth excelled with their declamation talents. Stein and Herskovics amused the public with the comic duo 'Zelig in the maze of bureaucracy'. Next was the main event, the theater piece entitled 'Dawn in the east'. All the actors acted perfectly. Albert Wiesner as a rabbi played his role lifelike. Frantic success was achieved by Miklós Szabó as Jiczhak, and by Erzsike Kállosi as Mirjam. Ernő Adler, Jenő Kahán and László Spitz were very good as bochers. Elza Fried and István Heimlich performed very well as chalutzim..."(73).

Illustration on page 84: The sculptural composition of Tamás Szabó: The Touch - Abraham, Isaac and the Angel - in Kisvárdá.

On December 7 of the same year, on the occasion of Hanukkah, a cultural evening was staged. On that occasion one contributor was no lesser personality than Dr. József Patai - his name was already mentioned as a visitor to the Kisvárdá Jeshivah - the chief redactor of the periodical *Múlt és Jövő*, as well as the president of the cultural section of the Pro-Palestine League of the Hungarian Jews. In the introductory remarks, the secretary of the local organization Lajos Schwarcz, presented the objectives of the evening and of the league: "... which is imbued with real Hungarian patriotism". Next was the presentation of the invited guest, the importance of which was thus perceived by the reporter: "... many, who up to now had perhaps vague ideas on Palestine, were enriched with fascinating and suitable information conveyed in the splendid and thoroughly interesting lecture of Dr. Jozsef Patai" (74). The rest of the evenings program - songs and declamations - were listened to with deep appreciation by those attending.

In addition to the societies based on congregational appertaining, the Jews of the locality played an important role in other public organizations too. We can't go into details here, suffice only to mention that in the year 1914, the president of the Commercial Circle was Mihály Széll, the leader of the Young Merchant's Association was Sándor Kálmán, the president of the Amateur Performing Association was Dr. Pál Schwarcz, and Herman Berger was the head of the Provincial Liquor Licensees Association (75).

The political events ended the activity of the Israelite congregational societies. On May 10, 1944, the county magistrate, sent the following official note marked 'Urgent' to the chief county clerk: "I hereby direct you to close in the locality of Kisvárdá the registered and probably active Chevra Kadisha of Kisvárdá, the Israelite Women's Association of Kisvárdá, the Israelite Child-care and Self-educational Girl's Association of Kisvárdá and the Pro-Palestine League; the activities of the above were terminated and dissolved on order No. 174.289/1944 VII.b. of the Royal Hungarian Minister of Internal Affairs. Do revoke the basic statutes of the named associations and lay it before me together with the report, in order to be forwarded to the county executive"

(76).

Considering, that as of the middle of April the Jews of Kisvárda were living (living ?) in the ghetto, and within 20 days of the date of the above letter, they were on their way to Auschwitz, the question may be raised how did the county magistrate presume that the associations were 'probably active' at the time?

Those who returned from the Holocaust, tried to reorganize their communities. There is no practical and useful documentation on that activity. The political changes emerging after the year 1948, were anew ushering in a period that was ruinous to the revival of such associations.

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G L O S S A R Y:

a/. Ferenc Molnár: (1878-1952) one of the best known Hungarian Jewish playwrights. After 1940 he lived in the USA, and some of his plays were big Broadway hits too: Carousel, The Play is the Thing.

b/. László Vadnay: (1904-1967), Hungarian playwright and humorist. After 1938 he lived in the USA and contributed to the script of many movies like: Manhattan, Bijou, Copacabana. .

c/. Károly Nóti: (1892-1954), Hungarian playwright and movie-script writer.

d/. The Millennium: it was the 1000-th birthday of Hungary as a state, celebrated with much ado in 1896.

e/. Endre Ady: (1877-1919), possibly the most important modern Hungarian poet, strongly influenced by the French symbolists.

f/. To "eat days": a form of charity exercised by most middle-class (or even less affluent) Jewish families. A destitute person (often a 'bocher', meaning a Yeshivah student) was given a midday meal in the home of a family, always on the same day of the week. If the indigent individual was able to line up seven such houses, his everyday meal was assured.

VII

The Kisvárdai Jews and the local educational range.

A scrutiny of the educational and learning status of the Jews can offer an answer to the question, whether any degree of schooling may have been a reason for their economical and social advancement. The topic of the education involves also a discussion of the religious instruction. The pietistic enhancement and the religious study was impossible without the knowledge of reading and writing, it was the basis of practicing religion, at least for the men. The study of the teachings and the canon, a foremost objective for a pious man, was a paramount element of the Jewish tradition. During the progressive era when the value of learning and teaching expanded even more, the second and third generation of the new immigrants was striving to get a higher education, to evolve into intellectuals.

Jewish schools were already mentioned in the legislation of the 13-th century, but the establishment of institutions for the lay instruction became possible only during the reign of Joseph II (a). Up to the middle of the 19-th century, there were no more than 20-30 of these German language schools. The absolutist era considered schooling the most important factor in advancing the assimilation. The establishing of Jewish schools was propagated already in the 1850-s, while at the same time the communities were induced to modernize the curricula. In the year 1855 an edict linked the employment of teachers to a diploma obtained from a teacher's training college. The erstwhile teachers were obliged to pass a qualifying exam. The authorities were successful in their efforts, by 1858 the number of Jewish schools had reached 304 (1).

Let's have a look at the objective local situation. There is no information on when the educational process of local people of Israelite faith had been started, but certainly if there was a rabbi, there must have been religious instruction too. In connection with the tenure of rabbi Izsák Ábrahám Weinberger (1844-1884), we have already mentioned that from the start of his activity he had set up a 'bet hamidrash', a school and library devoted to Talmudic studies. The 1848 census is already listing the following teachers: Lázár Balkányi, Ábrahám Gotesman, Sámuel Zelt, Sámuel Egri, Hersli Veinréb, Lévi Stein, Izsák Salamon, Óser Reisman, Sámuel Deits, Jakab Grünfeld, Heinrich Hedvig and Simeon Szobel (auxiliary teacher) (2). The oldest amongst them was 68 years of age, but at the time of the census he was living in Kisvárdai only for 17 years. The one with the longest local teaching time must have been the 60 years old Lázár Balkányi, who had lived all his life in Kisvárdai.

We can have only the vaguest idea on what kind of teaching activity was pursued by this almost one dozen of 'teachers'. Presumably they were primarily involved in the religious instruction: the boys started to study at the age of 3-4 years in the 'heder', and continued up to the age of 20 in the 'yeshiva'. This type of instruction was performed by rabbis, and the examples of the later decades demonstrate that numerous individuals set up unofficial illicit schools; they may have been precursors of the above mentioned teachers. Amongst the named, only one (Hersli Veinréb), was noted as 'Isr. teacher' instead of the customary 'teacher'.

Data from the 50-s and 60-s are pointing to the inadequate standard of life of the Jewish teachers, with the number of pupils paralleling their solvency. In the year 1858, David Friedlander,

domiciled in Kisvárda, was given a certificate that "... as a teacher he has an occupation enabling him to support a family, and the authorities have no objection to his marriage" (3). An official notice from the year 1869 states that a certificate of poverty was issued to Sámuel Guttenberg, teacher of the Israelite children, because he had no means of his own to obtain a cure for his 'weakened eyes'. Three month later on the petition of the teacher Farkas Salamon it was attested that he is the father of six children "... and is so impoverished, that for many years he was absolutely unable to pay for the medical expenses of his sickly spouse" (4). On December 8, a certificate was issued to Bernát Ujhelyi, affirming that he is domiciled in Kisvárda for 4 years, and makes a living as a teacher, in fact he just would make a living, because: " he has no property whatsoever, that could cover his medical expenses" (5).

Until the creating of the Jewish elementary school, the instructors who provided education to the Kisvárda Jews were like those cited above. We will not expand on it, but mention will be made in another instance of the preexisting public school, the communal elementary school and the possibility of private tutoring. It is evident that the Kisvárda children of Israelite faith were able to utilize those contingencies too.

The activity of the Israelite elementary school.

After the launching of the state elementary school (in 1875) even the gentiles were urging the creation of a Jewish elementary school. It was written in 1887: "It is a shame, that a community with a yearly budget of 10000, while remunerating it's rabbi like Debrecen, Miskolc, or any other large city, is not maintaining a congregational Israelite school" (6).

The school they grumbled about, was launched in the year 1889. The local newspaper reported on September 8, that: "The local Israelite congregational elementary school will start on the 9-th day of the current month. It is intended only for boys, it will have 6 grades and it is located in the four classrooms of the building acquired from Ignác Várady. The staff is composed of two certified schoolteachers and two religious instructors. The admission fee for the grades 1-2 is 60 kr, while for the grades 3-6 is 1 frt. a month. If the school will be up to its calling, it will fill a real need and it will result in the radical emending of our wretched educational status" (7).

For the sake of comparison, let us have a look at the number of congregational schools in the Szabolcs county in that school year (1889-90). Also let us check on the number of the school-age children, and how they did or did not fulfill their schooling obligation. There were 75 Roman Catholic schools, 49 Greek Catholic ones, 129 Protestant ones, 18 Lutheran ones and 20 Israelite schools (8,9).

School-age	Frequenting.	Non-frequenting.	Percentage of failure	children.	to frequent.	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	Roman
Catholic:	9382	8083	1298	13.9 %	Greek Catholic:	5488
	4802	686	12.5 %	Protestant:	13921	
	12569	1262	9.1 %	Lutheran:	2069	1915
	154	7.4 %	Israelite:	3756	3184	572
	15.2 %	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Information on the remuneration of the teachers can be gleaned from a bid-offer, announced in the Jewish congregational newspaper Egyenlőség: "As of September 1, 1889, there are two teacher's positions to be filled at the Talmud Torah school of the Kisvárda Israelite community.

One position compensated with yearly 600 forint, is offered to a certified teacher, qualified in 'commented dikduk' of Chumash, Rashi, Tnah, as well as having Hungarian and German qualifications; in addition he will have to manage the minutes of the community meetings and assist with the registry. The other teaching position, compensated with 400 forint, is offered to an individual who has no diploma but is fluent in the Hungarian and German languages, and who is versed in teaching Hebrew. Properly executed applications should be forwarded by August 15 of the current year, to the undersigned president of the school-board. Kisvárdá, July 7, 1889. Lajos Weisz" (10).

The bulletin issued by the school on the topic of its first school year did not survive, the only information we have, is the reporting on it in the contemporary local press: "The first paragraph of the bulletin expresses the difficulties the school went through from its very inception, and how many conflicting billows swept through it. The teaching staff, devoting great zeal to their arduous duties, has a difficult position amongst the weighty conflicts. But we have no doubts that the liberal tendencies that are unstoppably implemented all over, will apply to the educational matters too..." (11).

In the school-year 1891-92 the only reference concerning the appraisal of the schools, was: " The Israelites had only one neglected boy's school during the past school-year" (12).

The congregational school evolved in a spectacular manner in the year 1906. The new school building in the Posta-street was opened on May 13. The old building was sold by the community. The inaugural ceremony; "... began at 3 p.m. in the courtyard of the school: Mihály Széll the president of the community, told in a few words how the school was established and greeted the large number of participants. Next to speak was the chief rabbi Mózes Rosenbaum, who impressed with a patriotic and deeply felt address, presented in Hungarian. The festive atmosphere was further enhanced by the momentous speeches of Ármin Füredi, Illés Kohn and István Bácskay. In the interval between the orations, suitable songs were performed by the chorus of the school. Afterwards the Israelite Women's Association hosted the children" (13).

The building of the school was indeed large and modern, but it is revealing of the era, that the electricity was introduced only in the year 1922. Then the representatives of the township in an ultimate resolution, decided to contribute to the expenses with an assistance of 7030 korona from their housekeeping budget. This covered the full expenditure and they had granted the sum because: "... the school has no available funds for this outlay, the electrical lighting is a necessity and up to now they had never asked for the support of the commune; therefore the requested support is considered to be reasonable" (14). The question arises on how was the school provided for? Already from the start of the community, the congregational school was considered to be one of the institutions that needed communal support. The school board was one of the most important organs of the community. Minimal support or nothing at all was forthcoming from the state, the township contributed occasionally - as seen above - with certain amounts, but the main source of income was the special levy imposed on the members of the Jewish community. This was requited from everybody, not only from those whose children frequented the school. The community granted other incomes to the school too. Not only the school itself, but its pupils were also in need of support, as proven by the different campaigns that supplied donations to those concerned. Such an occasion arose in January of 1917, when the teacher-principal Armin Füredi thanked for the deed of Mrs. Samuel Klein, who had given used clothing, stockings, caps, shoes and shirts to the school, in order to be distributed amongst the indigent schoolchildren.

This offering was distributed to six children, who for lack of proper clothing had hitherto missed the school.

After scrutinizing the progress of the institution, let's have a look at how it managed to function. Already in the second school year, some individuals from Kisvárda complained against the teaching policy: "Mor Halasi and his associates, forwarded a protest to the county executive, reporting that the teaching language in this school is German, and the spirit of the teaching is not Hungarian. By the same token they asked that, upon verification of the facts, paying of the 5% school levy should be discontinued" (15). The author of the petition was himself of the Israelite faith, but this is one more proof of the fight between the different trends (neologue versus orthodox) and their proponents.

The county executive forwarded the petition to the educational supervisor: following the investigation, he found the accusations to be groundless, and the county executive rebutted the Halasi petition. The authors of the petition appealed, consequently the county authorized a commission of inquiry. From the very start it was specified, that in case the members of the community have to pay both the 5 % levy separately for the Israelite school, and the communal school too, they will be exempted from the later. There are no further data on the outcome of the commission, most probably their findings were identical to that of the supervisor.

Predictably there was no teaching on Saturday in an Israelite school. This was true for Kisvárda too, but the members of the community were not content with that. In the year 1911 they petitioned the Ministry of Education that: "the pupils of the Jewish faith should be exempted from frequenting the state school on Saturday. The Ministry, inasmuch as the state school has no congregational affiliation, deemed the request objectionable, not only because it would disturb the normal procedure of instruction, but it would also be disadvantageous to the educational progress of the Israelite pupils. After all, at the request of the parents of the Jewish pupils, by the ordinance # 42604/891, they were exempt from writing, drawing and doing written calculus on Saturday" (16).

During the years 1900-1910, the principal was Ármin Füredi (in fact his name was Chaim, and until 1904 he was named Fischer). Previously he was a teacher in Királyhelmeç (county Zemplén). Besides his educational work he participated in the activity of the Israelite associations. He was the editor of the weekly newspaper Kisvárda és Vidéke, and published under the pen-name Balaton. Following that, he was the editor and owner of the Kisvárdai Friss Újság (1911-12). He was not only a newspaperman, he also published titles on economical, educational, historical and grammatical subjects. Examples are: System methods of calculus for pupils of elementary school classes and private ones, 1886, and a volume of literature: Tales and stories, 1913 (17).

At the time the other teachers of the Israelite School were: Illés Kohn, Herman Klein and Sámuel Feldman (18). During the First World War, the school was relinquished to the governmental educational network. For the year 1914-15 a total of 162 pupils were registered (19), and a year later the number was 178 (20). Prior to the registration, the local newspaper was running announcements like the following: "The registrations for the Kisvárda elementary Israelite School will take place on the 28-th and 29-th days of this month. The school year will start on September 3. Parents and guardians are requested to effect the children's registration on the time advertised, because school admission will be limited to the number of pupils authorized by law.

Children registered for the first grade, will have to show proof of having passed their 6-th birthday. Children from other localities will presently be only pre-registered, and they will be accepted only after all local children have been definitively admitted. Kisvárda, August 4, 1917" (21). During the Romanian occupation in 1919 (b), the library, flag, etc. of the Israelite school were destroyed (22).

Illustration page 91: The building of the Israelite elementary school.

The following are recollections of some former pupils from the 1920-s: "The principal Mr. Roth, the teacher Mr. Margittai, the strict teacher Mr. Grünwald, Auntie Hajnalka, Auntie Lujza, Ebi Moskovits, the teacher Mr. Katz, they all evoke different memories in us. The occasional smacking with the rod we had received on our palms or bottoms, have for sure benefited us. They have taught us not only reading, writing, calculus, but besides the rigorous school curriculum they also educated us how to respect our parents and our elders, as well as how to live in a honest and proper way.... When I was a pupil in 1920, the school was managed by the principal Mr. Grünwald, a stern and accurate man. The children were quite apprehensive of him. He did not mind occasionally spanking a child who deserved it. The first four classes had individual teachers, while class 5 and 6 studied together, because they had a reduced number of pupils. Generally speaking, after the 4-th class, children did leave the school. The girls went to the local public school, the boys went onto high school in other localities. They were about 60 pupils in the first grade. ...the teacher of the second grade was Auntie Hajnalka.... I remember her as a nice, quiet, smiling, lady teacher. In this grade there were less pupils than in the first one. In the third grade Auntie Szigeti was in charge.... she was an energetic woman, the children were quite disciplined in her class. In the fourth grade our education was taken over by the principal, Mr.Grünwald. He was a rigorous and ordered man. He intended to teach us the same ways. He could maintain discipline with an overwhelming severity. He started us in the study of the German language. In the fifth and sixth grade we were few pupils. Only parents who for pecuniary reason could not afford the high school, or had a devout reason for it, let their children continue to study in those classes. Regrettably, in that class frequented by the more grown children, we had an ineffectual, feeble teacher. He didn't ask much from us and we were gratified by that" (23).

Those recollections are corroborated by the contemporary county roster: in the year 1927 the principal of the Israelite school was Adolf Róth, while Lajos Grünwald, Hajnalka Wiener, Lujza Ungerleider and Jakab Margitay worked as teachers (24). The principal obtained his diploma in the year 1913, he started his carrier in Nagykálló and came to Kisvárda in 1925. Later Grünwald became the teacher-principal, he had studied in the Pedagogical College of Budapest and obtained his diploma in 1905. Margitay also had studied teaching in the capital city, he taught for 18 years in Füzesabony, and came to Kisvárda in the year 1924. The above mentioned Katz was Dániel Katz, a teacher of Jewish religion. He had worked in Kisvárda from 1926 onward; his father has spent 22 years in the same location. Adolf Moskovitz who had obtained his diploma in 1921, was also teaching religion in those years (25).

In addition to the teaching, education was an important task in the activity of those institutions. This was done also by extracurricular exercises. We quote an account of such an occasion from the year 1930: "Long weeks of toiling resulted in the accomplished outcome of the fine program on the occasion of the Chanukah celebration; it was presented on Sunday in the main hall of the Israelite school, and it was repeated on Monday. The program was introduced with a speech to

the occasion by the principal Adolf Róth; it was in an erudite, wise, philosophical and historically well documented style.

The chorus trained by the teacher-principal Lajos Grünwald presented in a fine and pleasant manner songs to the occasion. The theatrical production of "The Descendants of the Maccabeans" that had a clear and deep meaning, was presented in a smooth, lovely, excellent and enjoyable manner. We have to point out a 7 years old girl, Márta Rottenberg, who played the role of Palika, and managed to convey in her acting, feelings that surpassed the spoken text. Ibolya Klein, Erzsébet Spatz and Olga Ellenbogen were also quite fine. Magda Roth declaimed with sensitivity. In the production of "The Little Maccabeans" Vera Széll was lovely, she conveyed with animation and success her role. Additional good performances were given by Júlia Reisz, Sári Reizman, Irén Schönfeld, Erzsébet Goldstein. The evening was closed with the well presented choral rendition of the "Hiszekegy". The great success of the well directed realization is due to the efforts of the teacher-principal Lajos Grünwald "(26). In addition to the celebration of specific Jewish holidays and occasions, there were other programs not related to religion. At the conclusion of the 1938 school year, on a Sunday afternoon, June 12, there was a gymnastics festivity. There were many spectators and the reporter related that: "The exam was an all-out success, the result of painstaking and motivated effort" (27). The Dienes county monograph from the year 1939, marks a Jewish elementary school functioning with 5 general and 2 religious teachers. There were 370 school-age children in the Israelite elementary school, and an additional 100 in the school run by the government.

Illegitimate and Yeshiva schools.

