

Between Expulsion and Rescue: The Transports for German-speaking Jews of Czechoslovakia in 1946

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Postwar Czechoslovak authorities refused to exempt German-speaking Jews from anti-German policies, forcing them to prove their anti-fascist credentials in order to avoid persecution and expulsion. Documents from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Mission to Czechoslovakia not only shed light on the cases of expelled German-speaking Jews, but also show that many sought to be included on transports because they found conditions in postwar Czechoslovakia unbearable.

“I lost one job because I was a *Mischling*,” Hilda Elsner wrote in her 1946 application for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) assistance, and “I lost another because of my German nationality. Today, I am without money or any property at all.”¹ Elsner, born to a Christian mother and a Jewish father in Podbořany (Podersam) in northwest Bohemia in 1901, was one of the thousands of German-speaking Jews suffering under Czechoslovakia’s postwar anti-German measures. Despite the fact that her father had died in Theresienstadt and that she had been required to perform forced labor under the Nazi regime, the Czechoslovak government did not immediately exempt her from persecution as a “German.”

A previously untapped archival collection entitled “Sudeten German Jews” in the United Nations archive reveals that thousands of German-speaking Jews, like Elsner, turned to the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia to help alleviate their suffering. The files confirm the long-held assumption that dozens of Jews were included in the postwar expulsions of Germans from Czechoslovakia.² Most German-speaking Jews managed to avoid forced deportation. Many nevertheless desperately attempted to leave the country through other means because they found daily life in postwar Czechoslovakia economically, and oftentimes emotionally, unsustainable.

The postwar experiences of German-speaking Jews who were forced to leave Czechoslovakia or who desperately wanted to leave Czechoslovakia intersected with multiple migrations from and across the Bohemian lands: the well-known forced expulsions of Germans from Czechoslovakia, the “voluntary” resettlement of German-speaking Czechoslovak anti-fascists, the Zionist-organized mass migration of Jews from Eastern and Central Europe (especially Poland) to the American Zone of Germany, and the migration of Jews from Subcarpathian Ruthenia and eastern Slovakia to the Bohemian lands. In contrast to a historiography that tends to study these migrations separately and adhere to national (and nationalist) categories, this article analyzes the entangled web of migrations and the agencies, ideologies, legal systems, and individual perspectives their intersection involved. As a result, it challenges several established interpretations of postwar Czechoslovak history, the *Brichah* (the underground movement dedicated to the migration of East European Jews to Palestine), and the politics of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

Two distinct agencies were responsible for the various migrations into and from Czechoslovakia in the early postwar years. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior, headed by Communist Václav

Nosek, was in charge of the migrations of former or recent Czechoslovak citizens and for the repatriation of Czechs and Slovaks from abroad. It was also responsible for migrants from Subcarpathian Ruthenia (a former Czechoslovak territory that became part of Soviet Ukraine in 1945), and for the expulsion of Germans, whom the government officially deprived of their Czechoslovak citizenship in August 1945 (though the Košice Program had signaled this in April 1945). The migrations of stateless people and foreign citizens mostly fell under the auspices of the Repatriation Department of UNRRA, which also administered the Displaced Persons (DP) camps in occupied Germany.

The case of Europe's surviving Jews proved challenging for the guiding postwar principle that everyone should return to his or her country of citizenship. Many Jews were reluctant to return to countries where they had suffered during the war and experienced postwar antisemitism, and where their communities had been destroyed. Many wanted to start new lives abroad. Authorities in the American Zone of Germany (where the majority of Jewish refugees were housed in DP camps) and UNRRA became increasingly aware of the special position of Jews (especially after Earl Harrison's report in August 1945, which harshly criticized the treatment of the Jewish survivors in the DP camps in the American Zone of Germany) and opened DP camps exclusively for Jews. Moreover, UNRRA agreed to help Jewish refugees fleeing *from* their countries of citizenship. The JDC provided funding for the Jewish DP camps, facilitated the Brichah, and covered the travel costs for Jews who wanted to immigrate to the United States. The JDC also generously funded Jewish charitable institutions and facilitated the revival of the institutional infrastructure for Jewish life. The case of the German-speaking Jews in Czechoslovakia shows, however, that the JDC's generosity had limits.

