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Uncertain Citizenship:
Jewish Belonging and the Ethnic Revolution in
Poland and Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948

by

Sarah Agnes Cramsey

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

and the Designated Emphasis in

Jewish Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor John Connelly, Chair

Professor John Efron

Professor Jason Wittenberg

Spring 2014

Abstract

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This study explores how citizenship came to be defined in ethnic and national terms during and after World War II. Before the war, citizenship within east central European states stood above ethnic and linguistic categories yet, in an unstudied revolution that gripped the region after 1945, new political entities came into being that were predicated on homogeneous populations. I trace this process in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and use debates and laws regarding Jewish citizenship to understand the revolutionary changes of this time. The story begins in London and New York, where Poles and Czechs in diplomatic exile interacted with Allied governments and transnational Jewish organizations like the World Jewish Congress. Within these circles new ideas were forged concerning who constituted the Jewish people and where they belonged geographically.

By 1944 and 1945 two distinct developments impelled key Czech, Polish and Jewish authorities to consider emigration away from Europe and towards Palestine as the most desirable option for east central Europe's Jewish citizens. First, the deadly extent of the Holocaust became increasingly public. And second, two high-profile meetings of the United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) failed to produce a plan helping three groups of "stateless" European Jews who could not return to their pre-war "homes": Czechoslovak Jews who opted for German nationality before 1938, Jews from Subcarpathian Rus, and Polish Jews in the lands occupied and later annexed by the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the second half of my dissertation follows these three groups after liberation and examines laws and social policies in the postwar era that codified ethnic difference and facilitated Jewish migration elsewhere. Notably, Czechoslovak officials played a key role in helping many east central European Jews leave Europe by fashioning their state into a major transit point en

route to Palestine. In sum, my dissertation shows how a deeper transformation of ideas concerning who belonged to a given nation-state under-girded broader political, economic and societal changes thus enabling the emergence of three new ethnic polities: Czechoslovakia, Poland and Israel.

My dissertation makes important contributions to studies of the Jewish experience, east central Europe and the contours of citizenship in the twentieth century. First, it shows how an “ethnic revolution,” that took place among Allied leaders in exile, inspired new ideas about the Polish and Czechoslovak body politic and Jewish/Gentile coexistence thereby mandating massive population shifts as World War II ended. Usually, scholars think of the revolutions gripping east central Europe after 1945 as being political or economic, but in fact wartime shifts in ideas about ethnic belonging greatly influenced the course of the socialist revolution. Second, I showcase how the *bricha*, or semi-legal movement of Jews towards Palestine, can be linked to broader stories about Jewish citizenship, postwar state policies encouraging ethnic un-mixing and the massive population transfers that transpired in the wake of Germany’s defeat. Finally, by illustrating how the possibilities for Jewish belonging narrowed over a short period and how a triad of ethnically homogenous states materialized, my work helps us better understand the prevalence of ethnically-defined nation-states.

For the “Chief”

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Introduction

On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion strode towards a handful of microphones in the main hall of a stout alabaster building in the heart of Tel Aviv to address thousands of soon-to-be citizens assembled before him. With clear, measured tones, Ben-Gurion declared that Israel would become, in a few short hours, an independent state. Flanked by his Zionist colleagues, outlined against a blue and white backdrop adorned with two six-pointed stars and directly below a portrait of Theodore Herzl, Ben-Gurion struck a memorable pose as he slowly read the Declaration of Independence from a handful of stapled pages. Modest circumstances, perhaps, for a great turning point in the history of the Jewish people--the birth of the modern Jewish state. After Ben-Gurion's recitation he affixed the first signature to the document. Twenty-five of his peers did the same in the next few moments. Photographs that captured the historic scene hang today in the same building now called Independence Hall.

Zorach Warhaftig did not pose for the camera on that day. Marooned in Jerusalem because of fighting in the Mandate, Warhaftig could not safely traverse the forty-or-so hilly miles to the palm-dotted city on the coast. A space was left for his signature. Three weeks later, he arrived in Tel-Aviv and stood before Ben-Gurion. Warhaftig recollected that Ben-Gurion, who by then had assumed the position of prime minister, handed him a pen and issued a "curt order: 'sign it.'"¹ And so, Warhaftig signed the document establishing the state that would grant him yet another citizenship.

Born six years after the turn of the century in Volkovysk, a town of five-thousand Jews and five-thousand Christians midway between Minsk and Warsaw, Warhaftig was a Russian citizen until the creation of the Second Polish Republic in 1919 when he became a citizen of Poland. Trained in his youth as a rabbi, Warhaftig moved to the Polish capital as a young adult to study at the University of Warsaw where he earned a doctorate in law in the 1930s.² In 1936, Warhaftig attended his first Zionist Congress as a bachelor. Three years later, he attended the 21st Zionist Congress as a married man. He brought his young wife Naomi along to the 1939 gathering in Switzerland so that the young couple could enjoy a honeymoon, nearly eighteen months after their wedding.

When the newlyweds moved to a "spacious building" at 13 Świętojerska, Naomi and Zorach could easily walk the one mile through Muranów to her parent's "warm house" at Nowolipie 39. Here, in "Jewish Warsaw, the pride of Jewish communities throughout Europe, with its masses of Jews, scholars and writers, the vibrant seat of trade and industry of crafts and arts," here in the

¹ Paul Lewis, "Rabbi Zorach Warhaftig Dies; Rescuer of Polish Jews Was 96," *The New York Times*, October 7, 2002. Only one other signatory outlived Warhaftig. Meir Vilner died in 2003 at the age of 84.

² Warhaftig worked at a break-neck pace upon his graduation, opening a private law practice in Warsaw while simultaneously serving the Central Bureau of He-Halutz ha-Mizrachi and as a Vice-President of the Mizrachi, while also being a leading executive member of the Tora va-Avodah movement.

“blooming” capital city of Poland, Zorach and Naomi tended to her family and built their first shared home.³

The Warhaftigs scrambled back to their Warsaw in late August 1939 as threats of war became increasingly real. In the midst of the 21st Zionist Congress, World Zionist Organization leader Chaim Weizmann announced to the 576 delegates that the meeting would conclude three days earlier than anticipated, on August 25, 1939.⁴ Reflecting on this fraught moment nearly six decades later, Warhaftig remembered that “only a few” members of the Polish delegation to the Congress “opted to remain in Switzerland.” For Warhaftig, staying in Switzerland was inconceivable. He recalled that

no such thought crossed my mind or that of my wife. We knew that we simply had to get back to our families in Warsaw and do our duty as loyal Polish citizens. At no time in the past had our Jewish and civil responsibilities coincided so harmoniously as they did now, when we were confronted with the menace of Hitler’s Nazi hordes...⁵

And so, using a collective passport entrusted to Zorach, the group of Congress delegates representing the Polish *Mizrachi* traveled via sealed train on a circuitous route back to Warsaw. En-route, Warhaftig saw groups of Polish refugees fleeing from the region around Poznan. Some Poles traveling on refugee trains shouted “Jews, go back to Palestine!” to Warhaftig and his colleagues. Their reply to these malcontents was “swift and to the point: ‘Shame on you! We’ve come back to Poland in defense of our country, and this is the kind of welcome we get from people like you—on the run from the enemy!’”⁶ The group arrived home after a week of travel to find the city mobilizing. Warhaftig hurried to the Muranów railroad station to help build anti-tank trenches in those early September days.

Within a month, however, the country of his citizenship, Poland, had disappeared from the political map of Europe. Warhaftig fled east towards the city of Vilnius, which the Soviet Union had ceded to Lithuania. After a few months there helping other Jews escape from Lithuania towards Palestine and other destinations, Warhaftig traveled to Vladivostock by train and then on to Japan by boat where he and a few thousand Polish Jews sought refuge in 1940 and 1941. Encouraged to cancel his departure to Palestine planned for December 19, 1940 due to the difficulties inherent in such a long journey, members of *Mizrachi* and

³ Zorach Warhaftig, *Refugee and Survivor: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1988), 289.

⁴ *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, “War Fears Curtail Zionist Congress 3 days; Weizmann Lashes Britain but Pledges ‘clean fight,’” August 17, 1939. In the midst of the 21st Zionist Congress, World Zionist Organization leader Chaim Weizmann announced to the 576 delegates that the meeting would conclude three days earlier than anticipated, on August 25, 1939.

⁵ Warhaftig, 18.

⁶ Warhaftig, 19.

the World Jewish Congress, an organization founded in the 1930s to represent the Jews of the diaspora, intervened to secure Warhaftig a visa to the United States instead. His journey across the Pacific began on June 4, 1941, just a few weeks before Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.⁷

In the United States, Warhaftig moved to New York City, worked for the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the research arm of the World Jewish Congress, and wrote prolifically about the fate of uprooted Jews throughout Europe. Three of his four children were born during his time in the United States. Both Zorach and Naomi acquired United States citizenship. And yet, in August 1947 Zorach emigrated, or made *aliyah*, to Palestine. Soon after the birth of their fourth child, Naomi and his children joined him. Reflecting on the peregrinations of his family, Warhaftig claimed that the arrival of his family in *Eretz Israel* marked a watershed moment: "when my family finally joined me, we had finally come home."⁸

Had they? In August 1939, Zorach and Naomi rushed back to Warsaw, their home and the home of Naomi's family. Now, less than eight years later, they found themselves in a new home thousands of miles away from the place of their birth. While the details vary, the story of Zorach, Naomi, and their children was not exceptional. Of the thirty-seven signatories on the Declaration of Independence thirty-six were born outside of the Levant. Twenty-five were born in the Russian Empire or areas that belonged to the Tsar. Between 1945 and 1948, upwards of 200,000 displaced Jews of a variety of prewar citizenships left Europe and moved to Palestine despite this movement being "illegal" under British colonial law. And of course, after Ben-Gurion signed the famous declaration, tens of thousands more poured into the new state. How did these Jewish citizens of east central Europe, namely interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia, become the first citizens of Israel?

This dissertation approaches this question, which might seem self-evident, and offers a corrective to narratives that directly link the Holocaust to the establishment of a Jewish State.⁹ I submit that answers to the question illustrated by Warhaftig's experience must include a fundamental discussion of citizenship and chart how conceptions and policies regarding east central European citizenries changed over the course the war and immediately afterwards. During World War II, Polish, Czech and Jewish diplomats working in-exile adjusted their sense of citizenship and broke their commitment to minority rights. By 1944 and 1945, individuals who had vigorously supported the Jewish diaspora and liberal

⁷ Unable to secure a visa to the United States like her husband, Naomi settled for a Canadian visa and spent eight months between 1941 and 1942 living alone in Montreal with their young son before moving to the United States.

⁸ Warhaftig, 387.

⁹ Two articles by Evyatar Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection Between the Holocaust and the Creation of Israel," *Israel Affairs Vol. 14*, No. 3 (July 2008): 446-466, and Yechiam Weitz, "Jewish Refugees and Zionist Policy during the Holocaust." *Middle Eastern Studies Vol. 30*, No. 2 (Apr. 1994): 351-368, directly question the seemingly self-evident link between the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel.

conceptions of belonging that transcended ethnicity just a few years earlier came to believe that Jewish survivors would have to leave Europe if they wanted to actively partake in Jewish national life. Within wartime conversations between members of the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments-in-Exile and officials of the World Jewish Congress, I have located a special place where knotty questions of Jewish belonging were contemplated and worked out.

Between 1938 and 1948 new ideas of Jewish belonging evolved in the minds of key east central European leaders and political citizenship for Jews within the region came to be defined in ethnic terms. This dissertation captures this redefinition in Jewish citizenship, explores how wartime thoughts translated into governmental policies and imbricates this change in a broader story concerning the disentangling of populations in Czechoslovakia and Poland. In short, across this ten year period an “ethnic revolution” contributed to the ascent of ethnocentric, territorial nationalism and mandated the creation of new political entities based on homogeneous populations. In this way, developments in east central Europe can be linked to the simultaneous embrace of Palestine and later Israel as a territorial, nationalist project. Usually we think of the postwar east central European revolution as involving politics and socialist economics. I show how a deeper transformation of ideas concerning who belonged to a given nation state under-girded broader societal changes and resulted in the emergence of three new “ethnic” polities: Czechoslovakia, Poland and Israel.

Other historians grappling with the link between the Jewish tragedy and the establishment of a Jewish state have produced monographs and articles situated in various historiographical currents. For example, experts on the *bricha*, or the semi-legal “flight” from Europe towards the Mandate, chart how war-time rescue missions on the ground in occupied spaces morphed into sophisticated underground channels after Hitler’s defeat. Yehuda Bauer’s seminal work explores the *bricha* using a vast array of sources and emphasizing oral contributions to understand how Jews moved away from their prewar homes.¹⁰ A contemporary of many of the operatives who worked on the rubble-laden ground in postwar Europe, Bauer recounts how Polish Jews returning from wartime exile in the Soviet Union met Zionist interlocutors at railroad stations upon their homecoming. These agents directed them towards established but secretive routes that would lead them towards displaced persons camps in the American Zones of postwar Austria and Germany. David Engel, an expert on both the Polish Government-in-Exile during World War II and Jewish institutions on Polish soil after the war among other topics, has further illuminated the interactions between Palestinian underground agents and returning Polish Jews as well.¹¹ Bauer’s work is longer and broader in scope, incorporating political discussions between Jewish authorities and state leaders alongside a gritty social story unfolding on the

¹⁰ Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: Random House, 1970).

¹¹ David Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight: Holocaust Survivors in Poland and the Struggle for Leadership* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996).

ground. Both works prioritize Jewish actors encouraging displaced people to prolong their displacement elsewhere in order to secure passage to Palestine as the most important causal factor in this story of shifting citizenships.

More recent interventions by two Polish-born scholars suggests that individual interactions between returning Polish Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors soured postwar possibilities for coexistence and propelled survivors to build their futures elsewhere. Few works on Jewish life in postwar Poland have faced the microscopic attention directed towards Jan Gross's work. Gross recently produced two darkly titled monographs: *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz* and *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust*.¹² Gross argues in both that coexistence between Jews and non-Jews had become untenable by 1945 and 1946. Pogroms resulted as potentials for co-existence evaporated and Jews decided to flee en masse.

Like other contemporary scholars who have written on this period in recent years, Anna Cichopek-Gajraj has Gross's interventions in mind. In her dissertation which builds upon and offers a corrective to his first book on the 1945 pogrom in Kraków, Cichopek-Gajraj "seeks to show this historical moment not as a short, harsh prelude to an inevitable emigration, but rather as a time of complex Jewish encounters with state and society in which the exodus was not presupposed."¹³ Her research across two distinct geographical spaces incorporates social and psychological perspectives to offer an *Alltagsgeschichte* documenting a four-year period (1944-1948) in Slovakia and Poland. As much as she hopes to distance herself from Gross and his emphasis on ethnic violence, Cichopek-Gajraj returns to the conflict she so carefully explored in her first monograph. Violent interactions assume causal power in these studies by Gross and Cichopek-Gajraj, forcing Jews to opt for further displacement rather than return to their prewar homes or, in the case of Jews impacted by border shifts, their prewar states.

¹² The major works authored by Jan Gross include: *Polish Society Under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); *Upiorna dekada, 1939-1948. Trzy eseje o stereotypach na temat Żydów, Polaków, Niemców i komunistów* (Kraków: Universitas, 1998); Jan Gross, Istvan Deak and Tony Judt, editors, *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2006); Jan Gross and Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For an excellent survey of Gross' work, with special attention to his recent interventions and how they differ from his earlier works see: John Connelly, "Poles and Jews in the Second World War: the Revisions of Jan T. Gross," *Contemporary European History*, 11, 4 (2002), 641-58.

¹³ Anna Cichopek-Gajraj, *Jews, Poles and Slovaks: A story of encounters, 1944-1948* (Ann Arbor, Mi: Unpublished Dissertation, 2008), 3. Also helpful is her article: "Negotiating Jewish Belonging in postwar Slovakia (1945-48)," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* (2012). For her earlier work on postwar Krakow see: *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie 11 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2000); and an article drawing from the monograph "The Cracow Pogrom of August 1945: A Narrative Reconstruction," in *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, edited by Joshua D. Zimmerman (Rutgers University Press, 2003).

Finally, studies exploring the world of displaced person camps and international attempts to ameliorate the situations unfolding within them help explain how Europe's Jews became Jewish Israelis. The list of books illuminating daily life within postwar camps across Germany (and to a lesser extent elsewhere) and the discussions between states concerning nearly half a million displaced people has grown in recent years, as scholarship dedicated to the history of human rights, refugee policy and transnational organizations created in the wake of World War II has captivated audiences.¹⁴

Offerings by Avinoam J. Patt and Yosef Grodzinsky have challenged traditionally narratives to reveal fundamental cleavages within the Zionist movement and vicious ideological conflicts between Jews in the displaced universe respectively. Volumes co-edited by Jessica Reinisch contain articles on the disentanglement of populations and reconstruction plans from the same five year period, 1944-1949. Her monograph on the history of the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration adds a much-needed perspective to the current historiography on transnational organizational actors during and after the Second World War.

Finally, Gerald Cohen's book places the Jewish displaced person at the center of postwar discussions concerning human rights, international law and the rise of "emergency Zionism."¹⁵ Cohen associates this term with the 1945 Earl G. Harrison Report, which recommended to President Harry Truman that 100,000 Jewish displaced persons from German camps be awarded entry to Palestine immediately. This report alongside the International Refugee Organization constitution, in Cohen's assessment, ostensibly recognized the reality of Jewish statelessness and extraterritoriality and thereby "normalized the idea of Jewish self-determination in international politics."¹⁶

When read together these books provide inspiration, context and provocative arguments, yet they do not fully answer the question posed earlier regarding Zorach Warhaftig, his family and hundreds of thousands Jewish inhabitants of east central Europe who left the lands of their birth and sought political belonging elsewhere. My contribution exploring shifts in conceptions of Jewish belonging and east central European citizenship begins in London. The

¹⁴ The following list is not exhaustive, but see: Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009); Yosef Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle between Jews and Zionists in the aftermath of World War Two* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2004); Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: close encounters in occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, editors, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-1949* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jessica Reinisch, Mark Mazower and David Feldman, editors, *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: international perspectives, 1945-1949* (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) (with Mark Mazower and David Feldman); and, most recently, Gerald Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Cohen, 135.

¹⁶ Cohen, 143.

first chapter of this dissertation explores how Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš interacted with Poles, other Allies and transnational Jewish organizations like the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in diplomatic exile. Very early in the war, Beneš publicly offered support for the settlement of “national” Jews in Palestine. Members in the World Jewish Congress, which operated like a non-state actor with state-like diplomatic reach, felt incredibly threatened by Beneš’ statements and paid special attention to others in the Czechoslovak exile government who espoused similar views. In this first chapter, ideas clash regarding where Jews belonged in the postwar world, how to separate Jews who wanted to belong to the state in different ways (as a national minority, as individual citizens, as members of their own Jewish state) and how to reinstate citizenship to those stripped of it in the wake of interwar discrimination (like in Poland and Romania) and the implementation of Nazi legislation.

To show how the WJC remained committed to the diaspora for the majority of the war, the second part of this chapter focuses on correspondence between WJC official Arieh Tartakower and Ignacy Schwarzbart, one of two Jewish representatives on the Polish government-in-exile. Up until 1944, these two voices lobbied extensively for the reintroduction of Jewish citizenship in continental legal codes despite the collapse of the Minority Right Treaties specifically and the collapse of emancipation more esoterically.¹⁷ While early in the war Beneš espoused support for Zionism and the movement of Jews away from Europe after the conflict, Jewish voices within the Polish Government-in-exile and the World Jewish Congress were not, to borrow a phrase from Samuel Kassow, “ready to abandon the *do* (here, or Poland) for the *dortn* (there, or Palestine).”¹⁸

¹⁷ See the “Program for the Institute of Jewish Affairs” in A5/3 at the World Jewish Congress Archive at the American Jewish Archives (hereafter WJC Collection) that dates from 1941. Under the leadership of Jacob Robinson, Arieh Tartakower served as a research fellow on migration and colonization. When Zorach Warhaftig arrived in New York in the fall of 1941 he joined the staff of the Institute of Jewish Affairs as a researcher.

¹⁸ See Samuel Kassow, *Who will Write our History: Emanuel Ringelblum and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Indiana University Press, 2007), 48. “Despite the prewar rapprochement with Zionism, however, neither Ringelblum nor his party was ready to abandon the *do* for the *dortn*. They would start calling Palestine Eretz Yisroel. They would start marching in Zionist demonstrations. But they could never turn their backs on the Diaspora, on the Jewish masses and the Yiddish culture that they so loved. It was this facet of the LPZ that left its deepest imprint on Ringelblum: commitment to the Jewish masses and to Yiddish culture.” On the variety of Polish Jewish political beliefs during the interwar period see: Yisrael Gutman, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jehuda Reinharz, Chone Shmeruk, editors, *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Boston, M.A.: Brandeis University, 1989); Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-1939: The Crisis of Constitutional Government* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1972); and his new three volume history of Poland, *The Jews of Poland Russia Volume 3* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012); Robert Bloubaum, editor, *Antisemitism and its opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005); Szymon Rudnicki, “Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland,” in *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, edited by Robert Blobaum (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005): 148-170; Emanuel Melzer, *No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry 1935-1939* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997). Joel Cang, “The Opposition Parties in Poland and Their Attitude towards the Jews and the Jewish Problem,” *Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2* (Apr., 1939): 241-256;

This commitment to rebuilding Jewish life in Poland and elsewhere in Europe began to change in 1943 and 1944 as the extent of the Jewish tragedy in Europe became known and the Allied powers fail to codify legal definitions for Jewish displaced persons at two United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration meetings.¹⁹ The second chapter follows Arie Tartakower and his now familiar colleague Zorach Warhaftig as they lobby on behalf of special categories for Jewish people at the first UNRRA meeting in Atlantic City (November 1943) and the second UNRRA meeting in Montreal (August-September 1944). Between these two meetings, polemical discussions within New York City-based Jewish circles increasingly cast Palestine as the best option for perceived postwar Jewish citizenship problems as plans for rescue morphed into plans for resettlement.

The third chapter charts the intellectual trajectory of Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress, from 1942 to 1944 and explores how ideas prioritizing the viability of Palestine as a solution to the postwar Jewish question became key components of the WJC's organizational platform by the end of 1944. Drawing on ideas tossed around in Zionist circles, Goldmann helped shape WJC policy whereby the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration would subsidize the emigration of displaced Jewish persons away from Europe towards new homes in Palestine. This shift, or as I term it the "Palestinian turn," marks a distinct change from WJC policies espoused just two or three years earlier and was spawned, in part, out of concern for those Jews who possessed interwar German citizenship. By the War Emergency Conference in November 1944, the postwar platform of the WJC had coalesced with the formerly problematic plans for Jewish evacuation towards Palestine expressed by President Beneš as early as 1940.

Turning back towards specifically Czechoslovak environs, my fourth chapter details the war-time positions of Jan Masaryk and demonstrates how the topic of Jewish citizenship cannot be separated from his thoughts on Germans. Further, this exploration reveals that statelessness, or to be more precise efforts to prevent statelessness, haunted conversations regarding postwar citizenship possibilities. Deemed by Jewish actors as a loyal friend to the Jewish people, Masaryk took his philo-semitic reputation seriously and made time in his busy war-time schedule for Jewish-themed lectures and radio addresses. During these

Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Bloomington, I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Jessica Reinisch, "Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA," *Past and Present* (2011) 210: 258-289; Jessica Reinisch "'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads" *Past and Present* (2013): 70-97; Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2011); George Woodbridge and Special Staff, *UNRRA; The history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Volume 1, 2 and 3* (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration: New York, Columbia University Press, 1950). Reinisch is currently working on a monograph about UNRRA.

opportunities, however, Masaryk spoke more about German topics than Jewish topics. Unlike Beneš whose position on the postwar Jewish future remained quite constant, Masaryk offered conflicting visions for the post-Hitler world save one: the Germans must go. Teasing out Masaryk's shifting wartime ideas concerning citizenship and ethnic belonging help us understand why he was so intent to help Polish Jewish citizens leave Poland after the war.

What began as a diplomatic history shifts in my later chapters to examine the legal framework and social policies in the postwar era that facilitated Jewish movement. Notably, Czechoslovak officials played a key role in helping east central European Jews leave Europe by fashioning their state into a key transit point for those Jews migrating towards Palestine. Further, the second half of my project clarifies how non-governmental Jewish organizations worked with east central European governments and United Nations officials to respond to the situation on the ground and craft precedents that accumulated into official policies. Specifically, the argument developed here connects post-1945 policies encouraging Jews to leave Europe to specific developments in wartime exilic circles. To make this argument, I focus on Jews with legal domicile in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, Jews who opted for German nationality during the interwar period in Czechoslovak and the government-sanctioned movement of nearly 170,000 Polish Jews through the Czechoslovak border-town of Náchod.

Situating the Jewish story into a larger east central European narrative requires me to draw upon recent literature from the region during the wartime and postwar periods. To explain how the Polish and Czechoslovak body politic shrunk after 1945 overall and how these conceptual changes mandated massive population shifts, I utilize the work of Gregor Thom, Chad Bryant, R.M. Douglas and Tara Zahra to understand the expulsion of ethnic Germans from their ancestral homes in central and eastern Europe more broadly.²⁰ My work differs, however, in my emphasis on Jewish populations. Jews, especially those who spoke fluent German, became entangled in legal and social precedents between 1945 and 1948. In order to separate German-speaking Jews (almost all who suffered racial persecution during the war) from German Christians, Polish and Czechoslovak authorities enshrined a new category of "Jewishness" in their country's legal code, thus contouring the ethnic body politic of their respective states in a novel way. Moreover, recent literature focusing on the activities of Poles and Czechoslovaks in-exile approaches each government in isolation and does not envision citizenship

²⁰ Gregor Thom, *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*, translated from German by Tom Lampert and Allison Brown (Princeton N.J. and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011); R.M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans After World War Two* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 2012); Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, M.A. and London: Harvard University Press, 2007); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

as a usable category to be studied.²¹ Few works bridge the chronological gulf linking the wartime situation with political and diplomatic developments in the postwar period. Contributions by Zahra, Bryant, Benjamin Frommer, David Gerlach, Marci Shore, Marcin Zaremba, and earlier works written by Jan Gross help flesh out the complicated setting of Czechoslovakia and Poland before the consolidation of communist rule.²² To better understand the continuities and changes between exile, return, emigration and communism my research uses the concept of Jewish citizenship to measure the differences and similarities between the Polish and Czechoslovak cases.

Second, I situate the *bricha*, or the semi-legal movement of Jews towards Palestine, into broader conversations about conceptions of Jewish citizenship in the modern era and interactions between Jewish actors working in diplomatic roles and their (usually) non-Jewish counterparts. Indeed, my work understands the World War II “government-in-exile” era and immediate postwar periods as moments imbricated in a longer history regarding the emergence of a Jewish political consciousness. Drawing on relevant works by Mark Levene, Yehuda Bauer and Carol Fink, I contend that from the late 19th century onward some European Jews (of both the Zionist and non-Zionist stripe) began to see themselves as a collective worthy of group rights.²³ By elevating figures like

²¹ For the Polish government-in-exile see: David Engel, *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1943-1945* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press Books, 1993); David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939-1942* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press, 1987). For the Czechoslovak case see Livia Rothkirchen’s chapter “The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile in London: Attitudes and Reactions to the Jewish Plight” in her book *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2006): 160-186; Livia Rothkirchen, “The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile: Jewish and Palestinian Aspects in the light of the documents” *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973) 157-199; and most recently, Jan Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938-48: Beyond Idealisation and Condemnation* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave: 2013). The volume edited by Jan Láníček and James Jordan entitled *Governments-in-Exile and the Jews during the Second World War* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013) stems from a conference on the ten governments-in-exile during World War II and addresses all the governments and their stances towards Jewish issue in separate articles by individual authors. I attended this conference (convened at the University of Southampton (United Kingdom) in March 2010) and noted in the final discussion that a volume studying the governments-in-exile and the Jews must include discussions about Jewish political power and Jewish organizations operating in exile like the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization, the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress. This dissertation, in part, grew out of this particular comment posited at this conference.

²² David Gerlach, *For Nation and Gain: Economy, Ethnicity and Politics in the Czech Borderlands, 1945-1948*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Pittsburgh, 2007); Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press 2006); Marci Shore, “Conversing with Ghosts: Jedwabne, Żydokomuna, Totalitarianism,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, No. 2 (2005): 345-75; Marcin Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga: Polska 1944-1947: Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Znak, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2012). Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*.

²³ Mark Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914-1919* (Oxford University Press, 1992); Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish emergence from powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979); Yehuda Bauer, *From diplomacy to Resistance: A history of Jewish Palestine*,

Nahum Goldmann, Ariele Tartakower and Zorach Warhaftig to the roles of diplomats and envisioning them to be statesmen for stateless people, I hope better understand the dynamics within the exiled east central European universe and demonstrate the range of power available to non-state actors.

Stripped of their own interwar citizenships as a result of the conflict in which they are embedded, these three Jewish activists from east central Europe met with counterparts in official capacities, communicated vigorously across with telegraphs, letters, face-to-face consultations and well-researched writings and represented their (often changing!) vision of the Jewish future as representative of worldwide Jewish desires. They attempted to interject new language codifying Jewish difference into the legal code of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and continued to lobby their east central European colleagues after these efforts failed. They eventually prioritized plans to move large groups of Jewish survivors away from Europe towards Palestine—effectively renouncing their dedication to the diaspora--and vigorously lobbied for the realization of their postwar vision even when official channels rejected their suggestions. Working alongside their non-Jewish counterparts, they recast the mass movement of hundreds of thousands of Jews out of Europe (before an interwar dream for devout Zionists and staunch anti-Semites alike) as the only viable reality for the “national Jews” emerging from the postwar rubble.

Finally, by illustrating how the possibilities for Jewish belonging narrowed over a very short period and how three new, ethnically homogenous states emerged in the wake of theoretical twists and concrete actions on the ground, my work appeals to those interested in the prevalence of ethnically-defined nation-states and the relationship between ethnicity, nationality and citizenship in various geographic and historical contexts. The issue of citizenship infuses many historical discussions of 19th century Jewish life in Europe. The deprivation of citizenship rights, however, has not been thoroughly explained in the central European context. Beginning with the Reich Citizenship Law of September 1935, legal amendments to citizenship requirements throughout the region (notably in Poland and Romania) stripped rights away from those considered Jewish. Moreover, on a basic level, the spread of Nazi rule included a complete revision of citizenship laws. Observers at the World Jewish Congress, like Tartakower, Goldmann and Warhaftig and their colleagues, recognized that citizenship taken away must be reinstated by exiled governing bodies and, again, within postwar government chambers if statelessness was to be avoided. Their acceptance of Palestine as the ideal destination for Jewish displaced persons and their proposal that the United Nation’s should coordinate the logistics to make this possible in 1944 marked a crucial turning point in the process by which Jews left Europe for a homeland

translated by Alton M. Winters (Philadelphia, P.A.: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970); Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

elsewhere.

The work of Rogers Brubaker provides a useful framework for understanding how citizenship and nationality merge after 1945 in east central Europe, thereby excluding minorities who do not belong to new, homogenously ethnic “nationalizing states.”²⁴ Recently, Brubaker’s sociological theories have defined many studies of citizenship and nationalism, Chad Bryant’s intervention being a notable example. In a work spanning from Czechoslovakia’s dismemberment in 1938/1939 through the inner workings of the short-lived Second Republic and after liberation in 1945, Bryant delineates how the official and grassroots answer to the question “What is a German?” changed over a nine-year period. By the time Czechoslovakia was liberated and reformed, neither President Beneš nor his fellow “Czechoslovaks” could imagine a multi-national Czechoslovakia with some 3 million ethnic Germans in its citizenry. In summation, Bryant observes, “nationality, something once acted out in civil and political society before the occupation, was now something that the state affixed to individuals.”²⁵ Bryant’s conclusions and Brubaker’s writings propel me to ask how pre-war trends toward Jewish inclusivity reversed over the same period in the Czech context and beyond. After 1945, a Jew born in Poland or Czechoslovakia was far more likely to emigrate than one born in Hungary or Romania. Why did so many Jews choose to leave their homes in Poland and Czechoslovakia after 1945? Could, perhaps, a study of each country’s citizenship policies help explain how these particular states with multi-national legacies became mono-national entities?

If I may, at this juncture, offer a necessary disclaimer: this project is not directly about the Holocaust even though the unfolding Jewish tragedy permeated nearly every conversation or memo included in this study. Rather, this dissertation explores how the decade spanning 1938-1948 witnessed an important revolution in thinking about “Jewish belonging” in Europe amongst east central European elites. While the Jewish tragedy unfolding in Europe influenced the actors in my story, the systematic extermination of six million Jews alone did not propel Czechs, Poles and the Jewish leaders of the World Jewish Congress to prioritize emigration elsewhere as an ideal solution. Rather, an acceptance of new ideas regarding Jewish belonging and the inability of the United Nation’s community to offer feasible solutions for the growing problem of some stateless people influenced a small number of powerful actors in east central Europe to facilitate Jewish movement elsewhere.

A peculiar travel document grows older in a gloomy archive deep within the maze of Prague’s Old Town. On its dimpled leather cover, gold letters shine in contrast to the deep blue skin surrounding them: “Temporary Passport of the

²⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University, 1996); and *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

²⁵ Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 51.

Czechoslovak Republic.” Inside, a creased travel identity card reveals the previous owner: someone with uncertain citizenship. Beginning in 1947, after revisions to passport laws came into effect, the Ministry of the Interior gave “authority to the departure” of travelers with “uncertain citizenship temporarily staying in Czechoslovakia.”²⁶ The special page asked “controlling organs to facilitate the holder of this travel identity card in crossing the frontier on the described journey.” Empty lines encouraged the bearers to list their date of birth and their final destination. Unmarked boxes asked the uncertain citizen to describe their eyes, their hair and other distinguishing marks. Only clean versions of this passport and travel card remain in the dusty folders, marked with red and black pens alongside numbering systems that have outlived their necessity. Who were these European-born travelers without a European homeland and how did their citizenship status become uncertain? Perhaps this study will help us understand who clutched these small documents and how their movement away from their prewar east central European homes became possible.

²⁶ See Fund #302-576-1 at the Archiv bezpečnostních složek (hereafter ABS) for the “Prozatimní pasové instrukce” issued by the Ministerstvo Vnitřní (Ministry of the Interior) in Prague, Czechoslovakia on November 18, 1946. For the temporary passport and travel identity card for stateless people see ABS 302-576-8.

A Tale of Two Diplomats: Edvard Beneš, Arieh Tartakower and their divergent Jewish future

Before hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors left east central Europe to build new lives in Palestine, new conceptions of Jewish citizenship and belonging were forged in diplomatic circles during the Second World War. This revolution in thinking about belonging inspired laws, precedents and policies after 1945 that encouraged the movement of Jews away from their interwar homes in Poland and Czechoslovakia. This chapter and the three which follow examine how ideas encouraging mass Jewish movement towards Palestine moved from the purview of various fringe groups, populated by an array of Zionists, territorial nationalists and anti-Semites alike, to become a broadly accepted permanent solution embraced by esteemed members of the diplomatic community. Specifically, this story begins with an intertwined study of two men who, in the early years of the war, worked steadfastly for the realization of a divergent future: Czechoslovak leader Edvard Beneš and Polish-born Jewish activist Arieh Tartakower of the World Jewish Congress.

The equally triumphant and tragic life of Edvard Beneš has captivated historians of Czechoslovakia, international diplomacy and the region in general.¹ Darling of the League of Nations and President of the First Czechoslovak Republic until his abdication in 1938, Beneš became the most prominent non-Jewish Zionist in wartime diplomatic circles in the early 1940s.² Internal documents from both the World Jewish Congress and the Czechoslovak government-in-exile interpreted with official inter-group correspondence and personal letters will chronicle the reasons and the context behind Beneš' abandonment of the minority rights system and his consequent embrace of

¹For Beneš' published writings see: Edvard Beneš, *Šest let exilu a druhé světové války* [*Six Years of Exile and World War II*] (Praha: Družstevní práce, 1946); *Paměti, Od Mnichova k nové válce a k novému vítězství* [*The Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Beneš: From Munich to New War and New Victory*] (Praha: Orbis, 1947); *The Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Beneš: From Munich to New War and New Victory*, translated by Godfrey Lias (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954); *Mnichovské Dny: Paměti* [*Days of Munich: Memoirs*] (Praha: Svoboda, 1968). First published by the Edvard Beneš Institute in 1956 in London, this last book was released again during the Prague Spring under different publication. On the Edvard Beneš Institute in London see Pavel Carbol, „Ústav Edvarda Beneše v Londýně v padesátých a šedesátých letech 20. století, [The Edvard Beneš Institute in London in the 1950s and 1960s] Unpublished paper delivered at the on November 19, 2009 at the Jihočeské muzeum v Českých Budějovicích.

² Beneš' wartime views towards the Jews have received some treatment in the historiography. See Livia Rothkirchen's chapter "The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile in London: Attitudes and Reactions to the Jewish Plight" in her book *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2006): 160-186; Livia Rothkirchen, "The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile: Jewish and Palestinian Aspects in the light of the documents" *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973) 157-199; Bohumil Laštovička, *V Londýně za války, Zápasy o novou ČSR 1939-1945* [In London During the War, Struggles over the New Czechoslovakia] (Praha: Státní nakladatelství politické literatury, 1954); more recently, Jan Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938-48: Beyond Idealisation and Condemnation* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2013); and, Jan Láníček and James Jordan, editors, *Governments-in-Exile and the Jews during the Second World War* (Vallentine Mitchell, 2013). My study differentiates itself by drawing heavily from the massive archive of the World Jewish Congress at the American Jewish Archive, Cincinnati Ohio.

Palestinian migration as the most ideal postwar solution for European Jews.

Between 1938, when our document trail commences, and his victorious return to Prague in May 1945, Beneš' policies towards Czechoslovak Jews, in particular, as well as world Jewry and Zionism, in general, remained remarkably consistent. To understand how his views gained credence amongst the World Jewish Congress, other exiled governments and the Great Powers is to grasp how the fundamental nature of east central European citizenship changed in the wake of the Munich tragedy and how mono-ethnic nation states emerged after the hard work of national unmixing and population transfers. The example of Edvard Beneš and his stance toward minority rights and Zionism provides two interwoven trajectories in which intellectual views translated (albeit a bit messily) into social policies when context allowed. The opinion of Arieh Tartakower and the collective leaders of the World Jewish Congress regarding the postwar lives of European Jewish survivors, conversely, vacillated considerably over the same five-year period,

The resume of Arieh Tartakower reflected the geography and politics of the Second Polish Republic. Born in 1897 to a family hailing from the eastern Galician town of Brody, he studied sociology at the University of Vienna before taking a position at the Institute of Jewish Sciences in Warsaw.³ As a founder and chairman of *Hitachduth*, Poland's Labor Zionist Party, and a specialist trained in the modern experience of Jewish populations in eastern Europe, Tartakower was an intellectual and a savvy politician skilled in the modern workings of Polish society and government.⁴ Neither his academic work nor his activist expertise,

³ In his later years as a sociology professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Tartakower wrote nearly a dozen monographs mostly all in Hebrew. For his written work in English see Tartakower and Kurt R. Grossmann, *The Jewish Refugee* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1944); *In Search of Home and Freedom* (London: Lincolns Prager, 1958) "Adam Czerniakow -- the Man and his Supreme Sacrifice," *Yad Vashem Studies* 6 (1967): 55-67. For a biography see: Alexander Manor, *Aryeh Tartakower, ha-Sozyolog ha-Ivri* [Arieh Tartakower, The Hebrew Sociologist] (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Y.L. Perets, 1962).

⁴ On Jewish politics in interwar Poland see: Ezra Mendelsohn's chapter on "Poland" in his monograph *The Jews of East Central Europe between the world wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983): 11-85; Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Emanuel Melzer, *No way out: The politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997); Jeffrey Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, "Did Ethnic Balance Matter? Elections in Interwar Poland," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry: Jews and their Neighbours in Eastern Europe since 1750, Volume 24*, edited by Israel Bartal, Antony Polonsky and Scott Ury (Oxford, U.K.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012); Samuel D. Kassow, *Who will write our history?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007): 17-49; Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Zvi Gitelman, editor, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003); and, perhaps most helpful, Joel Cang, "The Opposition Parties in Poland and Their Attitude towards the Jews and the Jewish Problem," *Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2* (Apr., 1939). On Polish Jewish life in the interwar period see Kassow, *Who will write our History?*; Szyja Bronsztejn, "Polish-Jewish Relations as Reflected in Memoirs of the Interwar Period," in *Polin: Jews in Independent Poland 1918-1939 Volume 8*, edited by Antony Polonsky, Ezra Mendelsohn and Jerzy Tomaszewski (Oxford, U.K.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994); Angela White, *Jewish Lives in the Polish Language: The Polish-Jewish Press, 1918-1938* (Unpublished Dissertation: Indiana University,

however, could fully prepare him for his new occupation. In 1939 for undocumented reasons, he traded the land of his birth and his position as alderman in Łódź for a new citizenship and a new job. Not long after his arrival in New York City, Tartakower commenced work with the World Jewish Congress. Over the next seven years, Tartakower would advocate on behalf of Polish Jewry and the World Jewish Congress during meetings of non-governmental organizations, betwixt the highest Allied leaders in London and among international diplomats developing the framework of the United Nation Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The second half of this chapter and the next uses Tartakower's rich correspondence, writings and views scattered throughout committee reports to explore how his personal ideas concerning Jewish citizenship and national belonging changed over the course of World War II. Accordingly, a close study of his notes and the office ledger permits a view of how the broader platform of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) changed across this critical period

Since its foundation in 1936, the WJC acted as a nongovernmental organization that served as a watchdog for the rights of Jews throughout the world.⁵ During World War II, this organization became a non-state actor with state-like powers. Working in offices in London, New York and Geneva and employing an adept staff with lofty political connections, the WJC spoke, by their own assessment, for the entirety of world Jewry. Since its inception, the WJC had a complicated relationship with ideas regarding Jewish migration and Zionism. Officially, leaders Dr. Stephen Wise and Dr. Nahum Goldmann fought for Jewish rights where Jews lived. While discussions of Palestine or other emigration options for European Jews found some space on inter-office correspondence or in meeting rooms, the WJC refused to turn their proverbial back on Jews in the diaspora.

One example of this position dates from early 1939, about nine months before the Nazi invasion of Poland. WJC leader Dr. Nahum Goldmann instructed the Polish Ambassador to France that "it was the wish of world Jewry to cooperate with the Polish government whenever possible." Further, "world Jewry must insist that the emigration problem in Poland not be viewed as a purely Jewish matter, that there must be no discrimination against the Jews in the country and no

2007); Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Marci Shore, "Children of the Revolution: Communism, Zionism and the Berman Brothers," *Jewish Social Studies* Vol. 10, No 3 (Spring/Summer 2004): 23-86; and two articles in the volume *The Jews in Poland between the World Wars*, edited by Yisrael Gutman, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jehuda Reinharz and Chone Shmeruk (Waltham, M.A.: Brandeis University Press 1989): Samuel Kassow, "Community and identity in the interwar shtetl," 198-222, and Chone Shmeruk, "Hebrew-Yiddish-Polish : a trilingual Jewish culture," 285-311.

⁵ An organizational history can be found under author World Jewish Congress, *Unity in Dispersion: A history of the World Jewish Congress* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs at The World Jewish Congress, 1948). For a postwar account see Nehemiah Robinson (Jacob Robinson's brother), *The United Nations and the World Jewish Congress* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs at the World Jewish Congress, 1956).

pressure to make them emigrate.”⁶ Just as shekel campaigns measuring support for the World Zionist Organizations lost Polish membership in the late 1930s, overall WJC support for Jewish settlement solutions beyond Europe’s soil also stalled. New, selective British policies restricting Jewish immigration to the Mandate propelled, in part, popular support for the Zionist movement in east central Europe to buckle. Plans involving the mass movement of Jews away from their interwar homes towards a national home in Palestine seemed increasingly more impossible as the 1930s moved forward and entries into the Mandate stalled. The leaders of the WJC seemed correct in emphasizing the Jewish diaspora in their political work as decreased emigration quotas to Palestine halted Jewish movement.

The WJC maintained a safe distance from the Palestinian option until revelations detailing the horrific extent of the Jewish tragedy and the reluctance of the United Nation’s Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to codify a special category for “Jewish victims” in international law, pushed the re-settlement of surviving European Jews to the forefront of the WJC’s thinking. Knowledge of the catastrophe, coupled with the endorsement of Palestine as the best future for European Jews by Beneš and other Zionist leaders most particularly Chaim Weizmann, encouraged many around the WJC conference table to modify their position regarding diaspora Jewish life. Over the course of the war Beneš, once a threat and danger to the WJC, became a trusted and valued ally. In sum, the documents which begin in this chapter and accumulate through the first half of this project chart how the World Jewish Congress as a body eventually came to accept Jewish settlement in the Palestinian Mandate (as opposed to settlement plans elsewhere) as a viable solution for post-war Jewry by the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944. Arguably, Beneš’ abrupt adoption of Zionist principles initiated consequential afterlives.

From central European liberal to staunch Zionist: The sharp turn of Edvard Beneš

From his introduction onto the international scene during World War I, Edvard Beneš personified ideals held by central European liberals. Following in the democratic traditions of President-Liberator Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Beneš firmly believed in an inclusive citizenship, the preservation of minority rights and the legal machinery of the League of Nations. This erudite lawyer, who rose from humble beginnings (the tenth child in a working class family) to become chief representative of Czechoslovakia at the 1919 Paris Peace Talks at the precocious age of 35 and later the country’s first Foreign Minister, was a known quantity in international Jewish circles. Beneš’ contemporaries in Prague, London and New York considered him a friend to Czechoslovakia’s Jews, a view confirmed by discerning historians such as Ezra Mendelsohn, Kateřina Čapková and Hillel

⁶ “Report of Nahum Goldmann’s report to the Polish Ambassador, Filed on February 27, 1939,” Box A1, Folder 1, Collection of the World Jewish Congress (American Jewish Archive, Cincinnati, OH) (hereafter WJC Collection).

Kieval.⁷ Especially when compared with other European leaders in the late 1930s, Beneš' devotion to international law, the interwar minority rights system and the preservation of liberal democracy stands in even sharper relief.⁸

In the wake of September 1938 Munich agreement, Beneš abdicated and temporarily left politics. Traveling to the United States, a locale that had also given political refuge to his predecessor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk during the First World War, Beneš lectured at the University of Chicago, wrote about his country's legal situation and offered radio interviews.⁹ When Hitler's forces invaded the truncated Czechoslovak state in March of 1939 and annexed the Czech lands to the Reich as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Beneš re-entered the political ring.

According to R.M. Douglass, who recently authored a book exploring the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia after 1945, Beneš left his homeland in 1938 with three firm convictions. First, Beneš believed that a world war would unfold shortly, “perhaps in the next year or perhaps in two of three years' time” which would destroy Nazi Germany and “justify his own policy after Munich.” Second, Beneš hypothesized that the Soviet Union would “become a leading factor in European Affairs” and, accordingly, Czechoslovakia should maintain “the closest possible relationship” and share a “common border” with their vast eastern neighbor. And thirdly, in Douglas' assessment, Beneš contended

that the political and economic changes the war would inevitably bring in its train would provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to complete the Czechoslovak national project, and that the solution of the minority problem through mass expulsions constituted the only possible means to that end. Beneš would set his political course by

⁷ See Mendelsohn's chapter on “Czechoslovakia” in his monograph *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983):130-170; Kateřina Čapková, *Češi, Němci, Židé? Národní identita Židů v Čechách, 1918-1938* [*Czech, German, Jew? The Nationality Identity of Jews in Bohemia, 1918-1938*] (Prague: Paseka, 2005); and two books by Hillel Kieval: *The making of Czech Jewry: national conflict and Jewish society in Bohemia, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and *Languages of community: the Jewish experience in the Czech lands* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2000).

⁸ See, for example, Melzer's coverage of Polish Foreign Minister Josef Beck *No way out: The politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939*. On anti-semitic tendencies in Fascist movements throughout Europe see: Michael Mann, *Fascists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁹ Beneš traveled the University of California, Berkeley to deliver the Charter Day Address in 1939. Robert Kerner, Professor of European History and member of President Woodrow Wilson's entourage at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, invited the exiled leader to California; Box 1, The Robert J. Kerner Papers at The Bancroft Library Archive, University of California, Berkeley. On the trip from Beneš' perspective see: “Letter from University President Robert Sproul to Beneš,” Edvard Beneš Oddíl II, 1939-1945, Karton #116 “Beneš in the USA, 1939” at Masarykův ústav a Archiv [Masaryk Institute and Archive] (hereafter ÚTGM).

these three beliefs, but especially the last for the remainder of his life.¹⁰

After noting Beneš' 1938 convictions, Douglass weaves an enviable mix of secondary and primary sources in German, English and Czech together to show how Beneš served as the prime initiator of plans to reorganizing the body politic of Czechoslovakia along ethnic lines.

Even though Beneš had strong views on the postwar absence of Germans in his reconstituted state, the Czechoslovak leader met with Wenzel Jaksch, the exiled leader of the Sudetenland Social Democratic Party, in 1940 and 1941. During those years, Jaksch joined state-related celebrations such as Czechoslovakia's Independence Day. The idea of creating a "canton-like" system whereby some Sudeten Germans could stay in the state of their interwar citizenship proved a viable topic of debate between the two men. By the end of 1941, however, Beneš no longer felt the need to work closely with Jaksch and ostracized him from exiled government circles.¹¹ In explaining this change, Douglass pinpoints two publications written by Beneš in late 1941 and early 1942 that advocated for the postwar organization of Europe along ethnic lines.¹² While Beneš suspended his belief that a compromise with Jaksch was possible, he sought agreement from Soviet, British and American leaders regarding his expulsion plans. Douglass details these meetings in a chapter entitled "The Planner" and submits that by the end of 1943 "the expulsion project had take on a momentum that only a decision of the Big Three could have reversed."¹³

Douglass' conclusions regarding Beneš certainly seem justified. An uncensored interview between Beneš and the Duncan Hooper, a Moscow-based correspondent for Reuters, on March 27, 1945 concisely sums up the President's view on the latter. Beneš candidly explained to Hooper that

Sudeten Germans had proved to be a poison in Europe and a poison in our own Czechoslovakia. Only when they have gone shall we be able to draw breath and start building up our country on the old foundations of democracy and non-interference with personal liberty again. We want no minority problem of any kind in the new Czechoslovakia. Minorities have been the curse of central Europe.¹⁴

¹⁰ R.M. Douglas, *Ordinary and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 2012),16.

¹¹ Douglas mentions that Beneš had his last documented meeting with Jaksch at the end of 1942 that seems to contradict his statement that Beneš had ceased working with the Sudeten German Social Democratic party in 1941. See pages 20 and 33 (respectively) in Douglas for these two references.

¹² See for example, Edvard Beneš, "The New Order in Europe," in *The Nineteenth Century and After* 130 (September 1941) and "The Organization of Postwar Europe" in *Foreign Affairs* (January 1942).

¹³ Douglas, 28.

¹⁴ "Draft of interview with Duncan Hooper with redactions," Edvard Beneš Karton L26, Folder "Korrespondence Židovské spolky, 1940-1945," ÚTGM.

Beneš decided, upon reflection, to strike all of these words from the official record of this interview. Nonetheless, this succinct and brutally quotation regarding his state's minority dilemmas can be found in altered forms throughout his own war-time memoirs as well as in a recent monograph by historian Chad Bryant.¹⁵ Douglass draws heavily on Bryant's work and with good reason. Bryant offers a viable explanation for how nationality politics introduced by the invading Nazis aggressively nationalized the Czech political sphere, thus making Beneš' plans fashioning Czechoslovakia into an ethnically homogenous nation-state more tenable.

Bryant details how, in Beneš' logic, the entangled precedents of national self-determination and minority rights had given Adolf Hitler the legal justification for his annexation of the Sudetenland. In a manner unforeseen by Masaryk and Beneš, Czechoslovakia's support of minority rights and the international machinery that protected these rights contributed to the state's unraveling. From the earliest days of his second exile, Beneš promised that a re-established Czechoslovakia would be a home only for Czechoslovaks. In essence,

Beneš felt the dismemberment of the Republic as a personal insult and humiliation and the revocation of the consequence of the enforced "Munich Diktat" became his main purpose ... it ran like a scarlet thread through his political thinking and also decisively determined his attitude to the Jewish question.¹⁶

And when the Jews were lumped into categories with other (seemingly) more coherent, ethnic minorities, keen observers in the World Jewish Congress felt compelled to intervene.

Beneš circa 1940: A Great Threat for the World Jewish Congress

News of Beneš' unexpected Zionist leanings first surfaced on November 20, 1940 in London, England. Here, in the bustling ex-patriot universe of the wartime British capital, a freshly appointed bureaucrat in the Polish Government-in-Exile named Ignacy Schwarzbart alerted his colleagues to the demise of Czechoslovakia's exceptionally tolerant interwar policies towards her Jewish citizens. After a handful of pages detailing the current state of Polish-Jewish related affairs, Schwarzbart dramatically switched tone and offered his readers in London and New York a "warning." Schwarzbart proclaimed that "prominent and responsible politicians of one of the defeated states in central Europe are considering a vital problem today: in the future Jews will either have to be part of

¹⁵ Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, M.A. and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Rothkirchen, "The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile: Jewish and Palestinian Aspects in the light of the documents" *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973), 160.

the ruling population or get Palestinian citizenship, in which case they would be treated as foreigners.”¹⁷ Further, Schwarzbart wished “to add that the statesmen in question are considered to be 100% democratic and that this beginning may result in the spreading of this idea to other neighboring countries. Now is the time to watch this danger-point.”¹⁸ This language, which seems quite opaque in retrospect, was arguably quite lucid in 1940. The high-ranking members of the World Jewish Congress who read Schwarzbart’s caveat knew that only one central European statesman could fit this description: President Edvard Beneš.

Five months later, another internal report of the WJC warned that Beneš and his views had become a persistent problem. When Czechoslovak citizen and WJC employee Dr. Lev Zelmanovits visited Beneš on March 28, 1941, he found his former President “firmly decided not to settle the Jewish problem until the whole minority problem in general is settled.”¹⁹ Beneš was, Zelmanovits noted, referring to the German-speaking minority, an issue that had figured prominently in Beneš’ thoughts before and after the so-called 1938 Munich tragedy. Zelmanovits found Beneš sympathetic toward the work of the WJC like when “Beneš said that he knew our difficulties and asked us to realize his difficulties as well.”²⁰ When Zelmanovits countered with the argument that the Jews could not “be compared with other minorities,” Beneš tersely replied “a minority is a minority.”²¹ This second alert provided by a Jewish Czechoslovak citizen working as an intermediary between his country’s exiled president and one of the most powerful Jewish organization in the world resonated more clearly than the first. Beneš was responsible for these new anti-minority policies and his new position had to be reversed. The World Jewish Congress, a four-year-old institution founded on the preservation of Jewish rights and Jewish life in the diaspora, had no choice but to react.

A notable intervention occurred when three WJC representatives, Noah Barou, Sidney Silverman and Maurice Perlzweig sat down with President Beneš on April 17, 1941.²² The report of their meeting insinuates that Beneš’ statement a “minority is minority” voiced a month earlier, served as the inspiration for their plan of attack. These three gentlemen wanted to clarify Beneš’ prior language regarding minorities, ask Beneš why he had not appointed a bureaucrat of Jewish background to the Czech National Council (the representative body of the government-in-exile which met frequently in London to discuss current and future state policies) and explain to the Czechoslovak leader precisely how the Jews differed from the other, more threatening and identifiable, minorities in his state.

¹⁷ “Report of Ignacy Schwarzbart filed on November 20, 1940,” Box A 20/7, WJC Collection.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Zelmanovits visit to Beneš on March 28, 1941,” H97/11, WJC Collection.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “Report on meeting between Beneš’, Silverman, Barou and Perlzweig on April 17, 1941,” H97/11, WJC Collection.

Pleasantries aside, Barou used serious language to express his anxiety. He told Beneš that “mutual enemies had already begun a whispering campaign informing the non-Jewish world that even the Czechs were changing their attitudes to the Jews” and that the Czech had “abandoned” their former Jewish citizens. This, in Barou’s formulation, was exponentially problematic as “the moral value of the attitude of Dr. Beneš and the Czechoslovaks, because of their influence and standing in the democratic world, was too important to be open to misunderstanding and misrepresentation.”²³ On the defensive, Beneš responded to the three WJC representatives in his presence reassuring them that he “personally had not changed his principles with regard to the Jewish question in general or with regard to Czechoslovakia in particular.”²⁴ He remained, in his opinion, “the same Beneš who had always fought for Jewish rights and had always supported Jewish democratic and national claims.”²⁵ Next, Beneš listed his most pressing problems in forming yet another government-in-exile, assembling that governing body out of a fragmented exiled body politic and deciding whether or not he could trust those Czechoslovak émigrés who were German speaking. The high percentage of German-speaking Jews in London’s Czechoslovak circles worried Beneš. After all, the German-speaking element within his state had proved to be the polity’s undoing.