In addition to the congregational elementary school, numerous illegitimate, unofficial schools also admitted Jewish pupils, in fact those were the only ones frequenting them. According to the directive # 40598 MKV of the year 1891, an illegitimate school is: "... an educational or tutoring institution where a number of children are taught the curriculum of a public school, however they are not maintained by a congregational or civic group, they are not constituted as a teaching organization with approved statutes, and the private individuals running them have no legal basis for it " (28).

These educational devices which cannot be called institutions, did not substitute for an elementary school, they were in fact intended as keepers of the Jewish religious heritage. This explains why the Jews were in the highest numbers dodging the compulsory schooling at the turn of the century. This is proven also by the previously disclosed county tallies where the Jews figure with 15,23% of the 'school-shunners'. The longtime survival of these illegitimate schools demonstrates the resistance of the oriental-type orthodox mentality that was opposed to the assimilation enhanced by education.

Even the laws from the year 1868 formalizing elementary education, did not manage to terminate the illegitimate schools. In the 1873 presidential report on the county's educational status of the previous year, they were reprobated as follows: "The majority of the teachers are ignorant people, who besides the Hebrew and religious matters, know almost nothing about what they would sorely need, education and instruction. Lamentably I experienced this in Kisvárda, where I inspected the illegitimate schools of Herman Goldberger, Ignác Frisch and Jakab Wohlhandler. In that township there are more schools of this type, a situation which cannot be further ignored "(29). At the date mentioned, there was not yet a communal school in Kisvárda, despite the fact

that already on Jun. 27, 1870, the Jewish community had asked for the establishing of such a school. However the leadership of the township did no respond to this request (30).

On March 25, 1872, there was a dance-festivity, with the purpose of establishing a girls school, but this effort came to naught. However the illegitimate schools were thriving. On April 4, 1873, the school-inspector József Kiss, appealed to the county executive: "Please, direct the district executive of Kisvárdá, the honorable Sámuel Bónis, to close off as soon as possible the illegitimate schools in Kisvárdá, which, in defiance of the requirements of Tc.XXXVIII/1868, are beneath all criticism as far as teachers, education and instruction is concerned "(31).

Finally, in the year 1874, the communal elementary school did open its doors, but even this did not result in the closing of the illegitimate religious schools. In the year 1874 there were Talmudic schools in different locations in Kisvárdá, managed by Mór Grünwald chief rabbi of the district, József Ehrenfeld, Sámuel Feldman, Jakab Frenkel, Márton Berlinger, Náthán Fried, Herman Goldberger and Mrs. Izsák Bleick. Most of the children who studied in them, never finished the elementary school. Additionally, children came to Kisvárdá from 13 counties of the realm, as well as from Galitzia (*c*). The situation is evident from data compiled by chief rabbi Grünwald on his 85 pupils: (County/number of children) Zemplén 29, Szabolcs 18, Szatmár 12, Bereg 6, Sáros 5, Máramaros 3, Sopron 3, Gömör 2, Ugocsa 2, Vas 1, Szilágy 1, Szepes 1, Ung 1, Gácsország 1 (32).

Following the deportment, or inactivity of the authorities, almost nothing happened. By the end of the eighties, those illegitimate schools were still around. This is confirmed by the 1887 report of the royal school-inspector Pál Velkey to the county administrative council, wherein he relates that almost 150 children are 'studying' in the unauthorized Talmud school, and this activity surged mainly since the arrival of the new rabbi.

According to Károly Liptay, member of the council, there are not 150 but 250 pupils in that school, and he cannot understand why isn't the school-inspector doing something about. The school-inspector recounted in his reply that he did go to Kisvárdá, but is unable to do anything alone. They did agree that the district executive and the school-inspector will jointly examine the situation and if the school is indeed illicite, it will be closed, and the children who are from outside the locality will be expelled from the township.

The result of the investigation established that the rabbi is not licensed to teach, and the school is not accredited. The pupils are boys aged 12-14 who, without exception, had failed to graduate from the elementary school - for the orthodox Jews the yeshivas customarily 'substituted', while for the more conservative neologues the yeshivas just added to the secular education - and even from the hygienic standpoint there are objections to the locale of the school. It was established that besides the school managed by the rabbi, there is teaching at other locations too, and not even the rabbi has knowledge of this. Following the probe the school was ordered to be closed, and the county administrative council charged the county executive with the effectuation of the steps (34).

The matter was discussed within the local elective council too: "There was a reading of the report of the public health commission concerning the closing of the Talmud-Thora school established by the Israelite community and the Jeschuba maintained by the rabbi. Before the assuming of a definitive decision, László Szabó, Dr. Sámuel Burger, Dr. György Küzmös and

Gyula Balkányi are delegated to inspect the setting of the Thalmud-Thora school as well as the local conditions, and a resolution will be made on the basis of the report presented.

From the report of the public health commission it became evident that the district executive, exceeding the county executives' directives, authorized the establishing of a Jeschuba institution, despite the fact that the ordinance No. 11413/87 of the county executive office makes no mention of that. The elective council is asking the county executive for redress against this unlawful action of the district executive, inasmuch that the prescript No. 2662/87 of the district officer should be shelved..." (35).

The county newspaper dedicated many a page to the discussion of the problem and the writer's opinion is far from flattering: "... it was a major mistake to employ in the second city of Szabolcs a rabbi, whose fluency in the Hungarian language is far from perfect, who is said to be fanatically religious, who abhors the schools which are intended to spread progress and enlightenment, who installed some 200 Talmud pupils, a score of dubious caftaned persons, whose appearance on the streets make us believe that we are in Galitzia" (36).

Things did not evolve smoothly. Further writing in the media indicated that the stopping of this school was just a formality. According to the ordinance No. 1163/1887 the school was indeed closed on its previous location, as controlled daily by the officials: there was no schooling there, but instead the teaching continued in the synagogue (37). The authorities denied that, but the incrimination of the elective board against the district officer is more eloquent than any denial: it was established that the Talmudic school is supported by the community and the Yeshiva maintained by the rabbi (38).

Next year the elective board directed the leadership of the locality to call upon the rabbi and request within 8 days a roster of his pupils, with names and places of domicile. Next came the repeated directive to close the school, which was appealed by the Israelites; the county executive forwarded the decision of the board to the county assembly for a decision. At the same time the chief county officer, Aladár Komoróczy, was asked to make up for the deficiencies in schooling, to work out a legal format to the education, arrange for a proper locale and educational implements, and even after that only 82 pupils were to be admitted. The next step was - as usually - to vigorously request reporting by the rabbi on his students.

In the year 1891 it was news again in the local paper that the illicite school was closed... Jakab Wohlander maintained a school and Izsak Bleich an unauthorized kidergarden, both were ordered to desist from this activity by the district executive and additionally fined 25 forint each. There should be of no surprise that the above patterns will reappear in the years to follow.

Let's evoke some teachers' names from that decade: in 1895, Salamon Grósz, teacher in the Israelite elementary school, 35 years old, born in Tiszaladány (county Szabolcs); in 1898 Ábrahám Grósz, teacher of Talmud, 32 years old, born in Tiszaladány (c. Szabolcs); Ignác Murtzen, teacher of Hebrew, 35 years old, born in Halmi (c. Ugocsa); Jakab Schwartz, teacher, 28 years old, born in Hajdusámson (c. Hajdu); Herman Weinberger, teacher, 26 years old, born in Nagytárkány (c. Zemplén); Lőrincz Weisz, teacher of Talmud, 43 years old, born in Cserepeskenéz (c. Szabolcs); Herman Klein, teacher, 42 years old, born in Agárd (c. Zemplén); József Stern, teacher of Hebrew, 59 years old, born in Kemece (c. Szabolcs); Ignác Jakubovics, teacher of Talmud, 28 years old, born in Puczák; Izrael Bendet, teacher, 29 years old, born in

Bilke (c. Bereg) (40).

The Talmudic schools were frequented by adults too, as proven by some of the names: in 1898, Mózes Hers Landau, aged 24 years, born in Ökörmező (c. Máramaros); in 1900, Ábrahám Friedman, aged 30, born in Kisvárdá (c. Szabolcs); Lázár Jakubovics, aged 28, born in Puczák (Pusztaháza, c. Zemplén) (41). József Patai (1882-1953), the well known writer, poet, translator, and active member of the Zionist movement, has also been a student of the Kisvárdá Yeshiva.

In the winter of the year 1907, the authorities mandated a school furlough due to the scarlet fever, but the local newspaper writes that: "...within Kisvárdá there are some illicite schools, where lameds are teaching 25-30 children in crowded and unsanitary rooms. They do completely ignore the above directive..." (42). We have to acknowledge that by the turn of the century the Talmudic schools have lost much of their draw, although the 1900 census of the declared Jewish population of the country registered 932 Talmudic teachers, furthermore 989 private teachers and educators, as well as 1227 teachers and 760 rabbis, respective substitute rabbis. At least a quarter, but possibly half of the Jewish cult personnel were religious teachers, inasmuch as the rabbinical class as well as the some of the other teaching personnel participated in religious education (43).

Besides the congregational and illicite schools, private schools were also active in the Jewish instruction. Such a school could be founded only by permission of the Ministry of Religion and Cult, and it depended on the presence of a proper building, equipment, of financial means enabling the continuity of the institution, qualified teachers and an appropriate curriculum. If the founder of the school fulfilled all the criteria, the institute gained public perquisites and the certificates received by the students became officially accepted ones.

Such a school was the one owned by Ignác Weissshaus; he later had an important position at the government elementary school and went on to become principal of the industrial apprentice school. His school was established in the Csillag street, and functioned until the year 1874. On the occasion of his retirement in 1911, these years were described by a colleague as: " 42 years ago I.W. had opened a private school. At the time that was the first school in Kisvárdá headed by a certified teacher. Due to his efforts, in time it became a communal school and later he achieved a conversion to a governmental one.... He, harking to his persuasions, propagated the Hungarian language, and implanted into the hearts of the children in his care, the love of the fatherland..." (44). This quotation is a testimony of the role played by the school in the Jewish assimilation. About I.W. it should be further mentioned, that for a time he worked as the secretary of the Jewish community.

In the year 1887 Ignác Feingold, a Jewish teacher from Kisvárdá, applied to the administrative authorities for a permission to establish a school. His application was rejected, he turned to the ministry, who referred the matter back to the county. Here the Kisvárdá decision was reconfirmed with the words: "... there is no need for a private school in Kisvárdá because of the existence of successfully functioning communal Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Protestant congregational schools. If it were, than the Israelite community of Kisvárdá could constitute a congregational school, that could satisfy the up to-date educational requirements " (45).

Within a couple of weeks, based on the excellent certificates presented, as well as letters of support from the board of directors of the Nyiregyháza High School, the school supervisor of

Zemplén County and István Zalay parliamentary deputy, the ministry finally gave its approval. They hoped that due to the favorable reaction "this new school will lead to the cessation of the sorry circumstances in Kisvárdá, that were created by the existence of the many illegitimate and Talmud schools, entailing the intervention of the authorities" (46).

In the year 1888, two male and one female teacher were schooling 26 boys and 14 girls at Feingold's. In addition to the elementary school curriculum, they were teaching matters related to business as well as German and French languages. The Feingold school closed in 1891, and its place was taken by a private school for girls only, managed by Soma Krausz and his wife Katika Frank. They were pedagogues in the recently closed private school. In the Krausz - later changed to the Hungarian sounding Kovács - school: "... in addition to the usual topics, the instruction by certified teachers comprises the German and French languages, the piano as well as all patterns of needlework. Live-in pupils will benefit not only from full board and family instruction, but they will enjoy close supervision and supplementary instruction. Their moral and spiritual development will be painstakingly promoted" (47).

As of the year 1901, they were entitled to manage not only the elementary grades, but public school classes too. This private institution received communal support starting only in the year 1905, and only in 1908 did the government offer an assistance of 600 korona. At the start the school was located in the Szeifrid house in the Szent László street, later it relocated to the nearby Bodisz building, and moved to its final place only in 1895. The number of pupils, including the elementary graders, was about 60-65 a year. Numerous prominent ladies of Kisvárdá were taught by the excellent pedagogues, but the establishing of the state public school of girls in 1911, sealed the fate of the Kovács educational institution. By the year 1914-15 they did not admit further pupils.

Apparently somebody felt that private education is still warranted. Kornélia Füredi, born in Kisvárdá, asked for and in January of 1915 was granted the right to open a public school.

The Jews in the state schooling.

We shall have a look at the basic educational system, typified by the communal, respective state schooling. Here we find the least indices of the Jews as Jewry, in the different ranks of those institutions the existence of different congregations is signaled only by the presence of the religious instructors. Nevertheless the role of the state schooling is defining for the education of the Jews, despite the fact that here they were taught not as Jews but as Hungarians.

The communal and state elementary school.

The communal elementary school of Kisvárdá opened with 91 pupils in the year 1874. The congregational division was the following: 22 Roman Catholics, 8 Greek Catholics, 8 Protestants and 53 Israelites. It is evident that despite constituting only about 29% of the general population, the Jews in the school represented 58.24% of the pupils. The school had 2 teachers; János Ács and the previously mentioned Ignác Weissshaus. The name of the first religious teacher was Izsák Weinberger (48).

Illustration on page 97: part of the 1874-75 year bulletin of the Kisvárdá communal elementary school.

The Jews did participate not only in the instruction, but influential individuals were quite active in managing the affairs of the school.

Members of the school board for the year 1875 were: Rudolf Hrabovszky, Menyhért Harsányi, Imre Bartha, János Bacsó, Ignác Berger, Samu Grünwald, Dr. Bernáth Rosenblüth, Dr. Miksa Reisman, Ignác Weinberger, Lajos Friedman (49). According to the 1880-81 bulletin, the school had 271 pupils, out of which 45-45 were Roman Catholic and Lutheran (16.6-16.6%), 3 Greek Catholics (1,1%) and 178 of Mosaic persuasion (65.6%).

In the year 1887, it is reported in conjunction with the Talmud-Thora school: "In the school year 1886-87, in the state elementary school, there were 374 pupils, out of which 258 were of the Mosaic persuasion". Proportionally that is 68.98% (50). In the school-year 1891-92, 456 pupils were registered in the elementary school, out of which 111 were Roman Catholics, 19 Greek Catholics, 104 Protestants and 222 Israelites (51). This meant that 48,68 % of the pupils were from the Israelite congregation.

The above figures are convincingly proving that the members of this congregation were educating their children in a proportion far superior to their percentage in society. This is valid even if one is accepting the fact that pupils may also have been from outlying localities.

The probability of the above may be considered, even if we don't think that the number of the outsiders was high. Added to this is the possibility that the outsiders were also coming from different congregations. If that is so, than the statement considering the Jews of Kisvárda, was not to be modified by the potential presence of outsider Jews.

In the school-year 1892-93, there were 117 Roman Catholic, 25 Greek Catholic, 107 Protestant and 193 Israelite pupils in the state elementary school (52). In the 1893-94 period, out of the 457 registered pupils, the congregational distribution was as follows: 128 Roman Catholic, 28 Greek Catholic, Protestants 114 and 188 Israelites (53).

The following figures will visualize the available elementary grade schooling in the county for the school-year 1910-11: 11 state elementary schools, 31 communal elementary schools, 79 Roman Catholic, 44 Greek Catholic, 117 Protestant, 26 Lutheran 16 Israelite, 4 estate and 2 private schools (54).

The number of those bound for schooling was distributed as follows in the different schools in the specified years:

School	1914	1931	1935	1936	1941
State	680	828	809	821	650
Roman Catholic	179	413	288	302	more than 200
Greek Catholic	150	208	193	140	379
Protestant	130	143	295	211	392
Israelite	162	309			355

The state public school for girls started its educational activity in Kisvárda in the year 1911. This institution was less important than the high school in the schooling of the Jewish intellectuals, despite the fact that many young Israelites were taught there too. It is important to emphasize that, compared to the high school, the events of the late 1930-s had less impact here. The number

and proportion of the Jews was decreasing here too, but in a far less dramatic manner than in the high school. The year of the deportation was an obvious exception.

School-year	Roman Cath.	Greek Cath.	Lutheran	Protestant.	Israelite.	Total
1923-24	86	16	2	74		
1930-31	20	1	2	86	57	166
1932-33	9	2	4	67	69	151
1934-35	8	-	4	68	91	172
1936-37	4	-	4	94	92	194
1937-38	8	-	5	120	101	234
1938-39	7	3	4	114	89	217
1939-40	7	8	3	113	71	202
1940-41	17	9	2	129	68	225
1941-42	15	13	2	152	58	240
1942-43	15	7	2	182	45	252
1943-44	17	10	3	220	44	294
1944-45	13	10	-	119	1	145
1945-46	17	9	1	159	4	194
1946-47	34	14	1	153	3	206

In any case it should be mentioned as a fact that the Roman Catholic public school for girls run by the Order of St. Ursula had Israelite pupils too. During the unsettled years the congregational proportion of the registered pupils was the following:

grade	1	grade	2	grade	3	grade	4
1937-38 school-year	Roman Catholic	16	20	22	16	Greek Catholic	7
	1	1939-40 school-year	Roman Catholic	31	20	18	16
	1		Protestant	2	4	6	4
	1		Israelite	2	-	-	-
	1	1940-41 school-year	Roman Catholic	35	26	2	13
	1		Greek Catholic	11	5	7	5
	1		Protestant	3	1	5	7
	1		Israelite	1	3	-	-

One of the main purposes of the high school and college education was to replicate the middle class and the upper social rosters. The secondary differentiating particulars like religion, designated the social standing of the individual even more than his professional-economic status. Keeping this in mind, let's have a look at the situation in Kisvárda.

The high school was established in 1911, and in the first school-year 121 pupils passed the examination: out of these 36 were Israelites. The following table will show the congregational distribution of the pupils until the year 1920.

School-year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Lutheran	Protestant	Israelite	Total
1911-12	23	20	14			
1912-13	34	19	1	50	62	166
1913-14	49	28	2	68	98	245
1914-15	59	30	3	86	121	299
1915-16	65	26	2	91	131	315
1916-17	65	20	4	93	130	312
1917-18	68	21	3	86	140	318
1918-19	62	12	6	92	159	331
1919-20	80	15	2	93	145	335

Starting with the year 1920, there was a different political and economical mood in Hungarian society. anti-Semitism was far more intensive in the next decades than in the previous eras (excepting the period of the Tiszaeszlár trial).

The decree 25 from the year 1920 stated that the number of university students from national and ethnic minorities, must be proportional to their percentage in the national population and should reach at least nine tenths of it. This was initiated in order to provide opportunities to the Hungarians crowding in from the lost territories and it resulted mostly in driving away the Jews from higher education. The law was amended later, but it did effect decisively the further fate of the Jewish intellectuals. Let's have a look at the congregational distribution of the high school pupils!

School-year	Roman Catholics	Greek Catholics	Lutherans	Protestants	Israelites	Total
1920-21	74	18	4	123	118	337
1921-22	73	19	4	105	117	318
1922-23	91	26	6	107	113	343
1923-24	115	36	6	122	98	377
1924-25	135	46	4	152	110	447
1925-26	142	42	5	154	95	438
1926-27	141	43	3	180	85	452
1927-28	145	46	4	194	73	462
1928-29	144	50	2	215	72	483
1929-30	169	59	2	218	68	516

In the school-year 1919-20, the Jews made out 43.28% of the pupils. As a result of the above mentioned decree, and conceivably following the Trianon decision (*d*) that proportion changed significantly. The Trianon decision excluded potential students from the lost territories. All this can be measured checking the congregational proportion of the high school pupils in the 1930-s. I did not include other religions, nor the proportion of the Lutherans; the others may be minimal figures and the Lutherans even if they are marked, are insignificant in number compared to the others.

School-year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Protestant	Israelite	Lutheran	Total
1930-31	170	72	216	82	4	544
1931-32	175	69	220	85	4	535
1932-33	186	59	198	84	2	531
1933-34	168	57	198	69	4	497
1934-35	158	60	181	70	5	474
1935-36	145	58	193	60	5	470
1936-37	133	64	200	63	3	463
1937-38	144	73	204	60	4	485
1938-39	147	61	204	47	4	464

The charts display an unequivocal decrease in the number of Jews, not only in comparison with the previous period, but even within the scrutinized time-span: the number of Jews ebbed from 15 to 10% in the local high school. This was to be lowered further, as another factor was changing the schooling of the Jews.

