

## Bulgarian Jewish Women and Scientific Knowledge

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### *Abstract*

The main aim of the study is: to present the Bulgarian Jewish women who are not widely known in our society, but their contribution in scientific knowledge is enormous, with which to give an unexpected insight into science – how in times when abusive with the scientific knowledge is destroying millions of human beings, these same people, despite their fate, they make and impossible to preserve their lives and to create a science that is in favor of all humanity. Between 30 January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, and 9 May 1945, 6 million were killed, of which 1.5 million were babies and young children. Every two of three Jews in Europe are killed. Among these 6 million ordinary people, there are also thousands of rabbis, teachers, academics, researchers, engineers, artists, writers, musicians, doctors, financiers, sports and culture people. Holocaust is a targeted genocide against the European population in the 20th century – the European Jews, by the National Fascists in Germany, with purpose to clear the population of Germany/Europe from certain ethnic groups. The Hebrew word for the Holocaust is “Shoah” (השואה) – destruction, a great catastrophe. These six narratives are an attempt to familiarize with the fates of six real people who have shown that despite the circumstances are personalities. Stories I hope will remain in the minds of the people who have heard/read them.

*Keywords:* Bulgarian Jewish women, scientific knowledge.

*“The science is the foundation of every progress which relieves human life and reduces suffering. I belong to those who believe in the majestic glory of science.”*

*Marie Curie*

*“The life is a very severe form of existence. Human should not turn into a category of homo sapiens who should hate others.”*

*Henry Lorier*

### 1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the globalizing world and all the challenges that arise from this process that lead to the demolition of many of the boundaries typical of traditional societies. But it also leads to the destruction of borders to the dangers of compelling modern human, placing him in a situation, living in a society labeled with a global risk. The idea that people living in Europe (and/or the greater part of the world), today after two world wars and a gradual global liberal democracy, are reasonable enough is often refuted.

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Today we do not stop talking about pluralistic social spaces, civil society, modern democracies, but we often forget that in 1933 Adolf Hitler came to power, precisely through democratic elections. Today, with extreme we see factors, ideological waves and political factions, pushing for sharp manifestations of: anti-Semitism, xenophobia, chauvinism, racism, sociopathism, etc.

## 2. We Remember!

The 27<sup>th</sup> of January is an International Day in which humanity pays tribute to the memories of millions of Holocaust victims. On this date, this year – 2019, we in Bulgaria paid tribute to the memory of 6 million Jewish women, men and children killed in the Death Camps, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March (2019) we celebrated 76 years of the great act of the Bulgarian people who saved part of themselves – the Bulgarian Jews.

In this great and to the same extent human cause, includes the whole Bulgarian people – people: known and unknown, on the culture and politics – such as Dimitar Peshev and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Metropolitan Kiril, Metropolitan Stefan and Metropolitan Neofit Vidinski.

In 2017, the Yad Vashem Institute in Israel proposed the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for the Nobel Prize for the great act it has done. This is the second nomination of our Orthodox Church for this great work, the first being in 2013 on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews (see Y.V., 2019).

Unfortunately, not all Bulgarian Jews had the fate of 8,000 from the territory of the Kingdom of Bulgaria. In 1943, 12,000 Jews from the territories of the Vardar Macedonia, Piro and Aegean Thrace – Greece, through the harbor of Lom, were deported to the camps in Auschwitz II and Treblinka.

With the opening of classified records and a thorough study of what is already available with regard to the so-called “Jewish Question” (or as the Nazis call it “The Final End of the Jewish Question” (see Y. V, 2019), new data emerges about the torture these people have suffered as well as about their resistance.

Under the auspices “We Remember” every year on 27 January, at every Jewish home, remembers that it will remember and will not forget the monstrous, foolish and unprecedented genocide to which part of the humanity has been subjected simply because it belongs to one of all possible human ethnic groups (see Rees, 2018).

We know the sinister numbers and our duty as humanity is to remember them and never to allow the repetition of such an evil – there is no political or religious ideology that can justify the deliberate and purposeful application and practice of genocide exercised by some people for account of the lives of others.