Beneš continued speaking until Silverman interrupted and posited “that the Jewish minority question differed entirely from the German [one] as there was no territorial nation behind the Jews.”²⁶ In response, Beneš “admitted the difference but insisted that as a matter of principle all the minority questions would have to be settled simultaneously on the principle of minority representation.”²⁷ Pulling out a map to demonstrate the vulnerable nature of the Czechoslovak state with regards to German-speaking population settlements, Beneš explained that a country such as Czechoslovakia could not exist if another national group, such as the Germans, laid claim to the country’s territory. In direct response to Silverman’s distinction between the Jews and the Germans, Beneš offered “that the civilized world would find a reasonable settlement of the Jewish question after the war and that he and his government would do their best to facilitate this.”²⁸ Silverman countered by saying “that he could not see that a parallel existed between the German and Jewish minorities.”²⁹

The dialogue between Beneš and Silverman showcases the limitations of an all-encompassing term such as “minority.” Silverman astutely challenged Beneš on the latter’s imprecise comparison between the German minority in Czechoslovakia, which could offer loyalty to a specific nation-state, as opposed to

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

the Jewish minority in Czechoslovakia that had no geo-political equivalent. The confluence of circumstances that led a majority of Sudeten Germans to request annexation with Germany did not apply to the Jews as they had no other polity to call home. To be a German national and Czechoslovak citizen was not equivalent to being a Jewish national and Czechoslovak citizen in the view of Silverman and the WJC. In both censuses during the interwar period, citizens in Czechoslovakia could be either a Jew by religion or a Jew by ethnic category.³⁰ Many of those with Jewish faith who resided in Bohemia and Moravia listed Czechoslovak as their ethnic identification. Jewish religious affiliation or Jewish parents did not necessarily preclude membership in the Czechoslovak national project.³¹ So when Silverman questioned Beneš equivalence of the Jewish minority with the German minority he was justified in his quest for deeper nuance. Since there was no Jewish state, how could those Czechoslovak citizens who once identified themselves as nationally Jewish abandon their only legal domicile? Yes, Beneš could rationalize exporting national Germans to a German state, but this option proved irrelevant in the Jewish case. That is, unless, a Jewish state or viable resettlement destination materialized. Under this exceptional circumstance, however, Beneš' seemingly illogical plan to exclude national Jews from a redefined Czechoslovak body politic becomes perfectly logical.

Beneš possessed an astute legal mind. He was diplomatically adept and took pride in his ability to out-think his peers. According to historian Milan Hauner, who has spent the better part of three decades steeped in Beneš' papers, Beneš took exceptional pride in both his own logic and international reputation.³² Zionism helped Beneš solve an heretofore impossible quandary, namely, what to do with central European minority elements who refused assimilation into Czechoslovak society and insisted upon trumping their perceived ethno-national rights. The ethnic Germans must leave. The national Hungarians could return to

³⁰ To learn about the interwar censuses in Poland and Czechoslovak and Jewish identification on those censuses see: Jeffrey Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, "Between State Loyalty and National Identity: Electoral Behavior in Interwar Poland" in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, Vol. 24, November 2011; Kateřina Čapková, *Češi, Němci, Židé? Národní identita Židů v Čechách, 1918-1938* (Prague: Paseka, 2005) and Tatjana Lichtenstein "Making Jews at Home: Zionism and the Construction of Jewish Nationality in Inter-war Czechoslovakia," *East European Jewish Affairs* 36, no. 1 (June 2006): 49-71 and "Racializing Jewishness: Zionist Responses to National Indifference in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. 43* (April 2012); Rebekah Klein-Pejsova, *Among the nationalities: Jewish refugees, Jewish nationality, and Czechoslovak statebuilding* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: Columbia University, 2007).

³¹ For more on the Czech-Jewish assimilationist movement see the newspaper of that movement *Rozvoj*, published from 1907-1938 and my unpublished working paper: Sarah A. Cramsey, "'To be a Czech Jew is not an easy thing': *Rozvoj*, print culture and identity formation in 20th century Habsburg Bohemia."

³² See Milan Hauner, *The Fall and Rise of a nation: Czechoslovakia, 1938-1941* (Boulder C.O.: East European Monographs; New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 2004). Also good on the psychology of Beneš is Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*; and Beneš' personal friend and historian Hugh Seton-Watson, see his: *Neither war nor peace; the struggle for power in the postwar world* (New York: Praeger, 1960) and *The East European revolution* (London: Methuen, 1950).

their perceived ancestral home. And those Jews who insisted upon maintaining a Jewish identity that extended beyond the synagogue's threshold or sought group autonomy should be encouraged to emigrate towards a destination they could share with their Jewish co-nationals. By the early 1940s, Beneš had concluded that the ideal Jewish destination was Palestine. And so, much to the chagrin of the World Jewish Congress who wanted to maintain the interwar status quo of minority rights for Jews in Czechoslovakia and in direct opposition to the British who wanted to maintain the demographic status quo in the Palestinian Mandate, Beneš made his position known.

Recognition by the British Foreign Office of Beneš as the official Czechoslovak head of State on July 18, 1941, almost three years after his humiliation at Munich, made his stance more problematic to the WJC. Now that the Czechoslovak government-in-exile had secured international recognition, WJC officials had a legal obligation and a pragmatic motivation for continuing this challenging conversation regarding Jewish rights in postwar central Europe with the re-appointed president; his wartime authority put Beneš in a position to implement his ideas following the conflict. A few months later in September of 1941, Arieh Tartakower met with the President to clarify his earlier remarks. And here, the two diplomats at the center of this chapter converge to espouse their divergent plans in person for the first time.

At this meeting, Tartakower reported, "Dr. Beneš expressed himself against granting the Czech Jews minority rights in the future Czech Republic. He thinks that Jews who intend to remain in Czechoslovakia as Czech citizens should assimilate themselves with the Czech population" thereby forsaking their right to group autonomy.³³ Moreover, Tartakower added, Beneš felt that "national Jews [those who selected Jewish as their nationality on the interwar census] should be deprived of Czech citizenship and should be induced to emigrate to Palestine as soon as possible."³⁴ In Tartakower's assessment, "this is a very dangerous attitude which contrasts markedly with the former democratic traditions of Czechoslovakia and endangers the position of Jews in other countries."³⁵ Tartakower admitted that he and the "WJC tried to convince Dr. Beneš of the inadvisability of following such a policy" and continued to hope "that a change would occur."³⁶

Beneš' support of Zionism echoed throughout internal WJC correspondence and across international new wires. On November 3, 1942, Beneš stated publicly that he "was convinced that in the world to be built after the war the Jewish people will enjoy a well-earned place amongst the free peoples of the world."³⁷ This statement, while direct and short, masks a complicated and

³³ "Minutes of the meeting of the representatives of Czech Jews and Polish Jews in the United States, Sept 25, 1941," A24/1 in WJC Collection.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Statement to Dr. Herz of the Federation of Czechoslovak Jews, 3 Nov 1942," Edvard Beneš Karton L 26/#251, ÚTGM.

profound set of questions about who constituted the Jewish people and how Jewish identity should be defined. During the war, Beneš did not clarify what he meant by the Jewish people. At least three subsets of Jewishness functioned in his mind at varying moments. First, he acknowledged the assimilationist Jews, who for all intents and purposes were Czechoslovak. They spoke Czech, acted Czech by defending the Czech nation in thoughts and deeds (most notably by attending Czech language schools and joining the Czech army) and had chosen Czechoslovak as their national identity in one or both of the interwar censuses. Differentiated from these Jews by genealogical stock, were the nationalizing Jews who spoke Jewish languages in their homes and in state law courts, chose a Jewish national identification for the interwar censuses and expected some form of minority rights for Jews in post-war central Europe. Most of these Jews had lived in the farthest eastern reaches of Czechoslovakia, in an area known as Podkarpatská Rus. Finally, Beneš also recognized another Jewish element, those German-speaking Jews of either Czechoslovak or German national identity who lived primarily in the Sudetenland and in the centers of major cities.

Pushing a bit farther, Beneš' invocation of the words "the Jewish people" masks a deeper, complicated reality: namely, who belonged to this collective? A debate on the composition of the Jewish people transpired primarily in Jewish circles during the war, most notably among members of Zionist organizations, the WJC and the American Jewish Congress. These Jewish leaders also discussed and studied how non-Jewish leaders defined the Jewish people. Beneš, whose controversial and consistent use of this vague term, drew careful analysis in these circles. In a notable internal WJC memorandum written in 1941, Dr. Jacob Robinson, head of the Institute of Jewish Affairs or the research arm of the WJC, sought to clarify exactly what Beneš' opaque language meant in realistic, ethno-national terms. In an attempt to extract precision inherently absent in the president's political rhetoric, Robinson posited that:

In Dr. Beneš' views, the Jews are not a nation. They will become a nation only if Palestine is proclaimed a national state. It is difficult to agree with this contention, which apparently is the basis of his entire philosophy. Of course, in comparison with nation-states, the Jews cannot be regarded as a nation. But life is so varied, and the transitions are so gradual that it is difficult to say when a group can be regarded as a national and when it cannot. At any rate, the sociologists have not yet found a definition of nation which would be applicable to all cases. The point is whether there is a will on the part of the Jews to survive as a people. Provided that a part of the Jews do this in these terms, there is no reason why they should not be regarded as a nation or nationality.³⁸

³⁸ "Internal World Jewish Congress Memo from Dr. Jacob Robinson regarding "Beneš' ideas on the Jewish Problem, on September 25, 1941," H279/1 in WJC Collection.

While Robinson argued that for Beneš, the Jews will only become a nation once they have geo-political borders in Palestine, Beneš himself envisioned the realization of this circumstance in (nearly) inevitable terms. The creation of a Jewish state was a mandatory element of Beneš' over-arching strategy for solving the interwar minority problems that had corrupted his state. If the Jewish nation was linked to land in Beneš' assessment, at this point in the war it remained unclear what criteria he would delineate exactly who belonged to the Jewish people, a task that becomes necessary, if somewhat difficult, after the war.

Tartakower's Preparations for Jewish Life in Postwar Poland

Tartakower exhibited deep concern for all the Jews stranded in occupied Europe and worked to secure visas from countries throughout North and South America during the war for those stripped of their citizenship. The heart of his work, however, concentrated on the country of his own interwar citizenship: Poland. Noted by his colleagues as an expert on Polish Jewry, Tartakower joined colleagues to draft a "Polish Jewish declaration" claiming to speak for the Polish Jewish population in both America and Poland. The small group reasoned that, once the horrible war ended Jews would not forsake their Polish home. The Jews, "as loyal citizens of Poland," should "constitute a permanent element and the attitude towards them as a national cultural group should leave no room for any plans about emigration or evacuation."³⁹ This declaration spoke directly to representatives in the Polish Government-in-Exile who harbored sentiments similar to those stressed by former Foreign Minister Josef Beck, who once supported (failed and impossible) government-sponsored schemes to move the Jews living in Poland elsewhere, in the late 1930s. In the first years of Tartakower's war-time work, speaking against the movement of Polish Jewish away from Poland became a strong leitmotif of his thought as he labored with the help of his colleagues to champion the continuance of Jewish life in the diaspora.

In the fall of 1940, Jan Stancyk, who served as Minister of Labor and Social Welfare in the Polish Government-in-exile, issued a statement concerning the future of Jewish life in Poland. This unexpected declaration spurred the executive committee of the World Jewish Congress into action. The members assembled for a special meeting on November 18, 1940 to discuss two "grave objections" elicited by this proclamation.⁴⁰ First, Stancyk had made his statement regarding Polish Jews without consulting the WJC. Second, similar statements issued by the British and Free French Government guaranteeing attention towards the Jewish plight in Europe had been issued by their respective Prime Ministers while Stancyk occupied a lower rung in the Polish government. To correct these errors Tartakower suggested that the WJC "insist on a formal declaration issued by the Polish government concerning the rights of the Jewish people in the coming

³⁹ "Draft of a Polish-Jewish Declaration on September 9, 1940," A24/1, WJC Collection.

⁴⁰ "Minutes of the Committee on Polish Affairs of the WJC on Monday November 18, 1940," A24/1 in WJC Collection.

Polish State” and, furthermore, that “this declaration be delivered by the head of the Polish government to the authorized organs of the Jewish people.”⁴¹ The Office Committee voted to carry Tartakower’s suggestions.

Motivated by a future that included a sizeable Jewish population within the boundaries of his home state, Tartakower lobbied vigorously for an official statement by Polish Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski. As a Polish Jew with deep attachments to the land of his birth, Tartakower did not consider evacuation from Poland a viable answer to the so-called Jewish question. His Jewish colleague on the Polish National Council Ignacy Schwarzbart evidently agreed.⁴² Writing to Tartakower in the wake of a conference with Polish Ambassador to the United States Jan Ciechanowski on January 2, 1941, Schwarzbart urged that “Jews must remain in Europe, as their transfer even in tens of years is impossible.”⁴³ For this reason, Schwarzbart felt it a duty to “defend ourselves against evacuationism and the duty of the Polish government not to listen to bad...advice.”⁴⁴

A few days later, Tartakower replied to Schwarzbart expressing his agreement with anti-evacuationist plan. “You are right,” Tartakower responded, “in warning against any possible revival of the negation of the diaspora.”⁴⁵ While he did not think the “danger is as great as represented in” Schwarzbart’s letter, Tartakower conceded that there might be some “fanatics among us who are ready to throw away the idea of our future life in Europe and even in other parts of the world.”⁴⁶ Therefore, Tartakower considered it a shared “duty to liquidate such views by a suitable explanation of our peace aims, not only to other peoples but also to” Jews.⁴⁷ He assured Schwarzbart that the WJC was currently working to thwart postwar solutions threatening both minority and individual rights in the Jewish diaspora. The time had come to “speak less about the aims of the past and to speak more about the progress for the future” especially because “some members within the Polish cabinet are not interested in the harmonious living together of the Polish and Jewish communities.”⁴⁸ This, Tartakower considered, was a severe threat that warranted hard work. So, Tartakower recommended that Schwarzbart focus on securing a statement from the Polish Government eliminating anti-Jewish laws. The “most urgent” concern demanded that issuance

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The most authoritative biography on Ignacy Schwarzbart in any language is Dariusz Stola’s *Nadzieja i zagłada: Ignacy Schwarzbart, żydowski przedstawiciel w Radzie Narodowej RP (1940-1945)* (Warsaw: Oficyna Nauk, 1995). For more on the Polish Government in Exile specifically see: See also David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939-1942* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987) and *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1943-1945* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

⁴³ “Memo from Scharwbart to Tartakower regarding his meeting with Ambassador Ciechanowski, January 2, 1941,” H278/15 in WJC Collection.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Letter from Arieħ Tartakower to Ignacy Schwarzbart on January 15, 1941,” A20/7 in WJC Collection.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

of a “general official statement about the equality of Jewish rights and the maintenance of a policy based on such a statement.”⁴⁹ After such a proclamation appeared in print, the Polish Jewish Representation Committee and Schwarzbart’s office could once again work on securing minority rights for “nationalistic” Jews.

This correspondence with Schwarzbart, some of the earliest in Tartakower’s massive, polyglot paper trail, indicates two important themes. First the World Jewish Congress actively worked to fashion themselves into a relevant non-governmental actor, secure diplomatic contacts and focus the world’s attention on the plight of European Jews. Second, Tartakower believed that when the current war ended (whenever that would be), Polish and European Jews would continue to live in their former homelands. Accordingly, Allied leaders like Edvard Beneš, who proposed the immediate establishment of a Jewish nation state in Palestine and massive Jewish emigration there as the only solutions to Europe’s Jewish problem triggered the most severe concern.

A few months after Schwarzbart’s initial wartime correspondence with Tartakower, the Joint Committee on Polish Jewish Affairs met to discuss the current state of affairs with the exiled Polish government. This assortment of leaders from the American Jewish Congress and the WJC had much to consider.⁵⁰ Nahum Goldmann and Stephan Wise submitted their evaluation of a disappointing visit with the Polish Ambassador to the United States Jan Ciechanowski. The Ambassador, an ostensible friend of the Jews, thought that the minority treaties forced on Poland were the “real cause of all the trouble” in the 1930s as they “prevented the Polish government from doing anything for the benefit of the Jewish population.”⁵¹ The coterie of ministers assembled in London could not, in Ciechanowski’s evaluation, “solve the Polish Jewish question” because it remained only a “war government.” Commenting on this report, the Executive Secretary of the Federation of Polish Jews in America Zelig Tygel, who in 1934 argued Palestine was the only place in the “world where man can live fully and happy as a Jew,” now harbored a seemingly contradictory opinion.⁵² Zelig did not want to preclude the re-establishment of Jewish life in Poland and “thought it was premature to discuss the details of the legal position of the Jewish population in the future Poland since no one can tell what the boundaries and character of the new Polish state will be.”⁵³ This did not stop those in attendance from comparing

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee on Polish Jewish Affairs in the American Jewish Congress and WJC on April 1, 1941,” which includes comments by Stephen Wise, Nahum Goldmann, Maurice Perlzweig and Arie Tartakower, A20/7 in WJC Collection.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² On Zelig Tygel’s (1890-1947) see comments in “No Fight Left in Polish Jews, Tygel Asserts,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 30, 1934.

⁵³ “Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee on Polish Jewish Affairs in the American Jewish Congress and WJC on April 1, 1941,” which includes comments by Stephen Wise, Nahum Goldmann, Maurice Perlzweig and Arie Tartakower, A20/7 in WJC Collection.

Ciechanowski's thoughts with those of Beneš or discussing the Polish ambassador's relationship with Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Near the end of the meeting Tartakower offered his thoughts and warned against "dangers which he saw in the present discussion."⁵⁴ He disagreed with those who argued that the Jewish fate in Poland would be decided by the governments assembled in London. The important decisions about the future of Polish Jews, he argued, would be reached in America, especially since the war situation relegated Palestine to an even more remote geo-political position. Polish authorities, however, could not be cast aside as irrelevant. For this reason, Tartakower planned communication with the Polish authorities stateside and hoped to secure an appointment for the representatives of the WJC and the AJC with Polish Prime Minister Sikorski during his upcoming visit.

Tartakower submitted that Poland's Jewish question could not be solved by the exiled government alone and would need international involvement. In this way, he echoed the feelings expressed by Ambassador Ciechanowski during his meeting with Goldmann and Wise earlier that same year. Obviously, decisions made at this stage of the war could not fully anticipate the post-war situation. And yet, Tartakower felt compelled to do something. Yes, perhaps these activities were in vain and misinformed, but an obligation to his country and the Jewish people propelled him forward. He also worked to set up a meeting with Sikorski and his Polish colleagues when they visited the United States. He met with colleagues concerning relief for Polish Jewish citizens in the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ And he assembled a meeting of Czech and Polish Jews in the United States inadvertently creating yet another committee that would convene for three sessions only to disband permanently.

A few weeks after the Allies marked the second anniversary of Poland's invasion, representatives of Czech and Polish Jews living in the United States convened a meeting on September 25, 1941 to "inaugurate a state of cooperation" and to "secure their civil rights and national rights in their respective countries."⁵⁶ Those gathered noted a contemporary irony. In the past "the situation of the Czech Jews was much better than the Polish Jews" but now it "seemed that the situation had changed somewhat."⁵⁷ While the Polish government in exile had "evidenced in a series of declarations made during the last months" an unbiased attitude towards the individual and national rights of their Jewish citizens,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "Minutes of the Committee on Relief for Polish Jewish refugees in Soviet Russia, December 21, 1941," A20/7 in WJC Collection.

⁵⁶ "Meeting of the representatives of Czechoslovak and Polish Jews in the United States," A 24/1 in WJC Collection. Tartakower helped convene the meeting. Zorach Warhaftig disagreed with the majority of the attendees. In what must have been one of his first meetings in the United States after his long trip from Poland via Lithuania and Japan, he "doubted whether the position of the Polish Jews is really better than of the Czech Jews at the present time. It is true that the Polish Jews have received assurances of full equality and civil rights which by the way was never doubted in Czechoslovakia, but as far as national minority rights are concerned no statement has been published by the Polish government up to the present."

⁵⁷ Ibid.

“difficulties have arisen unexpectedly in Czech government circles in regard to Jewish minority rights.”⁵⁸ The committee hoped that a union between Czech and Polish Jews in North America would “ensure the legal position of the Polish Jews” already expressed by the Polish leader while “inducing” the Czech government to change its present attitude. According to Tartakower, the chair of the meeting, the committee was “directed towards securing the civil and national rights of both the Czech and Polish Jews” and creating a precedent for cooperation between Poland and Czechoslovakia in the future.⁵⁹

The work of this small coterie mirrored larger initiatives undertaken by Polish and Czech diplomats in London. Between 1940 and the spring of 1943, officials from Prague and Warsaw assembled in exile to lay the groundwork for a postwar Polish-Czechoslovak federation.⁶⁰ This proposed economic and military union would create a multi-state buffer between Germany and the Soviet Union. As the only two central European countries counted in the Allied universe, Poland and Czechoslovakia naturally took the regional lead in preparing for the postwar future.⁶¹ Tartakower’s work organizing Polish and Czech Jews in America should be envisioned as part of this larger initiative.

Throughout 1940 and 1941 references to postwar life in the diaspora saturate Arieh Tartakower’s correspondence and committee work. Specifically, this son of Galicia directed his efforts towards the future of Jews in Poland. Tartakower articulated his disagreement with plans to leave Europe and did not envision Palestine as the only viable homeland for his compatriots. Tartakower had Zionist leanings, but he still envisioned Poland as sustaining Jewish life and culture *en masse*. For the most part, Tartakower’s opinions coincided nicely with the more general platform of his employer, the World Jewish Congress. The main idea underlying this organization, “that the Jews of the world ought to join in a common effort to defend their common rights,” found expression in Tartakower’s

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Piotr Wandycz, *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers, 1940-1943* (Bloomington, Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics, Indiana University, 1956).

⁶¹ Unfortunately this proposed confederation never materialized. In April 1943, relations between the Polish Government-in-Exile and the Soviet Union soured upon the exhumation of a mass grave of Polish military officers at Katyn. Both countries cut off diplomatic relations with each other. The Czechoslovaks, who worked to cultivate good relations with the Soviet Union throughout the war under the guidance of Beneš, was caught up within this rift, eventually supporting the Soviet’s and the Soviet-backed Polish Government known as the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa* as the official government of Poland. On January 1, 1945 Josef Stalin and his government recognized the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland (the offspring of the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa*) as the official government of Poland. The Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile cut off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government-in-Exile in London and shifted recognition to the Soviet-backed Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland on January 30, 1945, becoming the second state to recognize this body as the official government. A sovereignty crisis over who controlled the Polish state existed from April 1943 until the summer of 1945 the United States and Great Britain withdrew support from the London Poles after Victory in Europe Day. Marci Shore discusses Stalin’s role in the creation of the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa* in *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation’s Life and Death in Marxism*.

early work.⁶² Tartakower stood in stark contrast to the Jewish Agency, which spoke on behalf of the Palestinian component of the Jewish question and actively planned for the reversal of the diaspora to the ancient lands when geo-political circumstances would allow. As the list of Allied nations grew throughout 1941 with the addition of the Soviet Union and the United States in the war against Hitler, the scope of Tartakower's work grew, but his focus on Poland remained constant.

Getting Relief to Those in Need: Tartakower's Early Priorities

Intent on sustaining Jewish life within Polish borders, Tartakower made relief his main objective. In fact, most of Tartakower's professional correspondences from 1942 concern the movement of food, medicine and money towards those Polish Jews living in the *Generalgouvernement* or exiled in the Soviet Union. A memorandum sent from Maurice Perlzweig to Tartakower and the rest of the WJC Office Committee reveals the daunting logistical problems relief providers encountered. On January 23, 1942, Perlzweig conceded that "the time (had) obviously come for a change in our strategy in regard to the problem of Polish Jewry."⁶³ Talks with South American representatives to the World Jewish Congress and higher-ups in the British government had convinced Perlzweig that the "difficulty" faced by the WJC stemmed from "London" and not the United States. Simply put, the British needed to do more to ensure that Polish Jews in occupied Europe obtained more support.

Rather than proceed with the same tactics, Perlzweig suggested that the Office Committee should alter their lobbying strategy to get relief supplies across the blockades established by the Allies on the continent. Perlzweig lobbied his fellow WJC colleagues to "put pressure on the Polish government to act on our behalf pressing for modification of the British position."⁶⁴ Specifically, WJC leaders in New York should encourage their ally Schwarzbart to lobby on behalf of changes to the blockade policies. To reach Americans and the British decision makers, the WJC should utilize contacts in the Polish exile government to publicize their demands. In addition to working with Schwarzbart, Perlzweig also suggested forming a "small committee of American citizens preferably with legal experience" to take up matters regarding the blockade with the appropriate American authorities. If "Poles concentrate on their government" and "Americans on their government" than the "two together may achieve something."⁶⁵ The main goal, according to Perlzweig, remained the expansion of shipping opportunities, so that more supplies could reach Polish Jews behind enemy lines.

⁶² Nahum Goldmann, "Need for the World Jewish Congress," written in November 1941, A 5/3 in WJC Collection.

⁶³ Maurice Perlzweig, "Memo to Wise, Goldmann, Tartakower Schultz from Perlzweig on January 23, 1942," H 278/16 in WJC Collection.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

As 1942 progressed, the extension of relief to Polish Jews remained the preeminent goal for the WJC in general and for Tartakower specifically. In a report summarizing three years of relief work and the organization's current relief agenda, Tartakower highlighted the efforts directed towards Polish Jewry. Since the relief department of the WJC was established in Geneva in 1939, employees had worked to "establish contact with the Polish Jewish refugees scattered in all countries around Poland and enabled them to communicate with their relatives in the US and in other overseas countries."⁶⁶ The WJC aided Polish Jewish refugees as they escaped Europe, processed upwards of 10,000 letters from Switzerland within the first year of operation, shipped medicine and food into Poland and dispatched over 50,000 parcels up to March 1941. At that point, however, the WJC was "forced to stop these activities because of the attitude of the blockage authorities who did not agree to our sending food to enemy occupied countries."⁶⁷ Currently, Tartakower reported, the WJC was negotiating with the British and American governments to convince them of the "necessity of helping the Jewish population in Poland which is being systematically starved by the Nazi occupation authorities."⁶⁸

After surveying the condition of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union, Tartakower offered plans for both imminent and postwar action. For Tartakower, the time was ripe to alter the circumstances of Polish Jews living in the *Generalgouvernement* and elsewhere as well as consider the future of Polish Jewry. First, the WJC should work to "salvage the European Jews from destruction."⁶⁹ Tartakower and his colleagues understood "that the problem of helping Polish Jews [was] only a part of the broader task of saving the entire European Jewry which [was] enslaved at the present by Nazi Germany and [was] being systematically destroyed."⁷⁰ To do so, the WJC must continue negotiations with Allied Governments, especially those of Great Britain and the U.S. to provide aid. Tartakower and his committee also directed attention to the more distant future when peace would, hopefully, descend on the continent.

According to Tartakower, preparing "a program of Jewish Relief and Reconstruction activities to be instituted after the present war" was the "most important task" before the WJC. In 1942 it seemed clear to him "that millions of people will have to be supported as soon as the war is over" and programs must be created for survivors "in different European countries."⁷¹ To address this subject specifically, a special committee should propose important program which will then be submitted to all competent Jewish and governmental bodies in order to

⁶⁶ Arieh Tartakower, "WJC Council on European Affairs, Special Committee on Relief Questions," written on April 17, 1942, A1/8 in WJC Collection.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

secure their cooperation (for) relief activities which will be started after the war.”⁷² Thus, as of this April 1942 report, Tartakower remained convinced of (at least) two truths: large numbers of Jews would survive the war and these Jews will need assistance from Jewish organizations and their own governments to rebuild life in Europe.

In fact, Tartakower’s April 1942 report oozes confidence. “Millions of people” will survive this war, he predicted.⁷³ While “relief activities” will be necessary on the ground in various countries, the WJC can still act to “salvage European Jewry from destruction.”⁷⁴ One can sense urgency as well as certainty between the words and lines: European Jewry must be saved, but a distinct European Jewry and more specifically a Polish Jewry remains. Just as he had in the first two years of the war, Tartakower spent most of 1942 certain that Jews would remain in Poland and throughout the continent. Across letters, reports and meeting minutes numbering nearly a thousand pages, Tartakower rarely invokes the word Palestine. For Tartakower circa 1942 a continued Jewish diaspora in Poland and elsewhere remains an incontrovertible fact, for the present and for the future.

While Tartakower maintained Zionist leanings in the past, one must question how “Zionist” those leanings truly were. In truth, the densely populated political landscape of interwar Polish Jewry included many ostensibly Zionist groups that often did not agree on the basics of daily governance, let alone the relationship between Jews in the diaspora and Jews in Palestine. For Tartakower in the pre-war period and throughout the early 1940s, Zionism meant supporting Jewish settlements in the “Holy Land” while also continuing his life in Poland, his home and the home of his forefathers. Tartakower came to work for the World Jewish Congress, in part, to ensure that the organization fulfilled its purported mission: to support Jewish life in the diaspora and represent World Jewry as a united body when international discussions were convened. Tartakower could be a Zionist and also believe that Poland was his *Heimat*. The two ideas were not, as Samuel Kassow has argued in his superb presentation of fellow Galician Emanuel Ringelblum, mutually exclusive.⁷⁵ In fact, Schwarzbart and Szmuel Zygielbojm, both of the high profile Jewish Poles working in exile alongside Tartakower, possessed similar sentiments.

A consensus between Ignacy Schwarzbart and Szmuel Zygielbojm appears surprising. And rightly so. The two gentlemen rarely agreed. And very soon after Zygielbojm joined the Polish National Council in March 1942, the views of these two representatives of Polish Jewry collided publicly. A few weeks after Zygielbojm’s nomination to the Council, Tartakower reported a divide between

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Samuel Kassow, *Who will write our history?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

the Labor-Zionist candidate Schwarzbart and the Bundist representative. After first lamenting that the Polish government was unwilling to “go into the details of the Jewish problem,” Tartakower addressed the disagreement between the two men.⁷⁶ In an official address to the council, Zygielbojm stated that “Polish Jews are not interested in any emigration from Poland, neither to Palestine nor to any country.”⁷⁷ In response to this statement, Tartakower relayed, Schwarzbart “answered very sharply, stressing the deep connections between Polish Jewry to Palestine which is, however, in no way a contradiction of their Polish patriotism.”⁷⁸ While both Schwarzbart and Zygielbojm disagreed publicly regarding how many Polish Jews wanted to leave Poland, these two men hypothetically agreed that Poland would remain a home for Polish Jewry. And if Schwarzbart rationalized the co-existence of Palestine and Poland as viable spaces for the Jewish nation throughout 1942 and 1943, so too could Tartakower. The two were in constant correspondence and, more or less, solid agreement on this important question.

A quick look at the numbers crossing Tartakower’s desk from 1942 until October 1943 reveal why he remained so committed to diaspora nationalism. Throughout this two-year period, Tartakower received information indicating that substantial numbers of Polish Jews had survived Hitler’s terror and would, once again, call reconstituted Poland home. On December 25, 1942, Tartakower’s colleagues Stephen Wise and Nahum Goldmann attended a meeting for the American Emergency Committee of Zionist Affairs and discussed the prospect of several million Jews who would need food, clothes and rehabilitation after the war. A few months after that intelligence, in June 1943, Tartakower had a long conference with the financial counselor of the Polish Embassy. In the counselor’s prognosis, “thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of Jew may be saved by being hidden in Polish homes.”⁷⁹

Further on in the same report, Tartakower hypothesized that “hundreds of thousands or perhaps even millions of Jews live and will probably continue to live after the war in the territories encompassed by . . . Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Rumania.”⁸⁰ Sources from the Polish Government-in-Exile supported, in part, Tartakower’s high estimates. In July 1943, the Polish Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Agriculture prepared “special plans to feed the population in Poland after the war” and assumed that “after the war there will be 1,500,000 Jews in Poland.”⁸¹ Thus, well into the summer of 1943, Tartakower’s

⁷⁶ Arieh Tartakower, “Memo to the Office Committee,” written on May 21, 1942, H278/15 in WJC Collection.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Arieh Tartakower, “Memo to the Office Committee,” written on June 24, 1943, H278/15 in WJC Collection.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Arieh Tartakower, “Memo to the WJC Office Committee,” written on July 12, 1943, D2/12 in WJC Collection.

correspondence suggests that a sizeable portion of Polish Jewry, which numbered nearly 3.2 million in 1939, would survive the present war, return to their former homeland and need significant relief in the postwar period.

A hopeful assessment of the situation remained as late as August 1943, when Tartakower met with representatives of the Polish Government and Polish Jewry in New York City. At this meeting, the parties responded to a long report reviewing the current state of the Polish Underground Press. Those involved held talks about the “mass extermination of the Jews of Łódź” and the “extermination of remnants of the Ghetto in Warsaw” alongside conversations regarding the overall “tragedy of the Polish population which is being systematically robbed, deported and exterminated by the Germans or is being subjected to an artificial process of Germanization.”⁸² At this particular meeting, questions regarding the anti-semitic nature of the Polish press and, by default, inhabitants of occupied Poland seemed more relevant than reports of Jewish starvation and extermination. Tartakower had a hearty exchange with Jan Karski, a representative of the Polish Government and member of the Polish Underground.⁸³ Karski, a courier who escaped Poland over the Tatra Mountains in November of 1942, had arrived in the United States to talk to high-ranking officials, including Franklin Delano Roosevelt, about life and death in occupied Poland.

At this particular meeting, conversations regarding impressions of Jews in the Polish press trumped discussions regarding the actual status of Polish Jewry. Despite dismaying reports about the demise of Jews in the Warsaw and Łódź Ghetto, conversations about public opinion regarding Jews seemed more important. Tartakower’s interest in topics aside from Jewish destruction may indicate his continued optimism. Some ghettos had been erased and myriad citizens, from both Jewish and Gentile categories had been “exterminated,” but conversations about Jewish portrayals in the Underground Press and plans to combat anti-semitic stereotypes in common papers continued apace. The takeaway should be clear: plans for relief and rebuilding indicated that Arieh Tartakower deeply believed in the return of a vast number of Jews to Poland.

⁸² Arieh Tartakower, “Confidential letter to the WJC Office Committee,” written on September 29, 1943, D2/12 in WJC Collection. Tartakower notes that the meeting in question took place “a few weeks ago.”

⁸³ On Jan Karski see his memoir *Story of a Secret State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944); the new edition, recently republished with a forward by Madeline Albright, *Story of a Secret State: My Report to the World* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2014). Claude Lanzmann interviewed Karski for his documentary *Shoah* (1985) and recently released footage from his 1978 interviews recently in *The Karski Report* (2010). Also helpful is David Engel “‘The Western Allies and the Holocaust’ Jan Karski’s Mission to the West, 1942-1944,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1990): 363-380 and David Engel, “An Early Account of Polish Jewry under Nazi and Soviet Occupation Presented to the Polish Government-in-Exile, February 1940,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 45/No. 1 (Winter 1983): 1-16.

Back to Beneš: Jewish Jews Belong Elsewhere

The same summer Tartakower met with Karski, Beneš traveled to the United States and held private audience with WJC leaders to discuss the issue of Jewish belonging. In this meeting, Wise and Goldman reached an agreement of sorts with the Czech president and the animosity between the WJC and Beneš heretofore evidenced through internal WJC correspondence cooled substantially. On Friday, May 21, 1943, these two men, situated at the top of the WJC organizational chart, discussed a number of questions with Beneš. In a letter written three days later, A. Leon Kubowitzki explained to Arnošt Frischer, the representative appointed to the Czechoslovak State Council to speak on Jewish issues, how the meeting unfolded.⁸⁴

The entire discussion focused on correcting misunderstandings and aligning each representative body's platform with the other. Early in the visit, Beneš noted "in connection with the Jewish postwar demands, he asked to be informed of (the WJC) program as he would regret it if he would have to defend a viewpoint opposed to (the WJC)."⁸⁵ In response, Goldmann expressed "how sorry we had been to hear of certain views President Beneš had voiced on minority rights, views which seemed difficult to be reconciled with the great liberal ideals he had always defended."⁸⁶ Beneš "replied that he had only expressed serious doubts concerning the vision of demanding simultaneously a Jewish State in Palestine and political minority rights in the countries where Jews live."⁸⁷ What the WJC wants, Goldmann continued, was

only recognition of the fact that there is a Jewish people in the world, that Jewish citizens of the various states have the right to remain members of this Jewish people; that they may continue to instruct their children in the Hebrew language and in Jewish values, to display a deep interest in Palestine and in the Jewish fate everywhere, to cultivate their heritage and cultured ties.⁸⁸

In conclusion, Goldman insisted, "this is what we mean when talking of minority rights. We do not for instance, ask for separate Jewish wards in elections." Beneš countered, "whoever told you that I oppose such legitimate demands misunderstood me."⁸⁹

Turning next to the present Jewish situation in Europe, Beneš "expressed his conviction that we would find more Jews alive after this war than we think. According to his information, there are some 50-80,000 Jews in Terezín.

⁸⁴ A. Leon Kubowitzki, "Letter to Arnošt Frischer including a copy of the 'Report on the Meeting between Goldmann, Wise and Beneš,'" written on May 24, 1943, H97/11 in the WJC Collection.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Thousands either in hiding or also posing as non-Jews.” Moreover, as “for the fear that the Jews concentrated in ghettos and camps would be exterminated the moment the Germans will realize their dream, he [thought] there will not be time enough for them to accomplish their wicked purpose.”⁹⁰ The meeting ended on positive terms, with Beneš promising to meet with other Czechoslovak Jewish representatives during his time in the United States.⁹¹

Commenting on the report detailing the meeting between Beneš, Goldmann and Wise, Frischer offered an exhaustive analysis of this important *tête-à-tête*. His reflections on this meeting center on the continued use of the term “minority rights.” Writing from London on June 21, 1943, Frischer explained how the idea of “minority rights” had been misunderstood. Minority rights, he maintained, do not give extra privileges, rather they make minorities (particularly those who tend to live in the same regional spaces) on legal par with the larger majorities. Jews in interwar Czechoslovakia, Frischer noted, did not benefit from minority rights like Sudeten Germans did. Moreover, since the term “minority rights” has been tainted by the likes of Konrad Heinlein and Adolf Hitler, Frischer did not “think that we should make ourselves the champions of ‘minority rights’ in general in the presentation.”⁹² Furthermore, he added, the “the definition Dr. Goldmann gave about ‘what we want’ is really a very fine one, but he himself was aware that it is not identical with what the world calls ‘minority rights.’”⁹³ Conceding how important definitions could be “in the diplomatic and political sphere,” Frischer proposed that the WJC “should apply a term more modern and more popular, and above all, more suitable for our cause.” He suggested the term ‘right of man’⁹⁴

Any insight we gain from this exchange of letters regarding Beneš’ audience with the WJC in the summer 1943 proves small, but tangible. One can sense a compromise of sorts which mellows the former rancor of WJC reports regarding Beneš’ statements regarding the postwar world. Beneš was not opposed to Goldmann’s specific definition of minority rights. In fact, Beneš himself recognized the existence of the Jewish people in the world and he wanted to help that Jewish people obtain what was owed to them: their own polity. Goldmann did not counter emigration to Palestine nor did he insist that a discernible Jewish people living in Czechoslovakia enjoyed group rights. The parties reached a more palatable middle ground, however, not because Beneš had receded. Instead, Goldmann had simply reinforced what Beneš believed.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Regrettably, Beneš’s predictions regarding a high number of Jewish survivors were erroneous. For a discussion regarding what Allies and Jewish organizations knew about the extent of the Jewish genocide, refer to Walter Laquer’s *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler’s “Final Solution”* (Boston and Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1981).

⁹² Arnošt Frischer, “Letter to A. Leon Kubowitzki,” written on 21 June 1943, H97/11 in the WJC Collection.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

While in America, Beneš also met Chaim Weizmann, the president of the World Zionist Organization. In New York, the two men forged a tight bond, which would carry on through the war and beyond. In fact, for both Beneš and Weizmann, the establishment of their respective states became indelibly linked. In October 1943, three months after his sojourn in America and a few weeks before an equally important journey to visit Premier Stalin in the Soviet Union, Beneš stated that “the establishment of a Jewish national home is as certain as the restoration of Czechoslovakia, whose resurrection I do not doubt.”⁹⁵

The second half of 1943 found Beneš preparing for a long-anticipated (and delayed) trip to meet with Josef Stalin in Moscow. Back in London, after his long trip west, correspondence flooded his office keeping Beneš abreast of happenings both military and diplomatic. Focusing on just one letter that landed on Beneš’ desk in the fall of that year reveals the depth of Beneš’ connection to the Zionist movement. On November 12, 1943, Weizmann sent Beneš the following request:

I hear that you may be leaving for Moscow almost at once...may I at the same time remind you of the interview which you granted to Dr. Goldmann and myself in Washington when we discussed the attitude of Soviet Russia to our affairs? At your request we submitted to you a short memo on the subject which I hope is still in your possession. Since then I have had the pleasure of a talk with Maisky [Soviet Ambassador to Exiled Governments in England] during his last visit to this country and found him favorably disposed towards the idea of the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.⁹⁶ I think that an enquiry from you might perhaps elicit more clearly the attitude of the Soviet government and indicate whether they would be willing to support our claim before the Council of the United Nations.⁹⁷

As Weizmann evaluated the changing international power structure and lobbied for increased support for his Zionist platform, Beneš had become an influential intermediary with whom he inherently agreed. And here is the juncture where personal thoughts and individual philosophies transform into diplomatic action.

⁹⁵ The Hebrew magazine *Palcor* reported that Beneš made this comment in New York on October 3, 1943. Ing. Ivan Novák, the Czechoslovak Consul in Jerusalem, informed a representative in the London government of this report in *Palcor* three days after the supposed statement on October 6, 1943. In his memo, Novák listed the relevant subject matter of his report as corresponding to materials relating to the “solution of the Jewish question after the war.” Unfortunately there are no other documents relating to that specific subject line in this collection. See “Report of Novák to Dr. Kraus” in Archiv #1613 Londýnský Archiv Důvěrný [Confidential London Archive], Signatura #511 Židovská Otázka [The Jewish Question] in Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí [Archive of the Foreign Ministry], Prague, Czech Republic.

⁹⁶ On Maisky see Ivan Maisky, “The Communist and the King” with introduction by Gabriel Gorodetsky, in *The New York Review of Books*, April 28, 2011.

⁹⁷ Chaim Weizmann, “Letter to Edvard Beneš,” written on November 12, 1943, Edvard Beneš L 26, in Signatura #264 Korrespondence Židovské Spolky [Correspondence with Jewish Groups] Inventory #1659, ÚTGM.

Regrettably, archives have yet to yield the memo Weizmann mentions or the minutes of the official meeting between the two leaders. But the idea, even the mere suggestion that Beneš intervene on Weizmann's behalf the Soviet premier warrants pause. For three years, Beneš had considered "the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine as the only possible and just solution for the World Jewish problem."⁹⁸ Now, on the eve of his historic visit to the Soviet Union, Beneš received a letter from Weizmann encouraging him to further promote his Zionist leanings. Beneš' 1943 visit to Moscow arguably marked the first time Beneš lobbied on behalf of the Zionist movement to a foreign head of state.⁹⁹

As Beneš finalized preparations for his once-delayed trip to the Soviet Union, Tartakower received earth-shattering news in October 1943. During this month, Schwarzbart worked to convince his colleagues at the WJC that their collective optimism has been unfounded and their plans for a Jewish future in Poland too ambitious. Schwarzbart's words reflected a reality at odds with reports dating just a few weeks earlier. His estimates of surviving Jews on Polish soil ranged from a maximum of 1.2 million people to a minimum of 200,000 people.¹⁰⁰ According to new sources, as of October 4, about 300,000 Jews currently lived in Polish territory and an unknown number remained abroad in Soviet exile. This broad estimation range suggests the ambiguity in Schwarzbart's data and, perhaps, an attempt to maintain some hope in the face of the devastating new reports. Tartakower found this letter upon his return from an extended business trip to South America, where he was coordinating relief and refugee activities for the World Jewish Congress. Overburdened, exhausted from his journey and unable to find a Polish typewriter to respond to Schwarzbart in their shared mother tongue, he must have been shocked by these figures. Just a few months prior in July, the Polish Government-in-Exile detailed rehabilitation plans for upwards of 1.5 million Jews.

As Tartakower adjusted to life back in New York and prepared to attend the first meeting of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in November, further updates from Schwarzbart revised his vision of the present and future of Polish Jewry. Another report from London traveled across telegram lines towards his office at 330 West 42nd street later that same month. The staccatoed thoughts added up to one ominous conclusion: all involved had to face the possibility of complete annihilation.¹⁰¹ According to Schwarzbart's report, a message had reached the Polish Government, regarding the "Jews in Lwów (who were) slaughtered by Germans in (a) mass pogrom." Moreover, "those who tried to flee were shot and only 4000 (were) deported" to the labor camp in Janów.

⁹⁸ "Official Czech Government Radiogram on April 29, 1947 from Prague to OJI news in NYC," H 98/4, in WJC Collection.

⁹⁹ Alexander Easterman, "Letter to Edvard Beneš," written on March 20, 1944, H102/2, WJC collection.

¹⁰⁰ Ignacy Schwarzbart, "Statement before the Council of the Anglo-Jewish Association" on the "Present Situation and the future of Jews in Poland," written on October 25, 1943, H91/1 in WJC Collection.

¹⁰¹ Ignacy Schwarzbart, "Telegraph to Tartakower on October 25, 1943," H 291/6 in WJC Collection.

Schwarzbart concluded: “we have to face complete annihilation even of the small remnants.”¹⁰² These reports were not the first to detail the destruction of Polish Jewry, but Schwarzbart’s gloomy reports on the eve of the first UNRRA conference in Atlantic City constituted two more beads on a string of warnings that defied rationality.

Throughout the war, reports detailing the “extermination” of Polish Jews filtered to the World Jewish Congress and the exiled governments via underground reports, diplomatic channels and risk-taking couriers. The extent of this extermination, however, remained vague throughout 1941, 1942 and most of 1943. In May 1942, newly-appointed Szmuel Zygielbojm had received reports detailing the inconceivable extent of the Jewish loss in eastern Poland and announced these findings in a meeting of the Polish National Council. Gerhard Riegner had transmitted his telegram detailing infamous atrocities against Jewish populations in Europe to the WJC in New York on August 29, 1942 and prompted Stephen Wise to assemble public demonstrations in the wake of this tragic news. A few months later, in November and December of 1942, Jan Karski had crossed the Tatra mountains and related his experiences from the Warsaw Ghetto and (what he claimed was) the death camp at Bełżec to Tartakower and others as detailed above. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Raczynski had combined Karski’s report with other intelligence and produced a pamphlet entitled “The Mass Extermination of Jews in Occupied Poland” and distributed it to the governments of the United Nations on December 10, 1942. Raczynski had chronicled a detailed timeline regarding the Warsaw Ghetto and estimated that upwards of one third of Polish Jewry had already been murdered by the occupying Nazis.¹⁰³ And, just a few months prior to Schwarzbart’s October 1943 reports, on May 12, 1943, Zygielbojm had committed suicide in response to reports concerning the nearly complete liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto and the certain death of his wife and young son.

Clearly, Schwarzbart’s October 1943 correspondence regarding the extent of the extermination had precedents. The earlier reports that reached Tartakower and others, however, did not seem to convince the leaders in exile of the situation’s gravity. Even as these reports found readership, the estimates for postwar Polish Jewish survivors remained high and plans for a massive

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Zorach Warhaftig related his frustration with Tartakower’s inability to grasp the direness of the Polish Jewish situation in the spring of 1943. He wrote that on “the day (he does not mention which day,-SC) we heard of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Dr. Arieh Tartakower, ...invited me to his office and disclosed to me plans to shower leaflets over the Warsaw ghetto as a sign of encouragement. “That is the absolute end” I burst out hysterically. It was clear that a rebellion against the armed hordes of the Nazi regime was tantamount to suicide. “You think they need your leaflets!” I blurted out. “They need arms” I banged my fist down on the professor’s desk. I was beside myself. I rushed out of the room slamming the door. All day long I wandered the streets and alleys of New York. I dared not and could not go home. How could I look my wife in the eye knowing that her parents and her extended family had all stayed in Warsaw?” See Zorach Warhaftig, *Refugee and Survivor: Rescue Efforts During the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Vad Vashem, 1988), 253.

rehabilitation program sustaining upwards of a million Jews in Poland hatched and deepened. Almost all diplomats and bureaucrats within the central European Allied universe (Zygielbojm was a notable exception) tempered the reports of extermination with hope that a large remnant (nearly half) of Polish Jewry would remain. But the words relayed from Schwarzbart to Tartakower in October 1943 arguably influenced these two Galicians more than the previous warnings, as both seriously reconsidered, for perhaps the first time, the viability of reestablishing Jewish life in Poland after the war. The divergent paths of Tartakower and Beneš had nudged towards each other. Soon, as efforts to secure a special status for Jewish survivors in the legal code of UNRRA failed, Tartakower's words would mirror Beneš' thoughts even more.

**Inventing the Jewish DP:
Arieh Tartakower, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation
Administration and postwar visions of European Jewry**

Soon after his shared correspondence regarding the near destruction of Polish Jewry, Tartakower focused his full attention on the upcoming United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA] meeting in Atlantic City. After November 9, 1943, when forty-four countries met at the White House to sign the official agreement creating UNRRA, member governments, journalists and representatives from international organizations like the World Jewish Congress convened at the seaside resort town to discuss global reconstruction plans. As the designated representative of the WJC, Tartakower collated packs of memoranda to distribute to UNRRA delegates. Two specific initiatives sponsored by the WJC within these documents demanded special attention: the creation of a special category for Jewish survivors and the recognition of the possibility for Jewish settlement in Mandate Palestine after the war's conclusion.

During this first UNRRA meeting in Atlantic City in 1943 and the second convention in Montreal during the fall of 1944 and beyond, these two initiatives propelled Tartakower's work for the World Jewish Congress. Between November 1943 and September 1944, Palestine assumed an increasingly more important role in Tartakower's postwar calculus and his own attention turned away from relief within Europe to resettlement initiatives away from Europe. Tartakower was not the only WJC official to endorse postwar life elsewhere. As it became evident that UNRRA would not treat Jewish survivors differently than other survivors and awareness of the extent of the Jewish tragedy sunk in, Tartakower, his associate Zorach Warhaftig -- now safely in New York and working for the Institute of Jewish Affairs -- and their closest colleagues from the Office Committee of the WJC concluded that Palestine should by and large replace east central Europe as the center of Jewish life in the eastern hemisphere.

Tartakower's effort to secure a special status for Jews at UNRRA's first official meeting stemmed from his belief that the uniqueness of Jewish suffering had to be recognized by this international body. In a letter to Stanczyk, Minister of the Interior on the Polish Government-in-Exile, Tartakower outlined his general plans for the yet-to-be-announced "International Conference concerning relief after the war which will probably take place during September of this year."¹⁰⁴ Tartakower predicted that Poland would "be represented at that conference. On behalf of the entire Polish Jewry, may I express our desire to (have) included in the Polish delegation at least one representative of the Polish Jews as such." He explained that "this has nothing to do with any tendency on the part of the Polish

¹⁰⁴ Arieh Tartakower, "Letter to Stanczyk," written on July 18, 1943, H 272/10 in the WJC Collection. Tartakower wrote to Stanczyk as Chairman of the Representation of Polish Jewry in the US as well as a member of the executive committee of the WJC.

Jews to segregate themselves.”¹⁰⁵ Instead, the WJC understood “that the Jewish populations suffered much more during the present war than all other nations and that, therefore, relief activities for it must necessarily have a special character.” The UNRRA conference must discuss

feeding people who for long years were systematically starved, securing homes for people who were long ago driven from their former homes and who for years were persecuted in concentration camps and in labor camps and securing new economic positions for people who were robbed of their fortunes completely and were ousted from all former positions.¹⁰⁶

Tartakower wanted to ensure that those who “know the situation exactly and who are, apart from that, morally authorized to speak on behalf of the Jewish population” would be counted among the official delegates.¹⁰⁷

A few months later in October 1943, after the tragic death of Polish Prime Minister-in-Exile Sikorski and as the plans for the first meeting of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration coalesced, Tartakower conferred with Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk and Vice-Premier Jan Kwapinski via telegram.¹⁰⁸ Again, Tartakower wanted to ensure that the Polish delegation to Atlantic City include an official Jewish representative or, in the least desirable case, pay heed to the special situation of Polish Jews. Tartakower received positive feedback from the two new leaders of the Polish Government-in-Exile and also learned that Kwapinski would arrive in the United States shortly.

In fact, Kwapinski traveled from Ireland to New York City in early November 1943 to be in attendance at the White House for a newsworthy event. He would represent Poland and meet with representatives from 44 other states to sign the official agreement initiating UNRRA. On November 9, 1943, Kwapinski reported to the White House where he met President Roosevelt, the first Director General Herbert Lehman, head of the Czechoslovak delegation Jan Masaryk and dozens of diplomats from across the entire world. From Washington D.C., Kwapinski, Lehman, Masaryk and hundreds of others travelled to Atlantic City, where the first official meeting of this organization commenced just one day later, on November 10. Across the next three weeks, these signatories worked to clarify the agreement and visualize how the structure and process of post-war relief would unfold. Throughout this time period, Arieh Tartakower made his presence known during committee meetings, over dinner drinks and in the hallways of the convention center. The time and context for diplomatic action had arrived.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Arieh Tartakower, “Telegram to Jan Kwapinski,” dated October 1943, H 291/6 in WJC Collection.

The Inaugural UNRRA Meeting in Atlantic City, November 1943

Armed with pamphlets, his date book and the desire to speak with as many relevant parties as possible within a busy three week time period, Tartakower arrived in southern New Jersey in mid-November eager to disseminate WJC plans for a postwar Jewish program. Less than two weeks prior to Tartakower's appearance at the first UNRRA conference, the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress had adopted guidelines that would inspire their work towards "a democratic world order."¹⁰⁹ According to this document, "the Jewish people look to the establishment as a result of the victory of the United Nations of a new international structure based on the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter."¹¹⁰ Moreover, the WJC supported the creation of an International Bill of Rights which guaranteed the "full and complete protection of life and liberty for all inhabitants of all countries without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion; the principle of unequivocal equality in law and in fact for all the citizens of very country; and finally, the inalienable right of all ethnic and religious groups to maintain and foster their ethnic, cultural and religious identity."¹¹¹

With regards to "the right of all refugees, deportees and other victims of Axis persecution," all should be allowed to "return to their places of de facto residence and to the opportunities of which they were deprived...if they desire to do so." These victims had a right to indemnification and, finally, "appropriate measures should be taken in preparation for the restoration of normal conditions to expedite the reintegration of all sections of the population into the economic life" of liberated countries.¹¹² Jews were thus encouraged to return to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Germany and other European destinations.

Finally, the first part of the WJC proposal ended with an important condition. The Executive Committee recommended that UNRRA delegates devote special attention "to the distinctive Jewish problems created by the policy of extermination of the Jewish people, ruthlessly carried out by the Axis authorities and their accomplices" during the war.¹¹³ This language harkens back to the language Tartakower used in his summertime correspondence with Minister Stanczyk. Unlike the letter to Stanczyk, however, this recommendation was informed by the latest reports reaching exiled parties from Polish soil. The Executive Committee and by default Tartakower could speak with more authority regarding the "extermination of the Jewish people." The autumnal reports crossing Tartakower's desk and echoing through committee meetings had revealed the ghastly extent of the Jewish destruction. In order to solve the special problems

¹⁰⁹ "Jewish Postwar Program Adopted by the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress," dating from November 2, 1943, A 1/8 in the WJC Collection.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

faced postwar Jewry, their unique status as Hitler's preeminent victims must be established within UNRRA policies.

In an *Aide Memoire* published on November 1943 with the support of the World Jewish Congress and distributed at the UNRRA meeting in Atlantic City, two members of the Czechoslovak Jewish Representative Committee elaborated on the distinctiveness of the Jewish problem. The writers, two Czechoslovak Jews affiliated with the World Jewish Congress named Frederick Fried and Hugo Perutz, declared that "the creation of UNRRA affords the opportunity to draw attention to the plight and sufferings of the Jews in general and the Czechoslovak Jews in particular."¹¹⁴ It was incorrect to assume, the two advocates argue, "that a social and economic order based on democratic principles would automatically proved the benefits of relief and economic reconstruction to Jews and non-Jews alike." In fact, those, "who so regard Jewish postwar problems are not being realistic enough to evaluate the basic cultural and economic differences affecting the Jews, which require that these people be given special attention to the occupied and war-stricken countries."¹¹⁵

Evidently, the "Nazi oppressors have conducted special vicious extermination campaigns against the Jews everywhere in Europe" for years and "pogroms have changed drastically the social, economic, physical and emotional conditions of European Jewry." Because of this reality, "a clear recognition of the partly basic and partly gradual differences (between Jews and non-Jews) is imperative." At a most basic level, "Jews are receiving far less foods than the other elements of the population." For these reasons, Fried and Perutz recommended that "an expert should be delegated" to the UNRRA conference and it would be "the task of that expert to plan and to prepare, in collaboration with the newly established administration of the organization, a "program in the interest of our unfortunate brethren who are yearning for their deliverance from plight and suffering that was inflicted on them by Nazi oppressors, the common enemy of mankind."¹¹⁶

The proposals offered by Fried and Perutz in the *aide memoire* dovetailed nicely with the aforementioned plan proposed by the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress. Published around the same time as Perutz and Fried's report, the WJC demanded that "a representative entitled to speak for the whole of the Jewish people and recognized as such" should be "constituted."¹¹⁷ The job of such an entity would be "to present the Jewish cause to and cooperate with all international conferences or bodies summoned to or established by the Governments of the United Nations." Alongside this vague Jewish body, the WJC

¹¹⁴ Frederick Fried and Hugo Perutz, "Aide Memoire of the World Jewish Congress on the Occasion of the UNRRA Meeting in Atlantic City," November 5, 1943, H 98/3 in WJC Collection.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "Jewish Postwar Program Adopted by the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress," dating from November 2, 1943, A 1/8 in the WJC Collection.