Starting with the fall of 1939, the number and percentage of Jewish students displays further shrinking, following the introduction a 6% 'numerus clausus' (*e*) in the Bessenyei high school. This was to be experienced by those who were to be admitted in the first grade, while those who had already started their studies were unaffected. The data are as follows:

School-year	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Protestant	Israelite	Lutheran	Total
1939-40	147	61	204	47	4	464

----- 1939-40 151 58 217 38 2 466 32.4%
 12.4% 46.5% 8.1% 1940-41 141 78 184 25 4 432 32.6% 18% 42.5% 5.7% 1941-42 159 69 112
 23 3 366 43.4% 18.8% 30.6% 6.2% 1942-43 163 64 212 18 1 458 35.5% 13.9% 46.2% 3.9%
 1943-44 175 83 228 18 1 506 34.5% 16.4% 45% 3.5% -----

In the year 1941 there were 3770 Jews in Kisvárda, 25.5% of the population, but in the high school there were represented with only 6%. The school bulletin dealing with the examinations in the year 1943-44, gives a discreet hint about the actual situation of the Jews: "Amongst the 35 pupils who showed up for the examination, István Walfish could not be present, he was not able to leave his forced domicile, as designated by the authorities" (56).

The segregation was followed by horrific situations, affecting even the Jews who were in the teachers' ranks. At 4 o'clock in the morning on June 4, 1944, the Gestapo dragged away to an unknown location an 'exempted' (*f*) teacher, Jenő Práger. He was in his 34-th year of teaching, 29 of which was spent working in the high school. Sándor Schück, the religious teacher of the school was among those deported; he, like István Hollós sen. became a victim of fascism. A memorial tablet on the wall of the high school is recalling their tragic fate. About the family there is the recollection from the year 1947 of Julianna M.Szlávik, a nun from the local St. Ursula nunnery: "Do you remember Sárka Hollos? The whole family was taken away on Whitsun 1944, except for Pista, who was in the forced labor camp. None has returned! It is believed that she did not want to part from her mother and sick little sister, and volunteered to join them into the gas chambers. Is it true? I don't know! But one thing is for sure, if she had indeed died, the Holy Virgin will lay out a beautiful paradise in the other world for her" (57).

About the high school it has to be noted that a portion of the pupils, in general half of them, were not from Kisvárda. For example in the school-year 1935-36, out of the 470 pupils, 224 were locals, 202 were from other localities in the county, 35 from other counties and 9 came from the 'occupied territories' (*g*). The statistical data do not give information on the religion and proportional representation of those hailing from other localities. Presumably, these unknown figures would alter only the tally but not the proportionality, even if considering merely the Kisvárda numbers.

Illustration page 103: The György Bessenyei realgymnasium in the years 1910.

As a final comment let's mention that since 1885, there was a school of apprentices in Kisvárda. There is ample material concerning that, but it is mostly irrelevant to the present study. An example would be the bulletin of the apprentice-school from the year 1889-90, reporting that 149 individuals have registered for that school-year, out of which 11 did graduate during the school-year and 18 apprentices have quit. The residual 120 individuals are divided along the congregational line as follows: 29 Roman Catholics, 6 Greek Catholics, 36 Protestants and 49 of the Mosaic persuasion (49).

In the 1926-27 school year, the pupils registered for the I/C class had the following congregational distribution: 20 Protestants, 13 Catholics, 11 Israelites and 4 Greek Catholics. In that year 341 individuals apprenticed for a trade and 35 for commerce. Out of the total of 376 apprentices there were 90 Israelites, a total of 24% (60). Mention has to be made of the fact that at the time only boys were admitted to this kind of training, and also the fact that the favorable

reputation of the tradesmen and merchants of Kisvárda was for sure linked to that educational institution. But more about that in the next chapter.

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G l o s s a r y:

a/. Joseph II: (reigned 1778-1788), son and successor of the Empress Maria Theresa. He believed in liberal autocracy, he was the first ruler to accord partial civic rights to his Jewish subjects.

b/. The Romanian occupation: The short-lived communist-ruled Soviet government of Hungary was crushed in 1919 when Romanian troops temporarily occupied most of the country.

c/. Galicia was the Northeastern province of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a territory acquired from Poland when that country was dismembered in the 18-th century. It was a poor area, teeming with orthodox and Hassidic Jews, who continuously migrated westwards, towards the more prosperous and civilized provinces of the empire. This mass movement of ‘Galician’ Jews always contributed to heightened anti-Semitism.

d/. The Trianon decision: World War I was ended by the Treaty of Versailles. The chapter of the peace treaty that concerned Hungary was called Trianon after the location of the palace and the Hungarians called it decision because it was imposed on them. It significantly reduced the territory of prewar Hungary, giving away to neighboring countries large segments of land that had a mixture of Hungarian and other nationalities.

e/. Numerus clausus was one of the legal restrictions directed against Hungarian Jews: it limited to 6% the allowable percentage of Jewish students in educational institutions. In later instances this became ‘numerus nullus’, which meant total exclusion of Jews from the educational process.

f/. The tough and rigorous laws restricting the social, economical and legal status of the Jews did allow for a number of exemptions: highly decorated officers from World War I as well as war veterans who were incapacitated by grievous injuries. In practice these exemptions were often ignored or overlooked.

g/. Provinces lost after the Trianon decision to neighboring states (Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, even Austria) were considered ‘occupied territories’.

VIII.

The role of the Jews in the Kisvárda economy.

It was a perennial ‘indictment’ of the Jews that their share in the economy of the country is way out of proportion to their actual numbers. In this chapter we will try to show how difficult the road to this ‘exceeding quota’ was, moreover how and where in the economy did the Jews engage_ä_, either as individuals or in groups.

The Jews in the 18th century, and at the turn of the 19th century.

The position and possibilities of the Jews in the economy were determined essentially by the laws that banned them from most pursuits, thus directing them towards certain orientations. The most important of these prohibitions was that of land ownership. During the 17th century, there were repeated proscriptions on gentry land-title, tariff agency or tenancy.

Even the first data on Jews in Kisvárda substantiates that they were engaged in trade. As previously mentioned, an official of the fortress bought iron from a Jew in 1508. This won’t let us assert that there were Jewish merchants in the 16th century township; most probably it was a casual business, and the person involved was an itinerant Jewish peddler. This can be stated for

sure, as all later registrations applied mostly to those Jews who were traditionally connected to labour in the fields.

The gentry, accruing farming land, started from the end of the 17th century to use the Jews for their own purposes, offering in exchange a degree of protection to those 'Judeos' who settled on their estates. This mode continued even later, the Viennese court could not halt it; they tried to enforce their resolve and legal influence, with the so-called tolerance levy in the year 1749.

From the middle of the 18th century, we have more and more data on the presence of the Jewish tenants. In the year 1742, 12 families were registered in the district as lessees. In the year 1745, the names of the Jewish tenants for the landowners Teleki, Farkas and Krucsay are known: they were Michael Szakács, Csoba Caisbersa and Michael Keller (1).

The Jews, settling in, were a progressive factor in the existence of the county and the township of Kisvárdá. Being the income-generating tenants of the landlords, they needed to introduce a capitalist type management and commerce on the gentry estates back in the 18th century. At the beginning the levy-paying Jews were registered together with other categories of taxpayers (armalists, Greeks, innkeepers, renters). With the passing of time the number of the Jews expanded, and they were registered on separate rolls. The leases became so profitable to the landlords that they increasingly used the Jews as tenants, not only for land, but also for pubs, breweries, brandy-sills and even for animal slaughter. Gradually Jewish tenants appeared in almost all localities. The lease-contracts were drawn up usually for 1-2 years, and with the passing of time we find additional names on the agreements.

In the year 1753 there were 5 lessees in Kisvárdá, in 1757 four. The 1770 census and tax-registration provides a good opportunity to better scrutinize the field of action of the local Jews.

In the Kisvárdá district most of them earned their 'taxables' as servants (35 individuals), innkeepers (23 individuals) and brandy-distillers (20 individuals); another 6 are mentioned as traders (2). In Kisvárdá proper, Jews have been allowed on the following estates: Márton Krucsay, Count Gerhardt Vandernath, Miklós Jósa, the baroness József Horváth, Mrs. János Teleki and László Sennyei.

Out of the previously mentioned nine levy-paying Jewish families, in six instances one finds the word educillator in the column of the trade, meaning mostly server of wine, respective inn-keeper. One of them figured also as sartor - hoer.

There are data on the contractual situation too, as we find written for Simeon Jakobovics: "Educillator coventionatus Baronis Jos. Horvath". It is after all surprising that we don't find amongst the levy-payers the business of merchant (mercator), a trade considered so typical for Jews (3). In the columns referring to Mojses Farkas and Absolon Hersli, we find the word arendator, thus tracing the leases. Looking at the levies, let's present the register of the categories and amounts of taxes paid

In cassam domesticam	Cassam tollerantiatem	household tax	tolerance tax	other	Total	Forint
Forint	Kr.	Forint	Forint	Kr.	-----	-----
-----	1/.	5	4	16	8	17
-----	2/.	15	15	-	-	30
-----	3/.	5	5	-	24	34
-----	4/.	30	-	-	900	930
-----	5/.	4	-	30	-	4
-----	6/.	3	5	-	30	38
-----	7/.	5	1	-	16	22
-----	8/.	3	2	-	16	21
-----	9/.	20	13	-	50	83

The category of other, indicates the amounts paid to the local authorities and the landowner. According to the above figures Absolon Herskovics, the Judeus taken in by Gerhardi Vandernath, paid by far the largest amount. As such his income, as well as his taxes, must have been of diverse sorts.

The statewide data are indicating that about one third of the Jews were the indigent workers and beggars. The Jews were forbidden to employ Christian servants, as such the better-off Jews could and did employ as workers their destitute co-religionaires. This explains the 11 Judeus relatives and auxiliary family-members (famuli) found in the 1770 Kisvárdá registry of the Jewish households.

As previously mentioned the Jews settled in Kisvárdá by permission of the Eszterházys'. On their local estates in the year 1778, Josephus Farkas had leased 200 Pozsonyi measures and Josephus Salamon Lebb 600 Pozsonyi measures (4).

The potential combination of land-tenancy with other income-generating leases is well illustrated by the text of following contract: " The undersigned hereby acknowledges: I took in lease for three years from the Honorable and Notable Krisztina Krucsay de Nádffö, the widow of the deceased Honorable Baron József Hórváth, three Inns in the Noble county of Szabolcs, as well as the Puszta inn, together with the dry mill and the 2 meadows and lands to be designated, all under the following Conditions;

Primo, I oblige myself to lay down one hundred German forints for the first year

Secundo, for the second year to lay down one hundred at the Fair of Várda, the rest of the sum to be paid in Angaria (a).

Tertio, if the present contract is changed by me, I am obliged to lay down a vinculum (b) of twenty gold pieces. .

Kvarto, if throughout the present lease, damages were caused by my lack of taking care, I will be obliged to refund all of that, from my own property; for the greater assurance I hereby subscribed my avowed letter with my own handwriting. April 14, 1779" (5).

The census from the year 1785 is already evidencing professionals amongst the Jews in Kisvárdá. There is a tax-roll offering some data on property holdings too.

Name	For the amount of the lease.	No. of oxen.	No. of cattle	-----
-----				Mojzes Farkas 100 - 2
Mojzes 15 - -	Josephus Salamon 200	3 2	Josephus Aron - - -	Lebli Hers 20 - - Josephus Lebli 24
1 - Lebli Joseph 40 - 1	Lebli Simon - - -	-----		-----

The above named individuals have paid, respective have not not paid, the following amounts as tolerance-tax: (6)

1872 1783 1784 1785 Total Arrears. Rh. Kr. Rh. Kr. Rh. Kr. Rh. Kr. Rh. Kr. Rh. Kr. -----

-----1/. 70 - 47 40
 47 40 47 40 70 - 143 - 2/. 4 12 3 48 3 48 3 48 4 12 11 24 3/. 32 - 22 20 22 20 22 20 32 - 64 - 4/. 4
 - 3 40 3 40 3 40 - - 15 - 5/. 6 18 5 12 5 12 5 12 6 18 15 36 6/. 6 18 5 12 5 12 5 12 6 18 15 36 7/.
 38 - 19 40 19 40 19 40 20 - 67 - 8/. 4 7 3 45 3 45 3 44 4 7 11 14 -----

It is worth while to note that although the list was meant to register the number of horses too, the Jews in Kisvárda owned none. But this was also true for the non-Jewish people, except perhaps the more notable landowners, but their horses weren't kept for agricultural purposes either. The column "educillator" stayed empty for the locality proper.

On the occasion of the 1797 insurrectional subsidium we can already find well to-do Jews. One of them had an income between 451-700 forint, and the Segy Saly Judeus notation is evidence that it is a Jewish citizen and not an ancestral gentry. The same must be true in the case of the two Farkas Judeus, noted as possessors of median income. The contributions they had offered, were surely intended to enhance their stand in society (7).

A registry from the year 1801, lists the clerks and servants of the Eszterházy estate, where we find the name of Moyses Salamon (8). It is noted that he is an immigrant, but there is no mention of his occupation - unlike for the other non-Jewish employees - only that he is a Judeus.

In the following year there was another registry of the Kisvárda estate, and it shows that besides 'the hides gatherer Jew' and 'the buttonmaker Jew', the Jew Sámson, as well as the Jew Mojzes Szabo dwelled on the property. They have inhabited buildings with a more solid construction, the house of the Jew Sámson was built from 8000 unburnt bricks and the same amount of brick. The valuation of the unburnt brick was 3 Rhine Forint per thousand, while the brick was valued at 5 Forint (9).

The commercial élan was already noticeable amongst the local Jews. In a statement on a witness interrogation from the year 1782 we find: "...Is it true that due to the decay of the Kisvárda fortress, its lumber and stones are hewed and cartered away without any restriction by Jews and anybody else..."(10).

In the year 1805, the following was recorded in connection with an old Protestant church: "At that stage the Church or abode was empty of seats, but it was a timeworn building, and its lumber was sold for 70 Forints to the Jews..."(11).

This buying, selling, bartering, intermediating practice stayed on as something typical for the Jews. The 1848 census of the Jews will be further useful to analyze the components of the professional situation of the Jews. I will present the data in the separate divisions of the economical activity.

The capitalizing of the agriculture in Kisvárda and the Jews.

As of the second half of the 18th century, the productive gentry of Hungary tried to develop profitable farms. At the same time they tried to enlist the help of the Jewish proficiency in commerce - mostly in the marketing of the produce; in order to foster this, they favored the settlement of Jews on their estates. In Kisvárda the first such occurrence was on the Eszterházy estate, and soon the other squires followed suit.

The Jews were also willing to assume the charter of the so-called minor royal leases (pub, butchery, etc.). Some of these royal tenancies were occasionally linked to property. These were the early Jewish land-leases. However the commencement of real capitalization and investment was linked to a change in the laws that had restricted the usage and ownership of land by Jews.

In the year 1783 the emperor Joseph II granted them the lease of estates, but in 1818 the emperor Francis I banned it anew, although that decree was revoked in 1819 and within twenty years it was dropped once for all.

As the 18th century turned into the 19th, the gentry-estates were often leased to Jews - in lieu of the debt. In the first half of the 19th century: "...however the lease-farming was not marked by any innovation or capital investment...these forerunners of capitalist tenancies aimed mostly to exploit the land as fast and profitable as possible" (12).

According to the statistics of Elek Fényes, around the 1840-s the following squires owned estates in Kisvárdá: the dukes Eszterházy, the families Barkóczy, Czóbel, Detrik, Elek, Eördögh, Erös, Farkas, Fekete, Ferencz, Filep, baron Horváth, Irinyi, Kastal, Szerencsy, Szögyényi, Szöllösi and Vay (13).

After the abolishing of serfdom, huge estates were left without a work-force; on the other hand there were peasants cluttered on land-parcels as well as landless agricultural workers. By the 1850-s the changes in land-ownership were increasing as well as the number of leases. Most of the tenants were the earlier active Jewish agricultural merchants and bankers. In the 1870-s, the emancipation of the Jews, as well as the freedom to acquire land had stabilized the tenancy system; it had enabled the long-term investing. In the past, leasing used to be first step of the owner loosing his estate. The Jews functioned as innovators in organizing and engendering the markets.

The existing ideas emerged as reality in Kisvárdá. In the year 1857 there was a registry on the leases and local land divisions of the Eszterházy estates in Kisvárdá. Here we encounter the names of Mozes Krajnik, Farkas Spitz, Ferenc Grósz, Löbel Lechtstein and Ferenc Klein, all of them Israelites (14).

As of the year 1781, Wahrman Mór became the owner of the former Eszterházy lands in Kisvárdá and the leaser was Zsigmond Láng. Later the land was inherited by his daughter Reneé Wahrman (married to Izidor Krausz and in second marriage to Béla Fáy), and after 1906 Mrs. Samu Kun (15). The ownership registry of the year 1893 showed the following ones as holding more than 100 'Kat. hold' (16) (c).

Name	Arable	Garden	Meadow	Pasture	Vineyard	Reeds	Unusable	
-----								D.Eisenberger
-----								221 - 75 27 - 48
5 Géza Farkas	127	1	61	12	4	-	10	Mrs. Lajos Farkas
-----								203 - 39 - - - 4 Béla Ferenczy
-----								575 - 112 42 -
- 8 R. Hrabovszky	73	-	63	-	-	-	1	Mrs. István Irinyi
-----								58 - 42 - - - 1 István Kostal
-----								89 - 70 3 - 24 -
Béla Liptay	108	-	91	-	-	-	1	Mór Wahrman
-----								1451 2 353 672 - 159 11
-----								-----

The above data are showing that out the estates larger that 100 'hold', the Jews owned 3024 "Kat. hold", while the non-Jews owned 1934 'hold'. Furthermore it has to be noted that while the

over 3000 'hold' was owned by two individuals, the other almost 2000 'hold' was divided amongst seven individuals. It proves that by the end of the 19-th century, land-ownership was undergoing concentration and centralization.

The leases are noted positively in the local press: "One of the fulcrums of the economic enhancement was the fact that a significant part of the estates in our area are leased... the evolvement of the credit demands are promoted by the progress of the tenancies" (17). " ...the rents increased with about 20% in the last 3-4 years, likewise it seems that they are - sometimes unreasonably - further on the increase. Ultimately the lessee.....wants a profit "(18).

Notwithstanding the definite advantages of the lease-system, it was unavoidable that the changes brought harm to some. The 'injured' ones were mobilized by the agrarian-socialist movements stirring around the end of the century and noticeable locally too. The following is taken among others, from the grievances recorded in the minutes of Kisvárdai Agrarian Association: " a certain lessee took in our area a lease with 7 forints a 'hold'. After a while he managed to enthrall onto the farmers of Kisvárdai half of that parcel with 12 forint per 'hold'; we request its no-exemption bidding...

There is another side, maybe the major one, to these fraudulent procedures, like the way Herman Reizner, a local lumber-merchant, looked upon enviously on the fact that the local agrarian society used peacefully for 24 years the land given to, by his Grace the duke of Eszterhazy. He connived with his base procedures, until with the help of his hirelings he managed to take over our land....the land was not yet in his hands when he told the farmers of Kisvárdai that when he will own it, they will have to come hat in hand to him for the third part lease (*d*)... and he promised that it will take three farmers to own one overcoat and six of them a pair of boots...." (19).

This Herman Reizman is the same person who was mentioned in a previous instance in a far more positive manner.

In the year 1911, the following was the roster of the estates, land-owners and lessees (the owners are printed in large letters):

Name	Total area	Net Kat.	Income	-----	

Widow of Endre Beretvás	Herman Reizman	1029	5903	K.	
assoc. of the widow of Lajos Farkas	245	1657	K.	Jenő Herskovits	
	Herman Reizman	489	4661	K.	
Guidó Hrabovszky	József Kerekes	István Diner	166	848	K.
The township	Herman Reizman	607	2638	K.	
Béla Liptay	194	1208	K.	Herman Reizman	
	488	3298	K.	László Szmeccányi	
	175	1204	K.	-----	

2573 'Kat. hold' were noticeably in the hands of one Jewish owner and lessee, namely Herman Reizman. The other lessee, István Diner, was a converted Jew, and of interest are mostly his financial matters. 1369 'Kat. hold' was in non-Jewish hands, parceled onto five holders. Looking at state-wide data, we can find a significant buildup of Jewish ownership and tenancy. 7% of the tenants managing estates larger than 1000 'hold' were Israelites. Their percentage in managing over 100 'hold' is largest in the area east of the Tisza, mainly in Szabolcs and Zemplén counties. By the year 1910 the percentage of Israelites amongst the large estate-holders

is even more significant: 20.6% for lands over 1000 'hold' and 18,1% for lands 200-1000 'hold' (21).

