

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

In Czechoslovakia...

Mann, Erika

Datierung v. Stuart D. Ferguson

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Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

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formulas about 300 000

about 45 000 Jews in
C.S.R.

1939 sitting on
Houses, Rents
and Real Estate

Jews who had no houses,
but only movable property
+ valuables + money
disappeared are supposed
to get some advance
on war damage re-
compensation.
Last year 300 000 000
were distributed as Total

Cross only Jewish
war damage compensation
tion).

2000 Jews in

1930 registered
Jewish nationality

"In Czechoslovakia", I was told whenever I raised the point, "we have no Jewish question. Happily, our people are not in the least antisemitic. And even if they were, - even if Nazism had succeeded in permanently poisoning their minds against their Jewish compatriots, - there aren't enough Jews left to create a 'problem'."

Though largely correct from the Czech viewpoint, the statement becomes disputable when judged from the Jewish angle. The Jews - unconsciously, most of them - maintain that, perhaps ~~unconsciously~~, the Czechs are antisemitic; that, without their knowing it, the Nazi poison has seeped into their brains and hearts; and that while ~~there may not be enough Jews left to create a problem for Czechoslovakia,~~ *there are plenty of problems left to disrupt* ~~life in this democratic republic presents the remaining Jews with plenty of problems.~~

Of the more than 300 000 Jews who once lived here, ~~about~~ 45000 have returned - from concentration- and labour camps, from exile, or from the hiding places in which some - a very few - managed to survive the unspeakable. Officially, the homecomers ~~are~~ the majority of whom ~~are~~ rightly considered victims of Nazi persecution, were ~~given~~ given a cordial welcome ~~and~~ as well as a ~~large~~ number of promises. Among the latter none figured more prominently than "restitution" - the early restoration of their lost fortunes to the impoverished. Few, if any, doubt the sincerity of President Benes and his government, ~~but~~ But although "topside" is said to be utterly well-intentioned, a variety of obstacles seem to ~~be~~ blocking the road to complete Jewish rehabilitation.

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There is, above all, the decisive ~~question~~ ^{issue} of ~~whether or not~~ ^{nationality} the returning Jew is ~~eligible for~~ ^{eligible for} Czechoslovakian citizenship. More often than not he has lost everything he possessed, including his ~~identification papers~~ ^{own}. But even the ~~lucky ones~~ ^{own} who still ~~considered~~ ^{considered} Czechoslovakian passports are by no means automatically ~~the purely czech parts of~~ ^{the purely czech parts of} or in ~~Czech citizens~~ ^{Czech citizens}. Those born and raised in Bohemia or Moravia find it easy enough to re-gain their status, ~~national~~ ^{national}. ~~The members of the various minority groups have to prove that~~ ^{The members of the various minority groups have to prove that} their non-czech background never affected their loyalty to their country, before their applications may be granted. Most involved and entangled is the case of the Jews "Sudetenland" ^{2,5 Million of} whose "aryan" brothers ~~have been~~ ^{are} expelled from their homeland. Like these, the Jewish inhabitants of the Sudetenland call German their mother tongue. Educated in German schools they rarely speak any czech whatever and while - at the latest since ~~their political outlook~~ ^{"Munich"} could not possibly have been ~~anything but~~ ^{"pro-German"}, ~~their cultural links~~ ^{they were} remained ~~what~~ ^{are} : purely German; strictly non-czech.

To pass the loyalty test on which all depends, the "Sudenten Jew" must prove at least one point out of ~~four~~ ^{following} four:

If, in the census year of 1930 he gave his nationality as Czech rather than German he has won. If, having registered as a German in 1930, he ~~changed~~ ^{changed} his mind under Hitler and notwithstanding the ~~dangers~~ ^{inherent in} such an action, professed himself a Czech Jew, he ~~has~~ ^{comes} off with honour.

Handy
f. despit

(seems fair enough,- actually is. Jews, however, point out, there exists yet that, inofficially, another measurement : property. Poor people pass far more easily. Wherever restitution is not involved, difficulties negligible. Where it is involved all depends on attitude of local ^{much} authorities and on how the respective administrator is able and willing to use.

- 1.) How many Jews are left in Czechoslovakia, former homeland of a Jewish prosperous community of 300 000 ?
- 2.) What is the position, legal and otherwise of those who survived the financial unspeakable and returned - from concentration and labour camps, from exile and from the hiding places in which ~~hhhh~~ some - a very few - managed to escape persecution?
- 3.) What about anti-Semitism in this ~~democratic~~ republic ~~whose~~ with its present-day racially mixed population, its many minorities and its truly democratic tradition of tolerance and equal rights for all?
- 4.) How does the ~~present-day~~ Czech's attitude towards their Jewish compatriots compare with that taken by other "liberated" Europeans?

