

JEW S IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Compliments of

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*"The Governments in Exile and
Their Attitude Towards the Jews"*

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA*

According to the census of 1930, 356,830 Jews lived in the four provinces of the Czechoslovak Republic—about 2.4% of the total population. The provinces were divided as follows: (a) the historic lands—Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia; (b) Slovakia; (c) Carpatho-Russia.

Historic lands: In group A, there lived 117,551 Jews, most of them assimilated in language and appearance, although there existed among them a large Zionist movement. The greater part of them lived in the cities. About 70,25 of them were in trade and industry, where they had important economic positions. 4,08 were in the professions and occupied an important part in the cultural and artistic life of the Republic. Suffering from over-education, they were among the only Jewish groups in Europe whose birth rate declined at the rate of six per thousand.

Slovakia: The Jews of Slovakia were more on the order of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Deeply religious, although some of them assimilated in appearance, they numbered 136,737, who were for the most part engaged in trade and industry. Among them were a great many artisans, and some religious students. (It is worth noting that in the "historic lands" there were Jewish peasants, in a village, not far from Prague). 50% of the doctors and about 60% of the lawyers of Slovakia were Jews. Comparable to these figures was their representation among the intelligensia of the country. The best organized Jewish communities in Eastern Europe were in Slovakia. And as opposed to the birthrate in Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia, the birthrate here was a satisfactory one, 6 births more than deaths per thou-

*Jews in Czechoslovakia before and after the German Rape of the Republic. (The Resistance, September, 1942)

sand). Jews in Slovakia did not live on a particularly grand scale, but there was no poverty. On the contrary, it might be said that there was a degree of comfort among them.

Jews in Carpatho-Russia: The situation was quite different in this fourth province of the Republic. The 102,542 Jews who lived here constituted more than 14% of the general population. The Jews here were like the Jews of Eastern Europe, and almost to a man, were very religious. The majority were "chassidim," disciples of local rabbis. Their economic position was the most difficult of the entire Republic, but the possibilities for them were great. For the twenty years during which they were under the Czechoslovak rule, they profited greatly, both because of their civil rights, and because of the development of a national conscience among Jews. The two large cities—Mukacevo and Uzhorod had Jewish high schools (Hebrew) with standing in the government education system, which were supported by the government. The birth rate in this province was such that it kept up the standard for the entire country (an increase of 23 per thousand Jews). A considerable part of the Jewish population in this province was engaged in farming.

After the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia, the first two provinces became a Nazi "protectorate." Slovakia became an "independent government" under Hitler, and Carpatho-Russia was annexed by Hungary. Before Munich there was no Jewish problems in Czechoslovakia. It carried out its promise to minorities to the letter, and Jews enjoyed the full benefits of this. Anti-semitism was almost unknown.

Aside from single instances of outbreaks of local Nazis, the population of the Republic lived harmoniously together, in friendship and respect, until Hitler's advent. The occupation of Austria by the Nazis, in the

time of Conrad Henlein, and his "Sudeten" vandals, began to create difficulties for the 25,000 Jews of the "Sudeten" area. Although Prague already had at that time many refugees from Germany and Austria (by Prague we mean the Czechoslovak Government) room had to be made for these first victims of Nazi terror in the then still existing Republic.

On the morrow after the betrayal that was Munich, a part of the right wing of the Czechoslovak press began to agitate—and their first victims, needless to say were the Jews—. Benes was no longer in the country, and the coward Hacha, and his accolytes "founded" the Second Republic on the basis of hatred and reaction. They dismissed Jews from important positions, and by the first of February, 1939, had already begun revoking Jewish naturalization papers. Two weeks before the Nazis marched into Prague, municipal institutions were being "cleared" of Jews. Aside from all this, however, public opinion on this issue was so strong, that officially, the Second Republic did not dare to openly come out with anti-Jewish laws. Whatever was undertaken was done secretly, and under the so-called pressure of the press (which was partly already German controlled).

Jewish Refugees fared badly in the Second Republic. 40,000 of them in number, they suddenly became an unwanted group, yet no place existed where they could be deported. On the contrary, an additional 2,000 refugees who had been driven out of "Sudetenland" into no-man's land, had to be admitted into the country under the pressure of the liberal press.

The condition of the Jews in Slovakia was even worse. Slovakia had at first been granted autonomy under the Second Republic, and then, at the time of the German occupation, reached "independence." There, the disciples of the Catholic fascist, Hlinka, and his fol-

lowers encouraged the programs of November, 1939, which became a permanent institution and are carried on to this day. In the course of the entire existence of the Second Republic, Carpatho-Russia was the only one of the four provinces which kept Masaryk's traditional policy towards Jews—although there too there was a priest at the head of the autonomous government, Father Volozin. This did not last long, however, for at the same time that the Germans occupied Prague, the Hungarians seized this part of the Republic. The fate of the Jews in that area then became desperate.