In the year 1923 the land-reform expropriated 178 'Kat. hold' from Samu Reizman, 180 from Jenő Herskovits and 84 from the heirs of Lajos Reizman.

In the year 1925 the following owned more than 100 'hold': István Diner 108 K.h. Mrs. Lajos Farkas 245 K.h. Zsigmond Fodor 85 K.h. Jenő Herskovits 430 K.h. the township of Kisvárdá 623 K.h. Mrs. István Kopácsy 465 K.h. Mrs. Lajos Reizman and her children 615 K.h. Samu Reizman 444 K.h. and László Szmrecsányi 164 K.h. In the year 1931 Mrs. Farkas and Mrs. Fodor were taken off the registry, while László Kovács and associates were appended with 148 K.h. the widow of Endre Soltész with 120 K.h. and Dr. Lajos Varga with 123 K.h. The tally of properties and their acreage was as follows (22):

The number	Total area	-----
-----	under 1 K. hold	nonarable land 251 79 K.h.
-----	under 1 hold	arable land 1303 412 K.h.
-----	1-5 K. hold	581 1266 K.h.
-----	5-50 K.hold	198 2130 K.h.
-----	50-100 K. hold	4 238 K.h.
-----	100-500 K.hold	8 1516 K.h.
-----	500-1000 K. hold	1 624 K.h.
-----	-----	-----

The Trianon decisions, the conversion of the Jews, as well as the altered agro-economical and political situation induced changes in the state-wide picture too. In the year 1930, the number of Israelites owning more than 1000 'hold' decreased from the 1910 percentage (20.6%) to 9.3%. They represent 35.4% of the over 200 'hold' lessees, and 35.2% of the lessees of over 1000 'hold'. Together with the joint-stock company lands, the percentage is 47.7%. The total percentual figure is lower than it was in 1910 (23).

The restrictions brought by the changes in the general political situation affected the Jewish land-ownership too. An account from the year 1940 tallies 423 Jews as owners, but there is only one significant property, registered to Leó Hajdu and József Hajdu. The 175 'K.hold' and 1510 square fathom property includes 171 'K. hold' and 950 square fathom agricultural land, and the net income is 2433 korona and 53 fillér. In order of size, the next closest ones are lands between 10-20 'hold', the majority won't reach even 10 'hold' (24).

Commerce and the catering business.

Commerce was the most important and conceivably the most typical trade for the Jews. This was likewise enhanced by the pre-1840 restrictions; they could not acquire land, could only exceptionally engage in professional activities and as such were forced to reinvest their accumulated capital in trade. The range of commerce extended from the poor bundle-packing peddler to the well-to-do wholesaler and capitalist entrepreneur. These nuances grew and evolved within one century in Kisvárdá too.

The locality used to be a well-known mercantile center even before the Jews got involved into the local commercial life. People from Bereg, Ung and even Máramaros counties came here to barter household products, handicrafts, mining and lumber-ware for grains (25).

We have previously mentioned the 18th century commercial role of the Jews in connection with the demolition of the fortress and the Protestant church; it is evident that they were skilled in this

type of activity, but they are mentioned mostly as peddlers and itinerant traders. This was a transitory form of commerce. The 1770 census of the Jews in Kisvárdá does not indicate one single individual making a living from commerce. Most of the Jewish immigrants came into the country without any financial underpinning and gradually they took over the role of the Greeks. On the previously mentioned occasion of the early 19th century Eszterházy estate report, the scribe is already marking a hide-gathering Jew.

The first alluded Jewish-owned shop in Kisvárdá was founded in 1802 by the Klein family. The store, known under the name of 'Sárga bolt' was located on the Szent László street, and became the oldest emporium within the same family ownership in the locality. In the year 1909: "The commercial business known under the name of 'Sárga bolt' existing for 107 years in our township, was graced with a rare distinction. As a recognition of their merits in promoting the national products, the leadership of the National Industrial Board presented to them the bronze medal of the association; it will be proffered ceremonially on June 6" (26).

In the year 1918, there was a jubilee of another business, almost as old as the above one; "The lumberyard of Herman Reizman celebrated on July 24 its 100-th birthday. It coincided with the 70 years anniversary of Herman Reizner taking over personally the business from its founder. The present owner of the company, Samu Reizner, joined it 35 years ago, and together with his since deceased brother Lajos, they uplifted the enterprise to European standards" (27).

Illustration on page 113: The famous Sárga bolt.

Midway in the 19th century, the roaming merchants stayed on as dominant features, so much so, that in a community exceeding two thousand souls, regular shops barely existed. Here are some remembrances by a contemporary person: "... about forty years ago, there may have been only 3-4 shops in Várda: the Kondor store, the Kocska store, the Fácsi store and the Sárga store. These 4 outlets all but shaped Kisvárdá as a shopping center, because in a radius of 3-4 miles, no village had even one store, the people came from far away to the township for shopping. Within the stretch of 40 years, these 4 stores multiplied to fifteen times as much" (28). The state fairs attracted people from far away. In the year 1845, the dates of these swarms were: March 17, June 15, September 1 and November 5. Later on, there were 6 fairs in a year.

The 1848 census cites 28 merchants and 1 helper; there is no reference to what they traded with, and most probably they were not shopkeepers, but transient, itinerant peddlers. In other instances it is noted what kind of merchandise they were offering: there were 3 sellers of hides, 1 dealer in pottery, 4 in hemp, 3 ribbon-sellers, 1 pipe-dealer, 2 salt and 1 ironmonger. 1 seller of beverages and 5 brandy-merchants can also be considered as part of the merchant-caterer group (29). A total of about 50 individuals made a living in that division, a large proportion of the barely over 700 local souls and proportionally even more of the actively working ones.

The development of the local shopkeepers network took place in the second half of the 19th century. The stores, mostly owned by Jews, were concentrated in the center of the locality. In the year 1867 it was noted: "...in the center of Kisvárdá, there is no place for a gendarmes' barracks, because it's mostly stores...." (30). That was the era of unbridled capitalism with constant changes, and it was evident in the locality too. It was the time when the best known restaurant came up; it was leased and owned by a Jew. Originally it was not a spontaneous enterprise, but it continued to function for different purposes until 1969. This was the Great Restaurant. Notes in

the press about the inception: "In Kisvárdá, the owner of the restaurant 'To the Stag' started nonconformist lease-principle ideas, in addition to the political particulars of the spirits retailing; consequently the local estate-owners asked the lessee David Eisenberger to build a Great Restaurant suitable to the progress in Kisvárdá" (31).

Illustration on page 114: The Eisenberger, later Róth (Radnai) inn and restaurant.

The roof was raised in the year 1859, but even years later the building was not finalized. As far back as 1841 the above mentioned individual has tried bidding for leases of pubs, mills and fair-duties, but was unsuccessful. We find him in 1844 as a tenant of the pubs Morgó and Epreskert. Other members of this family played later an important role in the economical life of the county seat (32).

Another well-known entrepreneur of that period was Bernáth Weinberger. The following certificate from the year 1866 attests his financial status: "This certificate to B.W. of Kisvárdá, confirms that he is the owner of a well-appointed leather-store valued at 5000 Frt. in Kisvárdá; thus he can be recommended as a boot-maker contractor for the Imp. & Roy. military" (33).

Illustration on page 115: The Berger store.

The civic progress added the merchants who did offer various merchandise to those who catered only to the bare existence. Such an example was Mózes Buxbaum, a bookdealer who had opened a library in Kisvárdá as far back as the years 1855-57, or Ignác Berger, who founded in 1866 a printing-shop, was selling paper, writing-ustensils and books, and offered to the interested readers a lending library with over 4000 tomes.

The advertising pages of the press bear witness to the store launchings, for ex: Grósz and Grünwald opened a rope-store in the Grünwald house, Náthán Spiro an iron and wood furniture store, Simon Rosenblüth a spice and delicatessen store, Soma Grünwald a fashion-store, Endre Altman a store for condiments, miscellaneous items and fashion, and we could continue with many others. Beside the stores that took care of the daily existence, other companies were also born that were connected to the general economy like the consignment ware-house of Bernáth Grósz in the year 1874, where he sold agricultural implements and machinery (34). The railway line that had opened in 1872-73, had extended further prospects to entrepreneurial people, as proven by Simon Friedenstein, who had started in 1873 to offer rail-transportation of merchandise and diverse other materials (35).

The real business for the Jewish buyers of produce and the crop merchants got started when they could transport the commodities on the Budapest-Nyiregyháza-Kisvárdá-Csap-Ungvár rail-line. Kisvárdá became a mercantile center for agricultural produce and distillery of liquors. The Windt and Fisch company became one of the state-wide renowned firms. It was founded by Mihály Széll and Mór Halasi. This establishment known for its buying and storing agricultural produce started its activity in the 1880-s, and continued to fulfill its role well into the second decade of the 20th century.

Illustration on page 116: The Florian Square (at the time the market location) with the building of the Industrial and Commercial Bank.

The Jews were also often the lessees of the communal utilities incomes, and the most important

of these were the usage rights of the fairs. As late as June 2, 1947, the contract designates as lessees Ferenc Károly and Bernát Friedman. B.F. and his spouse Ilona Herskó have had leased this right earlier, back in 1930, for pengő 21500 (36). The feverish founding was always accompanied by the risk of failure and this was true for the Jewish entrepreneurs too. The financial crisis of 1873 was likewise perceived in Kisvárdá. Of the state fair of June 16, it was noted that there were barely any buyers, no cash and no credit by banks. Nobody wanted cattle, there was little corn, and its price was anyway far too high. Money was so scarce that there was hardly a drunk person (37).

Later there are further notices of failure; for example:" The Nyiregyháza court ordered bankruptcy proceedings on the property of the ironmonger company Mór Klein and Co." (38). The number of failures was significantly lower than the accomplishments, although success usually meant only that the person was able to make a living from his store, business or trade.

The shops converged in the center of the locality, and this was not coincidental. The locales were the Serház Street (later called Csillag and subsequently F. Deák St.) and the Market Street (later called Szent László St.). These roadways were the entry way to the center of the township. With the coming of the railroad, the later became the thoroughfare to the so-called Main station; the opening of the Hármasut Station gave again a boost to the Csillag St. since the outward traffic used those roadways too. Anybody who wanted to stay in the competition, tried to get as close as possible to the customer, in fact even wanted to go and meet him. This local confluence was further boosted by the weekly markets that were held in the immediate vicinity, in the narrow Market St.; this remained so even in the second half of the 20-th century. The state fairs - there were six of them - were held in the 80-s in the big market square, close to the station house. The development of the mercantile structure was further abetted by the local ordinances: street booths and even hawking were prohibited. The later was not always effective: "... repeatedly street vendors are dropping by our city, and though unlicensed, they peddle their wares from house to house.... We do have reliable merchants and tradesmen, whose wares and products are guaranteed..." (39).

Here we should mention an oddity: the majority of the tradesmen and merchants of Kisvárdá were Israelites who according to their faith were keeping the Sabbath and refrained from working. This has occasionally caused a certain animosity. In the year 1880 a local citizen complained that on Jewish holidays and even on Saturdays, one can barely find any meat because those engaged in the slaughtering and selling are mostly of the "Mosaic religion"(40). Occasionally it happened that even the markets suffered because of the religious prescriptions: ".... despite the request of our merchandisers to change the date of the local state fair on the 14-th of the curr. month, because it coincides with Jewish holidays, the ministry has refused that; consequently the Jewish merchants stayed totally away from the state fair, causing major harm not only to the Jews, but also to the market..." (41). "Saturday and Sunday our Israelite fellow citizens observed the New Years Day... The Israelite temples were filled to capacity with the devout people. The stores were closed, the commercial activity reflected the holiday of the Israelites" (42).

Illustration on page 117: The Windt and Fisch firm.

For a long time Jews could not own real estate property, commerce provided the only possibilities and the constraints engendered a gain. This is one of the explanations of the widespread expansion. In Kisvárdá this was furthered by the fact that the Jews were the buyers of agricultural produce. They were mobile and knowledgeable about the market, they could well deliver the crop of the land, mainly corn, sugar-beets and potatoes. The growth in agricultural produce and the opening of the railway in 1872-73, further fostered the trade in crops. Storehouses came up near the railway-station, the best known was the Produce and Spirits Repository of Kisvárdá. It was founded in January 1881, with shareholders subscribing 922 shares at 100 Forint apiece. The chairman of the enterprise was the land-owner Béla Liptay, on the board of directors we find the names of Mór Halasi and Gyula Diner, while Miksa Révész and Bernát Zuckermann are mentioned on the supervisory board. Israelites, converted ones, as well as gentiles, they were all cooperating towards a common goal.

On July 28, 1912, a fire on the Herman Reizner farm spread over to the Repository burning it down. The stores contained most of the harvested crops and about 1700 hektoliters of spirits. The conflagration resulted in major losses: the company and the Windt & Fisch firm lost 497740 K., the establishment of József Molnár (despite his name he was an Israelite) 47971 K, Herman Reizman 30916 K., and Adolf Ackersman lost 10500 (that was not insured); the losses were made up by the insurance companies. As a comparison we cite the amount of loss to the 19 workers: 1485 K. (43). The storehouse was rebuilt in 1912.

By the turn of the century Kisvárdá became a regional center, its position further reinforced by its trade activity with the agrarian products. Subsequent to the Trianon decision, Kisvárdá lost most of its absorbing markets, the commercial links to Galitzia were severed. This harmed the local merchants and retailers, but did not impact on the number of people active in the commerce and finances.

The following are the tallies of the merchants and dependents:

	1900	1910	1920	1030	1940						
Merchants	380	4.6%	472	4.7%	552	4.8%	678	4.8%	425	3.2%	
Dependents	642	7.7%	982	9.2%	1203	10.5%	1315	9.3%	525	4.8%	
Total	1022	12.3%	1400	13.9%	1755	15.3%	1315	14.1%	1050	8%	

The people with interest in agriculture and commerce did establish their own organization, the Circle of Farmers and Merchants. The leadership in the year 1927 was composed of: chairman Adolf Radó, co-chairmen Pál Diner, Dr. Ferenc György, Sándor Kálmán, secretary: Dr. Lajos Spitz, keeper of the minutes: Sándor Katona, major domo: Ferenc Kun, cashier: Mór Kellner, comptroller: Béla Pallay, librarian: Imre Kálmán (44). Jewish interests were central to this organization, as they comprised most of the members and the leadership.

On April 28, 1934, at the inception of the local chapter of the OMKE (National Commercial Hungarian Association), it was again the Jewish people who made up most of the leadership and membership. Chairman: Adolf Radó, co-chairmen: Sándor Kálmán, Samu Kun, István Diner, first secretary: Miklos Róth, legal adviser: Dr. Sándor Katona and Ignác Lukács, cashier: Jenő Rosenbaum, keeper of the minutes: Lajos Neuman, members of the board; Dr. Marcell Altman,

Sándor Fried, Ignác Kálmán, Samu Kálmán, Ferenc Kun, Dezsö Elek, József Kundler, József Hartman, Frigyes Kovács, József Kain, Miksa Lefkovic, István Major jun. Dezsö Smilovits, Ignác Prerau, Zoltán Nagy, Dezsö Stark, Dezsö Vadasz, Dr. Miklós Schönwald, Endre Vadkerty, Dávid Friedman, László Halmi, Károly Baráth, Géza Marczy, Andor Kroó (48). In fact it was against this predominant influence, that later on the Kisvárdai chapter of the Baross Association was constituted.

Ferenc Virágh, the prematurely deceased local historian provides a sweeping description of the Kisvárdai merchants: "... the chasm between the educated, culturally exacting business- person and the primitive merchandiser is far wider. The later can be described in just a few words. These grocer-type traders derived in part from the small farmer or artisan, they became sellers on the fringe, carried only a small inventory of daily necessities and their standard of life placed them amongst the rudimentary tradesmen. The other group emerged from the lowest life-style Jews, that will merit cultural consideration only in their next generation. Serious attention though has to be given to the real mercantile people of the township. Some of them are university graduates, there are numerous self-educated cultured people, the general standard is quite satisfactory" (46).

It was this last class, that earned the well respected reputation of the Jewish merchants of Kisvárdai, and the above pronouncement was valid not only for the thirties but for the preceding periods too. This is also proven by the words written on June 27, 1911, on the occasion of the demise of Ignác Weinberger, the founder of a mercantile company in 1853 and one of the best known representatives of the later 19th century commercial life; "... The deceased was despite his old age an enlightened man, he was enthusiastic about the sciences and the arts. He was a founder and on the board of the local Savings Bank, he was a sole person acknowledging the value of science and art far back in the old times. The pioneer of the Kisvárdai public education is no more with us, he moved to a better land..." (47).

Credit establishments.

Next to the dismantling of the ancestral system, the availability of credit played an important role in the capitalization of the agriculture. There was likewise local demand for it. The first financial institute to be founded was the Savings Bank of Kisvárdai in 1869. The basic capital was 120000 korona, the founder and chairman was the lawyer and landowner Rudolf Hrabovszky, but the general manager was the Israelite Mór Halasi. In the year 1900 the total amount of deposits was 2 million korona, the credits 3 million. At the time most of the board members and directors were Jews like: Herman Reizman, Lajos Friedman, Dr. Bernáth Rosenblüth, Ignác Weinberger, Benő Grósz.

A new financial institution was born in Kisvárdai in the year 1886, the Industrial and Commercial Bank. The founders issued 1000 shares with a 200 korona nominal valuation, 100 korona to be deposited (48). The field of activity was to be: loans, depositing and advances, discounting of bills, business of consignment and monetary interest. The chairman was László Pilissy, the general manager Lipót Propper. Members of the board of directors were the merchants Simon Rosenblüth, Farkas Balkányi, Soma Grünwald, Samu Reizman jun. the lawyers Sarvay and Glück, the physician Dr. György Küzmös and the land-owner Gyula Diner (49). In the year 1888 the repr. Balázs Farkas became the chairman. In the year 1890 it became the local agency of the Debrecen chapter of the Hungarian Austrian Bank; they did issue 1000 shares valued at 10 forint

(50).

In the year 1891, the demise of Propper resulted in the election of Gyula Diner as general manager (51). In the year 1892 a new issue of 500 shares valued at 320 korona, raised the capital to 300000 korona and the reserve capital rose to 200000 korona. On the occasion of the 25 years' commemorative celebration of the bank, the followings were penned: "... it is in a premier position as a financial institution not only in Szabolcs county, but likewise in the whole area....Its' progress parallels in many aspects that of the industry, commerce and agriculture of Kisvárdá; in fact it is intreconnected with the growth of the community... The Industrial Bank was the first one to provide loans with installment payments on houses and estate properties" (52).

Illustration on page 120: The building of the Institute for Financial and Commercial Credit.

The function of the banks was thus appraised by the local paper: "Whatever we have in farming, commerce and a little industry, has its might rooted in those two institutions; even more these are the most important conveyor channels to the most potent economic tool - the money. These two financial institutions are the ones that satisfy the wast majority of the credit needs, they are the day-to-day tool of those who are dealing with the lending profession" (53).

In the year 1897 there was another addition to the institutions dealing with money. It was the inception of the Mutual Assistance Society of Kisvárdá. The chairman became Dr. Lipót Vadász (Weinberger), the credit institution launched as a cooperative started with a basic capital of 160000 korona. The goal was to enable the poorer class to save with small weekly payments, and to provide them in need with easy to repay loans. Even those three institutions could not satisfy the credit requirements. On September 3, 1903, was the constituting assembly of the Credit Institute for Economy and Commerce. On that occasion the gathering: "...acknowledged the appointment of the directors by the founders, elected the board of trustees, and approved the basic statutes prsented by the founders. The manager of the new bank is József Fried" (54). Members of the board of directors were: Samu Gyulaházi, Dr. Miklós Werner, Ignác Grósz, Lajos Reizman, Dr. Dániel Zsidai, Dr. László Szmrecsányi (55).