It happens that the data on the dead and burned people in the Death Camps varied. It is very difficult to establish and specify the exact number of victims killed in the Death Camps because thousands of the accepted people were old/elderly over 60 years of age, sick, pregnant women, mothers with children on their hands or children under the age of 16, who were not registered at the time of their arrival, but were directly burned in the cameras.

Part of the summarized numbers and facts about the Holocaust (in Greek language “full burn”) are the following:

- In the period between on 30 January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany until 9 May 1945, in the Death Camps – Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau), Auschwitz III (Monowitz), Treblinka and Treblinka I and etc. Of the 9

million Jews living in Europe at the time, 6 million were killed, of which 1.5 million were babies, young children and thousands of pregnant women were burned;

- Every three Jews in Europe, two are killed. From the cameras of death, only 250, 000 people survive. Among these 6 million ordinary people, there are also thousands of rabbis, teachers, academics, researchers, engineers, artists, writers, musicians, doctors, financiers, sports, culture ordinary people (see Rees, 2005), (see Snyder, 2010), (see J.V.L., 2019).

Only in Auschwitz I and II, after the end of World War II, were found:

- Over 7 tons of human hair and this is only 30% of all hair removed from people's heads before they are burned. The rest was sold to German companies (5 Deutsche Mark of kilograms), which turned human's hair into wigs, pillow cushions, mattresses, stuffed toys or gowns and sheets consisting of 30% hair and 70% flax;
- In warehouses are collected, sorted and described tons of shoes, suitcases, clothes, utensils, glasses, walking sticks, crutches, jewelry. It was a luxury for Germans to buy from the camps, a baby stroller and baby clothes for their newborn child, left from the burned babies killed in internment of their mothers in the camp. Babies born by Jewish mothers born in the camps were immediately killed. Babies born from mothers of Russians and Polkas were left to live, but because of the extreme mothers' weakness and lack of breast milk, babies did not live for more than a month.

*Photos of killed people in Auschwitz<sup>2</sup>:*



*Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II (Birkenau)*



*Auschwitz III-Monowitz*



*Treblinka and Treblinka I*



Among the victims of the Holocaust are: 250,000 disabled people; tens of thousands of people of all origins – among them 150,000 deported Poles 23,000 Gypsies and Sinti; 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war, 4,000. Jehovah's Witnesses, and a huge number of homosexuals.

A total of over 17 million were burned alive in the chambers of the camps, shot, drowned, or buried half-life after the field and in the woods. Only in Auschwitz II, more than 250 tons of gas were used for gas chambers. And today birds do not fly in the camp areas and flowers do not grow – the air and the soil are poisoned (see Y.V., 2019).



### 3. The Bulgarian Jewish women and scientific knowledge

The contribution of women and men Jews to the development of world science, humanities, culture, art, medicine and technology is well known. **More than 30% of the Nobel Prize winners and Medal Fields (a medal in mathematics) are Jews.**

The question is often asked: What is the reason among scholars, people of Jewish origin, to be so great? And whether this is due of special genes or some unsearchable secret? There is hardly an unequivocal answer to such questions, but one of the sure conditions for a person to be genius is, regardless of the conditions in which he is, to continue to obey prohibitions, taboos, to stop his imagination due to social prejudices and he is able to subordinate his imagination and intelligence to progress. Despite the persecution, the prohibition to teach, work, the political and

physical genocide of the first half of the twentieth century, scholars of Jewish origin did not stop following their ideas, working for the sake of truth and progress for all mankind, following the maxim in evolution, good is always more than evil. Among the thousands of Jewish scientists there are many names of Bulgarian Jews, which are rarely heard in our Bulgarian society. I will tell the stories of six Bulgarian Jewish women, whose contribution to science and, in particular, to medicine is enormous and acknowledged throughout the world.