~~These~~ Simple though they sound, these ~~basic~~ Dozens of exhaustive conversations with both Jew and Czechs; with government officials, party leaders, people engaged in ~~assisting~~ financial aid ~~to~~ impoverished Jews; Jewish recipients of ~~legal~~ and advise; Czech beneficiaries of and administrators of Nazi-confiscated Jewish property - ~~with~~ gradually told the story - a ~~complex~~ story ~~if~~ if ever there was one.

Of all the ~~interviews~~ ^{relevant} interviews and visits that I've had during these past three weeks, two encounters proved wholly ~~unforgettable~~ ^{unforgettable}. And since they ~~also~~ served to answer - at least partially - the questions listed above

~~Thư viện này~~ I nguhobahthon venture to reproduce them on these pages.

While her friends had never before seen her so tall and Mrs. S.
thin but healthy of looks she recalling her recent past as though
had a way of the horrors of her own recent past as though
they had been experienced by strangers.

mother. It was the last I saw of her. After two years at Thersienstadt she was
massed at Auschwitz. "

By 1943 the of Prague's Jewish community was
the liquidation had been completed,
had been completed, and had disappeared from
In the last column of
Jews to be shipped to Theresienstadt, Mrs. S. [redacted] was
the least. Along with the small belongings she had taken from her
future companions she surrendered her own effects to the S.S. man

Theresienstadt; ~~hahhwhhh~~ Auschwitz; humiliation, filth,
~~hahhahagathahhahhahhahh~~
terror ~~hahh~~ despair and ~~hahhah~~ - irrational and inexplicable as
life itself, ~~hahhahhah~~ - hope against hope and ~~hahhahhah~~ considered self-
interest~~hahh~~; none of the goryly familiar ingredients ~~hahhah~~ missing. ~~hahh~~ ^{was}
safe, sound and very much alive
Mrs. S./ ~~hahhahhahhahhahhahhahh~~ ~~hahhah~~ had been lucky, though. Here she was,
dry
interrupting her account of her husband's death and the gradual
extermination of all but her entire family, to ~~hahhahhahhah~~ discuss
her present position.

nknfnhnanehhohghewnhshahsbahnkntnbncaeh hankntnbhhuvennn
gsehbhsbhaknan

Of the more than 300 000 Jews who once lived in Czechoslovakia 45 000 may now be found here.

What is the position, legal, financial and otherwise of those who survived the unspeakable and returned - from concentration- and labour camps, from exile and from the hiding places in which some - a very few - managed to ^{escape} ~~survive~~ ^{the present-day} ~~the unspeakable?~~ What about anti-semitism in this republic with its mixed population, its many minorities and its ~~hhhh~~ ^{para} democratic tradition of tolerance and equal rights for all? ^{Para} How does the Czechs' attitude towards their Jewish compatriots compare with that taken by other "liberated" Europeans?

Simple, though they sound, these 3 basic questions are not easily answered. Dozens of exhaustive conversations with both Jewish and gentile Czechs; with government officials, party leaders, people engaged in assisting impoverished Jews; Jewish recipients of financial help and legal advice; non-Jewish beneficiaries ~~hh~~ and administrators of Nazi-confiscated Jewish property gradually told the story - a tale as complex as any.

Of all the relevant interviews and visits that I have had ^{in the course of my investigation,} during these past three weeks, two encounters proved eminently enlightening, - so much so that I propose to recall them on these pages.

The welcome was cordial. With me were two representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee and I was considered a friend. Our hosts - three survivors of both, the Theresienstadt and the Auschwitz ordeals - were ~~prominent members~~ prominent members of the small Jewish community of Mariánská Lázně, better known as Marienbad. They were born here, two of them, and - prior to "Munich" - ^{ed} they all had own seizable property in this world-famous spa in the heart of

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The welcome was cordial. With me were two representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee and I was considered a friend. ~~Our hosts - three~~ ^{three} survivors of both the Theresienstadt - and Auschwitz ordeals ~~(one of them had been in Bergen Belsen as well)~~ (one of them had been in Bergen Belsen as well) were prominent members of a small Jewish community in the heart of Sudetenland. They were born here and, prior to Hitler had owned sizable property in these parts.