The bank was instituted with a subscription of 1000 shares of 200 korona and started its actual activity on October 5, in the Somogyi house, at No. 32 Szent László Street. In its first year of existence it placed 805000 korona mortgage and instalment loans. By the year 1914, this had increased to 14493 thousand korona. In the year 1905 they increased their basic capital, in 1909 they built headquarters and in 1910 they further raised the 600000 basic capital with an issue of 2000 new shares of 200 korona. With the passage of time, the number of financial institution increased. In the years 1910 and 1927, the composition of the management at certain banks was as follows.

The Savings Bank of Kisvárdá (founded in 1869). In the year 1910 the general manager was: Mór Halasi, directors were Guido Hrabovszky, Adolf Radó, Herman Reizman, Dr. Lipót Vadász, Ignác Weinberger. The leadership in 1927 was: general manager: Mór Halasi, deputy manager: Dr. Gyula Halasi, acting manager: Béla Sümeghy, chief accountant: Ádám Linszter, cashier: Béla Korcham, counsel: Dr. Ferenc György. Members of the board of directors: Dr. Antal Éber general manager MOB Budapest, Adolf Radó wholesale merchant, Miklós Jármy land-owner in Eperjeske, Jenő Eszenyi land-owner in Tornyospálca, Dr. Frigyes Fellner university professor

Budapest, Ödön Groák royal educational superv. MOB chapter director Nyiregyháza, Frigyes Szántó MOB director Budapest, Ferenc Kriston chief engineer, Dr. Miklós Halmi deputy general manager MOB chief adviser Budapest, Béla Greiner MOB director Budapest, Mór Halasi general manager, Dr. Gyula Halasi deputy gen. manager.

Industrial and Commercial Bank of Kisvárdá (established in 1886). General manager: Gyula Diner, deputy general manag. Bernát Zuckerman. Members of the board of directors: Péter Glück, Lajos Kovács, Dr. Vilmos Lukács, Samu Reizman, Mihály Széll, Mór Vadász. In the year 1927 general manager: Gyula Diner, acting managers: Béla Pallai, József A. Gronich, chief accountant: Miklós Roth, accountant: Barna Kövér, counsels: Dr. Sándor György, Dr. László Diner, members of the board of directors: Gyula Diner land-owner, István Diner land-owner, Ferenc Kastaly hon. chief district officer, Dr. Vilmos Lukács physician, Mihály Széll, Mór Vadász wholesale merchants, Ferenc Székely chairman of the Inner City savings bank Bp. Dr. Emil Bihari lawyer, Lajos Timár Bp. Zoltán Némethy, Samu Reizman land-owner.

Credit Institute for Economy and Commerce Ltd.(established 1903). General manager: József Fried, members of the board of directors: Ignác Grósz, Lajos Reizman, Dr. László Szmrecsányi, Samu Weinberger, Dr. Miklos Werner, Dr. Dániel Zsiday. In the year 1927 general manager: Andor Kálmán, manager: József Kundler, vice-manager: Miksa Róth, cashier: Samu Kovács, consel: László Szmrecsányi. Members of the board of directors: Dr. Béla Jármay county governor-chairman, Sándor Kálmán, Zoltán Földes the general manager of the Credit Institute of Miskolc, Dr. Sámuel Fried physician, Dr. József Keller MAH manag. Debrecen, Miklos Preiser MAH manag. Budapest, Dr. László Szmrecsányi land-owner, Dr. Dániel Zsiday land-owner, Endre Pallay land-owner, Bertalan Szalánczy land-owner, Dr. Emil Bihari lawyer.

The Mutual Assistance Society of Kisvárdá, as a cooperative (established 1897). Chairman: Dr. Lipót Vadász, vice-chairmen: Adolf Radó and József Kerekes, members of the board: Benjámin Grósz, Samu Kálmán, Dr. Vilmos Lukács, József Molnár, József Pallay, László Szeifrid, Gyula Szeifrid, Lajos Weisz.

The Popular Bank of Kisvárdá, as a cooperative (established 1908). Chairman: Dr. Ferenc György lawyer, vice-chairmen: Samu Kun and Sámuel Fried merchants, members of the board: József Pollák, Dr. Lajos Spitz, Jenő Barta, Elek Berkovics, Sándor Friss, Emánuel Jakobovics, Béla Szombathi.

The Credit Bank of Kisvárdá Ltd. (established in 1923). In the year 1927 the management was: general manager Dr. Miklos Schönwald, procurist Lajos Ujhelyi chief accountant, counsel: Dr. Sándor Katona. Members of the board: Dezső Vadász wholesale merchant, Dr. József Szilágyi physician, József Kain merchant, Endre Mácza butcher, József Hartman ironmonger, Dr. Miklos Schönwald lawyer, Dr. Sándor Katona lawyer.

The Popular Economic Bank Ltd. (established 1910). In the year 1927 the management was: general manager: Dr. Ferenc György, directors: István Diner, Samu Kun, procurist: Mihály Steiner chief accountant, cashier: Ernő Korchma, counsel: Dr. Sándor György, Dr. Lajos Spitz. Members of the board: István Diner land-owner, Dr. Ferenc György lawyer, Samu Kun merchant, Béla Rochlitz land-owner, Dr. Sándor György lawyer, Béla Diner land-owner, István Kopácsy land-owner.

The Farmers Bank Ltd. (established in 1912). In the year 1927 the management was: general manager: József Molnár, manager of the products section: Károly Molnár, procurist: Bence Loránt, chief accountant: Ede Fischer, Ferenc Stern, cashier: Jenő Lebovits, counsel: Dr. Ignác Lukács, Dr. Sándor Révész. Board of directors: György Orosz de Csicsér imp. & roy. (e) chamberlain, ret. colonel (chairman) Budapest, Adolf Erenreich land-owner Demecser, Mór Fülöp land-owner Nyirkarász, József Molnár land-owner, Géza Halmi land-owner, Károly Molnár land-owner, Sámuel Klein land-owner Ajak, Bernát Moskovitz land-owner Zsurk, Miksa Glanz land-owner Nyirtass, Zoltán Rochlitz land-owner Nagyvarsány, Dr. Ignác Lukács, Dr. Sándor Révész lawyers, Andor Berkovits, Arnold Zuckermann landowners (56).

The above listed names are authoritative proof of the Jewish preeminence in the financial sector of the Kisvárdai economy. The banking institutions' management and their boards had a composition that proved convincingly the overwhelming importance of the credit in agriculture, commerce and industry. It is also evident how influential were the leaders of one institution in other banks too, and what a well organized and resolute crowd (personified not only by the Jews) was directing the development of the Kisvárdai economy.

The number of the banks was changing as were bank managers. In the year 1916 the Savings Bank got a new owner (57), and in the year 1929 the Industrial Bank is absorbing the Farmers Bank, that had operated since 1912 under the leadership of József Molnár. In the year 1927, the position of the deceased Gyula Diner in the Industrial Bank is taken over by István Diner, who was hitherto managing the Popular Economical Bank. Consequently the post of general manager of the Popular Bank is taken over by Dr. Ferenc György (59). In the period between the two world wars, the most significant institutions were the Industrial Bank and the Commercial Credit Bank.

Within the credit institutions section it is worth mentioning that in addition to the local capital, big banks were attracted too. According to an account from the year 1938, the Hungarian General Credit Bank had invested 200000 pengő in the local Commercial and Economic Credit Bank as well as the Hungarian-Italian Bank that had 408000 pengő. The Inner City Savings Bank was cointerested in the local Industrial and Commercial Bank to the tune of 540000 pengő.

Industry and services.

The industrial set-up of the local Jews was, like elsewhere in the provinces, constituted mostly of artisanal industry with 1-2 individuals involved. The previously cited 1848 census of the Jews, will be helpful to demonstrate the industrial branches wherein the Kisvárdai Jews were active during the ascent of capitalism in our country. Here is the description and enumeration of the artisan-craftsmen: 1 window-maker, 1 joiner, 1 gold-smith, 2 tin-smiths', 1 tin-smiths' assistant, 1 tin-smiths' apprentice, 1 tinker, 3 seamstresses, 4 button-makers, 2 bookbinders, 1 bookbinders' apprentice, 1 butcher, 1 baker, 3 pipe-makers, 1 pipe-makers' assistant, 2 pipe-makers apprentices, 1 copper-smith, 1 copper-smiths' assistant, 1 copper-foundryman, 1 hat-maker, 8 cobblers, 3 cobblers' assistants, 6 cobblers' apprentices, 16 tailors, 2 tailors' assistants, 3 tailors' apprentices, 2 soap-makers, 1 soap-makers' assistant, 1 soap-makers' apprentice, 1 spirits-distiller, 1 furrier, 1 tanner, 1 glass-maker, 1 master shoe-maker, 1 shoe-makers' assistant (61). It is evident that there were 22 types of craftsmen in Kisvárdai, or more exactly that was the number of crafts exercised by the Jews. One notation from the year 1867 remarks that amidst the guilds from Kisvárdai there was a Jewish tailors' guild. The prominence of the township at the

time and later as well, was due to the commerce and not the industry. Within half a century, the number of artisans increased and the disciplines of the specialties developed, but there was no structural change, no qualitative progress. The first chairman of the Industrial Union founded just before the turn of the century (1893) was a Jew. This election of Simon Frigyesi is one more sign of the recognition accorded to the Jews in this sector of the economy as well. The Jewish artisans were likewise accorded a significant role in the leadership of the professional organizations: Mor Kohn was chairman and Simon Feldman was secretary of the Tailor's Association, that was started in the year 1912 (62).

Illustration on page 123: A bank share.

The fastest growing crafts were those where the raw material was provided by the agriculture, and after 1872-73, the industry was favored by the coming of railway. Transport expenditures were minimal and there was a local consumer market. These factors were decisive in the predominance of spirits distilling in the county and in the district of Kisvárdá. Similar facts played a role in the local appearance of the mills. Often both manufacturing branches were in the possession of one person: "This certifies to Simon Wellinger of Kisvárdá that there is no objection to his establishing of a steam-mill as well, on the site of the planned sprints distillery, and hereby a permit was issued. 5th day of 7-th month, 1865" (63). The best known mill-owner was Lipót Rochlitz, who had bought the company from his predecessor in 1886. In the year 1894 he offered to the elected council a solution to the problem of public lighting in the township, by providing electricity, with the dynamos mounted on the machinery of the mill. The contract was drawn and although the delivery of the electrical current was sputtering, the industrialist overcame the difficulties when Rochlitz himself became a member of the council in 1902 and got into the committee on economy. A shift in the matter of electrical lighting came, when in the year 1917 the Electrical and Mill Co. Ltd. of Kisvárdá was founded and took over from the previous Rochlitz company. The founders of this company were mostly local Jews and members of the management of the local banks. Out of the 2500 shares with a nominal value of 200 korona, the Economic and Commercial Credit Bank signed up for 650 shares, Ármin Szanto for 500 shares, the merchants Adolf Radó, Dezső Vadász 100 shares each, and the general manager of the bank, Sándor Kálmán signed up for 100 shares as well. It is a sign of the political patronage, that the county governor and the chief county officer had shares too, furthermore the governor was the chairman of the new company, and Miklós Orosz imp.& roy. chamberlain was a member of the supervisory board. Members of the directorate were constituents of the local financial and political organizations (64).

Before the 20-th century no such company was launched and founded. A contemporary is depicting the situation: "Our industry is a step-child, and we can say very little about it: mostly primitive, pitiful and often quite awkward. The skimpy configuration of the industry makes it work with a low pitch.... small capital" (65).

The partial picture of the industrial employment situation of Kisvárdá, with the number of the workers and dependents is visible below: -----

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1949	
-----	1348	1140	1767	1765	1496	industr. earner 1136 13%
-----	2744	2140	3627	3627	2100	dependent 1496 18% 2100 21% 2187 19% 2636 19%
-----	total: 2632	3448	3627	4403	4509	32% 34% 32% 31% 35%

According to these numbers, approximately thirty percent of the population made a living from the industry, though this industry is mostly small artisanal. After the first decade of the century we see the first full-fledged industry and a higher level of industrial enterprise.

One of the areas where this was evident was the distillery of spirits. The tax on spirits was modified in the year 1916 with the pertinent paragraph XXIV and that induced the need for a central distilling cooperative for the distilling of grape-marc. The consequence was in the year 1917: "The larger viticultors of Kisvárda and its district, devised together with the Felsőszabolcs Central Spirit Distillery Cooperative such a company, wherein every viticultor who desires to join, is wellcome" (66). The founders of the cooperative were: Ferenc Kastaly, Béla Sümeghy, Dr. Ferenc György, József Papp, Gyula Diner, Samu Kun, Dr. László Szmrecsányi, István Diner, Benjamin Grósz and Lajos M. Grósz. The listing of names indicates unequivocally that the Jewish financial, intellectual and land-owner group associated itself with the non-Jewish land-owners, intellectuals as well as with the political system of the state.

In the year 1922, the farming land-owners and lessees of the Nyír-area, asked for and were granted license to refine and stock freely spirits, won from the distilleries of their agricultural produce. The new enterprise started its activity under the name of The Szabolcs Farmers' Cooperative for Refining Spirits. We can almost take it for granted that, like in the previous cooperatives, the founders came from the same crowd. Amidst them a mention has to be made of the prominent figure of the converted Diner family, namely István who "... made tangible and vital sacrifices in order to start the company" (67). He became the acting manager of the company spawned together with his 20 farmer backers (like Samu Reizman), while at the same time he was the general manager of the Industrial and Commercial Bank. The chairman of the cooperative was György Orosz de Csicsér. In the year 1926 the general manager is Elek Goldstein, the manager of the production Bertalan Berkovits (69). The enterprise employed 33 people in 1933, in the later thirties there were 15 clerical and on the average 40 production workers, and they operated 9-11 month a year.

The role of the banks waxed and changed during this new era of the capitalism. They became not mere creditors for an enterprise, they did launch themselves new companies. Examples are the Building and Lumber Co. Ltd. that consisted of a brick factory and a lumberyard, started by the Economic and Commercial Credit Bank in the year 1917, as well as the previously mentioned Electrical Co. Ltd. The Provincia Credit Bank established the Farmers' Bank and the Szatmár County Savings Bank. A company that extended its life into our days was the Vulkán Technical and Commercial Ltd. The new enterprise had its constituting meeting in August 1921, but already in 1923 it had changed its name to Vulkán Iron-foundry and Machine Factory. They started with smithery and range-works; as demonstrated by the change in name they did foundry work too, manufacturing doors and plates for kitchen ranges. The 1923 volume of the Hungarian Financial Compass offers the following data on the company: basic capital is 1.2 million korona, 6000 shares at 200 korona each. Management: Sándor Kálmán the general manager of the founding bank is the chairman, Lajos Harmathy mechanical engineer is the managing director, members of the board are: Ernő Milhoffer merchant, Béla Rochlitz land-owner, Jenő Kunder the director of the Credit Bank, Dr. Vilmos Bozsán counsel.

Within a number of years (in the year 1926) the main shareholder coalesced into the factory the

Construction and Lumber Co. Ltd. which was also part of his holdings, and thus the board of directors was expanded with Dr. Emil Bihari lawyer, Ferenc Kastaly chief county officer, Géza Halmi landowner and Dr. Sámuel Fried physician. members of the supervisory board were: Miksa Róth director, Dezső Smilovics merchant and Ferenc Vadász wholesale merchant. This roster of names is a further proof of the fact that financial interests are matching potential antagonists moored to different creeds; furthermore these interests may unite the individuals belonging to the guiding ranks, even if they started out at different levels of the society. The number of people working at the factory grew to a couple of dozen from the initial handful; in the year 1939 there are 110 registered employees, 12 of them being clerks. In the year 1942 there are 150 workers, in addition to which there were some 20-25 industrial apprentices who were supposed to substitute for the qualified workers called up to the army. All this growth was due to military contracts (69).

Given that another larger institution, the Hungarian Central Credit Bank, was cointerested in the Commercial Credit Bank, in the year 1938 they had as such invested 80000 pengő in the Vulkan, and 125000 pengő in the Mill Works (70). It is noteworthy that the local banks were the local representants of the different insurance companies: it was in this skillful way that the credit institutions exploited the possibilities offered by the market and that's how they tried to root themselves in all the potential runs of the economy. Even these organizations could not change basically the local industrial structure, although there was progress. This can be seen from the following data. In the year 1930 out of the 635 small manufactures in Kisvárdá 367 operated without a helper, 196 had 1-2 assistants, 55 had 3-5, 10 of them had 6-10 assistants and only 4 had 11-20 helpers. The only factories with more than 20 aides were the shoe factory with 28 and the spirits refinery which had 28 workers (71).

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GLOSSARY:

a/. Angaria was a form of labor service extracted from the serfs from their lords: days worked on

the lands of the lord without retribution.

b/. Vinculum was the forfeiture or retention money: if someone was not able or willing to live up to contractual obligations, this money served as compensation to the prejudiced party.

c/. The commonly used measure of land was the 'Katastral Hold' which equals about 0.57 hectares or 1,42 English acres.

d/. A form of lease where the lessee paid one-third share of the crops in rent to the owner.

e/. In the so-called Dual Monarchy the head of the state was emperor of Austria and king of Hungary. All court titles had the "imperial & royal" designation.

IX.

The situation of the Kisvárdá Jews in the years 1938-1944.

The national political leadership felt compelled to go along with the international political situation, and in the thirties they legislated the statutes that gradually isolated and further excluded the Jews from the non-Jewish segment of the population, forecasting their eventual destruction. The Jewish Legislation limited the number of Jews in many professions, furthermore by defining who is considered to be Jewish, those concerned were eliminated from certain jobs. On August 6, 1941, the so-called third Jewish Legislation was enacted, affecting those who had maintained a relationship and furthermore prohibiting the matrimony between Jews and non-Jews. The compulsory labor service introduced in the spring of that year did discriminate against the Jews. In January of 1942 the Jewish participation in elective councils and the House of Representatives was ended; next on March 19, the Jewish land-ownership was terminated, and on the 25-th, the activity of those physicians who were considered Jewish, was restricted. On May 1, a statute concerning the Israelite religion was sanctioned, by which the Jewish religion was relegated to the group of those, that were merely acknowledged.

Presently let's have a look how those acts affected Kisvárdá._

In the spring of 1938 the so-called free troops came to Kisvárdá. These "soldier-corps" are called "raggedy mob" by the official historians. The troops were under the command of the regular army and volunteers had joined them: their objective was to infiltrate into Czechoslovakia, enact diversions and prepare for the entry of the Hungarians.

Before doing so, they wanted to boost the Magyarization of the Kisvárdá Hungarians. They contributed to the realization of the long-planned national flag, but from our point of view their

importance lies in fostering the atrocities committed against the Jews. The antagonism was initiated when the troops arrived on a weekend carrying provisions, but had no bakery, no field-kitchen. They had to procure locally their cooking vessels, but because of the Saturday the Jewish stores were closed. The commanding officer summoned those dealers whose merchandise was needed, but they refused to vend, pointing out the religious teachings - the prohibition of work from Friday sunset to Monday morning. The commander of the soldiers had the stores opened, collecting whatever they needed and gave the owners a written note about it. This occurrence produced a big outcry not only amongst the Jews, but also within the county leadership. The Jews protested, the free troops retorted and some individuals were beaten up (1).

The troops started to check who is buying in stores not owned by Magyars and occasionally that person was branded on the forehead. Nevertheless the troops themselves again and again took merchandise from Jewish stores, often without payment.

A political storm was created when the anti-Semitic press spread the rumor that a secret Jewish radio transmitter was found in Kisvárda, used by the local Jews to inform the Czechoslovakian Jews about the movements and activity of the free troops. This false intelligence was hatched by the Lt. Col. Alajos Haynal, in the hope of inciting the local population against the Jews. This was somehow successful, the soldiers did arrest a number of individuals accusing them of spying and treason. The next day the rumor was denied by the chief county officer.

Illustration on page 128: A page of the 1938-39 school report of the state girls' high school.