On the first of October, 1939, the "protectorate" (the parts occupied by the Nazis) held a census, and it was determined that in the two provinces there was left a total of 90,147 Jews, including the refugees. (42,298 women; 43,849 men) More than half of them lived in Prague.

The first of the anti-Jewish laws appeared in July, 1939, and excluded the Jews from all the professions. Then came a series of decrees, both from the local government and so-called protectorate, and from the Reich,—all directed to the most efficient means of confiscation and destruction of Jewish wealth and positions. The Czechs however, were given very little chance to share in the profits of this "aryanization," or to take over Jewish businesses. This latter was probably not permitted because of the fear that the population would take advantage of such opportunities, to try to save something for the Jews. By the end of 1939, all of Jewish fortunes and property were in German hands. The largest part of Jewish commercial enterprises—industry, banks, insurance companies, etc. — were "aryanized," or, to state it more realistically, stolen, by the Nazis. Throwing a bone to their collaborators the Germans occasionally permitted them to share to some small extent in their gains. According to German

estimates, the Jewish confiscated property amounted to about 3,000,000,000 marks or \$1,000,000,000. It must be remembered that these are *German* figures.

Mass murder, arrests, executions, concentration camps and other tortures which were prepared for the Jews in the "protectorate" further decimated their numbers. Jews were driven from their homes and cities. Those who were not deported to Poland were sent to ghettos where families of seven and eight people had to huddle in one small room. A curfew was imposed on Jews from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. Public parks and boulevards were closed to them. They were not permitted in public vehicles, and not beyond the limits of the ghetto, not even to go to a neighboring city for a funeral of a member of the family. Although they were officially issued ration cards, they could only make purchases during certain hours of the day. They did not receive any clothing rations at all. They could not bathe in public baths, or even in rivers or lakes. Regardless of all this, the entire male Jewish population from the ages of 17 to 55 had to register for compulsory labor. Each minor infraction of the anti-Jewish laws was heavily punished by Nazi tribunals.

The Jewish community in Prague still managed to exist and fulfill its functions as the head of Czechoslovak Jewry, despite all these decrees. Under the danger of the death penalty, they even issued a Yiddish-German weekly which dealt with the Jewish problem.

In order to expedite its systematic anti-Jewish program, the Gestapo created a bureau for this purpose. This is located in the midst of the Jewish community of Prague, with Gestapo agents and tax officials represented. When a fortunate Jew managed to get a visa to one of the neutral lands, he had to fill out 18 different questionnaires of the bureau. When the large scale deportation of Jews from the "protectorate" was be-

gun, 24 hour notices were given to those who were to leave. They were explicitly forbidden to sell any part of their personal belongings, and were permitted to take along only small quantities of baggage, and very little money.

In order to facilitate these deportations, the Nazis called on the Nazi, Eichmann, who came from a German colony in Palestine. The plan to send the Jews to Poland was not capable of being carried out to the extent that it was originally planned, but insofar as it was carried into effect, it was one of the most gruesome. As an example, we need only point to the case of the 8,000 Jews of Moravia, who were deported by the Gestapo to Poland, within *24 hours*. The unfortunates were permitted to take along one hand valise, and a sum of no more than 3,000 Czechoslovak crowns. At the station of the same city, the Gestapo took even these sums away from them. Despite all their efforts, however, the Nazis were unable to popularize the anti-Jewish laws, which the population refused to recognize.

When Heydrich, who was later executed, took over the administration (Fall, 1941), the first of his acts were directed against the Jews. When he undertook to "cleanse" the ranks of the Czech quislings, his first accusation against them was levelled on the grounds of friendship to Jews, and on their disregard of the anti-Jewish decrees. In October, 1941, Heydrich began to organize the second deportation of Jews to Poland and to the Nazi-occupied areas in Russia. Jews were given two hours' notice. Entire communities were herded into synagogues and court-yards, where they were kept days on end, sometimes even weeks, without food and water. Then they were loaded on freight cars, and transported under inhuman conditions of cold and hunger. Thousands died on the way; and of those who arrived, many were no longer able to survive.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT EDUARD BENES*

“The Jewish problem, along with many others relating to the reconstruction of the life of our state after the conclusion of the war, has greatly occupied my thoughts. It represents an important factor in our efforts to secure civic liberty and social justice in Czechoslovakia within the framework of the genuine and improved new order which, as a sequel to the chaos let loose upon the world by the insane Nazi experiment, is certainly destined to come into existence.

