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Theory of Anti-Semitism Conceived by István Bibó

**ISTVÁN BIBÓ AND THE HISTORY
OF HUNGARY IN THE XXTH CENTURY**

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Introduction

This paper attempts to show how original and deep-sighted was István Bibó's theory of anti-Semitism. The theory was developed in an essay written right after the Holocaust. The major goal of the essay is to provide material for the Hungarian citizens classified from 1938 to 1944 as non-Jews to morally confront the horrors of anti-Semitism embodied by the mass deportation and killing of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian citizens who were classified by the anti-Jewish legislation as Jews. The scope of the essay, however, reaches beyond morality. In order to provide firm basis for moral judgment the author wanted to give a profound historical, sociological and social psychological analysis of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, the essay was published in 1948 in Hungary in Hungarian in a periodical which was soon to be banned by the Communists, who were far from intending to promote coping with the collective trauma stemming from the Holocaust. No matter which roles were cast, perpetrators, spectators and victims equally were silenced by the Communist takeover due to come in 1948. Consequently, there was no time and opportunity for the public and the scholarly community to realize how original and profound the author's approach was.

Several key discoveries of István Bibó will be explored in the paper. First, we would like to demonstrate that Bibó had understood the concept of the social entropy-resistance which was developed much later by Ernst Gellner. Second, the author had noted the role of accessibility heuristics in the formation of everyday heuristics. Moreover, in describing the cognitive and emotional roots of anti-Semitism, he detected the processes of categorization, stereotype formation, illusory correlation that were described much later by Bettelheim and Janowitz, Allport and Hamilton.

Resistance to social entropy

Dealing with the determinants of modern political anti-Semitism, Bibó is keen in distinguishing the sociological factors rooted in history and the social psychological factors. As a result of these factors, Jews in Central and Eastern Europe had been increasingly perceived by non-Jews as merciless invaders who had nothing in common with the majority's soul and interest. Lacking clear political and legal boundaries, the various national groupings could not find an argument against the attempts of assimilation on behalf of the Jews other than the racist one. The need to find differentiation between the assimilated Jews and the rest of the nation was especially strong among Germans living in Germany, as well as among Germans and Hungarians living in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. These were the countries where the assimilation process was the most advanced. Anti-Semitism, however, was not less widespread among the Poles living in Russia, or among the Russians themselves. Elements of modern anti-Semitism and medieval religious anti-Semitism in these societies mingled.

In exploring the antecedents of modern anti-Semitism Bibó points out that the medieval societies of Europe were particularly characterized by the strictly traditionalist, customary, and inherited organization of human opportunities and existence, that is, a social organization that strictly opposed any rational pragmatism and exploitation of opportunities that were independent of personal qualities. In transition from feudalism to capitalism in connection with emergence of the market economy the rational handling

of opportunities gradually became one of the basic principles of social and economic life. "Much of the broad social layers-especially the civil servants, craftsmen, some of the merchants, and the small landholders –have merely acknowledged the new conditions, and adapted themselves to capitalism only to the extent of using its means of distribution and mass-produced *commodities*. In all other respects, they continued to cultivate those forms of human existence that have been in force before the advent of capitalism. The capitalist penchant for rationalism as the 'natural' method of management improved opportunities for Jews because –quite independently of capitalism-they had similar conditioned attitudes. This explains how Jews of Western and Eastern Europe –fresh out of their fully enclaved Near Eastern ritual communities (we could say ,fresh out of the Middle Ages)-were able with unmatched alacrity to adopt the modern capitalist method of acquiring wealth while a significant portion of Europe's societies, which nurtured capitalism, continued to view the same capitalist principles as alien."(p. 216. italics and quotation marks from Bibó.)