At this stage though, the propaganda against the Jews had succeeded in turning a certain segment of society against them. The local press, the most important media agent of the times, initially did not foot the line. This was obvious, because it was owned by a converted Jew, István Diner, the manager of the bank; György Dénes who was editor in chief of the paper *Felsőszabolcs* from 1935 to 1938 - was himself Jewish. Due to the anti-Jewish legislation, Dénes was soon replaced with a figurehead, and in November the paper ceased to exist. The new weekly that appeared in 1941 was the *Kisvárdai Vidék*. Its owner and editor had no doubts in dishing out the anti-Semitic propaganda, even if only for correcting the "social ratio".

Locally the restraints on the Jews intensified from the year of the first anti-Jewish legislation, to the entry of the country into the world war. On September 9, 1938, the head clerk-secretary sent the ensuing notice to those concerned: "Those who have to authenticate their citizenship are hereby summoned to come to room # 9, on September 14, 1938 at 9 a.m. to the town-hall.... in their own interest" (2). That roll listed 28 names, but similar rosters became a frequent occurrence. The primary purpose was to remove the non-local Jews. It is not a widely known fact that as a result of these 'removals' in the summer of 1941, about 18000 Jews were deported via Körösmező into the area of military operations; they have met with a tragic end in Kamenec-Podolsk.

The second Jewish legislation limited to 6 % the number of Jewish youngsters who were to be accepted into the secondary education. It resulted in the dwindling of Jewish pupils in the local high school. The Bessenyei György Gymnasium had a lowered number of Jews in the school year 1938-39, just 10.1%; in the next school-year it was only 8.1%, in 1940-41 only 5.7%. By 1944 their number decreased to almost nothing.

This changing political situation had likewise showed its effect in the state girls' school; in the year 1937-38 they separated the Jewish girls from the rest of the pupils. In 1937-38 school-year there were 53 pupils in one of the groups of the second grade, while in the next year in grade III/a there were only 31 gentile girls and in III/b 4 gentile and 28 Jewish pupils. The large number of pupils in the class was given as reason for the division.

Furthermore the second Jewish legislation decreed that a Jew cannot be a member of the elective council on the basis of being a 'virilist' (paying the highest taxes); one could become a member only via an election, or being a representative of a creed. In the minutes of the elective council in the beginning of the year 1939, the following are still listed as being virilists: Dávid Friedman, Dr. László Szilágyi, Dr. Miklos Schönwald, Dr. Ödön Bartha, Dr. Lajos Varga, the widow of Zsigmond Kondor, the widow of Benjámín Grósz, István Kopácsy, Sándor Kálmán, Adolf Radó, Samu Kun, Dr. László Szmrecsányi, Miksa Lefkovits, József Hartman, Ernő Kálmánczi, Dr. László Diner, Dr. Nagy Sándor de Szotyor, Dezső Vadász, László Halmi, István Major sen.(3). A decision of the chief district officer added the following names to the list: the widow of Károly Mártha, János Rubovszky, vitéz (a) Ernő Csajka, the widow of Dr. Lajos Vargha, István Szilcz, the widow of Endre Soltész, Lajos Harmathy, Dr. Sándor Szántó, Dr. Mihály Tóth, Gyula Cserepes, Dr. János Erdőhegyi, Péter Kerchy, János Kovács, Béla Sümeghy (4).

The anti-Jewish measures were likewise perceived in the economy. On the October 28, 1939, one of the matters discussed by the board of directors of the Vulkán Ltd. was the fact that out of the 14 clerical employees, two are affected by the Jewish legislation. This was properly reported by the company. On January 30, 1940, Dr. Lajos Harmathy reported that the Government Office of the Intellectual Unemployment authorized the employment and remuneration of 1 Jew out of the 5 clerks; the agent working on percentage was not affected - despite being Jewish - because he did not figure on the payroll of the firm (5).

In another company in Kisvárdá the changes were more significant. The local press heralded on November 6, 1941 that there was a change in the management and ownership of the Spirits Refinery: "... The Spirits Refinery Cooperative of the Szabolcs Farmers... which is one of the most important companies thus named in the country, tried to adjust perfunctorily to the precepts of the law, as proven by their gradual dismissal of the previous Jewish employees and the hiring of new, gentile, mostly younger workers_. While these benevolent changes have been implemented within the team of clerks, frankly, one has to realize that the old management stayed on. A motion for change was started amongst the business partners and the management of the cooperative. However the major provisions for the meeting of the board did not result in any surprises. Nevertheless there was no slackening of the activity at the Spirits Refinery. Within a couple of weeks the board meeting was followed with a plenary meeting of the shareholders, wherein all the Jewish members and shareholders of the Spirits Refinery were present and together with the gentile members, they decided to elect another management instead of the previous board. A certain part of the management and members have assailed the resolution of the general meeting to the ministry, both through the judiciary and the administrative path. Following the intervention of the finance ministry a major compromise agreement was generated. The squire count Tivadar Dessewffy took over the business shares of the Jewish members on the price agreed in the compromise, thus acquiring the majority shares of the Spirits Refinery. According to our information, the count Tivadar Dessewffy became the general manager and the majority owner of the Spirits Refinery..." (8).

Within a year, at the financial institution which was the predominant element in the local economy, there was an additional change: "The takeover of the ownership of the Economical Bank by gentile people who are not affected by the Jewish Legislature was discussed for quite a while; now suddenly a change was brought on by personal disagreements. Sándor Kálmán, the former general manager of the Economical Bank, after a brief parley relinquished his significant personal proprietorship to a gentile interest that is representing the Kisvárdai chapter of the Savings Bank of the Eger Diocese. A considerable part of the gentile stake was taken over by the landowner László Szmrecsányi jun." (7). Another source tells that Rubovszky and another five associates have bought from Kálmán the shares of the bank and implicit of the plants (8).

The bank held an interest in the Vulkán, the Mill, the Provincia Commercial Produce Company and the Enamel factory, consequently they underwent changes similar to the events recorded at the bank. At the Vulkán József Kundler (the former director of the Economical Bank), Sándor Kálmán (until August 17, 1942 the general manager of the Vulkán Ltd.), Kázmér Kállay and István Zsögöd were removed from the board. They were replaced in the board with Dr. János Rubovszky, Dr. János Békés, Lajos Harmathy jun., László Szmrecsányi jun., Antal Gell, while some other members stayed on. The changes engendered by the Jewish Legislature disheveled the management and at the same time made marketing more difficult, requiring the discovery of new business connections. The interweaving of economy and politics is demonstrated clearly by the fact that the change in management coincided with Gell, Szmrecsányi, Harmathy, Rubovszky and Békés being members of the elective council, while according to the law, the Jews were already excluded from it. In the year 1943 the chief engineer Lajos Harmathy was dropped as general manager and his place was taken by Dr. János Rubovszky (9).

Nor could the attention of those intent to change the socioeconomic order overlook the land ownership by the Jews. In the year 1939 it was impeded, in the year 1942 a government ordinance blocked the agricultural and forestry lands above 500 'hold' and they ordered the seizure of machinery and livestock of the larger Jewish properties. The government promised bonds as a compensation for the properties expropriated (10). The next step was, that by December 1942, all unsold Jewish real estate that was less than 5 'hold' was taken over by the local communal governance as ordered by the government, and passed on to the local ONCSA administration. The land was awarded in the first instance to war widows, war orphans, persons who were broke and families with many children (11).

The distribution of certain lands started in the year 1944: " The citizens of the community are hereby advised that by the order 120.794-1944. VII.B.1. of the Hung. Royal (b) Ministry of Agriculture, the land of the Jewish owners in Kisvárdai is to be activated. The present course will apply to the Dr. Hajdu property and the Mrs. Zoltán Fodor vineyards.... Kisvárdai, the month of January, 1944 (12).

It seems that the people in charge did not always implement the adverse directives concerning the Jews: in November 1942 the chief county prosecutor indicted the former director of the Economic Bank, József Kundler as well as Jenő Klein bank clerk, alleging that they did not carry out the instructions of the Government Agency for Intellectuals, they did not reduce percent wise the salary of the Jewish intellectual employees (13).

At that time all kind of fines directed against the Jews were already a daily occurrence. We cite some instances. Márton Lövi had to pay 100 pengő because he sold more high-priced yarn,

Henrik Kaufman had to pay a fine of 200 pengő, because he had declared one of his employees, Zoltán Neumann, as being a messenger while using him in clerical work, Ábrahám Gold had traded with spirits, Zsigmond Grünwald operated illegally a club-soda company, Béla Schwartz did not display the price-list, etc. In general the disciplinary measures for these offenses were monetary fines (14).

Despite the precise and unsparingly applied legal rulings there was cooperation amongst the Jews and gentiles. This existed primarily in economic matters. The local press was constantly thrashing those who had taken over a Jewish business and instead of actively managing it, stayed on as figureheads and cooperated with the former owners. They do write with disapproval of those farming women who are selling the skimmed milk to the Jews instead of taking it to the market, and they ask for stern measures against those who are on the other side of the deal "...one ought to teach orderliness or send to a concentration camp those Jews, who do not follow the dictate of the authorities, while looking only for their own benefit and full belly..." (15). In one of the articles the writer is pondering why the farmers engage the Jews for the threshing? The answer was that "... the gentile threshing-machine owner had lost the confidence of the farmers" (16).

Occasionally it happened that somebody was sentenced because of concealing Jews, like Mrs. József Halpert who in 1943 was hiding Samu Grünbaum and his spouse, refugees from Slovakia (17). It is not known if the risk was taken for money or as a humanitarian action, but Mrs. Halpert was taken to an internment camp (18).

From the start of the war there used to be raids, with the purpose to find people who stayed illegally. In the year 1941 on such an occasion "... 45 Jews were arrested, whose papers, mainly the citizenship documentation, was deficient..." (19). They had fled from Galitzia, probably together with Polish soldiers.

A number of Jewish refugees, fleeing from the fascist regimes of neighboring countries, may have thought to find a safe heaven in Hungary. On the occasion of the 1941 census, the citizenship of the Kisvárda Jews became again an issue; the existence of numerous problems is proven by a recollection: "... as a certified professional I was charged to scrutinize the census. As a random testing we did enter the homes and checked to see if everybody is properly registered and if the forms were appropriately filled. Well, we did see a deep, crowded house that looked like a slum-dwelling, where we found 17 non-registered individuals. They did not forward any data, they hid, the census could not mark and register them. I know it is not nice to write about these, but they were my personal, individual experiences. On the other hand these people had excellent international connections, mostly with the Jews of Czechoslovakia" (20).

The demagogues of the time added to the issue of strife between the Jewish and Christian religion, promoting the contrasts that the Jew equals rich and that of the Christian versus the usurer Jews. The truth was far from that. The few residual data extant in the archives of the Jewish community are mostly requests of the members of the Jewish creed, asking for assistance from the leadership of the community.

"Respected Magistracy of the Community, Kisvárda!

I hereby solicit the hon. Magistracy, to kindly extend me a 100 (one hundred) pengő in the form

of aid_ or loan.

The existing laws make it impossible for me to exert my profession, I am going to learn artisanat, that may take 3 weeks, and I ask for the above amount to be able to support my family in the meantime.

In the hope that my request will be approved, respectfully,

Adolf Klein. Kisvárda, April the 20-th, 1942"

The limiting of Jewish activity in the economic life had brought the proliferation of such requests. As noticed, the mandates were directed not only against the so-called big capitalists, but they made life more difficult even for those who were on the other side of the society. For example the decision No. 7493/1941 of the county executive proclaimed: " I hereby proscribe all Jews, be it from our or from other jurisdictions, from partaking in country fairs, churchly festivals or weekly markets in all of Szabolcs county" (22).

One of the reasoning of that decision was that neighboring counties have already issued such bans, and therefore those Jews had flooded the Szabolcs county fairs and markets.

In any event the community did not own the means to be able to assist all of those who had lost their livelihood or sustenance. This is quite evident from one of the documents.

The Support Office of the Hungarian Israelites, in its letter from March 8, 1942, urged the community to disburse the residual 11747 pengő for 1943 and 7500 pengő for the first quarter of 1944, moneys authorized as participatory dues by the VKM 8888/1943. The chairman József Kain, stated in his reply that with the ratifying of the OMZSA contribution, the locals had assumed a sum above their means, they are trying to comply, but: "... our community has no reserve funds, indeed we don't have adequate funds to properly settle our employees' monthly salaries". As such they are unable to advance the moneys they did not take in, especially not the advance for the year 1944. "I have to emphasize again, that most members of our community are impoverished people who have difficulties in procuring the daily bread; even under duress they would be unable to pay their imposts, and lastly one shouldn't forget that many members of our congregation were called up for compulsory labor service..." (23).

Illustration on page 133: The lead article of the local paper reflects the changes in the economy.

By artificially aggrandizing and fomenting the Jewish-gentile antagonism, the local press adapted to the times wherein public opinion was directed to be anti-Jewish. We cannot judge its success or the lack of it, considering that only those who professed the above ideas were writing in the paper and quite often the majority was on the opposite side. The policies were not laid out in the redaction of the 'Kisvárda és Vidéke', but the weekly paper was in the forefront of offering that anti-Semitic bill of fare. The further fate of the Jews - unrelated to the influence of the paper - was decided beforehand. The previously mentioned institution of compulsory labor service may be hinting at that.

In the year 1940 the young Jewish men were still called up into the regular army, while the older generation was mustered into the so-called auxiliary labor service. The Jews of Kisvárda were likewise affected. Thus are the recollections of an individual from those times: "... My unit had

first received the so-called 'disciplinary' training in Fényeslitke, and after that we were directed to a small locality near Körösmezo, where we were employed in forestry work... The food supply was sparse, but we were allowed to buy provisions for ourselves in Körösmezo.

At the time uniformed Jewish officers were still serving in the labor companies, but in charge were the gentile officers. Our situation was not yet bad. One could bribe the troop cadres, and they even let us go home for a proper consideration" (24).

This pre-storm, peaceable era, was pictured in a poetry volume by the Jewish former chief editor of the local 'Felsőszabolcs'. We are quoting from the tome "The Book of Songs and Tears" published in the year 1941 in Kisvárdá. The importance of it lies not so much in the aesthetic value of the poem, but in how the Jews related to the Magyar idea.

To the labor company

(September 8, 1940; to my beloved comrades).

Join the work, we are toiling for our Homeland

we live and die for it,

if ordered so by our higher-ups

our strong arms are set to perform.

Go ahead labor companies,

let's strive with our hard fists,

shoulder to shoulder we join up,

that's how better times will erstwhile come.

Let's flaunt to everybody

that yes, we are good Hungarians

and whatever is in the outlook

for our Homeland - in need - we are ready to die.

György Dénes and his fellows were on the labor service in Kárpátalja, they came home in December 1940. The ideas displayed in the poem prove that the Jews of Kisvárdá - as well as the other Jews in the country - considered themselves first Hungarians and only secondarily Jews. But even this could not save them, from what the poet had intuited as a premonition: the extinction.

The situation had changed drastically when the labor companies were called up again during the war. Information on the men from Kisvárdá were received at the community from different parts of the country. Local Jews were asking for various items on behalf of the labor contingent from Kisvárdá, mostly winter clothing, boots and foodstuff. The following places were mentioned:

Huszt, Fót, Zombor, Várpalota, Bikfalva, Bácskertes, Szentkirályszabadja, Miskolc, Dömös, Bánhida, Rimaszombat, Nagybánya, Diosgyör, etc. (26).

Some names from the labor contingent: Ernő Berger butcher, had spent 16 month with the 181/3 company in Tiszaborkut, Nándor Ecker merchant, had spent five years with the 108/1 and 108/3 companies inside the country and in the Ukraine, György Fischer merchant, was with company 101/207 in different areas of the country, Emil Galet merchant, worked with the 5/4 company, Miklos Glück merchant had spent 2 years with the 11/4 company in the Carpathian Mountains, József Hartman butcher, was for 42 month with the companies 108/19 and 109/26 in Bácska and the Ukraine. We could continue enumerating the names (27).

More local Jews were called up for labor service in 1944, the company was divided in two, one part ended up in Szentendre, the other half was installed at the Textile Mills of Kispeszt. Both were commanded by res. lieutenant Géza Szalay.

Even in Kisvárdá proper there were labor service men. In December 1942, about 100-120 of them have arrived from the internment camp of Garany. They constituted the Special Hung. Roy. Company No. 481. They were quartered in the theater hall of the Roth (Radnai) Hotel, and their job was to level the area of the marketplace. They had several commanding officers, the last one who had stayed with them the whole time, was capt. Károly Bartha, who in civilian life was teaching at the local high school. This unit existed until May 31, 1943 (28). The following letter, 'mailed' to the redaction of the local paper, referred to them. The writer was objecting that the Christian ladies are oblivious of those gentiles who are defending them: "...But they are sorry for the Jewish shovelers, who are walking on nicely cobblestone-paved streets, who are sleeping in a fine theater-hall, who have their daily bread assured, even their wives are present amongst them. Such a good Christian lady had said: I commiserated them because they sang that 'we are memorial shovelers' !... Our young men, would be happy to sing anything here at home. If they were at home..." (29). In continuation the writer of the letter was describing the fate of the Hungarian soldiers on the Russian snow-fields, but he omitted to mention the presence of labor-service men as well on those snow-fields.

The first month of the year 1944 saw the continued economic deprivation of Jews. The claiming of the land was followed by forced selling of the livestock: "...At the time when I will communicate_ you the date and location of the meeting, you are requested according to the M.E.sz. 4070/1949, to tender for sale the livestock and implements owned by you. On that occasion you will put forward your selling-price, based on which the commission will try to reach an agreement with you. Kisvárdá, February 1, 1944 " (30).

The March 19, 1944 German occupation of the country, set the course of events towards destruction of Jews from the rural communities. Until that time - despite the atrocities, restrictions and deprivation that befell both individuals and communities - the Jews of Hungary were in a 'better' situation than their brothers in the neighboring countries. Following the occupation, the political leadership had to accede to the German wishes, resulting in further restrictions on the Jews. As of the middle of April economic injunctions were implemented: the Jewish properties were blocked, Jews were removed from the financial institutions and their component companies, all intellectual employment was terminated, and on April 21, Jewish shops were closed. On March 21, the president of the community announced in a notice that: "Based on the ruling of His Excellency the Hon. Roy. Hung. Minister of the Interior, until further

notice, there will be no general assembly" (31).

The significant change in the political life was eminently perceptible in the local paper: " A couple of days were sufficient to change everything around us... If we just look at how the shift affected Kisvárda, we shall see amazing things. An undesired group got scared.... The pace of the daily life was rolling in front of us and we could well notice how the Jews stayed on in the rear of the stores acquired by gentiles. We were aware of the 'monetary source' of the newly opened gentile shops. We have pilloried in our paper all these duped Aladárs and front men.... We have wrung our hands in bitter resignation watching how the Jews oozed back into leadership positions. Now there was a major change in Kisvárda too. The prime Jew-concealers and shoulder-patters are now caroling ferociously: long live Hitler!" (32).

Thus how another writing describes the change: "Above and beyond the theories we now have the leaders of the change, whose intention is to carry out what was long promised and never done, the purging of the Jews. A new social system will be born, where the only factor will be the honest work... The recent days of smuggling Jews are gone " (35).

Illustration page 136: Memorial tablets of the deported victims.

The concentration of the Jews from surrounding localities into the Kisvárda ghetto had started eight days after the publication of that article, on April 8. On the 10-th, the chief clerk-secretary of the township, based on the decree 6136/1944.VII.Res. of the Ministry of the Interior, directed József Kain, the president of the community to register all the local Jews and forward the roster within 3 days. The purport was that the Jews of Kisvárda, as well the Jews of the neighboring communities were intended to enter the ghetto. This did indeed occur between April 15 and 30. The locals were gathered in the selected area according to the order of the registration and not by their address. The ghetto began on the left side of the Miklos Horthy Road, extended to the Ferenc Deák and Petöfi Streets, as far as the right side of the King Mátyás Street, including the synagogue. The roads and the neighborhoods were closed with barriers. Next day the president of the community sent out the following invitation: "I hereby respectfully ask the subsequently named members of the Autonomous Orthodox Community of Kisvárda, to show up today at 11 a.m. at the offices of the lawyer dr. Ignác Lukács, for the purpose of constituting the Council of the Kisvárda Jews: Samu Burger veterinarian, Bernáth Friedmann, Dr. Sándor Katona, Samu Kun, Miksa Lefkovics, Dr. Ignác Lukács, Ignác Prerau, Mihály Steiner, Dr. Sándor Szöke, Lajos Szilágyi. Kisvárda, April 16, 1944, the president of the community " (34).