“Great tasks await us. In the restored Czechoslovak Republic all sections of the population, in so far as they have shown themselves, and will show themselves in the future, as capable of aiding the work of the State, must receive due justice. Religious freedom is, of course, the first pre-supposition and foundation, and one which cannot be dispensed with by any properly organized state. We shall not depart in the least from the principles of true and honest democracy which we adhered to in creating our first republic. They led us to progress, peace and development. The Nazis, through the fact that they are today repudiating them, have turned Czechoslovakia into a hell. Their murderous emissaries destroy the works of human culture, introducing in their place the torture chambers of the Gestapo. They incite people to intolerance, to racial, religious and ideological fanaticism; they expel those who are not so cowardly as to accept their regime, or those who in their eyes have sinned only through the fact that they were not born of Aryan parents, while at

*The Persecution of the Jews in Nazi Slovakia: Report and Documents. Published by the Federation of Czechoslovak Jews in London. June, 1942. And documents from The Palestinian Press of May, 1944.

the same time they drive their own youth to the common grave of the battlefields.

“But all this is only transitional. It will pass away, like everything which is in contradiction with the laws of humanity. The Czechoslovak State will be re-established, and with it its previous conception of democracy.

“Hold on, therefore, to the end, and be sure that the renewed Czechoslovak Republic will have no other program than the program of religious tolerance of the first Republic of Masaryk.”

Jerusalem reports that the Hebrew paper “Hazman” published on May 23rd, 1944, a declaration by Angelo Goldstein about Benes’ statement concerning the repatriation of the Jews made to Czechoslovak soldiers on March 24th. Goldstein says that owing to different formulations of the statement published, he addressed himself to the man who put the question to Benes in camp. The question was: “What are the President’s personal views and what are the Czechoslovak Government’s intentions concerning the repatriation of Czech Jews and the restitution of their property? My question refers to all those who were deported or expelled during the German invasion.” President Benes answered: “The repatriation of all Czechoslovak citizens, Jews and non-Jews, will be accomplished by the Government, helped by the Army, immediately after the overcoming of transport difficulties. I shall be glad to see among us again, all members of our nation, without regard to creed or origin.” Labor will be needed. Remember my declaration concerning the Sudeten Germans (Benes had declared that they will be sent to Germany). Repatriation committees will be sent everywhere where they will be needed.”

President Benes, after having said that most of the stories about the complete extermination of the Jews under Nazi occupation have been exaggerated, con-

tinued as follows: "As to the restitution of Jews to their former position, our laws do not make a difference between loyal citizens whatever may be their origin or religion. I should like to add that the Jewish question is an international one, needing to be resolved internationally after the war."

THE JEWISH PROBLEM IS A WORLD PROBLEM*

It is hard for a son to follow in the footsteps of a great father. All who know him, however, agree that Jan Masaryk is carrying on the great tradition of liberalism which his father founded. In fact, in reading the utterances of both, it is often difficult to distinguish which was said by Thomas Masaryk, and which by his son.

In a discussion with American-Yiddish journalists, long before the present war, Thomas G. Masaryk told them: "When I came to this country during the World War (I), to carry on a campaign for the establishment of Czechoslovakia as an independent nation, the prospects for success were very weak. Americans are generally disinterested in European problems and conflicts. They were not very much concerned with the fact that there existed a Czechoslovak people, with a tradition and culture that went back a thousand years. Some of them knew me personally, but curiously enough, I was popular, not as a politician, but principally as the defender of the accused in the Hilsner trial. The Americans did not forget that, and that got me sympathy in many circles which would not otherwise have been interested. However, sympathy alone never built a nation, and for a while I regarded our position as most unfavorable. Even in the case of President Wilson himself, I found a certain amount of indifference to our ideals. He was an extreme idealist, a friend of all small nations, but he had a weakness for the old Austrian Empire, and feared that if that Empire were broken up and small nations established, it would be a menace to world peace.

*Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Jewish Problem.

"During this unsuccessful tour of mine, the Jews helped me. I established contact with Jewish personalities, visited synagogues and made friends with Jews who had influence with the press and with the White House. More than all others, Brandeis was helpful, as a descendent of Czechoslovak Jews, and an intimate friend of President Wilson. Also Jacob DeHaas, Stephen Wise, and others.

"I was helped by Jewish public opinion, which remembered my part in the Hilsner blood-libel trial. Thanks to this help, the ice was broken and we began little by little to win over the general public. Even President Wilson became our friend, and gave his unqualified consent to the independent state of Czechoslovakia."

When we read these words, spoken by Masaryk to a Jewish journalist, we understand the Masaryk cult among Jews. Jews helped the fight for freedom in many countries, but none of their statesmen were as grateful for their help as were Thomas Masaryk, Jan Masaryk and Dr. Benes. During the last few years, Jan Masaryk did not let a single opportunity pass without manifesting his friendship, sympathy, and forthright plans for the Jews.