The first political anti-Semites were recruited from the ranks of the losers of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As Bibó puts it „the evident active involvement of Jews in all of these processes made anti-Semites primarily out of those for whom modern economic and social progress brought crises, losses, or dislocation.” (p. 234) As far as the chances of anti-Semitism becoming a powerful and destructive popular ideology are concerned, Bibó distinguishes between two types of communities. In the „normal community” the Jews are not to be seen by the non-Jews in terms of outgroup but are recognized as members of the nation. In the „weak community”, however, where people have lost their sense of reality, every social problem is represented in the context of the conflict between the ingroup, identified as the nation, and the outgroup, identified as the Jews.

Since the publication of Jenő Szűcs's seminal essay on István Bibó, we know how important the river Rhine was to Bibó as the border making off where Western Europe ends.¹ In the rest of Europe, social development according to Bibó was uneven and halted, and here were located the countries of „weak community” and people „with lost

¹ Szűcs 1983.

sense of reality.” Social, economic, and political institutions of capitalism in these countries, such as class structure, market, and pluralist democracy were „based not on the internal demands of progress but on the economic, political and intellectual reverberations set off by an already developed Western capitalism and the already successful democratic revolution of Western Europe.”

(p. 235) As a consequence, in the regions of Europe east of the Rhine, the old social structure remained intact and strong, capable to resist to the social forces stemming from capitalism. The narrative of the inevitable conflict between „Jews and their surroundings” in Germany, in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in Russia is told accurately by István Bibó in his essay of 1948. (pp. 236-238) What is important to note here is the author’s stress on the historically determined structural aspect of anti-Semitism, which allowed not much space for alternative narratives of the inter-group relations between Jews and non-Jews.

In Bibó’s writing on the historical and social roots of anti-Semitism in Europe, the words of explanation and description are intertwined with the words of evaluation and persuasion. There is an inner tension in the text stemming from the clash of two discourses. One of the discourses highlights on investigation and analysis, while the other discourse focuses on approval and disapproval on moral grounds. Taken together, the two strikingly different discourses fail to reinforce each other. One is wondering who were in the target group of the communication. Anti-Semite readers would have been deterred to read such words as „healthy environment” and „normal community” contrasted with „weak community,” „lost sense of reality,” and „false political formulas.” Because the author does not conceal his moral position, anti-Semites soon discover that they are out of the target group, and belong to the realm dominated by weakness, imbalance, pathology. Non-anti Semite readers might realize the ideological bond established between them and the author, but they might find superfluous the long historical and sociological excursions.

In order to reveal the originality of Bibó’s theory, we have to dissect the text and to focus only on the analytical parts. In doing so, we shall see that behind the value-loaded phraseology there is a sound sociological theory that can be tested and measured.

According to this theory, prejudice toward an out-group in modern society is function of the inability to disperse throughout the society, which is expected to operate on the principle of equal opportunity.

According to the theory of Ernest Gellner, developed much later than Bibó's essay, „dispersion of ethnic groups along the lines of class society can be considered as one of the major consequences of emergence of capitalism. Before discussing ethnicity, Gellner raises the problem of social groupings altogether. In light of the modern social psychological literature (Tajfel, 1981, Turner, 1987) human groups can be formed by any criteria. There is ample social psychological evidence that there is simply no limit to the number of ways in which people can be classified. Gellner suggests, however, that from a sociological point of view most of the possible classifications will be of no interest whatever. Left-handedness, boldness, propensity to depression are examples of such classification. But some of the classifications can become socially and politically very important. Classification based on religion, ethnicity, and territory results in socially and politically important group formation. These are the groups which have the ability to resist social entropy. According to Gellner, a „classification is entropy-resistant if it is based on an attribute which has a marked tendency not to become, even with the passage of time since the initial establishment of an industrial society, evenly dispersed throughout the entire society. In such an entropy-resistant case, those individuals who are characterized by the trait in question will tend to be concentrated in one part or another of the total society.” (Gellner, 1983: 64-65)

Gellner imagines an artificial society which contains a certain number of individuals who are, by an accident of heredity, pigmentationally *blue*. The rest of this society is composed of non-blues. Let us assume that, despite the passage of generations since the initial establishment of new economic and social order most *blues* stubbornly persist in occupying places either at the top, or at the bottom, of the society in question: In other words, the *blues* tend to capture either too many, or too few of the advantages available in this society. In that sense we speak about blueness as a social-entropy-resistant trait.