The same day the president of the community reported to the chief clerk-secretary that this was achieved.

The number of those taken into the ghetto was about seven thousand, and they stayed there for almost one month. The 1941 census put the figure of the local Jews to 3770. On June 22, the executive committee of the Federation of Hungarian Jews specified in its letter to the prime minister Döme Sztojaj, that the Kisvárda ghetto holds 12 000 inhabitants. Within the ghetto order was maintained by selected Jewish watchmen. The building of the Jewish elementary school was used as a ghetto hospital. On May 3, in its address to Eichmann, the Central Council of the Hungarian Jews took up the situation of the Kisvárda ghetto: "There the major difficulty is the placement and subsistence of the Jews from the neighboring localities. They were herded into the yard of the Jewish temple. They have ran out of food, and the hygienic situation is desperate"

(35).

The Protestant pastor Gyula Kiss, raised his voice in the local elective council calling for a solution to the problems. The problem with provisions was partly due to the fact that the gendarmes stopped everybody who wanted to deliver any foodstuff into the ghetto.

In the meantime the legal plunder of the Jews went on. The textile purchasing books of 38 merchants were revoked and 40 shops were closed. On May 5, the pharmacy licenses were repealed; locally it affected the pharmacy named The Divine Providence. The valuables of the Jews arrested during the mopping up were confiscated, and the worthier items of those brought into the ghetto were taken away (36). On May 10, the chief district officer bade the chief clerk-secretary to implement the Interior Ministry decree 174.289/1944.VII.b.sz. concerning the disbanding of the Jewish associations in Kisvárdá too, and close the aforementioned organizations.

On May 29 and 31, the people were loaded into wagons. Somebody remembering the events writes thusly: "The first section to be deported was in-between the Csillag Street and Posta Street. The order to start came all of a sudden. They were taken on foot towards the Lesser Station and they were herded into the courtyard of the Schwartz lumberyard. The rail-lines reached into this large yard, where the wagons were already positioned. In front of each wagon there was a gendarme with a machine-gun. There were 40 gendarmes minding 3500 people" (37).

Illustration on page 137: The title page of the book of Izabella Leitner.

The wagons ran to Auschwitz through Kassa. At the Kassa railway station, a Jewish man had asked a railway man to take note of the incoming trains and the number of people within. The first train arrived from Kisvárdá on May 30, containing 3475 individuals and on June 2, the secret observer registered 3421 individuals (38).

Izabella Leitner from Kisvárdá wrote a book about the deportation and the annihilation camps: it was published in New York in the year 1978 under the title: Fragments of Isabella.

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G L O S S A R Y:

a/. Vitéz: a new title of nobility created in the period between the two World Wars, to replace the older titles that were suspended; the exact translation of the Hungarian word is valiant, brave.

b/. Hungary stayed on as a 'monarchy' even after the abdication of the last king in 1918, while the Admiral Horthy acted as regent and governor of the realm.

X.

The Jews of Kisvárda after 1945.

Most of the Jews from the locality were exterminated in the death camps. A fraction of the survivors did not return to Kisvárda, they emigrated. The survivors of the unendurable, who had chosen to return to their old place, sensed that the first task was to deal with the injuries suffered and with the irreparable tragedies. The following appeal was launched: "The Jewish Community of Kisvárda is calling upon all who had served in the army or in the labor force from Kisvárda, the Kisvárda and Mándok districts, to show up without delay at the community offices, for verification of their military service, bringing all the evidence (pay book, etc.)"(1). The office of the community was at No. 15. Deák Ferenc Street. As soon as the national organization of the Labor Servicemen was constituted in Budapest, it was to be followed with the establishment of the local chapter. For that purpose on June 3, 1946, a comradesly assemblage was convened in the locality of the food-kitchen, and on that occasion they decided to constitute the Kisvárda organization of the MUSZ (a). A committee of 6 members was charged with the task of setting up the organization. In order to be registered, one had to present himself at the MUSZ representative in the bookstore of Gyula Klein, No. 22, Szent László Street (2).

Some of the Jews did integrate actively in the setting up of the local authority: "As soon as the local police force was constituted, Zoli Fischer and Jancsi Prerau took active part in its work. I was a liaison between the Hungarians and the Russians. In that line of duty I had the opportunity

to have some prominent anti-Semites jailed" (3). There was a similar situation with the Communist Party, those concerned felt that it may be a basis for their security, as well as for their settling the accounts with imagined or real enemies. The subsequent events proved that this opportunity was not a theoretical but a real one. It was noticeable in Kisvárdá as well, how the MKP (*b*) tried to destroy the largest political party of the country, the Small Farmer's Party (*c*). Some Jewish individuals did contribute to this ignominious effort: "We were appraised that some Jewish people accused our party with different actions that include offenses against the paragraph VII / 1946 of the law defending the democratic state and the republic. This denunciation was conveyed to the State Security section of the State Police in Nyiregyháza... In connection with this, the leadership of our party deems necessary the following declaration:

1. On January 11, 1947, between 6 and 8 in the evening, the party organization was holding its usual weekly assemblage; we do have the list of the 22 members who were present. The members did discuss in an informal manner the actual problems. Approximately at 7 p.m. two local men by the name of Teichman and Fried came in and they inquired about Mr. Maticsák. After they left and the group was about to break up, 2 plainclothes policemen materialized... they did inquire from the host of the site János Varga, about what had happened.

Next day it was widely talked about that in the Small Farmer's Party, they did 'instigate' against the Jews, they corrupted the forint, they were insulting the police and the three-year's plan, etc. This could have originated only from the two individuals who had entered the party assemblage on Saturday and who... probably fabricated the false charges upon outside incitement... Upon the mistaken information of these two gentlemen, a false alarm was put forth amongst the Jews from Kisvárdá and the Jewish problem was unnecessarily raised... We can only deplore that even larger groups - in this case the Jewry of Kisvárdá - are willing to listen to such incriminations that are void of all ostensible proof and convictions..." (4).

Most of the Jews avoided this type of political activities, they tried to restart their stores, enterprises, businesses. For some - mainly if they managed to hide and safeguard their valuables in time - this was reasonably easy. The majority though, had to start almost from scratch. Many of the homes sealed on the occasion of the deportation, had already been broken in, the things collected in the synagogues have been dispersed after the entry of the Russian troops, and the businesses and stores previously owned by Jews became property of strangers. The returning ones tried to validate their previous rights, meaning to repossess as soon as possible their former properties. The following appeal was signaling this objective: "The use or lease of Jewish apartments, shops, pharmacies, storehouses, plants, enterprises, etc. has to be declared within three days under sanction of eviction, at the offices of the Isr. community... A receipt of the last rent-payment has to be presented at the time of the declaration. Furthermore, the Jewish equipment and wares, as proven by an inventory on the day of the ownership change, have to be declared, or else to bear the consequences" (5).

All kind of assistance was not solving the problems, just easing them. The intuition and adaptability that was always propitious to Jewish people, proved to be furthermore useful. An example of such a renewal is conveyed by one of the affected individuals: "The permit and the locale of the shop were already available, but there was only a passage leading down into the basement; a door was needed. In the neighborhood they were installing a portal, they had a superfluous door, which I could buy. The price was in cigarettes, they were just than unavailable, and I had promised to obtain them.

Still we didn't even have floor-planks. I went over to the carpenter Tutkovits who was willing to help. I carried over the planks. Next I painted the locale, and the store furnishings were fitted together from the broken pieces found in the streets. In this manner it was for free" (6). This quotation is a good example of how the relation between Jews and gentiles worked, if no artificial incitements were raised.

The hopes were barely rekindled when politics interfered again. The nationalization did definitively terminate the possibilities of integration into a private economy for all the Jews. It was not a coincidence that the number of Jews did gradually decrease. This was due to the emigration. We quote from a document given out for such an individual looking for a new homeland:

"I hereby certify, that Dr. Sándor Szöke of Kisvárdá, was born in the township of Kisvárdá in the year 1888; he is of the Israelite religion, married, a consulting hospital physician and presently domiciled in Kisvárdá. During his habitation in the locality, he was never member of any political party, he did not participate either in the national socialist or fascist movements. He never took up politics. This certificate was made out on his request, according to the decisions of the National Committee, in order to serve him for emigration. Kisvárdá, February 24, 1947. József Vékony, the chairman of the National Committee. " (7).

A total of 804 Jews were living in Kisvárdá in the year 1946. This residual group of Jews wanted to stay on living. On April 4, 1946, the third rabbi of the Rosenbaum dynasty was installed as chief rabbi of Kisvárdá, and there was a rebirth of the Orthodox Community. The chief rabbi Tibor Rosenbaum became one of the champions of the Hungarian Zionist movement, and this is probably the explanation of his emigration. There seemed to be a revival in other aspects of communal life too. We have data on the existence of the Israelite Ladies' League between the years 1946 to 1948 (8).

Illustration on page 141: Bar-mitzvah ceremony of György Dávidovics, in the synagogue of the capital in the nineteen-eighties'. In the picture from left to right: Alfréd Schöner, chief rabbi of Budapest, the young man and Kálmán Eichler (Egri), the president of the Kisvárdá Community.

It was likewise in the 'year of the change' (*d*), on the June 2 meeting of the elective council, that a decision was reached concerning the petition forwarded by the Israelite community. The deputy secretary made it known, that the above organization requests to change the name of the Miklós Horthy street to 'The Road of the Martyrs'. The presentation was seconded by the lawyer Dr. Miklós Székely. He served with the 108/33 forced labor unit at home and in the Ukraine, and he had lost five siblings and six cousins in the Holocaust. On that occasion, as a member of the council, he was supporting the motion because: "... the sad fact is, that this was the street where the 7500 Jews of the Kisvárdá ghetto were exposed to the first cruelty of the commander of the ghetto and his companions, they were dragged away from Kisvárdá on this street" (9). The self-government of Kisvárdá decided in its resolution 81 Kgy. 468/1948, to accept the way the community desired to set a memorial to those Jews from the locality and its surrounding, who were liquidated by the fascism.

A census from the year 1949 shows that the Kisvárdá community numbers 650 individuals, with

120 levy-payers. The chairman is Béla Friedmann, the manager Dezső Stern, the rabbi Vilmos Szamet. The only active society is the Hevra Kadisha. The Kisvárdai district comprised 29 communities. In Tornospálcza the rabbi was Pinkász Rosenbaum (10). The number of Jews in Kisvárdai was notably decreasing due to deaths and emigration. Those taking the census found 355 individuals in the year 1953 and 160 individuals in the year 1977.

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- 2/. Appeal - Szabolcsi Szabad Nép, 1946, No. 2, p.3.
- 3/. Memorial Book: p. 130.
- 4/. SZSZBMÖL XVII. 27. The documents of the National Committee of Kisvárdai, 1945-1947.
- 5/. Appeal - Északszabolcs, 1945, No. 1, p.4.
- 6/. The recollections of Lajos Fischer, Kisvárdai é.n. - reported by István Perjes. The history of the Kisvárdai Jewry - Kisvárdai é.n. (manuscript, Kisvárdai, Municipal Library).
- 7/. SZSZBMÖL XVII. 27. The documents of the National Committee of Kisvárdai. 1945-1937.
- 8/. The address-book of the societies in Hungary, from the restorative era to 1945, Vol. 3. Edited by Edit Pór - The Institute of Cultural Research, Budapest, 1988, p. 954.
- 9/. SDZSZBMÖL V. 337. The self-government documents of the Kisvárdai township 1948, 81 Kgy. 3680/1948.
- 10/. The Jewish Communities of Hungary in April 1944, reported by József Schweitzer - Budapest, MTA, 1994, p. 872.

GLOSSARY:

a/. MUSZ: acronym for 'Munkaszolgálatosok Szövetsége', the organization of the former labor service men, established in 1945.

b/. MKP: acronym for 'Magyar Kommunista Párt', the Hungarian Communist Party.

c/. The Small Farmer's Party represented mostly agricultural interests, it existed during the Horthy era as a middle-of the road grouping. After 1945 it became the largest political party, and was gradually pushed aside and neutralized by the encroaching communists.

d/. The 'year of the change' was 1948 when the communists managed by electoral fraud and intimidation to become the leading political force in Hungary.

E p i l o g u e .

XI.

With the passage of time and the decrease in the number of members, the community had parted with its synagogue and sold it to the local council. In the year 1983 the Rétközi Múzeum was opened in that structure.

The renewal of the building was done according to the design of Mária Hegyi. The windows were restored with the remnant colored glass, the cast iron pillars supporting the wooden galleries were retained. For many years the rain was seeping into the synagogue, most of the painted walls were ruined and they had to be covered up with white. As far as possible the painted ceiling was conserved - and this became an ornament of the building. In the former synagogue one can find the Hebrew and Hungarian language memorial tablets of the Jewish victims of both the First and Second World Wars.

On February 27, 1990, the building was declared as being a "structure with landmark value"; this act took into consideration the need to preserve it in view of its important architectural, historical, past background, artistic, handicraft and ethnographic value.

Those buildings that in the past had served an ecclesiastical purpose did metamorphose with the time. Some of them are unused (the prayer hall), others are serving the townspeople under a changed aspect: the Jewish elementary school, the bath.

In the year 1989 the community was still extant, with the 84 years old Ferenc Radványi as foreman. In our days, the Jewish community, whose close to 250 years of history the present work endeavored to revive, is practically nonexistent. This volume had attempted to evoke the distant centuries as well as the recent past, laying down a "pebble" on the memorial of the Kisvárdai Jews.

István Nézö, the author of the volume, was born in the year 1963. He graduated from the history and folk-art section of the Teacher's College in Nyiregyháza and subsequently finished the library division of the ELTE. Since the age of twenty he lives in Kisvárdai. He works for almost ten years in the library of the township, being in charge of the local studies. Two third of his publications in the local and county press, as well as in the specialty papers, are dealing with the history of Kisvárdai, the remainder are various works and essays. Some of his studies were nominated for, or earned prizes. His field of work inspired him to collect data on the Jewry of Kisvárdai: researchers in the subject of local history, furthermore interested ones, are often asking for data on this matter. The available shorter publications and manuscripts could not offer the profound and multifaceted information needed, and thus he had decided to write a study that fulfills the objective. It is not meant to close the research of the annals of the Kisvárdai Jewry but - hopefully - to launch it; in due time there should be further evolving of certain segments discussed in the book.

Life stories, afar from the native land.

Sándor Marik editor.

At first, the book was to be concluded with the remarks from the previous pages. The work of István Nézö is a thorough effort, it embraces over two centuries, apparently no locally existing document has eluded his attention. Concerning its task, it is also a fortunate that his interest transcends the limited matter of this one subject, as a local historian he researches the whole of the townships' life, while already looking for further documentation.

The history of the Kisvárda Jews - due to the known tragic events - ceased to exist as a community decades ago. It survives to this day mostly in the recollections of those hailing from there. All the same while reading the manuscript a feeling emerged: even if there was no religious Jewish life in the locality, we ought to know more about that half century. The lector's opinion averred this idea. Thus was born the editorial concept, to add to the study - which is intrinsically complete - personal histories of some individuals coming from Kisvárda. They would epitomize the way of the Kisvárda Jews life - even if dispersed around the world. We contacted people in places like München, Sidney, Los Angeles, or Toronto, who either came directly from Kisvárda or descended from such ancestry. We asked three of them to write about their daily life, how they live their Jewish life, far away from the native land.

The reader will find three wholly different life-avenues.

Efraim Agnon is a member of the older generation. In the year 1943 in Budapest, he was active in the Zionist youth organization and together with his companions had saved lives. For this activity he was later rewarded with the Bravery Decoration medal. He emigrated to Palestine in the year 1946 and worked for a long time in a kibbutz. Presently he lives in Jerusalem and is one of the upholders of the Israeli Association of the Kisvárda People. Marika Weinberger may be the sole person in the last half of the century, whose Jewish religious wedding in 1969 was at the same time a Kisvárda event. She is taking care of a large and devout family in London. Gábor Eichler lives in America, he is the founder-owner of an international magazine, publishing as a writer under the name of Gabriel Erem. His achievements are impressive. On the 25-th anniversary of his publication there was a salute in the Congress of the United States: " The Lifestyles magazine was created to pay tribute to all the treasures by which - in all the domains of life - the Jews have enriched our world. Gabriel Erem is a descendant of the Holocaust survivors - he is to be treasured for teaching Jewish history and culture, and for his passionate commitment to safeguarding the Jewish heritage", thus is it inscribed amongst others, in the proceedings of the Congress, on November 13, 1997.

These three notices_ have a common element - standing up for the religion and respectfully remembering the homeland; this is to be valued as a present-day continuity of the Kisvárda Jewish community of late.

They have neither a tombstone nor a cemetery.

Gábor Eichler (New York) on the tragedy of the Kisvárdá Jews.

There is bright sunshine and the name chiseled in stone strikes pointblank my heart: Kisvárdá. I close my eyes for a second and look again: do I see right? I am in Jerusalem, in the heart of the Holy Land. In the garden of the Yad Vashem Memorial. The sign at the path explains it all: The Valley of the Annihilated Jewish Communities. Before my eyes is the largest cemetery on earth, the spiritual resting place of the 6 million destroyed human lives. The name of the place carved into the Jerusalem stones hurts like a knife thrust into my heart.

Kisvárdá. It used to be my hometown, the hometown of my ancestors since 1747. Today it is a bustling city, a teeming beehive of a renewed life. But something is missing. Something that for hundred and ninety-seven years was an integral component of the population. My relatives, my community, the Jews.

Nobody is left today. There will be no new residents in the Jewish cemetery. The last Jew from Kisvárdá was already buried in the memorial park. The marvelous synagogue of late, an architectural masterwork that used to be the heartbeat home of our community, is presently just a museum. Only the wailing, drifting ghosts dwell behind its stained glass windows. They are the souls of those, who were carried away from this world on the railway of hate on Monday, May the 29-th, 1944. It was the last train of the ghetto, the last train of the populace rounded up from the neighboring locality. The family of my Father and Mother was amongst them.

I stand on the sunny hills of Jerusalem, but my eyes within see the wagon loading of the Kisvárdá ghetto. At the secondary station, near the lumberyard, in the former brick-factory, the gendarmes and the arrow-cross (*a*) henchmen of Gyula Thun are pummeling my family into the cattle-wagons with their rifle-butts. The faces, the eyes, the tears, the wailing, they are etched forever into my soul.

Ignátcz Eichler, my paternal Grandfather was sixty nine years old. His wife Anna Gerendási was fifty five years of age. The siblings of my Father Kálmán were Vilmos (44), Hugó (43), Margit (35) and Olga (25); the siblings of my Grandfather Ignátcz were Sámuel, Henrik, Jenő, Ödön and Gizella. My maternal Grandmother Ilona Berger and her sister Szerén, as well as their fourteen children, went up in smoke and soot within half an hour after their arrival to Auschwitz. Likewise my uncle Vili, his wife Bella and their two children aged six and four.

Many years later an eyewitness told me about the arrival to the death factory of Auschwitz of that train, with its transport of people force-loaded and degraded to counted cattle. Doctor Mengele stood on the ramp and pointed left or right with his elegant leather gloves. My Aunt

Olga, who stood holding in her arms one of her tiny twins, was one of the first ones to be sent towards the gas chamber. An unfortunate Jew from Aranyosapát - sick from the inhuman wagon transport - was moving too slowly, and an SS soldier crushed his skull with his rifle-butt. My uncle Vili, jumped out of the ranks and knocked down the SS henchman with just one blow of his bare fist. He knew what to expect and casting a last glance at his wife and the little twins, he leaped onto the high-voltage electrical barbed wire.