Masaryk speaks to the American public at a meeting of the United Jewish Appeal; he addresses a graduating class at Yeshiva College; he grants a Jewish journalist an interview, and touches upon the Jewish problem at a non-Jewish radio program. In Chicago, the Jews of that city come to him; when the Jewish world becomes aroused over the fate of scores of Jews on a "lost" ship—they come to Masaryk. He takes their problems and sorrows to heart, and does not rest until he has done all within his power to help them.

In the end of 1941, when the author visited Masaryk, he was put into an embarrassing position by this man,

who, taking the problems of the wandering, homeless Jews on the seas, to his own heart, demanded to know what was being done by Jewish organizations to aid them. "I, too, am trying to help them, and believe me, I have neglected more than one important matter during the last few months, in an effort to intervene on behalf of these unfortunate Jews." Then he added, "How can civilized people sleep calmly while somewhere, on unknown seas, there tosses a ship with close to one hundred Jews—women and little children, who do not find some little haven of refuge on God's great and beautiful earth?"

In Chicago, at a mass meeting, Masaryk declared, "History has fortunately always given a verdict of guilty against the majorities who have oppressed those under their rule who are weaker than they."

Thomas Masaryk wrote, "Antisemitism is, according to my opinion, an insult to non-Jews. It harms them, and makes them appear immoral and vulgar."

Jan Masaryk, speaking to the author on this same subject, expresses himself more strongly: "Tell the Jews that I personally consider antisemitism as the cowardly expression of inferiority and inhumanity. If you Jews were a people of say, 300,000,000 and we non-Jews numbered an equal amount," he said smilingly, "it might be sporting to be an antisemite. But under present conditions, when there are 2,000,000,000 non-Jews, and a handful of Jews numbering 18-20,000,000, antisemitism is a cheap expression of the bully."

At a Lucien Wolf memorial lecture which he held at the Jewish Historical Society at the end of 1943, Jan Masaryk said, on the subject of Jewish patriotism, that even in Germany, until the advent of Hitler, Jews were among the staunchest patriots.

"The Jews did much to heal the wounds of Germany after the first World War, and helped greatly to bring

Germany back to her rightful place among the European lands."

"We have the example of the United States. The government of these states examines the qualifications of the immigrant before it accepts his application for citizenship. However, as soon as he becomes a citizen, America is his country, regardless of what language he speaks. His citizenship stands on a firm base, and his loyalty to the United States comes before his loyalty to others. That is how it will have to be in every democratic state."

"The policy of Czechoslovakia with regard to minorities," he declared, "consisted in giving the Jews the right to organize as ethnic minorities, regardless of their language." He stressed that more than half of the Jews of Czechoslovakia considered themselves members of the Jewish nation.

Comparing the fate of the Jews and the Czechs, Masaryk stated: "There is a great resemblance between the two thousand years of Jewish suffering and the thousand years of suffering of my people. What statesmen did to us—and I think that will pass—the Germans did to the Jews, and that, too, will pass. It is therefore no more than right that I should speak to Jewish audiences, and on behalf of Jews."

"The Jewish problem is a part of my own existence."

Many Jews have not yet reached the degree of understanding and liberality with which Jan Masaryk handles the Jewish problem. In 1941, he said to the author, "There exists no separate Jewish problem. There is no difference in the problems of the Jew and the Englishman, or the Jew and the Czech, or the Jew and the Pole. The Jewish problem is an inseparable part of my own existence, a part of all other problems which I must solve. The nations of the world, among them the Jews, will at the peace conference table, have to deal intelli-

gently and humanely with the Jewish problem as a part of all other questions in a world undertaking.

“It is the moral debt of all nations, a duty to history and coming generations, to bring this problem out into the open. When nations will meet to discuss world problems, they will have to deal with this one with justice as one of their own affairs; they will have to deal with the Jewish people as an equal partner whose sufferings they all share.”

In November, 1943, when Jewish delegates clamored at the doors of the Food Conference in Atlantic City, Masaryk was the only one to issue a declaration. He was entirely in favor that the “Jewish problem should be dealt with by the Conference as a specific point in the rehabilitation program.”

“It is laughable,” Masaryk said, “to want to close your eyes to the truth: the Jewish problem demands a specific treatment. And unless we shall find this, or try to find the solution at least, we shall have sinned greatly.

“The Jewish problem is an important one, one of the most important,” he said. “We cannot build a permanent peace if we will ignore it, as some want to do. I am in favor of a thorough, honest treatment of the Jewish problem.”

In answer to the classic objection of the Jewish assimilationists, that treating the Jewish problem as a specific one might look like discrimination, he said, “For two thousand years, we Christians have been discriminating against Jews. Let us this once have the courage to discriminate in order to help them finally solve their problem.”