### ***Rose (Sarah) Moses Isako-Kalov (1907-1967)***

She was born on 24 April 1907 in Plovdiv. After her family moved to Sofia, she finished her secondary education at the German High School and then became a student in Dentistry in Leipzig. In 1930 she married astronautic engineer Victor Isaac. They are leaving for Moscow, where Isaac has a helicopter contract. Rose during this time worked as a dentist, then her son Enrico was born.

In 1937 Rose went to Paris and her marriage to Isaac are collapsed. Because of the racist laws adopted in France, she left France in 1943 and settled in Italy, where she joined the resistance.

She falsifies with impressive dexterity the identity documents of thousands of Jews, thus protecting them from deportation to the camps of death and saving their lives – at that time in Europe the change of the Jewish names with the country's status was one of the ways people of Jewish ancestry could preserve their lives, as well as to observe in Bulgaria Law for Protection of the Nation.<sup>1</sup> According to this “law, for example. If a Jew accepts Orthodoxy, he will not be deported to the death camps” (Koleva & Pramatarov, 2017: 36).

After the end of the Second World War, she worked as a dentist in Rome until 1950, after which she left for Paris. She marries to Caesar Banon's antifascist. She died in Paris on 16 March 1987, from cancer (see Anavy, 2013).

### ***Valentina Trainer (1907-1990)***

She was born in Pleven in 1907. Her father is a surgeon in the city, but he dies young shortly after Valentina returns from Vienna, where she graduates in medicine

She is the first female surgeon in Bulgaria. In 1930 she moved to Sofia and opened her own clinic.

Under the Law of Protection of the Nation during the Second World War, when the rights to work of the Jewish doctors were taken away after her Bulgarian colleagues advocated for her, Dr. Trainer's right to practice was returned, but with the condition of practicing only in rural hospitals. During the war, she has volunteered many Jews (see Anavy, 2013)

### ***Tamara Pilosof (1909-1981)***

She was born on 6 May 1909 in the town of Lom. In 1937 she graduated in Paris. Several years she worked in Paris clinics as a specialist in particular pathology and metabolism, and then returned to Bulgaria to avoid the repression in France against the Jews.

In Bulgaria, because of the Law for the Protection of the Nation<sup>1</sup>, she managed to practice her profession until the end of the Second World War, only in the hospitals of the Pirodop and Samokov villages. Immediately after the war she joined the Regional Hospital Sofia. In 1950, she served as assistant in endocrinology at ISUL, and in 1967 habilitated as a regular associate professor of cardiovascular diseases and rheumatism. In 1971 she became a professor of nonsurgical treatment of inflammatory and degenerative joint disease treatment at the Institute of Orthopedics and Traumatology at the Medical Academy. In 1976, she founded the first rheumatology clinic in Sofia. Professor Pilosof has over 150 scientific papers. Winner of numerous international and national awards and medals. She died in 1981.

***Stella Mordechai Astrukova***



She was born on 24 May 1925 in Sofia. Her parents are ordinary workers. In 1943, Dr. Stella Astrukova was 16 years old. Her father was sent to a concentration camp and the family was moved to Dupnitsa. Her early youth was accompanied by the tribulations of the Jewish community in Bulgaria - several times her family was relocated, and she had been in prison for rehashing. After the end of the war she was accepted as a medical student at the Higher Medical Institute in Sofia. In 1953 she was appointed as a mentor in the Infectious Disease of Third City Hospital in Sofia, where she worked for 36 years. Because of the difficult working conditions in the hospital between 1953 and 1960, because of the lack of necessary medication and protective clothing, Dr. Astrukova is often at risk of serious infectious diseases. The divisions are full of jaundice patients, often accompanied by tuberculosis, as well as patients with scarlet fever, diphtheria and child paralysis. Despite the dedicatory work of the entire hospital team in such a difficult, devoid of elementary means and medical material, as well as the opportunities for workers to relax and rest, Dr. Astrukova decided to protest and raise trade union demands, which relieved the work of medical workers, as well as to improve the medication base for treatment, and succeeds. Dr. Astrukova introduces in her department a highly effective therapy for the treatment of red wind, actively working in the field of prevention of infections and viral diseases. A number of scientific publications have been rewarded many times (see BTV, 2019).