My maternal Grandmother Ilona Berger was 55 years old. She was among the first ones to go into the gas chamber. My Grandfather, Vilmos Frank, was also 55 years of age. During the First World War, in the times of Franz Josef, he won a metal for bravery as an Austro-Hungarian soldier, as such they only sent him into the hell of Therezienstadt. My Father was the lucky one: he was sent with his 23 years old twin brother Gábor, with brothers Sámuel (36), Ernő (33) and Jozsef (32) to the Russian front. It was an vicious task, they had to clear land-mines. All of them perished except my Father.

Illustration on page 148: Vilmos Frank, a strictly orthodox man, was the owner of the last meat-shop of Kisvárda, until the beginning of the 1980-s.

Why do I list their names? It is for the posterity to know, that they had existed. They have no tombstones. They have no cemeteries. They have lived, they were human beings. They had feelings, they enjoyed themselves. They were sad. They worked. They kept the holidays. They were part of that mosaic that was around Kisvárda and its vicinity. Hate had killed them, love should preserve their memory. I want to enlighten all those who live in our former homes and all those who are picking the grapes of our vineyards that, yes, they were Jews in Kisvárda, they did live there for two centuries.

As a young newspaperman, working for the redaction of Kelet-Magyarország, my friend and driver Feri took me once to Aranyosapáti; I asked him to stop for a moment in front of the Protestant church. Surprised, he asked me why do you want stop here? Because the house of my grandfather was on the opposite side of the street. I stepped out of the car and wanted to take a picture of the house. An old villager-man emerged from the house. He doffed his hat in an old-fashioned manner, looked over the Volga car with its official plate and the city-dweller visitor with a camera in his hand. Finally he asked: Excuse me, why do you take a picture of the house? I returned his salute and said that this used to be the house of my grandfather. The old man took out the meerschaum-pipe from his mouth, pushed back his hat, scratched his forehead and asked: Are you indeed the grandson of Ignátcz Eichler? On my affirmative the old man said: Wouw, your grandparents were good people, despite being Jews!

Kisvárda, the sparkling Jewish life of that Szabolcs township, cannot disappear into the abyss of history. Those few of us, who out of the four thousand souls of the Kisvárda Jewish community have mercifully stayed alive, we have to erect a memorial to that Jewish life, which was a basic ingredient of the Kisvárda commune. We reflect with bitter nostalgia on the deserted, despoiled ancestral homes, the abandoned synagogue and the Jewish school, never to be rebuilt. There won't be any more Jewish weddings in Kisvárda, and the laughter of Jewish kids will never be ringing again in the vanished Jewish school. But the faces are reemerging. I do recognize them, I see them again, they are the images shielded forever in our broken hearts. Kisvárda lives forever in this book. The timeless vigor of eternity will cast into perennial bronze its everlasting actuality.

A basic pillar of the Jewish survival was the divine tenet: Tell it to your children! Tell them how your life unfolded. Acquaint them with your hometown, which they may never know. They won't miss it, not like you, who left your roots there, your loves, your dreams and the fair years of your youth. There you have forsaken your faith in mankind and humanity. Tell them that one will stand up even in the radically changed new world, if one started from Kisvárdá with the parental heritage of a lofty ethical stance. Living in a new homeland, building a new place but always, always abiding by the spiritual and ethical standards of Kisvárdá.

Illustration on page 149: The last 'cheder'. The photo of the 24 children was taken in 1955. All the grandparents of the children had perished as martyrs in Auschwitz. Presently only four of these children live in Hungary, most of the others are citizens of Israel, Canada and the United States.

We have to erect a memorial to the spiritual treasure, to the abandoned synagogues, to the desecrated Torah-scrolls, to the ripped apart prayer-books where tremulous hands used to mark the joyful dates and the tearfully sad mourning notes. We have to remind the posterity that the bodyless names carved into marble in the entry-hall of the Kisvárdá Jewish synagogue were in fact people. Lives, hopes, neighbors, friends.

The face of the letters reflects the glitter of the Jerusalem sunshine. Kisvárdá. I close my eyes. Kisvárdá. Such a tiny dot that one can't find it on the map of the world. But it is immense on the map of the hearts, it's unforgettable. Going anywhere in the world, meeting and talking to a Jew from Hungary, one soon finds out that he has some Kisvárdá connection. Either he had family or had done some business there. My dear friend, the governor of New York State, George Pataki - originating from Kopocsapati/Kisvárdá - hugs me always like a family member. The commander of New York mayor's police force, Tibor Kerekes, was also born in Kisvárdá.

Whenever I meet people who have some connection to Kisvárdá I am always asked: Tell us how was life there? And I am always willing. Because for us, who were born and lived there the finest years of our youth, Kisvárdá became an image. It was the locale of our school-years, there we were molded into human beings.

Oh yes, I just have to close my eyes, it does not matter if I am in Jerusalem or New York, in any place I see Csillag Street in front of me. There are many shops. Further towards the corner is our imposing fine synagogue and in the center is the Csillag pharmacy. Behold to our vision of late, the Main Street - before it was called Malinovsky and later Lenin street - was packed with beautiful shops.

I imagine walking along the main street and behold, I see everybody is there. Uncle (*b*), Kesztnér the scarves dealer, Uncle Fülöp the hat maker, Uncle Laci Fisher the one-legged tobacconist, Ábris Markovits and Bigar the horse-carriage driver, the grocery store of Andor Klein, Banyi Eichler the picture-framer, the bicycle store of Pali Schwartz and Miklos Geiger, Ági Kosa and Valika Elbogen, the pharmacy apprentices.

Illustration on page 150: The photo was taken after awarding the last Hebrew school certificates, shortly before the 1956 revolution.

But I do see their predecessors too, the watchmaker Eimer, the glazier Teichmann, the cobbler Reismann, the chocolate-store of Stuhmer, the Biedermann and Kovács emporium, the printing-

shop of Gyula Klein, the bookstore of Preiss, the grocery emporium of Sasos Klein and Kellner, the shoe-store of Prerau, the perfumery of Frenkl and the delicatessen-store of the Vadász. I do see the carriage-man Grünwald and his horse Sári trudging on the cobble-stoned road. I do see the horse of Schwartz, the soda-water carrier, munching on the leaves of the roadside trees. Furthermore I see the restaurant of Majer Krausz, the fragrant garden of the herb-gathering Auntie Rozsi Majlech. The superb Friday evening dinners of my aunt Margit. The mosaics of my past are instantly rekindled in my memory.

In our splendid, stately synagogue, I do see even today the legendary chief rabbi Rosenbaum, the cantor Mandel, Fülöp and Haas my teachers, as well as the sexton Czitrom. I visualize the hundreds of parents, friends and acquaintances, who have visited the synagogue on a daily or weekly basis, while some of them came only once a year.

I see the yellow bricks of the synagogue, where as a child, I did carve my name year after year. I see the broken back window of the prayer-hall, through which I absconded from the Hebrew lesson in company of Laci Kósa and Gabi Karádi. I do see the forlorn presidential seat of the synagogue; on Saturdays I was sitting nearby in my best clothes, next to my grandfather Vilmos. I do see the kosher meat-store of my grandfather and I see the small Torah-scroll of our family, that is presently turning into dust in its abandoned tomb in the Kisvárdá cemetery.

Illustration on page 151: Steven Spielberg, the director of the Oscar winner movie Schindler's List (on the left) and Gábor Eichler (on the right).

I visualize the fortress, the beach, the spirits-refinery, the soccer-field, the Vasas team that was trained by my Father Akiva Eichler blessed be his memory, I do see the tobacco-exchange, the Vulkán foundry, the vineyards of my grandfather, where presently the grapes are picked by strangers. I see our house on Main Street, where me and my sister Györgyi had played in the shade of the chestnut trees.

I do see the park opposite the nunnery, behind the Main Square, where I had kissed for the first time Valika, and I do see the number one primary school where for the first time I have received my honor-pupil certificate, together with Csaba Tarczy and Zsuzsi Erdélyi. I see the splendid garden of Uncle Doctor Liener and I see the carriage taking Doctor Moskovits for a house-call to Tas. I do see the dental office of Doctor Weiss and the Mother's Shop where my parents bought the first swaddlings for my kid sister Györgyi. I see the Cultural Hall where I sang the first Happy Mother's Day to my mom and I see the Bessenyei High School, where I was locked in for indiscipline for the first time after school-time by Béla Kriveczky. The history lessons of Uncle Jozsi Pajzs, as well as the laughter of my favorite teacher of Hungarian, Nusi Sipos, are still ringing in my ears.

I see the hardware-store, where, accompanied by my inseparable friends Dénes Szabo and Sanyi Jeney, I have bought my first motorcycle. I do see Janika Terebessy, who was unsurpassed in painting images of the saints. I do see Czikó, the ÁVO-man (*c*) - he had a huge red spot on his face - feared by everybody. I see Ani Macza, whose mother always had me for dinner as if I were her own child. I see the movie-house on the Main Square, its projection-screen was my only open window to the world, there I had my first glimpse of New York's skyscrapers. I see the darkroom of the cultural house, where I have developed for the first time, my first print of the superb architecture of our synagogue. And I see the bench where for the first time I was coached

in descriptive geometry, by my dear childhood friend Sziszi, a.k.a. Laczi Szilágyi.

Illustration on page 152: This memorial tablet was put up in remembrance of the last leaders of the Jews of Kisvárdá and vicinity, at the main entrance of the Beit Halevy, near Montreal. The synagogue of chief rabbi of Nyirtass, Tzadik Halevy (Ferencz Loevy), was inaugurated under the name of 'Heichal Akiva' in October 1997, in memory of the community chairman Akiva Eichler z"l.

However, because of the peculiar was human mind works, even the people who had walked the cobblestoned Main Street well before my time, are alive in my heart. The Diener-bank and the courtyard of the Sós-store. The lawyer of my grandfather, Dr. Miklos Schönwald, the last president of the community, whose mansion-like house was later used for the party-committee. My inner eyes also do see all those, whose most meaningful entertainment was the Saturday afternoon and evening walks on Main Street. Boys and girls spun their youthful dreams in cheery chats. Even if those dreams never came true, even if all the beauty went up in the void, we cannot take out Kisvárdá from our memories, it lingers on as an eternal source of nostalgia.

I am aware that our dreams vanish in the terrible reality. Today_ I know that everything is different from our childhood. We, the youngsters of yesteryear, we are becoming grey-headed parents. Our children are dreaming the reveries of another world, they cannot see the quiet daily life of a small township in Szabolcs. Nonetheless, beyond everything, despite all the aching actuality, for us it persists to be our hometown, Kisvárdá.

"The author of these lines was born in Kisvárdá. He emigrated in the seventies, and graduated from the Tel Aviv University. He is the founder-publisher of Lifestyles, a well-known international magazine. His readers are coming from over ten countries. This writing, contributed on the request of the book's editor, is his first piece in 27 years written in the Hungarian language".

G l o s s a r y :

a/. Arrowcross: in the era between the two world wars, there was a political party in Hungary, which sported as emblem, a cross whose four arms ended in arrowheads. The program of the party was mainly rabid anti-Semitism, and during the year 1944 they were responsible for untold atrocities against the Jews.

b/. Uncle, Aunt: in colloquial Hungarian, it is a friendly-respectful form of addressing your elders, even if there is no kinship.

c/. ÁVO: the initials stand for the 'Detachment of State Security'. It was the much feared communist political secret police, the Hungarian version of the KGB.

Remembering, year after year.

Efraim Agnon (Jerusalem), in the name of the Israeli Association of the people originating from Kisvárda and its vicinity.

The war had ended. The calendar marked the summer of 1945. Those, who after the world-conflagration managed to stay alive, were struggling 'home'. Hoping to find acquaintances, friends and perhaps - or mainly - somebody from the family. Families were ripped apart by 'fate', dispersed in all corners of Europe, into faraway lands taken over by the German Reich.

The remnants of the forced-labor companies, dragged themselves back from the minefields, filled with dark fear and dubious presentiment, however some indescribable and unaccountable hope flickered. The human mind couldn't fathom the truth about the rumored destruction of the closest kindred.

Those who were deported, the spiritual and physical wrecks surviving the extermination and labor camps, they had no illusions. They had seen, the going up in 'smoke' of their dear ones. They had lived day after day, through the scale of horror. They had witnessed the operation of a genocidal extinction at a fast clip. Nevertheless - an inexplicable drag pulled them towards the former 'home', perchance there may be somebody expecting, awaiting them, tantamount to their longing.

That was how they, how we, were wandering from place to place, looking for witnesses, for renewed tidings, probing names, with the myriad 'where, when, how' questions, that had no

answers.

Illustration on page 153: The former prayer-house of Kisvárda.

The bare truth emerged, the hopes crumbled. Then came the bitter facing of looks that denied seeing the stripped homes or even the 'sympathetic' well-meaning interest. The brief encounter was soon followed by the realization that our native home ceased be the center of our lives. However, a few of the returning remnants were able - forgetting or setting aside everything - to restart their lives on the lethal place of their beloved ones.

Following the German invasion in March 1944, we, the Zionist youth, raised the banner of resistance and revolt, setting the route for young Jews. We shouldered a primary role, we strove to 'save the salvageable'. After the end of the war, history provided us again with a foremost task. It was to proffer direction and purpose, to raise hope in the desperate souls of the survivors. We did not pledge solace, however we prompted the young people to fight assuredly for a better future, for the creation of an new, independent nation-state.

We grabbed again the wandering-stave, we contemplated an unknown uncertainty. We joined as brethren and countryman, with mutual assistance in the new hardships. We have a sacred pledge to nurture, preserve and pass down from generation to generation the remembrance of our parents, siblings and families. We need to engrave into the minds of our children the history lessons of the Holocaust, our nation should never again be handed over into the grasp of others.

Our association meets every year, in a traditional memorial ceremony. In the background of the congenial assembly is the divine behest: 'REMEMBER'.

'Efraim Agnon (Teichman), was born in 1922 in Kisvárda. In the year 1943 he joined the Hashomer Hatzair Zionist youth movement, and following the German occupation, was a participant in the resistance and human-life rescuing activities. He emigrated to Palestine in 1946, and lived in a kibbutz for 25 years. Since 1971 he lives in Jerusalem, is self-employed as a manager and partner in an import-export company'.

A Jewish wedding in Kisvárda.

Marika Weinberger, the married Mrs. Nichtburg (London).

Summer is here, and - after crossing Europe by car - we will spend our vacation in Kisvárda, a small township in Hungary. My husband had planned everything to the most minute detail of the trip. We cross the Channel on a hover craft ferry - this takes only 45 minutes - arriving to Calais. The Hungarian border is reached via Belgium, Germany and Austria. From Hegyeshalom it takes three hours to Budapest, and after a short rest we continue towards Eastern Hungary, through the dunes of the Hungarian Plain. Proceeding on the meandering roads we arrive to the signboard: 'Szabolcs-Szatmár County', and soon afterwards we see the edge of the locality: 'KISVÁRDA'.

We slow down. My heart beats wildly, tears are rushing to my eyes.

The filling-station, where Aunt Kati Kun and Mrs. Radványi were employed, is our first stop; indeed it is on the Ajaki Street. The car rolls on slowly along the cobblestoned road. Here is the flower-shop that was owned by Bandi Weiss and his mother, opposite is the court, to the right is the main station, in winter after school we used to go sledding on the rail-embankment. My recollections are awakening: the house of the surgeon Kondrai, uncle Laci Schwartz lived nearby. The house of my uncle, the tinsmith Weisz, built and maintained with so much care. The Radványis', Weisz the dental doctor, Dr. Moskovits, the beer-garden, the police. The main street where we proudly walked with my father and so often enjoyed talking to friends.

Where did those days go, was it reality or just a dream?!

The past is so aching, it brings the tears gushing from my eyes. The Jews disappeared, they were cruelly wiped out from Kisvárda, not even vestiges were left. That little community - still existing after the war - is possibly forgotten by the people living there today; the fact that Jews had lived once there is 'merely' history for most of them.

My father was a shoemaker before the war. His shop was on the main street, he employed twenty workingmen. Everything ended with the advent of the nazis. His wife and three children, his parents, his brother with all his family, they all perished in the gas-chambers of Auschwitz, as routed by Mengele. He alone returned and helped by friends, has started a new life.

He became a shoemaker selling on markets and married anew. I was born within a year and a half in 1950, and my mother died after the childbirth. My dad grieved endlessly, but he had to go on living because of me. For the first half year, he took care of me and than remarried. He became the secretary of the KIOSZ (*a*), a task he was very well suited for and enjoyed by him. I still have the decorations he had received. For sure he had envious detractors too. One of them told him once; if you go to the synagogue, you can't fulfill this position. My father was not surprised and declared that he had suffered extensively for being Jewish and had paid a great price for it. He chose to resign. Later he became the ritual slaughterer in Kisvárda and the president of the Kisvárda Community. It was no easy task to hold together the handful of Jews, their numbers dwindling. There were more and more deaths', there was no children born. The meat consumption was decreasing, poultry was slaughtered every other week. Much later, the few people who demanded kosher meat, had to bring it from Budapest or Debrecen. The maintenance of the cemetery, as well as taking care of the emptied buildings became the responsibility of the communities of Budapest and Debrecen. _

Illustration on page 156: The young couple.....

Young people wandered away to higher studies and various universities. I was 16 years of age when I went to Budapest, to the Jewish high school. I met my future husband in the fourth grade, and within six month, on March 25, 1969, we were wedded. The ceremony led by the chief rabbi Dr. Shück, was held in the courtyard of the Kisvárda synagogue. Sightseers stood on the fences and the roofs, wherever they could find a spot. This was the first traditional churchly Jewish wedding under a chupah (canopy) since the war. Four men held the pillars, seven members of the family and the community were honored with the seven blessings. When, according to the tradition, the groom stepped on the glass breaking it, everybody intoned in unison 'MAZEL

TOV' (good luck).

Our wedding dinner was a magnificent feast, companioned with old traditional Jewish melodies, played by the gypsy-fiddle. Guests came from all over the country. My father had slaughtered three calves. The Jewish ladies of the township - Sári Eichler, Rozsi Ellenbogen, Mrs. Karádi - were busy cooking the wedding meal since the morning. Others who also helped were Olga Winkler from Nagykállo and my aunt Joli Weisz. By afternoon I was almost dazed from the fine aromas. The wedding-feast lasted until midnight.

Within 4 weeks we did leave Hungary, arriving on May the first to England. This was the real start of my life. Years were passing by, six children were borne. In the beginning we went for a home visit every year, later, with the large family, it became more and more difficult. My parents aged and grew sicklier. Things turned to be very difficult. In the year 1984 we lost our 4 years old son with leukemia, the year before it was my father who had passed away. Mother was lonely, but despite all our bidding, did not want to leave her home. She too passed away three years ago. She was the last devout Jewish woman in Kisvárdá.

I stayed in contact with friends and former teachers, visited them on each of my trips. Last time I was home together with my family two years ago, we were the guests of my friend of old times Anikó Marcza (presently Mrs. Szilágyi) and her family.

Kisvárdá did change a lot since I departed. In my opinion the modernization of the main square and main street had changed the character of the locality. I think that it would have been more appropriate if they would have properly repaired and restored in style the buildings. Truthfully, I don't like the way the concrete block buildings are weighting down the city. Our formerly splendid synagogue was dismantled, the beautiful hand painted walls got whitewashed. Once it was surrounded with a lawn, today it is just bare ground...

My childhood dreams, my visions of the future, they were all conceived in my hometown, in Kisvárdá. The years had passed away. My husband and myself, we became both middle-aged parents. My oldest daughter is 28 years old, she lives with her four children in New York. My 26 years old son lives in London, he is manager at a company, has one child. My other daughter is 26 years old, and my other son is 20 years of age, a computer- programmer. Last, but not least: my 12 years old little daughter is in the sixth grade and a good student. I have realized my most important goal of my life: to raise a religious family that will abide in Judaism. They will never forget the township from where their parents and grandparents hailed and whose dreams were erased by Hitler and the nazis.

Illustration on page 157:and the family - today.

I have lived the most beautiful and important 18 years of my life in that township, which used to be the home of 2000 devout Jewish families.

So long, KISVÁRDA!

'The author lives in London since 1969'.

G l o s s a r y:

a/. KIOSZ: the initials stand for 'National Association of Small Artisans'. It was one of the many organizations spawned and manipulated by the communist party in order to globally control the social fabric of a country.