Industrial societies are not free of conflict. Fissures are rampant. Taking into account the conflict potential of industrial society, it is easy to understand that entropy-resistance deepens the fissures, sometimes veritable chasms, in the industrial societies in which it occurs. As a result of cross-categorization, blueness and class will overlap, facilitating the merge of two distinct kinds of group hostility. The association of *blueness* with class position will create modern political prejudice.

The introduction of the notion of entropy resistance into the discourse on the origins of modern political anti-Semitism solves the problem of two discourses in Bibó's writings. Borrowed from physics, the term of entropy-resistance is value-free and the usage of this term breaks through the wall of moral judgment. The moral discourse will have been replaced by the analytical discourse, finding a path to the reader irrespective of his or her moral stance.

The most decisive conflicts and misunderstandings leading to the formation of anti-Semitic beliefs and prejudice among non-Jews concerning Jews is embedded in the propensity of social groups to resist social entropy. Jews are perceived by non-Jews to achieve economic and social successes and to take advantage of the new opportunities created by market economy. Members of the surrounding society, however, fail to understand that in the case of the Jews due to cultural reasons, there was a match between the supply and the demand in terms of skills, whereas in the case of the surrounding society there was a mismatch of supply and demand in terms of skills. In light of the theory of the three regions of Europe, it is not surprising that resistance to social entropy was much more pronounced in societies of Central and Eastern Europe than in countries of Western Europe. Due to the increased tendency to resist social entropy in Central and Eastern Europe, members of the surrounding society supposed that the Jewish successes were always easily achieved, and were based on taking advantage of opportunities and methods which „decent” people „usually” disavow. Members of the surrounding society consistently tended to evaluate differences between their own moral qualities and the moral defects of the Jews, whom they continued to consider as members of the out-group.

Inter-group Encounters and Experiences of Each Other

In exploring the historical roots of the anti-Semitic imagery and the concomitant prejudice, Bibó is explicit. His cognitive archeology reveals layers of ethnocentrism, Christian anti-Judaism and modern political anti-semitism. The force stemming from the stock of historically produced ideas, however, would not be so strong without the support stemming from the life-world framed and structured by the constraints of social structure which was formed by default of social entropy. Anti-Semitism, according to Bibó, is a kind of knowledge of the persons involved who can hardly be persuaded by means of rational argumentation alone. No doubt that the knowledge rendered by anti-Semitism is false. But the question is why this knowledge cannot be falsified? Bibó seeks the answer to this question in the spirit of sociology of knowledge. Due to the presence of entropy-resistant groups, the nature of everyday encounter between persons is such that they are compelled to look at each other in terms of in-group and out-group. This is the background which makes possible to raise the following two questions posed by Bibó: „What do we mean when we say that Jews have certain experiences with their human environment”? „What does it mean when we say that anti-Semites have certain experiences with Jews?” Speaking about „certain experiences concernig each other,” Bibó means the diametrically opposed generalizations of people mirroring each other as „Jews” and „non-Jews.”

The stock of the anti-Semitic knowledge

According to Bibó the knowledge people tend to acquire in the society concerning each other as members of diverse groups can be either „real” or „false.” Real knowledge is the product of active, lively, manifold and participative social behavior which is not constrained by external circumstances but based on certainties achieved by independent judgment.