Executive Committee Platform advocated for the creation of another sovereign entity that was distinctly Jewish in nature: a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.¹¹⁸

Near the end of this document, the half-dozen regular members of the WJC executive committee pleaded that “the gates of Palestine be opened” in accordance with the “demands” of the “Jewish people.” Moreover, the Jewish Agency should be vested with control of immigration in Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country.” In sum, “Palestine (should) be established as a Jewish commonwealth” and “integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.” Further “an indispensable element in the implementation of this policy is the recognition of the right of every Jew who desires to settle in Palestine to emigrate and to take his possessions with him.”¹¹⁹ This language echoed the Biltmore Program of May 1942 and will be discussed further in the next chapter. Here, it is important to note that the WJC wants the restrictions on Palestinian immigration lifted and the desires of individual immigrants to be recognized. The document does not, however, clarify who will pay for the movement of Jews towards Palestine or how those Jews will negotiate the complex journey from Europe across the Mediterranean.

Overall, this marked a change in WJC policy. On the eve of the first UNRRA conference, the Executive Committee as well as some Czechoslovaks and Poles working for the WJC had proposed a list of suggestions and demands for representations from 44 nations to consider. First, Jewish suffering must be recognized as exceptional. Second, a Jewish body should offer UNRRA guidance as they confront the unique problem of postwar Jewry. And finally, any solution to post-war Jewish problems must involve the creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Tartakower’s plans for realizing these demands, however, remained unclear.

Three days into UNRRA’s first official convention in Atlantic City, Tartakower submitted an official memorandum to the leaders of the organization that mirrored the document written by Fried and Perutz. Jewish representatives from seventeen different countries endorsed this official document.¹²⁰ The frightening extent of Jewish destruction in Europe permeates the entire submission. In fact this “specific approach to the problem of relief and rehabilitation for the Jews is a direct consequence of the magnitude of the disaster which has befallen the Jewish people.”¹²¹ Accordingly,

three things follow from the recognition of this fundamental fact.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Additionally, “it [was] clearly understood that the religious and the cultural rights of the Arab population in the Jewish commonwealth should be respected and guaranteed.”

¹²⁰ “United Nations asked to recognize Central Jewish Relief Body for Post War Aid,” November 17, 1943, Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

¹²¹ Arie Tartakower, “UNRRA and the Jewish Cause,” November 1943, H97/11 in WJC Collection.

First that the problem of Jewish relief and rehabilitation must be very carefully studied and must be presented to the outside world in a form which will make the unique responsibility evident. Second, that constant Jewish advice must be sought in all relief schemes prepared on behalf of organized mankind in order to make sure that the urgent needs of the Jewish population will be given adequate consideration and third that there will be proper Jewish representation in the machinery which will be responsible for the practical work of relief and rehabilitation.¹²²

Tartakower's memorandum suggested that the World Jewish Congress would be the "appropriate body for such purposes." With their platform for action and suggestions publicized, Tartakower, and his associates in Atlantic City had completed their work. Afterwards, Tartakower continued his individual meetings, attended open committee sessions and transferred his energy into varying degrees of patience. He and many others throughout the world waited to see how UNRRA would move forward.

The two-week long inaugural session of the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration marked an important milestone in Allied cooperation and provided hundreds of delegates the opportunity to meet each other and recently appointed members of the organizations hierarchy. This meeting was not, however, an opportunity for cementing plans for the postwar world. First, too many variables remained undefined. Estimates of people displaced throughout Europe, ranging from 20 million to 30 million even 40 million, remained vague.¹²³ Furthermore, the Allied Nations could not foresee when the war would end or what cities remain after half a dozen years of aerial and ground combat. And perhaps most poignantly, the Allied blockade on Germany and occupied lands barred UNRRA from initiating immediate action. Even before the meeting commenced, President Roosevelt made clear in a speech that he did not expect UNRRA to "take up immediate relief for German occupied Europe as the UNRRA agreement signed on November 9 "precludes action in enemy-controlled territory."¹²⁴ Unable to secure more accurate information about the civilian status quo and prevented from distributing instantaneous relief, those assembled in Atlantic City could build contacts, vet ideas and finalize the scope and content of UNRRA's jurisdiction. Thus, the largest accomplishments of the 1943 Atlantic City meeting concerned the clarification of legal language and the delineation of UNRRA's organizational reach.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ "UNRRA will do everything possible to return Displaced Jews to Homelands," November 26, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* and "Only 30 percent of Polish Jewry still alive, UNRRA Parley Told," November 12, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

¹²⁴ "United Nations Relief Parlay will not discuss immediate aid," November 9, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

Much to the disappointment of Tartakower, his colleagues at the World Jewish Congress and the seventeen representatives who signed the November 13 memorandum, UNRRA representatives refused to create a special status for Jewish war victims in their foundational documents. Upon receiving the memorandum from the World Jewish Congress and another from the Jewish Labor Committee, UNRRA Counsel General Herbert Lehman passed both documents on to the subcommittee on Social-Welfare Policies, “because its jurisdiction also includes UNRRA relations with voluntary relief agencies.”¹²⁵ There in committee, the chairman Jan Kwapinski, who served as Vice-Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile, and secretary Harry Greenstein, a native of Baltimore who worked for the Associated Jewish Charities, debated how to respond to these two requests. According to a story released by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on November 22, “the subcommittee's decision to not include a recommendation for special treatment for Jews in Europe in its final report” was “the outcome of friendly debate between two schools of thought, both equally sympathetic to Jewish needs, but differing as to methods of meeting them.”¹²⁶ The first perspective, espoused by the Jewish Labor Committee and the World Jewish Congress, “fears that routine methods, applicable to all afflicted populations, will prove highly inadequate so far as the Jews are concerned.” The opposing opinion, which “prevailed” amongst the committee members, maintained “that appropriate plans for dealing with special Jewish problems can be worked out within each afflicted nation - and that for UNRRA to undertake to give them extraordinary treatment might, in the long run, react to the Jews' own disadvantage.”¹²⁷

At the UNRRA conference in Atlantic City, the leadership of the new organization denied the WJC’s proposal to enshrine a legal category delineating the “unique and special status” of Jewish survivors within their official protocols. Sub-committees and representatives of the organization did, however, utilize language recognizing that some refugees of Hitler’s war would demand extraordinary support and allowing for additional help in that circumstance. For example, a report offered by the Norwegian Minister of Reconstruction Anders Frihagen, stated that in “any area where relief and rehabilitation operations are being conducted ... relief in all its aspects shall be distributed or dispensed fairly on the basis of the relative needs of the population in the area, and without discrimination against any person for whatever reason.”¹²⁸ Correspondents at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency interpreted this language to indicate that in “special cases like those of persecuted Jews”, the “diverse needs caused by discriminatory treatment by the enemy during its occupation of the area” may be “taken into

¹²⁵ “UNRRA will not make special provisions for treatment of Jewish War Victims,” November 22, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ “UNRRA expected to coordinate work of Jewish Relief Agencies in Liberated Europe,” November 28, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

account to determine the relative needs of the population.”¹²⁹ Even though Jewish refugees were not deemed “unique and special” status explicitly, the open-ended phrasing emerging from committee meetings did not preclude the possibility of distinctive treatment.

UNRRA’s leadership explicated how private, voluntary relief organizations would interact with UN personnel on the ground in liberated Europe at this inaugural meeting. The welfare-branch of the conference, under the direct leadership of Director-General Herbert Lehman, declared that “private charity can only work in liberated areas under UNRRA direction.”¹³⁰ As the “resources, personnel and skill of voluntary agencies, too, will be needed,” the committee declared, “it should, therefore, be the policy of UNRRA to enlist the cooperation of any... voluntary relief agencies and seek their participation in relief and rehabilitation measures which they have the competence, personnel and other resources to administer and which can be effectively integrated with the UNRRA program as a whole.”¹³¹

This portion of the convention proceedings demarcated how individual relief organizations, including Jewish ones, will cooperate with UNRRA in the liberated territories. If individual states and sovereign governments could determine how UNRRA and other forms of relief will function on their territory, who realistically has control over the entire rehabilitation process? UNRRA purported to be the United Nation’s administration for the rebuilding of a shattered Europe, but their power was constrained by the whim of the nation-state. And what would become of countries, like Poland, with their sovereignty in contest? Official pronouncements emanating from the meeting did not clarify such details.

In the wake of the Atlantic City assemblage, UNRRA’s power in relationship to individual states remained undefined. And as delegates returned to their desks across the globe, murky details clouded yet another influential issue before the Administration, namely the repatriation of millions upon millions of refugees. In late November, as the conference drew to a close, Sir George Rendel, a member of the British delegation, addressed a press conference concerning refugees in general and Jews in particular.¹³² Rendel “revealed that UNRRA will cooperate with the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in seeking the repatriation of exiled Jews.”¹³³ Notably, however, “UNRRA could not force governments to take back aliens.” The committee report stated that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees “has long dealt with those persons who have been obliged to leave their homes for reasons of race, religion or political belief.” After the war,

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² For more on Sir George Rendel see his memoir: *The sword and the olive: recollections of diplomacy and the Foreign Service, 1913-1954* (J. Murray: 1957).

¹³³ “UNRRA will do everything possible to return Displaced Jews to Homelands,” November 26, 1943, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

UNRRA will assist in the care and repatriation of such of these persons as can, and are willing to return to their countries of origin or of former residence. The Inter-Governmental Committee has the function of finding places of settlement for such of them as fall within its competence and as cannot or do not desire to be so repatriated.¹³⁴

Regarding “the care of ...those refugees as cannot be repatriated,” it will be the “responsibility of the relief organs of UNRRA to assist, for a reasonable period” those who do not wish to return home. UNRRA will support these refugees who cannot be repatriated “until the Inter-Governmental Committee is prepared to remove them to new places of settlement.” Thanks to the efforts of Director-General Lehman, “UNRRA’s willingness to undertake a large share of the responsibility in repatriating refugees” was clearly stated in the official communiqué.¹³⁵ This differed remarkably from the original draft written by Sir George Rendel. The first manifestation of this document “gave almost the whole responsibility to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.” According to the JTA correspondent, “Lehman made a strong plea to undertake the job.”¹³⁶

Representatives and committees at the UNRRA conference did not offer details clarifying the jurisdiction of relief workers on the ground after the war, how UNRRA would coexist with state actors and how refugee travel would be subsidized. And most importantly, for Tartakower’s purposes, the laws and protocols initiated by the UNRRA conference did not distinguish Jews as “special and unique victims” of the World War. Of course, uncertainty enveloping the war itself, the inability of participants to say how the war would end and what that end entailed, precluded direct, nuanced answers to these complicated problems. Over the course of the next calendar year as UNRRA assembled again and time plodded towards V-E day, this triad of unanswerable dilemmas persists and UNRRA’s initial unwillingness to define Jews as such in their legal code elicited specific responses from Jewish organizations and state actors alike.

Moving from Atlantic City back to New York, Tartakower returned to the offices of the World Jewish Congress and to what must have been a very full desk of correspondence. Included in the stack of telegrams awaiting him was a new message from inside Poland via Schwarzbart. The triumverate of Polish Jewish leaders, Adof Berman, Yitzhak Cukerman and D. Kafer, had communicated more debilitating news. On November 16, 1943 Schwarzbart received their message which included new estimates for the remaining Jews in occupied Poland. The three wrote that last month there “were only between 250,000-300,000 Jew left in Poland.” It was their updated “opinion that in a few weeks there will only be

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

around 50,000.”¹³⁷ This estimate must have weighed heavily on Tartakower’s mind. It was still, however, only an estimate and those Jews who did survive Hitler’s war would need relief once hostilities drew to a halt. With numbers of vast destruction crisscrossing his desk now on a weekly basis, Tartakower spend the rest of December 1943 reporting on the Atlantic City convention and preparing for what would be an extended trip abroad in the new year. Instead of traveling to South America where refugee communities awaited his help, Tartakower would venture eastward to London where he would communicate the altered platform of the WJC to the exiled governments and the Allies directly.

Tartakower’s Three Months in London: January-March 1944

Tartakower moved his operations from New York to London in early 1944. Scores of meetings occupy the period between January 6 and March 15.

Tartakower met with high ranking officials from almost all ten of the exiled governments, sat with Jewish leaders from a number of countries, used his location in England to establish closer connections with UNRRA’s leader Sir Hebert Emerson and, finally, allotted ample amounts of attention towards Jews of Polish citizenship and those on Polish soil. In his own assessment, three reasons substantiated Tartakower’s extended business trip to London. First, Tartakower anticipated many conferences with representatives from the Polish government-in-exile. Second, he wanted to flesh out the “problems concerning” relations with British friends both in the World Jewish Congress and governmental circles.”¹³⁸

While in England, Tartakower dedicated ample time to UNRRA-related issues. He met with high-ranking UNRRA official based in London and continued to lobby for unique and special status for Jewish survivors of the conflict. His role as a research fellow in the Institute of Jewish Affairs enabled access to troves of information percolating through transnational telegraph lines.¹³⁹ Many Jewish leaders, from Zionists to non-Zionists and everyone in between, sought information from Tartakower regarding the extent of the Jewish tragedy in Europe and conditions on the ground. Thus, he found himself surrounded by a variety of Jewish leaders. And finally, while he was in England day-to-day events, most notably a public relations crisis regarding the “desertion” of Polish-Jews serving in

¹³⁷ Adolf Berman, Yitzhak Zuckerman and D. Kaftor, “Letter to Ignacy Schwarzbart,” written on November 16, 1943, H 274/11 in WJC Collection.

¹³⁸ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹³⁹ The American and World Jewish Congresses established the Institute of Jewish Affairs in February 1941 to study past and current Jewish experiences and make suggestions for the future of Jewry after World War II. Jacob Robinson headed the Institute. For more on Jacob Robinson and the Institute see: Boaz Cohen, “Dr. Jacob Robinson, the Institute of Jewish Affairs and the Elusive Jewish voice in Nuremberg,” David Bankier and Dan Michman (eds.), *Holocaust and Justice: representation & Historiography of the Holocaust in Post-War Trials* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and Berghahn Books) and Gil Rubin “The End of Minority Rights: Jacob Robinson and the ‘Jewish Question’ in World War II” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook XI, 2012*: 55-72. See also the wide array of Institute of Jewish Affairs publications including those written by Jacob Robinson in the bibliography.

the Allied armed forces, demanded Tartakower's attention. By the end of his trip, Tartakower pushed WJC demands in audience with UNRRA and IRO officials, had consolidated relationships throughout the Polish government-in-exile, and had worked, in vain, to increase rescue efforts for the Jews remaining in Europe and especially in Poland.

Employees of the WJC in London, such as Barou, Easterman, Rubenstein and Lady Reading welcomed Tartakower with conversation, meetings and proposed schedules.¹⁴⁰ He met Czechoslovak Jewish delegate Arnošt Frischer, and Polish Jewish delegate, his close friend, Schwarzbart. Notably, this list of initial meetings included a 90-minute conference "devoted all together to Zionist affairs" with Chaim Weizmann. Tartakower used this meeting as a chance to transmit to Weizmann confidential information from Goldman" and the two men conversed about Weizmann's recent conference with Winston Churchill. Weizmann asked "several questions" and thus displayed interest in the present activities of the WJC and "especially our work of rescue of European Jewry." He listened closely as Tartakower detailed information concerning Hungary and Romania. Weizmann had in hand "our memorandum to the conference of UNRRA, which he received that very day" and he, along with his wife, wanted to "hear more details ... concerning facts and figures as presented in the memorandum."¹⁴¹

Apparently, the WJC's contribution to the Atlantic City meeting had gained readership from distant corners of the Jewish world. And since the memorandum submitted by the WJC to UNRRA's directorate included support for a Jewish state in Palestine, the report had certainly peaked Weizmann's interest. Uncertainties surfaced in the conversation between Weizmann, his spouse and Tartakower as well. Reports detailing the number of Jewish survivors throughout central and eastern Europe were hard to confirm.

Attempts to grasp the extent of the Jewish loss in Europe was a topic of discussion elsewhere like at the Executive Committee meetings of the WJC in London, which were held across a four-day time period in mid-January. From his work with Jewish leaders, Tartakower branched out to meet Gustav Kullman from the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees and various UNRRA leaders, like Fred K. Hoehler, John Henry Gorvin Gorvin and Sir Herbert Emerson.¹⁴² With Mr. Kullman, Tartakower discussed the situation of refugees in various countries, the rescue of Jewish children in France, planned relief activities and relations between UNRRA and the Intergovernmental committee. Tartakower's last talking point harkened back to discussions regarding the management of refugees held in Atlantic City just a few weeks prior. During committee deliberations, Sir George

¹⁴⁰ Arieh Tartakower, "Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944," A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² On the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees see: Tommie Sjoberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), 1938-1947* (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1991).

Rendel and Director-General Herbert Lehman disagreed over the administration of refugee relief and repatriation. Rendel, chair of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, thought that his organization, which had emerged after the Evian Conference to help political, racial and religious refugees from Germany and Austria find refuge. Lehman considered UNRRA to be a better administrator than ICoR. A few weeks after the Atlantic City, the scope of both organizational bodies remained undefined. So, in London, Tartakower sought to delineate which organization would control the various aspects of refugee policy.

This proved increasingly difficult once Tartakower and his colleagues realized that words promulgated in Atlantic City were not necessarily decisive and the machinery of UNRRA remained unassembled well after its inaugural meeting. Still, Tartakower maintained that “Jewish advisors” could be appointed in a “semi-official standing to serve as a liaison officials between UNRRA and the organized Jewish people.”¹⁴³ If a Jewish representative served UNRRA at the highest administrative level, Tartakower assumed that Jewish liaisons could be attached to small bodies within UNRRA, like the European Regional Committee. When Tartakower discussed the issue of Jewish liaisons with Sir Herbert Emerson during one of their many encounters, however, he must have been disappointed by the Director-General’s answer. Emerson had “some doubts whether it is worthwhile to have a special position granted to private organizations” and lobbied instead for direct communication channels. Emerson, however, seemed open to Tartakower’s input at other junctures.¹⁴⁴ He asked Tartakower “to transmit to him the final text of the respective resolutions adopted in Atlantic City.” Upon reviewing the WJC’s documentations Emerson revealed that “he may be inclined to reconsider the entire problem” of Jewish refugees during and after the current war.¹⁴⁵

This admission by the chief officer of UNRRA revealed that a representative from a private organization possessed influence over UNRRA policy and precedent. Tartakower’s interactions with Emerson and others from UNRRA and IGoR in the early months of 1944 indicated how *ad hoc* refugee and relief remained. The Atlantic City conference represented a watershed moment of sorts, but the discussions held there did not cement policies regarding the power of non-state actors and position of Jewish advisors. As Tartakower noted in his final report, “in the field of UNRRA much more must still be done.”¹⁴⁶

In addition to meeting officials in UNRRA and IGoR bureaucracies, Tartakower also convened with individual governments-in-exile concerning the relief and rehabilitation work that would potentially commence on their sovereign territories upon the war’s conclusion. Tartakower wanted individuals to back

¹⁴³ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁴⁴ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on February 14, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

certain plans of the WJC, such as the one to send “Jewish candidates to train relief workers” on the ground and another to disseminate Jewish aid workers into “liberated territories in cooperation with the machinery of UNRRA.”¹⁴⁷ He spoke with Norwegian, Danish, Dutch and Czechoslovak bureaucrats during his ten weeks in England. More than any other government, however, Tartakower met with seemingly all the high-ranking members of the Polish government-in-exile. Tartakower spoke with these officials regarding Polish Jewry and the mass of European Jews who had been deported towards Polish territory. From the Prime Minister Mikołajczyk, the Minister of the Interior Banaczyk and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Romer to the Minister for Social Welfare Stanczyk, the Minister of Information Kot and the Minister of Reconstruction and Peace Problems Seyda, Tartakower met with them all over a eight week period. Indeed, he felt that a “tremendous burden of work (had been) imposed upon” him.¹⁴⁸ But the fruits of his labor were substantial, at least in the short term.

Writing in a report near the end of his tenure in Great Britain, Tartakower laid out the directives that guided his talks with Polish government representatives. First, he had spoken with his co-nationals about abolishing the anti-Jewish laws and regulations that had discriminated against Jews in prewar Poland.¹⁴⁹ Tartakower worked for the “the establishment of a special division for the rescue of Polish Jewry” that would fall directly under the fiscal purview of the Polish government-in-exile. He was successful in this venture. Turning his attention to the future, Tartakower also discussed the “problems of relief activities in Poland” with regards to the work of UNRRA, the issue of rescue more generally and, finally, the “problems of post-war reconstruction as (far as) Jewish interests in Poland are concerned.”¹⁵⁰ At the same time that he met with ministry level officials in the Polish government, Tartakower also worked with Nahum Goldmann (who by accident remained in England during the same term as Tartakower, Anselm Reiss (who worked as a Representative of Polish Jewry in Palestine) and, of course, with Ignacy Schwarzbart.¹⁵¹

Schwarzbart was at Tartakower’s side when he attended a luncheon meeting with Professor Olgard Gorka, or the Head of the Department for National Minorities in the Polish Ministry of the Interior.¹⁵² Gorka presented Tartakower

¹⁴⁷ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁴⁸ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on January 22, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁴⁹ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection. Specifically, he was referring to laws capping Jewish enrollment at universities and laws outlawing kosher butchery.

¹⁵⁰ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on February 14, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁵¹ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁵² For more on Gorka during the interwar period see: Daniel Blatman and Renee Poznanski, “Jews and their Social Environment: Perspectives from the Underground Press in France and Poland” in *Facing the*

with the details of a new initiative, namely to establish “a special division within the Polish government for the rescue of Polish Jewry” within the Ministry of the Interior. Officially created in late March 1944, this rescue division possessed a “five million dollar budget under the assumption that 50,000 Jews (or \$100 per person) will have to be rescued during that period.”¹⁵³ Tartakower reported on the creation of this initiative upon his return to New York in early April 1944.¹⁵⁴ Many of his own ideas were reflected in this proposal and the emphasis on rescue most likely well-received. After all, a primary goal of this extended business trip was to clarify and, hopefully, embark upon improved rescue schemes.

Rescue remained a primary concern for Tartakower and many of the exiled government officials he encountered. Despite ghastly reports of Jewish exterminations, the majority of leaders in London held out hope that Jews from all countries could be salvaged. In fact, in Tartakower’s assessment, public opinion in England now tended to favor doing more for the Jews in need of rescue on the continent.¹⁵⁵ Since tens of thousands of Europeans deemed Jewish by the Nuremberg Laws had been transported to formerly Polish territory, rescue efforts engineered by Tartakower and the WJC needed the support of member governments as well as the Poles. Saddled with personal connections and a native speaker of Polish, Tartakower proved to be an ideal interlocutor to broker rescue efforts. For example, across a handful of meetings with Interior Minister Stanczyk, with whom Tartakower had corresponded since the beginning of his term at the WJC, he “discussed problems of refugees in different countries” and also problems of relief in Poland itself.¹⁵⁶ During the course of his meetings with Polish representatives, however, Tartakower encountered an interesting distinction that had the potential to inhibit relief efforts for Jews. Just as in Atlantic City, Tartakower had issues convincing his contemporaries that Jews as a whole deserved special categorization.

According to Tartakower, in all of his conferences he “spoke about all Jews of the respective countries independent of their actual citizenship” and “representatives of at least two governments, namely the Dutch and Norwegian, expressly accepted this principle.”¹⁵⁷ One government proved obdurate, however, in envisioning all Jews as a distinctive collective. “From this point of view” Tartakower continued, “my conferences with the Polish government are of a specific character.” For when Tartakower discussed rescue efforts with his Polish

Catastrophe: Jews and NonJews in Europe during World War II, edited by Beate Kosmala and Georgi Verbeek (Oxford and New York: Berg 2011): 159-227.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, “Governments-in-Exile decide on Measures to Rescue Jewish Children from Nazi Lands, April 2, 1944.

¹⁵⁵ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on February 14, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁵⁶ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on January 22, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁵⁷ Arieh Tartakower, “Report on the work done during my visit to Great Britain January 6, 1944-March 15, 1944,” A1/4 in WJC Collection.

colleagues, he “stressed the principle that help on the part of the Polish Underground is to be granted not only to Polish Jews but also to Jews deported to Poland.” Accordingly, “the Polish government accepted this principle with the understanding that they will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in this work as far as non-Polish Jews are concerned.”¹⁵⁸ Discussions regarding the rescue of children with Stanczyk mirrored this stance. If the Polish Underground Machinery in France helps move Jewish children to safety in Spain, the “Polish government will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in helping children of non-Polish nationality whereas the entire expense for Polish Jewish children up to the moment of arrival in Spain will be covered by the Polish government.”¹⁵⁹

Thus, Polish authorities wanted to maintain a distinction between Polish and non-Polish Jews with regards to relief activities and economic obligations. Thus, at least in the minds of Polish bureaucrats, the Jews persecuted for racial reasons and imprisoned on Polish territory as such were, in theory, divided by national categories. With the large number of Jews on occupied Polish soil, the Polish Government-in-Exile only wanted to take fiscal responsibility for Jews from their citizenship. Again, Tartakower’s attempt to envision all Jews regardless of birth country as belonging to an imagined community had failed. First at Atlantic City, UNRRA officials had refused to grant a “special and unique” status to persecuted Jews. Now, Polish officials wanted to ensure that they would be fiscally responsible only for Polish Jewish citizens included in rescue efforts.

Back in America: Outrage, A Sovereignty Crisis and Dispair in Spring 1944

During the first week of March, Tartakower packed up his diary and the papers that accompanied him during his two-month long hiatus from his New York desk and returned to the United States. Filled with seven-day workweeks, the period in London had been downright exhausting and Tartakower lamented to the Executive Committee that a “tremendous burden of work” had been imposed on him.¹⁶⁰ Despite his fatigue, Tartakower could take solace in the fact that his time abroad had been vaguely productive. He remarked a few weeks before embarking home that “there is a feeling that something happened here in connection with our visit.”¹⁶¹ Tartakower’s reports from his extended trip to London, filled with names, numbers and copious notes reveal his arduous work ethic and the intricacies of the diplomatic universe in exile. They do not, however, offer a sound glimpse into Tartakower’s emotions regarding the situation unfolding in his former homeland and his honest opinions regarding his colleagues in the Allied governments. He was, after all, a professional diplomat, anxious to

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on January 22, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

¹⁶¹ Arieh Tartakower, “Letter to the Executive Committee of the WJC,” written on February 14, 1944, A 1/4 in WJC Collection.

keep any and all government representatives in his good graces for the benefit of the Jews in combatant territory.

But sprinkled throughout Tartakower's personal files are speeches, personal letters, notes and confidential meeting minutes that betray his true and often controversial opinions. In a speech given in Chicago a few months after his return, Tartakower offered listeners frank reflections on his work and the current situation. He spoke about the final battle of the Warsaw ghetto, which "represented an integral part of the fight for the liberation of Poland, where have lived and created centuries and which must, regardless of all the tragic moments in Jewish history on Polish soil, be restored and become a land of freedom for all its inhabitants."¹⁶² Tartakower observed the fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto had "borne" the red and white flag, the "symbol of Polish nationalism," on the days of that fateful battle.

This evidence demonstrated that "the Jews of Warsaw fought and died for the honor of their people, for the liberation of the world and for the freedom of Poland." But, he demanded, "what answer did the world give these martyrs?"¹⁶³ In Tartakower's measurement "the people and government of Poland did comparatively nothing to come to the assistance of there stricken Jewish compatriots."¹⁶⁴ Making allusions to the work he completed on his recent business trip, Tartakower argued that "only recently... due to the pressure we have brought to bear, they have undertaken to extend their efforts to help." The Poles should not assume all of the blame, however, for "almost the same commentary may be made about the efforts of the so-called democratic world in general and the Allied nations specifically."¹⁶⁵ Thus, Tartakower's time in London left him with a sense of apathy on the part of the Polish government-in-exile and the equally culpable Allied powers. If anything, the WJC must re-double its efforts to ensure a brighter future for the Jewish people on Polish soil or elsewhere. The memory of the martyrs, including Tartakower's acquaintances and friends, loomed large in his thoughts.

By the early spring of 1944, a sovereignty dispute of potentially epic proportions created a discernable cleavage in the universe of Allied states. Who, a variety of diplomats and others from the United Nations implored, spoke for Poland? The Americans and the British considered Stanisław Mikołajczyk heir to Władysław Sikorski's, who died when his plane plunged into the sea off the coast of Gibraltar in July 1943. On December 31, 1943, however, Stalin had recognized a small committee (of his own making) known as the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa* as the official government of his western neighbor. The eight-month stalemate between the London Poles and the Soviets, which began in April 1943 after the discovery of a mass grave filled with Polish military officers in Katyn, had

¹⁶² Arieh Tartakower, "Speech in Chicago on April 30, 1944," H 274/8 in WJC Collection.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

resulted in a permanent split between the two governments by the beginning of 1944. Thus, the Poles in London, separated from their homeland by water, terrain and the retreating German Army, depended on recognition FDR, Churchill and their respective governments for their continued relevance and existence. Furthermore the existence of two rival entities claiming to speak for sovereign Poland complicated planning for relief and rehabilitation after the war. Tartakower and the World Jewish Congress found themselves in a vexing situation. Jews from Poland as well as Jews deported to Polish territory desperately needed relief and protection. A crisis of leadership coupled with unpredictable advance of Allied forces upon German territory combined to make work and planning nearly impossible.

Tartakower had met with Mikołajczyk during this trip to London in early 1944 and looked forward to more meetings later in the year. The Polish leader had plans for a visit to the US, where he would meet with FDR, other high-ranking American officials as well as American Poles. On the cusp of the summer of 1944, Allied military gains forced the *Wehrmacht* on a slow retreat. The end of the war in Europe seemed within grasp. Many unknowns, however, overshadowed that optimistic forecast. Who would govern Poland? How would the WJC gain support for their program throughout circles in Washington, London and beyond? Regarding the program of the WJC, would support for Jewish movement away from Europe and towards Palestine continue? Or would mounting pressure from British and American associates lessen demands for Near Eastern settlements? How many Jewish survivors remained in Poland and beyond? And, finally, would Jewish survivors be given preference at UNRRA's second meeting in Montreal?

Before attending the UNRRA meeting in Montreal, Tartakower intercepted more reports on the extent of the Jewish tragedy in occupied Poland. Nearly a full year after the utter destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, two pieces of correspondence arrived at the New York headquarters of the WJC in May 1944 confirming the worst estimations possible. Tartakower knew that Warsaw was leveled, but now he encountered reports claiming that only a sliver of the entire prewar population of Polish remained. Hopes that higher estimates would prove correct should be abandoned. Both sources with similar figures originated in Poland. On May 17, Szymon Gotesman wrote to Schwarzbart from Poland and reported that only 200,000 Polish Jews, most of them exiled in the Soviet Union, were alive. Harkening back to reports written in October 1943, the lowest approximations for Polish Jewish survivors now reflected present realities.

Tartakower, who had spent so much of his time between October 1943 and May 1944 making plans for the rescue of reconstruction of Polish Jewish life, had evidently squandered much of his time. A triumvirate of Polish Jewish survivors hiding in the *Generalgouvernement* expressed severe concerns about Tartakower's grasp of the situation.

Writing to Anselm Reiss at some point soon after May 1, 1944, Josef Sack, Szulim Grajek and Lejzor Lewin commented on miscommunications between those working in-exile and those imprisoned behind Nazi borders. The small group had received reports written by Tartakower and Schwarzbart. After perusing "Arieh's report," the three remained "afraid that he does not realize the details of our situation very clearly."¹⁶⁶ To correct these inaccuracies these writers in occupied Poland "considered it (a) duty to clarify the following positions." In Warsaw there were, at present, "15,000 Jews in hiding about 10,000 of those depend on the Jewish National Committee" for assistance. Further "all relief activities under the auspices of the International Red Cross are without avail." In conclusion and with "bleeding hearts," Sack, Grajek and Lewin updated Reiss about colleagues and friends about whom he had inquired.¹⁶⁷ All but two were dead.

This letter compels us to consider the difficulties besetting attempts to monitor Polish Jewry during the conflict. Two years after the Riegner Telegram, seasons after Karski's visit to the Allied powers and months after the dire reports received in October 1943, Tartakower did not yet understand, at least in the opinion of these three observers in Poland, the gravity of the loss. Without a detailed document penned in Tartakower's hand it is impossible to know precisely when he realized that more than 90% of his Polish Jewish brethren had perished. While an exact date remains elusive, the reports arriving at his desk in the WJC New York City office become increasingly pessimistic in the second half of 1943 and downright depressing by the first half of 1944.

In addition to these ghastly reports, Tartakower learned of Mikołajczyk's resignation from the Polish Government-in-Exile. Instead, he followed suggestions offered by Edvard Beneš and others to meet with Stalin and return to Poland via the Soviet Union. Officially a member of the Polish Committee of National Liberation by the summer of 1944, Mikołajczyk followed Red Army regiments back to Polish soil.¹⁶⁸ As the London Poles became increasingly irrelevant, Mikołajczyk remained an important figure eventually representing the Peasant Party as Deputy Prime Minister, under Władysław Gomułka and the Minister of Agriculture until his cloaked departure from Poland in 1947. Tartakower would encounter Mikołajczyk again in the postwar world, but in the meantime, he turned his diplomatic attentions towards another entity that could help the Polish Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union: the UNRRA.

¹⁶⁶ Szulim Grajek, Josef Sack and Lejzor Lewin, "Letter to Anselm Reiss," H 275/6 in WJC Collection.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ See Stanisław Mikołajczyk's own account in his biography *The Rape of Poland: The Pattern of Soviet Aggression* (London: Sampson Low, Martson & Co., LTD., 1948).

The Second UNRRA Meeting and the words of Zorach Warhaftig

Hundreds of diplomats from across the world arrived in Montreal late in the summer of 1944 to convene the second meeting of the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.¹⁶⁹ Thousands upon thousands pages of meeting minutes, relevant reading materials and conference programs greeted them upon arrival. Tucked within the white reams bestowed on each participant included a tightly bound two-hundred page booklet produced by the research arm of World Jewish Congress and written by Dr. Zorach Warhaftig, whom we first met in the introduction. If Arieh Tartakower would be the diplomatic face of the WJC at this important postwar planning event, the voice of this organization would belong to the author of this thick pamphlet. Replete with specific amendments to existing UNRRA code and requests for further definitions of nebulous language, Warhaftig's treatise also proposed a direct link between UNRRA's responsibilities and the re-settlement of European Jews in Palestine. Distributed to all invitees of this UNRRA session, Warhaftig's *Relief and Rehabilitation* marked the precise moment when the WJC's plan for the postwar world publicly assumed a bold Zionist tint.

In preparation for his first WJC publication, Warhaftig evidently pored over the minutes of sub-committees and legislative fruits from the first UNRRA session in Atlantic City. His evaluation of the published material included very specific recommendations beneficial to Jews specifically. Early in the pamphlet, Warhaftig reminds his readers that the UNRRA subcommittee on Social Welfare policies "decided against making any recommendations for special treatment of Jewish war victims on an international basis. The view which prevailed was that the Jewish problem was to be dealt with 'within each afflicted nation' individually." Like Tartakower and others on the WJC, Warhaftig remained, nearly a year after the meeting in Atlantic City, troubled by this decision. In order to distinguish itself from Nazi aggressors, UNRRA representatives encoded anti-discriminatory language throughout the documents produced in November 1943. Warhaftig accepted this reality, but works carefully within the existing writings to accentuate Jewish difference nonetheless.

Culling from examples which demonstrate how those defined as Jews under the Nuremberg laws experienced this war differently, Warhaftig recommended language guaranteeing that the "relative needs of population should be taken into account" as workers prioritize and distribute UNRRA aid.¹⁷⁰ Worried that Jews possessing German or Austria citizenship will be categorized as enemies after hostilities have ceased, he recommended amendments which clarify that UNRRA

¹⁶⁹ For background on this second meeting and Canada's role in UNRRA see: Susan E. Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁰ Zorach Warhaftig, *Relief and Rehabilitation: Implications of the UNRRA Program for Jewish Needs* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1945), 50.

relief activities will extend to enemy territories and to those with residence in Axis countries.¹⁷¹ Warhaftig suggested that UNRRA codes adopt the year 1933 as the beginning of the war so that Jews who experienced discrimination or expulsion from Germany, Austria and even Czechoslovakia before September 1, 1939 can qualify for UNRRA aid.¹⁷² In part to justify the WJC's relevance, he implored UNRRA representatives aid in the establishment of a "coordinated central Jewish agency for the purposes of relief and rehabilitation" constituted from "the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress as the only organization which speaks for the destroyed Jewish communities in Europe."¹⁷³ Throughout this pamphlet distributed to hundreds visitors from across the Allied world, Warhaftig argued that UNRRA's desire to dispense aid indiscriminately (at least within non-aggressor countries) is well-intentioned yet, in the end, completely misguided.¹⁷⁴ As the most targeted victim of Hitler's regime, Jews deserved positive discrimination and special benefits in the postwar world.

Harkening back to the Atlantic City meeting in 1943 when the WJC failed to secure a special status for Jewish victims, Warhaftig explained why the previous decision "against making any recommendations for special treatment of Jewish war victims on an international" needs immediate correction.¹⁷⁵ UNRRA officials refused to recognize the distinctiveness of the Jewish relief and rehabilitation initiative for two distinct reasons. First, so as not to encode discriminatory language in their legal code as reiterated above. And second, so that "each afflicted nation" could "deal" with the "Jewish problem...individually."¹⁷⁶ In this way UNRRA surrendered enforcement of their protocols to member states of the United Nations ensuring that "the basic principle established in regard to distribution of relief was that as a rule, all relief on the spot would be distributed by the local govt."¹⁷⁷

Warhaftig anticipated that such an arrangement, neutering the authority of UNRRA on the ground and relying on local and state actors to distribute aid, would fail. Why? Because only an internationally supported legal infrastructure and internationally guaranteed enforcement could ensure that all Jewish victims regardless of their pre-war citizenship or nationality have access to the help they so desperately need. Jewishness as a category transcended political boundaries. Jews belonged to the citizenries of both Allied and Axis states. Thus, Jewish

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 64.

¹⁷² Ibid, 110.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 32.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 45; Warhaftig continued "as a result of unhappy experiences with the evils of discrimination in several countries of Europe and the racial animosities so enormously strengthened by the Nazi methods of admin during the war, the UNRRA Council decided to adopt unequivocal declarations against racial discrimination in the distribution of UNRRA relief."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 21.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 42.

belonging and Jewish need was portrayed as transcending political boundaries. An international mandate would be necessary if all European Jews were to receive compensation for their particularly horrific wartime experience.

As the UNRRA code encouraged local government official to “take the relative needs of the population ... into account” alongside “the diverse needs caused by discriminatory treatment by the enemy during its occupation of the area,” Jews should expect some modicum of special treatment in spite of anti-discriminatory language elsewhere. Accordingly, Warhaftig observed, “the Jews who have suffered from grievous discrimination at the hands of the Nazis in regard to food received, as in many other respects and who are terribly undernourished as compared to the Gentile population should expect special priorities in the food and relief scheme of UNRRA.”¹⁷⁸ But such a guarantee echoed without impact upon closer observation. Without “canons...on the international scale” regulating the disbursement of aid and repatriation on the ground, UNRRA’s power was moot. In Warhaftig’s words, “the matter cannot be settled by way of negotiations between the Jewish organizations and the individual governments concerned. Action on an international basis is imperative.

In a statement to the press on March 24 1944, President Edvard Beneš of Czechoslovakia pointed out the extraordinary difficulties involved in repatriating the widely scattered Jews. Beneš noted that unless uniform principles on an international scale were developed for this purpose, a practical solution would prove difficult... (similar sentiments have) also been stressed in a recent editorial of the semi-official Polish organ *Gazeta Polska*.¹⁷⁹ To correct this emasculation of UNRRA law, Warhaftig recommended those assembled in Montreal “grant the Director General power to supervise relief distribution everywhere through his own officials acting on the spot” to ensure that nondiscriminatory distribution ensues in various locations.¹⁸⁰

The inconsistencies regarding precisely who would have authority in certain jurisdictions are sprinkled throughout UNRRA legislation. Could UNRRA representatives overrule local and federal officials on the postwar ground? And who would care for those stateless individuals divested of citizenship, especially if they were found on enemy terrain at the end of the war? The numbers collected by the Institute of Jewish Affairs prove startling. According to the Allied Postwar

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 45; in detail, “Committee IV, Sub. 2 on Policies with Respect to Health and Medical Care lists sufferers from ‘deprivation diseases’ among those who might possibly enjoy ‘priorities of special rationing.’ (par 25). “Mr Acheson, chairman of the first UNRRA Council session, acknowledged that under the aforementioned Resolution No. 2 due recognition would be accorded the Jews who have suffered from discrimination throughout occupied Europe. In commenting on this Resolution, Vera Micheles Dean, a member of Mr. Lehman’s temporary staff during the first session of the UNRRA council, observed that ‘this would make it possible for UNRRA to give priorities on supplies for those groups—for example the Jews in Poland...specially discriminated against by the Nazis.’” But Jews were not explicitly mentioned in the policy.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 127: Also, Mikołajczyk at a press conference in Washington gave assurances that Jews returning to Poland after the war would be welcome. See the *JTA Bulletin*, June 15, 1944.

¹⁸⁰ Warhaftig, 53.

Requirements Bureau, the displaced people outside the Soviet Union numbered 18,871,303.¹⁸¹ And according to specific Jewish estimates produced in September 1943, the Nazis and her allies had dispersed nearly 1,141,450 Jews (comprising deportees, evacuees or émigrés to foreign countries) across Europe, nearly 1,200,000 Jews were displaced throughout the Soviet Union and an unspecified number of Jews had been uprooted and deported towards Polish soil.¹⁸² Among these dazzling numbers were, Warhaftig lamented, considerable numbers of “stateless” Jews who “will belong to a new category of people, those of ‘questioned nationality.’” Most of these people, he claimed “will be without any identification papers, with the result that in many cases their citizenship will be questioned and challenged.”¹⁸³

Some Jews in question, Warhaftig recalled, lost their citizenship after the First World War and failed to gain new citizenship rights in their new homes. Upwards of 50% of the total Jewish population of France and nearly 80% of the Jewish population of Belgium possessed alien status.¹⁸⁴ Others possessed historic German nationality in central European states before the Nuremberg Laws and lost their citizenship when state-sponsored discrimination followed Nazi rule (Germany, Austria) and occupation (Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.) Those Jews in the former group possessed no citizenship rights. And those in the latter group possessed “enemy nationality” ironically claiming the same pre-war political identity as their oppressors.¹⁸⁵ As Nazi German legal codes would expire after the war, situations might develop whereby “at least some of the German Jews might regain their German nationality and forthwith begin to suffer from the restrictions imposed upon their enemies – now once again their co-nationals.” Warhaftig wanted to prevent such a situation under any circumstance.

Quoting letters exchanged between Kubowitzki and Tartakower and members of the Subcommittee on Policies with respect to DPs, Sir George Rendel and Director General Lehman, Warhaftig recounted how WJC officials worked to clarify the position of those stateless and enemy-national Jews scattered throughout Europe. The two members of the Atlantic City delegation suggested that UNRRA clarify language so that “non-nationals of the United Nations who have been obliged to leave their homes or places of de-facto residence for reasons of race, religion or political belief” qualify for UN support.¹⁸⁶ Both Rendel and Lehman offered responses explaining that the final edit of the sub-committee would include language distinguishing the persecuted from the persecutors. On the eve of the Montreal meeting, however, Warhaftig remained concerned about UNRRA language detailing this distinction. He offered a final edit whereby

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 90.

¹⁸² Ibid, 92.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 92.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 125.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 112.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 116.

paragraph five should read “that UNRRA should also assist in the repatriation to their country of origin or to their places of settled residence and/or in the return to their homes in those countries, of persons who have been obliged to leave their homes for reasons of race, religion or political belief since 1933—regardless of the nationality of these persons.”¹⁸⁷

Soon after Warhaftig offered this language to UNRRA lawmakers, he drew attention to a small but important phrase in this paragraph that demands elaboration. The term “settled residence” was “inadequate insofar as certain interpretations of it might fail to include all types of factual residence.”¹⁸⁸ He urged representatives to clarify what “settled residences” indicate for those Jews who lost their citizenship and took up domicile elsewhere after World War I or were stripped of their citizenship before and during World War II and to codify in writing that the organization will assist in the abstract resettling of all the persecuted parties regardless of nationality.¹⁸⁹ Interesting, the author recasted ideas regarding where certain groups of Jews belong geographically thereby establishing precedents in UNRRA legal infrastructure that endorsed the resettlement of Jews *elsewhere*, away from places where they possessed prewar citizenship and away from homes geographically situated in foreign countries after boundary shifts.

Resettlement as a concept profoundly interested Warhaftig and he engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding what this word indicates in the present context. As he saw it

the problem is clear. Great numbers of people deported or expelled to foreign countries and also many of those displaced within their own country would be unable or unwilling to be repatriated—to return to their countries and homes. The overwhelming majority of this group would be the Jews. For this group, a solution other than repatriation and return must be found. There is only one other possibility, namely, resettlement in other countries as immigrants, there to be absorbed and stabilized.¹⁹⁰

Thus, Warhaftig offered a provocative answer to a relevant question: how will UNRRA move refugees homeward when there are unwilling or unable to return to the place they once labeled home? The sentences codified at the first UNRRA gathering in Atlantic City define “homes” as “settled residences.”¹⁹¹ Policies and infrastructures designed to channel displaced people back to their pre-conflict

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 129.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 116.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 147.

¹⁹¹ On page 129, Warhaftig that the term “settled residence” used in paragraph 5d is inadequate insofar as certain interpretations of it might fail to include all types of factual residence.

homesteads, however, ignore complex realities on the ground. International borders had already shifted and more changes to the European map could be expected.

To further explicate this point, Warhaftig limned a concrete example: the nearly 600,000 Jews now in the USSR including the recently liberated areas, whose nationality in the prewar period was not Russian and whose present status is still unsettled.”¹⁹² For these displaced people the “contemplated boundary changes in eastern Europe and the anti-emigration policy of the USSR [were] likely to affect the situation of Jewish refugees, the majority of whom have been inhabitants of areas claimed” by Moscow. Specifically, Warhaftig harbored concern for the estimated 100,000 Jewish refugees from the “part of Poland west of the line claimed by the USSR.”¹⁹³ The “homes” or “settled residences” of these refugees stand in a completely different state. Polish Jews from the parts of Poland annexed to the Soviet Union in the fall of 1939 could not hope to return to their former homelands, as their previous abodes sit on land belonging to another state.

Besides the problem of shifting borders, Warhaftig evinced doubts about the post-conflict return of Polish Jews in general. He referred to a report supposedly emanating from the Polish Underground that “claims that the return of the Jews to the cities and to their homes and concerns would be regarded as an invasion and might invoke opposition by force.” Quoting the report despite the Polish Government-in-Exile’s claims that the report did not originate from “any responsible Polish underground quarters,” Warhaftig alerted UNRRA members that “the non-Jewish population has occupied the place of Jews in the town and cities and over a large part of Poland. (Accordingly,) the (Polish) population would regard the mass return of the Jews not in the light of a restoration of a prewar status but as an invasion against which they will defend themselves even by force.”¹⁹⁴

To reinforce this example, Warhaftig offered another quote from an article on repatriation problems in the “semi-official Polish daily, *Gazeta Polska*.” According to a March 1944 issue of this journal, “there will be a large number of people who would simply not have anything to return to; for instance the Jews...there will be persons deprived of families, homes, shops long ago ruined or transferred to other owners.”¹⁹⁵ With this context in mind, “there [were] only two possibilities. Either to accomplish the policy initiated by Germany or...to integrate them organically into the economic and political life of the country.” We must, however, “take into consideration that even the replacement and return to society cannot be carried through without strong opposition on the part of the (Gentile) population.” Regretfully, the article argued, “five years of Hitlerism could not pass

¹⁹² Ibid, 135.

¹⁹³ This was the estimate of the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev before its closure; Warhaftig, 135.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 145.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 145.

over people, even such as fought it relentlessly, without leaving definite traces.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, Warhaftig imparted a variety of worries regarding the return of Polish Jews to the country of their former citizenship. He argued that shifting borders, many years of absence from their home turfs and the potential hostility of the Gentile population must be taken into consideration as UNRRA members drafted language justifying postwar policies. In sum, it stood to reason that a majority of Polish Jews would prefer to be resettled elsewhere. Warhaftig opined that UNRRA should facilitate this urgent movement and do so quickly.¹⁹⁷

So, Warhaftig submitted that those gathered in Montreal should define “resettlement” and clarify UNRRA’s role in this necessary process. He proclaimed that “in the framework of the total function of UNRRA there is no logical difference between repatriation to former places of residence and resettlement.” In fact, “resettlement of uprooted people, especially in the case of the Jews, is only another form of repatriation.” After equating “repatriation,” the return of uprooted people to their former homeland, with “resettlement,” arguably the return of uprooted people to their former homeland if not their former homestead, Warhaftig offered a startling submission. If UNRRA officials considered the resettlement of the Polish Jews from Soviet-occupied Poland to new homes in another part of Poland as legitimate than perhaps these same officials could support the movement of these displaced Polish Jewish to other “homelands” as well. With regard to the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine, Jews would go there with the aim of reconstituting their ancient home, their patria.¹⁹⁸ Thus, Warhaftig recommended that representatives convening in Montreal alter language (specifically in paragraph 5d) “to read that UNRRA should also assist those nationals of the United Nations and those stateless persons who have been driven as a result of the war, from their places of settled residence in countries of which they are not nationals, to return to those places, *or to be settled in other countries.*”¹⁹⁹ The italicized portion should be added to UNRRA legislation, Warhaftig submitted, thereby enabling UNRRA funds to support movement of Jewish refugees away from Europe specifically toward Palestine.

Why should European Jews and these Polish Jews specifically be moved away from the continent of their birth? “Normal humanitarian considerations,” Warhaftig observed, “impose the obligation to take into consideration the preference of refugees themselves.” Regarding the Polish Jews in Soviet exile,

“many of the refugees have close families and relatives in the countries of their origin, in Palestine, in the United States and elsewhere. In their eagerness to be reunited with them, and also in the desire to be assisted by them, many of the refugees would prefer

¹⁹⁶ See M. Jono, “Repatriacja”, *Gazeta Polska*, March 3 1944, cited in Warhaftig, 145.

¹⁹⁷ Warhaftig, 135.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 153.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 154.

to go to those countries. The desirability of ‘reunion of families’ has been recognized by the UNRRA council as an important principle.”²⁰⁰

Further, USSR authorities “permitted ... about 2,000 Jewish refugees from Poland, stranded in Vilna, to leave for Palestine and 2,000 others to go to Japan” in 1940-1. During these evacuations, “no distinction was made between refugees from Nazi-occupied Polish areas and those from the eastern part of Poland claimed by Russia.” Even “more recently, the USSR established another precedent by permitting 23 Jewish refugee families to go to Australia and some to Palestine.” In summation, Warhaftig argued that “the settlement of Jewish refugees in Palestine, in fulfillment of the principles of the Palestine Mandate, should be regarded as *repatriation* in its highest sense (emphasis in text).²⁰¹

Warhaftig’s proposition that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration subsidize the movement of Jewish displaced persons away from Europe toward a presumed home in Palestine was unprecedented in official WJC literature presented to this international body. At the first UNRRA meeting in Atlantic City, the question of displaced Jews who choose not to return to the place of their last domicile was entertained. Afterwards, in meetings with Secretary General Lehman and his colleagues on the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, WJC officials discussed how the process of resettlement and repatriation would be complicated and contested for those Jews who wanted to move elsewhere. Warhaftig’s submission to the delegates of the second UNRRA meeting, however, marked the first time that a WJC official publicly drew the connection between the repatriation of displaced persons to their “homeland” and the sponsored movement of European Jews far away from their “homes” to Palestine. When Warhaftig declared that “the settlement of Jewish refugees in Palestine...should be regarded as repatriation in its highest sense,” however, he drew on a multitude of private and internal discussions amongst exiled Jews over many war-time years. This particular trajectory will be detailed in the next chapter.²⁰²

Ending with a few pages of charts and graphs, Warhaftig’s book numbered more than two hundred pages. Released on August 15, 1944, WJC officials delivered the books exactly one month later to every delegate attending the Montreal UNRRA conference along with a “short memo” and a summary of the main arguments contained within.²⁰³ According to Sofia Grinberg, who attended

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 140.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 140.

²⁰² Ibid, 140.

²⁰³ “WJC Office Committee Meeting from August 24, 1944,” A 72/3 in WJC Collection; also “Jews for UNRRA Sought,” *The New York Times*, September 9, 1944. This article quotes an announcement saying that the book will be sent to all delegates on September 15, the day the meetings were supposed to begin. On September 16, 1944 the *Washington Post* reports that the meeting had been delayed because of an east coast hurricane.

the conference in Montreal, “Warhaftig’s book” was “read by all delegates of governments and was considered by them as a very helpful document.”²⁰⁴ In her opinion, the “WJC delegation to UNRRA” left an impression on the assembled leaders that deserved her “enthusiasm” and “praise.” In his memoir written nearly four decades after the conference, Warhaftig recalled that “the guidelines suggested in my research played a partial role in framing UNRRA and in directing its activities.” A leading Polish Jewish journalist Chaim Shoshkes later told Warhaftig that he saw *Relief and Rehabilitation* on the desk of the Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. When asked about the Warhaftig’s treatise, Pearson told Shoshkes that he used the book as “a manual in mastering the problems of UNRRA and in the implementation of its program.”²⁰⁵ And, to circle back to the primary actor of this chapter, as he prepared his recommendations concerning the Jewish position before his own trip to Quebec, Arie Tartakower promised to use the “recent survey study” by Warhaftig. Obviously, this book entertained a vast and potentially captive audience. Did any of the arguments contained within its covers, however, demand enough attention to become encoded in UNRRA protocols?

The UNRRA General Assembly vigorously endorsed two of the three fundamental demands enunciated in Warhaftig’s book: the first concerning the “full equality in the treatment of displaced persons regardless of their nationality” and the second regarding “relief to be administered in enemy or ex enemy territory to victims of persecution.” A proposal submitted by U.S. Delegate and future Secretary of State Dean Acheson at a closed meeting of the policy committee requested that “the UNRRA constitution be amended to authorize relief or all ‘displaced’ Jewish victims of Nazi persecution found in German and other enemy” gained nearly noticeable support. Acheson’s addition “was made as an amendment to a British resolution giving power to UNRRA with the consent of the occupying military authorities, to take care of Allied nationals found in enemy or ex-enemy territories.” Specifically, the words “or other persons who have been obliged to leave their country of place of origin or former residence of who have been deported there by action of the enemy because of race, religion or activities.” According to Russell Porter, a *New York Times* journalist who submitted updates twice a day to his paper throughout the duration of the conference, Acheson’s proposed insertion was “discussed at length and put over for further action.”²⁰⁶ Two days later, on September 24, 1944, the resolution passed the policy committee, which included one member from each of the 44 assembled nations, unanimously.

Canadian Prime Minister Leslie Pearson, who worked near a table laden with Warhaftig’s work, argued that the “extension of UNRRA activities to cover persecuted racial and religious minorities and extension of the agency activities to

²⁰⁴ “WJC Office Committee Meeting from August 24, 1944,” A 72/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁰⁵ Warhaftig, 255.

²⁰⁶ Russell Porter, “Dutch oppose aid to Italy by UNRRA,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 1944.

aid political anti-Nazis of technical enemy nationality would look after many who were hitherto unprovided for in the scope of UNRRA activities including the inhabitants of Nazi concentration camps and German Jews deported to Poland.” Reflecting on the Montreal meeting, Pearson added

everybody [felt] much better than before the meeting. The UNRRA got off to a magnificent start at the first council session in Atlantic City but for the last ten months it has had nothing to do but plan. Now we have got out of the planning phase and are ready to go into action on a large scale.²⁰⁷

Less than 72 hours later, the language approved by the policy committee was endorsed by the entire Council. And so, two-thirds of the fundamental demands elaborated by Warhaftig in his well-distributed book and reinforced by Tartakower in Montreal passed into the UNRRA legal code. On September 29, Tartakower joined Miss Jane Evans of the American Jewish Committee at 138 West 43rd Street to publicly celebrate their joint-accomplishments at Montreal. The codification of this particular language took center stage at their joint press conference.²⁰⁸ Indeed, two-thirds of the WJC’s essential stipulations had entered into UNRRA’s code of law.