At another occasion he said, “The Nazis played their first winning cards on the program of antisemitism. Slowly—too slowly, the world began to realize that not only is the Jewish problem a world problem, but it is

more than that: it is a barometer for many events which come as a result of it."

The father's name has become a synonym for justice; the son's, for revenge and equality.

On June 18, 1942, the Yeshiva College of New York gave Jan Masaryk an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. At that occasion he said, "My father's name has been associated with democracy and humanity. My name, unfortunately (and this has not been due to me) has become synonymous with anger and revenge."

" . . . If the Germans will not experience the same treatment which they have given us, they will never rise above the beasts to which they have sunken."

"I do not know whether I shall have any connection with the coming peace conference. But to me the Jewish problem is inextricably bound with the problem of my people, and with the problems of all nations which have temporarily fallen under the tragic yoke of Nazi occupation."

On the eve of the Jewish New Year, 1943, Jan Masaryk declared: "Each nation can be judged by how it has treated the Jews. . . . I must state that my people have treated them well."

In an interview with Rev. Dr. Maurice L. Perlzweig, head of the political department of the World Jewish Congress and Dr. F. Fried, chairman of the Czechoslovak Representative Committee of that same organization, on May 18th, 1944, Mr. Jan Masaryk gave the assurance of his government that all loyal citizens in liberated Czechoslovakia will be treated on a basis of absolute equality. He declared it "a matter of personal pride" to see to it that the treatment of Jews in Czechoslovakia shall be as fair as was the case in that democracy before the war.

At the conclusion of the interview, Mr. Masaryk authorized the publication of the following statement:

"I wish to go on record once again in stating that decent citizens of Czechoslovakia regardless of race or faith will be treated in the same fair manner as was the case before this terrible war started.

"The treatment of Jews in my country is a matter of personal pride to me and there will be no change whatsoever in this respect.

"This statement can be considered as the concerted opinion of the Czechoslovak Government in London."

At a dinner arranged in his honor by the Czechoslovak Committee of the United Jewish Appeal in New York on May 24th, 1944, Jan Masaryk stated:

"It has been the Czechoslovak way of life to treat minorities decently. If German minorities, or let me put it, a large majority of our German minority did not keep their part of the bargain. They became Hitler and Henlein minded to such an extent that they have thoroughly destroyed what was laboriously built up under the presidency of my father and they will have to take the consequences. The minority clauses of the last peace treaties have gone with the wind and it is not our fault. The story is quite different when we come to speak of the Jewish minority. A very great majority of that minority appreciated the fairness with which they were treated. That they are today paying the most horrible price in the not too cheerful history of the Jewish people is not our fault and it is not their fault. Lately there has been somewhat of a whispering campaign and the name of our great leader Benes, whose sixtieth birthday we are about to celebrate, was mixed into this campaign. Dr. Benes said, and I agree with him, that the Jewish problem is an international one, that Czechoslovakia alone cannot solve it and that it is the duty of all the United Nations to deal with it thoroughly and for all time. That does not mean, and I am so much surprised that people were found to believe it

so, that there is going to be any differentiation on religious grounds among the citizens of the future free and democratic Czechoslovakia. Neither Benes nor I would be a part of any such indecency. We are not going to ask: Are you a Jew or a Catholic or a Protestant? But what is more important, the people at home are not going to ask that question. They will ask: Have you done your duty during the terrible crisis that all of us together have been facing the last half a dozen years? The saintly inhabitants of concentration camps and ghettos will have no trouble in answering that question. Not a day goes by that I do not think of them and that I do not long for the day when the remnants of their heroic martyrs will be liberated. They have done their duty and what a duty. They gave their lives by the thousands so that you and I could meet here tonight in these very pleasant circumstances. To them we owe our eternal gratitude and to try to allievate their unspeakable suffering is our self-evident and sacred duty.

And let me ask you very frankly, and I ask myself at the same time: Have we, everyone of us, done all we could? I am afraid the true answer would not be altogether satisfactory. All you and I could do is to call the world's attention over and over again to their suffering and then to give money which we have to a major or minor extent. And tonight the Czechoslovak Committee of the United Jewish Appeal is giving us this opportunity to make good and to leave this room not especially proud but perhaps somewhat more satisfied with ourselves than when we foregathered an hour or so ago. As some of you know I have given a considerable amount of my time to Jewish affairs for many years, but I am not proud of it. I just did my duty. Often I spent more money than I could afford to help to save a few precious lives. I am not telling you this

looking for praise or gratitude, I am asking you today likewise, quietly, without much talk, because only so can you and I face those who stayed behind, if God willing, they are still alive—your fathers, your mothers, your brothers, your sisters, your children. The Jews have a very fine record as family people. Today all Jews are one family, a family in distress, a family in mourning and indeed they must live up to their fine reputation. I am asking you to be generous tonight and I want you to think tomorrow morning whether you gave all you could afford. If you have not, send some more. It is needed as it was never needed before.