The girl's command of English was better than that of the two men. Also, she seemed the strongest personality of the three. Thin, but tall and healthy of looks, Mrs. S. had a way of referring to the horrors of her own recent past as though they had been experienced by strangers.

"Why of course" she said in answer to a question, "the Czechs are antisemitic - not officially to be sure but actually, they are."

I inquired just how antisemitism manifested itself nowadays. ~~When the Jews were being discriminated against when it came to their seeking jobs?~~ ^{Were the Jews being discriminated against when it came to their seeking jobs?} ~~Were they finding it more difficult than others to re-gain the property they had lost under the occupation?~~ ^{Were they finding it more difficult than others to re-gain the property they had lost under the occupation?}

"Employment" she told me "is easily found, though I doubt that any of us could get a government job..."

~~HERE~~ ^{stopped} She was ~~interrupted~~ by the Bergen-Belsen survivor, who addressed her in Czech, before turning towards me.

"It's ~~a matter of language~~ a matter of language", he said.; "whoever speaks Czech without a foreign accent is ~~eligible~~ eligible ~~for any position provided he qualifies otherwise.~~ ^{afflicted - not only a German one} people with a German accent are out of luck - whether they are Jewish or not."

The girl chuckled. "And Jewish people ~~with~~ ^{she said, "who on top of} a German accent", ~~she said, "who~~ claim restitu-
tion are doomed."

prompted

"Perhaps" she suggested, "I 'd better explain. My own case, though by no means unique, is somewhat exceptional. Only those who, like myself, were born and raised in Sudetenland, share my difficulties. Having lost our Czech citizenship when, in October 1938, this part of the country was incorporated in the Reich, we must now regain our national status, before restitution may even be applied for."

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The girl chuckled.

"And BHH jewish

blind people with a German accent" she said, " who ~~amalgamated~~
have any claims to restitution are doomed."

Another insert in Czech caused her to modify her statement.

"Perhaps" she suggested "I'd better explain. My own case, unique, is in somewhat though by no means ~~exceptional~~ exceptional, ~~hh~~ who like myself were ~~only~~ Only those born and raised in Sudetenland share my difficulties. Having lost our Czech citizenship when, in October 1938, this part of the country was incorporated in the Reich, we ~~must now~~ ~~re-gain~~ re-gain our national status before ~~restitution~~ restitution, may even be applied for. ~~To qualify for~~ To qualify for citizenship the 'Sudeten Jew' - or any Sudetenlander permitted to stay here - must prove at least one point out of four. If, firstly, in the census year of 1930 he gave his nationality as Czech rather than German, he has won. If, secondly, having registered as German in 1930 he changed his mind under Hitler and notwithstanding the dangers entailed by such an action demanded to be considered Czech, he comes off with honour. If thirdly, despite his continued adherence to Germanism, he fell victim to Nazi persecution (and can prove that he did) he still passes. And if, finally, having managed to escape injury, he engaged in - and can show for - any kind of anti-Nazi activity, either here or abroad, he

Sudetenland.

The girl's command of English was better than that of the two men. Also, she seemed the strongest personality of the three. Thin, but tall and healthy of looks, Mrs. S. had a way of referring to the horrors of her own recent past as though they had been experience/ by strangers.

"Why of course" she said in answer to a question, " the Czechs are antisemitic - not officially to be sure, but actually, they are."

I inquired just how antisemitism manifested itself these days. Had there been anti-jewish demonstrations of any kind? Were the Jews being discriminated against when it came to their seeking jobs? ~~When~~ Did those among them who had somehow lost their national status find it difficult to re-gain their Czechoslovakian nationality? And if so, what ~~was~~ was the official explanation - or pretext, if she so desired?

She answered ^{my} ~~the~~ last question first.

"No law", she said, "requires an explanation. ~~Take~~ the ~~decrees~~ decrees pertaining to ~~'minority Jews'~~ 'minority Jews'. As one born and raised in Sudetenland I had better know them by heart. Like everyone here I lost my Czech citizenship when, in October 1938, this part of the country was incorporated in the Reich. ~~But unlike the rest of~~ *But this little bit has been returned to* ~~Hitler's~~ *Poland and 1.5 millions of* Sudeten-German brothers, I was permitted to stay here, as were all Jews ~~residing~~ *domiciled* in these parts. We ~~had~~ were - you see - given the benefit of the doubt. Since "Munich" - at the latest - our political outlook could not possibly have been very 'pro-German'. But what about our cultural leanings? Educated as we were in German schools

we called German our mother tongue. Few of us had ever learned to speak
any Czech whatever. But with the standstill policy which was applied in the
past in
the German anti-semitic policy
perhaps during the years prior to Hitler's ascent to power
we had been engaged in 'germanizing activities'. If despite our German
background we had always considered ourselves good Czechs we had probably
said so in the census-year of 1930. "

She paused.