The third demand articulated by Warhaftig in his book and reinforced in person by Tartakower at the Montreal conference elicited interest but not legislation. Those assembled in Montreal did not offer a solution regarding the resettlement of DPs “who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated.”²⁰⁹ Poignantly, UNRRA policies emanating from Montreal contained no mention of Palestine as a viable destination. According to Tartakower’s final report of the conference “the demand concerning participation of UNRRA in the resettlement of persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated had no chances whatever of being adopted at that session.”²¹⁰ Perhaps the silence with regards to this issue came as a surprise. Just a few days into the hurricane-delayed conference, “the US delegations indicated it was giving urgent consideration to appeals from the World Jewish Conference and the American Jewish Conference ... asking it to support amendments to the UNRRA constitution, one of which would provide for resettlement in Palestine of millions of Jewish refugees who do not want to return to Germany and other countries in which they formerly lived.”²¹¹ Since “resolutions [had] been introduced to authorize UNRRA operations to resettle elsewhere in the western hemisphere those Jewish refugees who had obtained a

²⁰⁷ Russell Porter, “Aid to expatriates by UNRRA is voted,” *The New York Times*, September 24, 1944.

²⁰⁸ “The Jewish groups voice hope over UNRRA activities,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 1944.

²⁰⁹ Arieh Tartakower, Zorach Warhaftig and Sofia Grinberg, “Report on the activities of the WJC Delegation on the Second Session of the Council of UNRRA in Montreal,” submitted on September 9, 1944 to the Office Committee of WJC, A 71/2 in the WJC Collection.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Russell Porter, “UNRRA will spend a billion in 1945,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 1944.

temporary haven in the new world and wish to remain on this side of the ocean,” discussions concerning movement towards Palestine could not be considered completely unprecedented.²¹² Resettlement elsewhere, however, proved a very contentious topic and debates about it did not materialize.

Reflecting on the proposed amendment in the Policy Committee authorizing relief for all “displaced” victims of Nazi persecution regardless of prewar citizenship, Acheson explained that the amendment did not cover the problem of repatriation which was a matter for the individual governments to handle.” Specifically, “the question of resettlement of Jewish refugees in Palestine had not been discussed” thus “clarifying a misunderstanding which had given rise to the impression that the US delegation had interested itself in this project.”²¹³ Clearly, resettlement in Palestine was not tantamount to repatriation in general. Moreover, the topic proved too contentious for any on-the-record conversation. As hundreds of diplomats departed Canada to return to 44 member governments, Warhaftig’s equation of resettlement and repatriation, so eloquently elaborated upon in his book, remained a hypothetical. UNRRA did not endorse a broader definition of resettlement, nor did it support transport elsewhere. The futures of hundreds of thousands displaced Jews remained unclear.

Despite the measurable legislative successes in Montreal, the triad of WJC delegates who attended the event expressed profound discontent upon their return. In long report submitted on September 29, 1944, Tartakower revealed his frustrations. “The atmosphere of deep understanding for the sufferings in Europe, the wiliness to help and sympathy for the idea of a broad cooperation of all nations in the field which we faced in Atlantic City” he lamented “did not exist in Montreal.” Regrettably, the “idea of international cooperation had lost its strength” and “as far as problems of displaced persons were concerned the problem of how to get rid of DPs seemed to be more important and more urgent than how to help them.”²¹⁴ Tartakower outlined a few “complicating factors” which exacerbated his inability to make progress at the Conference. First, many delegates from Atlantic City did not return for the second session. Second, a “great number of Jewish organizations” appeared on the scene. Tartakower and his colleagues had to “concentrate (their) efforts towards reaching an understanding between the Jewish delegation and creating a united Jewish front at the session. In the end, conversations with several members regarding specified Jewish representation in the council of UNRRA had come to naught and a final decision was deferred until the next session of the Council.

²¹² Russell Porter, “UNRRA will spend a billion in 1945,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 1944.

²¹³ Russel Porter, “Help for Jews Proposes Acheson Pleads for ‘Displaced’ Victims of Nazis Found in Enemy Territory,” *The New York Times*, September 28, 1944.

²¹⁴ Arieht Tartakower, Zorach Warhaftig and Sofia Grinberg, “Report on the activities of the WJC Delegation on the Second Session of the Council of UNRRA in Montreal,” submitted on September 9, 1944 to the Office Committee of WJC, A 71/2 in the WJC Collection.

Third, as only delegates from member nations could submit demands or talking points for committee meetings, Tartakower convinced another party to present WJC material. On at least one occasion, a delegate raised a Jewish-related demand that the WJC did not endorse. Cuban Delegate Gutteriez Sanchez offered a motion declaring that “the Jewish people had to be recognized as an Allied nation with regard to problems of relief and rehabilitation.” As this motion had “no chance whatsoever of being adopted by that session” Tartakower persuaded Sanchez to withdraw this ambitious proposal. Thus a number of factors diluted the influence of the WJC in Montreal. The appearance of other Jewish organization, the discontinuity of delegates and the format of bringing discussion points to committees worked against WJC’s potential for success.

Tartakower and company had succeeded in lobbying the British and American representatives to submit motions corresponding with two of their three fundamental demands. The American delegation moved so that UNRRA support would be granted to “all person who have been obliged to leave their country of place of origin or former residence of who have been deported there by action of the enemy because of race, religion or activities in favor of the Allied nations.” And the British motion “extended the same principle to liberated areas where person of other than UN Nationality and stateless people were to be assisted by UNRRA.” The issue of resettlement, as we have noticed, did not claim attention. According to Tartakower, “the demand concerning participation of UNRRA in the resettlement of persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated had no chances whatever of being adopted at that session.” Tartakower supplemented this official report with some remarks at the Office Committee on September 29, 1944. Notably, he advised the WJC to “take up the ‘problem of help to be extending to person unable or unwilling to be returned to their former homes in the same measures as help is accorded to repatriated persons with the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees” and have that organization approach UNRRA in the future.²¹⁵ After Tartakower added these unofficial remarks, his colleagues Sofia Grinberg and Zorach Warhaftig, shared their thoughts as well.

Both Grinberg and Warhaftig offered comments on the unresolved demand of resettlement. In a conversation she had with Mr. Patrick Malin of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), Grinberg discussed the group of un-repatriable Jews that seemed to increasingly garner attention. Mr. Malin noted that the IGCR not UNRRA plan to care for these refugees. While the IGCR has no “funds of its own” it plans to accumulate finances from specific governments upon submitting definite projects to them for consideration. Malin was confident that the organization “will be in a position to fulfill its task concerning these persons.” Warhaftig could not disagree more. He argued that “resettlement (presumably to Palestine) should now be (the WJC’s) main concern.

²¹⁵ Arie Tartakower, Zorach Warhaftig and Sofia Grinberg, “Report on the activities of the WJC Delegation on the Second Session of the Council of UNRRA in Montreal,” submitted on September 9, 1944 to the Office Committee of WJC, A 71/2 in the WJC Collection.

The Montreal Conference, in his assessment, “did not deal with the subject” of resettlement because “in his opinion they were afraid of the word resettlement in connection with Palestine.” Rather than wait for the IGCR to draft indefinite plans, Warhaftig suggested working with the Joint on questions on resettlement. The urgent issue of resettlement, both Warhaftig and Tartakower agree, deserves the office committee’s concern and action.

Despite the amendments protecting refugees of enemy nationality and those found in enemy territory added to the UNRRA legal framework in Montreal, the World Jewish Congress representatives had, in general, failed. Tartakower, Warhaftig and Grinberg failed to earn a special and explicit designation for Jewish refugees or displaced people. Additionally, their work at the UNRRA meeting did not result in an organization-wide designation of Palestine as a viable destination of resettlement. By the fall of 1944 as Allied forces pushed back German forces and began the process of liberating occupied lands, WJC efforts to invent a separate category of Jewish war victims had proved futile. From the first UNRRA meeting in November 1943 and throughout his activities in 1944, Tartakower worked relentlessly to secure an exceptional status for the Jew of Europe displaced by Hitler’s war. And while the “Jewish D.P.” may have existed in his mind and the minds of others, UNRRA refused to take a public stand on the issue. The failure to enshrine the “Jewish D.P.” into international law would unleash noticeable consequences as the conflict in Europe ended. It was not certain, however, that Tartakower would occupy a position to confront those consequences head-on.

At the same Office Committee Meeting on September 29, 1944, Tartakower offered his colleagues a more personal update alongside his report from Montreal. Tartakower announced that he had recently been appointed as Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He looked forward to relocating to Jerusalem as early as 1945, but would not move there until 1948. The good news Tartakower shared with his colleagues on September 29 would soon be overshadowed by tragedy. On the same day that Tartakower informed the WJC Office Committee about his new professional appointment, Tartakower’s twenty-one-year-old son Joachim fell in battle on the battlefields of western Europe. Tartakower’s personal archive in WJC files contains no reference to Joachim’s death. In the dedication of a book co-written with Kurt Grossman and entitled *The Jewish D.P.*, however, the co-authors recognized the sacrifice of Tartakower’s son. In the next chapter chapter, we will turn to a WJC event, the War Emergency Conference in Atlantic City that coincided with the publication of this book. While he mourned for his son and prepared for a new professional life at the Hebrew University, Tartakower remained quite busy, finalizing the plans for publication and the largest assemblage of World Jewry since the 1930s.

The Palestinian Turn: How Nahum Goldmann and the World Jewish Congress recast “Jewish belonging” away from east central Europe

At the end of November 1944, 267 representatives from twenty-two countries congregated in Atlantic City for the War Emergency Conference, the largest international meeting of Jewish delegates convened by the World Jewish Congress (WJC) or any other Jewish organization since the outbreak of Hitler’s war.²¹⁶ Originally scheduled for the spring of 1944 but delayed when travel restrictions prohibited Palestinian Jewry from attending, the executive committee of the WJC envisioned this gathering as an opportunity to have their postwar plans made public and subsequently endorsed by a cross-section of world Jewry.²¹⁷ Years full of spirited conversations across living room coffee tables, reports of the Jewish tragedy from occupied Europe and insufficient decisions handed down by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration hovered over this historic gathering. At the opening session of this conference, Nahum Goldmann, chair of the Administrative Committee and co-founder of the WJC, approached the podium to express the organization’s deep commitment to the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine and suggest the unprecedented belief that the United Nations should financially and logistically support the movement of European Jews towards that geographical locale.²¹⁸

Goldmann stressed the intrinsic role that a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine should have in a postwar world. Overall, he contended, “Jewish rights must be restored where they have been abrogated,” Jewish property must be restituted to rightful owners, Jewish organizations should help facilitate rehabilitation and “criminals who have committed crimes against the Jews” should

²¹⁶ For more information on the World Jewish Congress, begin with the organization’s self-published monograph *Unity in Dispersion; A History of the World Jewish Congress* (New York: World Jewish Congress, 1948). The research arm of the World Jewish Congress, the Institute of Jewish Affairs published a series of pamphlets during World War II including reports of the War Emergency Congress in Atlantic City. For a broader look at Jewish diplomatic history in the first four decades of the twentieth-century see Carole Fink, *Defending the rights of others: The Great Powers, the Jews and International Minority protection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.) Fink’s analysis, however, ends on the eve of World War II and does not speak to the activities of the World Jewish Congress.

²¹⁷ This chapter draws heavily on meeting minutes from the Office Committee of the World Jewish Congress. These frequent meetings assembled between five and ten “executive” members of the World Jewish Congress at least twice weekly for the duration of the war.

²¹⁸ On Nahum Goldmann see *The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann; Sixty Years of Jewish Life*, translated by Helen Sebba (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969); *Memories: The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann: the Story of a Lifelong battle by World Jewry’s Ambassador* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970); Nahum Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, translated by Steve Cox (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978); Nahum Goldmann, *Mein Leben: USA, Europa, Israel* (Munich: Langen Muller, 1981); Raphael Patai, *Nahum Goldmann: His Missions to the Gentiles* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1987), Mark Raider, editor, *Nahum Goldmann: Statesman Without a State* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009); Jacob Dranger, *Nahum Goldmann; ein Leben fur Israel* (Frankfurt am Main: Europaische Verlagsanstalt, 1959)

be punished.²¹⁹ Even if all these actions would be taken, however, the problems facing European Jews would remain unresolved. Only the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine could rectify the Jew's position in the world community. "Had there existed a homeland when Hitler came to power, willing and ready to take in all those Jews who could have escaped," Goldmann hypothesized, "millions of Jews who are buried in the fields and forests of Poland and Russia would have been alive today." This perceived reality prompted Goldmann to declare that the "Jewish people should insist once and for all on a solution" thereby making a repetition of the most recent tragedy "impossible." At this unique moment in the history of the Jewish people, Goldmann enthusiastically declared that "no programme (sic) of Jewish demands has meaning or historical significance if it does not culminate in a demand for a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine." Of course, the "the restoration of Jewish rights, the restitution of Jewish property and the participation of Jews in UNRRA is necessary and elementary." These actions alone, however "will not solve the problem."²²⁰

Speaking to those members of the World Jewish Congress satisfied with their lives in the diaspora, Goldmann offered a caveat. He pled not "for (the) enforced evacuation of European Jewry. Those who want to stay have the right to stay and be restored to their former status."²²¹ There will most likely be, however, "many who will reject this solution and the minimum one can do for them is to give them the right to start a new life in a country of their own, where, whatever may happen to them, such a catastrophe will not occur again."²²² For these reasons, the proposed demand for a Jewish Commonwealth was "no longer a so-called Zionist demand." It has "superseded the limits of party Zionism" in Goldmann's assessment and "the overwhelming majority of the Jews of the world are clamoring for this essential solution to the Jewish problem." The "tragedy of the past decade" demands but one reparation: the "establishment of a Jewish homeland in the full sense of the word, a place where every Jew from Europe or elsewhere, who wants to go or is forced to go will be received and find refuge in his own homeland."²²³

The delegates at the War Emergency Conference overwhelmingly agreed with Goldmann's inaugural address when they unanimously endorsed a resolution calling for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth.²²⁴ In an effort to initiate the "definitive and permanent termination of the national homelessness of the Jewish people" the Conference urged the British Government

²¹⁹ "Address delivered by Dr. Nahum Goldmann" in *War Emergency Conference of the World Jewish Congress Addresses and Resolutions* (London: British Section of the World Jewish Congress, January 1945), 11.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid, 27.

to abrogate the policy set out in the White Paper of 1939 and to open Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and resettlement.” Moreover, the conference

appealed to the United Nations to ensure that the general scheme of postwar reconstruction shall include the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth and that appropriate public financial and other resources be provided for that purpose, including the speedy transfer to Palestine of all Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution who desire or need to have part in the rebuilding of the Jewish National Home.²²⁵

Going further, the amendment supported by delegates from five continents called for the “the opportunity of free departure from their places of temporary residence and freedom in the choice to be repatriated or returned to their former homes or to be resettled elsewhere.”²²⁶ As an “overwhelming majority of such persons will desire to go to Palestine” the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees and UNRRA should give “large financial assistance to cover the cost of the transportation of the refugees and the process of resettlement.”²²⁷ Thus, the establishment of a Jewish political entity in Palestine and United Nations’ support for Jewish refugees to move there became one of a handful of primary resolutions emanating from the War Emergency Conference to the assembled press corps and international observers.²²⁸

The language contained in this amendment includes a number of verbs that indicate repetition. Jews from Europe are to be “resettled” in Palestine, as if they had physically lived there before. Survivors from internment camps have the right to partake in the “rebuilding” of their national home, as if their nation-state had been built and torn asunder within recent memory. Jews would not be wantonly evacuated to a foreign land, rather they would be “repatriated” to an entity where political belonging awaited them. In this way, returning an internee from Bergen-Belsen to the *shtetl* of their birth in Poland became tantamount to shipping that same internee far across the Mediterranean to a newly designed coastal settlement. The description of Palestine as a Jewish homeland does not necessarily engender surprise. Arguably as long as Jews have lived in the diaspora, the lands detailed in the Bible have been linked to such sentiments. Since the establishment of the World Jewish Congress in 1936, Goldmann and many other prominent leaders of

²²⁵ Ibid, 28.

²²⁶ Ibid, 31.

²²⁷ Ibid 31. See on p. 39 for views on Germany in particular: “Since the Jews of Germany have renounced their connection with that country, no Jew who has escaped from Germany in time ought to be compelled whether by legal means or by any kind of moral or material pressure to return, and no former Jewish citizen of Germany ought ever again to acquire German nationality except at his own direct and personal request.”

²²⁸ This amendment was issued to reporters and promptly reproduced in pamphlet form alongside declarations detailing the punishment of war criminals, indemnification, treatment of Jews from Axis countries, statelessness and the future of Germany.

the organization had publicly endorsed Zionist views alongside their commitment to Jews in the diaspora. Requesting that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the international community fund the transport of Jewish survivors away from their pre-war homes and towards a presumed ethnic home in Palestine, however, is unprecedented.

How did these twinned assumptions, that a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine should be envisioned as a reparation for the war-time Jewish catastrophe and that Jewish refugees from Europe should have the financial and political support of the United Nations to move towards that perceived homeland, emerge and spread throughout the highest echelons of the World Jewish Congress thereafter emanating beyond? Additionally, how did the organization so threatened by Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš' calls in the early 1940s for the creation of a Jewish state and the movement of Jews towards that political entity after the war come to publicly endorse similar plans just a few years later? This chapter attempts to answer these questions using committee minutes, reports and personal writings stemming from members of the World Jewish Congress between 1942 and 1944. Nahum Goldmann in particular served as an intermediary between Chaim Weizmann, who first proposed that the United Nations support the movement of European Jews away from Europe in 1942, and his colleagues in the World Jewish Congress who eventually adopted this viewpoint and lobbied vigorously in favor of it at key UNRRA meetings.

This chapter demonstrates how Goldmann transferred ideas from Zionist circles to the Office Committee of the WJC by the summer of 1944 and suggests that two key developments influenced this stark change in WJC policy. First, a growing realization regarding the extent of the Jewish tragedy, Jewish displacement and the stalled reaction of world leaders to both encouraged WJC leaders to consider wide-scale emigration plans away from Europe as viable solutions to the so-called Jewish problem in east central Europe and Germany particularly. In his autobiography, for instance, Goldmann affirmed that "the massacre of the Jews made me more certain than ever that after the war we would have to come out with a demand for a Jewish state."²²⁹ Secondly, WJC leaders learned at two UNRRA conferences (first in Atlantic City in November 1943 and later in Montreal in September 1944) and through personal conversations with international actors that the world community had no clear plans to enshrine a distinction for Jewish victims persecuted under racial laws within international legal codes. This implied that Jews and especially German, Austrian and Hungarian Jews could be lumped into national categories with the same wartime oppressors that humiliated and murdered Jews during the conflict. As it became evident that plans to create a category delineating "Jewish DPs" from other displaced people and Axis nationals failed to congeal, WJC officials worried that surviving Jews would be forced by UNRRA repatriation plans to return to

²²⁹ Nahum Goldmann, *The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann: Sixty Years of Jewish Life*, translated by Helen Sebba (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 221.

obliterated communities or worse implicated in postwar vengeance schemes directed towards Nazi Germany and her allies.

Effectively, the WJC publicly endorsed the creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine coupled with United Nations'-supported emigration there in November 1944 because low survivor estimates, the complicated status of Jews vis-à-vis Axis nationalities and the lack of legal support for "Jewish DPs" mandated a radical change in WJC's diaspora-focused policy. And so, the organization founded in 1936 to represent the entirety of World Jewry living outside of Palestine transformed into a staunch organizational supporter of the Zionist project. Further, Goldmann and his colleagues offered a novel solution to the demographic dilemma that perennially plagued the Zionist movement: the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration would finance the "repatriation" of European Jews away from Europe and towards a new home in the Middle East.

Goldmann's Perspective on the Diaspora and the Center

As the evaluation of the crisis initiated by Edvard Beneš' support for Zionist aims in the first chapter indicated, the members of the WJC Office Committee maintained conflicting feelings about the postwar realization of the Zionist project at the beginning of the second World War. While most if not all of the WJC leaders supported the settlement of Jews in the Palestinian Mandate in theory, almost everyone agreed that Jews would continue to call Europe home after Hitler's defeat throughout 1943. WJC founders Nahum Goldmann and Stephen Wise, who both held appointments in Zionist organizations, continued the fight for the maintenance of Jewish rights in the diaspora. Support for Jewish migration towards Palestine and a Jewish commonwealth coexisted with work strengthening Jewish belonging in European states.

Throughout his life, Goldmann simultaneously supported the emergence of a Jewish state and life in the Diaspora at length in his autobiography. Reflecting on his early childhood under the roof of his grandparents in Congress Poland, Goldmann could "hardly say, for instance, when I became a Zionist. Even as a child (he) was a Zionist without knowing it."²³⁰ After moving to Germany to live with his parents and commence schooling there and delivered his first speech for a Zionist organization at age fourteen.²³¹ Despite his strong affinity for Zionism in his youth, he vehemently rejected the thesis that Jewish movements towards Palestine negated the importance of the diaspora for future generations.

Instead, Goldmann cast the diaspora as a spiritual necessity for the Jewish people, fulfilling "some deep need of the Jewish spirit or of the collective Jewish soul." Reflecting on the entirety of Jewish history, the man who notoriously possessed eight passports throughout his life observed that since the destruction of the Second Temple Jews had "shifted back and forth between" two "poles": one

²³⁰ Goldmann, 12.

²³¹ Goldmann, see p. 20 and p. 23 respectively.

marked by the “adventurous spirit of a world people” and another which “yearned for the homeland.” This realization pointed Goldmann to a conclusion “that our situation cannot really be normalized by assembling a small portion of people in Palestine and writing off the rest.” In short, the “diaspora must survive along with the Jewish center.”²³² Writing his autobiography nearly a generation after the establishment of the state of Israel, Goldmann posits that this epiphany, which coalesced in the early 1920s during his two-year habitation in Murnau am Staffelsee, carried him through the entirety of his adult life.²³³ Even after the Jewish state came into existence, Goldmann regarded this tension, between the Jewish homeland and Gentile homelands, as the “central Jewish problem of our time.”²³⁴

The Biltmore Conference, May 1942

With such a strong and consistent philosophy infusing his thoughts, it should come as no surprise that Goldmann fought on behalf of postwar rights for Jews living in the diaspora and served as a co-convenor, alongside Meyer Weisgal, of the Biltmore Conference in May 1942. More than 600 authorities with Zionist leanings from a variety of political parties assembled in New York to discuss the postwar fate of Palestine. The resulting program from this meeting asked, among other things, that

the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.²³⁵

This meeting and the public announcements proceeding from it marked a transition in Zionist tactic. According to a consensus shared by notable historians and those involved in the event, before the Biltmore Conference, the World Zionist Organization generally supported homegrown development of the *Yishuv* and a repeal of British-enforced quotas on Jewish migration toward the Mandate.²³⁶ The Biltmore Program, which members of the WJC endorsed,

²³² Goldmann, 78.

²³³ Goldmann credits his daily contact with Jacob Klatzkin as “greatly stimulating” his “thinking on Jewish issues. Klatzkin was “the most Zionist of all the thinkers in the movement, the only really hundred percent Zionist, who uncompromisingly pursued the basic concept to its conclusion as nobody else did.”

Goldmann, 76.

²³⁴ Goldmann, 79.

²³⁵ For the text see “The Biltmore Program, May 11, 1942” in *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society Politics and Foreign Relations: Pre-1948 to the Present*, edited by Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2007): 54-55.

²³⁶ See: Jeffrey Gurock, editor, *American Zionism: Mission and Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998); William Ernst Hocking “The Zionist (Biltmore) programme, 11 May 1942: Arab

indicated that postwar plans for the Jews of Europe should include the opportunity for wide-scaled migration towards the Near East. The exact scale and pace of the emigration remained undefined.²³⁷ Citing the Balfour Declaration but ignoring precedents that limited Jewish movement towards the Mandate, those gathered at the Biltmore, including Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, Goldmann and Wise issued a proclamation upon which they believed a majority of Jews, with variegated Zionist leanings, could agree upon in May 1942.²³⁸

Reflecting on the importance of the Biltmore Program, Goldmann notes how the May meeting marked a watershed in Zionist politics. Up until this declaration, Goldmann “had been among those who went along with Weizmann in opposing any official demand for a Jewish state.” This, Goldmann clarified,

was a matter of practical politics, not principle. As long as there was no realistic prospect of attaining a Jewish state in Palestine, if only for the simple reason that we were outnumbered by the Arabs, it would have been harmful to issue such a demand. In principle, of course, I had always been convinced that sovereign state in Palestine was the only possible solution and that it was as just a matter of waiting for the right moment to make the demand.

nationalism and political Zionism” in *From Haven to conquest: readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948, Part III*, edited with an introduction by Walid Khalidi (Washington D.C: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987); David H. Shapiro, *From philanthropy to activism: the political transformation of American Zionism in the Holocaust years, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994); Meyer Weisgal’s chapter “Mainstream and Sidelines: The War Years” in *...So Far: An Autobiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971): 178-192; Monty Noam Penkower, “American Jewry and the Holocaust: From Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference,” *Jewish Social Studies* Vol. 47, Now 2 (Spring, 1985): 95-114; Yechiam Weitz, “Jewish Refugees and Zionist Policy during the Holocaust,” *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 30, No. 2 (Apr. 1994): 351-368.

²³⁷ Yehuda Bauer, *Diplomacy to Resistance: A History of Jewish Palestine 1939-1945*, translated by Alton M. Winters (Skokie, IL: Voard Books, 2001). Yehuda Bauer’s excellent chapter on the Biltmore Declaration details the rift that developed between Ben-Gurion and Weizmann regarding (among other details) the size and pace of emigration. During his 1940-41 visit to the United States, Ben-Gurion began advocating that 5 million Jewish refugees should move to Palestine “at the fastest possible rate” at the end of the war (Ben-Gurion in Bauer, 230). This stands in contrast to Weizmann’s January 1942 article in *Foreign Affairs* calling for two million European refugees to settle in Palestine over a few years. During the summer of 1942, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann confronted each other in Wise’s apartment over their overall agreements. Notably, Weizmann’s assistant Meyer Weisgal downplayed the rift between Ben-Gurion and his boss.

²³⁸ And yet the vague wording, while more amenable to some less vigorous Zionists, unleashed other consequences, namely contributing to the rift between Ben-Gurion and Weizmann. According to Bauer, “the vague wording of the convention’s resolutions suited Weizmann’s aims. Weizmann and his aids in the United States didn’t in the least intend to formulate a new line of Zionist policy at the Biltmore. They were formulating a political demand suitable for conditions in the United States, worded in language comprehensible to its Jews and non-Jews and not calculated to stir up sharp objections in Palestine. Ben-Gurion on the other hand, turned a local resolution of American Zionists into a new political formula—affirmative—a standard for the nation.” Bauer, 241.

The Biltmore Conference seemed to be a “right” moment of sorts despite the continued minority status of Jews Palestine.²³⁹ Although Goldman considered the demographic reality in the Mandate a “great obstacle,” he also considered the time ripe for a declaration of collective Zionist intent.

Unable to convene an official Zionist Congress during wartime, the Biltmore Conference allowed Goldman and others within the movement to “prepare public opinion for the idea of a Jewish state.”²⁴⁰ As the “platform was quickly ratified by all branches of the movement, it acquired the validity of a congressional resolution.” The Biltmore Platform did not, however, garner the support of the American Jewish Committee, a non-Zionist organization representing the hypothetical voices of nearly six million American Jews. Also the vagaries included in the proclamation emanating from this meeting meant that a “goodly number of questions marks inhere in the Biltmore Program.”²⁴¹ And so a new series of discussions was initiated to include the AJC within this new thrust of Zionist politics and clarify issues spawn from the change in policy. In the midst of these conversations convened to bring American non-Zionists into the Zionist fold, Goldman and his colleagues held fascinating discussions that showcase the inherent dilemmas of the Zionist project. A brief evaluation of these meetings reveals how Goldman arrived at an answer to perhaps the most important question: how the Jewish citizens of Europe would logistically metamorphosize into the citizens of a Jewish state.

In the wake of the Biltmore Conference, a dozen or so leaders from a panoply of Jewish political organizations assembled to discuss how the initiatives decided upon in May 1942 would be implemented in the postwar world. Goldman and Wise joined this group and through their attendance the Executive Committee of the WJC gained knowledge of the extent of the Jewish tragedy and how leading Zionists planned to respond to new harrowing realities. The meeting minutes of the “Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs,” offer an intimate perspective on the process by which plans for increased migration towards Palestine in the postwar years became clearer and more urgent and should be understood as the starting point of the WJC’s turn toward Palestine. Besides the involvement of Goldman and Wise at these meetings, a half dozen copies of the official minutes from the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs (AECfZA) can be found in the archives of the Institute for Jewish Affairs, the research arm of the World Jewish Congress.

²³⁹ Goldman, 221.

²⁴⁰ Goldman, 221.

²⁴¹ Bauer, 241.

The American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, 1942-1943

Just a few weeks after the Biltmore Conference, Goldmann and Wise met with a dozen or so leaders from across the spectrum of Jewish politics assembled as the so-called Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs.²⁴² Established on the eve of World War II to serve as umbrella group for Zionist organizations and those with Zionist sympathies working in New York City, the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs became the “American” Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs after the United States joined the war effort in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Alongside his responsibilities at the WJC, Stephen Wise served as co-convener of this committee as well first, first alongside Emanuel Neumann and later with Abba Hillel Silver.

At this particular meeting, as the freshly minted Biltmore Declaration reverberated across the Jewish and non-Jewish presses, a handful of notables including David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency, and Maurice Wertheim, President of the American Jewish Committee, gathered.²⁴³ The meeting agenda focused on clarifying the relationship between Zionists, who supported Jewish migration and settlement in Palestine and non-Zionists, and those “who want to support some aspects of Jewish immigration to Palestine.”²⁴⁴ Non-Zionists (also known as Anti-Zionists although Anti-Zionists tended to be more combative to Zionism in general) can be loosely described as those American-born Jews who worried that support for permanent Jewish settlements in Palestine would threaten their standing as American citizens and, even, force them to declare their own intentions to move toward Palestine.²⁴⁵ The AJC included many so-called non-Zionists and Wertheim defended their perspective as the meeting unfolded.

In order to gain increased support for Jewish migration towards Palestine in the American, the Office Committee deemed it necessary to draft a definition of

²⁴² “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wednesday, June 3, 1942”, C5/3 in WJC Collection. Present at this meeting: Levinthal, Jacobs, Leibel, Rosensohn, Goldstein, Goldmann, Ben-Gurion, Lipsky, Szold, Wertheim, Wise, Lourie, Neumann, Weisgal.

²⁴³ On the American Jewish Committee see Louis Marshall, *The American Jewish Committee* (New York, 1909); Marianne Rachel Sauna, *Let us Prove Strong: The American Jewish Committee, 1945-2006* (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2007); Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966* (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972); Frederick Robin, *The Pursuit of Equality: A half century with the American Jewish Committee* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957). On the Jewish Agency see: Yosef Kats, *Partner to Partition: The Jewish Agency's partition plan in the mandate era* (London; Portland, Or: Frank Cass, 1998); Yehoshua Freundlich, editor, *Political Documents of the Jewish Agency* (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Haziyonit, 1996).

²⁴⁴ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wednesday, June 3, 1942”, C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁴⁵ Historian Thomas Kolsky explores the personalities partaking in these debates about the future of the Jewish homeland. See Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). Also Menahem Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists and Zionists in America, 1939-1948* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, and Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1991).

“Zionism” that a large variety of Jews, even those of non-Zionist stripes, could support. Zionist negotiated with non-Zionists at this juncture in order to “arrive at a common program so that American Jewry could appear as a united group before the (eventual) Peace Conference to get the best possible settlement for Palestine.”²⁴⁶ The task proved arduous. Nearly impossible, in fact.

For example, Nahum Goldmann “could not conceive of any formulation on Palestine which would be acceptable to” everyone. Ben-Gurion should inform Wertheim that the assembled parties “cannot agree to any formula about Palestine which does not include ‘commonwealth’ or ‘national home for the Jewish people.’” If the AJC does not accept this formulation “we might come to an agreement on immigration and colonization but it must be made perfectly clear that we will carry on the fight of Jewish control and for a Commonwealth.” In response, Wise “warned against being rushed into any formulation” as he “would not delegate the power to formulate Zionism to any individual.” Time was of the essence but there was “too much at stake to try to come to a conclusion (on how to define Zionism) in 48 hours.”²⁴⁷

To expedite the debate between non-Zionists and Zionists, Ben-Gurion met with Wertheim privately to reach an agreement on a shared definition of Zionism that would enable American Jews as a whole to endorse postwar plans that included the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Two days after this meeting, the Office Committee reconvened to learn about the conversation between these two notable leaders. Ben-Gurion imparted good news: Wertheim would support a program quite similar to the one endorsed at the Biltmore Hotel. His agreement with Ben-Gurion was predicated on two conditions: that the Emergency Committee offer a conclusive formula regarding the “ties which bind Jews together” and that the WJC cease their operations in the United States.²⁴⁸

Wertheim had good reason to tie his endorsement of a Biltmore-esque platform with these two conditions. He asked the Emergency Committee to clarify exactly which “ties...bind Jews together” because without such a clarification the Biltmore Program’s promise to increase “Jewish immigration” to Palestine remains hopelessly ambiguous. Which Jews will become the Jews who settle in Palestine once immigration restrictions ease? Are American Jews to join European refugees after Palestine is labeled “a Jewish commonwealth”? Wertheim spoke on behalf of AJC constituents who supported a Jewish home in theory, but were not willing to uproot their North American lives to become pioneers in the Middle East. Suspicious of WJC political activities within the

²⁴⁶ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wednesday, June 3, 1942”, C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁴⁷ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wednesday, June 3, 1942”, C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁴⁸ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wednesday, June 3, 1942”, C5/3 in WJC Collection.

United States, Wertheim wanted Goldmann and Wise to stop their activities in New York City, Washington D.C. and beyond. Unsurprisingly, Wertheim's conditions sparked animosity amongst WJC members assembled at the June 5, 1942 meeting of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs. In an effort to register his anger at such a brash request, Wise noted "he would consider any decision to alter the status of the WJC" two days before a meeting of the AJC "as a betrayal of the Jewish people."²⁴⁹

The animosity detailed in these meeting minutes reveals a deep fissure between two influential Jewish organizations and key Jewish personalities working in America after the Biltmore Conference. Although the Biltmore Platform gained recognition as a watershed in Jewish politics, when both Zionist and non-Zionist organizations united in favor of a policy outlining increased Jewish migration toward Palestine and the establishment of an autonomous Jewish commonwealth, it also initiated further disagreements regarding which Jews would settle in Palestine and what role the WJC should have in the international arena. Questions asked at these two meetings in June 1942 did not engender immediate answers nor the desired consensus. Later that summer, Wertheim and the AJC withdrew official support for any statement resembling the Biltmore Program.

The dynamic between Wertheim, Ben-Gurion, Wise and Goldmann preserved in the records of these two meetings reveals the state of the Zionist Program in America mid-1942. While some consensus materialized between so-called Zionists and non-Zionists in the wake of the Biltmore Program, serious questions plagued the leaders involved in these discussions. If Palestine becomes a "Jewish commonwealth" which Jews will emigrate there? Who belongs to the Jewish people and what obligation will American Jews have to a Jewish political entity thousands of miles away? Can constituents of the World Jewish Congress support plans for a Jewish commonwealth while also speaking for Jews in the diaspora? As his remarks at these two meetings in June 1942 indicate, Nahum Goldmann did not yet possess the answers to these questions. After three more meetings of the AECfZA Office Committee and one calendar year, however, Goldmann's plan for the postwar world and the Jews' position within it would coalesce and shape the official platform of the World Jewish Congress.

Over two meetings in late December 1942 the AECfZA Office Committee met to "clarify fundamental questions of policy and objectives" of particular interest to the attending group.²⁵⁰ The most pressing concerns centered on two topics: what type of governmental structure would emerge if the British Mandate

²⁴⁹ "Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Friday, June 5, 1942", C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁵⁰ "Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held at 10 AM on December 25, 1942 at the St. Regis Hotel," C5/3 in WJC Collection. Present: Szold, Bublick, Gellman, Greenberg, Halprin, Jacobs, Pool, Shulman, Segal, Wise, Goldmann, Lourie, Neumann, Weisgal, Weizmann was present for a short time during the afternoon.

system collapsed and how would that hypothetical government structure inhibit or encourage emigration of Jewish masses.²⁵¹ Those present offered predictions for what would happen in the wake of the conflict throughout the Near East. Always eager to share his opinions, Goldmann suggested that “ideally (he) would choose an international trusteeship for Palestine entrusted to the administration of a neutral country, not tied up with the Arab World and not motivated by power politics.” In this way, Jews and Arabs would share local control and “Jews should be responsible for the administration of immigration.” Accordingly, a neutral state power “must be given the clear directive that its chief task is the development of the country in order to facilitate rapid, large scale Jewish immigration.”²⁵² Both proposals offered by Goldmann elicited a response.

Beginning with Goldmann’s first suggestion, that some form of neutral international trusteeship oversee local government initiatives in general, three in attendance responded with enthusiastic disagreement. Namely, his supposition that a neutral state could take control over this slice of the British Empire proved far too unrealistic. Goldmann responded to comments directed towards his proposals and weighed on the idea of the “transition period.” He reiterated that the “possibility of a neutral country taking the responsibility of Palestine” was not so “unrealistic” as many believed. He added that if Jews

succeed in getting the support of the United Nations for a Jewish commonwealth and with it directives leading to a Jewish majority, then it may be that Great Britain with all her commitments in the Arab world may prefer not to be the authority to carry out these directives.²⁵³

Here, Goldmann emphasized the influence wielded by the United Nations with regards to the creation of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Perhaps, this new international organization could support the establishment of a Jewish political entity, encourage migrations towards it and force Great Britain to revoke their promises to Arab states. In their statements, Goldmann and his challengers discussed the ideal form of the administration that could potentially emerge in the so-called “transitional period.” Goldmann’s remarks also raised a secondary concern, however, that of Jewish immigration to the Mandate in an immediate postwar time frame. In comments offered by Chaim Weizmann and his loyal assistant Maurice Weisgal this potential dilemma garnered much more attention.

Goldmann proposed that the United Nations support for a Jewish commonwealth could minimize British influence in the region and potentially help increase Jewish numbers in Palestine. From the foundation of the modern political movement in the *fin de siècle* to this meeting held in late 1942, demographic

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

concerns have been fundamental to the Zionist project.²⁵⁴ How many Jews could reasonably populate the historic biblical lands within the Ottoman Empire? Would the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration enable the increase of Jewish numbers in the Palestinian Mandate? Could Jewish settlers gain numerical equality with Arabs with the relaxation of immigration controls? Might the White Paper signal the end of Jewish movement towards the Mandate? Those in support of massive, expedited Jewish settlement in the Levant had to contend with one primary practical and logistical concern: how would Jews move from their former “homes” to a perceived “home” elsewhere? At this juncture, Goldmann envisioned a link between United Nations support for a Jewish political entity and a revision of British-imposed immigration barriers. Two participants at this meeting, Chaim Weizmann and Weisgal, elaborated upon Goldmann’s proposition and offered a provocative plan.

Before Weizmann arrived, Meyer Weisgal detailed his views on Jewish immigration, which he understood as “quite independent of the provisional form of government which might be set up and the ultimate establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth.”²⁵⁵ Primarily, in Weisgal’s opinion, there are two basic problems, “the need of the Jewish people for Palestine and to get a majority in the country.” Both of these problems could be solved by “immigration.” Since there will “be several million Jews who will have to be fed, clothed and rehabilitated after the war by the United Nations,” this mass of humanity had the potential to become the immigrants so desperately sought. Consequently, “by securing the agreement of the United Nations to take these people out of occupied countries immediately after the war and sending them to Palestine, we would then be doing something constructive.” Within three to five years, the refugee Jews of Europe could constitute “a Jewish majority in Palestine” and “the entire immediate problem will be solved.”²⁵⁶

Weisgal’s call to have Jewish authorities cooperate with the United Nations and facilitate the postwar migration of Jews towards Palestine echoed words offered by Goldmann and others assembled in this private apartment on this late

²⁵⁴ The rift that developed between Ben-Gurion and Weizmann between 1940 and 1942 stemmed, in part, from a demographic disagreement. Ben-Gurion wanted immediate emigration of the largest number of European Jews possible. The student of Zionist thinkers would benefit from thinking of the demographic and migration questions as differentiating Zionists from each other. Consider: Max Nordau’s proposal in the wake of World War II that 600,000 Jews from Europe should be moved to the newly organized Palestinian Mandate thus creating a Jewish authority in the land overnight. Or Vladimir Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s proposal to use contacts at the highest echelons of the Polish and other central European governments to support the mass migration of Jews away from Europe, moving 1.5 million Jews over a ten-year period. See: “Proceedings of the New Zionist Organization Conference in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 31 January-7 February 1938”; Jabotinsky’s *The War and the Jew* (New York: The Dial Press, 1942) and Howard Rosenblum, “Promoting an International Conference to Solve the Jewish problem: The New Zionist Organization’s Alliance with Poland,” *The Slavonic and East European Review Vol. 69*, No. 3 (Jul. 1991): 478-501.

²⁵⁵ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held at 10 AM on December 25, 1942 at the St. Regis Hotel,” C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

December day but also represented something new. The direct connection he proposed between Jewish postwar refugees, the United Nation's endorsement of migration plans and the metamorphosis of the liberated Jews of Europe to Palestinian settlers had precedent neither at the Biltmore Conference nor within the confines of this committee. While the activists on the AECfZA could not agree on what political entity would emerge in Palestine after the conflict, they spoke in unison regarding Jewish movement towards the Mandate. Now Weisgal had posited a seemingly viable plan. When he entered the meeting late, Chaim Weizmann joined this pro-emigration chorus with much élan and seconded Weisgal's thoughts.

For Weizmann, postwar Jewish immigration should ensue with great speed after the war. He "favored a plan of bringing over a large number of people immediately after the guns have ceased firing."²⁵⁷ Such a plan was "necessary and would to a great extent solve the whole problem." Then Weizmann offered a poignant hypothetical. "Suppose," he posited, "you bring over a quarter of a million or 300,000 Jews, you would then have effectively (even if not numerically) a majority in Palestine. If these people who will in any case have to be fed and clothed are fed and clothed in Palestine, the country will be rebuilt in the process." Weizmann continued, with attention to presumed public opinion:

if this plan is combined with the development of the country we are more or less in the unassailable position. If the Arabs refuse, it will put them in a 'dog in the manger' position which will not be tolerated in the post war world. Such a plan will, moreover, win the interest and sympathy of the liberal world and is the key to the solution of our problems. We can prove that we can bring in 300,000 or a quarter of a million as a 10% installment on future Jewish immigration.²⁵⁸

And so, Weizmann clearly stated the most important Zionist goal for the immediate postwar period. Arguably, Weisgal's intervention and Weizmann's vague plan with specific numbers articulated on December 25, 1942 mark two of the earliest statements envisioning the European Jewish refugees as the precise settlers needed to ensure a Jewish majority in Mandate Palestine. Goldman and other colleagues at the same meeting advocated Jewish control over immigration, but did not necessarily equate the new immigrants with Europe's stateless Jews. At consequent meetings of the AECfZA and the office committee of the World

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. Further, "Weizmann believed we should be making a great mistake in assuming that Great Britain will not have a very important voice in the solution of the problem and he thought a great deal of the decision to be taken there. Great Britain is now passing through a curious state – a period of rejuvenation. The people feel that they can do the job as well as anyone else, if not better...he said he would not like to see dual control in Palestine for that would mean we might fall between two extremes."

Jewish Congress, Goldmann grappled with this equation of refugees with Palestinian immigrants. Eventually, by the summer and fall of 1944, he would adopt the ideas espoused by Weisgal and Weizmann at this particular meeting as his own.

Precisely who would constitute the new Jewish migrants towards Palestine and how soon they would arrive after the conflict infused another discussion of the same committee three days later on December 28, 1942. The most interesting snippets of the discussions pertained to specific dreams for the postwar reality. Goldmann advocated that Zionists be “completely frank in discussions with the British” and should “make clear that whatever power becomes the trustee for Palestine, must carry out the directive of getting a Jewish majority in the country as soon as possible.”²⁵⁹ Wary of potential associations with the British Empire, Goldmann cautioned that “it is not the historic task of Jews returning to Palestine to be exponents of British imperialism in the Near East.” The language invoked by Goldmann hints at repetition. Goldmann marked the hypothetical Jewish survivors, likely born in central and eastern Europe and confined there for the majority of their lives, as “returnees” to Palestine, a perceived ancient homeland. Here, Goldmann foreshadows remarks he imparts toward a much larger audience at the War Emergency Conference in November 1944. Additionally, Goldmann accentuated the priority of Jewish migration towards Palestine, as he did three days earlier.

In the meantime, Goldmann’s colleagues in the Executive Committee espoused their own conflicting ideas regarding the pace of postwar migration and what organizational body would govern this mass movement. For Neumann, “our goal at the moment without our own government under the present circumstances should be to try to get a large immigration to Palestine with Britain as trustee for a certain period of years.” This immigration, moreover, should be “turned over to us.”²⁶⁰ Neumann wanted to seize the postwar moment and avoid a return to the prewar status of stalled migration. Labor Zionist leader Hayim Greenberg invoked calmer language and advocated a decelerated process. In his words, the “only path we can pursue is to stress the uniqueness of our position both as a people in relation to the geography and history of Palestine and the nature of the task which will be undertaken there.”²⁶¹ And then, in “ten or fifteen years...the population of the country must make its own decisions as to affiliations we can face the world with a clear conscious and a valid position.” In truth, the “whole matter of course will depend on whether, after the war there really will be set up an efficient world federation with efficient police power.”²⁶² For Greenberg, autonomy for Jews in the Middle East remained a decade or more away and

²⁵⁹ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held at 10 AM on December 28, 1942 at the St. Regis Hotel,” C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

dependent on international security machinery. This son of Bessarabia who emigrated to the United States in 1924 believed in this moment that Jews belong in Palestine for geographic and historic reasons. Dr. Emanuel Neumann, who emigrated to America from Latvia at a much younger age than Greenberg, disagreed and advocated for more immigration when the moment becomes available.²⁶³

After listening to these somewhat ambitious and contradictory plans, Wise weighed in with a short remark. “Any plans made by us at this stage” argued the respected leader, “were mere *Kinderspiel* and would be considered naïve unless we knew what the British were thinking.”²⁶⁴ For this reason, “before we make any program we (must) try to find out what is in the minds of the British with regard to Palestine.” Immediately, Goldmann and Shulman adamantly disagreed. “If we took that position,” Goldman stressed, “then we would have to postpone making any plans or any program for the British would certainly take no position on Palestine until after the war was won.”²⁶⁵ Shulman found fault in Wise’s logic for another reason arguing “that we should not be dissuaded from thinking in terms of a changing world. We are not going to ask for what is possible but present a program of what we want.” And so, “we should tell (the United State’s) government that we want Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth, with a neutral status internationally guaranteed and ask whether it is possible to fit such an arrangement into the postwar world.”²⁶⁶ Five different men at the same meeting advocated five unique plans for the immediate war-time and consequent postwar future. Half a year later a consequent AECfZA meeting a reckoning with extent of the Jewish tragedy mandated that postwar options narrow. Those demanding alacrity silenced those advocating for a slow migration towards Palestine and caution in the international arena during two meetings in December 1942.

The last of the meeting minutes from the AECfZA preserved in the files of the WJC dates from June 1, 1943. In the nearly five month interim between the penultimate gathering and this one, the world revolving around the men who assembled again to discuss postwar Zionist plans had changed for the worse. Another organizational initiatives dedicated to rescuing European Jewry had materialized and faltered. In April 1943, the much-anticipated Bermuda Conference convened on the same day that Jews remaining in the Warsaw Ghetto initiated their uprising. Known officially as the Anglo-American Conference on

²⁶³ Emanuel Neumann (1893-1980) hailed from Liban (Libau) Latvia and moved to the United States with his family when he was only a few weeks old. He died in Tel Aviv after making aliyah just a year prior to his death. According to Paul C. Merkley “Neumann and American Zionism came of age together.” See Merkley’s *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891-1948* (London; Portland, Oregon: F. Cass, 1998). Goldmann remembers Neumann as speaking against partition plans in Nove 1946 at the Hadassah Conference in Boston, see Goldmann, 232.

²⁶⁴ “Meeting of the Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held at 10 AM on December 28, 1942 at the St. Regis Hotel,” C5/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

Refugees, planning for the Bermuda Conference began when the British Foreign Office proposed a joint meeting between British and American officials to discuss the continuing problem of refugees in Europe.²⁶⁷ Held over eleven days in April, Harold Willis Dodds, a Professor of Politics and University President at Princeton, chaired the American delegation and Richard Law, the parliamentary undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, served as his British counterpart. While Chaim Weizmann sent notes on behalf of the Jewish Agency, private organizations and observers, official discussions were closed. The meeting resulted in the extending the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee of Refugees, but failed to issue other proclamations regarding the fate of Europe's displaced and stateless people. The disappointing results issued from Bermuda starkly correlated with the dismal numbers coming out of Europe. And Chaim Weizmann assumed the floor to respond to this crisis of epic proportions.

Due to leave America after a year-long stay, Weizmann availed himself of the opportunity to offer "a few summary remarks." And so he began to speak frankly about the state of the Zionism and the fate of European Jews. Weizmann

viewed the situation in the Zionist movement with the utmost gravity. The fact that central European Jewry is being decimated imposes quite different problems. Where will the millions of Jewish come from who are to go to Palestine? The only communities still intact are in Hungary, part of Rumania and those who saved in Russia and it is not known how or why those will be returned. Other scattered groups are being systematically exterminated. Only those who had the courage and the means to survive will be left. What then is the aspect of the movement that must be faced? There may be, perhaps a million or a million and half Jews left to emigrate but the wisdom of talking in very large figures seems questionable.²⁶⁸

Looking at the reports of destruction pouring out of Europe, Weizmann laments that most of his prospective Palestinian émigrés have been killed. All plans considered before must be reconceived. Weizmann was "sure of one thing: the old methods and slogans and clichés have gone never to return because the position is changing and Zionist organizations all over the world must make up their minds that new methods must be sought."

²⁶⁷ Shalom Adler-Rudel, "A Chronicle of Rescue Efforts," *Year Book XI of the Leo Baeck Institute* (London 1966); *Bermuda Conference on Refugees* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, 1943); Arieh Tartakower and Kurt Grossmann, *The Jewish Refugee* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, 1944).

²⁶⁸ "Meeting Office Committee of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs held on June 1, 1943," C5/5 in the WJC Collection. Present: Levinthal, Bublick, Gold, Goldstein, Goldstein, Greenberg, Halperin, Jacobs, Lipsky, Neumann, Pool, Rothenberg, Shulman, Szold, Wertheim, Wise, Weizmann, Goldmann, Berlin, Lourie Mr. Weisgal.

American Jewry and British leaders had irreversibly failed Weizmann and, since the destruction of the Temple, the Jews have never “faced so tragic a period.” Reflecting on the realities in the United States, Weizmann noted that “American Jewry will not go to Palestine unless driven.” He could not expect his *chalutzim* [settlers] to emerge from the U.S.A. Recent conversations he shared with Britain’s Lord Halifax offered little hope that policies towards Palestinian immigrants would be reversed. So Weizmann envisioned the Zionist movement as under attack from within and from outside. Despite plans to open a new Jewish Agency office in Washington and other plans to lobby further, Dr. Weizmann “was leaving this country with a heavy heart.”²⁶⁹

The jubilation that wreathed Weizmann upon the passing of the May 1942 Biltmore Resolution had evaporated. That accomplishment should be understood as a “symbol” and a “flag” but not necessarily practical. As European Jewry could not provide enough immigrants to populate Palestine, “Zionists must continue to build, infiltrate and expand industrially and economically without expecting millions of Jews to come.” Rather than dwell in naïve dreams that a Jewish commonwealth could immediately come into being after the end of hostilities, he deemed it necessary to characterize the Biltmore Resolution as “impractical.” Moreover, “the fact that the Jews have been allowed to disappear and there was no reaction to it or to the Bermuda Conference is depressing.” In summation, as far as the Jews are concerned “Hitler has won the war” and Hitler’s “poison has spread deep.”²⁷⁰

Weizmann’s frank comments elicited a variety of responses including one from Nahum Goldmann. He emphatically disagreed with Weizmann’s characterization of the Biltmore Program and he “believed there was a good chance of even the eldest among the Zionist leaders seeing its implementation.” In Goldmann’s eyes, the Biltmore plan remained a “practical program for this generation and at this particular juncture of Jewish history.” The main uncertainty in relation to the Biltmore program remained which step should be taken first, namely should the establishment of a commonwealth or the initiation of emigration constitute the greatest priority? When asked by a member of the State Department which platitude of the Biltmore Program he would immediately chose, Goldmann replied “that he would ask for the immigration of half a million Jews in (the) two years immediately after the war.”²⁷¹

Thus, practicality mandated that increased numbers of Jews in Palestine should predate the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth. In Goldmann’s assessment, “the first task is to bring in as many Jews as will create (a) Jewish majority and then to ask for a self-governing Jewish Commonwealth.” He strongly believed that the U.S. State Department and Great Britain “would accede to the

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

demand for the immediate immigration of half a million Jews” before they would endorse the creation of a Jewish commonwealth.²⁷²

Concerning debates regarding which Jews should move toward Palestine, Goldmann provided a concrete resolution. In general, he considered “the dispute about the number of Jews to immigrate to Palestine ridiculous.” Quite simply, “the formula should be that all those Jews who have been uprooted from their countries and have to be cared for immediately after the Armistice, should be assisted by the UN.” The “uprooted” Jews “should be forced neither to return to their countries of origin, nor to be dispersed.” Succinctly, if individual states or the community of the United Nations inquired what the “Zionist demands will be step by step,” Goldmann recommended that American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs pronounce demands “coined in his formulation for immigration.” To directly recapture words stated by Weisgal and Weizmann at the end of December 1942, Goldmann reminded his colleagues that there will be a “tremendous job of housing, feeding and transportation which, if successful will lay the basis for the demands for a self-governing Commonwealth.”²⁷³ In Goldmann’s assessment, immediate emigration of Jewish refugees should be the primary demand for all Zionists. And most importantly for our analysis, the relief bodies of the United Nations should, in part, finance this emigration.

From Zionist Circles to the World Jewish Congress: Goldmann as Intermediary

Goldmann’s proposals found acceptance amongst the assembled participants. The specific demand linking U.N. support for postwar Jewish refugees with transit towards Palestine that Goldmann delineated at the AECfZA meeting in June 1943 would soon resonate amongst the members of another office committee, that of the World Jewish Congress. In this way, Goldmann served a link between discussions amongst prominent Zionists and WJC members, some of whom harbored conflicting views regarding their organization’s support for mass Jewish migration to Palestine. In three particular meetings during the spring and summer of 1944, Goldmann joined conversations pertaining to postwar European Jewry and had the opportunity to test the argument he espoused at the AECfZA to his colleagues in the World Jewish Congress Office Committee. By the end of November 1944 when Goldmann assumed the podium at the War Emergency Conference his connection linking U.N. postwar relief activities to the transport of Jewish refugees away from Europe and towards Palestine had become a key platitude of the WJC.

Eleven months after the June 1943 meeting of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Goldmann sat down with executive members of the WJC to discuss domestic developments in refugee policies, namely the January 1944 creation of the War Refugee Board. Recently, Goldmann had visited John W. Pehle, a former U.S. Treasury lawyer who had become the Executive Director

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

of the War Refugee Board soon after its creation.²⁷⁴ During their meeting, Pehle showed Goldmann “a draft of a statement which read that America will be ready to take refugees.”²⁷⁵ Such a change in U.S. policy towards European refugees should, arguably, be greeted with enthusiasm. Goldmann, however, had other ideas concerning postwar relocations of Europe’s Jews.

Goldmann quickly registered his disagreement with the WRB’s proposed proclamation. He told Pehle that the part of the draft stating that “after the war these refugees will be returned to their countries of origin” was problematic. Further, Goldmann stood “opposed to the formulation of the draft since a possibility must be secured for refugees to go to Palestine after the war.” Relaxed U.S. immigration quotas might preclude Europe’s Jews from choosing new postwar homes in Palestine. Therefore, Goldmann suggested that a draft “be prepared in a new form securing a possibility for the refugees to go to other countries wherever they wish.”²⁷⁶ Those assembled at this particular meeting did not immediately respond to Goldmann and Pehle’s interaction. In a few weeks, however, two extensive gatherings of the WJC’s Office Committee allowed members to discuss postwar scenarios and evaluate how two seemingly contradictory programs, one advocating support for diaspora Jews and the other backing Jews who want to emigrate away from Europe might potentially coexist.

Periodically each week for nearly six years, the handful of members who constituted the WJC Office Committee convened to discuss developments both ordinary and exciting. The preserved minutes of this committee reveal the endless grind of daily correspondence, the scheduling nightmares which accompanied intermittent meetings with government leaders from across the Allied world and, in some instances, contentious debates regarding WJC’s policies and organizational philosophies. Before Goldmann’s plan equating displaced Jews to Palestinian settlers could gain endorsement from the delegates at the War Emergency Conference in November 1944, his associates in the Office Committee had to flesh their own opinion regarding postwar movement away from Europe. Two particular discussions, the first on June 8 and the second two weeks later on June 30, provided ideal opportunities to evaluate the future of European Jewry.