This greatest of history's cataclysms is nearing its final climax. Our boys are standing with concentrated alertness ready to invade Hitler's inferno. Many a Jewish boy will be giving his life in the next few weeks. He will be killed on his way to open the gates of the ghettoes and he will be dying confident that we, who had the privilege of living a free life throughout the war, will carry on where he was forced to stop. We dare not fail him. I thank you for having listened to me and I will thank you still more when I know how generous you were or still better that you did your plain duty by giving perhaps 25 cents or \$25,000 more than you could afford. The people at home will be asking that question, they will be asking us about it and I know that we want to look them straight in the eye and say: Brother, I did my best."

TO THE JEWS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA*

"Hitler forced the Jews of our land to wear the yellow badge, to distinguish them from the rest of the population, in order to facilitate the "work" of the brown shirts, for the fascists of Czechoslovakia, and for the Czechoslovakian "government," in carrying out their murderous instincts. It was not enough for them to rob the Jews—no, they had to mark the Jews.

"This will remain an everlasting mark of shame for the Germans, who sunk so low in their monstrous anti-semitic fury. . . . Hitler has, since his rise to power, never shrunk from using any methods, even the very lowest, to achieve his ends. Of all his inhuman acts, the very lowest remains the race doctrine, which is one of the bases of his new order. I go back to the blood libel trial of Hilsner, at the close of the last century, at which Thomas Masaryk, long before Emil Zola's "J'accuse," lifted his voice against the weapon of anti-semitism. The Czechoslovakian people at that time rejected antisemitism. This was the beginning of Masaryk's spiritual leadership of our people.

" . . . We here abroad are well informed about everything that is happening at home. Therefore, we also know well how everyone has behaved and is behaving towards the Jews. It fills us with justified pride when we can announce to the civilized world that our people behaves towards the persecuted Jews with Christian sympathy and profoundly human understanding for their cruel hardships. And we are happy that the German anti-Semites are joined only by a handful of rascals who speak Czech and Slovak but have sold their souls to their slave-drivers. . . . " •

*Excerpts from a Broadcast from London on September 18, 1941, by Dr. Hubert Ripka, Czechoslovak State-Minister.

"Jews of Czechoslovakia, we remember you with sympathy and understanding for your sufferings. We are carefully gathering data about you; we make notes of the persecutions; we make lists of your tormentors; we know of the ghettos, prisons and concentration camps; we know what is happening in the so-called "work camps". . . . Unfortunately, we cannot help you at this time. But we speak in your name, and announce your sufferings to the free world, and we assure you that they will not be forgotten.

"Today they wish to designate you publicly by a mark of shame. But the yellow Star of David is a sign of honour which all decent people will respect. I recall the words of the profoundly faithful Catholic of Jewish origin, the writer Alfred Fuchs, whom the Nazis tortured to death. For his Catholic zeal he received a Papal distinction. He then said: 'If the Germans introduce a Jewish badge in our country I shall wear it with demonstrative pride beside my Papal distinction.'

Jewish friends, do not hide your Jewish character, be proud of it—you cannot be discriminated in any other way than all men are: the deep irreconcilable difference rests only in whether a man is worthy or unworthy, humane or inhumane. In these times of bitter trial strengthen your minds in faith in the victory of justice. Today victory is already certain and it is no longer in the far distant future. You will live to see the day of liberation and just retribution."

THE PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN SLOVAKIA AND ARYANIZATION OF JEWISH PROPERTY IN SLOVAKIA*

The treacherous Slovak rulers see the threatening danger which is pouring upon them from the East and will soon appear from other parts of the world too. So Mach and his thugs are trying to scrape together as much as ever they can in order to be able to buy their escape from the fury of the people and from the just punishment which awaits them. They consider the easiest way to be that of stealing the last remnants of that little which still remains the property of the Jews.

They have recently started issuing new decrees and writing and ranting against the Jews again. As Budapest announced to the world, Mach's organization in Bratislava has ordered a new registration of Slovak Jews. They recall that the deportations in 1942 also began with registration. In Hungary, of course, they rejoice over these crimes. And this shows how the Bratislava criminals are playing into the hands of the Hungarians. The Hungarians will be able to blare forth to the world what a civilized and Christian nation they are, compared to the Slovaks.