"I for one", she finally added "failed to say so. I was nervous
in giving my nationality as 'German' I merely told the truth.
The census in question set out to determine the numerical strength of the various minority groups.
That was all. Who could have known that 15 years later it would be used in a loyalty test?"

an international
Usually ill-informed circles tell of a meeting recently held at
St. Mouse-Hick, popular spa in the heart of this noman's land.
The gathering, they say, was quite exceptional in that it (a)
brought together a ~~hhhh~~ number of pneitpotentiaries from the USA,
Britain, France and the USSR none of whom had ever been heard of
before while (b) it ended in complete ~~and~~ harmony and utter understanding

While each delegate represented his ~~hhhhhh~~ respective government,
everyone was at liberty to dispute, ^{to unmask and} ~~hh~~ even to oppose his country's
official policy - ^a course, the wisdom of which became increasingly evident
the further the discussions progressed.

From the minutes read to, and approved by, all participants,
^a ~~annnnnnnnnnnnnn~~ source quotes the following ~~fragmentary~~ passages:
~~hhhhhh~~ Gregori
Mr. Muschlicheff (representing the U.S.S.R.):

"On behalf of my government I wish to state that there is hardly a ^{political} blunder
which we have not committed in the past two years. While ~~nnnnnnnnnnnnnn~~
we've religioiously kept all our international agreements and have not
in fact violated the sovereignty of any of our neighbours, we have
behaved so irksomely in so many respects and contexts that our enemies
everywhere on earth have found it easy enough to heat even harmless
and peace-loving people against us."

Mr. James S. Huskleather (representing the U.S.A.):

You said it, brother. On behalf of my government, however, I should like
^{point out} to ~~add~~ that we, too, are ^{somewhat digusted} ~~quite~~ ~~nnnnnnnnnnnnnn~~ with our own performance.
What the hell are we up to, anyway? War? Nosiree! Granted ~~nnnnnnnnnn~~ we'd
be capable of devastating your fair country with the aid of the atom.
And in a giffy, too. ~~nnnnnnnnnnnnnn~~ But meanwhile your va/lliant
soldiers would surely occupy ^{the continent} ~~Europe~~. So we'd devastate Europe, sure, we
would and there'd be nothing to stop us either. But ^{then what?} ~~nnnnnnnnnn~~ Well,
we'd land and bravely fight our way from rubble heap to rebble heap
with half of the survivors helping us and the other half putting up

a very ugly fight at the side of you reds. In the end we'd win though, ^{whereas} For we'd ~~hahahahaha~~ cut your supply lines, ~~hahah~~ ours across the Atlantic would remain comparatively intact. ~~hahahah~~ Even so we'd be in for trouble. None of the conquered rubble heaps which were once European cities could be left to itself. We'd have to ~~hahah~~ ^{deposit} a lot of soldiers ^{fresh and} ~~hahahahahahahahahahahahah~~ powerful ~~hahah~~ all over the place and while some ~~hahah~~ armies would enter Russia ^{of ours} via Japan our European contingents wouldn't amount to much - either numerically or from the point of view of morale - ~~ahntantant~~ before they ever crossed the Soviet boundaries. Which makes it obvious that we don't want war - or do we ? "

Mr. G. Muschlicheff:

" 'course not. We don't either. Yet, I am sorry to state that our government controlled press is hardly better than your capital controlled one. Hardly, I say. For I don't think any of our sheets could compare with The Chicago Tribune or the New York daily News when it comes to insulting allies. What makes our names calling worse than yours is merely the ~~hah~~ fact that our open insult and scantily veiled threats are known to be officially inspired, whereas yours are but the juicy fruits of individual ~~hah~~ enterprise and the freedom of the press.

Mr. Huskleather:

Quite. But then, our congressmen, governor/s and the like go much further in insulting and frightening (if they can) your nation, than ~~hahah~~ any of your ~~hahahahahahah~~ policy makers. Remember Senator Brewster's recent statement? Said he : "we must use the atom without compunction whenever and wherever our orders are defied." Handsome, Uh ?

Mr. Muschlicheff:

" Never mind. Who cares about Brewster. He's only a leading member of the Senate's Foreign affairs committee and as such wholly irresponsible. "