In late spring 1944, WJC notables assembled in Goldmann’s apartment on Central Park West to discuss recently publicized postwar reconstruction plans offered by German JDC officials and prepare a collective statement regarding the regeneration of Jewish life in Germany after Hitler. While the decision at hand

²⁷⁴ John W. Pehle was named Executive Director of the War Refugee Board in February 1944. He interacted closely with Jewish organizations in America during his tenure. For more on Pehle see the transcript of his interview with Claude Lanzmann in Shoah. See also Monty N. Penkower, “Jewish Organizations and the creation of the U.S. War Refugee Board,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 450, Reflections on the Holocaust: Historical, Philosophical and Educational Dimensions (Jul. 1980): pp. 122-139.

²⁷⁵ Arieh Tartakower, “Memo to the Office Committee on meeting with Red Cross, Polish Embassy, War Refugees Board, etc,” July 1944, H 272/10 in WJC Collection.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

mandated discussion on the German context in particular, the conversation soon expanded to include a discussion of Jewish communities throughout Europe and, on a more theoretical level, where the Jewish people belong after a disastrous war, years of anti-Semitic legal codes and the complete shredding of European Jewish life. Goldmann voiced his now-familiar equation of survivor and migrant, but refused to advocate for the forced evacuation of Europe's Jews from the entire continent. While no clear consensus emerged from this discussion, a majority of the voices felt ambivalent about the viability of renewed Jewish life in Germany and a few found themselves advocating a much different position than before.

Near the beginning of the meeting, Maurice Perlzweig stated succinctly: "he who goes back to Germany goes at his own risk."²⁷⁷ This Polish-born, resident of London served the WJC as the head of division for international questions and chairman of the British section. He drew upon his rabbinical education as well as extensive diplomatic experience to substantiate why the WJC should discourage Jews from returning to the German state. Notably, Perlzweig harbored fears that Jews returning to Germany would become entangled with overall retribution and incur punishment targeted for the non-Jewish German population. While "it is a human right to go back," he "who does it must meet the German fate and we cannot defend him." Dr. Goldmann, respectfully disagreed with Rabbi Perlzweig's position. If, Goldmann argued, we were "against a return only to Germany, this would be a triumph for Hitler, Germany would become *judenrein* and this would happen with the approval of the WJC." Moreover, if the WJC dismissed return to Germany as a viable option based on German aggression and acquiescence to Jewish extermination, what about other countries where Jews were also killed? Other countries such as Romania and Hungary had murdered Jews as well and if the WJC bans "Jews from all these countries" the organization will destroy Jewish life in the diaspora."²⁷⁸

On the contrary, Goldmann believed that "the greatest triumph of Jewry would be if Jewish rights in Germany would be internationally guaranteed." In response to Perlzweig's fears regarding retribution and punishment misdirected towards Jews, Goldmann figured that "the Jewish community will return to Germany later" and thus "will not be in Germany when the punishment of the Nazis will take place. Worried about Jewish rights in the diaspora in general, Goldmann felt that a ban on Germany could have severe consequences for the rights of Jews wanting to remain in other European countries. "We have a right" Goldmann stated "in a democratic world to live wherever we want." How could these statements coexist with Goldmann's equation of Jewish survivors with potential Palestinian émigrés? Understanding Goldmann's support for a postwar German Jewish community hinges on our ability to differentiate between those Jews who want to return to their prewar homes and those who decide to relocate

²⁷⁷ "World Jewish Congress Discussion in Office committee on June 8 1944," A71/3 in WJC Collection. Maurice Perlzweig lived from 1895-1985.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

elsewhere. It seems that Goldmann sought in this particular discussion to protect individual choice, regardless of where that individual chooses to abide. Perhaps for this reason Goldmann remained against a mass evacuation despite being able to “understand its logic.” Each Jew possessed the prerogative to live in Tel Aviv, Warsaw or even Berlin. Goldmann refused to take away options.

A staunch proponent of mass evacuation, however, chimed in next. In part, native Lithuanian and long-time member of the WJC Baruch Zuckerman agreed with Goldmann that “the problem of whether Jews should return to Germany or not should be considered as part of the whole problem of the return of Jews to Europe.”²⁷⁹ In contradiction to Goldmann’s views, however, he believed that a WJC or a JDC statement of policy “must have historic significance.” Those assembled should act as if “the representatives of the Free Nations will pay great attention” to what they will say. From his standpoint, the Jews of Europe are entitled to three distinct rights: “to decide whether he wants to return to the country from which he was displaced,” “the right of ethnic groups to maintain their identity and develop their own religious and cultural life” and, the most importantly, “the demand for the equalization of the Jewish status as a people with all the other peoples of the world.”²⁸⁰ For Zuckerman, who made *aliyah* to Palestine in 1932, “there is only one way to achieve such a goal: the recognition on the part of the world of Palestine as a Jewish state or commonwealth.” Accordingly, only after offering a declaration concerning Palestine can “the principles contained in the first two spheres of rights” be addressed. Thus, to analyze the problem of “whether Jews should return to Europe or not,” the WJC must clarify its position on Palestine.²⁸¹

Already Zuckerman possessed a clear position on Palestine and who should constitute the citizenry of a hypothetical Jewish commonwealth. “With the exception of those individual Jews who will insist on returning to their former countries,” he declared, “Jewish representative bodies must demand from the world the concentration of all the remaining displaced Jews in one country: in Palestine.” And so the WJC should not release an isolated document merely dealing with Jewish return to Germany because “nobody in the world will understand the mentality of the Jews who after having passed through the greatest catastrophe in their history are merely repeating the demands which they put forward after the first World War.”²⁸²

Rather than “leave to humanity a heritage of a renewed German Jewish problem, a Polish Jewish problem a Romanian Jewish problem, a Hungarian Jewish problem” Zuckerman asked the “world” to “facilitate “*yeSiath Europa*” (or

²⁷⁹ Baruch Zuckerman, 1887-1970. Zuckerman lived in New York City for the duration of the second World War. He served on the state committee to establish Yad Vashem when he returned to Palestine after 1945.

²⁸⁰ “World Jewish Congress Discussion in Office committee on June 8 1944,” A71/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

the exodus from Europe) for the Jews.” Only after a formulation regarding the migration of European Jews towards Palestine should the WJC consider “supplementary political formulations” concerning the right for Jews as individuals to return to their old countries, if they so choose, and the right of Jewish groups to maintain their group identity if such groups remain in Europe.”²⁸³ The most pressing priority centered on securing a Jewish political entity in the Levant and populating it with survivors of the catastrophe.

A few minutes after Zuckerman finished his statement, the leader of Belgian Jewry Leon Kubowitzki assumed the floor.²⁸⁴ At the last Administrative Committee meeting, Kubowitzki “defended” the idea of a policy statement encouraging the return of Jews to Germany. Now, however, “we are driven by the terrible force or events to proclaim a ban on Germany. Why, Kubowitzki asked out loud, did “I change my mind?” Kubowitzki, a founding member of the WJC, still considered himself a supporter of Jewish life in the *Galuth*. He stood “opposed to the idea of collective responsibility,” realized that “many Germans have helped Jews at the risk of their own lives” and he recognized that “there are other peoples (besides Germans) who have not behaved very well.” More practically, he envisioned “all the difficulties we would have to face if a ban was proclaimed, because of the mere fact that Germany is in the heart of Europe.”²⁸⁵

Just one year prior, Kubowitzki “believed that the masses of the German people did not know the details of the horrible massacres of helpless old people and children in which their kinsfolk participated.” But “now no doubt is possible anymore.” Ordinary Germans “must have been informed through innumerable channels” and “yet not one outstanding German tried to come out from Germany in order to disassociate himself and his people from these crimes.” Moreover, “a year ago we did not know the appalling dimensions of the exterminations. We knew that hundreds of thousands had been killed. We did not know that we had lost the two thirds of the Polish Jews...we had finally hoped that we would save Hungarian Jewry...but they (the Nazis) do not give us any respite. They are bent upon killing all of us.”²⁸⁶

Kubowitzki, who in Goldmann’s assessment was a “dynamic man with a thoroughgoing knowledge of European Jewish Affairs,” changed his position because of this chilling realization.²⁸⁷ Moreover, “history imposes upon us the obligation of giving an answer to what happened in our existence in these historical times. The answer must be commensurate with the magnitude of the

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Leon Kubowitzki (1896-1966) was born in Lithuania, lived in Belgium and later made aliyah to Palestine. He served as the General Secretary of the WJC from 1945-1948 and was among the first Jews to “return to Europe” in December 1944. He served as the director of Yad Vashem under his Hebrew name Arieh Leon Kubovy.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Goldmann, 215.

tragedy.”²⁸⁸ Compelled by the “moral safety” of Jewish people and the need to tell his own son “how the Jewish people reacted,” Kubowitzki viewed the present situation as markedly different than “normal wars” or “average pogroms.” Regarding this “apocalyptic occurrence,” he and his colleagues must “give an answer to the world, no only to the Germans.” He must, “bring back to his Belgian neighbors a Jewish answer which should be adequate, striking, majestic.” This answer should be “dramatic enough to shake the world and to give our people the moral support and respect of the nations of the world.” While the WJC Administrative Committee was not prepared to “proclaim a ban” on return to Germany, they could “start negotiations with other Jewish organizations and with our religious authorities so as to be ready when our War Emergency Conference will convene” in November 1944. Moved by his obligation to his son, the “victims who are dead, cremated helpless dust” and to history, Kubowitzki could not foresee a future involving a substantial Jewish community in Germany.²⁸⁹

After Kubowitzki’s rousing comments, a patient Arie Tartakower assumed the floor to “emphasize the practical aspects of the matter.” Today, Tartakower reminded his colleagues, “we are discussing only the question of German Jews and not the question of principle whether European Jews are to be left in Europe or enabled, all of them to go to Palestine.” All should bear in mind, that since there will be scarcely any noteworthy numbers of Jews in Germany after the war” the WJC does not need to issue an official document. Tartakower does not foresee significant numbers of Germans Jews from Palestine, the United States or Great Britain returning to Germany “unless we encourage them to do so.” Even if “there would be Jews willing to go back there, they would not be able to live together with the Germans” as the German people have been “systematically educated during the long years to consider Jews as their worse enemies.” In fact, for “the time being after all that happened I don’t see the slightest possibility of Jew and Germans living together.” Widening his gaze beyond the German-Jewish issues, Tartakower admits that

public opinion throughout the world would not understand how Jews are still thinking of (living a) Jewish life in Germany. In other countries the situation is different because even in the worst cases, as for instance the case of Poland, a great part of the population is, despite it all, not antisemitic, whereas in Germany, Jewish hatred must be considered as a rule.²⁹⁰

After conceding that the opinion of the United Nations regarding the postwar Jewish life in Germany could not be known, Dr. Martin Rosenbluth lent his voice to the discussion. For a long time, ardent Zionist Rosenbluth had been

²⁸⁸ “World Jewish Congress Discussion in Office committee on June 8 1944,” A71/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁸⁹ “World Jewish Congress Discussion in Office committee on June 8 1944,” A71/3 in WJC Collection.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

“against the policy of the WJC because (he was) of the opinion that we should concentration on Palestine. But in view of the tragedy we now witness, I came to the opinion that it was necessary to do something for the Jews in Europe.”²⁹¹ For the Jews in the labor and concentration camps, “they might prefer to return to the places of their previous abode” and “for them we need both protection and guarantee.” In contrast to Kubowitzki, who felt compelled to forsake Germany because of the European Jewish tragedy, Rosenbluth used the example of Hitler’s war against the Jews to justify continued support of Jewish life in Europe. The dazzling range of opinions represented at this meeting could continue to coexist for now. Goldmann ended the discussion with a reminder that a “final decision” regarding the return of Jews to Germany “will remain with the Emergency Conference in the fall.”²⁹²

This discussion tugged at the heartstrings of all involved, precipitated Kubowitzki and Rosenbluth to reverse their previous opinion and reveals how complicated the crafting of organization-wide policies could be especially when emotions ran high. Almost of all the participants who spoke during this meeting had close yet contentious ties with Europe. Goldmann, Kubowitzki, Zuckerman, Perlzweig and Tartakower hailed from Jewish communities within Europe. So a discussion questioning whether or not to rebuild Jewish life in Europe drew on their personal pasts, presents and futures.

Stepping back and reflecting on the conversation, the anonymous notetaker concluded that the proposed

statement of policy [was] not merely a practical question and as such it [was] not confined to Germany alone. It is part of a general policy which has to be defined and which appears in every item of post war planning as for instance in the question of retributions.²⁹³

If the WJC provides a decision as to “whether or not Jews should return to their countries of origin,” hopefully this statement “would influence the policy of those nations who will determine the future course.” In his/her opinion a “final policy of the WJC” for the future of Jews in Europe could be “drawn up along the line of what Dr. Goldmann terms a policy of concentration in the Diaspora” whereby the WJC “should not make efforts to rebuild lost Jewish positions at any price but rather fortify those position which hold out some hope for the immediate future.”²⁹⁴

In a broader sense, this particular discussion demonstrates how questions about postwar resettlement in general must include references to established communities in Europe (including Germany) and envisioned settlements in

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

Palestine. Members of the WJC Office Committee had grown increasingly open to Zionist plans by this moment in 1944. Particularly, they supported calls for Jewish movement towards Palestine if individual Jews wanted to leave Europe when given the hypothetical chance. Mass evacuation, however, did not seem to be a viable option. Goldmann, Kubowitzki and others seemed eager to lobby on behalf of those Jews yearning to move elsewhere but could not reach a committee-wide consensus on how such movement away from the continent would proceed.

A few days after Tartakower and Goldmann lobbed divergent opinions across the meeting room table, they united with Wise for a meeting with Polish Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk in mid-June 1944.²⁹⁵ First, the trio spoke on the behalf of the Delegation of Polish Jews about a potential law mandating that the “property of Jewish individuals” and institutions “with no legal heir” remaining after the war should be turned “over to a special fund for Polish Jewry.” In his report from this discussion, Tartakower indicated that this fund should be used “for the reconstruction of Jewish life in Poland and for assisting such Jewish persons who may wish to emigrate from Poland.” A “special committee of experts on behalf of the representatives of Polish Jewry” submitted a draft of this law to Mikołajczyk and asked that it be “taken up immediately by the Polish authorities.”²⁹⁶

Here, the contradictory ideas percolating through the minds of WJC officials resurfaced in an official conversation. Tartakower, Goldmann and Wise would not condemn the rebuilding of Jewish life in Poland. They also would not, however, forsake those Polish Jews who favor emigration elsewhere after return to Polish soil. In this way, a fund established for the Jews of Poland potentially helps some to stay and others to leave. Tartakower does not register Mikołajczyk’s reaction to this proposition. Nor do we know how the plans for this fund evaporated over the next few months. What remains is clear evidence of an organization that could support two contradictory paths forward. Less than two years earlier, plans for organized Jewish emigration elsewhere proposed by

²⁹⁵ “Meeting with Mikołajczyk on June 14, 1944,” A71/2 in WJC Collection. This meeting covered extensive topics and was quite interesting. The report continues that “the three WJC leaders could discuss only a few matters as Goldmann and Wise had to hurry and catch a flight... Later in the short meeting, they discussed the “rescue of Jews in Poland proper” and Mikołajczyk was urged to immediately mobilize the new Polish government division for rescue of Polish Jews. Mikołajczyk noted that transmitting funds to Poland remained very difficult. Next, the highest-ranking member of the Polish exiled government introduced numbers that contradicted the WJC’s latest intelligence. According to figures assembled by his associations in London, 90,000 Polish Jews remained in ghettos, hundreds of thousands of Jews were living in small towns and villages and, finally, between 800,000 and 1,000,000 Polish Jews remained in Poland overall. Finally, the four men considered the Polish Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union. Mikolaczky informed Wise, Goldmann and Tartakowr of “an agreement (that) may be reached in the very near future between the Russian and Polish governments with the cooperation of the Australian government which acts as an intermediary.” Soon after this encounter with Tartakower, Goldmann and Wise on July 22, 1944, Mikołajczyk shocked much of the Allied world by resigning from the exiled Polish government. Instead, he joined the Polish Committee of National Liberation and thereby secured his return to Polish territory via Moscow behind the advancing Red Army in order to become the Minister of Agriculture.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš stunned WJC officials. Now, three WJC leaders approached the Prime Minister of exiled Poland with a hypothetical plan for a postwar fund that would economically support the exodus of Jews away from Poland.

A few days after this meeting with Mikołajczyk, WJC office committee members converged once again on Goldmann's apartment to revisit the contradiction inherent in a policy encouraging support for Palestine and support for the diaspora. Jacob Robinson, WJC founding member, head of the Institute for Jewish Affairs was a brilliant legal mind who served in the Lithuanian Parliament and possessed intimate familiarity with the Minority Treaties.²⁹⁷ Upon emigrating to the United States in 1940, he plunged into New York's exilic milieu and gained a sound reputation for his research work benefiting both the WJC and American Jewish Congress. On this summer day in 1943, Robinson called a special "all-out" meeting to "reconsider the basis of all (WJC) activities and to discuss them fundamentally, as conditions have changed since the WJC met in August 1936."²⁹⁸ The core members of the WJC executive committee, many who could date their membership in the WJC from the 1930s, congregated on the border of Manhattan's bucolic park to re-imagine the Congress' role in a Jewish world very much altered.

Robinson hoped that an honest debate with his colleagues would allow the WJC as a whole to chart a new course after the current conflict. One of his colleagues Maurice Perlzweig, however, suspected that Robinson's proposal to reconceive the WJC stemmed from other, more Zionist motives. Threatened by the call for a reevaluation of the WJC, Perlzweig assumed that Robinson wanted the WJC to simply merge with the Jewish Agency in Palestine and cease promoting Jewish life elsewhere. Specifically, Perlzweig took issue with Robinson's presumed negation of the WJC's influence as the "Jewish people [still] consist[ed] of two fragments: in Palestine and those for whom Palestine is the solution and to the others who are not there." The interwar system of minority rights had

²⁹⁷ "Speical Office Committee Meeting on June 30, 1944," A71/2 in WJC Collection. For more on Jacob Robinson, see his publications from the Institute of Jewish Affairs, but mainly: Jacob Robinson, Oscar Karbach, Max M. Laserson, Nehemiah Robinson *Were the Minorities Treaties a failure?* New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1943); *Palestine and the United Nations; prelude to a solution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1947); *Human rights and fundamental freedoms in the charter of the United Nations, a commentary* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1946) and *And the crooked shall be made straight: The Eichmann Trial, the Jewish catastrophe and Hannah Arendt* (New York: MacMillan, 1965). For a historical evaluation of his influence see: Michael R. Marrus, "A Jewish Lobby at Nuremberg: Jacob Robinson and the Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1945-1946" in *The Nuremberg Trials: International Criminal Law since 1945*, edited by Herbert Reginbogin and Christoph J. M. Safferling, 63-71 (K.G. Saur, 2006); Boaz Cohen, "Dr. Jacob Robinson, the Institute of Jewish Affairs and the Elusive Jewish voice in Nuremberg," in David Bankier and Dan Michman, editors, *Holocaust and Justice: representation & Historiography of the Holocaust in Post-War Trials* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and Berghahn Books Jerusalem): 81-100; and Gil Rubin "The End of Minority Rights: Jacob Robinson and the Jewish Question in World War II", *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 11 (2012), 55-72.

²⁹⁸ "Speical Office Committee Meeting on June 30, 1944," A71/2 in WJC Collection.

collapsed, Perlzweig continued, “but not the diaspora” as there will be Jews in the Soviet Union, South America, the British Commonwealth and the fringe in western Europe. Zuckerman joined Perlzweig’s attack at Robinson’s idea of WJC negation. As long as the World Zionist Organization refused to represent diaspora Jews, “we must continue with the WJC.”²⁹⁹

In Tartakower’s assessment, a misunderstanding plagued the conversation amongst his colleagues and stifled their collective ability to reach a viable mission statement for the postwar WJC. “We cannot” he opined “speak now of the Jewish people as one entity.” Instead, four components should be distinguished from each other: American Jewry, Palestinian Jewry, Jewish communities scattered all over the world and European Jewry. This last segment of World Jewry should be, in his words, “written off.” Ironically, Tartakower continued, the WJC has gone “from one extreme to the other. Before the war we considered European Jewry as the only decisive factor.” In contrast, now “we say that there is nothing to be reconstructed.” This reality, he conceded, was “terrible.” In sum, Soviet Jewry and the European Jews scattered “all over the world” numbered at least “four million.” Hundreds of thousands of Jews would remain on the European continent after the war. What, Tartakower asked, will be “fate of European Jews” after this war?³⁰⁰

Various possibilities existed. If, he declared, “we have the possibility of bringing them to Palestine in the next few years” then they could discuss Robinson’s point of view. But, he reminded his contemporaries, that the WJC had already worked “to organize emigration of European Jewry in the years before the war.” No consensus had been reached to this point and no viable plans to transport Jews towards Palestine yet exist. Despite the grim prognoses emanating from the death camps of Europe, WJC officials still must “think of terms of an organized people” regardless.³⁰¹ There must be an “organized Jewish body” and the WJC could fill that demand. Tartakower foresaw a role for the WJC in the post-war world. He could not, however, imagine how Jews would get to Palestine or elsewhere specifically. It was premature, he thought, to declare European Jewry extinct, but the situation had irrevocably changed.

After Tartakower offered his thoughts, Kubowitzki raised his voice to condemn, once again, Robinson’s suggestion that the WJC should be dissolved. As long as the “diaspora exists” the WJC will remain. The WJC should, in Kubowitzki’s assessment, alter their program. The basic template from 1936 Geneva should remain. The WJC will “always” be there and promises to consider the “Jewish problem from a universal Jewish aspect.” Kubowitzki assumed that the Congress will be “terribly attacked from two camps: from the assimilation camps and from the tendencies of the Jewish Agency.” He added, that the “conception of a Jewish state to which citizens of Europe belong” remains, in his

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

assessment, “very dangerous.” Kubowitzki’s keen reflection on citizenship deserves pause.³⁰² He appears to speak against the transfer of Europe’s Jews away from the continent, understanding the Jews as belonging to the states that gave them political rights. But these remarks starkly contrast with his views on the return of Jews to Germany enunciated less than four weeks prior in similar company. Over these two discussions, Kubowitzki refused to support the renewal of Jewish communities in Germany but later exuded unease in response to plans enabling Europe’s Jewish citizens to populate a state in the Levant.

Kubowitzki’s contradiction and Tartakower’s inability to clarify how the WJC would function in a postwar world indicate that severe indecision and confusion plagued the Office Committee of this organization well into 1944. Even as the Institute for Jewish Affairs published pamphlets, as Tartakower traveled to take part in UNRRA discussions with international actors and as the leaders of the WJC prepared for the upcoming War Emergency Conference, the intimate discussions held in the summer of 1944 reveal that private consensus eluded Goldman and his colleagues.

Near the end of this late June meeting, Goldman stepped in to offer his comments. He noted that the “small Jewish communities will need us more than before and therefore the WJC has to exist.”³⁰³ Committed to idea of Jewish migration towards Palestine and willing to voice his support for this movement in Zionist, non-Zionist and diplomatic circles, Goldman pledged the WJC’s continued support for diaspora life. This promise to Jews remaining in Europe became part of the postwar WJC platform unanimously approved at the War Emergency Conference five months later. The twinned ideas espoused by Weisgal and Weizmann in the spring of 1943, one equating Jewish survivors with potential Palestinian citizens and another tasking the U.N. with repatriating these migrating Jews towards the Mandate, were included in the WJC’s public statement as well. From that meeting of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs and Goldman’s meetings with WRB Executive Pehle to the WJC’s small conference with Mikołajczyk, Goldman transferred this two-pronged plan from Zionist circles to the WJC.

Moving towards the War Emergency Conference in November 1944

A spectre haunts WJC meetings throughout the first half of 1944 and, in fact, pervades most if not all of the sessions convened by Wise, Goldman, Tartakower, Perlzweig and Kubowitzki throughout the duration of the Second World War. This spectre is relevancy. The highest-ranking members of the World Jewish Congress could not risk being deemed superfluous by the Allied powers and the exiled government universe. Thus, they had to assemble sessions to discuss policy statements to produce and disseminate. And they filled their date books with lunches shared with diplomats and politicians who would lend their

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

ear. And they traveled across the seas and rails to ensure that the WJC was included, was heard and remained relevant. In audience with high-ranking Allied leaders and UNRRA officials, Wise, Goldmann, Tartakower, Perlzweig and their colleagues worked to reestablish Jewish communities on the ground in Europe after Hitler fell. Yet, on other occasions like the first UNRRA Conference in Atlantic City, the second UNRRA gathering in Montreal and, most emphatically at the War Emergency Conference in November 1944 the Congress promulgated declarations enthusiastically supporting massive Jewish emigration away from Europe and toward Palestine.

Nominally, the WJC advocated for Jews in the diaspora. Since the organization's founding in 1937, however, leaders of the WJC had formulated ideas regarding Palestine and Jewish life therein on both individual and organizational levels. In truth, the WJC and its constituents maintained a contentious relationship to Zionism from its founding onward. At times, the WJC officials differentiated themselves from their contemporaries in the Jewish Agency and purely Zionist currents advocating Jewish withdrawal from the diaspora and towards Zion, the perceived center of Jewish life and culture. One such moment, when the WJC suggested that European Jews move elsewhere was the War Emergency Conference in November 1944.

The speeches at the War Emergency Conference and the resolutions codified at that event reiterated points in Warhaftig's *Relief and Rehabilitation* while also indicating concern that the Allies and the United Nation's community had not yet elaborated specific plans for Jewish refugees, Palestine and resettlement overall. And so, when Warhaftig equates the Polish Jews in Soviet exile with the stateless Jews presumably questing (because they can only assume what these far-flung prisoners desire) for a new ethnic citizenship and suggests that the United Nations should finance their migration (or return) to Palestine, he employs two tropes that have remarkably short histories. As this chapter has argued, the provenance of these tropes can be, in part, found in the intellectual musings of Nahum Goldmann.

As 1944 drew to a close, these problems remained unsolved in international circles. A book written by Tartakower near the end of 1944 outlining the history of the Jewish refugee evidences that the conversation surrounding this important issue continued unabated. Tartakower and his co-author Grossman offered a close study of the refugee in recent and not so recent times. Far from being an objective study, the authors interjected several opinions resonating the resolutions enshrined at the War Emergency Congress and words offered Warhaftig and Tartakower in the advent of the UNRRA Montreal meeting. For example, the duo submitted that because "Palestine has succeeded in absorbing such a great number of refugees, and that it is deeply rooted in the hearts of Jews all over the world, leads almost automatically to the conclusion that it ought to be

regarded as the haven par excellence for Jewish refugees.”³⁰⁴ And so, the conversation lobbying for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth and United Nation’s support for Jewish refugee-emigrants to that yet-to-be-established Commonwealth continued as the calendar pages flipped towards the last year of Hitler’s war. The future of Palestine, the Jewish survivors and their migration route away from the continent of their birth remained, for the most part, uncertain.

³⁰⁴ Arie Tartakower and Kurt R. Grossman, *The Jewish Refugee* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1944), 55.

Jan Masaryk, Friend of the Jews? Statelessness, Citizenship and the German Jewish Question

Statelessness and citizenship are mutually exclusive. When the 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped those classified as Jews of their German citizenship, nearly half a million Jews living across the Reich became stateless. In 1938 the Jews of Austria succumbed to the same legal fate. And when Nazi Germany assumed complete control over Bohemia and Moravia by the spring of 1939, thousands of Jews classified as German, Czechoslovak and Jewish nationals lost their citizenship as well. Unless, like Nahum Goldmann, these politically marginalized unfortunates acquired new citizenship elsewhere, they joined a multi-national group of the disenfranchised whose statelessness stemmed, mostly, from their post-World War I refugee status.

Under the protection of the League of Nations and (after 1930) the International Office of Refugees, stateless individuals could apply for a so-called “Nansen passport” thereby gaining a paper identity in card form that nearly fifty countries recognized as valid.³⁰⁵ Technically, however, political dissidents fleeing the Russian Revolution, Armenians seeking asylum or others classified as refugees did not gain another citizenship by default. Losing one’s citizenship meant becoming stateless, temporarily or otherwise, and this vexing status could be passed on to a spouse or a child. The condition of inherited statelessness plagued those concerned about the fate of Jews in east central Europe and diplomats tied to the region alongside other observers pondered how to reinstate citizenship for Jews from across Nazi occupied Europe affected by this discrimination.

The final resolution issued at the War Emergency Congress, at the end of November 1944, addressed statelessness directly and threatened to overturn the practice of issuing Nansen passports to those without definite citizenship. As a result of “territorial changes and overlapping and conflicting legislation of various countries,” the accepted language of the Congress posited that large numbers of individuals “have lost or may lose their citizenship without acquiring another.”³⁰⁶ Accordingly, the World Jewish Congress urged the United Nations to overturn

³⁰⁵ The Nansen Passport was named after Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930), an explorer, humanitarian and diplomat, who served the League of Nations as High Commissioner for Russian Refugees between 1921 and his death. In 1922, Nansen was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work helping displaced persons of World War I. In that same year, Nansen designed the Nansen passport for stateless individuals fleeing from the Soviet Union. In 1938 the Nansen International Office of Refugees (established after the death of Fridtjof Nansen in 1930) won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1938 for their efforts helping stateless people expelled from a variety of countries. Nansen was a prolific writer. For more on Nansen, the League of Nations system and the International Refugee Office see: Roland Huntford, *Nansen: The Explorer as Hero* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998); Claudena Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Louise W. Holborn, The League of Nations and the Refugee Problem, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 203, *Refugees* (May 1939): 124-135; Randy Lippert, “Governing Refugees: The Relevance of Governmentality to Understanding the International Refugee Regime,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* Vol. 24, No. 3 (July-Sept. 1999): 295-328.

³⁰⁶ *War Emergency Conference of the World Jewish Congress Addresses and Resolutions* (London: British Section of the World Jewish Congress, January 1945).

League of Nations precedent, eliminate the condition of statelessness and prevent the creation of new groups of stateless individuals. Erasing the category of statelessness would ensure that all Jews, after the war, would have citizenship rights and a country that could protect them. The generalized language of this demand masks a more complicated question: to which citizenry did disenfranchised Jews belong? And if Jews from Germany, Austria or elsewhere did not wish to reclaim their prewar citizenship, to which political entity could they turn?

The concerns for tens of thousands of Jews who once possessed German or Austrian nationality weighed heavily in WJC war-time discussions. In truth, simply the idea of hypothetical postwar decisions stimulated passionate disagreement. As shown by the June 8, 1944 meeting discussing the organization's position on Jews returning to Germany, questions regarding Jews in a postwar Germany illustrated the possibilities of Jewish life in postwar Europe overall. The WJC wanted Jews of German extraction to have options and possess incontestable citizenships, after the postwar reshuffling had ceased. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, feted by the WJC for his intimate relationship with their organization, wanted for Jews of German extraction to have multiple options save one: the right to settle in a reconstituted Czechoslovakia.³⁰⁷

This chapter uses war-time speeches, notes scribbled on postwar planning pamphlets, confidential government letters and private conversations to chart the development of Masaryk's views on Jewish return to Czechoslovakia. Unlike his colleague President Edvard Beneš, who publicly expressed strong Zionist views as early as 1940 and deviated little from those ideas for the duration of the war, Masaryk labored over Jewish questions, sometimes even contradicting himself in the same meeting. Just as high-profile members of the World Jewish Congress slowly moved towards Beneš' ideas regarding the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine as the 1940s progressed, Jan Masaryk eventually became a key spokesperson for the idea that Europe's Jews belonged elsewhere as well. Arguably, in the corridors of the exiled Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, the United Nations and the UNRRA, Masaryk advocated on behalf of Jewish demands for emigration away from Europe more than any of his diplomatic equivalents. His picaresque journey towards endorsing Zionism and Jewish migration away from Europe cannot be unwoven from his less-convoluted intellectual trajectory concerning German migration away from Czechoslovakia. In this way, plans

³⁰⁷ Masaryk left behind published writings from his time as a diplomat until his mysterious death in 1948, some cited below. For more on Masaryk's life see: Zbyněk Zeman, *The Masaryks: The Making of Czechoslovakia* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976); Antonín Sum, *Otec a syn : Tomáš Garrigue a Jan Masarykové ve vzpomínkách přátel a pamětníků [Father and Son: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Jan Masaryk in the memories of their friends and those who remember them]* Vol. II (Praha : Společnost Jana Masaryka v nakl., 2000); Robert Lockhart, *Jan Masaryk: A Personal Memoir* (London: Dropmore Press, 1951); and a memoir of his girlfriend at the time of his death, Marcia Davenport, *Too Strong for Fantasy* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1967).

pertaining to the small number of German-speaking Czechoslovak Jews illuminate larger considerations about the ethnic makeup of his postwar state.

Jan Masaryk's ideas about the return of Jews to postwar Czechoslovakia were closely linked to his feelings regarding the fate of national Germans who belonged to Czechoslovak citizenry before Munich. The boundaries conceived at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and finalized by international agreements thereafter divided historically German-speaking regions and incorporated more than three million German-speakers in the First Czechoslovak Republic. Census takers working for the federal government classified these people as national Germans during two interwar censuses. After Hitler assumed power in Germany, political leaders amongst these German-speakers continued to generate feelings of separatism from Czechoslovaks and used the spirit of the Minority Treaties to advocate increased national autonomy within Czechoslovakia and even the attachment of German-speaking regions to an enlarged German state. Beneš and Masaryk blamed the minority rights system and the "Germanizing segments" of Czechoslovakia's German minority for the dismemberment of their state. Early during their exile from Prague, both Beneš and Masaryk commenced a massive public relations campaigning linking the German minority to German aggression overall. A reconstituted Czechoslovakia could not include this fifth column. After the war ended, the Germans had to go.

Beneš' war-time views on Czechoslovakia's German problem are well-documented. His key associate Jan Masaryk, in contrast, has received much less attention. The startling absence of Masaryk from wartime historiography correlates with the absence of an archive devoted solely to Jan Masaryk in Czechoslovakia or even in the Czech Republic. Masaryk died under suspicious circumstances in March 1948 and was not celebrated during the communist period. Some of his papers are stored at the Foreign Ministry Archive in Prague, but there is reason to believe that much of his archive has been lost. In an article which blends argument with translated versions of complete documents, Livia Rothkirchen notes that searches for Jewish themes even in the official paper trail of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile yields few notable clues. The archives of the World Jewish Congress, however, offers documents previously unstudied by Czechoslovak and diplomatic historians and includes many heretofore under-analyzed papers. Masaryk proves worthy of attention. The second highest-ranking member of the government based in London, recognized as the Foreign Minister by other Allied powers and speaker of fluent English, Masaryk commanded gravitas because of his family history and his lively personality. Often, as when he attended the foundational meetings of the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration or when he traveled to San Francisco to sign the United Nations Charter, he worked with little guidance from anyone else.

Obsessed with the German Question

Regarding the postwar position of Germans in his state, however, Masaryk appeared to wholeheartedly agree with the opinions issued by Beneš. Over the Wednesday night radio waves on October 23, 1942, for example, Masaryk addressed the Nazi-appointed State Secretary of the Protectorate Karl Hermann Frank on BBC Czechoslovak-London radio.³⁰⁸ Speaking in German he asked “his people in Czech to forgive him for doing so” explaining that their shared language was “too good to use when addressing such jackals.” Masaryk utilized vivid vocabulary as he described the despicable “Germans who are very quick at putting the noose around peoples necks throughout Europe.” With tactics such as “public mass murder and torture,” Frank and all “blood suckers are writing a white book of bloody horror, pronouncing [their] own verdict of guilt.” After this current conflict, Masaryk declared with certainty that Germany will be defeated and the “disgusting spider of the swastika will be swept away.” Punishment will ensure and “evil doers” will face “terrible severity.” Masaryk’s opinion of German elements within his occupied state rings loudly: they must be eliminated.

Masaryk and Beneš agreed that culpable Germans should be punished and driven from Czechoslovakia. But how to weed out the “good Germans” from the “bad Germans?” And, further, how to differentiate those persecuted as Jews under Nazi racial laws from others listed as German nationals on the 1930 Czechoslovak census. While Beneš and Masaryk agreed on the exclusion of Germans in postwar Czechoslovakia, they issued at times contradictory opinions about Jewish belonging in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Masaryk seemed less certain than Beneš, however, about Zionism and Jewish settlement in Palestine early in the war years.

For instance, in a speech given at Royal Albert Hall in London on October 29, 1942, Masaryk mentioned Palestine but guaranteed that Jews would return to postwar Czechoslovakia.³⁰⁹ Addressing an assembly of British Jews, Masaryk reminisced about the equality Jews enjoyed in his interwar state. And when “Czechoslovakia again takes its rightful place in the heart of Europe, our Jewish brethren will be welcome and I count on their cooperation in building up what Hitler has destroyed.” He noted that although the audiences’ “longing eye often rests on the country of your past glory, Palestine” deliverance will come only if those Jews in the audience fulfill their “duty one hundred percent as citizens of Great Britain.”

Like his colleagues in the World Jewish Congress, Masaryk spoke more openly about Jewish migration from Europe as the war progressed. Unlike Goldmann, Tartakower and Warhaftig, however, Masaryk endorsed Zionist initiatives partially as an attempt to solve Czechoslovakia’s German question. For if non-Jewish Germans belonged elsewhere, namely in an ethnic German state, then German-speaking Jews belonged elsewhere as well. Because he could not

³⁰⁸ “Report of Czechoslovak Press Bureau,” October 23, 1942, Vol. 2/No. 103, H 99/1 in WJC Collection.

³⁰⁹ “Masaryk’s speech at Royal Albert Hall, London on 29 October 1942,” H 98/5, in WJC Collection

justify the expulsion of German Jews who suffered under Nazi racial laws, the establishment of a Jewish state allowed Masaryk to solve a very real conundrum: how to eliminate the German ethnic element from the Czechoslovak body politic.

Even when Masaryk was invited by Jews to speak about Jews at a Jewish event, his thoughts repeatedly turned to Germans instead. While delivering the Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture at the Jewish Historical Society of England on September 14, 1943, Masaryk reflected on national minorities in interwar Czechoslovakia. Although he mentioned the Jewish “religious minority” in his former state, his emphasis fell upon the German “racial minority” and the disastrous consequences of their existence. Offering some historical context, Masaryk explained how soon after the conclusion of World War I, Czechoslovaks as a whole realized they would have to “share (their) citizenship with Germans, Magyars, Little Russian and others.”³¹⁰ Once the government “found the solution for the German minority” within Czechoslovakia’s borders the government could “easily find the solution to other minority problems.”³¹¹ Beginning in 1918, the German question and Czechoslovakia’s response to it served as twinned foundations of the entire minority rights system. And by the 1930s, rabid German nationalism had corroded the cement binding ethnic German nationals to their Czechoslovak citizenship. No doubt referring to the support directed towards Henlein’s party in the Sudetenland, Masaryk lamented that the German minority proved unable to live “entirely unto itself” and exchanged their Czechoslovak citizenship for German Reich citizenship” when they overwhelmingly voted for Konrad Henlein’s *Sudetendeutsche Partei* in the 1935 parliamentary elections.

Unlike the Jews in the Weimar Republic, who “blended love of country, the true patriotism, with his European citizenship” many Germans living in Czechoslovakia “believed in a hierarchy of races” thus destabilizing the political life of the first republic and making Munich, seemingly, inevitable. Masaryk stood before the gathered listeners nearly five years into a conflict spawn of German nationalist aggression. He could not envision a postwar reality in Czechoslovakia that includes a replication of post-World War I minorities system and asked that “the minority problem be settled drastically and with finality.”³¹² As the problem of the German minorities transcended Czechoslovak borders, the nations as whole “must take steps to ensure that minorities shall never again act as a lever for power with aggressive designs.” And so, those who opted for German citizenship in the Reich “ceased to be citizens of their former states” and “governments of the liberated countries are, therefore, entitled to decide for themselves whom among the Germans they will restore citizenship.” Those national Germans who wished to prove themselves good citizens of Czechoslovakia could apply for their

³¹⁰ Jan Masaryk, *Minorities and the democratic state. A Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1943), 7.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 19.

citizenship to be reinstated. But overall, the Czechs and Slovaks must consummate their national life in their own homeland. In Masaryk's view,

members of minorities in all countries have before them a compelling, momentous and irrevocable choice—to work faithfully for the welfare of the countries in which they are living or to get out! The day of Henleins and Franks are over. They are over forever, if our civilization—and it is a great civilization indeed—is to survive.³¹³

Masaryk did not employ the word expulsion nor did he explain how population transfers of ethnic minorities would proceed. The message underlying his vision of the postwar world comes across in clear binary terms. Stay if you want to build a democratic nation-state. Leave if you do not.

Drawing his attention back to his audience at the Jewish Historical Society, Masaryk concluded with the pronouncement of a “precious, almost heavenly word—security.” Both the Jews and the Czechoslovaks

need and deserve security--economic security, political security, religious security. The future of Europe, nay of the world, depends on that. May it please God that his gift, kept from the Czechoslovaks for a long time and from the Jews for a still infinitely longer time will become our common denominator.³¹⁴

Masaryk could have invoked yet another type of security: ethnic security. If the German national minority destabilized Czechoslovakia and represented a fifth element-threat to the democratic state, security depended on the separation of that population from the body politic. He did not utter the word Palestine or demand the creation of an ethnic Jewish polity, but his plea that both Jews and Czechoslovaks deserve “security” independently suggests the existence of two independently secure states.

Masaryk, UNRRA and Debates over Displaced Persons

Just a few weeks after his lecture at the Jewish Historical Society in London, Masaryk traveled to Atlantic City to join the first conference of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. There he encountered WJC official Arie Tartakower and received readings regarding Jewish topics. Three pamphlets from the meeting remain pressed between caramel colored folders in the confidential archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The longest piece, “Memorandum on Postwar Relief and Rehabilitation of European Jewry” and finalized on November 11, 1943, details postwar plans for European Jewry as

³¹³ Ibid, 20.

³¹⁴ Ibid, 20.

a whole. The list of suggestions numbers twenty-nine pages, briefly mentions the possible “urge to migrate towards Palestine,” and recommends that “the task of resettling uprooted Jews must, therefore, be divided between the governmental and intergovernmental machinery on the one hand and the competent Jewish organizations on the other.”³¹⁵ This more general reading nicely complements a more specific *Aide Memoire* from the Czechoslovak Jewish Representative Committee published on November 5, 1943 and specifically addressed to Jan Masaryk. Authored by Czechoslovak Jews Frederick Fried and Hugo Perutz, this pamphlet argued “that the Jewish problem differs from other problems” and that the restoration of family unity for uprooted Jews must motivate postwar planning.³¹⁶ Both pamphlets survived their shipment from North America, back to government spaces in the United Kingdom and, later, up to the top floors of the Czernin Palace where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive operates today and are best described as casually worn but unmarked.

Lest we think the publications of the World Jewish Congress fell on deaf ears, a third publication concerning the UNRRA conference preserved in the same ordinary brown archival box was adorned with underlining, highlighting and a handful of memos stapled behind it.³¹⁷ A short, four page flyer entitled “The Atlantic City Conference of UNRRA” rolled off the presses of the British arm of the WJC in January 1944 and garnered the attention of at least two Czech Foreign Ministry employees working in London exile: Zdeněk Procházka and Hubert Ripka. Both men left evidence of their readership on the worn flyer in the form of thin wobbly underlining, thick red highlights and their signatures. Their reading attention focused on UNRRA discussions concerning the repatriation of displaced persons, to their countries of residence and to other countries willing to accept them.

Which specific passages did Procházka and Ripka mark with their red and black pens? One of the two men underlined that “displaced populations” constituted the “most acute rehabilitation problem.” The UNRRA Subcommittee dedicated to “Displaced Persons” and the entire council did not specify protocols for Jews as such instead advocating that the “sole rule of procedure in the case of deportees should be ‘repatriation’ and that ‘repatriation’ should mean solely the return of United Nations citizens to their countries of origin.” The British Section of the World Jewish Congress noted a fatal flaw in this logic. Both readers drew attention to the next section and declared that many Jewish refugees after the war “will not find it possible or will not prefer to return to the countries of homes from which they were removed and who should by every rule of justice be aided to

³¹⁵ Frederick Fried and Hugo Perutz, *Aide Memoire of the Jewish Representative to the United Nationals Relief and Rehabilitation Association Meeting in Atlantic City*, Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, Box #33. Archiv Ministerstva Zahraničních Věcí České Republiky Archive (hereafter MZV).

³¹⁶ Dr. Frederick Fried was Chairman of the Czechoslovak Jewish Representative Committee of the World Jewish Congress and Professor Hugo Perutz, who was a notable member of the Prague Jewish Community, also served on this committee.

³¹⁷ “The Atlantic City Conference of UNRRA,” Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, Box #33, MZV Archive.

resettle elsewhere.” As a corrective, the WJC British Section proposed that “repatriation of deportees (could) take the form not only of returning citizens to their countries of origin but also of returning displaced residents who were not citizens of their country in question to the countries of their ‘settled residence.’” The British WJC wanted UNRRA to make their displaced person solution formula more lenient. In this way, personal choices gain leverage whereby citizenship will not be the deciding factor animating repatriation schemes. These ideas disturbed Procházka and Ripka, not because they wanted to impede the resettlement of European Jews but because they wanted to ensure that German nationals would be excluded from postwar Czechoslovakia.

After the UNRRA conference in the Atlantic City, a few other members within the Czech government joined the conversation initiated by Procházka and Ripka to discuss how international plans concerning the repatriation of displaced persons meshed with internal discussions about the expulsion of German nationals. Plans for the expulsion of German nationals from postwar Czechoslovakia had not necessarily been finalized or detailed, but the idea that population exchanges could ensure postwar peace had been approved personally by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in June 1943 and by Josef Stalin in December 1943 during private meetings with President Beneš. Czech officials, including Masaryk, vetted UNRRA declarations and the proceedings of the subcommittee devoted to displaced persons to decipher how freshly established United Nations precedents could interfere with domestic plans for expulsion.

This deciphering proved difficult, however, because the first UNRRA meeting had not established clear precedents. And of all the problems UNRRA members dealt with in Atlantic City “one of the most difficult” concerned the solutions for the “rehabilitation of displaced persons.” In a report dating from the end of November 1943 and disseminated to all government departments in December of that same year, a Czech delegate to UNRRA named Josef Hanc detailed the dissonance which plagued discussions of this topics.³¹⁸ During subcommittee meetings, “many opinions” were voiced. The Czechs found agreement with the Yugoslavs that governments must agree on evacuations but the committee as a whole did not issue an opinion on this statement. The “general resolution given in the end” was that the “delicate and complicated question be solved humanitarily.” Hanc, the former Czech Consul General in the United States, did not comment on this vague formulation in this report. Two of his colleagues, Procházka and Ripka, would in a handful of letters exchanged in early 1944.

³¹⁸ Josef Hanc, “Report on UNRRA Meeting in Atlantic City,” MZV, Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, Box #33. Josef Hanc served as a diplomat in the Czechoslovak Foreign Service, as a lecturer at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy during the war and wrote in journals and the *New York Times* on Czechoslovak themes. See for example: “Czechs and Slovaks Since Munich,” *Foreign Affairs* (October 1939): 102-115. Trained as a historian, his books included: *Tornado Across Europe: The Path of Nazi Destruction from Poland to Greece* (New York: The Greystones Press, 1942) and *Eastern Europe and the United States* (World Peace Foundation, 1942).

In reading over the subcommittee minutes dealing with displaced persons, Ripka noticed that a slight change in wording may potentially inhibit Czechoslovakia's ability to control the ethnic makeup of its postwar population. In an early meeting of the Subcommittee for Displaced Persons, those assembled—including two Czechoslovaks Jiří Stolz and Evzen Loebel—confirmed that nationals of the United Nations or stateless people should “be repatriated to their countries of residence, provided these countries are willing to receive them.” Ripka agreed with this formulation whereby the individual state controlled the deciding factor in the process of repatriation. Language issuing from a subsequent meeting of this subcommittee, however, did not guarantee the same level of state autonomy. In fact, the will of individual states was completely erased from the repatriation equation! Instead, UNRRA would work in consultation with member governments to assist in the return of United Nations' nationals and stateless people who have been displaced as a result of the war to their countries of settled residence.” Here, the prerogative of the individual state was absent in the subcommittee's formulation. And Ripka envisioned this slight change as intensely problematic. If an individual state like Czechoslovakia could not control the displaced persons Germans filtering back to their prewar Bohemian and Moravian homes, then Czechoslovak plans to expunge the body politic of the German national element would be threatened. Accordingly, Czechoslovaks must work to amend this language and ensure that U.N. legal codes protect state autonomy. If Stolz and Loebel had protested this revision in subcommittee, Ripka would have precedence to offer disagreement. He asked Procházka for clarification and direction.³¹⁹

Procházka responded quickly to Ripka's letter. While he registered Ripka's concern for this “serious situation,” he considered patience the best possible response. Masaryk's busy schedule precluded time to consider UNRRA's stance on repatriation. Procházka promised to ask Masaryk for guidance moving forward upon the Foreign Minister's return from traveling.³²⁰ Nearly five weeks later, Procházka wrote back to Ripka with Masaryk's response to this repatriation quandary. Procházka spoke to Masaryk's about Ripka's concerns and Masaryk had offered clear responses. First, even though Czechoslovakia has agreed to welcome stateless individuals and refugees from Germany and Austria across her borders, future meetings of UNRRA might allow for further discussions and different solutions regarding this matter. And, more importantly, Masaryk directly addressed Ripka's fundamental concern regarding the ability of individual states to control the ethnic composition of their body politic. According to Procházka, Masaryk offered assurances that “the expulsion of Germans will be our own affair” despite “formal adoption” of UNRRA proposals indicating the contrary.³²¹

The report submitted by the British Section of the WJC found readership within Czech government circles. Information gleaned from the report, however,

³¹⁹ “Letter from Ripka to Procházka dated January 25, 1944,” Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, Box #33, MZV.

³²⁰ “Letter from Procházka to Ripka dated January 26, 1944,” Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, Box #33, MZV.

³²¹ Ibid.

did not necessarily inspire discussions devoted to Jewish life in postwar Czechoslovakia. The more meaningful questions revolved around the German issue. Masaryk endorsed UNRRA proposals demanding universal policies towards stateless displaced persons while simultaneously crafting plans to push German nationals beyond Czechoslovakia's borders. There is no differentiation in this particular paper trail between non-Jewish Germans, Jewish Germans, German-speaking enemies or German-speaking dissidents working against the Third Reich. Masaryk and his colleagues privately working through UNRRA proposals cast the world in monolithic ethnic terms. Publicly, however, Masaryk vacillated between more nuanced understandings of ethnicized belonging and speaking of the Jews as a discernable entity deserving of their own state.

Public Voice versus Private Meetings: Masaryk's Contradictory Language

When, for example, Masaryk spoke with the press after attending the UNRRA conference in Atlantic City he offered an evaluation of the event infused with Jewish exceptionalism. The Jewish problem, Masaryk opined, "demands a specific treatment" and it was "laughable" to think otherwise."³²² The nations of the world "cannot build a permanent peace" without treating Jewish concerns as such in the rehabilitation program." For two thousand years, Masaryk said "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." In this public setting, Masaryk mandated discrimination. In fact, he declared that a permanent peace depends on this particular kind of positive discrimination.

A few months later, however, Masaryk promised to oppose discrimination in all its manifestations throughout the postwar world. At a dinner arranged in his honor by the Czechoslovak Committee of the United Jewish Appeal on May 24, 1944, he reiterated that the United Nations had a "duty" to deal with Jewish problem "thoroughly and for all time."³²³ It did not follow, however that there would "be any differentiation on religious grounds among the citizens of the future free and democratic Czechoslovakia." Instead, Masaryk declared that neither he nor Beneš "would be a part of any such indecency." When people return to Czechoslovakia, "we are not going to ask: are you a Jew or a Catholic or a Protestant?" Rather, the "people at home 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."³²⁴ Actions not discrimination, then, would provide the foundation for postwar Czechoslovak citizenship.

Perhaps Masaryk revised his call for Jewish discrimination because he stood at a lectern in the midst of fundraising for the United Jewish appeal. After all, calling for continued, albeit positive, discrimination vis-à-vis the Jewish

³²² Masaryk quoted in Z.H. Wachsman, *Jan Masaryk, friend of the Jewish people* (New York: The Resistance, 1943), 16.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

people might ruffle the feathers of American Jews advocating for continued support of Jews in the diaspora and equality overall. But the juxtaposition of these two public statements focuses attention towards the precarious position Masaryk held as a deeply respected public figure intent on securing his state the most favorable postwar conditions. Publicly referred to and privately regarded as a loyal friend to the Jewish people by the WJC and others, Masaryk's words carried weight in public opinion and diplomatic circles.

His commitment to the Jews functioned in two, sometimes contradictory, ways. First he advocated for the re-entry of Czechoslovak Jews into postwar Czechoslovakia. Second, he pressed that the "nations of the world, among them the Jews" gather at peace conference tables to deal with the Jewish problem "intelligently and humanely."³²⁵ Sometimes these two commitments opposed each other. Czechoslovak Jews who professed German nationality complicated Masaryk's first commitment while also solidifying his allegiance to his second commitment. Masaryk did not expect the Czechoslovak people to ask "are you a Jew or a Catholic or a Protestant" in the wake of liberation. He did, however, assume that his countrymen would ask "are you German?"

So far, this chapter has shown that Masaryk's understanding of postwar Jewish questions, namely who belongs to the Jewish people and where do those Jewish people belong geographically, cannot be unwoven from broader questions regarding German belonging in the Czechoslovak body politic. The cognitive dissonance evident in Masaryk's sometimes conflicting visions for Jews in the postwar world appears once again, in a meeting between the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister and two representatives of the World Jewish Congress. Maurice Perlzweig and Frederick Fried met Masaryk in Washington D.C. on May 16, 1944, to discuss comments made by Edvard Beneš concerning the repatriation of Jews in general and Czechoslovak Jews in particular after the war.

According to the memo filed by Perlzweig a few hours after the meeting, Masaryk issued contradictory statements concerning postwar plans for the reintegration of minorities in Czechoslovak society. In this intimate meeting, Perlzweig explained that disquiet had emerged in Jewish circles by Beneš' declaration "that the return of Czechoslovak Jews must depend on the adoption of some international machinery for the repatriation of Jews."³²⁶ In response, Masaryk "wished to explain the background of the statement... indicating at the same time that he did not see eye to eye with Beneš on this question." Briefly, in Perlzweig's shorthand, "the background was the Sudeten question." During a visit to Churchill before Masaryk left London, "Winston had expressed the hope that the Czechs would get rid of the Germans."

³²⁵ Masaryk speaking in 1941 quoted in Wachsman, 15.

³²⁶ "Memo to the Office Committee From Dr. Perlzweig on May 16, 1944," H 98/3 in WJC Collection. Additionally, Perlzweig noted that "it would be impossible for Masaryk to say anything of value if more than two of us were present."

When Masaryk exhibited “hesitation,” “Winston reassured him that he meant no harshness, but said that it might be done gently, by giving them 48 hours notice to go for example.” Offering no comment on whether such a short time frame would be harsh or not, Perlzweig continued with his description of the meeting.

Having told this story (about Churchill), Masaryk turned on me and with great conviction said “there will be no more minorities, Brother Perlzweig.” The rest of the conversation left it crystal clear that the Czechs felt that their loyal support of special minority rights under the old system had been very ill rewarded and that they did not propose to repeat it.³²⁷

Perlzweig’s response to Masaryk’s blunt comment harkened back to earlier WJC responses to Beneš’ Zionist leanings earlier in the war. He expressed concern for the citizenship status of Jews in the diaspora. The WJC leader “pointed out that (the Sudeten German question) was not the issue and that it was important to reassure public opinion that the citizenship rights of Jews in regard to repatriation would be observed.”

Masaryk prevaricated and proposed “to make a strong statement about it at a forthcoming meeting of the United Jewish Appeal” and, subsequently, “offered to write out a statement immediately.” Perlzweig attached the statement in full. Dated May 16, 1944 and signed by Jan Masaryk it read:

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 little statement can be considered as the concerted opinion of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile.³²⁸

Commenting on this statement in his memo, Perlzweig observed that “there is no explicit reference to repatriation, but apparently it is implied in the reiterated promise of equal rights.” During the meeting, Perlzweig and Fried had directed Masaryk to this admission. In response, Masaryk “repeated one of his stock sayings: ‘I will not go back without my Jews.’” After this abrupt statement, Fried initiated a discussion about a “certain decision at the Atlantic City UNRRA Conference.” On the topic, it “became clear from what Masaryk said that he was not too happy either about the failure to organize UNRRA with sufficient rapidity or the resources at its disposal.” UNRRA’s proposed budget of two billion dollars

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

“might be a large sum, but how far will it go in feeding three hundred million Chinese alone?”