False knowledge is the result of emotionally fixed and tainted experience. This experience is formed by perceived injustice and compulsive inability to change. Moreover, this kind of knowledge is highly selective. The facts from an infinite

multitude of phenomena are filtered through the closed mind. The facts are treated as „examples.” No question, that each of these examples are real, but being of limited significance, in the long run, they become obstacles to further experiences in grasping the reality in its entirety. Misleading methods of detection and investigation are applied. The facts can be real but the context is false. The core idea of Bibó, that the information processed by the anti-Semitic mind are produced by entropy-resistant social structure, and that this structure results in organizational contradictions, hidden falsehoods, or prejudices bringing individuals and groups together in such a manner that they repeatedly and constantly perpetuate these misleading experiences about each other.

As far as the cognitive consequences of the forced intergroup coexistence concerned, the best example is the relationship of the „housewife” and the „domestic servant.” This is the famous „kitchen example” of Bibó, which should be taught in any class on prejudice and inter-group conflict. In Bibó’s own words, the example is as follows: „It is the structured relationship between the *housewife* and the *domestic servant* during the period of transition from hierarchical feudalism to a society of classless equality, that is, to a bourgeois liberal society. There is nothing more real than the housewife’s experience of the servant’s laziness, obstinacy, maliciousness, and lack of reliability: and, similarly, nothing is more real than the servant’s experience of Milady’s capriciousness, unpredictability, inhumanity, and aloofness. Yet, in spite of these *real* experiences, neither of them has any real knowledge of the other’s entire being, because their relationship is structured in such a way that-necessarily and typically-they experience only each other’s negative traits, even if they happen to face the best representative of the other type.” (pp. 212-213)

Bibó, of course, does not forget to add that the relationship between the housewife and the domestic servant is an asymmetric one. Whatever they know and feel about each other, both partners are captives of the structure, and their experience of each other is equally misleading. On the other hand, their grievances are not of equal seriousness. When it comes to a historical accounting of justice, their similar palpability will not prevent us from considering the complaint lodged by the domestic servant as the more valid.

The people dealing with the multitude of single events they encounter in their daily life are urged to order these events and to place them into familiar rubric. Our experience in life tends to form itself into clusters. The formation of clusters is engendered by categories which usually are names. Categorization is a cognitive process, which makes possible fast and cognitively costless generalization. A category enables us to identify any related object. Moreover, it saturates all that it contains with the same ideational and emotional flavor. (Allport, 1958: 20-21) Categories would be hollow boxes of knowledge without exaggerated beliefs defining the contents of the category. Stereotypes are the exaggerated beliefs concerning the visible and non-visible character of the people in a category. Prior and unsupported judgment based on the exaggerated beliefs leads to prejudice, which is, according to Allport „thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant.” (Allport, 1958:7) Bibó was not using the term of categorization but was aware of the nature of this process. Moreover, he was also aware of the connection between categorization, stereotype and prejudice.

Instead of categorization, stereotyping and prejudice Bibó was speaking about *collectivel traits*, which he was presenting as generalizations stemming from „both friendly and unfriendly contacts between Jews and their environment.” Years before Allport, he was stating almost in the same manner that „human groups may have certain attributes, characteristics, behavior patterns, or sets of conditioned responses that could distinguish and identify them in a given situation.. Since we are talking about a community or a group including a number of individuals, calling these traits or behavior patterns 'typical' or 'characteristic' can only imply a statistical ratio.” (Bibó, p. 214)

Bibó, like the famous American theorist of anti-Semitism Gavin L. Langmuir much later, was able to differentiate between biased generalization, xenophobic representation and chimeric imagination. These varieties of inter-group representation reflect different degrees of statistical distortion. Biased generalizations are collective images formed by the use of de-contextualized statistical data, selective statistical arguments, obscure preassumptions (e.g. frequencies of Jewish bankers, Communists, opera singers, etc. compared to their proportion in the total population). Xenophobic representations

redeem the group in terms of anxiety and strangeness (e.g. Jews as aliens, intruders, parasites). Chimerical imaginations attribute with certitude to out-groups characteristics which have never been empirically observed (blood libel, world-conspiracy).