Recently you could hear over the Bratislava wireless and on the Donausender daily, weak attempts to justify in the eyes of the Slovak people the fresh crimes which Mach's aryanisers are preparing. Like Pharisees they grow embittered over the way the poor Jews who are threatened with deportation, which in practice represents the death sentence, try to save themselves by accepting the Christian faith; and they even abuse them for having tried to escape abroad from the Guardists

*BBC Broadcast, Czechoslovak program, February 19th, 1944, by Dr. Juraj Slavik, Czechoslovak Minister of the Interior.

and Mach's criminals. According to the Bratislava traitors the Jews have only one right—that of being deported or killed so that the aryanisers may grow rich.

But the Slovak people judge differently: they help and will help the persecuted Jews. In vain does the Gardista attack the Slovak railway workers who saved Jews from Mach's claws. Every true Slovak and Christian will follow their example.

The Bratislava rulers are not satisfied with persecuting the remaining Jews. They have announced the last stage of the aryanisation of Jewish property. This time it is a question of stealing Jewish houses. The General Secretary of the H.S.L.S. (Quisling Party) Mr. Mikula, is doing everything possible to dupe the Slovak people into becoming fellow-culprits in the plunder. The Slovak regimists somehow think that if the plunder is carried on on a large scale, if a large number of the Slovak people are compromised, there will be more hope of the plundering and robbing going unpunished and criminals escaping the punishing hand of justice. They are making a fatal mistake of course. The law which is already being drawn up applies to everyone enriching himself in this way. So, Slovaks, do not allow yourselves to be caught by this immoral propaganda which is put forward under the orders of Mach's Mikula in order to drag you too to the precipice of disaster. Do not apply for Jewish property and homes. Let those who can no longer escape the punishing hand of justice steal them.

There is not the slightest doubt that anyone who profits from the property coming from mass plundering and murder will not live for long. And by participating in the distribution of that property you will compromise yourselves as fellow culprits in all the crimes committed against your Jewish fellow citizens and you will be judged accordingly.

THE FATE OF JEWRY*

The terrible news about the fate of the Jews on the Continent of Europe has shaken the world. The criminals who call themselves the German Government realize that the hour of retribution has drawn near and that there is no escape for them. Their political and social programme lies in ruins. They will never again succeed in conquering the world, they will never again be able to create a new moral order out of the enslavement of the modern social structure and out of the laws of the jungle. The noose is being drawn tight round their necks and they have not much time left. So they make ready to leave the scene of history, as one of their representatives has said, in such a manner that the world should be shaken with horror. That means in streams of blood and flames of fire. Millions of people, defenseless, old folk, women and children, particularly among the Slavs, have already experienced what the world should be like behind which the retreating nation of heroes has slammed the door.

But of all lots, the most terrible is the lot of those people who gave the world the Bible, from whose midst came the prophets and Christ, Spinoza, Marx and Einstein: the Jewish people. Nazism, possessed, and with all signs of spiritual disease, has striven to present Jewry in the picture of a fiend responsible for all its own shortcomings, its own failures, its own defeats. The Jews have allegedly caused the war, Jewish democracy brought it about, Jewish capitalism and Jewish Bolshevism are waging it, the Jews are the reason for the coming downfall of Nazism. There is no need to point out how much charlatanism, treachery and bestiality is contained in this *idée fixe* of the madmen.

*Broadcast from London by Dr. Hubert Ripka, Czechoslovak Minister of State, on January 5, 1944.

But the Jews are scattered and defenseless and so are absolutely the only ones with whom the Nazis can thoroughly carry out their program. On them alone have they been able to show that they carry out their promises and murder has taken place which is unparalleled in history. Millions of Jews have already been wiped from the face of the earth. Mobile gas-chambers are working at full pressure and with full gas. Others die of torture, starvation and disease. And in his New Year's message, the German Führer repeats his threat, which has already been largely carried out, that after the war the Jews of Europe will be wiped out.

Only a possessed, crazed maniac could take such terrible responsibility upon himself. But there is no doubt that he will try to do all in his power. News has reached us that those few Jews who still remain in our lands are to be sterilized after the Dutch model, those Jews who are economically useful, Jews of mixed marriages and their offspring, if they do not choose to be transferred to Poland, that is to almost certain death. Up to 6,200 Dutch doctors have already protested against a similar order in Holland by a mass strike. All the Dutch churches from the Roman Catholic to all the Protestant, Calvinist, and Lutheran churches; have sent a letter to the Reich Commissar, Seyss Inquart, "saying among other things: "Sterilization represents a physical and spiritual mutilation which is directly opposed to God's law that we should not abuse, hate or kill our fellow creatures. Sterilization represents a violation of the laws of both God and man. It is the ultimate expression of the anti-Christian racial teaching, destroying peoples and is the arrogant pride of an outlook which destroys and makes impossible a truly Christian life and human life."