And so a gathering initiated to clarify resulted in thicker confusion. In response to a serious question about the status of Jewish repatriates overall, Masaryk offered, to use Perlzweig’s wording, “a stock saying” and incomplete glimpse of a broader context that he did not fully describe. This meeting reveals that even in May 1944, after Beneš received private guarantees from Roosevelt (June 1943) and Stalin (December 1943) concerning the homogenization of the Czechoslovak body politic and the further reassurances on populations transfers more generally from the Big Three at Teheran, the Sudeten Germans haunted conversations about postwar Jewish life in Masaryk’s state. Perlzweig, Fried and their WJC colleagues were justified in raising their point about procedures for Jewish repatriation. In less than a year, thousands of Czechoslovak Jews bearing German nationality (and most likely German mother tongue) who survived the war would return to a country where their citizenship rights remained uncertain. The inability of Masaryk (and to be fair, others in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile) to tease out these Jewish problems from the broader German problem arguably abetted citizenship confusion on the ground in the wake of Hitler’s defeat.

Just how deep did Masaryk’s suspicions concerning German-speaking Czechoslovak Jews strike? A radio address delivered by Masaryk on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah on September 29, 1943 provides an informative glimpse. Masaryk reminded his Czech-speaking listeners in the United Kingdom or perhaps those intercepting the signal illegally on the continent, that on this day Jews in “America, England, Russian and Palestine” pray for the “poorest of the poor, who had their synagogues torn down by the German barbarians and were massacred by the millions.”³²⁹ Reflecting on the war in general, Masaryk noted that German anti-Semitism was the “first statement of the German taste for domination and eradication of others” and thus should be considered the first indicator of Hitler’s aggressive war. Reflecting on Jews in the diaspora worldwide, Masaryk admitted “it is true that every nation is known by how it treats the Jews, and we behave admirably.”³³⁰

But, Masaryk continued, in a different and provocative tone, “it is also true that some Jews did not behave well. They walked repeatedly through Prague cafés and spoke German (“němčili“) even after 1933.”³³¹ In the midst of a radio address commemorating the Jewish New Year, in which he speaks of the evils of anti-semitism and the murdered millions, Masaryk recalled that some Czechoslovak Jews acted badly in the waning years of the first Republic, galavanting around with the German language on their lips. After the war, however, Masaryk predicted, “it will be difficult...to find a Czechoslovak who will make these

³²⁹ Jan Masaryk, *Volá Londýn* (Prague: Prace, 1948), 261.

³³⁰ *Ibid*, 261.

³³¹ *Ibid*, 262.

mistakes again.” What to make of this prediction? Is it a veiled threat? A simple admission that the discrimination and murder unleashed by Nazi Germans will impell German-speaking Czechoslovak Jews towards other languages and more complete integration? He quickly regained his bearings, noting that he has “also know(n) many, very many decent, proper, faithful Jews” who “belonged among us as our own.”³³² As he closed his radio remarks, Masaryk assumed a self-congratulatory posture, saying that after the war “our children and the whole world can say that we helped the Jews and we remained descent people amidst German horrors.”³³³

Fundamentally, Masaryk’s decision to recognize the Jewish New Year is exceptional and justifies journalist Z.H. Wachman’s categorization of him as a “friend to the Jewish people.” Masaryk offered condolences for the wartime Jewish loss, maintains a note of hopefulness moving forward and exhibits a sensitivity to a religious calendar that is not his own. On the other hand, an address meant to mark the passage of Jewish time contains problematic references to “Germanizing” tendencies amongst Czechoslovak Jews. Poised before a microphone and intent on reaching out to Jews across occupied Europe and in liberated areas as well, Masaryk cast accusations concerning regretful interwar behavior and a prediction that Germanizing Jews will not operate in the same haughty manner after Hitler’s defeat. Why include such negative reminiscences in an address containing Rosh Hashanah greetings at a very somber moment? Masaryk’s words are best understood against a backdrop of paranoia. So worried was Masaryk about the ethnic German element in Czechoslovakia, that a New Year’s speech for a decimated people became an opportunity for pointing fingers and offering a guarantee that Jews in postwar Czechoslovakia would never “Germanize” in the same way again.

Onward to San Francisco: Preparing for the end of hostilities

As Masaryk prepared for another extended trip in the United States early in 1945 so did the entire Czechoslovak government-in-exile prepare for their return to continental Europe. In March, he went to San Francisco for the inaugural session of the United Nations. Beneš, on the contrary, gazed eastward beyond Prague towards Moscow, where his overland homeward journey would commence. If, as they initiated their equally circuitous routes towards Prague, they contemplated the fate of German nationals (of Jewish and non-Jewish background) in postwar Czechoslovakia the heralding of 1945 also occasioned action with regards to another neighboring state: Poland. On January 1, 1945 the Soviet Union, which had severed diplomatic relationships with the London Poles after the discovery of Katyn in the spring of 1943, recognized the Government of National Unity as the government of Poland. At the end of that same month, Czechoslovakia became only the second state to do the same. The British and the

³³² Ibid, 262.

³³³ Ibid, 263.

Americans still considered the London Poles as representing the Polish state. And so a sovereignty dispute resulted in the convening of the first meeting of the United Nations without Polish representation. Neither “Polish government” was present in Atlantic City. With Germany, Austria and Hungary absent from the United Nations gathering (as the Axis powers they were not part of the United Nations) Czechoslovakia was the only east central European government present in San Francisco. And so the mail room at Masaryk’s Foreign Ministry Office once again became a receptacle for guidance and requests from Jewish organizations. Masaryk was their diplomatic lifeline at this highly important event.

Two notable pamphlets arrived at the Foreign Ministry’s London office: one issued by the American Jewish Conference called “Jewish people in the postwar world” and another from the World Jewish Congress entitled “The Problem of Statelessness.” Addressed to Masaryk, former Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States Vladimir Hurban and the entire Czechoslovak delegation to the San Francisco event, this booklet arrived accompanied by a memo that asked the diplomats to advocate for official Jewish representation in San Francisco.³³⁴ Unfortunately, these documents arrived in London after Masaryk’s departure for the United States. The ideas contained in the AJC’s correspondence echoed the WJC’s turn towards Palestine described in the previous chapter. Once ambivalent to Zionist schemes of mass settlements, the AJC now asked the United Nations to “find new places of permanent settlement bearing in mind that Palestine has been prepared through decades of Jewish pioneering efforts to absorb large masses of returning Jews.” While other countries should be considered as “sanctuaries for individual settlers,” Palestine like “no other country” remained “best suited for Jewish mass colonization.”³³⁵ The AJC asked that the Jewish Agency be awarded official government status in San Francisco. Alongside these demands, the AJC offered more general requests for an international bill of rights, the restoration of citizenship rights in Europe, the rehabilitation of DPs, the punishment of war criminals, the restitution of property and an internationally sanctioned solution for the problem of statelessness. Had Masaryk seen and responded to the AJC’s plea before his transatlantic journey to the United States, he could have spoken effectively on a variety of these demands. Arguably, he would have been most captivated by the broader issue of statelessness.

Statelessness and citizenship are mutually exclusive. To eradicate statelessness, a political entity must bestow citizenship or an international organization must create a new category for political belonging which transcends

³³⁴ The Czechoslovak Delegation to San Francisco included: Masaryk, Vladimir Hurban (Ambassador of Czechoslovakia to the United States), Jan Papanek (Chief of Czechoslovakia’s information service in New York City), and Josef Hanc.

³³⁵ “The Jewish People in the Postwar World,” Londýnský Archiv-Důvěrný, 1939-45; Box #16: Konference mezinárodní, in MZV.

state borders. As World War II drew to a close, few serious discussions at international levels entertained the re-introduction of Nansen passports or the creation of a new status that would simply prolong statelessness. Instead, it became “generally accepted doctrine that statelessness is undesirable.”³³⁶ And so, nationality law must be reformed in such a way that “every individual may have a nationality and statelessness may be eliminated.” In the words of a booklet produced by the British Section of the WJC which arrived at Czechoslovakia’s Foreign Ministry in March 1945, the “abolition of statelessness can only be a humanely satisfactory remedy if nationality warrants the enjoyment of fundamental human rights by all nationals.”³³⁷ In other words, all people living within in the United Nations’ community deserved belonging to a political entity as a basic human right.

The author of the article, legal scholar Paul Weis, explained that “there is no basis in present international law for a right to a nationality; neither has the individual a right to acquire a nationality at birth, nor does international law prohibit loss of nationality after birth by deprivation or otherwise.”³³⁸ This situation placed the individual at the mercy of the “nationality-granting” state. Due to an “exaggerated conception of the state,” “the unlimited exercise of its sovereign omnipotence” and the “lack of effective international machinery for the enactment and enforcement of universal rules” the individual floats alone on the high seas, cast off from political lifelines. As long as “nationality is the link between the individual and the benefits of the Law of Nations, legal policy regarding nationality must see its task in providing this link.” Nationality should be conceived of as a “means” towards a specific aim: the “enjoyment of the benefits of the Law of Nationals and ---ultimately---of the Rights of Man by all of those rights which are common to all men.”³³⁹

To foreground his argument, Weis made reference to a series of denaturalization laws in the 1930s which stripped groups of citizenship rights. These laws had a sizeable impact on his own life. Born in Vienna seven years after the turn of the 20th century, Weis was a law student when he lost his citizenship and faced internment at Dachau in 1938 and 1939.³⁴⁰ While describing the revisions of German and later Austrian law, Weis emphasized the Jewish predicament which emerged in a variety of occupied countries as Nazi German law transformed into laws instituted by occupiers. Stateless people were, by

³³⁶ Paul Weis, “The Problem of Statelessness,” Londýnský Archiv Box # 440, 1, in MZV.

³³⁷ Weis, 3. Weis offered a clarification in terminology: “in this paper nationality used in the Anglo American sense to denote membership in a state and not in the sense used in Central Europe, where it denotes belonging to a nation.

³³⁸ Weis, 36.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ For biographical information see “Editorial Paul Weis, 1907-1991” by Ivor Jackson, *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (1991): 183-184. For a broader postwar overview of the issues in this pamphlet see Weis’ book *Nationality and Statelessness in International Law* (London: Stevens & Sons Ltd., 1956). Weis was connected to the International Refugee Organization and was a Legal Advisor for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva.

default “unprotected.”³⁴¹ The status of statelessness was hereditary and only stateless people codified as refugees could claim international protections. Statelessness evaporated only after repatriation, naturalization in another land, marriage or death. Notably, migrations directed towards Palestine and America does not lead to statelessness as these immigrants are in a position to “acquire the nationality of the country of immigration.”³⁴²

Seeking a solution to the problem of statelessness, Weis argued that simply “alloting stateless persons a nationality” would not ameliorate the situation. Rather, the “question has to be decided whether the nationality to be allotted is the nationality of the State with which the person is in fact most closely connected.”³⁴³ So the “will of the people” must be ascertained before nationality is fixed. As the individual and the group were entitled to state belonging as a basic human right, the power and authority of individual states was, necessarily, constrained. The state could no longer indiscriminately deprive someone of nationality and could not arbitrarily cast out citizens until those people have acquired political belonging elsewhere.³⁴⁴ To cite Weis directly, “under existing customary International Law, no State may refuse to receive back into its territory any of its nationals or former nations unless the latter has acquired another nationality. It is desirable that this rule should be laid down unconditionally and unambiguously by contractual legislation.”³⁴⁵

Therefore Weis recommended that in countries like Czechoslovakia, where Jews might want to live again, returning pre-war citizens should obtain their former political status *ipso jure*, as legislation initiated by occupying powers will be rescinded. Those Jews who possessed wartime citizenship in Axis countries, however, may decide not to acquire their prewar nationality. Compulsory repatriation may be out of the question, but decisions regarding citizenship should be made by individuals and not necessarily by state powers.

For example, a reinstatement of interwar citizenship laws across Nazi-occupied Europe would allow Jews to return to their former countries of residence. And for those Jews refusing return to their interwar homes in Germany, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and France, the eradication of statelessness would open an aperture for the creation of new citizenships elsewhere, as in Palestine or the western hemisphere. Weis himself would have fallen into this category had he not achieved British citizenship in 1947. After leaving Dachau in 1939, Weis managed to emigrate to England where he continued his law studies and began his work for the British Section of the World Jewish Congress. On the question whether Jewish DPs should have the right to emigrate directly to Palestine, as the final resolution of the WJC’s War Emergency Congress demanded, Weis was

³⁴¹Weis, 4.

³⁴²Weis, 19.

³⁴³Weis, 21-22.

³⁴⁴Weis 22.

³⁴⁵Weis, 23.

regrettably silent. He did not address this specifically in his paper as “it requires special and most careful examination in connection with the entire Palestinian problem.”³⁴⁶

In the end, Weis articulated a handful of distinct demands. Two of them may have troubled the Czechoslovak Foreign Office and Masaryk. First, Weis asked that “nobody should be deprived of his nationality for reasons of discrimination (political, racial, religious or other)” in the future.³⁴⁷ And second, Weis suggested that old nationalities should be restored “as from the date on which they were deprived of it.”³⁴⁸ Both of these fundamental demands were translated into Czech and sent from the desk of Procházka to the Ministry of the Interior soon after the pamphlet arrived at the Ministry’s London office in March 1944. Why would these two demands provoke concern in Czechoslovak government circles? The memorandum attached to the translation does not offer an explanation. But perhaps, we can cull from the evidence presented in this chapter to suggest why Weis’ revision of the “statelessness” as a viable political category would threaten postwar plans for a reconstituted Czechoslovak body politic.

As illustrated by numerous examples, Masaryk and his colleagues in the Czechoslovak government-in-exile desperately wanted Germans out of postwar Czechoslovakia. Accordingly, they approached the issue of statelessness with this paramount concern woven throughout their thoughts. So if German-speaking Jews from Czechoslovakia could automatically regain their prewar citizenship with the backing of international law, a small but noticeable number (arguably between 1,500-2,000 people) would potentially have legal rights to stay in Czechoslovakia thereby complicating the German expulsion. Both Paul Weis and the World Jewish Congress wanted to guarantee that Jews could not be arbitrarily deprived of political belonging in the future and they wanted citizenship taken away to be reinstated. In general, Masaryk hoped that citizenship would be reinstated for Jews as well. He did not, however, want German-speaking Jews to remain in his Czechoslovakia, despite their prewar citizenship status as Czechoslovaks. And herein lies the contradiction. The greatest friend of the World Jewish Congress in Allied diplomatic circles wanted German-speaking Jews to gain citizenship elsewhere, perhaps in an ethnically Jewish state, so that Czechoslovakia’s plans for postwar ethnic homogeneity could be more completely realized. The emergence of Palestine as a state for ethnic Jews offered Masaryk a solution for the perennial Jewish problem, the problem of statelessness and the problem of minorities in Czechoslovakia and east central Europe overall.

At the end of June 1945, delegates from forty-four nations individually approached a table laden with two volumes, the United Nations Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice, to add their signatures to the freshly

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Weis, 24.

finalized international covenant. Even after four weeks of meetings and assembly so much remained unsolved. A definitive resolution on statelessness did not emerge from this gathering. In fact, the UN did not issue official conventions of statelessness until 1954 and 1961. Further, the United Nation's assembly in San Francisco did not produce definitive guidelines for treating Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. In fact, more than one year later, continued attempts to enshrine a category specifically for "Jewish D.P." in international law met with failure.³⁴⁹ In meetings of the Special Committee for Refugees held in London from April 8-June 1, 1946, efforts to insert language dealing specifically with refugees of "Jewish origin" met with resistance. Yet again, no mention of "Jewishness" was encoded in UNRRA policies.

Without clear directives on these two important topics, Masaryk left California and, for the first time in seven years, traveled home towards Prague. He arrived in Prague in the summer of 1945 as a "somber optimist."³⁵⁰ He strongly felt that "Europe must be saved" in the wake of Hitler's war. But what would "Europe" look like after this intervention? Masaryk returned to Czechoslovakia anxious to recast his state in a new, ethnically homogenous image. While he possessed ideas about the place of Jews in this new world, the exact course of future events remained uncertain. At least one thing remained clear: most Germans, including some German-speaking Jews with interwar Czechoslovak identity documents, would not be welcome.

³⁴⁹ See the "Report of the special committee for Refugees, London 8 April – 1 June 1946," Mezinárodní Odbory (MO), Box # 206 in MZV.

³⁵⁰ "Journal of the Third Session of the Council London, Aug 7-25 1945," MO Box #206 in MZV.

**Uncertain Citizenship:
National Committees, the Interior Ministry and
the fate of Czechoslovak Jews from Subcarpathian Rus, 1945-1947**

Edvard Beneš rose early on the morning of May 16, 1945. The day promised to be eventful. After living in exile for six years, the President of Czechoslovakia would officially return home to Bohemia. Fanfare and pomp would color the remaining leg of his homecoming journey at every turn.³⁵¹ After waking up in Brno, Beneš traveled by car to Blansko where he boarded a special train that would carry him through canary-yellow fields of Moravian rapeseed and, then, minor cities in eastern Bohemia. The train stopped at five stations en route so other members of his government could join him on board. Red, white and blue banners of the Republic adorned houses along the 100-mile route between Blansko and Prague.³⁵² And as the cars carrying Beneš, his wife, his staff and his government colleagues chugged towards the destination, members of the Red Army ensured the safety of the Czech President on this historic and triumphal day.

At two-o'clock the bands of the Czechoslovak and Red Armies played the fanfare from Bedřich Smetana's opera *Libuše* as Beneš' train crested into Prague's central train station, Wilsonovo Nádraží.³⁵³ Minutes later, when Beneš emerged from his carriage, the bands received him with renditions of the Czechoslovak state hymn and the *Internationale*. An entourage of city and federal leadership accompanied Beneš through the station, to his presidential car and, then, on a fantastic, winding journey through the golden city. Beginning in the New Town, a caravan of 34 automobiles followed Národní třída (National Street) to the National Theater and the banks of the Vltava River towards the Old Town Square where Beneš would address the cheering crowds and listen to speeches made in his honor. More than one-week prior, Nazi forces had surrendered to the Allied powers and the war in Europe had ended. But Beneš' return to city of spires represented a visible manifestation of absolute victory. Thousands gathered to see the prodigal Czechoslovak son with their own eyes. Half a dozen winters of occupation had indeed resulted in a marvelous spring.

Saddled with hospitality gifts of salt, bread and flowers from strategically placed Czechoslovak children, Beneš delivered his speech, listened to a continuous musical loop of Smetana's celebratory hymn and proceeded back to his car for a short but slow drive across Charles Bridge, through the Lesser Quarter and up the hill to Prague's castle complex.³⁵⁴ Upon debarking from his car, Beneš

³⁵¹ For a detailed plan of this day see: "Návrat pana prezidenta republiky do Prahy dne 16. Května 1945," Edvard Beneš Oddíl III, KPR/1, P1/1 at the ÚTGM.

³⁵² The Ministry of Information announced the train route in advance on the radio and in newspapers so citizens along the route could decorate their homes, Ibid.

³⁵³ So named for U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

³⁵⁴ Prague's streets had been cleaned in preparation for this parade. Remnants of the Prague Uprising, a three day-long urban battle to rid the city of her Nazi occupiers, were removed by city officials. This was

and his followers saw the presidential flag, replete with the Czech coat of arms and emblazoned with the national motto “Truth will Prevail” flapping in the spring air. His second exile was over.³⁵⁵ Prague once again belonged to a free and democratic Czechoslovakia. After the day’s festivities, Beneš retired to his personal quarter. The president had, finally, come home.

In the spring of 1945, Edvard Beneš moved homeward. He was in good company. Upwards of fifty million Europeans found themselves away from their homes by the end of Hitler’s war for various reasons.³⁵⁶ As the Wehrmacht receded and (more poignantly) with the official end of fighting after May 8-9 of that year, a large percentage of that inconceivably large segment of war-torn humanity began criss-crossing the center of the continent, using highways, train tracks and provincial dirt roads to return. Millions of those millions moved through Czechoslovakia and her cities. Prague, Brno, Bratislava and even unassuming Náchod, became key nexuses of transportation, relief and, later, rehabilitation.

Homecoming, therefore, was an event shared by many. Depending on one’s social status, ethnicity and geographical birthplace, however, these homecomings, numbering in the tens of millions, transpired in countless ways. As President Beneš arrived back to Prague amid pageant and celebrations, for instance, Isaak Martin Weiss lay in a hospital bed near the Mauthausen Concentration Camp.³⁵⁷ There, he gathered up strength to begin his own journey back to the place of his birth: Czechoslovakia. Weiss, his parents and his eight siblings hailed from Polyana, a small village folded in between the hills and valleys of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the most eastern portion of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

Raised in a traditional Jewish home, Weiss spent his school years commuting between his *cheder*, where the rabbi taught him the Hebrew of the Torah, and a state school, where pictures of the President-Liberator Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk decorated the walls. By his account, Marty was a proud Czechoslovak citizen who played stick-ball in the town’s muddy streets with his Jewish and Gentile neighbors. The youngest son in a large family, Marty watched one older sister migrate to America, another sister study at the state Gymnasium in nearby Mukačevo, his older brother join the Czechoslovak army, his father

no small task, as nearly 1,7000 Czech urban combatants and almost 1,000 German soldiers fell on the city streets during the fighting from May 5-8, 1945.

³⁵⁵ During the first World War, Beneš had lived a few years in exile as well as he worked with T.G. Masaryk to establish the First Czechoslovak Republic.

³⁵⁶ For a broader description of the DP situation see: Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948*.

³⁵⁷ Personal interview with Martin Weiss, conducted on December 9, 2010 in Washington D.C. All explanations relating to Martin Weiss within this chapter stem from this interview and subsequent interviews in March 2011 and August 2011.

discourage another brother from emigrating to Palestine and, finally, the Hungarian army invade his town in the wake of the Munich Agreement.

Seven years later, in June of 1945, well enough to digest foods and walk long distances after medical attention, the sixteen-year-old left Austria with his cousin and traveled, without tickets, on a number of trains to his native hamlet. Weiss carried little luggage but plenty of fraught memories. His mother and two youngest sisters had died upon arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944. His father perished before his eyes, during a death march of out of Poland in early 1945. Only by returning to Polyana, could Weiss ascertain who else in his immediate and extended family had survived and who had perished.

And so, he traveled northward to Moravia and then eastward through Slovakia in a homeward direction. Marty traveled without much currency and without certifiable tickets. The trains traversing Czechoslovakia were open to most civilian travelers and especially hospitable to those who could prove membership in an Allied state. Unlike President Beneš, no one met Marty with jubilation when he arrived in Polyana just a few weeks later. He only stayed there for one day.

This chapter begins in 1945 as myriad homecomings end. It explores how failed homecomings for those interwar Czechoslovak and Polish citizens designated by the occupying Nazis as Jews initiated further movement, new forms of displacement and new policies by the Prague and Warsaw governments that eventually enabled Jewish migration away from Europe. Specifically, I track the experience of 8,000 Jews who, like Marty, returned to Subcarpathian Ruthenia throughout 1945 and 1946. These survivors of Hitler's racial war became combatants in a citizenship war between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union when this region became part of Ukraine in the wake of post-war treaties between Moscow and Prague. An analysis of this situation exhibits how some dialogues that transpired in wartime exile between Czech leaders, allied governments and transnational Jewish organizations translated (albeit messily) into local and national post-war laws defining "Jewishness" and social policies encouraging Jewish movement into the evacuated economies of the Sudetenland and beyond.

The Czech phrase *židovský původ* is often used to describe those of Jewish descent who were not necessarily considered "national Jews." In both interwar Czechoslovakia and interwar Poland, citizens of Jewish origin could opt for either a Jewish nationality or a German, Czechoslovak or Polish nationality in both of these two multiethnic states. Usually, the census classification was decided on the basis of "everyday language." It is important to note that the youth populations of both states were quite substantial on the eve of World War II. For example, upwards of 40% of Polish Jews were under the age of 25. These younger citizens would have had the possibility to attend state schools and perfect their knowledge of the Czech or Polish language, thus they could have been more readily identified as non-Jewish nationals in the census. The use of the words "Jewish descent" then would correlate more with a Nuremberg Law-like understanding of "Jewishness."

The Jews in question might speak Polish or Czech natively, and yet they were labeled by war-time occupiers as having Jewish provenance. This identification based on racial Jewish terms occurred well after liberation.

The legal infrastructure designating some DPs and Czechoslovaks in Jewish terms coalesced on the chaotic ground immediately after the war in Czechoslovakia. Wartime attempts by the World Jewish Congress to create a special category of “Jewish survivors” or the “Jewish DP” had failed at various international meetings from 1943 onward. WJC representatives, like Arieh Tartakower, Nahum Goldmann and Maurice Perlzweig lobbied in vain at the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation (UNRRA) meetings in Atlantic City (November 1943) and Montreal (September 1944) on behalf of those Europeans designated by the Nuremberg laws as Jews. These survivors deserved, in the WJC’s assessment, special designation in the rehabilitation camps, passport offices and UNRRA offices sprouting up as the Wehrmacht retreated. Tartakower especially worked tirelessly in the last two and a half years of the war to enshrine in international terminology a category promising “positive discrimination” for the Jews who survived Hitler’s war of extermination. Jews should be entitled to more calories and special travel assistance as well as other yet-to-be-define benefits. Efforts by Tartakower in particular and the WJC in general to codify special distinctions for Jews in UN and UNRRA legal codes failed. In the absence of international directives, the process of distinguishing and acknowledging Jewish suffering fell under the purview of Czechoslovak authorities at both the federal and local levels.

Locating Power in Postwar Czechoslovakia:

National Committees and the First Government of the Liberated Territories

Three entities monopolized political power in Czechoslovakia in the immediate wake of Hitler’s defeat: the office of the President, a handful of cabinet members leading government’s ministries who assembled nearly every day beginning in April 1945 to discuss the status quo and offer recommendations to the President and the so-called national committees [*národní výbory* (plural), *národní výbor* (singular)]. While in exile, upon his arrival in Košice, during his initial days back in Prague and until the first postwar elections in the spring of 1946, President Beneš issued a series of decrees which clarified the law of the land and created the space for the expulsions of Sudeten Germans, the attribution of Czechoslovak citizenship and the nationalization of large swaths of private property. The unique postwar situation did not, however, transform Beneš into a totalitarian leader. In the power vacuum left by fleeing Protectorate administrators, a handful of advisors assembled first in Košice in the early spring of 1945 and moved westward towards a soon-to-be-liberated Prague. Some of these notables had spent the war years in exile with Beneš, others with communist leanings had found asylum in the Soviet Union and a handful had survived the war on Czechoslovak territory. Together, they constituted the “first government of the

liberated republic” [*první vláda osvobozené republiky*] that became the Národní Fronta [National Front] in May 1945.³⁵⁸ This coalition of politicians from six parties served as a sounding board for Beneš as he conceived of his presidential decrees.³⁵⁹

Perhaps the most infamous declaration became public on August 2, 1945 following nearly three months of enthusiastic discussions in the “first government of the liberated republic.” This decree, known by the number 33/45, deprived citizens registered as German and Magyar nationals on the 1930 census of Czechoslovak citizenship and property rights in the reconstituted republic.³⁶⁰ Putting into motion promises he made from the early years of his exile just a few weeks after his homecoming to Prague, Beneš initiated a proclamation that revoked Czechoslovak citizenship from those who declared German or Hungarian nationality on the last interwar census thereby forcing upwards of 3 and a half million Germans and half a million Hungarians to leave their homes and obtain citizenship elsewhere.

From their first meeting on April 5, 1945 the first government of the liberated republic assembled forty-two times before Beneš promulgated decree number 33/45.³⁶¹ On May 25, 1945, in their twenty-second meeting, these leaders discussed the expulsion (or *odsun*) of Germans from their republic for the first time. Over a series of six meetings that transpired over the next two months Václav Nosek, Jaroslav Stránský, Zdeněk Nejedlý, Jan Procházka, Klement Gottwald, Zdeněk Fierlinger and their colleagues explored how they would deprive Germans and Hungarians of citizenship, how they would delineate between good and bad elements of both populations and how the Czechoslovak

³⁵⁸ On the Košice Government see: Marta Vartíková, *Košický vládní program [Košice Government Program]* (Bratislava: Nakladatelství Pravda, 1978). On the National Front see: Karel Kaplan, *Národní fronta 1948-1960 [National Front, 1948-1960]* (Praha: Academia, 2012); Pavla Vošahlíková, *Československá sociální demokracie a Národní fronta [Czechoslovak Social Democracy and the National Front]* (Praha: Academia, 1985) and, for coverage of the “Action Committees” of the National Front which emerge after February 1948 see: John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

³⁵⁹ The parties included [in English] the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS; formed in 1939), Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party (CSDP), Czechoslovak National Socialist Party (CNSP; national-liberal, petty bourgeois, no connection to the German Nazis), Czechoslovak People's Party (CPP; a Catholic group) and the (Slovak) Democratic Party. The minutes of these meetings are located in two locations at the National Archive in Prague, Czech Republic. For the “Program of the Meetings of the Czechoslovak Government” see Collection #83 and Guide #1546. For minutes of the meetings see the Klement Gottwald Archive #1261/3, Karton #137. Some of the meeting minutes are hard to decipher and at least one meeting is not accounted for in the preserved materials.

³⁶⁰ Another presidential decree issued on May 19, 1945 defined a German national as one who belonged to German national group, a German political party after 1929 or someone on the Volkslist. Both decrees are part of the public record of Czechoslovak law to the present day.

³⁶¹ “Meeting minutes from the 22nd meeting of the government on May 25, 1945.” Klement Gottwald Archive #1261/3, Karton #137, *Zápisy 1-50 schůze první československé vlády* in Národní Archiv České Republiky (hereafter NA).

economy would survive the massive outflow of human capital as millions departed important industrialized lands.

The issue of expelling Germans and Hungarians, Minister of the Interior Nosek noted in a meeting convened on July 10, 1945, must be linked to a revision of Czechoslovak citizenship rights overall.³⁶² Discussions on that day considered: how the potential presidential decree should define a “German,” (according to racial calculus, the interwar census or Protectorate-era records?); whether or not the Interior Ministry should have final authority over who stays in the republic (should the process be completely centralized? Nosek argued on behalf of his Ministry possessing final authority); and when forced movements away from the Sudetenland should begin (after the harvest?). As those in this assemblage and consequent ones contemplated the draft of the 33/45 decree, it became apparent that the proclamation should contain some mechanism for contestation. What about those Czechoslovaks who had a German spouse? And should those of German nationality who demonstrated loyalty to Czechoslovakia during the war have the right to stay in their homeland? Logically, such a vast policy eschewed centralized implementation. And so the final draft of 33/45 included an important caveat: German and Magyar nationals could contest revocation of citizenship before the national committee within their geographical jurisdiction.

These referenced local national committees defined political life, citizenship and the contours of nationality in postwar Czechoslovakia. The Beneš decrees and communiqués from the ministerial level publicized laws, but individual “national communities enjoyed considerable latitude to interpret and implement these decrees.”³⁶³ This chapter recreates the convoluted space between government directives and members of these national bodies to see how official policies endorsed by Beneš, his upper level colleagues and implemented local agents redirected the lives of Marty and a sizeable percentage of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus who survived the war. Between May 1945 and the fall of 1946, a working definition delineating Jewish identity or “Jewishness” emerged out of the chaos, confusion and need for order on the ground in places like Czechoslovakia.³⁶⁴ The ethnic logic used to clarify this definition of Jewishness stemmed from Nazi racial calculus. In this way, citizens imprisoned as Jews during the war could claim entitlements as Jews after the war, even if they had previously registered as Germany or Hungarian nationals in 1930. Accordingly, Jewish provenance, as understood during this critical time, granted a broader array of options (most notably emigration) to those categorized as Jews from

³⁶² “Meeting minutes from the 38th meeting of the government on July 10, 1945,” in *Ibid.*

³⁶³ For more on this idea, see Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children of Europe: Reconstructing Europe’s Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

³⁶⁴ On a methodological note: archival documents rarely capture chaos. Documents in and of themselves are not chaotic, the words on the page appear in a recognizable pattern and the pages number higher in perfect chronological order. The document itself, therefore erases chaos in an ironic way.

Subcarpathian Rus, the Sudetenland, Czech-speaking communities and even Poland.

Moving forward, we follow Martin Weiss and the 8,000 Jews from Subcarpathian Rus who survived the second World War as they navigate the labyrinth that was Czechoslovak bureaucracy and social reality between 1945 and 1947. From homecomings and hearings before the national committees, to new homes in the evacuated Sudetenland as well as further interactions with local authorities and the nebulous state, the bureaucratic sojourns of this small population can be understood as representative of larger processes in the new Czechoslovakia. As the ethnic revolution colored ideas about citizenship and national belonging and administrators from major cities and hamlets rooted out the bad Germans and bad Hungarians, the need to distinguish Jewish sufferers of racial prosecution from non-Jews became mandatory.

Marty's Return to Polyana and Calcifying Categories

In the late summer of 1945, Martin Weiss returned to Polyana. The geography surrounding the town layout therein remained as before, otherwise, the extent of the change proved baffling. No longer did Jewish children run on the dirt streets to play stick-ball with their Christian friends after Hebrew lessons. The cart that Marty's father had used to make deliveries to the nearby spa town over the rounded hill in the distance had disappeared and around the hitching post looped the rope of another wagon. And the warm hearth where Marty's mother baked his favorite boyhood snack, a streudl-like combination of cinnamon and sugar that she baked on the eve of Shabbat as a treat for her three youngest children, contained non-kosher food. The woman who had carried him in pregnancy did not return home. The crematoria at Auschwitz claimed her and his two youngest sisters. According to Marty's recollections some seventy years later, no Jews remained in Polyana. More than half the town had vanished over the span of two short years.

Once Marty ascertained from neighbors and visual evidence the destruction that had befallen his family, he proceeded to the local representative of the national committee to obtain official papers clarifying his identity. During his time in Auschwitz, Mauthausen and in between, all evidence of his name, citizenship, nationality and state-given identification numbers had been erased. Deemed unimportant by camp guards and impossible to maintain as he moved across Europe on foot, his papers fell into the vast oblivion of once useful documents that suddenly had no use.³⁶⁵ Securing new papers in 1945 Subcarpathian Rus required a trip to the local Town Hall. And so Marty walked

³⁶⁵ I am reminded of Czeslaw Milosz in *The Captive Mind* when he notices important legal documents in post-uprising Warsaw simply scattered in the wind. Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, translated from the Polish by Jane Zielonko (London: Penguin Books, 2001).

away from his the house of his birth towards the building housing the professional and personal quarters of the town leadership, an imported Soviet official.³⁶⁶

The over-laden desk of the most powerful town official in Marty's heimat stood in a drawing room that had been belonged Marty's uncle before the Hungarian invasion of 1944. Evidently, another family member who would never return. Marty he walked into the familiar room, looked at some unfamiliar furnishings and introduced himself to the Soviet bureaucrat. Marty told the man his name, his religion and his national affiliation (Czechoslovak) and, in turn, the official scribbled the information verbatim on a random piece of paper that had markings on the other side. Clean paper, Marty remarked, was an unheard of commodity in Subcarpathian Rus circa 1945. Then, after the thump of an official stamp, the papers found their way to Marty's anxious hands. The meeting was neither tense nor tedious. In less than five minutes, Marty exited his uncle's house. From there, Marty recalls, he left and did not look back. He never set foot in Polyana again.

From the city of birth Marty traveled to Svalyava, a larger city in the vicinity of Polynana. Along with his older brother, who he found soon after his discharge from the hospital, Marty built up his strength, drinking milk and eating pig lard for the first time. In Svalyava, Marty received good news through, in his own words, "the grapevine." Miraculously, his older sister Celia and her husband Fred Moskowic had both survived the war, albeit in different environments. Celia had gone through the camp system herself but had not been deported with her parents and younger siblings. Conversely, Marty's brother-in-law Fred served the majority of the war-time experience in General Ludvík Svoboda's legion in the Soviet Red Army. Like many Jewish Czechoslovak citizens from this region, Fred returned to Subcarpathian Rus as a liberating hero and soon found that his status as a Svobodnik, as legionnaires of General Svoboda were called, entailed inordinate privileges. Already by the fall of 1945, Fred possessed an apartment in Prague, the promises of a business in Karlový Váry and the respect of many Czechs. After all, not many Czechs saw active duty during the war. Only those who enlisted in the Royal Air Force in England, the British ground forces in Palestine (incidentally, mostly Jews) and those who linked up with Svoboda after fleeing Subcarpathian Rus could claim veteran status.

Categories grew exceedingly and increasingly important throughout central Europe, Czechoslovakia and Subcarpathian Rus throughout the war and after V-E Day. Marty, for example, could claim a tripartite status. As a Jew he suffered racial persecution and camp imprisonment before 1945. As an alum of Czechoslovakia's public Czech-language schools, Marty spoke fluent Czech and thus could claim membership in the ethnically-envisioned Czechoslovak nation-

³⁶⁶ Officially, this region fell under sole Soviet control beginning on June 29, 1945 when Soviet Foreign Molotov signed a secession agreement with Czechoslovak Ambassador to Russia Fierlinger and Vice-Minister of the Interior Vladimir Clementis. In truth, as early as November 1944 the occupying Red Army assumed authority over this region as the Hungarian Army retreated.

state. Finally, his link to Fred entitled him to a third categorization, namely the family of a war veteran. Combined membership in these three categories resulted in mobility. Marty could leave Soviet Subcarpathian Rus, gain an apprenticeship and then later migrate to America in large part because of this entitled identity as a Czech Jew with military ties. While no one particular amalgam of categorization guaranteed survival, migration or a fashionable villa in the former Sudetenland, the more privileged categories one belonged to, the better. In 1945, 1946 and 1947, the categories to which Marty belonged determined both his “certain” nationality, his presumed citizenship and, by default, his future options. For former citizens of Czechoslovakia’s Subcarpathian Rus like Marty, suspended between the Soviet Union and the Second Czechoslovak Republic imagined national and citizenship categories had real consequences throughout the immediate post-war period.

To understand the context of postwar Czechoslovakia and Marty’s range of options, it is helpful to recall how conversations amongst diplomats and bureaucrats over meals and port in exilic London and elsewhere consistently returned to a handful of themes when Czechs counted themselves in attendance. Would Czechoslovakia maintain her 1920 borders in the post-war world? What alliances would ensure Czechoslovakia's integrity after Hitler had been defeated? Which political parties will be most represented in the recreated state? The most vexing questions, however, that Beneš and his government encountered in closed conversation and diplomatic encounters revolved around the Sudeten Germans. Did these Germans belong in Czechoslovakia? If they did not belong, how would authorities evacuate them from her territory? How would the economy of the Sudeten region recover from the mass exodus of nearly 3 million people? These questions dominated the dialogues of inconsequential lower level meetings as well as the more notable encounters between Beneš, Masaryk, Eden, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. By the end of 1943, Beneš and Masaryk secured the support of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union for their expulsion plans. German nationals would lose their Czechoslovak citizenship and right of domicile after the conflict. The details of the decision to expel the Germans (and later the Hungarians), however, remained unclear. Masaryk promised that the "good" Germans could stay after the war and that Czech authorities would separate the positive and negative elements within Sudeten society. This promise, unfortunately, proved hard to fulfill in the absence of strict, universal criteria.

In an effort to realize the evacuation of the negative human elements in Czech society, policy makers in the ministry of the interior and elsewhere in the Czechoslovak state biologized linguistic categories. Accordingly, those citizens who reported speaking Hungarian and German as a language of everyday use on the 1930 federal census after Hitler’s surrender became classified as ethnic Germans and ethnic Hungarians respectively over a handful of presidential decrees in 1945 and 1946. When the dust had cleared after massive transfers moved millions of Germans and thousands of Hungarians away from Czechoslovakia,

very few of Masaryk's so-called "good" Germans remained. The new citizens of Czechoslovakia gained citizenship via biology and language, not necessarily because of their war-time behavior.

Proving Nationality: From the Ministry of the Interior to the National Committee

Across a three year period, from 1945 to 1947, the citizenship status of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus underwent important and often times contradictory shifts. These war-time refugees went through the process of declaring their citizenship, used repatriation missions funding by state money to change their legal residences and, in some cases, found their citizenship status held in suspicion by both Czechoslovak and Soviet authorities. Those in the most precarious position throughout this time period were those Czechoslovak citizens who had possessed "Jewish nationality" in the First Republic. Alongside those Jews from elsewhere in the Republic who declared German as their language of everyday use on the interwar censuses, these Jews of "Jewish nationality" fell outside the set of national categories activated in the wake of Hitler's defeat. According to the Beneš decrees, Czechoslovakia would only be home to citizens of "Czechoslovak nationality." Declaring "Jewish nationality" was not an option and those who had chosen this identification previously had to demonstrate their "Czechoslovakness" if they wanted to remain in the country of their birth. The seamless reminiscences related by Marty obscure a complicated and convoluted reality. The process of proving one's nationality was not straightforward. And citizenship once given could easily be rescinded.

An important thread of story documenting the calcification of nationality categories in Subcarpathian emerges in early 1945 when the territory of Subcarpathian Rus fell under control of the Red Army and, later, the administration of František Němec (Minister of the Liberated Territories). A handful of months before Marty Weis and other Jewish refugees returned to their places of birth after the V-E day, Czech administrators arrived in the easternmost regions of their pre-Munich state to survey the damage caused by the hostilities and ascertain the leanings of the local population. Wedged between the Ukraine, Hungary and Slovakia, the fate of post-war Subcarpathian was uncertain. Negotiations between Josef Stalin and Edvard Beneš beginning in December 1943, however, indicated that this region could fall under Soviet control depending on the leanings of the local population. While Czech bureaucrats back in London questioned whether this mountainous area would be re-incorporated into their state, they simultaneously looked to reports from these liberated lands to understand what the war-time experience had been like on the ground. Those with Jewish concerns soon encountered a harsh reality: most of the 110,000 Jews which constituted one quarter of the prewar population of Subcarpathian Rus were nowhere to be found.

Anticipating Hitler's imminent defeat at the hands of the Allied powers, a handful of Czech leaders with Jewish interests met in January 1945 to discuss the

pessimistic reality on central European soil. The handful of men assembled began their conference with a discussion concerning the latest numbers of Jewish dead. According to reports filtering into the Czech exiled government, a high percentage of Jews across Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia had perished. The numbers from Subcarpathian illuminated a similar reality. Of the 110,000 pre-war residents who identified themselves as Jews religiously or culturally, only 15,000 had survived. 8,000 of these Jews were out of the boundaries of this region and upwards of 1,000 were thought to be in Slovakia. Upwards of 70% of those Jews who survived the war were between the ages of 18 and 45 and 15% were between the ages of 15 and 18. After the number distribution was revealed, one participant questioned how many Jewish remained in this once flourishing Jewish enclave. The answer given: “there are none.”³⁶⁷ After facing the numerical reality of the Jewish loss, the participants turned to the specific problems facing Jews from Subcarpathian Rus as they returned home. To whom, the conversants asked, did this remnant of Czechoslovakian Jewry belong? All involved in this meeting understood that Subcarpathian Rus would in all likelihood be ceded to the Soviet Union at some point in the near future.³⁶⁸ Both Beneš and Stalin had promised a plebiscite whereby the residents of this region could vote for their country of belonging. But even without a plebiscite, the room agreed that incorporation of this mountainous area within the Ukraine seemed inevitable. What, however, would become of the Jews specifically? Arnošt Frischer, the Jewish representative on the Czech National Council noted that during the meetings between Czechoslovakia and Russia, the representatives did not “talk about Jews that had Jewish nationality and (notably) a majority of Jews in Subcarpathian Rus belonged to this nationality.”³⁶⁹ Frischer went further, stating his “hope that this arrangement will not be construed against the Jews.”³⁷⁰ As a custodian of all Jews in pre-Munich Czechoslovakia, Frischer wanted to include all Jews of self-professed Czechoslovak nationality in the new republic regardless of their domicile. His colleagues at the table, however, pushed the discussion further and highlighted a problematic feature of the Subcarpathian Rusyn Jewish debate. What would become of those Czechoslovakia Jews who labeled themselves as Jewish? Of course Jews of Czechoslovak nationality belonged to Czechoslovakia. But where did the Jews of Jewish nationality belong? Could these Jews claim membership in postwar Czechoslovak citizenry as well, thereby staving off their incorporation into the Soviet Union?

³⁶⁷ “Meeting Minutes from the Anglo-American Commission,” January 1946, 425-221-4, ABS.

³⁶⁸ Well before liberation in the winter of 1945 and the end of the war in Europe in May of that year, Czechoslovak officials expressed the belief that PKR would become part of the Soviet Union. For example, in April 1945, Minister Němec penned a letter expressing his belief that Subcarpathian Rus would be part of the Soviet Union. See František Němec, “Letter from Košice,” dated April 26, 1945 EB Oddíl II, #351 Kancelář Podkarpatská Rus, ÚTGM.

³⁶⁹ “Meeting Minutes from the Anglo-American Commission,” January 1945, 425-221-4, ABS.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

Resoundingly, those in this meeting agreed that all Jews from Subcarpathian Rus theoretically should be given Czechoslovak citizenship after the war. Regardless of whether the individual Jews was classified as Czechoslovak or Jewish nationality in the last pre-war census, those considered Jews by the Nuremberg laws should gain Czechoslovak citizenship after the war and, accordingly, move out of the region into the Republic's territory. As Kurt Wehle explained, "notes collected during the 1930 census when 95,000 people reported that they were Jews (more specifically of Jewish nationality)" reveal that "the reporting of nationality was not (based on) a single criterion but rather depend(ed) on, for example, to which school" they went or "what language (they) used" and "these people from the east used Yiddish."³⁷¹ As so many Jews from Subcarpathian Rus spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue, a better criterion of Czechoslovak-ness was the issue of schooling. As Wehle continued, "the problem revolves around whether (they) sent (their) kids to Czech schools." According to a unknown source, Wehle notes that "it is confirmed that a majority of Jews attended Czech schools" and that "young Jews constituted 90% of pupils in Czech schools. For this reason, Wehle argues, Jews from this region are "bound (spjati) to Czech culture."³⁷² Despite their former status of Czechoslovak citizens of Jewish nationality, these Jews possessed a quantifiable Czechoslovak identity that could not be denied. The meeting did not result in a memo or policy paper. The personal thoughts of these five Czechoslovak officials were conclusive. The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus who attended Czech-language schools should be part of Czechoslovakia regardless of the official census status they had in 1930.

Wehle's assertion that these Jews were bound to Czech culture echoes other sentiments regarding the qualities and circumstances that determined national belonging expressed by Czech exiled leaders throughout the war years. In a very select number of cases, nationality was negotiable. An April 1944 document detailing plans for population transfers after the war, for instance, expected that some native German speakers could potentially blend or fuse with the Czechoslovak nation and thus avoid expulsion.³⁷³ The movement of populations, this plan posited, was inevitable but certain individuals and small groups could fall into a special category of uncertain nationality. According to the new law code of Czechoslovakia that did not distinguish between citizenship and nationality, a

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid. Wehle goes on to note that he expects around 60% of the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus to leave central Europe completely. He still argued, however, that these Jews should be included in a new Czechoslovakia. Later in this document, those at the meeting discussed the issue of Palestine but were unsure as to whether or not it would become "the" Jewish homeland.

³⁷³ Jaroslav Cisar, "Memo on the Solving of Minority Problems in Czechoslovakia," EB II/1 Box # 147 V 130/2, Inv. 1298 on Národní Otázky, in UTGM. Cisar also discussed how sovereign states and international bodies solved nationality problems in the past, how voluntary resettlement is an oxymoron and thus impossible and finally, that "besser ein End mit Schrecken als ein Schrecken ohne End." For planning purposes the report delineates how: the transfer of 79,000 Poles, on 236 trains, will take four months with two trains daily; the transfer of Germans will take five months; and the transfer of Hungarians four months. The planned transfer should be completed in two distinct stages.

designation of uncertain nationality threatened one's citizenship and rights.³⁷⁴ Special considerations, therefore, could be made for those falling in between nationality categories. More often than not, these uncertain citizens were Jewish.³⁷⁵

Two events in the summer of 1945 signaled potential reckonings to the Jewish nationality issues raised in the meeting with Frischer and Wehle half a year earlier. On June 29, 1945 a treaty signed by Molotov, Fierlinger and Clementis regarding the future of Subcarpathian Rus included a clause pertaining to Czechoslovak citizens in the region. Now that PKR would be officially joined to the Ukrainian Soviet State, all remaining citizens of Czechoslovak extraction would be allowed to move into Czechoslovak territory until January 1, 1946.³⁷⁶ Further, those people who qualified as Czechoslovak citizens could apply to a local repatriation commission and have their move subsidized by the Czechoslovak government. At a time when many Jewish residents of region were still making their way home (Marty if you recall was still in a hospital at this point), this news traveled through local communities via town mayors and Soviet officials. A dicey issue ensued from this proclamation. How, exactly, would Czechoslovak citizens demonstrate their citizenship in the absence of official papers and local records? Moreover, would the categories enshrined in the 1930 census be amended with regard Jews who identified themselves as Jewish nationals?

A fifteen-page communiqué issued by the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior a few weeks later in August 1945 attempted to resolve these specific issues regarding PKR Jews and unresolved nationality issues in general throughout the recently liberated central European state. Entitled "How to confirm citizenship" the statement directed the actions of regional representatives scattered throughout the republic on national committees (*národní výbory*) whom the Interior Ministry charged determining citizenship.³⁷⁷ Clearly, the rules singled out German and Hungarian nationals from the 1930 census and any person guilty of collaborating with the occupiers as undeserving of Czechoslovak. Those ensured Czechoslovak citizenship included those who had been imprisoned during the war

³⁷⁴ I borrow the idea of solid nationality (or *pevné národnosti*) from a statement to President Beneš in January 1944. In a document produced by the Czechoslovak Consulate in Jerusalem to the President regarding Czech soldiers in the Middle East, an anonymous consular officer notes that these members of British Allied Forces were of "solid" Czech nationality. See "Anonymous Letter to Edvard Beneš," January 1944 in Londýnský Archiv, Karton #478 in MZV.

³⁷⁵ A quote from Chad Bryant is helpful at this juncture. Bryant discusses how during the Nazi Occupation the relationship between the individual and his/her nationality drastically changed. "In summation," Bryant observes, "nationality, something once acted out in civil and political society before the occupation, was now something that the state affixed to individuals." See Bryant's *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 51.

³⁷⁶ "The Agreement between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union Regarding Subcarpathian Rus," 425-233-6, in ABS.

³⁷⁷ "Úprava československého státního občanství podle dekretu č. 33/145" *Mězinárodní Odbory*, 1945-1949, Box #158, in MZV.

for “religious or racial reasons” and those who had fought on behalf of Czechoslovakia as soldiers. The long guidelines conclude with a reminder for those serving as Interior Ministry representatives. If those reading these instructions have “doubts to one’s citizenship during the investigation of citizenship” they should send “requests to the Ministry of the Interior when doubts occur.” Further, employees should “seek so that women and minors during the investigation of citizenship are judged separately” and, thus, “the regional national committee can issue citizenship separately.”³⁷⁸ In this way, women and children could be issued citizenship in spite of their husband’s activities during the war.³⁷⁹ Notably, individual representatives could bestow citizenship as they, individually, saw fit, albeit with some consultation from the Ministry. Given this constellation of power, the representative of the local national committee who sat in the drawing room of his uncle’s home harbored quite an influential position. He could decide what Marty’s papers would say and, by default, what Marty’s citizenship and consequent rights would be.

Consider, also, the timing of these instructions. This directive from the Ministry of the Interior in Prague dates from August 1945 and thus only arrived in the mailboxes of the national committees throughout the state near the end of summer, a full three months after liberation. Already citizens filtering through transit nodes and across Czechoslovakia’s busy rail and road grid had then plodded towards the buildings housing the offices of their respective national committees. Just as homecoming transcended class and ethnic boundaries in the wake of Hitler’s defeat so did a visit to the national committee become a common event shared by everyone who needed papers confirming their citizenship. By and large, the vast majority of Jews from across Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus had spent the war in imprisoned in ghettos and concentration camps. Those flung from their homes in forced transit more often than not returned to Czechoslovakia without many personal objects and viable personal papers. To prove their citizenship, wartime status as a prisoner for racial reasons and their rights to privileges granted by the state, Jews and other political prisoners returning homeward had to visit their local national committee. Accordingly, the importance of these bodies should not be underestimated.

And yet, few studies of this critical chronological period explore the *národní výbory* in depth.³⁸⁰ Perhaps this omission results from the nebulous scope

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ The issue of separating citizenship after marriage is a novel idea for central Europe. Usually, the woman assumed her husband’s citizenship when she married him. Children born within wedlock assumed their father’s citizenship and children born out of wedlock assumed their mother’s citizenship.

³⁸⁰ For information on the *národní výbory* in Czech see: Jan Kuklik, *Vznik Československého národního výboru a prozatímního státního zřízení ČSR v emigraci v letech 1939-1940* (Prague: Karolinum, 1996); Frantisek Koranda, *Národní výbory v politickém systému ČSSR* (Prague: Svoboda, 1982); Jaroslav Mlynsky, *Únor 1948 a akční výbory Národní fronty* (Prague: Academia, 1978); A. Sojka, “K otázkám dalšího rozvoje funkci národních výboru v etapě výstavby rozvinuté socialistické společnosti,” *ČSSR: Stát a právo* 1978, č. 18; Pavel Zarecky, “Úloha potřeb v řízení ekonomického a sociálního rozvoje územně správních celků národními výbory” in *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review*: Vol. 19, No. 6

of these new structures. According to H. Gordon Skilling, national committees were “revolutionary organs of local government exercising wide authority in the absence of central authority right after liberation.”³⁸¹ Beneš may have controlled the castle, but the extensive hierarchy of national committees entrenched at the village, town district and regional level held ultimate power over their respective jurisdictions. First created by presidential decree on December 4, 1944, national committees sprouted up unevenly as Nazi administrators evacuated their positions as defeat became imminent. Members of the national committees hailed from the Czech underground resistance movement, anti-fascist groups, pre-war municipal leaders and, increasingly, communists.³⁸² In the absence of systematic elections, these leaders assumed their places on national committee via force, influence or experience. Those who gained a place on the *národní výbor* confronted the confusion on the ground firsthand and often made decisions concerning violence, retribution, property ownership, natural resources and even citizenship without guidance from the federal government. In some instances, according to Tara Zahra, state-wide authorities “issued several sets of conflicting guidelines for assessing nationality” thus “guaranteeing confusion at the local level.”³⁸³ From the presidential decree creating them in 1944 until their official inclusion in the 1948 constitution, national committees played an influential and perhaps immeasurable role in both local and regional events. Most importantly for our purposes in this chapter, they had the authority to bestow and revoke citizenship.

Uncertain Citizenship: The Lawyer and Diplomat Respond

The August 1945 communique from the Ministry of the Interior which reverberated to the national committees throughout the state elicited legal confusion soon after its dissemination. How should a Jew listed as a German speaker in 1930 be classified? Does the experience of internment in a concentration camp for racial reasons trump the linguistic identification of such an example? The directives issued by the Ministry of the Interior in August 1945 were unclear. Striving for clarity on this issue, an American attorney named

(1983), pp. 623-633. In English, consider the brief descriptions of the *národní výbory* in Tara Zahra’s *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Benjamin Frommer’s *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Chad Bryant’s *Prague in Black*; and, Eagle Glassheim, “Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia’s Borderlands, 1945–1989” in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (March 2006), pp. 65-92. On national committees and the economy see David Gerlach *For Nation and Gain: Economy, Ethnicity and Politics in the Czech Borderlands, 1945-1948* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2007.)

³⁸¹ H. Gordon Skilling, "Revolutions in Prague" *International Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring, 1949), pp. 119-136

³⁸² By 1945, communist party members constituted 40% of *národní výbory* leadership.

³⁸³ See Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); 256.

George Weiss wrote Arnošt Fischer an inquiry on November 28, 1945. Weiss, a consultant on continental law, represented a handful of German speaking Jews in the fall of 1945 who wanted to secure Czechoslovak citizenship, lest they be forced to leave their ancestral Bohemian home. Weiss asked Frischer, “are we right to advise people who reported in 1930 as Jewish but were educated in German schools and spoke German at home to apply for confirmation (of Czechoslovak citizenship)?”³⁸⁴

Later in the epistle, Weiss maintains the same line of question asking

what if they reported in 1930 as Jewish spoke at home Czech but went in their youth to German schools? If they reported themselves Czech but if one of the parents was a German speaking Jew if therefore some German was spoken at home and the name was written in the German way--say (for example) Robitschek--is it thought in Prague that such a man would apply even if he went to the Czech schools only?³⁸⁵

Obviously confused and frustrated, Weiss demands: “how is a German speaking Jew expected to answer the question on his nationality? Jewish?”³⁸⁶ Further, Weiss conjectures “is nationality further unchangeable and meant to be the same as reported in 1930? Is it possible to declare oneself to be of Jewish nationality?”³⁸⁷ Weiss negatively concludes that “to all these questions no advice is forthcoming and people here are quite helpless.”³⁸⁸ The questions raised by George Weiss in 1945 illustrate the intrinsic dilemma faced by Jews in a new Czechoslovakia. At that moment, the laws aimed for the convergence of citizenship and nationality. Accordingly, the possibility of a multi-national citizenry disappeared in the wake of plans for large-scale population transfers ensuring that political states aligned with ethnographic maps. A category of Jewishness existed in form (racial persecution is undeniable and “Jews” were definable in the Protectorate era) but not in the principles enshrined in Czechoslovak law. So where, Weiss asked, do the Jews in general belong after 1945? And what should become of those Jews whose regional homeland is now part of another sovereign state?