Bounded rationality

Following the example of the „housewife” and the „domestic servant,” Bibó is keen on demonstrating the mutually misleading patterns of Jews and non-Jews experience of each other in the society of restricted social mobility and of struggle with traditionalism. Members of the majority „tend to notice and acknowledge that when it comes to choosing a residence or trade, learning languages, determining life-styles, adapting to improvements or declines in living conditions, or utilizing openings, favorable trends, and economic boom periods, Jews evaluate their chances in a more rational manner than others, that whatever appears best on the basis of such rational evaluation they tend to focus on it, implement it, and in doing this, they are less likely to be disturbed by the unusual or non-traditional nature of their actions than others. Jews consider this such a self-evident, intelligent and exclusively rudimentary approach that they seldom realize that others see it as a *characteristically* Jewish behavior pattern. On the contrary, Jews perceive the behavior of surrounding society to be peculiar, especially when it becomes noticeable that a remarkably large percentage of non-Jews act in an impractical manner: failing to see or take advantage of newly opened opportunities, failing to perform actions which they have clearly recognized as practical, failing to adjust their living style to growing or decreasing possibilities and continuing to try to make a living predetermined by their habits, prejudices, and demands that are either lower than the opportunities or higher than the possibilities before them, implementing changes not when their necessity is realized but when compelled to do so, and expanding the greatest amount of energy not when new opportunities must be exploited but when their established or desired lifestyle needs to be protected” (Bibó p.217-218, italics from Bibó).

The inability to assess each other in terms of individual and personalized judgment, and the tendency to resort to stereotypes, is associated with bounded rationality of the

members of the in-group and the out-group. Persons embedded in inter-group relations are restricted in their judgments by the cognitive horizon set by the nature of inter-group relation, which limits the amount of available information, and reduces the number of possible alternatives and their associated consequences in the decision making. As a result, the definition of the situation is likely to be incomplete and inadequate. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) speak about simplifying heuristics, which generally obstruct the the process of adequate decision making. Two sorts of simplifying heuristics can be distinguished. Two sorts of simplifying heuristics can be distinguished. The availability heuristic reflects the influence of the relative availability of objects or events (that is their accessibility through memory, perception, or imagination). Representativeness heuristics involves the application of one's sense of resemblance between objects or events. In applying this heuristic, a person assesses the extent to which an object or event possess features that would enable the person to categorize the object or event appropriately.

Because of the volume, variety and complexity of inter-group situations, persons frequently are tempted to apply the simplifying heuristics which costs less effort to guide their daily behavior in dealing with members of the in-group and the out-group. The stereotypes and prejudices come from enhanced availability and distorted representativeness. Both means are from the stock of bounded rationality, which has especially harsh consequences in inter-group relations.

Ethnocentrism

The best that can be said about an the in-group that members all use the term *we* with the same emotional significance. Most in-groups refer to themselves in positive emotional tone. The cleavage between the in-group and the out-group is reflected by the acceptance and approval of the socially constructed world of the in-group, and the rejection and disapproval of the socially constructed world of the out-group. This is ethnocentrism. Bibó, again, was not using the term ethnocentrism, but it is difficult not to realize that he had something similar in mind when he characterized how Jews and

non-Jews mutually experienced the other's moral inferiority within the constraints of cross-categorization of being simultaneously Jew and Capitalist on the one hand, and being cross-categorized as non-Jew and member of a traditional group on the other hand. As a result, a cognitive wall was created between the two groupings.

Bibó is extremely good in identifying the core of the psychological antagonism between the two groupings. He is considering the moral issues as the most important elements constructing the wall of misunderstanding and suspicion based on the differing beliefs of what should be taken for granted.

„Both groups experience a difference in the other's behavior that they attribute to their own moral superiority and the other's moral inferiority. In everyday practice, such denigration of the other's system of moral values leads to the point where Christian social morality will serve for nothing more than the covering of violent and plundering injustices, while Jewish social morality will be nothing more than a justification for fraud and trickery. The optical illusion is mutual.” (Bibó p.221)

The emergence of conflicting images of each other is inevitable. Jews will be seen by the non- Jews as dishonest, indecent, morally defected, calculating swindlers, and this attitude will be echoed by Jews depicting the members of the majority as a bunch of conservative, helpless, and stupid creatures.