***Heny Chelibonova-Lorer***





She was born in Kazanluk. After the Law for the Protection of the Nation, exodus Jews from Sofia were brought to her home in Kazanluk. Shortly thereafter, the Jews from Kazanluk were displaced on the Danube to wait for their deportation to the death camps, while her family was interned in Vratsa. There, they are placed in a school building waiting to be deported. After the end of the war she graduated chemistry at Sofia University. Her interests are in the field of cell chemistry – biochemistry, pathology of the tumor cell. She works at the Institute of General and Comparative Pathology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She is a professor, a doctor with numerous scientific publications and books. The winner of numerous public awards, including the Shophar Award (see BNR, 2015; BNR, 2013; NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC, 2018).

### ***Vera Boyanova***

She was born on 16 July 1934 in Sofia. Her father is a well-known metropolitan dentist who was killed in the first anti-Semitic fascist actions. In 1958 she became a pharmacist at the Medical Academy and until 1960 she worked as a manager of a pharmacy in Sofia. She began to work on scientific work. In 1960, she was appointed senior assistant at the Scientific Chemical-Pharmaceutical Institute. She defended her dissertation in 1972, and shortly after, headed a toothpaste unit. Winner of numerous awards, in 1988 she received a degree senior research associate II, has over 80 international scientific publications (see Anavy, 2013).

#### 4. Conclusion: The reminders for Holocaust

The topic of the Holocaust always will be important for non-Jews today, it is often recognizable as part of the newscast about the dates with which this report began, or about another vandalism and anti-Semitism manifested against a Jewish synagogue, cemetery or home. For the Jews, the Holocaust is a subject that is part of consciousness, flesh of the flesh, memory and thought in memory. Nowadays, it is timely to talk about active measures against the Language of Hate, to try to protest against it, write, and recall what it can bring.

Rosa (Sarah) Moses Isako-Kalov, Valentina Trainer, Tamara Pilosof, Stella Mordehai Astrukova, Heny Chelibonova-Lorer and Vera Boyanova are not just six historical narrations of biographies of Bulgarian women of Jewish origin, are not just a series of historical portraits of people who lived and live on this land and wore the sense of measuring the time – who they had the "bad chance" to be born in the specific historical time marked by the fascist ideology but also have luck, be among the surviving and saved people of anti-Semitism.

These short stories, on the one hand, aim to show that, despite the crushing political and social reality in Europe and the moods of the Jews from the beginning of the twentieth century as a whole:

- Despite the participation of many Jews in the First World War, the well-known in history Jewish Legion, which is voluntary Jewish subdivision of 5 battalions, formed on the initiative of “Vladimir Zhabotinski and Joseph Trumpeldor to the British Colonial Army against the Ottoman Empire. Also known as the Zion Mule Corps – 1917-1919” (see Malul, 2017);
- Jewish Brigade (הקִיבוצִי הַיְהוּדִי), the only “Jewish National Army League in the Allied British Army during the Second World War, 1940-1946” (see Weizmann 2017);
- Thousands scientists, intellectuals, humanists and artists of Jewish origin did not stop at the end of the Second World War, despite persecution, the prohibition to teach, work, follow their ideas, work in the name of truth and progress (not to forget the fact that the constant displacement and movement of Jews from one place to another greatly hinders their being – every human, however, seeks resilience and

security in his personal life, even from the point of view of his home, toping with a certain place and tradition).

On the other hand, Prof. Heny Lorer says, “The power of good is weaker than the power of evil because it implanted itself. Just as tumor cells multiply and lead to pathology throughout the body. Similarly, the ominous theories and ideologies such as: the existence of a higher race, fascism, xenophobia or sociopathism – affect the whole of society, make it aggressive. Evil, however, can be overcome with science, knowledge and education – the power of good is in the humanity of the human soul who knows and knows righteousness and directs itself to the light” (see BNR, 2013).

