

Jews In The Czecho-Slovak State

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# Bohemian (Czech) National Alliance OF AMERICA

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CHICAGO EVENING AMERICAN

SATURDAY, DEC. 28, 1918

The Chicago Evening American published the following Editorial concerning Jews in Bohemia:

This column has received letters resenting the suggestion that nations are sometimes not self-governing because they don't know how, or don't deserve to govern themselves.

Bohemia, for instance, looking forward to "self-determination", promptly publishes an order expelling all Jews. This takes Bohemia back to the savagery of Portugal or Spain in the Middle Ages.

Mr. Masaryk, advocate of Bohemian "self-determination", cables over that he had ordered the cancellation of that rule expelling Jews. What Bohemia does, not what Mr. Masaryk cables, settles Bohemia's fitness to rule herself.

A country that has not advanced far enough to grant freedom to others is too backward to deserve liberty for itself—many countries in Europe will find that out.

THE ANSWER:

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## JEWIS IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATE.

It is to lay at rest and prevent such statements as the foregoing, founded on ignorance of facts, prejudice and often willful malice toward the Czechoslovak Republic that this article has been written. The facts stated speak for themselves and proclaim more loudly than could be done by the best oratory or art the gross injustice done to the Czechoslovaks in the statement quoted. The writer sincerely hopes that all fairminded, all intelligent, impartial and well meaning men and women will agree after reading this brief statement of **facts** that this is the highest time to put a stop to the vicious propaganda of the enemies of peace and harmony, to this vitiating of truth and feeding race hatred and prejudice in order to further ulterior ends of the enemy just conquered.

We most earnestly solicit all readers of this pamphlet to spread the truth among their friends and prevent fomenting unnecessary dissensions and ill feeling.

We think it the patriotic duty of all to do so to the best of their ability.

### **What are the facts about this so-called expelling of Jews from Bohemia?**

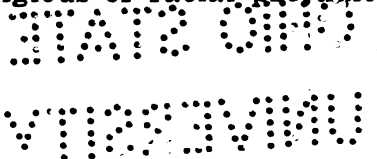
1. Bohemian Jews were not expelled, nor any other Jews as such. The order was for the **Galician war refugees**, 17,000 in number, families without homes and occupations, to **go home** now that the war was over. Majority of these refugees are Galician Jews, but not all.

Only a malicious enemy, a prejudiced partisan looking for a pretext to injure the Czechoslovaks could make a case of this and say that the Czechoslovak government expelled **all Jews** as such from Bohemia, and therefore was prejudiced against the Jews.

But, of course, there are many such enemies of the New Czech Republic. Prof. Masaryk in countermanding the order in question, did so, no doubt, because he would not give these enemies any chance and not because there was anything wrong with the order itself. Then, too, the order was untimely owing to the unsettled conditions in Galicia, where the refugees will surely gladly return as soon as conditions permit.

This view will be seen to be correct because in Bohemia there never has been anti-semitic feeling to any great extent. Just reflect on the following facts:

When in New York a Jewish Convention was passing resolutions asking equal rights for Jews in the newly formed states, the Czechoslovak Republic had acted upon that principle as one that was self-evident and the only possible one in a free state by appointing two Jews to the ministry, namely Adolph Stransky, minister of commerce and L. Winter, minister of public welfare. It was probably the latter who signed the order asking the Galician refugees to return home, and he, a Jew, certainly could not have acted out of religious or racial prejudice against his own kind.



Moreover, Jews in Bohemia always enjoyed equal privileges—equal rights.

By far the best indication of the treatment of the Jews by a government or a nation is their own attitude toward that government or nation. The majority of Jews of Bohemia always were and are now good Bohemian patriots, loving Bohemia and the Bohemian people.

Thus Oesterreich, who changed his German-sounding name to its Bohemian equivalent, Rakous, wrote treatises of passionate love on Bohemia and the Bohemian people. Besides him there were many others like Lederer, Lustig, Kohn, Nebesky (1848), etc., etc. Among prominent educators I might mention Prof. Veleminsky, whom we count among our personal friends, having gotten acquainted with him when he toured the United States, visiting and studying American schools shortly before the war.

Many Jews were prominent in the political life of Bohemia. Josef Stransky, now minister of commerce, one of the most courageous leaders of revolt against Austria-Hungary, L. Winter, now minister of public welfare, social democrat, Meisner, prominent socialist writer, Langer and many others.

Czechs never stood in the way of the Jewish free development in Bohemia. Jews taught in Bohemian schools, sat in city councils and banks, headed big industrial enterprises (Bondys, Fischls, Morawetz, etc., etc.), in brief, were just as much a part of the Bohemian cultural and industrial life as the Czechs themselves.

The well-known Hilsner incident in which Prof. Masaryk became prominent, was engineered by reactionaries, while the nation stood solidly behind Masaryk against the intolerable superstition of ritual murder.

We might say considerably more showing that the Czechs always were lovers of democracy and equality which they practiced as well as preached. The Jews were best treated in Bohemia even in the Middle Ages and the Jewish colony of Prague is the oldest in Europe, the famous Jewish cemetery being one of the most remarkable antiquities that city boasts of.

For brevity's sake, however, we shall end here fully convinced that the above facts are enough to convince any open-minded man or woman of any creed or nationality.

We wish to state this, however, that it was and is now the aim of the Czechoslovaks to make use of the special commercial and financial abilities of their Jewish citizens in building up the economic strength of the young republic and that therefore there cannot be any talk of prejudice or injustice to Jews in Bohemia, and that only malicious and avowed enemies of the freed Czechoslovakia can spread such untruths with view of injuring the enviable harmony and concord that reigns in it.

**BOHEMIAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF AMERICA.**

January 1, 1919, Chicago, Ill., 3734 W. 26th st.

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