One month after Weiss’ inquiries, Arnošt Frischer detailed his answers to these valid and troubling questions in a report entitled “The Jewish Position in Czechoslovakia.”³⁸⁹ In a statement addressed directly to his former colleague President Beneš, Frischer details the reality of the some 43,000 Jews remaining in

³⁸⁴George Weiss, “Letter to Frischer,” on November 28, 1945, 425-230-7 in ABS.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Arnošt Frischer, “The Jewish Position in Czechoslovakia,” H 100/2 in WJC Collection.

the Czechoslovak state. Quick to remind Beneš that almost 13,000 Jews maintained no religious affiliation and were Jewish according to Nuremberg criteria only, Frischer details how these citizens have “encountered great difficulties” and are “excluded from privileges and rights which belong to Czech, Slovaks and members of other Slav ethnic groups.”³⁹⁰ To amend this injustice, Frischer began (on September 25, 1945) to “advise citizens who registered previously as of Jewish nationality, to register in the future as being of Czech or Slovak nationality respectively.”³⁹¹ Frischer did this, he argues, “presuming that the Government would consider this act as a contribution made by the Czechoslovak Jews to the political homogeneity of the Republic, provided that their former declaration of Jewish nationality would not be detrimental to them and that they would be treated in all cases equally as Czechs and Slovaks.”³⁹² Frischer had sent a letter to the Ministry of the Interior detailing his change of policy a few weeks prior. He still awaited an official reply.

Finally, Frischer turned his attention to the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus. In Frischer’s assessment, “these Jews have always been supporters of the idea of the Czech state. They sent their children to Czech schools and they professed in the vast majority of cases, Jewish nationality.”³⁹³ In the wake of the annexation of this region to Soviet Ukraine, these Jews “did not get the right of option for the Czechoslovak Republic and their situation remains very precarious, whether they are in Subcarpathian Rus or whether they have (already) moved to Czechoslovakia.”³⁹⁴ Frischer alerted Beneš to rumors circulating “that they are to be expelled from the western provinces (of Bohemia and Moravia) within the next few days if not hours.”³⁹⁵ Frischer lobbied Beneš to treat these people “sympathetically” even if its not possible to create a supplementary agreement with the USSR concerning the “right of option for Czechoslovakia.”³⁹⁶

Near the end his report, Frischer referred to a suggestion he made to the President several months prior. He had requested that a “special department should be established at the office of the Prime Minister... (and it) should deal with all measures which are necessary to remove the consequences of racial persecution, which have been carried out systematically by the Nazis and Fascist for six years.”³⁹⁷ Specifically, such a body would “examine all drafts of laws in order to make sure that they do not contain implicit rules which could be prejudicial to people who have suffered from racial persecution and it should see

³⁹⁰ Ibid. One significant injustice detailed in Frischer’s report occurred in Ústí Nad Labem when German speaking Jews (presumably identified as German nationals on the 1930 census) had to wear a “white armband.” He reminds Beneš that “the decree about citizenship offers a possibility that Czech citizenship can be preserved for these people.”

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

that the traces of discrimination are wiped out systematically and completely.”³⁹⁸ Moreover, this department should be partially autonomous insofar as it could “develop its own initiative within the terms of reference” and be a “place where we could concentrate our suggestions, request sand complaints.”³⁹⁹ It appears that Frischer’s second request for a special bureau fell once again on deaf ears, at least within the Czechoslovak government apparatus.

While few of his non-Jewish countrymen expressed public concern over the situation regarding the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus, World Jewish Congress officials increasingly focused their attention on the situation. Near the end of 1945, Paul Reiner argued in a memo that the Czechoslovak citizenship law “33/45 must be amended and a specific solution in the instance of the small remaining Jewish population is required.”⁴⁰⁰ Echoing sentiments espoused by the WJC at the 1943 and 1944 Atlantic Conferences (see Chapter 3), Reiner argued that Jews should be entitled a special political distinction. Specifically, he maintained that “Jews should be distinguished from Germans and Hungarians and upon proof of Jewish origin or denomination, should be automatically exempted from the burden of proving their loyalty to Czechoslovakia.”⁴⁰¹ Reiner invoked a Nuremberg-esque definition of Jewishness, lumping those of religious conviction with those of non-practicing ethnic stock. In Reiner’s calculus, “Jewish citizens, in the same way as a Czechoslovak citizen, should be subjected to discrimination only if the authorities prove that he was guilty of some act of collaboration.”⁴⁰² The positions espoused by Reiner and Frischer both called for positive discrimination towards all those Czechoslovak residents considered Jewish by the Nuremberg laws regardless of what nationality they possessed in 1930. Looking beyond their concern, our paper trail suggests that only Jewish observers expressed concerned with the Subcarpathian Rus problem specifically and the Czechoslovak Jewish citizenship crisis in general by the end of 1945. Concern over this small number of Jewish survivors from this remote region, however, would multiply as 1946 moved forward.

Move the Germans out, Move the Jews in! A look at Liberec

As the first full year of peace descended on postwar central Europe, Marty settled into his new surroundings and new job. Reunited with his older sister Celia, the two siblings embarked upon their future together with the help of Fred, Celia’s husband. Thanks to Fred’s connections and the resources available to those linked to army veterans, Marty secured passage to Liberec by January 1946. There, the boy who had never lived in an electrified residence trained to be an

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Paul Reiner, “Memo: Re: Confirmation of Czechoslovak citizenship to Jewish Persons,” H 100/7 in WJC Collection.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

electrician. Like thousands of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus, Marty cautiously laid down shallow roots in these transient months. Those deemed ethnic Germans by local authorities evacuated their houses and business afterwards setting off for new homes or concentration camps as part of the *odsun*.⁴⁰³ In order to preserve some semblance of economic continuity, ethnic Czechs from Germany, Poland and elsewhere in the state moved into vacated industries, jobs, farms and houses.⁴⁰⁴ Those Jews from PKR registered as “Czechoslovak” by the 1930 census, their record of military service, their wartime experience of racial internment or by an individual representing the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry were included in this vast repopulation scheme. Soon after these PRK Jews had moved, however, the extent of this special group’s “Czechness” became a point of contention and the Jews who had professed Jewish nationality for the 1930 census became the main targets.

In February of 1946, as Marty plunged himself into his training program in Liberec, a Jewish Community official named Dr. Machacek was at work in the same town. On the ninth of that month, Machacek filed a report detailing his conversation with Councilor Werner of the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry regarding those from Subcarpathian Rus who declared themselves of Jewish nationality. A few days prior, Machacek had approached Werner and inquired as to the attitude of the Ministry regarding these Jews “who opted on the basis of the treaty of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia for (the Czechoslovak) Republic and to whom a certificate from the Ministry of the Interior had been issued confirming that they have opted for (the) Republic.”⁴⁰⁵ In response, Councilor Werner had “indicated that, according to the treaty these person (were) not permitted to opt for (the Czechoslovak) Republic” and that “the certificates issued to them were declared invalid by the Ministry of the Interior” and, moreover “that the applications of these persons will be denied without any exceptions.” Such a policy indicated an abrupt change from the Ministry’s initiative to allow those of Jewish nationality to demonstrate their “Czechness” via language use, school certificates or proof of their war experiences. It appeared that the precedent of inclusion in operation during the fall of 1945 had been replaced with a blanket exclusionary policy. The status of these relocated Jews seemed under threat.

Machacek concluded his report with two more interesting details. While the Ministry had invalidated the right of option for these “Jewish” Jews, the

⁴⁰³ *Odsun* is usually translated as expulsion and refers to the expulsion of Sudeten Germans and other German minorities from Czechoslovakia after 1945. Bryant’s *Prague in Black* contains a good English-language description of the process by which Czechoslovak authorities encouraged and in many instances violently forced nearly 3 million ethnic Germans to leave their homes. See also: R.M. Douglass and Eagle Glassheim.

⁴⁰⁴ The best evaluation of the economic problems initiated by the *odsun* is David Gerlach, *For Nation and Gain: Economy, Ethnicity and Politics in the Czech Borderlands, 1945-1948*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Pittsburgh, 2007).

⁴⁰⁵ “Memo on the conversation with Councilor Werner of the Ministry of the Interior on the subject of person from Podkarpatská Rus who declared themselves of Jewish nationality,” filed on February 4, 1946, 425-192-75 in ABS.

Interior officials did “not know the present address of the greater number of these persons and therefore in the case of most of them, the decision” could not be conveyed to them. Despite this, if any person misused the “option certificates issued to them, which are no longer valid or if they are obtaining from these certificates advantages reserved for Czechoslovak citizens, steps must and will be taken against them.”⁴⁰⁶ Citizenship given could be taken away.

How did this complete reversal in the postwar legal code come to pass? Machacek detailed how “ten thousand persons of Jewish origin and in most cases also of Jewish nationality, formerly Czechoslovak citizens who have residence or right of residence in the territory of Subcarpathian Rus, crowded into the border regions, especially in the larger towns.” According to Machacek’s report, “with few exceptions only” these Jews are “unproductive elements.” They “lived mainly by black market activities” and engaged in profiteering by “looting German flats.” And moreover, in Machacek’s assessment, “for the greatest part, they do not know either the Czech or Slovak language” and they are neither of the Czech or any other nationality.” Machecek elaborated, stating that “persons of Jewish origin and religion in Subcarpathian formed a quite independent nationality and ... they did not become integrated with the surrounding Slovak population, let alone” become Slovak or even Czech. Those who learned Czech or Slovak in state schools during the interwar war did so for opportunistic reasons. This group of overcrowding profiteers, in Machecek’s opinion, was decidedly Jewish. Despite linguistic ability or citizenship papers, they could never be Czech.

Machecek’s utilized an economic-infused rationale to exclude the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus. His reasoning gains traction against the context of Liberec and the broader Sudetenland circa 1945 and 1946. The situation can best be characterized as an economic free-for-all. As upwards of three million people deemed ethnic Germans by Czechoslovak authorities left the region shattering what semblance of economic normalcy had remained throughout the war years, people deemed Czechoslovak by state authorities shuffled into the region via train, cars and blistered feet. Czech speakers from Germany, Czech “nationals” who had spent the majority of their lives in Poland and Czechoslovaks avoiding incorporation of their regional home into the Soviet Union poured in to fill the economic vacuum.

Of course, from an economic standpoint, the transfer of a few million citizens away from their businesses, familial graveyards and well-kept homes defies human logic. The postwar central European world, however, did not operate according to seemingly universal economic rationality. The desire for punishment of the Axis powers reigned supreme. Thus delineating Germans from Czechs and Slovaks from Hungarians became a mandatory task. It follows that Jews fell into a suspicious category that proved baffling on closer inspection. To whom do the Jews belong? Plucked out of racial anonymity by the introduction of

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

Nuremberg-inspired laws, those designated as Jews by racial or religious guidelines represented an unknown quantity. The Sudetenland had to be nationally unmixed. In the process, however, the economies therein had to be completely repopulated. Friction ensued as populations unmixed, moved, remixed and began the difficult process of rebuilding daily economic life.

The process of repopulating the economic universe of the Sudetenland proceeded with another Presidential Decree of the Republic on July 20, 1945. According to the proclamation issued by the office of President Beneš, “Czechs and other Slav nationalities” could apply for an “allotment of land according to the regulations issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare as to the procedures” followed by the “National Committees.”⁴⁰⁷ In addition to other powers, these committees had purview to allocate apartments to “nationally reliable persons of Slav nationality. Moreover, only “Czechs, Slovaks and persons of other Slav nations” were granted the active and passive right to vote. With this in mind, Marcheczek outlined some recommendations to the “Council of the town of Liberec.” As soon as possible,

all offices of the town of Liberec must be informed that every person coming from the former eastern part of the Republic is not to be regarded as a Slav as long as he is not able to prove the contrary, by submitting confirmation from the census of 1930. This is to be asked also of persons who submit provisional certificates of Czechoslovak citizenship.⁴⁰⁸

Moreover, “the other towns in the border regions must be informed about these steps in order to agree upon a common procedure.”⁴⁰⁹ Thus, the burden of proof fell on the individual. Officials should consider Jews from Podkarpatská Rus as non-Slavs until proven otherwise. The rights guaranteed to Slavic people, such as a vacated apartment in Liberec or the ability to assume ownership of an abandoned business, would be extended to Jews only if they could demonstrate their “Slavness” with proof from the 1930 census. The passage of sixteen years and the experience of one inordinately destructive World War could not alter what the census had immovably etched in stone. To be Czechoslovak, or Slavic, in 1946 Liberec, one must produce paperwork dating from 1930.

The archives have not surrendered evidence corroborating the situation that Marcheczek described in Liberec. Such an abrupt revision of law should have, one could presume, created more ripples in the paper trail. Marcheczek’s account, nevertheless, warrants attention in light of the events that follow his report. For throughout the spring of 1946, information regarding the Interior Ministry’s revocation of option reverberated from Liberec to Prague and beyond. Concern

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

over the situation initiated copious letters written by the World Jewish Congress and, in turn, those epistles generated meetings between WJC representatives and Czechoslovak officials. Notably, during the same months when Czechoslovakia granted entrance, sustenance and passage to Polish Jews migrating through Náchod the same officials debated whether the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus deserved state citizenship and the rights accompanying it.⁴¹⁰

A few weeks after Marchacek's filed his report concerning the Jewish Jews in Liberec, an internal document circulated through the Interior Ministry regarding the establishment of nationality. In an attempt to delineate who enjoyed the right of settlement in the Sudetenland, an anonymous author reminded his readers that the law of June 29, 1945 marked those with Czechoslovak nationality or permanent residency in Czechoslovakia and military people of Ukrainian or Russian nationality who had fought in the Czech army or were "members of army families" as those entitled to citizenship.⁴¹¹ After this clarification, the writer continues "the agreement did not mention those who during the census said they were of Jewish nationality."⁴¹² In spite of the fact that "Jews have always been an element of state building, visitors of Czech schools" and supportive of "Czech institutions."⁴¹³ To rectify this imbalance, the Interior Ministry submitted that "nationality can be proved with other documents such as the general certificate of public Czech schools or (evidence of) attendance at Czech schools."⁴¹⁴ Thus, people who in 1930 reported themselves as being of "Jewish nationality" and "today (in 1946) want to report Czech nationality can do so by showing their school certificate."⁴¹⁵ In contrast to Marchacek's communique which attributed negative motives to Jews who attended Czech schools, this anonymous official argued the reverse. Of course, this writer maintains, proof of enrollment at a Czech school demonstrated Czech nationality.

This decision reaffirming the link between school attendance and nationality would be "advertised in Subcarpathian Rus as well as in border region in the daily press."⁴¹⁶ Those Jewish Jews in question with the correct papers could register with the repatriation agencies and, thusly, be regarded as citizens." The Soviet authorities could not force them to Czechoslovakia. The March 1946 directive corresponded mainly "to those who during the war left their homes and shortly after liberation returned from concentration camps or as members of the army and settled chiefly in the border lands (pohranicni uzemi)." In conclusion, and again in stark contrast to Machecek's reasoning, "economic losses for the

⁴¹⁰ Notably, the report of Marchacek indicates that military veterans regardless of nationality or 1930 classification can be trusted. Recall that Marty's brother-in-law Fred had served in General Svoboda's regiment.

⁴¹¹ "Informace o opčním právu obyvatelů Zakarustské Ukrajiny," March 11, 1946, 425-233-02 in ABS.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

modest labor force" would ensue if these Jews were not permitted to stay in the republic."⁴¹⁷ For this official, those of Jewish nationality from Subcarpathian Rus served an intrinsic purpose for the Sudetenland's economy. For Machacek, the same group was perilously detrimental.

On the same day that this report gained an audience, Arnošt Frischer met with Foreign Affairs Minister Jan Masaryk to discuss the worsening situation in northern Bohemia. In a report sent to the World Jewish Congress a week later, Frischer explains how he related "the whole situation according to formal laws and to reality."⁴¹⁸ Noticing departmental cleavages in Czechoslovak governmental policies, Frischer asked Masaryk to merge his opinion with the Minister of the Interior and "recommended (a) benevolent attitude" with relation "to Jews who had reported an option for Czechoslovak citizenship" so that they would no longer be harassed."⁴¹⁹ Moreover, Frischer implored Masaryk to "discuss with representatives from the Russian repatriation commission" and urge them to "give up claims to the Jews."⁴²⁰ Masaryk promised to do so. Overall, Masaryk expressed his agreement with Frischer and his opinions. He promised to intervene significantly as he "could not tolerate anti-Jewish policies in Czechoslovakia."⁴²¹ A few days after the meeting, Frischer could still not "state the results of the meeting."⁴²² Masaryk's stance, however, appeared to be quite clear.

Soon, another high profile governmental official added his voice to the conversation surrounding the situation of these Jews from Subcarpathian Rus. Ambassador Steinhardt, the highest ranking American diplomat to the Republic, appeared in communication between Irving Dwork and his World Jewish Congress colleague Arieh Tartakower. According to Tartakower, Ambassador Steinhardt stated that "officials of the Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia have no evidence of Soviet pressure on the Czechoslovak government for the return of any Subcarpathian Jews to Ruthenia."⁴²³ While the distinction drawn in Czechoslovak law between citizenship and nationality complicates the situation, the status of these Jews does not appear to be under imminent threat as of March 1946.⁴²⁴ That same spring, Francis T. Williamson, the Acting Assistant for the Chief Division of Central European Affairs, related another intervention with Ambassador Steinhardt. On this occasion, Steinhardt reported that "not more than 20 persons were handed over by the Czechoslovak police to Soviet repatriation offices" and that the "Ministry of the Interior (acted) sympathetically to the Jewish refugees" from this region. In conclusion, Steinhardt noted the Jewish

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Arnošt Frischer, "Report on Meeting with Jan Masaryk on March 11, 1946," written on March 18, 1946, 425-231-1 in ABS.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Arieh Tartakower, "Letter to Irving Dwork," H 99/17 in WJC Collection.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

Community of Prague harbored concerns that increased public pressure on the Ministry of the Interior would result in a Subcarpathian Jewish exodus toward occupied Germany.⁴²⁵ These two documents reveal that the American embassy in Prague exchanged information with the World Jewish Congress and DoD officials regarding Czechoslovakia's Jewish Jews. And so, the drama surrounding the right of option of this group continued

In the Office of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, the American Embassy on Vlasska street and, even, at the conference table within the Jewish Town Hall across the shallow alley from the Old New Synagogue, conversations regarding these specific Jews echoed. On March 24, 1946, Frischer sat down alongside officials of the Prague Jewish Community and the Jewish Communities of Bohemia and Moravia for their regular bi-monthly meeting. Not surprisingly, the issue of the Jews deemed Jewish by the 1930 census weighed heavily on their minds. Frischer detailed the facts of the problem and referenced his meeting with Masaryk (and the Minister's promise of help) a few days earlier as evidence of his response to the impending right of citizenship crisis.⁴²⁶

According to Frischer, the Ministry of the Interior had agreed to protect from deportation to the Soviet Union those Jews with certificates confirming their right of option to settle in Czechoslovakia. Interestingly, a representative from UNRRA had reported to Frischer that his organization would not consider these Jews from Subcarpathian Rus who had settled in the Sudetenland as "displaced persons." Thus no funding would be made available for their move back to the region of their birth or elsewhere.⁴²⁷ Frischer considered the situation regarding these 1,500 Jewish Jews to be quite serious as the position of the Interior Ministry towards this group was not "favorable."⁴²⁸ The document does not reveal if Frischer's colleagues at the Jewish Town Hall shared his concerns. It does appear, however, that the issue surrounding this small group was a persistent point of conversation. Three weeks later, the same group reconvened in the same conference hall and opened the right of option controversy for discussion once again.

From Frischer's standpoint on April 10, 1946 the situation of the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus was "worsening and critical."⁴²⁹ Those assembled listened as Frischer detailed instances of property confiscation, state citizenship revocations and other problems that he had discussed of late with an Interior Ministry Representative. After some discussion, those in attendance decided that in the following days a multi-pronged intervention was necessary. Those in attendance should, in the near future, contact the heads of various political parties as soon a

⁴²⁵ Francis T. Williamson, "Undated Letter," H 99/17 in WJC Collection.

⁴²⁶ "Zápis o schůzi představenstva Rady židovských náboženských obcí v zemích České a Moravskoslezské," on March 24, 1946, 425-233-6 in ABS.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ "Zápis o schůzi představenstva Rady židovských náboženských obcí v zemích České a Moravskoslezské," on April 10, 1946, 425-233-6 in ABS..

possible. Fuchs explained that targeting the leaders of the coalition government parties was most important. As the situation concerning the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus was “more than serious,” those assembled determined that fast, positive results were of the utmost importance.

The concern expressed by Frischer and his colleagues during meetings across the spring of 1946 found voice in the World Jewish Congress as well. In a memo dating from March 26, 1946 from Alexander Easterman, Maurice Perlzweig and Leon Kubowitzki, these three informers related an official government announcement from Prague regarding the Subcarpathian Rus situation. Specifically, “persons producing certificates of option for Czech citizenship filed (were) not liable to register for repatriation (to the) USSR. These persons considered citizens CS until final decision application.”⁴³⁰ In their assessment, “this is a satisfactory improvement and (will) likely stabilize temporarily situation.”⁴³¹ The office of the WJC advised that citizenship should depend on nationality status in 1930 or attendance at Czech schools. A second memo from Easterman alone just a few days later, however, relayed a worsening situation. On April 2, 1946 he wrote to Wise and Perlzweig and observed that the status quo for Jews from Subcarpathian Rus had “gravely deteriorated.”⁴³² Easterman “urged strongly” that Wise should cable Beneš and Masaryk to express his “grave anxiety” and “request emergency action” to “prevent forcible repatriation.” Additionally, Easterman encouraged Wise to request assistance from American authorities like Ambassador Steinhardt.

Obviously, Jewish leaders in Czechoslovakia and Jewish observers from international perches took note of the drama surrounding this small remnant of pre-war Czechoslovak Jewry. Across cables and conference tables, a coterie of officials debated the information they received and which course proved the best way forward. Throughout the spring of 1946, conflicting accounts concerning the gravity of the situation and how Jews on the ground responded to back and forth pronouncements from a variety of government officials inhibited contemporary understanding of the actual situation. The evidence presented here does not clarify whether the threat facing these Jewish Jews was more theoretical than real. It stands to reason, however, that the high-profile names contained in these correspondences indicate that a tangible threat manifested for these resettled Jews in the spring of 1946. By May of 1946, records from the World Jewish Congress point to a resolution of the conflict. On May 13, Frischer met again with President Beneš and, the reporter is certain, “he discussed the matter of the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus.”⁴³³ Moreover, “Mr. Easterman of the British Section of the WJC visited Prague recently (regarding) the same matter. He reported that all Jews

⁴³⁰ Easterman, Perlzweig and Kubowitzki, “Memo dated March 26, 1946,” H 99/17 in WJC Collection.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Easterman, “Memo to Wise and Perlzweig dated from April 2, 1946,” H 99/17 in WJC Collection.

⁴³³ “Anonymous Memo dating from May 12, 1946,” H 100/7 in WJC Collection.

who had opted for Czechoslovakia are permitted to remain there.”⁴³⁴ As the summer of 1946 cooled, the wires transmitting messages between WJC representatives in Prague and those stationed in Paris and New York carried almost no updates regarding the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus.

Throughout 1945 and 1946 the status of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus remained unclear in part because the Ministry of the Interior did not specifically address the problem. In the absence of a clear federal directive, national committee members enjoyed a fair amount of flexibility as they granted citizenship to some applicants and hesitated with others. By September 1946, the majority of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus who wanted to resettle in Bohemia had done so. The process of citizenship clarification had worked out to a certain extent organically. A need to issue a state-wide clarification, however, remained. And so, in the fall of 1946 the Interior Ministry issued its most direct ruling to date concerning Jewish inhabitants in Czechoslovakia.

In a memorandum distributed through the country, to national committees in small towns as well as large the Ministry offered guidance concerning “person(s) who by the occupants were considered as 'persons of Jewish origin.’”⁴³⁵ Beginning with historical background, it states: “it is sufficiently known that the barbarism of the Nazis, supported by the racial theories and by the deep hatred of everything that was not proved to be Nazi raged at first and in increased measure against person of so called 'Jewish origin' and against so called ‘Jewish half-castes.’” In response to this despicable Nazi behavior, “the Czech and Slovak nation refused the call of discrimination of these unfortunate victims of the Nazi persecution from the other citizens who survived the terrors ... of the concentration camps and repudiates every discrimination regarding the original religion and native language and the difference in treatment accordingly” with the exception of German and Hungarian nationals who committed crimes against the Republic during the war.

As of the date of the decree, however, persons of Jewish origin are categorized as Jews and Jewish half-castes by the Czechoslovak authorities “only because the person who were labeled this way by the occupants and persecuted inhumanly should not suffer by the fact that our laws, which do not recognize and repudiate such a racial discrimination, (besides those concerning) German of Hungarian nationality, would not make any difference between (the Jews) and the German and Hungarian traitors.”⁴³⁶ Succinctly, Jew in the eyes of Nazi law remains a Jew before Czechoslovak law.

The document ends with special instructions for *národní výbory* members asserting that “it is necessary that the respective National District Committees should investigate thoroughly every case according to specific directives.” Moreover, “the results of these investigations should be submitted referring to this

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Decree # S-3559/89-17/9-46, 425-192-74 in ABS.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

decree to the Ministry of the Interior which reserves the right to decide the individual cases whether the person of Jewish origin of German or Hungarian nationalist were Germanizing or Hungarianizing in sense of this decree.”⁴³⁷ Overall, this decree attempts to solve at least two problems. First, Czechoslovak authorities promised to recognize Jewish origin as a viable category in the state’s legal code because such a distinction persisted from the Protectorate era. To prevent those Jews who registered as German or Hungarian in the 1930 census, the Ministry agreed to make a distinction between Jews, Jewish half-castes and the rest of the population. Secondly, this ruling attempts to integrate the actions of the national committees on the ground with the Ministry above. In the end, the Ministry itself can offer decisions in individual instances, thereby overriding the authority of the local body.

Sixteen months after liberation and a full year after the August 1945 communiqué detailed above, the Ministry of the Interior codified “Jewishness” into federal law. Ironically by this time, most of the Jews from Subcarpathian Rus or elsewhere had already appeared before national committees, applied for citizenship and activated the privileges that belonging to the new state entailed. It is obvious, however, that uncertainty over the citizenship status of Czechoslovak Jews remained. The back and forth letters between the World Jewish Congress and Prague officials, the incessant lobbying of Arnošt Frischer, the legal quandary presented by George Weiss, the report filed by Dr. Marchacek and the disharmonious relationship of the Ministry of the Interior and national committees evidence this continued uncertainty. And so, the Interior Ministry needed to clarify the citizenship status of those designated as Jews during the Nazi Occupation. In turn, this “necessary” clarification perpetuated a racial distinction thereby enabling the continuation of Jewish difference.

⁴³⁷Ibid.

**“The Most Significant Spot in Europe”:
How the “Ethnic Revolution” and 130,000 Polish Jews arrived in
Náchod, Czechoslovakia in 1946**

Tucked into the emerald hills of northeastern Bohemia, the unassuming town of Náchod lies about three miles west of the modern-day Polish border. On foot, one could pass from the main square to Poland without much exertion. In good weather, it would take less than an hour to stroll from Náchod’s town hall to the small rocks that represented the border between these two states. With no mountains, hills or roaring rivers separating them, these snippets of Bohemia of Lower Silesia were knitted together by economies, accessible footpaths and a semi-major thoroughfare throughout the early modern and modern periods. Even in 1945 and 1946, when instability plagued the other borders encircling Poland, the stretch of boundary slicing this region remained relatively secure and well-traversed.⁴³⁸

Upwards of 170,000 Polish citizens of Jewish descent moved westward and crossed this border on foot between September 1945 and December 1946. The largest number of these trans-migrants, nearly 130,000, traveled towards Náchod in relentless droves from February to October of 1946 after their failed repatriation from the Soviet Union to the new territories that constituted western Poland.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸After hostilities ended in May 1945, Poland still remained a very hostile place. In 1945 and 1946, Poland’s borders changed drastically and shifted more than 150 miles westward and the Soviet Union absorbed the eastern third of the country. Thus, most of Poland’s western and eastern borders were highly contested on the ground. The slice of border near Náchod was especially unguarded as border guards were deployed to the “new borders” elsewhere. Some historians have classified the power struggle between units of the underground and the Lublin Communists as a full-fledged civil war. See: Antony Polonsky and Boleslaw Drukier, *The Beginnings of Communist Rule in Poland, December 1943-June 1945* (London: Routledge, 1980); Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii, editors, *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in eastern Europe* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997); Gregor Thum, *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*, translated by Tom Lampert et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict - Ideology and Power in the Relations among the USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia, China, and other Communist States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation’s Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); and, David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944-1946," in *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol. XXVI, Jerusalem 1998, pp 43-85.

⁴³⁹When dealing with displaced person populations and (largely) undocumented movement such as this accurate numbers prove difficult to determine. The large numbers used heretofore have been corroborated across multiple sources. In his article for *The Resistance*, Isaac Assofsky uses the numbers similar to the Joint Distribution Committee, the World Jewish Congress and other publications cited here. A plethora of documents and press clippings estimate that upwards of 170,000 Polish Jews passed through Czechoslovakia on their way to the US Zone in Germany/Austria and that 130,000 Polish Jewish transmigrants traveled through Náchod or her vicinity in 1946 alone. Numbers preserved in Czechoslovak Interior Ministry archives are a bit more judicious. According to spreadsheets from Náchod in 1946 37,341 Polish Jews from various Polish cities were registered at Náchod’s Repatriation office between June 1, 1946 and December 27, 1946. The monthly breakdowns are: 4037 in June; 8079 in July; 13,290 in August and 11,935 from September to December. Obviously, these numbers are smaller than estimates elsewhere. It is highly probable that not all Polish Jews who passed through Náchod registered with the repatriation

Beginning in late 1945, trains originating in the Central Asian steppe brought hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews back to Polish territory but not to their former places of residence. As their homes stood in regions ceded to the Soviet Union, returning to Poland meant returning to their country of citizenship but not their location of pre-war domicile. Accordingly, a large percentage of these interwar Polish citizens decided to keep moving rather than inhabit formerly German homes throughout the cities and towns of this area formerly known as Prussia.⁴⁴⁰ On the road yet again, these Polish Jews constituted a new and complicated legal category.⁴⁴¹ They became in clunky United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) parlance: “displaced persons unsuccessfully repatriated.”⁴⁴² By the early months of 1946, as swaths of these returnees swarmed around train stations throughout the so-called Recovered Territories, their precarious fate remained uncertain. The highly-contingent process by which Polish citizens of Jewish descent moved away from new homes in Lower Silesia and towards a (presumed) ethnic home in Palestine is the subject of this chapter.

The financial, social and humanitarian support of the Czechoslovak government and its officials enabled the movement of these doubly displaced people more than any other organizational entity. Czech officials in Prague, Náchod and in between coordinated with the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Polish government in Warsaw and UNRRA to ensure that these Jews would be accepted at the Silesian border, housed, fed and then deposited on specially-designated repatriation trains that would bring this mass of human capital to points in the American Zones of Austria and Germany.⁴⁴³ Once in American-sponsored

department there. This does not, however, explain why the official estimates in the press and governmental correspondence are so much higher.

⁴⁴⁰ Nearly all the Poles of Jewish descent in this group were born in the eastern territories of interwar Poland. This area was annexed by the Soviet Union in the fall of 1939 and many were deported soon after. Regarding the annexation of Polish lands by the Soviet Union and the experiences of citizens from this area between 1939 and 1941 see Jan Gross’ *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁴⁴¹ This large number of Polish Jews returned to Poland as part of a massive repatriation scheme overseen by Władysław Gomułka (Minister of the Recovered Territories) and others in the Polish Government of National Unity. These Polish citizens of Jewish descent hailed from the eastern half of interwar Poland and thus were more likely to speak Jewish languages as their primary tongue. For more information on this group and other Polish citizens who were deported to the interior of the Soviet Union in the wake of the Soviet invasion (mid-September 1939) and consequent occupation please see: See Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), Keith Sword, *Deportation and Exile: Poles in the Soviet Union, 1939-48* (London: Macmillan, 1994) Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), Albert Kaganovitch. "Stalin's Great Power Politics, the Return of Jewish Refugees to Poland, and Continued Migration to Palestine, 1944-1946." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26.1 (2012): 59-94.

⁴⁴² 425-231-2 in ABS.

⁴⁴³ The journalist I.F. Stone accompanied a group of Jews through Náchod and towards D.P. camps in Germany in 1946. He mentions neither Náchod nor the people organizing the activities at Náchod by name in order to protect their identities. His secrecy is evidence of this highly contentious process. See *Underground to Palestine* (New York: Boni & Gaer, 1946).

DP camps, the Polish citizens of Jewish descent who passed through Náchod became the Jewish citizens that Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency needed to populate the Palestinian Mandate.⁴⁴⁴ In oblique but important twists of postwar fate, the road to Palestine began for many Polish Jews at Náchod and their benefactors hailed, in part, from Czechoslovakia.

In order to understand why Czechoslovak officials of both Jewish and non-Jewish lineage assisted nearly 130,000 Polish citizens of Jewish descent in leaving the country of their birth in 1946 and embarking on a long, uncertain trip towards Palestine, it is necessary to view the circumstances surrounding Náchod as epiphenomenal of a deeper and more complicated change in Czechoslovak (and arguably central European) consciousness. In the midst of war spawned from German and to a lesser extent Hungarian treachery, Czechs in-exile began to envision a postwar state devoid of perfidious ethnic elements.⁴⁴⁵ While the idea of moving those of German or Hungarian ethnicity out of postwar Czechoslovakia gained substantial support in-exile and at home, identifying people who belonged to these categories proved more difficult. Upon return to a newly reconstituted Czechoslovakia, President Edvard Beneš and many high-ranking officials throughout his government agreed to use the last interwar census (in 1930) as a method of distinguishing Germans or Hungarians from the rest of the population. Almost all those deemed German or Hungarian by this pre-war count would be expelled alongside those accused of outright collaboration during the conflict.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ Arguably, the constellation of events and decisions surrounding Náchod eventually enabled the 1948 declaration of the Israeli State. I will flesh out this controversial and macro-historical question out fully in the conclusion of my dissertation. For now, I submit that without a substantial number of Jewish settlers, the population status quo in Mandate Palestine circa 1945 would have favored non-Jewish people so heavily that an autonomous Jewish State would have seemed impossible. Chaim Weizmann noted on various occasions in the company of Jewish and non-Jewish audiences that the Second World War in Europe offered an opportunity to obtain the human capital necessary for increased Jewish populations in the Mandate. Earl Harrison's and Truman's declaration in 1945 that 100,000 certificates should be issued to Jewish DPs in the American Zones of central Europe mirrored a request that Weizmann voiced three years earlier during war-time discussions with the World Jewish Congress. The majority of Jews in DPs camps by 1946 and 1947 had been Polish citizens before the war. For a description of Polish Jews and others in the Jewish Displaced Persons camps, one can consult a multitude of recent contributions. See, for example, Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009), Yosef Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle between Jews and Zionists in the aftermath of World War Two* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2004), Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: close encounters in occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) and, most recently, Gerald Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁴⁵ As the Slovak's had a puppet government during World War II under Father Jozef Tiso, only the Czechs had a government-in-exile in London during this period. Some Slovaks, however, served on the Czech government-in-exile.

⁴⁴⁶ See Chapter 6 "All the Germans Must Go" in Chad Bryant's *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech nationalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007). Also helpful is Bryant's article "Either German or Czech: Fixing Nationality in Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-1946," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 61, No. 4, (Winter, 2002), pp. 683-706.

Thus, selecting German or Hungarian as your language of everyday use on a census form in 1930 had dire consequences after 1945 that allowed for little if no compromise. A linguistic category enshrined in the first Czechoslovak Republic hardened into an ethnic category that could not be controverted. A significant dilemma arose, however, in using the same method to decide the fate of those who had been persecuted as racial Jews during the war but who had been labeled as Hungarian or German by census-takers nearly a generation earlier. Thousands of Jews from Czechoslovakia and beyond fell into this troublesome gray area.

Accordingly, to distinguish the victims of Nazi racial laws from treacherous Germans or Hungarians, Czechoslovak bureaucrats created a new category and thereby created a new ethnic distinction in civil law. Jewishness, established either by a religious community or proved by war-time internment for racial reasons, would automatically grant citizenship in the reconstituted republic even for those labeled as German and Hungarian in 1930. In short, a new form of Jewish identity, determined by a racial calculus used during wartime, had entered into the legal code of the second Czechoslovak Republic.⁴⁴⁷ This idea of ethnic Jews, separate from traitorous Germans and Hungarians, transcended domestic circumstances to include Jews from Poland who collected at the border near Náchod. Throughout this chapter, Czechoslovak ministers and bureaucrats envisioned the Polish citizens of Jewish descent passing through Náchod as more Jewish than Polish. Once a precedence of ethnic difference was established, other policies ensued which allowed these “Jewish Jews” to exit Poland and move elsewhere towards an imagined polity composed of ethnic Jews.

At Náchod, these two twists of consciousness, one designating ethnic Jews as a separate group deserving distinct treatment and the idea that central Europe’s Jewish Jews belonged elsewhere in their own ethnic polity, converged during a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. Throughout the late winter, spring and summer of 1946, tens of thousands of Polish-Jewish migrants arrived at the Czechoslovak border per month. Administrators in Náchod, security officers at the border and government officials back in Prague made a series of decisions allowing the movement of these former Polish citizens away from Poland. In this way, Czechoslovak actors contributed to the larger, historical event known as the *bricha*, playing a key role in the “semi-organized movement of Jewish displaced persons (DPs) from Poland” toward the American Zone in Germany and, later, Palestine.⁴⁴⁸ Confronted with Polish Jews and non-Jews assembling at the border,

⁴⁴⁷ Specifically, see Decree #S-3559/89-17/9-46 4 in ABS.

⁴⁴⁸ The *bricha* (a Hebrew word translated as escape) has been covered extensively in both European and Israeli historiography. See, for example, Avinoam Patt’s article “Stateless Citizens of Israel: Jewish displaced persons and Zionism in post-war Germany,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-1949*, edited by Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: Random House, 1970), David Engel, *Between liberation and flight : Holocaust survivors in Poland and the struggle for leadership 1944-1946* (Tel-Aviv: ‘Am ‘oved, 1996) and Arieh J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The

ministers in high-level talks and civil servants working on the ground decided at a number of key moments in the spring and summer of 1946 to permit only Polish citizens of Jewish descent into Czechoslovakia. Once across the border, these trans-migrants spent a short amount of time in Náchod before boarding specially designated trains which brought them closer to the American Zone in either Germany and, less often, in Austria. More so than any other entity, public or private, the Czechoslovak government helped these Polish Jews move closer to Palestine in 1946.⁴⁴⁹

By exploring the ways in which decisions by Czechoslovak authorities enabled this movement, this chapter offers new ways to understand the process by which the Jews of Poland became the Jews of the displaced persons camps in Germany. Especially in recent years, scholars have explored the Jewish experience in the immediate postwar period in Poland as well as the circumstances by which many surviving (Polish) Jews became the *Sh'erit ha-Pletah* (or the surviving remnant) in the American Zone. Few details have emerged of late, however, concerning the logistical process by which some Jews left Poland and traveled west via Czechoslovakia in the hope of exiting Europe forever.⁴⁵⁰

Yehuda Bauer laid out the template for this research in his breathtaking study on the *bricha*. Published more than forty years ago, Bauer's monograph is thick with facts and unconventional documents. He covers the wartime and postwar movement of Jews from all across Europe towards Palestine. While Náchod plays an important role as a transit station in Bauer's work, I offer new documentation to show how precedents generated by officials in the Czechoslovak government accumulated, thus ensuring that Náchod would remain a viable exit

University of North Carolina Press, 2001). What happened at Náchod, however, has not received much attention. A new work of Czech-language historical fiction explores the Czechoslovak link to the *bricha* and the circumstances in Náchod, see: Jiří Sulč, *Mosty do Tel Avivu* (Prague: Knižní Klub, 2010).

⁴⁴⁹ The Czechoslovak Government spent 80 million crowns for 130,000 Polish Jewish transmigrants. See "Text of the Press Conference of Dr. Rudolf Kuraz, Czechoslovak General Consul in New York City Consul for the Jewish Press on Monday March 17, 1947," H 101/2 in the WJC collection. In 1946, 1000 Czechoslovak crowns equaled approximated 20 dollars, thus equaling 1.6 million dollars.

⁴⁵⁰ The topic of Jewish life in postwar Poland and studies on the violence that Jews encountered upon their return to the Polish homes are exceedingly popular. Most notably, Jan T. Gross' *Fear: Anti-Semitism after Auschwitz* has encouraged healthy (and in some instances combative) debate regarding the persistence of antisemitism in Poland and how feelings towards Jews combined with economic incentives to encourage some Poles to confront their (returning) Jewish neighbors with violence and contempt. I contend that David Engel's short article "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944-1946" cited in the first footnote offers a more careful assessment of Jewish violence in postwar Poland than Gross' study, which relies more on circumstantial testimonies than careful statistical analyses. In Engel's final assessment, a "multiplicity of factors" (page 38) sparked violence against Jews in postwar Poland. This chapter, however, asks an entirely different kind of question. Studies (like Gross') asking why Polish Jews left Poland throughout 1945 and why more than three quarters of Polish Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union to the Recovered Territories in the first half of 1946 distract from the issue of how exactly such a human multitude embarked on a semi-legal and diplomatically tenuous journey hundreds of miles away from Poland towards the American Zone in Germany. Geographically, the answer is obvious: through Czechoslovakia.

and entry point.⁴⁵¹ Further, by envisioning the situation at Náchod as epiphenomenal of a larger change in thinking regarding where Jews belong, this chapter offers a new explanation regarding the motives behind the broader policy of the Czechoslovak government.⁴⁵²

In a broader sense, this study reveals how events on the border between Polish and Czechoslovakia fell outside the control of the victorious Allied Powers and specifically posits that the influx of Polish Jews towards Bohemia and onward to the American Zone should not be understood as an event that any solitary actor allowed or orchestrated.⁴⁵³ Existing historiography relating the *bricha* and, in fact, the diplomatic history of the immediate postwar period emphasizes the plans of great statesmen of the victorious Allied Powers, Jewish Joint Distribution Committee officials in New York, covert agents from Palestine and UNRRA officials on the ground in Europe and does not question the zigzagged process by which Náchod, Czechoslovakia became the important transit station that it did.

The trip from Polish Silesia to the border station at Náchod and throughout Czechoslovak interiors to the American Zone in Germany was laden with contingencies. Jan Masaryk, Edvard Beneš, Vladimír Clementis, Bolesław Bierut, Clement Atlee, Harry Truman and, even, Josef Stalin could not whole-heartedly encourage nor completely prevent the wearied herd of human capital which pressed towards the border cutting through historic Silesia. Moreover, the undercover Zionist agents, who worked together in a semi-organized unit to enable Poland's Jews to leave Poland could not control how Czechoslovak authorities on the border and in Prague would respond to the influx of transmigrants. No discussion in the Kremlin, the White House or the temporary headquarters of

⁴⁵¹ Bauer's work draws heavily on the Haganah Archives in Tel Aviv. He does not include documentation from Czech, Czechoslovak or Polish archives in his study. This makes sense as the book was published in 1970 when access to east European archives was not readily available. Now it is possible to supplement Bauer's expansive research with even more documentation.

⁴⁵² In *Brichah* (his transliteration from the Hebrew), Bauer asks why Czechoslovak government officials supported the *bricha* so strongly. See on p. 219, "the operation clause of the decision, however, stated quite clearly that Nejedlý's ministry should take care of the transients and provide transportation through Czech territory. The fact that the large Communist contingent in the government including Klement Gottwald, supported this decision is, of course, very important. One can but guess at the motives for this attitude. Obviously any Jewish infiltration into Palestine would cause trouble there for the British and this was welcomed by pro-Communist or pro-Soviet politicians. At the same time, however other motives seem to have been present as well. Many Czech politicians, including such people as Nejedlý, Antonín Zápotocký (Prime Minister) and others had gone through the Nazi hell, which was still fresh in their minds in 1946. Generally speaking, the feeling in Czechoslovakia toward Jewish refugees was friendly for that reason, and this was probably a factor. At any rate, Communists and non-Communist ministers and officials cooperated to make this extraordinary arrangement possible, knowing full well the opposition of Britain to this mass move of Jews."

⁴⁵³ Náchod resident Rudolf Beck, who helped organize the relief on the ground, writes on the back of a picture in his personal archive that "our government bureaus, the Ministry of International Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior financed this effort with the agreement of the Soviet Union, namely by providing vehicles and issuing travel documents." See: Rudolf Beck's Personal Archive, Náchod, Czech Republic. Of course Soviet agreement regarding this operation is important but it was not the key ingredient for the success of this exodus. Events on the ground, regardless of Soviet opinion, moved with unique momentum as 1946 proceeded.

UNRRA could anticipate what happened as events unraveled in the spring of 1946.

On the Border: From V-E Day to the first quarter of 1946

Immediately after hostilities ended, throughout the summer of 1945, Náchod residents lucky enough to spend the war years at home witnessed minimal foot traffic through their town. Czechs and Poles, Jews and former political prisoners, civilians and military officials crossed back and forth in an attempt to return home. The main thrust of this initial postwar repatriation, however, traveled by rail and therefore far from the Náchod town square. An anonymous report circulated throughout the Ministry of the Interior in August 1945 reported that 700,000 Czechs had already been repatriated and about 300,000 more waited for their chance to board a government-sponsored train to Prague and then, from Prague, to their homes.⁴⁵⁴ During the first week of August 1945 alone, 150 trains carried upwards of a hundred thousand people out of Czechoslovakia. Millions of non-Czechs waited in Prague and other major cities for their multi-directional homeward evacuations across Czech borders. Náchodians saw few of these repatriates in the three months after liberation. Away from the transnational rail lines, the majority of trains in Náchod's station shuttled back and forth to Prague carrying local traffic. Beginning in the fall of 1945, however, Náchod's experience with post-war refugees drastically changed.

As the summer cooled in September 1945, unsuccessfully repatriated Polish Jews began spilling across the western Czechoslovak border. According to a report filed eleven days before the autumnal equinox by soldier Lt. Schonborn, a liaison officer between the Czech General Staff and the International Red Cross, an increasing number of Jews had arrived "who (were) anxious to go to Palestine."⁴⁵⁵ At first, the XXII U.S. Army Corps had handled and accepted the small stream. Three weeks prior, however, this unit "stopped accepting individual transports of such people giving as a reason that Great Britain had closed entry into Palestine." Schonborn expressed concern for these Jews, who claimed that in Poland there was "very little protection from the law." As the Polish Government did not inhibit emigration, upwards of 15,000 had left the country and, at the time, 6,000 had arrived in Czechoslovakia. Most of these refugees were young. Some in the Bohemian lands considered this population a threat.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Ústav Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (hereafter ÚTGM), Edvard Beneš, Collection II (EBII), P44/8. Also helpful in understanding the transport situation in post-war Prague and the overall bedlam which ensued in the wake of V-E day as millions of people took to central Europe's roads is Heda Margolius-Kovaly's beautifully-written memoir *Under a Cruel Star: Life in Prague, 1941-1968* (New York: Holmes & Maier, 1997).

⁴⁵⁵ 425-230-8 ABS.

⁴⁵⁶ 425-227-4 ABS. In a fascinating conversation among Jewish community leaders in January 1946, Mr. Crum noted that "Jews from Poland have been a threat....since September 1945;" with 15-20,000 Jews living in camps, the situation is very difficult (obtizna). In response, Dr. Kurt Wehle noted that the Czech government had strong humanitarian sentiments and Arnošt Frischer added that "these Jews do not want to stay in Poland and are not able to stay."

Instead of expelling these unfortunates, Schonborn proposed that the Czechoslovak government should step in and build camps to house between 30,000 and 40,000 of these refugees. The Czechoslovak authorities, in Schonborn's proposal, would control the population of these camps, the movement therein and provide those working outside the camp with ration cards. In the end, "Palestine must be the ultimate goal" as, he reasoned, "their admittance into Palestine would practically solve the Jewish problem in Eastern Europe." Concluding with a flourish, Schonborn argued that President T. G. Masaryk, were he alive, would support such a humanitarian effort.⁴⁵⁷

Schonborn looked back two decades at the example of Czechoslovakia's founding father. He could have chosen, however, a more recent example to demonstrate Czechoslovakia's liberal and humanitarian values. On the first of July 1945, Jan Masaryk, the Foreign Minister of the state and son of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, met with high-ranking representatives of the World Jewish Congress to discuss the postwar situation of Jews in central Europe. Masaryk promised "to use his influence for (the) opening up of emigration for those who want to emigrate, especially those with close family ties abroad."⁴⁵⁸ Over the course of the next year and a half, Masaryk would hold true to this sentiment. Those Jews who want to leave Europe should, in Masaryk's assessment, be able to leave. Family ties, however, would not be the sole or the even the primary factor determining a Jew's right to exit Europe.

Masaryk acted alongside a handful of men in the highest echelons of the Czechoslovak government to implement very precise ideas about where some Jews belonged. Their views and decisions become increasingly relevant beginning in January 1946, when Polish Jews who had spent the war scattered throughout the Soviet Union began returning to their country. Nearly 70% of this population decided to leave Poland upon their failed homecoming. They moved towards the Silesian border on foot, by bus or on horse carts and attempted to cross the Polish border and enter Czechoslovakia. By the early days of February 1946, Czechoslovak administrators confronted this unfortunate wave directly.

Responses to the first waves of trans-migrants

A varied team assembled for a meeting regarding the flow of Polish Jews on February 2, 1946. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZV), the Ministry of the Interior (MV), the Ministry of Health (MZ), UNRRA, the JDC and Dr. Karel Stein of Prague's Jewish Community gathered to discuss

⁴⁵⁷ 425-230-8, ABS. The archives have not yielded an official response from either the Czechoslovak Government or the International Red Cross to Schonborn's report. It is interesting to note, however, that in the fall of 1945 Polish Jews were not allowed to cross the border into Czechoslovakia. Moreover, Schonborn noted the viability of having some kind transit camp near Náchod to help with a humanitarian mission concerning these Polish Jews only.

⁴⁵⁸ "Conversation with Jan Masaryk on July 3, 1945," H 98/3 in WJC Collection.

the “Jewish refugees (who) cannot stay in Poland” and “need help.”⁴⁵⁹ This international coterie decided that these Jews “can stay (in) Czechoslovakia for a while during their passing.” Moreover, because of the “antisemitism in Poland they can have asylum in Czechoslovakia.” Legally, these trans-migrants fell into a new UNRRA category and were thus described as “displaced person(s) unsuccessfully repatriated.”⁴⁶⁰ Their entry into Czechoslovakia would be legal, transit visas would be given for their evacuation into Germany/Austria and the government of Czechoslovakia would provide “two camps for those leaving Poland.”⁴⁶¹ Finally and most poignantly, an agreement between UNRRA and the MZV clarified that UNRRA would be responsible for these people.⁴⁶²

The agreement securing UNRRA financial support for the care of these unsuccessfully repatriated Polish Jews was unprecedented and seemingly marked a watershed moment for the organization. From November 1943 when UNRRA assembled for its inaugural meeting in Atlantic City and throughout further conferences in 1944 and 1945, members of the UNRRA team codified specific legal language defining displaced people and clarifying support. Notably, the efforts of the World Jewish Congress to introduce a special category of the “Jewish displaced person” failed at each of UNRRA’s three official meetings war-time meetings. Further, UNRRA guidelines did not permit displaced people to be repatriated more than once. The subject of displaced people who returned home but then would potentially opt for voluntary displacement after their official

⁴⁵⁹ In Czech, the ministries are as follows: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, Ministerstvo Vnitra, Ministerstvo Zdravotnictví. The Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is a worldwide Jewish relief organization founded in 1914. During World War II and immediately after, the JDC was a non-state actor with, arguably, state-like power. Officials from the JDC and the World Jewish Congress often found themselves in meetings with high-ranking state officials speaking on behalf of Jews or what each organization considered the Jewish people. For more on the JDC see: Yehuda Bauer, *My brother's keeper; a history of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1929-1939* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974); Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the ashes : the impact of American Jews on post-holocaust European Jewry* (Oxford; New York: Pergamon Press, 1989); Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish emergence from powerlessness* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979); Yosef Litvak, “The American Joint Distribution Committee and Polish Jewry, 1944-1949” in *Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period*, Selwyn Ilan Troen and Benjamin Pinkus, editors (New York: Routledge, 1992), 269-316. On the World Jewish Congress see: *Unity in dispersion; a history of the World Jewish Congress* (New York, 1948).

⁴⁶⁰ On UNRRA see Zorach Warhaftig, *Relief and rehabilitation; implications of the UNRRA program for Jewish needs* (New York: Institute of Jewish affairs of the American Jewish congress and World Jewish Congress, 1944) and Daniel Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN : how the allies won World War II and forged a peace* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris/Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁴⁶¹ The question of finances will be discussed below, but for now suffice it to say that the JDC did not have many funds to offer Czechoslovakia at this time. In a January 16, 1946 letter to Czechoslovakia Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger, Director of the JDC in Czechoslovakia Harold Trube asked the Prime Minister to provide funds which the JDC had “assumed would be met by the Government.” As the Jewish Religious Community had no funds and people had lost individual savings, Trube hoped that members of the Government upon becoming aware of the seriousness of the situation which confronts us ... will wish to do (their) utmost to find a speedy and effective solution.” See ABS 425-192-75. Thus, the Czechoslovak Government was expected to play a significant financial role alongside the JDC.

⁴⁶² 425-231-2 ABS.

homecoming infused a handful of UNRRA discussions in 1943, 1944 and 1945. The official guidelines of the organization, however, did not offer support to these doubly displaced individuals. The agreement made between the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNRRA in early February 1946 challenged this precedent. Now, even after repatriation, Polish Jews could opt for voluntary displacement and thereby inherit a new status as a “displaced person unsuccessfully repatriated.”

It did not take long for these agreements to take effect and dramatically alter daily life in one Czechoslovak border town. Less than three weeks later, on February 21, 1946, the state border police in Náchod “detained a group of Polish Jews for crossing the border and left them in detention” at the Red Cross facility in town. The border police report indicates that “members of this group should have been punished for crossing the border” but instead “they were transmitted by the Repatriation Department in Náchod and without punishment removed to Bratislava.” This surprising turn of events “happened on the command of Consul Novak from the Ministry of the Interior, through the representatives of the Joint in Náchod, Mr. (Rudolf) Beck, and the functionary of the UNRRA, Mr. (Elfan) Riese.” Furthermore, it was confirmed that “the detainees” had “wanted to go through Bratislava to the (American Zone).”⁴⁶³ Three of the institutional partners who attended the meeting on February 21st intervened to change the course of events for this group of Polish Jews. These migrants, who ordinarily would have been punished for their illegal transgression, were given clearance to proceed to Bratislava and then westward, most likely to the American Zone in Germany. The border at Náchod, once a roadblock to further emigration, was now a rare point of exit.

This second precedent for movement via Náchod occurred as tens of thousands of Polish Jews returned from exile in the Soviet Union. Each month, from January through August, Poland’s Recovered Territories (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) in the west were expected to absorb this influx of repatriated citizens. The absorption did not always succeed. When WJC official Arie Tartakower met with the Polish Minister of Labor and Social Welfare on March 21, 1946, he learned the government’s official view regarding the homecoming of these Jews. Minister Stanczyk told Tartakower that “the principle of freedom of emigration will be strictly observed in the future, just as it is being observed at present.” Further, the minister “was afraid that the present, already very strong tendencies of emigration among some Polish Jewry will grow considerably as a result of the process of repatriation.” Stanczyk had observed that the Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union “are in the majority of cases anxious to leave Poland as soon as possible. They have suffered very much during their life on the territory of USSR and they are afraid that in the case of a Soviet occupation of Poland they would have to live forever and always under Soviet rule. No difficulties, therefore, ought

⁴⁶³ 302/163-5 ABS.

to be placed in the way of their emigration.”⁴⁶⁴ Polish Jews, therefore, could exit the country legally, according to Polish law. The reasons behind their westward emigration, however, needed clarification.

Both Tartakower and Stanczyk harbored concerns about how international observers would interpret the massive exodus of Polish Jews away from the Recovered Territories. An argument identifying antisemitic propaganda and acts of physical terror against the Jews as the stimuli for emigration “must be avoided.” Instead, the two men agreed that, instead, “the difficult economic situation of the Jewish population and the hopelessness of Jewish life in Poland” should be stressed as the “prime motivating factors behind the exodus.” Moreover, “the fact that Jews are reluctant to remain in the country where millions of them were killed by the Nazis” could be emphasized as well.⁴⁶⁵ A high-ranking Polish government official and a well-connected representative from the World Jewish Congress shared similar public relations concerns. Neither wanted antisemitic violence to be invoked as the primary cause of Jewish emigration from Poland.