The problem of evil is fundamental, and along the Holocaust-related events, it is a theme that makes the “Jewish Question” a basis for philosophical treatises. In this connection, Hannah Arendt writes, “Evil is multidimensional and at the same time banal in its nature. It is and manifests itself in this, when human does not have the power to take responsibility for his actions and actions, no matter what the Izmir invokes in his actions. The growing evil in the world is due to the unhappy people who refuse to resist, to have principles, to those who refuse to be personalities – to think and think” (see Arendt, 1981: 451).

To remember something, it must be known, to be thoughtful on it.

Holocaust is a targeted genocide against the European population in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the European Jews, by the National Fascists in Germany, with purpose to clear the population of Germany/Europe from certain ethnic groups. The Hebrew word for the Holocaust is “Shoah” (שואה) – destruction, a great catastrophe. These six narratives are an attempt to familiarize with the fates of six real people who have shown that despite the circumstances are personalities. Stories I hope will remain in the minds of the people who have heard/read them.

Evil must be remembered so that it does not repeat itself.

Nota Bene:

1. The Law on the Protection of the Nation - was adopted on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, 1940 and entered into force retroactively from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 1940. It consists of four units, the first of which directly concerns the prohibition of secrecy and international organizations. The second one for people of Jewish origin. The third is for antinational and public events. The fourth contains specific and general provisions. It is similar to the laws of National Socialist Germany adopted in Nuremberg. Separately, the Bulgarian government is pushing for the adoption of such a law by the German authorities. What we see in the first title. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter prohibits the existence of secrets and international organizations and the existing ones are dissolved. This is also the first point of the law. Defining the meaning of an international and a secret organization and specifying which may exist. The second and third chapters describe how to cease operations and liquidate their property. Penalties are imprisonment and heavy financial penalties. In the archives of the National Assembly the defenders of the LPN present this part as a means of fighting the Masons and other similar organizations and expressed the opinion that such organizations have no place in Bulgaria. The second part is directed against the Jews in Bulgaria. Chapter 15, Article 15, defines which Bulgarian citizen can be considered a Jew. But under the strikes of the law, there are no persons of mixed marriages and baptized in Orthodox faith. The following articles are aimed at clarifying the names and regulation of the personal data of persons of Jewish origin, such as prohibiting Jewish surnames to end with “OV”, “OVA” and “EV”, “EVA”. The prohibition of adoption and recognition of persons of Jewish origin is noticeable. The second chapter of this title defines the general restrictions on persons of Jewish origin. Compared to German law, LPN is more moderate, but has no equivalent in the history of modern Bulgarian history. The third chapter limits the residence of citizens of Jewish origin. The ban on

obtaining a Sofia residence / its revocation and the influence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health put the Jews in a rather unequal position. Apart from this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the power to gather the Jews in the Ghetto similar to those in the other European countries occupied by the German military machine. The fourth chapter prohibits the possession of landed property of persons of Jewish origin except in the resorts. The fifth chapter regulates and percentages the number and types of activities in which Jews can be employed, extreme capital restrictions are imposed on them, they have to be banned from serving managerial positions, and they deal with financial, banking and bookkeeping, arms production, and commerce, and hospitality, cannot own cinemas, schools, nor participate in capital in any form in such. They are also forbidden to own pharmacies, drugstores and sanitary shops. It is forbidden to transfer their capital as a whole to persons of foreign origin as well as to foreigners. Pre-emptive activity in state-owned companies is prohibited. An exception to these articles, which by their very content are some of the most sinister in our history, is given to war invalids, volunteers in the wars, those who have been awarded the order of courage and orphans of the war of Jewish origin. This provoked a very strong controversy in the National Assembly and a strong insistence on the part of the Nazi diplomats on the government and Boris III. Acceptance and debates on this part of the law are very controversial and last for four days. Many MPs are opposed to the division and limitation of Jewish activity, with the fact that the Jewish community in Bulgaria at that time was about 1% of the Bulgarian population and did not have a large holding of capital.

2. All photos of Auschwitz I, II and III, are from the German Federal Archive.

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