The stranger's psychology

The nature of conflict between those who were viewed as Jews and non Jews in the society was aggravated by the peculiar role of the stranger attributed to the Jews. The expectations of this role veiled the structural element of the inter-group conflict and created resentment in the majority, fueling this most passionate element of anti-Semitism with anger and frustration (Szabó, 1981). The stranger's role was brought about by the lack of shared traditions between different clusters of the society. As Bibó put it: „Jews scarcely brought with them any feudal, aristocratic, or serf-like conventions from their own separate communities, and could attribute their

emancipation to the breaking down of the feudal social order. As for their own traditional conventions, those were readily discarded to the greatest extent by their emancipatory segments which established the closest contacts with their social environment. By contrast, in the surrounding European societies the view of society based in qualitative distinctions among individuals had become deeply ingrained into the very consciousness of all social strata and occupations, largely defining society's relationship, conventions and communal and emotional ties. The de-stabilizing of this view proved to be a great shock: the structures based on it reacted to their elimination with reluctance, anger, and vindictiveness and gave up their positions only gradually, after stubborn resistance. Thus, at the time when the universal choir of modern social criticism began to disassemble some of the social and moral edifices long criticized by Jews, the conflict between the social-critical attitudes of the Jews and those of the more conservative segments of the surrounding society became sharper. Jews became convinced that the farsightedness of their criticism, and the acuity of their moral judgement had been vindicated. Moreover, a segment of them (whose members retained their ethnic consciousness) asserted from time to time that-- surrounded by a society whose members were intellectually and morally more reluctant and slower--Jews as a whole should become flag-bearers of rationality, progress, modernity, and new values. At the same time, the more conservative elements of non-Jewish society--or those more disturbed by the changing values". (Bibó, pp. 221-222)

The perception of the critical attitude of the Jews unleashed in the majority the fear of „Jewish destructive influence,” which became the major constituent of modern political anti-Semitism.

The way Bibó presented the roots of disillusionment and „objective” observation concerning the major political and social affairs of the majority is strikingly similar to the approach of Alfred Schutz, who has characterized the psychology of the stranger. According to Schutz, the stranger becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group.

As Bibó imagined the „Jew”, the stranger of Schutz also lacks feelings for distance. The stranger is condemned by his position to oscillate between remoteness and intimacy. He cannot but express his distrust in every matter which seems to be so simple and uncomplicated to those in the surrounding society who rely on the efficiency of unquestioned recipes which have just to be followed but not understood. The cultural pattern of the majority group is to the stranger not a shelter but a field of adventure, not a matter of natural course but a dubious topic of investigation, not an instrument for disentangling problematic situations but a problematic situation itself and one hard to master.

Schutz stresses the point, that the stranger's learning attitude explains two basic characteristics of the stranger's attitude toward the majority groups. As we have seen above both characteristics were discovered and described by Bibó as well. Perceived objectivity is one of the characteristics. It is important to note, however, that the majority is wrong in assuming that the stranger's sole endeavour is to be critical. Social, political and economic criticism of the stranger is a misperception because in reality the stranger's objectivity cannot be sufficiently explained by his critical attitudes. To be sure, he is not bound to worship the idols of tribe and has a vivid feeling for the incoherence and inconsistency of the approached cultural pattern. But the criticism originates far less in his propensity to judge the newly approached cultural pattern and to examine for this purpose with care and precision what seems self-explanatory to the in-group. The stranger only seems to be critical against his or her intentions.