During March 1946, the same month that Tartakower met with Stanczyk, a special report landed on the desk of employees within Czechoslovakia’s Interior Ministry. The two-page document alerted officials to the “serious” problem of the Jewish refugees from Poland at Czechoslovakia’s northeastern border.⁴⁶⁶ According to this anonymous writer, in addition to “International Jewish Organizations” that are “helping (Polish Jews) to move further west” institutions such as the Ministries of the Interior, Social Welfare and Foreign Affairs have “tried to sign an agreement with UNRRA” to offer further help. The agreements, however, have not been signed yet because UNRRA in Czechoslovakia “has not received agreement from their headquarters.”⁴⁶⁷ In lieu of UNRRA’s cooperation, the Interior Ministry has worked with (unidentified) Jewish organizations to “register the refugees of this kind as long as they live at the present time on the land of Czechoslovakia.” Without knowledge of UNRRA’s opinion on this matter, however, “further infiltrations of these people on the land of Czechoslovakia is impossible.”⁴⁶⁸ The report encouraged “caution in this matter” as various opinions existed within government circles regarding these Jewish refugees. No concrete policy decision resulted from this memorandum. Soon, however, conditions on the ground demanded immediate action.

⁴⁶⁴ Arieh Tartakower, “Report of meeting with Jan Stanczyk,” March 1946, H 273/13 in WJC Collection.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ “Informace pro pane minister [Information for the Minister of the Interior],” written on March 1, 1946, 304-257-6 ABS.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. Eleven Jewish refugees from Poland were detained in Náchod during the week prior to this report. Also, some Romanian Jewish refugees spent time at a border station in Bohumim and another Romanian group had been seen in Prague on February 27, 1946.

The Exodus at its height in the spring and summer of 1946

A “disastrous situation” had materialized in Polish Silesia by April and May 1946. The flow of refugees out of the Soviet Union back towards Polish soil increased substantially as warmer weather enabled swifter travel on railways. A short cable sent to the World Jewish Congress by Berman and Zelicki on May 14 reported that 85,000 repatriates, including 15,000 children, had arrived in Lower Silesia. The Polish authorities requested “immediate help, money, clothes and food.”⁴⁶⁹ The extent of this humanitarian crisis cannot be overemphasized. Very soon after these masses arrived at train stations throughout the recently acquired territories, they made conscious decisions to leave once again. Upon disembarking from repatriation trains, many Polish Jews met Zionist youth organizers who disseminated information about housing, daily life in their new surroundings and how to continue sojourns towards Palestine.⁴⁷⁰ Most likely, at this moment, thousands of Polish Jews heard the word “Náchod” for the first time.

As the number of Polish Jews crossing into Czechoslovakia increased, the Ministry of the Interior sent out an official communiqué to various state and regional bodies on April 18, 1946. Equal parts informative and directive the subject line read: “people of Jewish descent, Polish state citizens.” It is useful to quote this announcement at length:

Many Jewish people have fled Poland to Czechoslovakia recently because of Benderovcu (Ukrainians), fascists and illegal organizations of the (Polish) Home Army. The reasons for their fleeing include: returning from various concentration camps and finding none of their relations or being in homeless states or finding their homes occupied and choosing to voluntarily move. The majority of these people were interned a long time and suffered in these concentration camps in both heart and body. There is no work (in Poland). (Their) the only desire...is to get quickly to their relatives in America, in Palestine, in Canada, in Subcarpathian Ruthenia or in other states. International Jewish organizations like the Jewish Joint and others will offer help and support their evacuation. The Ministry of the Interior confirms that that some of our departments have cracked down on these people ... and others have eventually evacuated them back to Poland where they are subject to persecution before they again resort to our land.

⁴⁶⁹ “Cable from Berman and Zelicki to WJC,” Dated May 14, 1946, H 276/13 in WJC Collection.

⁴⁷⁰ Engel discusses this in *Between liberation and flight*. See also in Bauer’s *Bricha*, 126: “At the railway stations in Warsaw or Łódź, propagandists of the Jewish Central Committee and those of the Zionists competed quite openly for the newcomers...unlike those Polish Jews who had been under direct Nazi rule (the Polish Jews arriving back from the Soviet Union) were not single remnants of large families but members of families who now came from Russia with children...There was a basic readiness to leave the country, this readiness was not unconditional and the majority of repatriants were content to sit on their suitcases waiting for a legal way to leave Poland.”

The Ministry considers this position inappropriate and unsuitable and (asks) ... the security forces to take care of persons of Jewish origin and Polish nationality. (They should) not obstruct (them) from leaving our countries territory to the west where they intend to settle. Do not evacuate them like uncomfortable foreigners to Poland because, apart from the fact that it is humane treatment (not to send them back to Poland), it can be expected from (their initial) attempt to cross the border that they will do so again in this direction.⁴⁷¹

Despite being written in complicated legal Czech, a translation of this directive clarifies the official state policy regarding a specific group of displaced people: the Polish citizens of Jewish descent. Unlike other potential non-Jewish migrants from Poland, this specific group was to be treated in a special manner and allowed entry to Czechoslovakia.⁴⁷²

This decree does not invoke antisemitism as a cause of this movement away from Poland. More generally, the Polish Jews in question suffer at the hands of bandits, fascists and illegal organizations throughout the ravaged state. As there is no work in Poland and their homes no longer belong to them, this select group who has suffered in concentration camps should be allowed to leave and join their families abroad. Moreover, as the JDC will fund the travels of this select group of people, they should be allowed to travel freely.⁴⁷³ And since these people, once barred entry at the border will most likely seek entry yet again, the Ministry suggests that the security police on the border should not turn these Polish Jews away. They are worthy, in the Ministry's assessment, of "humane" treatment. And so, any Jew who attempts to cross the border will be able to proceed. Once

⁴⁷¹304-257-1 ABS. The law continues: "It is in our interest that people of Jewish origin and Polish citizenship leave our country quickly, so that their stay in our country is not extended, or even so they do not settle here, since these are usually people who will not work and be unemployed."

⁴⁷² Only Polish Jews could obtain passports, cross the border, find shelter at Czechoslovakia-supported transit camps and receive transit visas that would enable further travel to American zones in Germany and Austria. Two separate documents from the World Jewish Congress archive confirm that only Jews could receive passports in Poland circa 1946. See H 278/2 in WJC Collection for when "Dr. Margoshes explained (on March 6, 1946) that in Poland passports are being issued to Jews only. An applicant for a passport must get a statement from the Central Jewish Committee that he is of Jewish birth. (Moreover) no papers have been issued to Jews stating that they do not have the right to return to Poland." See also Zorach Warhaftig's report on his 1946 visit to Poland, where he states that "according to the administrative practice (of the Polish Government) you must get from the Central Committee a statement that you are a Jew and only then can you get a passport; now the Union of Religious Communities is also issue such certificates." Poignantly, Warhaftig frames the Jewish exodus against the complete wartime annihilation of Polish Jews. He writes "you cannot have any idea of what has happened to European Jewry until you have visited Poland and see it with your own eyes....you cannot realize, you cannot comprehend what has happened to the Jews anywhere unless you see what has happened to them in Poland. There is no comparison. Only cemeteries remain..." Zorach Warhaftig, H 276/14 in WJC Collection,

⁴⁷³ At this point, it seems that the JDC would pay for the costs incurred throughout this migration. Throughout 1946, however, the Czechoslovak state paid for a majority of the costs associated with this passage.

discriminated against negatively during Nazi occupation, Polish Jews now enjoyed positive discrimination, at least in the eyes of Czechoslovakia's Interior Ministry and foreshadowed another decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior in September 1946 and analyzed at the end of the last chapter.⁴⁷⁴

In short the September 1946 decree clarified that a Jew in the eyes of Nazi law remained a Jew before Czechoslovak law. When the Czechoslovak officials who worked at the Náchod transit camps prevented non-Jewish Poles from joining the droves of displaced persons throughout 1946, they were, in effect, following state laws that mandated special treatment for Jews. In this way, Náchod became a halfway house only for Polish citizens of Jewish descent.

In a special issue of the Yiddish periodical *The Resistance* dedicated to "the good citizens of Czechoslovakia," Isaac Asoffsky, the Executive Director of HIAS, explained through words and pictures what happened in this sleepy hamlet. Throughout 1946 the Czechoslovak government spent upwards of 30 million crowns (approximately 1.6 million dollars) for relief to the 130,000 Jewish refugees "who fled hostile surroundings" and migrated through Czechoslovakia.⁴⁷⁵ Náchod, their point of departure and "once only a spot on the map... became a focal point of international interest and a symbol of mercy to Jews everywhere." Asoffsky praised the Czechoslovak government for their spontaneous and gracious response to this humanitarian emergency. Even though "the flood of dejected persons came ... like an uncontrollable tidal wave" the people living and working in Náchod "welcomed them rather than building ponderous bulwarks in their paths."⁴⁷⁶

Though Asoffsky praised the work at Náchod, his journalistic account masks a more complicated reality that unfolded throughout the summer of 1946. Thousands of Polish Jews crossed the border monthly through the winter and spring. The advent of warmer weather, a high-profile pogrom in Kielce on July 4, 1946 and the arrival of repatriation trains carrying Polish Jews from the Soviet Union toward new and unfamiliar homes dramatically increased the flow of refugees.⁴⁷⁷ This confluence of climate and violence led those bureaucratic and

⁴⁷⁴ Obviously the legal position of the Jew drastically changed in the postwar period. The calculus establishing Jewishness, however, remained the same during and after the Nazi occupation of Poland and the concurrent period in Bohemian and Moravian Protectorate. During the war, a person of Jewish descent was designated as such by the Nuremberg Laws that came into effect through the Czech lands and Poland upon the Nazi occupation. In both contexts, national Jews, who opted for a Jewish identification on the interwar Czech and Polish censuses, and Polish and Czechoslovak nationals with Jewish heritage, Jewish spouses or Jewish community membership became one and the same in the eyes of Nazi law. This category included Jews who were not otherwise "Jewish" but established as Jews racially. After the war, any Polish citizen could use their experience as a Jew during the war to obtain special treatment (relative to the non-Jewish Polish population) as a Jew.

⁴⁷⁵ Quoted from "The Epic of the Jewish Trans-migrants through Czechoslovakia as told by Isaac L. Asoffsky and by Z.H. Wachsman in *The Resistance*, Feb 5 1947," *Zemský Úrad-Washington, USA #33 in MZV*.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁷ Regarding Kielce, see Gross' *Fear* and Engel's "Violence" article cited in footnote #1. While the pogrom in Kielce initiated an increase in transmigrants, the numbers grew substantially in the month of

non-governmental officials to reassess and then expand the entire operation. A closer look at events during the month of July 1946 reveals just how much the fate of the 60,000 transmigrants, who traversed Náchod and its environs during that summer hinged on the relationships between the JDC and Czechoslovak bureaucrats, between the availability of Czechoslovak crowns and the firm resolve of a few notable Jewish, American and Czech officials.

What is to be done in Náchod? Meetings across July and August 1946

Over a period of two weeks, from July 14 to July 26, 1946, a coterie of high-ranking ministers, transplanted Jewish leaders and a pair of UNRRA officials convened a series of meetings devoted to the Polish Jewish exodus. The agreements codified during this two-week time span reinforced the precedents from February and April ensuring that the road to and beyond Náchod remained open for continued transit. Notably, at this juncture the discussions surrounding the exodus of Polish Jews involved the highest echelons of the Czechoslovak government and created divisions among UNRRA administrators. Even as the number of migrants increased, as the pace of their passage quickened and the costs of the enterprise multiplied, the exodus remained legal (and in some cases decidedly mandatory) according to a handful of Czechoslovak, JDC and (some) UNRRA officials. In July of 1946, fewer than a dozen men and women working in Prague, Náchod and in between ensured that thousands of Polish Jewish citizens would have safe passage out of Europe and that bricha could continue apace.⁴⁷⁸

The drama of high-level meetings during this pivotal month remains preserved in a report filed by Israel Jacobson, a Jewish American who was serving as AJC director for Czechoslovakia after the war.⁴⁷⁹ Soon after the Kielce pogrom, Jacobson attended a meeting on the dire financial state of the operation

August, perhaps as the last of the repatriated Polish Jews moved into Silesia. At this point, Silesia would have been at its most crowded, thus explaining why more Polish Jews set off towards Náchod than in previous months. Hence, Kielce should not be considered the event that prompted the most Jewish migration. According to the numbers at Náchod, the conclusion of official repatriation from the Soviet Union initiated more movement away from Poland than did the pogrom at Kielce.

⁴⁷⁸ In *Brichah*, Bauer attributes agency to the Bricha movement in general. And yet, he also notes that the movement was also quite decentralized. On page 184 he writes, “slowly as 1945 passed the soldier and the Palestinian *shlichim* (literally, senders; the men and women who helped Polish Jews know how to leave Poland, my note) of Mossad made their influence felt and toward the end of the year all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had their Palestinian *Bricha* commanders. The time had clearly come to set up a much more efficient centralized organization, however, efforts to do so ran into snags that can only be explained by the complications of the Zionist political structures.” *Bricha* is at once a unified and divided force.

⁴⁷⁹ Bauer uses Jacobson’s report extensively. See in *Brichah*, 182-188. For Israel Jacobson’s full report see: Israel Jacobson, “Report,” 425-192-75, ABS. Most of the documents relating to Náchod are replicated in the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archive. See for example: Israel Jacobson, “Report on JDC activities in Czechoslovakia, July-November 1946,” in Records of the Geneva Office (1945-1954) of the JDC #G45-54, Czechoslovakia Section File #201, Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (hereafter JDC) Archive and Israel Jacobson, “Report #345 dated 7/29/46, Content: Czechoslovakia and Preliminary Report-Re: Infiltrates from Poland” in Records of the Geneva Office #G45-54, Poland Section File #780 in JDC Archive.

straddling the Czechoslovak-Polish border. The organized violence against Jews, fueled by the radio broadcasts of Cardinal Hlond, and the influx of refugees from the Soviet Union into an insecure Polish state propelled more and more Jews to flee Poland.⁴⁸⁰ In turn, the cost of upkeep and further transportation from Náchod climbed astronomically. The “makeshift arrangements” involving the Ministers of Social Welfare and Labor, Foreign Affairs, the Interior and the JDC proved insufficient when confronted with an increased exodus. To exacerbate matters, the Czechoslovak government had spent upwards of 21 million crowns on food over the past six months “without any clear-cut decision as to who was ultimately responsible” for distributing it. Acting on the verbal assurance of Mr. Riese, a repatriation officer of the UNRRA mission to Czechoslovakia whom we encountered above, Prague government officials assumed that the Washington officials would offer a special allocation for these people classified as unsuccessful repatriates. The time had come, however, to settle accounts and prepare for a sustained flow of human traffic. And so, when the UNRRA Deputy Director General for Europe Mary Louise Gibbons came to Czechoslovakia during the week of July 7-14 1946 officials from various government ministries and the JDC gathered for meetings with her. Unfortunately, Miss Gibbons brought debilitating news.⁴⁸¹

In meetings with minor government authorities during her time in Bohemia, Gibbons informed her colleagues that “they had either misunderstood or been misinformed by Mr. Riese with regard to UNRRA acceptance of responsibility in supplying these additional funds and food products necessary to feed and to transport the unexpectedly large number of refugees.” In fact, Gibbons remained adamant that the “budget for Czechoslovakia had been set” and “no additional funds could be made available.” Upon the reversal of Mr. Riese’s promise, shockwaves spread through bureaucratic and diplomatic circles. In Jacobson’s assessment, “great anxiety and confusion amongst the lower echelons of Governmental employees who had been carrying out the program of aid to Polish travelers without authorization from their chiefs (i.e. the head of various ministries) followed in the wake of Gibbons’ declaration. Jacobson and his colleagues at the JDC wasted little time considering their options. Instead, he “immediately conferred with Minister Masaryk and Vice Minister Clementis” concerning the dire situation at hand.⁴⁸²

Soon after Gibbons’ announcement, Jacobson met with two high profile officials to clarify and, hopefully, revise her directives. At the meeting, Masaryk assured Jacobson and the JDC that “everything would be done to keep the Czechoslovak border open and that he personally would pay tribute to the various officials who had been assisting this important work at the (scheduled)

⁴⁸⁰ In chapter two of his book on Wrocław, Gregor Thom offers a judicious review of Hlond’s actions and the relations between the Polish Catholic Church and the Vatican.

⁴⁸¹ Israel Jacobson, “Report,” 425-192-75, ABS.

⁴⁸² Ibid. Jacobson notes that Masaryk had no party affiliation and that Clementis was communist.

government meeting on July 16.” Moreover, he declared that “Czechoslovakia must remain a haven of refuge for these Jews fleeing from terror.” Emphatically, Masaryk promised that if Czechoslovakia would close its borders, he “would resign” in protest. Masaryk’s Vice Minister Clementis “also agreed that everything would be done to keep the border open” once he was assured that the transmigrants would stay in Czechoslovakia only for the duration of their “transport out of the country.”⁴⁸³ Jacobson and the JDC now had a clear mandate from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his second in command that the exodus would proceed. Jacobson, however, did not cease his activities on behalf of the Polish Jewish refugees. His work during that busy July had only just begun.

Fresh off his meeting with Czechoslovak leaders, Jacobson welcomed another UNRRA leader for a two and a half hour conference a few days later. Unhappy with the remarks of Gibbons, Jacobson sat down with her associates, Piotr Alexejev, the current Chief of the UNRRA mission in Prague, and Mrs. Gates, a welfare officer for UNRRA. Alongside JDC-Paris official Levy Becker and Max Spitz of the South African Jewish Appeal, Jacobson worked through an interpreter to ascertain Alexejev’s position on the entire Náchod affair. Jacobson expressed his organization’s “deep desire” that Alexejev would “use all his persuasive powers both with his superiors at UNRRA in London and Washington as well as with Czech Government officials to the ensure that funds and food would continue to be provided for the Polish Jewish transients through Czechoslovakia.”⁴⁸⁴ In return, Alexejev “expressed his sympathy with the need and his desire to do all possible.” On a number of occasions, Alexejev had cabled London for a “direct concrete answer to his question as to whether UNRRA would provide the Czechoslovak government with the extra allocation for this purpose.”

Directly contrary to his colleague Gibbons, Alexejev reported to Jacobson that he was prepared to “negotiate immediately with Czechoslovak government officials to ask them to continue their cooperative participation in providing food and transport.” Further, Alexejev “expressed the hope that (the) AJDC would continue to do its utmost in providing staff at the focal points and supplementary food wherever needed.” On that note of cooperation, the meeting adjourned. Apparently, Gibbons’ reluctance to provide UNRRA funds for the Náchod operation had been an aberration. Alexejev would work to ensure that the exodus continued at full pace.

Back in sync with UNRRA, Jacobson moved to schedule more meetings with high-ranking Czechoslovak government officials in a two-pronged strategy to secure national and international assurances for the transmigrants passing through Náchod. A few days later on July 23, Jacobson convened with Professor Zdeněk Nejedlý, the Minister of Social Welfare and Labor, for a three-hour meeting which included Captain Groen (of the Repatriation Department), Dr. Satawn (Council to the Ministry), Dr. Jiří Fisher (representative of Ministry) and Max Spitz. At this

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

three hour session “the total overall problem was discussed” and it became clear that the “Minister had not been aware of the full implications of the problem.” To correct this gross oversight, Nejedlý “tried to reach by telephone the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister in order that his Ministry be definitely charged to take over the organization and operation of services to facilitate the rapid transit through Czechoslovakia of the Polish Jewish refugees.” When Masaryk and Václav Nosek (Minister of the Interior) could not be reached, Nejedlý agreed that status quo arrangements (would) be continued” until a conference could be arranged including the relevant government officials. For the time being, the “de facto arrangements existing today, i.e. the installations at Náchod, Bratislava, Bloubetin and Prague would continue to serve the Polish refugees” and “transportation by Czech railroads” would proceed indefinitely.⁴⁸⁵ important meeting. In a thank-you letter to the Minister, Jacobson deemed it an honor to report to (JDC) headquarters the “liberal and humane attitude of the Czechoslovak Government and the Czechoslovak people in the help they are giving to the terror stricken Polish Jews fleeing for safely through (the country).”⁴⁸⁶

In Jacobson’s assessment, Nejedlý’s constructive understanding mirrored the examples of Ministers Masaryk and Clementis who had also extended extra help to Poles of Jewish descent. The concerted actions of these three leaders demonstrated the “will of the Czechoslovak people in aiding the unsuccessful repatriates from Poland.” Jacobson continued and stated his “readiness to have the Ministry of Social Welfare take over the organization and operation of services to facilitate the rapid transit through Czechoslovakia of these unfortunate human beings.” Moreover, he thanked Nejedlý for his assurances regarding the early implementation of this program. After meetings with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior, Jacobson was confident that “necessary steps can be taken at once.”⁴⁸⁷

Over the course of one week, Israel Jacobson enjoyed an audience with two top UNRRA officials who espoused contradictory platforms and with three leading Czechoslovak government authorities. That these officials showed alacrity in response to Gibbons’ debilitating statement is exceptional. It stands to reason that Jacobson’s speedy access indicates an awareness of non-Jewish government and UNRRA officials that the situation surrounding Náchod had become either increasingly important, impossible to ignore or some combination of both. Jacobson is clear that Masaryk viewed the Polish Jewish exodus as an incident of the highest humanitarian importance. Masaryk would resign his post rather than turn his back on this fleeing remnant of humanity. Nejedlý, Clementis and the others Jacobson encountered that July were less clear and less idealistic

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Israel Jacobson, “Letter to Nejedlý,” 425-192-75 in ABS.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

than Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister but they were still quick to act and keep Náchod's borders open.

One day following the decision of Minister Nejedlý to relocate the administration of Náchod and the exodus under the purview of his department, Jacobson met with three Social Welfare and Labor officials to work out financial and logistical specifics. At this meeting, Jacobson made 50,000 crowns available to the Ministry for "the repair of a reception center in Náchod" which would house a repatriation office and an office for the JDC. The Center would be run by the Repatriation Office (which fell under the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor) and staffed by the Joint.⁴⁸⁸ This agreement was temporary but ensured that all arrangements currently in operation would continue indefinitely. The Ministry officials then expressed to Jacobson their concern "over the fact that they had to date received only verbal assurance from UNRRA and on this basis had made available food and transport without having had special instructions from their top officials." In turn, Satawn, Green and Blanner asked for the JDC's help "in working out a definite understanding with UNRRA." Jacobson agreed to intervene.⁴⁸⁹

Throughout 1946 but especially during the summer months when the exodus reached its height, funding from the Czechoslovak government eclipsed the contributions of the JDC, the Prague Jewish community and even UNRRA. In a letter to Allan Strock in New York City on 22 July 1946, Ernst Frischer related the dire situation on the eastern border. The former Jewish representative of the Czech government in exile and current member of the Jewish National Council in Prague noted that upwards of 700 Polish Jews crossed the border daily. This high number of people financially strained all the organizations involved. Frischer wrote to his friend, however, to demonstrate which parties shirked their financial obligations.

Frischer explained to Strock how Gibbons had refused to allot a special quota or extraordinary funds. Frischer considered this "opinion of Mrs. Gibbons

⁴⁸⁸ Israel Jacobson, "Report," 425-192-75, ABS. An article ("Z našeho Náchoda do zaslibené země" by Ladislav Khas) found in Rudolf Beck's personal archive in Náchod explains what happened each day during the busy summer of 1946. According to Khas, a regularly scheduled train left Náchod with 600 Jewish passengers. At 6:30 the next morning, the train arrived in Devínska Nová Ves, Slovakia, where children and luggage were loaded into automobiles and the adults walked on foot to Marchegg across the border in Austria. There, the group waited again for a train to Vienna. In Vienna, four buildings were provided to help the trans-migrants. Later they left in the direction of Munich and from Munich they could travel to Palestine via a handful of possible routes. "Only from Náchod" Khas emphasizes, "are 600 Jews prepared (for further transport) every day." The Repatriation Center was in the hills just east of the town square where a senior citizen home remains today (so-called Masaryk Dům). According to pictures housed in the photo archive of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, see 46451.JPG and 36049.JPG at the Museum's Photo Archive housed in Washington D.C., Polish Jews waited for trains in the Náchod train station at the center of town and waited to collect food vouchers and information on the town square in the middle of Náchod. Thus the citizens of Náchod would have seen these throngs of trans-migrants on a daily basis.

⁴⁸⁹ Israel Jacobson, "Report," 425-192-75, ABS.

to be a grievous fault.”⁴⁹⁰ Contrary to the promises offered by UNRRA official Alexejev, it is clear that some parties in this new international body were not moved to remedy the situation on the Czechoslovak-Polish border fiscally. In contrast, Frischer declared, “the Czechoslovak governments behavior in this matter is excellent and they are not only granting asylum but also financial support.” With emphasis, Frischer closes his note stating: “ I think it would not serve our cause if there could arise the impression that the Czechoslovak government is more interested in these refugees than the international UNRRA.”⁴⁹¹ Here, in the midst of a humanitarian crisis, the Czechoslovaks provided the necessary financing. Overall, UNRRA seemed un-involved.

In contrast to UNRRA, the JDC representatives and Prague officials in Czechoslovakia continued what seemed like relentless work. Two days after his meeting with Nejedlý on July 25, 1946, as his associate Becker looked over the situation in Náchod proper, Jacobson had dinner at the house of Dr. Zdeněk Toman (Vice Minister of the Interior).⁴⁹² Later in the evening, Dr. Seman, another official from the Ministry of the Interior, joined them. Over the evening meal, Toman “expressed his great concern over the fact that fascist Ukrainians and other undesirables were sneaking through Czechoslovakia posing as Polish Jewish refugees.”⁴⁹³ The two men “discussed security arrangements and the use of JDC staff to buttress the effort of the Ministry of the Interior in checking the refugees coming through.” Afterwards, Toman proposed that Jacobson “confer with the Polish ambassador in Czechoslovakia” persuade the “Polish government to legalize the existence of these people.”⁴⁹⁴ Upon discussion, Toman conceded that a meeting between Jacobson and the Polish Ambassador might be premature. Instead, he proposed that Jacobson should decide “at a later date whether AJDC should deal with the Polish Ambassador regarding this or whether it should be handled directly by the Czechoslovak government.”⁴⁹⁵ The presumed interaction between is noteworthy. During this humanitarian crisis, in the wake of a war that emptied state treasuries and shattered the ability of indigenous civil societies to organize and respond, the JDC became a non-state actor with seemingly state like fiscal and political powers. In this moment, Jacobson offered diplomatic advice in his capacity as JDC country director.

The conversation proceeded late into the evening as the three men discussed the transportation logistics involved once the exodus moved away from

⁴⁹⁰ Arnošt Frischer, “Letter to Allan Strock,” 425-233-04, ABS.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² In interviews included in the 2003 documentary *Between a Star and Crescent: Bricha (Mezi hvězdou a půlměsícem: Bricha)*, Jacobson and his wife note Toman’s instrumental role in the Náchod operation. The documentary includes footage of an interview given by Zdeněk Toman in the 1980s when he claims that he single-handedly kept the borders open for the flow of refugees. The 58 minute documentary was directed by Petr Bok and is the first film in a three part series detailing the special relationship between Czechoslovakia and Israel.

⁴⁹³ Israel Jacobson, “Report,” 425-192-75, ABS.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

Náchod. Toman asked Jacobson for “an assurance that the people coming into Czechoslovakia would continue to be moved out quickly” and “discussed a plan to direct some of the refugees from Polish border points through Prague to Aš on the American Zone Germany border line, so that they could from there be routed directly to UNRRA camps in Germany.”⁴⁹⁶ The two ministry officials “sympathetically accepted” this plan and “proposed also that arrangements be made for some of the Polish Jews to work in-country for a few weeks. As there was a critical labour shortage due to the deportation of Germans.”⁴⁹⁷ These refugees “would be paid prevailing wage rates” and a plan to employ Polish workers in the former Sudetenland are as would be “considered after definite arrangements were made regarding the care of these transients.”⁴⁹⁸ After those assembled settled a reimbursement issue, Toman asked Jacobson to “submit in writing an overall plan with responsibilities affixed for the movements of Polish Jewish refugees through Czechoslovakia.”⁴⁹⁹ Jacobson had a few short hours to firm up his thoughts regarding the exodus. For on the next day, July 26, 1946, representatives from across the government apparatus would meet to discuss Nejedlý’s decision to maintain the present de facto arrangements in Náchod and beyond.

Nearing the end of his detailed report, Jacobson concludes with a review of this decisive meeting which included representatives from the Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Social Welfare and Labor and of course the JDC. Those assembled accepted Nejedlý’s plan and “agreed that immediate steps would be taken to establish at least quasi-legal machinery to deal with the problem” of the exodus. Moreover, “the officials decided that it was necessary to get clear understanding from UNRRA regarding its supplementary allocation for coping with this situation and a bill of 21,000,000 crowns is to be submitted to UNRRA for food advanced from January 5 to the present in order that a definite decision be given by UNRRA.”⁵⁰⁰ Jacobson was approached to help in these negotiations with UNRRA. When asked what fiscal alternative existed if UNRRA denied the funding, Jacobson submitted that all present “should assume that UNRRA will carry out its obligations in this matter.”⁵⁰¹ The JDC would cooperate with the Czechoslovak government to ensure that the allocation was delivered.⁵⁰² In closing, “it was agreed that the rendering of service to transient Polish Jews would

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Another matter discussed was the return to the AJDC of 115,000 crowns which was the penalty fixed for emigration visas on a group of Polish refugees for illegally crossing into Czechoslovakia. Dr. Toman agreed to return this sum within the next few days.

⁵⁰⁰ Israel Jacobson, “Report,” 425-192-75, ABS.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² According to Bauer, “in the end, UNRRA paid only \$250,000 for the expenses borne by the Czechs. This sum was apparently paid at the end of September 1946, while the actual expenses came to 52,406,750 crowns up to that date (or about \$1,048,000). As far as is known the Czechs were never reimbursed for the rest of the sums expended.” (Bauer, 219).

at no time be terminated without further consultations with the AJDC.” Adding his own commentary, Jacobson noted that this decision “may be important at that moment when any of the agencies involved will wish to change the present arrangements.”⁵⁰³

The involvement of the Czechoslovak government with this movement required the cooperation of various state bureaus and local cells of authority on the ground. Jacobson observed that Nejedlý’s views echoed those of his counterparts in the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Federal administrators from different political parties and governmental officers were in agreement concerning these Polish Jewish transmigrants: they needed help to leave Poland and they belonged elsewhere. Impressively, despite the chaotic governmental shuffle that followed in the wake of liberation and re-establishment of agencies throughout Prague, the problem of Náchod united personnel across the various federal bodies and on the ground in Silesia.⁵⁰⁴ The process of assisting upwards of 60,000 Polish Jewish refugees in the summer of 1946 required symbiosis across state and local levels.⁵⁰⁵

An excellent illustration of the process by which local personalities coordinated with centralized bodies in Prague surfaces when we focus on Náchod citizen Rudolf Beck. Interned in various concentration camps because of his Jewish lineage, Beck returned to his home in Náchod soon after liberation in 1945. From his airy two-story house atop a hill less than a quarter mile from the main square, Beck worked to establish an infrastructure to support the Polish Jewish refugees who appeared in Náchod soon after their individual homecomings had failed. Beck coordinated with health officials in Náchod and secured space in a convalescence home perched in the hills south of the city center. Working with other Jews affiliated with the Náchod Jewish community and using the connections he developed at a civil servant in town before and immediately after the war, Beck secured space and foodstuffs while laying the foundations for an institutional framework that could support transmigrants who stumbled across the border and under the jurisdiction of Náchod’s *kehillah*.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰³ Israel Jacobson, “Report,” 425-192-75, ABS.

⁵⁰⁴ On July 19 a press conference was held in the JDC office at which the press of the United States, England and a number of other countries was represented. Israel Jacobson issued a statement highly praising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour and the Ministry of the Interior. Jacobson said ‘the Czechoslovak government is to be thanked for its extremely helpful attitude in regard to this critical problem. The situation, in short, is that these people are here and that they need help,’ see “Press Conference at JDC Office,” 425-192-74, ABS.

⁵⁰⁵ On September 13, 1946, Mr. Edward M. Warburg, chairman of the American JDC, stated that 60,000 Polish Jews had taken to the road during the last three months in flight from the antisemitic outbreaks in Poland: “the Czechoslovak Government has provided generous aid, including reception centers and transportation through their country,” see “Statement by Edward M. Warburg,” 425-192-74, ABS.

⁵⁰⁶ A small personal archive held by Rudolf Beck’s son-in-law in Beck’s house included a handful of official documents and a small collection of newspaper articles regarding the movement of Polish Jews through Náchod. Two newspaper articles, one from *Svet Prace* on 11/26/46 and an article entitled “Z našeho Náchoda do zaslibené zeme” (“From our Náchod to the beloved land”) detail by Ladislav Khan report that Czechoslovak private citizens in Náchod and on the border in general helped the Polish Jews

No doubt, Beck worked relentlessly in the spring and summer of 1946 as the number of refugees increased astronomically and his hometown became a destination for so many of the destitute. The situation demanded, at least from the perspectives of the Prague Jewish Community and of Beck himself, the involvement of higher authorities as the flood of Polish Jews intensified by mid-July. Accordingly, Czechoslovakia's largest Jewish community decided to send an agent from Prague to fulfill Beck's request for increased help. The situation on the border "in recent week" had "become so big that it extends beyond the capacity of (Náchod's) community."⁵⁰⁷ Because the events at Náchod required negotiations with national bureaus as well as the JDC and UNRRA, the *kehillah* in Prague would conduct the negotiations "exclusively." Specifically, the letter asks Beck to cease his negotiations with UNRRA and allow the Prague representative to take over in his stead. Finally, the writers asked Beck to "assist" the representative and promised to find a suitable "solution" to the problems at hand.⁵⁰⁸

By the end of July 1946, upwards of 700 refugees daily burst through the migration channel that led directly to Náchod and traversed the border at other points.⁵⁰⁹ Moravská Ostrava and Trunov became viable exit points as well. As the masses of displaced persons passed across the border, Zdeněk Toman, the Vice-Minister of the Interior as well as the Czechoslovak director of National Safety who famously met with Israel Jacobson, harbored deep concerns about the authenticity of the trans-migrants entering his country from Poland. The Ministry of the Interior, Toman stated in an internal memorandum, has "received word that sometimes non-Jews sneak into transports of Jewish refugees from Poland who flee from Poland for political reasons and try to get from our country further west."⁵¹⁰ One particular example stood at the forefront of his mind.

On October 14, 1946 border police detained a 24-year-old man named Zbigniew Hartwig of Gornici, Poland. Later, the suspect "confessed during interrogation that he wasn't a Jew and that he had snuck onto the transport for Jewish refugees from Náchod using a false document under the name Viliam Sempek." Further, the accused confirmed that he was a "member of the illegal

passing through the region. Both articles detail the active work of the Czechoslovaks who helped this exodus. Khan's article notes that the Soviets supported this movement but that Czechoslovakia financed it. Both articles, moreover, detail with immense pride how these

⁵⁰⁷ Prague Jewish Community, "Letter to Rudolf Beck," dated July 15, 1946, Personal archive of Rudolf Beck, Náchod, Czech Republic

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ See the July 21, 1946 cable from Sam Sharp to Kubowitzki of the WJC, D 59/11 in WJC Collection. Sharp visited Náchod in July 1946 and noted that the average flow of 600 to 700 Polish Jews met with no difficulties in Czechoslovakia. He also noted that the facilities were "poor" but would be improved by the JDC and the community. He advised that would be "unwise" for the WJC to join this action at this time. In a July 12, 1946 communiqué Sharp reported that "the Polish authorities make no difficulties in issuing passports to Jews desirous of emigration but they insist that the applicants have some kind of final visa of a country willing to accept them." See Sharp's reports in H 97/12 in the WJC Collection.

⁵¹⁰ Zdeněk Toman, "Memo to Sebor," dating from November 1946, 305-871-1, ABS.

organization Wolność i Niezawisłość (WiN) and (that) he (had) fled to our country out of fear for arrest.” To correct this situation, Toman and the Ministry of the Interior asked that “transports of Jewish refugees are given more attention and (that) every suspicious person ...is investigated with the participation of reliable Jewish representatives” before traveling further into the country.⁵¹¹ Only Jews could secure the benefits of the transit camp and free transportation toward the American Zones. A screening process involving discerning Jewish eyes would ensure that Christian Poles would remain in Poland. Poles of Jewish descent, however, could exit.⁵¹²

When September Ends: The Exodus Wanes

By August 1, 1946, at least 50,000 Polish Jews had passed through Náchod or in its vicinity since the conclusion of the Second World War. In contrast, an estimated 120,000 Polish Jews had settled in Lower Silesia after their repatriation from the Soviet Union as the summer of 1946 reached its halfway point. Over the next two months, those Polish Jews who had returned did not stay and in August and September the largest burst of transmigrants reached the Czechoslovak border.⁵¹³ Using legal precedents and an infrastructure developed during the spring and early summer of 1946 more Polish Jews decided to move onwards toward undefined homes elsewhere rather than settle in the structures abandoned by expelled Polish Germans.⁵¹⁴ And until this exodus slowed significantly by the end of 1946 and early 1947, thousands of these transmigrants passed through Náchod, just as thousands had before them.

From his vantage point on the ground in Náchod, Reverend Robert Smith, a correspondent for *The Scotsman* newspaper, possessed a much richer knowledge of Czechoslovak involvement than his contemporaries Barks and Keith could from their high perches in official buildings hundreds of miles to the east in Warsaw. Stationed in Prague, Smith visited Náchod after reading about the town in various international newspapers. He traveled there at the end of August 1946 and wrote that “since the beginning of July over 32,000 people have passed

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Khan writes “condition of transfer (across the border) is Jewish identity which is ascertained by verification of the doctor or the religious community. During the entire time that the action was organized, there were only a few instances of people who incorrectly used the opportunity of the Jewish transfer and in those instances the illegal passengers returned.” See Khan’s “Z našeho Náchoda do zaslibené zěme,” November 26, 1946, *Svet Prace*.

⁵¹³ The most conservative estimates from the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry suggest that at least 13,290 Polish Jews passed through Náchod in August alone.

⁵¹⁴ Bauer notes that according to agreements explained by Jacobson in his detailed report, the “outflow of Jews in August and September was henceforth conducted on a semilegal basis by the Poles.” Ironically, “it appears that the Czech government was not aware, as late as July 26, of the readiness of the Poles to let the Jews out. The two governments were therefore acting simultaneously but quite independently of each other...” In Bauer’s assessment the complicated situation in Poland by August 1946 “points to a definite Russian policy: they would not encourage the Jews to move out but neither would they do anything drastic to prevent the exodus.” (223) Actually, this policy seems more vague than definite.

through this camp and the neighboring camp of Brumov.”⁵¹⁵ In July alone, he determined, about “14,000 crossed the frontier.” Further, “the records of Náchod camp show that 1,765 refugees arrived on the first of August and during the peak period of the next few days the figures averaged over a thousand daily.” Smith learned that “at first (the transmigrants) were billeted in private homes or in a hotel, but soon the barracks were taken over and the American JDC undertook the relief organization.” Despite the leadership of the JDC, Smith noted that there was “a representative of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Social Welfare who look(ed) after official contacts and a Czech Jewish doctor whom we saw at work.”⁵¹⁶ By the end of August, the stamp of the JDC was ubiquitous throughout Náchod. The Czechoslovaks, however, still remained linked to the operation that they had, in large part, created.

Czechoslovakia played an instrumental role as a thoroughfare for the exodus of Polish Jews away from Poland throughout 1946.⁵¹⁷ Administrators from Prague, Náchod and various points in between crafted policies, upheld precedents encouraging movement and ignored others that would have stifled the flow of these transmigrants. As 1946 drew to a close, Masaryk approached the podium at a meeting of the nascent United Nations in Lake Placid, New York and reflected on the status quo for Jewish citizens throughout Europe. Masaryk spoke candidly about the “Jews of the ghetto, the gas chamber and those still in concentration camps.”⁵¹⁸ He urged that these Jews, whom he no longer described as Czechoslovak or Polish citizens but as constituents of the Jewish people, should be aided in their quest to enter Palestine. Masaryk clearly expressed the view that Europe’s Jews “belonged” outside of Europe’s borders. He and his colleagues throughout the highest echelons of the Czechoslovak government had done their part to help these Jews move toward an imagined ethnic home. Masaryk, Nejedlý, Toman, Clementis and a handful of others working in Prague and Náchod worked

⁵¹⁵ Rev. Robert Smith B.D., “The Jewish Train from Náchod: Organisation of Transit Camp on Polish-Czech Frontier,” *The Scotsman*, September 4, 1946.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ In September of 1946, the stream of Polish Jewish transmigrants lessened considerably. This lessening coincided with a substantial drop in violence against Jews on Polish territory (see Engel’s article cited in footnote #1). I submit the violence against Jews stopped and the stream of transmigrants slowed simultaneously because so many Jews had left Poland. By the fall of 1946, most repatriated Polish Jews who wanted to leave Poland had left already. With the repatriation process over, those Polish Jews who wanted to settle in Upper or Lower Silesia would have decided to stay by the fall of 1946. Violence against Jews ceased for similar reasons. Once Jews stopped returning to Poland they stopped being a threat for those non-Jewish Poles who occupied formerly Jewish houses or who had obtained Jewish property. Thus, the “fear” which Jan Gross invokes had an expiration date in post-war Polish society. Violence against Jews or against Jewish property seems, to my mind, directly related to Jewish repatriation waves. Apparently, the United Nations closed the border at Náchod in November 1946 (See the article in *Svet Práce*). The border seems to have been open once again soon after. A few thousand people crossed the border in the early winter of 1947 but new emigration policies in Poland made travel away from Poland must more difficult beginning in February 1947. Around this time, Náchod ceased being a viable exit point. The JDC and federal operations helping transmigrants stopped soon after.

⁵¹⁸ He most likely meant in displaced person camps. D.P. camps were often former concentration camps.

throughout 1946 to open the road between Polish Silesia and the displaced persons camps in the American Zone of Germany. Indeed, “quite simply, no Jews could have passed to Bratislava or Prague had it not been for the aid and sympathy extended by the Czechs.”⁵¹⁹ To echo the words of observer Rev. Robert Smith “in the eyes of world Zionists, Náchod (was) the most significant spot in Europe.”⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹ Bauer, 182. Bauer always writes, “it must have cost the Czechs a very considerable sum of money for trains and food and they earned the sympathy and the gratitude of the Jews.” Bauer, 184.

⁵²⁰ Rev. Robert Smith B.D., “The Jewish Train from Náchod: Organisation of Transit Camp on Polish-Czech Frontier,” *The Scotsman*, September 4, 1946. Smith wrote: “A few weeks ago Náchod was little known beyond the borders of Czechoslovakia...this little town of some 16,000 inhabitants had become the assembly point for Jews escaping across the Polish frontier with Palestine as their goal. Journalists came flocking to the scene of a new exodus, to watch the first ripples of a human tide that is flowing southwards across Europe and across the Mediterranean ... for this movement has international implications.”

Conclusion

Postwar Life is Elsewhere

Looking at a demographic map of the lands between Germany and the Soviet Union produced between the two world wars is like staring into a kaleidoscope replete with colors that reproduce in unexpected patterns. When each distinct color represents a distinct ethnicity, the most precise statistics render a kodachrome effect. Deep hues filling in the political boundaries of Bohemia and Moravia indicate the settlement of Czechs, millions in number. And yet the same color appears again nearly 1000 kilometers to the east in the Polish province of Volhynia, where upwards of 20,000 so-called ethnic Czechs had lived for decades farming on marshlands formerly within the Russian Empire. This dispersion of ethnicities repeats itself. Poles and Ruthenians who lived in Czechoslovakia. Belorussians and Ukrainians who lived in the Polish *kresy*. Slovaks in Hungary. Hungarians in Romania. And, on this interwar map, two ethnic groups were heavily sprinkled throughout: Germans and Jews.

The movement of Germans away from their towns of their birth and toward Germany occurred quite rapidly. On September 28, 1939, less than four weeks after the invasion of Poland commenced, Hitler assumed his position in the Reichstag to discuss how the conquered territory would be governed. Embedded in his statement were the seeds of a new east European revolution, which would shift the colors of the demographic kaleidoscope so that ethnic and political boundaries would align. Hitler declared that the “most important task” at present was to “establish a new order of ethnographical conditions, that is to say, resettlement of nationalities in such a manner that the process ultimately results in obtaining better dividing lines than is the case at present.”⁵²¹ Accordingly, the “splinters of German nationality” throughout eastern and southern Europe had perennially constituted the “reason and cause for continual international disturbances.”⁵²² The “principle of nationalities” and “racial ideas” promised that “highly developed people can be assimilated without trouble.” And so, the “far-sighted ordering of the life in Europe” mandated that a “resettlement should be undertaken here so as to remove at least part of the material for European conflict.”⁵²³ These efforts would finally settle one of the largest unresolved issues emanating from the 1919 Paris Peace Conference: the messy *mélange* of ethnic populations sprinkled throughout the region.

Between October and November 1939, over 370,000 “ethnically national” Germans (*Volkszugehörigkeit*) moved from ancestral homes in Estonia, Latvia, Southern Tyrol, Volhynia and Eastern Galicia towards the Reich. And over the

⁵²¹ Adolf Hitler's speech of Oct. 6, 1939,” *Facts in Review*, No. 10 (Oct. 14, 1939) quoted in Joseph B. Schechtmann, “The Option Clause in the Reich's Treaties on the Transfer of Population,” *The American Journal of International Law* Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul., 1944), 356.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

next three years another 300,000 of the same from Bessarabia, Bukovina, Lithuania, Ljubjana and Bosnia followed. In sum, within three years of unleashing war on Poland, nearly 700,000 ethnically national Germans moved to lands they had never plowed that had belonged to others. The Germans who stayed outside of the borders of the German state “were expected to assimilate” with the local populations. Joseph Schechtmann, a researcher at the Institute for Jewish Affairs who wrote a history of population transfers in the early 1940s, described how those ethnic Germans who spurned the offer to relocate no longer enjoyed the right to public use of their language, their own schools or even their German names.⁵²⁴ To have group rights as a German community, ethnic Germans had to live in German political entities. The protection of minority rights and the German imprint on communities across the region was evaporating.

Already, the colors on the kaleidoscope were shifting. As early as 1942, Jacob Robinson, Schechtmann’s boss at Institute of Jewish Affairs, noticed the “homogenization of the European state” and warned that population transfers were becoming increasingly invoked “as a principle for postwar organization.” Moreover, he stressed that “the minority group as an element of European national life was fast disappearing in reality.”⁵²⁵ Two years later, in 1944, Robinson remarked that “there are today and will be after the war practically no minorities in Europe.”⁵²⁶ In retrospect, Robinson’s clairvoyance is startling. Just a few years after these two remarks, after forced movements of other ethnic populations in Germany’s sphere of influence, Hitler’s eventual defeat, the redrawing of borders and massive postwar population transfers, almost all ethnic Germans remaining in Europe lived within the Allied-control German State. Ironically, a war spawn of by a hyperethnic Germany asserting its power and gathering in diasporic populations resulted in the creation of unprecedentedly ethnic states after the war.

Where do east central European Jews fit into this story of demographic unmixing and ethnoterritorial nationalism? As ethnic Germans voluntarily moved to German spaces, German occupying powers (sometimes with the support of local populations) forced the ethnic Jews of Poland and Czechoslovakia into ghettos, labor camps, to extermination camps or out to forests where they were shot and buried in mass graves. And then as these gruesome events unfolded during the war, notable personalities from the region working in diplomatic exile recognized that Europe was indeed not a place for “Jewish Jews,” or those Jews who wanted to maintain political and cultural autonomy as a distinct minority group with specific protections and rights under League of Nations’ law. Jews who survived the Holocaust and returned to their homes in Czechoslovakia or

⁵²⁴ See the drafts submitted by Joseph Schechtmann as he prepared his manuscript *Transfer of Populations*, which eventually was published as *European Population Transfers: 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), in C 117/8 in WJC Collection.

⁵²⁵ Gil Rubin, "The End of Minority Rights: Jacob Robinson and the Jewish Question in World War II", *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 11 (2012), 60.

⁵²⁶ Rubin, 61.

Poland after 1945 had two options: they could assimilate and confine their Jewishness to private expression or they could emigrate. Those Jews who wanted to act nationally Jewish could do so in Palestine or in more populous diaspora communities elsewhere. For Jews who wanted to remain in Europe, like the 80,000 Jews who stayed in Polish Silesia or the urbanized Jews of Prague, Warsaw, Łódź, Krakow and other cities, maintaining their citizenship east central Europe meant renouncing their right to belong in the Jewish nation.

The story of Adolph and Jakub Berman, so eloquently described by Marci Shore, reflects this divergence: Adolph, the brother with Zionist sympathies who lived a vibrant culturally Jewish life was forced to leave postwar Poland. Conversely, Jakub the brother with communist sympathies and an important position in the postwar Politburo could remain.⁵²⁷ In the postwar era, wartime ideas casting Jewish Jews as belonging outside European borders transformed into policies that carved out space for some Jews (those willing to fully assimilate into the Czechoslovak and Polish body politic) but not for others. The incentive behind this push to concentrate Jewish Jews in an ethnic polity of their own cannot be understood outside of broader trends within the region. In an odd twist of fate, the hyperethnic world-view endorsed by Hitler had an afterlife long after the defeat of Nazi Germany. The starkly homogenous postwar states of Poland, Czechoslovakia and, to a certain extent, Israel emerged from the same hyperethnic moment.

For Beneš and Masaryk, squeezing out the “German Germans” and the “Jewish Jews” by revoking their citizenship belonged to the same process of disentangling populations and freeing Czechoslovakia from national minority elements that had led to the dismemberment of the state in 1938 and 1939. No longer would group rights or the minority entitlements influence the internal politics of east central European nation states. Instead, the United Nations community would endorse human rights as the basic building block of international law. The process by which majority ethnic states absorbed minority ethnic groups silenced questions of group autonomy in diverse societies. Why did minority groups need protection? It proved more logical, according the calculus of population transfer advocates, to move people to where their hypothetical group belonged. Then the individual ethnicized state would be responsible for the ethnic group within its borders and, perhaps, historic and everyday conflicts between ethnic groups within states would evaporate after such changes. The revision of citizenship became a legal mechanism by which leaders striving towards homogeneity unmix the panoply of ethnic groups that had coexisted in the region for centuries.

⁵²⁷ Marci Shore, “Children of the Revolution: Communism, Zionism and the Berman Brothers,” *Jewish Social Studies Vol. 10*, No. 3 (2004): 23-86. Shore describes how commemorations for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (April 1943) became increasingly polonized after the war with less and mention of the Jewish background shared by the ghetto fighters.

In his brilliant survey of the east central European experience in the 20th century, Joseph Rothschild suggested that this region experienced a return to political diversity near the end of the Soviet Era and especially with the revolutions of 1989.⁵²⁸ Cultural diversity emerged alongside these political changes. And yet, something remains lost in the countries that emerged from eastern Europe near the end of the 20th century: the tangled, contested and always brilliant sphere of east central European Jewish civilization. Bemoaning this precise loss in his article “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” Milan Kundera contended that “no other part of the world has been so deeply marked by the influence of Jewish genius.”⁵²⁹ Recalling Jews like Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, Gustav Mahler, Joseph Roth, Julius Zeyer and, of course, Franz Kafka, Kundera envisioned them as “aliens everywhere and everywhere at home, lifted above national quarrels, the Jews in the twentieth century were the principal cosmopolitan, integrating element in Central Europe: they were its intellectual cement, a condensed version of its spirit, creators of its spiritual unity.”⁵³⁰ The Holocaust decimated the Jewish people of this region. And the turn away from diversity and towards homogeneity, towards a privatization of ethnic identity, decimated any remaining potential for the revival of this particular kind of east central European Jewish civilization. Why? Because the colors, tones and words that emanated from this culture depended precisely on artists, musicians and authors who cherished the liminal status enabled by their identification as Jews.

I encountered this deficit of Jewish civilization firsthand when I traveled to Poland as an undergraduate to study (what was termed) the contemporary “renaissance of Jewish culture” emerging in Krakow at the turn of the 21st century. The popularity of Stephen Spielberg’s movie *Schindler’s List*, which was filmed partially in Krakow, coupled with the opening of Poland to western-style tourism after 1989 had propelled many American Jews with deep pockets to return to Poland and adjacent environs in search of their Jewish roots. I traveled to Galicia to interview the hoteliers, the tour guides, the bookstore owners and galleristas catering to these new American-Jewish travelers. Instead, I found myself traveling back via wooden folk art, hovering smells of dill, klezmer clarinets and grainy black and white pictures to the diverse interwar era. When American Jewish tourists traveled to Krakow, they did for two reasons: to visit the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps in nearby Oświęcim and to recapture a “vanished world” when the Jewish community of Poland existed as a discernable autonomous, semi-integrated and yet quite distinct ethnic unit.⁵³¹ Of course, the perpetrators of the Holocaust dismembered this ethnic unit, snatching millions of

⁵²⁸ Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵²⁹ Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” *New York Review of Books Volume 31*, No. 7, translated by Edmund White (April 26, 1984).

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Roman Vishniac, *A Vanished World*. New York : Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983.

Jews from lives not fully lived. It is not my intent to minimize the destruction unleashed by this heinous event. I suggest, however, that changing ideas of Jewish belonging and the squeezing out of “Jewish Jews” from the region contributed to the disappearance of an autonomous Jewish civilization, partially differentiated from religion and rooted in the soil of east central Europe.

Alongside the cultural ramifications, changes in conceptions of Jewish belonging throughout east central European thought contributed to the realization of the Zionist political project. The small group of east central European exiles that I investigate in this dissertation helped to manufacture theoretical support and the logistical conditions necessary for the mass movement of Jews, namely Jewish DPs, away from Europe after 1945. In these discussions held in exile throughout North America and in London, I have located a special cast of characters who debated and, eventually, worked out knotty questions regarding where returning Jews belonged. The process by which Palestine becomes the logical destination for the displaced Jewish survivors of this region was contingent and accepting Zionism as a preferred reality does not diminish the logistical and diplomatic hurdles attached the mass movement of hundreds of thousands of people across war-torn spaces and guarded borders. And here is where the motivations of Masaryk and the other local, federal and international actors who ensured that the border at Náchod remained open became intrinsic to conversations about where Jews belong in the postwar world. Because of a concerted effort on the ground and throughout multiple echelons of government and the UNRRA, nearly 130,000 Polish Jews leave Poland in less than one year. Without this important transit point, I contend, the efforts to populate a Jewish state in Palestine and reach a demographic equilibrium with non-Jews in the Mandate would have been significantly slowed or, perhaps, unsuccessful in general.

The possibility for a specific type of east central Europe citizenship that transcended ethnic belonging came to an end after World War II. This revolution in understandings of who belonged to a Czechoslovak, a Polish or a Jewish (or a German and a Hungarian) citizenry unleashed massive demographic changes in a region historically known for its ethnic coexistence. As a consequence, millions of people left their homes, fields, villages, neighbors and former lives to live in a presumed ethnic homeland elsewhere. For the tens of thousands of “Jewish Jews” from this region who would not assimilate their Jewishness their ethnic homeland was presumed to be far away and across the Mediterranean Sea in Palestine. On May 6, 1946, a few hundred of these “Jewish Jews” from Poland gathered for a meeting at the displaced persons camp in Fritzlar, a small town in the American Zone of dismembered Germany. Its highly probable that at least some of these Jews had passed through Náchod en route to any camp that would accept them in the American sphere. Most, if not all, had plans to emigrate further towards strange lands far away: to the Americas, to Australia and to Palestine. That day, the UNRRA director of the camp Paul Jokelson spoke to these transients about

their future plans and, possibly, their future regrets. After promising to answer questions from the crowd, Jokelson posed some questions himself.

Jokelson wanted to understand the thought process of the Jewish Poles assembled before him. What, he questioned, “do the people who tell you not to go home have to offer to you?”⁵³² Jokelson promised the crowd that they would “inevitably be home-sick one day” and “irresistibly want to go home, to see again the country where you were born, to which you belong, to meet your friends, your relatives, to smell the odor of your native land.” On that hypothetical day, however,

it will be too late because your comrades who have gone home, your government who (have asked) to go home will tell you: ‘we needed your help to rebuild our country (and) you refused to come, you wanted to wait until the task was over: now it is too late, we don't need you anymore, you are now strangers.’

Jokelson prodded the displaced persons and asked in summation: “is that what you want? Be one amongst these stateless people who are moved from one country to the other without being able to settle down, without being sure of what will happen the next day?” He then prompted his audience to volunteer for (another) repatriation back to Poland. If he collected at least 300 names of those willing to return he could obtain a direct train from Fritslar onto Polish soil.

His speech indicates to me that Jokelson could not understand why these Polish Jews, after so much displacement and tragedy, had opted for more displacement and uncertainty.⁵³³ Perhaps his words here reflected a more general viewpoint espoused by his employer, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Perhaps his words delivered on this particular day registered his disappointment with his camp's capacity for refugees and so he wanted some to leave so as to alleviate his burden. I did not find a list of 300 names willing to return to Poland attached to this speech in the archive nor did I find evidence of the audience's response. What Jokelson could not understand these displaced persons of Polish Jewish extraction already knew: their homeland, their citizenship and their postwar life would be elsewhere.

⁵³²“Speech of Paul Jokelson to DPs in Fritslar,” Collection #522 Generalny Pełnomocnik Rządu RP Repatriacji w Warszawie, Signatura #460, in *Archivum Akt Nowych*.

⁵³³ Soon after he gave this speech, in 1948, Jokelson (1905-2002) surrendered his own homeland in France to join his new wife in America, where he lived the rest of his life.

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