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL*

The old anti-Jewish bias of Central and Eastern Europe was carried over in all the post-war states of this area in various forms of its expression. In Austria it created a strongly anti-Jewish Fascist movement such as the Heimwehr and other political parties with anti-semitic tendencies. In Hungary it assumed an even more violent form in the movement of the "Awakening Magyars" of Tibor Eckhardt, and in Rumania it found its expression in the "Iron Guard." One state, however, the Republic of Czechoslovakia, until and even beyond the last hour of its independent existence remained without blemish or stain in the treatment of its Jewish population. This was due not only to the constitution which gave the Jewish population the same rights and duties bestowed on members of the nation belonging to other denominations and other faiths, but to the spirit of the people. This spirit manifested itself in the daily life of the citizens of Czechoslovakia, in business men, in government officials, in the army and in the courts of the Republic where the equality of Jew and Gentile found its fullest expression. In good and bad times alike Jewish fellow citizens were accorded the same consideration as were other members of the community, and their response when they were called upon to serve the Republic was highly commendable, for they neither shunned sacrifice nor did they evade any difficult or costly duty. Airmen and soldiers of Jewish faith in France and later in the Near East (at Tobruk), in Russia and in England, fought and are fighting with the same courage and devotion to the cause of their country as do other members of the Czechoslovak armed forces.

*Article by Dr. Ján Papánek, Minister Plenipotentiary Chief, Czechoslovak Information Service, N. Y.—Reprinted from "The Resistance."

Until the German invaders began their beastly policy of extermination, Jews in Czechoslovakia occupied positions in all walks of life. In business they proved successful and because of their integrity they enjoyed the respect of their colleagues and the confidence of their customers and no German anti-semitic propaganda no matter how ingeniously it was conceived could destroy this cooperation. In political life too, religion did not prove a hindrance for the Jewish population played a considerable role in the democratic process of government. Jews were active leaders in many political parties both in the left and right wing sections of the political life of the country. Czechoslovak literature was enriched by Jewish poets and dramatists and the theater had many distinguished actors whose popularity was by no means diminished because of their denomination. It is therefore fair to say that the 300,000 Jewish citizens of Czechoslovakia occupied those positions in the social, economic and political life which they were able to attain through their ability, diligence, knowledge or other qualifications necessary for a given job in industry, commerce, agriculture, science, literature or politics.

It was with deep sorrow and helpless anger that the people of Czechoslovakia had to witness the Nazi atrocities committed on their neighbors and friends. In all the sections of Czechoslovakia, in Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Carpatho-Russia, with the exception of a small gang of quislings, they not only refused to participate actively in the Nazi anti-semitic orgy, but with all the means at their disposal attempted to help their unfortunate friends and thus sabotage the German efforts. Daily evidence is received to this effect from the Nazi court reports describing the execution of men and women who "were sabotaging the efforts of the Reich to solve the Jewish problem." Many Slovak farmers kept

their Jewish neighbors in hiding for months and even years in order to save them from deportation to Poland and certain death.

As for the confiscated and "Aryanized" Jewish property, the Czechoslovak people consider this as a typical German robbery and support fully the declaration of the Czechoslovak Government in London which states that the liberated Republic will not recognize as valid and legally binding any transfer of private property rights which occurred during the occupation of the Nazis under duress or due to German anti-Jewish legislation.

Due to the German slave labor system which they have instituted all over occupied and oppressed Europe, hundreds of thousands of Czechoslovak citizens will be left stranded and helpless when the Nazi monster falls apart under the united blows of the free peoples, from the northernmost part of Norway to the Bay of Biscay and the Adriatic. It will be the difficult task of the government of Czechoslovakia to get them back to their families and their homes, to their wives and to their children. With the aid of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the Czechoslovak Red Cross and other organizations of this kind, the Government will most certainly see to it that no difference will be made in the disposition of any of its citizens and that this job be carried out in accordance with the principles of greatest need. Indeed, the democratic spirit of the people and their national tradition would not tolerate any other consideration or measure. Whether Jewish or Gentile they will be taken under the protection of the Czechoslovak Government wherever they may be and they will receive the help they need in accordance with the best means available.

The liberated Republic will continue to expand its democratic creed in all phases of its social life. And

since anti-semitism is the first testing ground of a true and healthy democracy, to use the words of our late President Masaryk, I venture to say that the people of Czechoslovakia will pass this test as they have heretofore. Citizens of Jewish faith, as President Benes and other members of our Government have so often emphasized, will enjoy the same rights and fulfill the same duties towards their community and nation as the rest of us.

Dr. Ján Papánek

“JEWS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA”

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Z. H. Wachsman.

JEWES IN POST WAR EUROPE

*The Governments in Exile and
Their Attitude Towards the Jews*

by

Z. H. WACHSMAN

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