Schutz, like Bibó is explicit concerning the second characteristics stemming from the the stranger's role. Tragically, the stranger's loyalty is doubted. The stranger remains a marginal man, a cultural hybrid on the verge of two different patterns of group life, not knowing to which of them he belongs. The stranger is called ungrateful by the majority since he seems to refuse to acknowledge that the cultural pattern offered to him grants him shelter and protection. But members of the majority don't understand that the stranger is actually in the state of transition and cannot consider the cultural pattern of majority as a protecting shelter but a labyrinth in which he has lost all senses of orientation.

Illusory correlation

No doubt, the Jews are construed as strangers by the anti-Semitic mind. Moreover, they are seen as a minority in the society. Bibó acknowledges the multiple political, cultural and social psychological disadvantages associated with minority existence. He stresses that the inhumane relationship existing between the Jews and the surrounding social environment has its ultimate causes in the attitudes of the non-Jews, and that the consequences of that relationship are also much more severe when it comes to the actions of the surrounding environment. As a result, the Jews were accused of various crimes, morally condemned and detested, and at times subjected to hysterical outbursts and injuries – without any valid empirical proof for the above accusation.

Lacking empathy, the members of the majority have no idea how vulnerable it made the Jews feeling repressed for centuries, to cope with emotional outbursts, and the malevolent predilection for injury and deprecation. Moreover, the Jews, according to Bibó, were perceived by the majority as different because of their tendency to dissent and oppose. In view of the fact that the majority considered the moral and social order as just any manifestation of criticism and disenchantment caused cognitive dissonance in public opinion and was condemned immediately. Consequently, when members of the majority „saw Jews dissenting, their opposition to criticism was reinforced by the antipathy felt toward the critics. This was how non-Jews formed the experience-based view of Jews that a fairly large proportion of the latter tend to ignore the social value system, undermine social authority, discover and expose lowly interests and motives behind hallowed and respected social institutions, and regularly use the well-known sarcastic humor which turns pathetic situations into objects of ridicule. This, combined with the more rational handling of economic situations, yields the societal belief according to which many Jews simply ignore the moral rules of everyday social life.” (Bibó, p.220) Consequently, anti-Semites believe that „we are honest” and „they are dishonest”. This belief consists of moral devaluation of dissent and identification of the dissenting voice with the Jews.

In summarizing the core elements of the anti-Semitic image Bibó speaks about „an integrated and set image of the Jews’ dangerous traits, their greedy and deceitful stride toward enrichment, their political and moral destructiveness, and their penchant for being vengeful and domineering.” This highly negative stereotype can be explained by the theory of illusory correlation developed by cognitive social psychologists in the second half of the past century, decades after the publication of Bibó’s essay.

Illusory correlation is an erroneous conclusion concerning the collective character traits attributed to the minority by an observer belonging to the majority. The error lies in the perceived degree of association between two variables or classes of events. In the normal everyday experience the typical majority person interacts with minority persons relatively infrequently and even his or her exposure to minority members is rare. Consequently, when a majority person does encounter a minority person it is for him or her a *distinctive event*. Distinctiveness in this case is being defined by infrequency. In addition, undesirable or deviant (immoral, indecent) behavior is also seen less frequent than desirable behavior and hence exposure to deviance is also to be considered as distinctive. Being informed of any co-occurrence of minority status and act of deviance the pairing of „minority member” and „undesirable behavior” will drive the typical majority member to infer a relationship between the two elements of the pair, even if the distribution of desirable and undesirable behavior has been the same for both minority and majority members. Such an inference would provide the basis for the differential perception of the majority and minority groups, and hence for stereotyping. Not surprisingly, the resulting stereotype will be unflattering.

Another theory which is worth mentioning explains the content of the Anti-Semitic stereotype. This theory was developed in the 1940’s by the psychoanalytical school of social psychology (Adorno et al. 1950). Bibó was seemingly not influenced by this school. As we have seen his approach was based on historical, sociological, and cognitive social psychological aspects. He identified anti-Semitism as „distorted” and „false” interpretation of experiences of non-Jews. As he writes „all members of the surrounding society (anti-Semites and non-anti-Semites) *have the same experiences about Jews*. [Bibó, p. 232 italics in the original]. But if the experience is the same, what

is the path leading to anti-Semitism as opposed to the path leading to the lack of anti-Semitism? Unfortunately, Bibó has no answer to this question which was elaborated in the same time in America by Adorno and his colleagues exploring the theory of authoritarian personality. In a similar vein, Bettelheim and Janowitz carried out a research on anti-Semitic stereotypes among veterans of the American Army in 1948. These researchers found the familiar „European” pattern of anti-Semitic stereotype. Egoism, clannishness, intelligence, aggressiveness were the most frequently exposed traits in the interviews. Looking for the basic psychological mechanism responsible for the presence of these traits in the stereotype, Bettelheim and Janowitz found that *projection* was the mechanism by means of which the prejudiced person tried to solve a conflict within himself by ascribing to members of the out-group emotions, motives, and behavior which actually had been nesting in himself.

According to the theory of these authors, the category of „Jew” provides subjects onto which anti-Semites can project the rejected emotions which created an inner conflict in themselves. This makes capable them of freeing themselves of the conflict and reestablishing their personality integration which has been endangered by demands of which their superego did not approve.

Bettelheim and Janowitz state that out-group hostility is a symptom of personal disintegration. Personal integration can be threatened by two opposing psychological entities: superego and id. The latter has also targets represented by Blacks in America or Gypsies in Europe. In the context of anti-Semitism, the former is more important. Superego, by definition, controls human behavior in line with social standards. The capitalist economic system stressing the necessity to work hard, to achieve, and to be successful seems suitable to represent superego demands, many of which the individual feels unable to meet. Consequently, among anti-Semites there is a tendency to select the Jew for projecting onto him those tendencies rejected by the superego.

Conclusion

István Bibó used to say that he had lived between 1946 and 1948. These were the years when he was free of external political constraints. Actually, he lived between 1911 and 1979. Between these two dates he had many lives. Between 1930 and 1936 he studied law in Budapest, Vienna, and Geneva. His academic career was discontinued in October 1944 by the extreme right government which was put into power by the German occupying forces. He was a high ranking public servant in Ferenc Erdei's Home office in 1945-46. As an outstanding political scientist he became professor of political science at the University at Szeged between 1946-1950 and was elected member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Between 1950 and 1956 he worked as a librarian. In the last days of the revolution in 1956 he was minister without portfolio in Imre Nagy's government. He never recognized the legitimacy of the Soviet intervention but tried to seek compromise between the opposition and the puppet government superimposed by the Soviets. He was arrested in 1957. He spent six years in prison as a political prisoner. He died in 1979 as a public icon.

Apart from the texts he left not much to posterity. As a public servant he failed to replace the old-fashioned county system with a decentralized system of local self-government. As a political scientist he underestimated the obstacles on the road to democracy. He was not invited to advise to make peace following World War II. He believed in democratic socialism that has never been realized. His moral stance in politics disqualified him to struggle in the dirty politics of state socialism. The transition from state socialism to democracy, market economy, and political pluralism has not brought him resurrection either.

Paradoxically, he revived in a role which he had thought to be the least important for him. The close reading of his texts reveals how profound was his understanding of social psychology. His conceptions such as „collective hysteria,” „fear,” „false realism,” „need for self-justification,” and „distress of East European small nations” can easily be interpreted according to the paradigms of mainstream social psychology. István Bibó's approach to the problems of political culture, political character, and

national identity is called by Ferenc Erős „productive” and congruent with the theories and the paradigms of social psychology which were much later developed as the „theory of social categorization,” „social identity theory,” or the „theory of cognitive dissonance.” (Erős, 1992:16) This paper was to prove that no social psychological approach to the theory of inter-group relations can be conceived without taking into account Bibó’s discussion of the relationship between collective experiences and collective traits and no student of anti-Semitism can dismiss his theory on the connection between anti-Semitism and society’s developmental disorders.

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