Language—Nationality—Citizenship

According to the 1930 census, there were about 117,000 self-identified Jews (by religion) living in the Bohemian lands, approximately one third of Czechoslovakia's 357,000 Jews (an additional 137,000 lived in Slovakia and 103,000 in Subcarpathian Ruthenia). Linguistically the Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands mirrored the overall distribution of the Czech- and the German-speaking populations. Most Jews in central, south, and east Bohemia and some Moravian Jews preferred Czech in their daily communications, while Jews in the border regions and in most of Moravia generally used German. Brno (Brünn), Prague, České Budějovice (Budweis), and Pilsen had significant German-speaking minorities. Bilingualism, however, was common among all Bohemians and Moravians, especially Jews, who, for example, were disproportionately (over)represented among teachers of Czech at German secondary schools.³ Knowledge of Czech was more prevalent among the younger generation of Jews, whose parents had preferred to send them to Czech schools.⁴

Language preference, which determined official nationality (*národnost*), had been a hotly contested political and educational issue in the region since the 1890s.⁵ Until autumn 1938, however, it had no direct impact on citizenship. The basis for citizenship was a domicile, a permanent residency in the territory of Czechoslovakia. In the two interwar censuses, in 1921 and 1930, each Czechoslovak citizen selected a nationality (allegedly based on his or her mother tongue). Jews moreover had the option of claiming Jewish nationality even without knowledge of Hebrew or Yiddish.⁶ Nobody could have known at that time that their 1930 nationality selection would have important implications for acquiring citizenship in the postwar era, when the government cancelled the domicile basis and used the 1930 census instead.⁷

During the Second World War, four different administrative units governed the Jews of interwar Czechoslovakia: the Greater German Reich (which annexed the Sudetenland in autumn 1938), the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (following the German invasion of March 15, 1939), a

semi-independent Slovak state, and Hungary (which annexed parts of southern Slovakia upon the First Vienna Award and all of Subcarpathian Ruthenia subsequent to that). Despite variations in their wartime experience, they faced similar fates; only a small fraction of them survived the Holocaust. There were only 23,000 Jews in the Bohemian lands after the war, less than a quarter of the area's prewar population. This number includes also people who did not previously self-identify as Jewish, but were classified as such under the Nuremberg Laws, and around 8,000 newcomers: Subcarpathian Jews who opted to settle in the Bohemian lands following the Soviet Union's annexation of Subcarpathian Ruthenia after the war.⁸



German-speaking Jews Robert, Heinz, and Elizabeth Benda of Liberec (Reichenberg), Czechoslovakia; location uncertain, 1933. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy Eva Benda.



Benda Brothers clothing store; Liberec (Reichenberg), Czechoslovakia, 1933. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy Eva Benda.

In the postwar Bohemian lands, one umbrella organization, the newly established Council of the Jewish Communities in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia (hereafter, the Council of the Jewish Communities), assumed the infrastructure of the wartime Prague Jewish Community, an organization that had “represented” all Jews (as defined by the Nuremberg Laws) in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Council of the Jewish Communities was primarily responsible for registered members of Jewish religious communities, but it also distributed aid to and advised “racial” Jews who were not members.⁹ Moreover, the Council took over the administration of the Jews and Jewish communities in the former Sudetenland.

Of the 23,000 people in the care of the Council, 10,000 to 11,000 struggled to regain Czechoslovak citizenship in the postwar years. Approximately 8,000 of the latter were Subcarpathian Jews, who for the most part could not reclaim their Czechoslovak citizenship because they had declared Jewish nationality in the 1930 census: according to the June 1945 Czechoslovak-Soviet Agreement on Subcarpathian Ruthenia, only people of Czech or Slovak nationality there could be recognized as Czechoslovak citizens. The other 2,000 to 3,000 were Jews who had declared German nationality on the 1930 census.¹⁰ They lost their Czechoslovak citizenship in 1945 alongside all Czechoslovak Germans, and they had to apply to regain it.¹¹ Among them were well-known professors from the German University of Prague,¹² and even some Jewish soldiers who had fought in the Czechoslovak forces of the British Army.¹³

Treat the Germans as the Nazis Treated the Jews

Czechoslovakia expelled close to three million Germans (former Czechoslovak citizens) during the first two postwar years—only around 300,000 were able to remain in the country.¹⁴ The expulsions of the first postwar months—May to September 1945—are known as the “wild” transfer (the euphemisms “transfer” or “resettlement” were officially used in the contemporary Czech as well as Allied documents and are still used in most Czech historiography). Many have argued that this was an unorganized, spontaneous process with very little involvement from the Czechoslovak administration; however, the newest research shows instead that during these months the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior, Local National Committees, and police departments were actively involved not only in expulsion, but also in the numerous massacres.¹⁵ At the Potsdam Conference (July–August 1945) the Allies agreed to the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary under condition that “it should be carried out in as orderly and humane a manner as possible.”¹⁶ However, brutality was typical not only in the first months, but also later. Around 350,000 Germans were kept in forced labor camps and the victims of massacres numbered in the tens of thousands.¹⁷ In November 1945 the Allied Control Council (of the four occupying powers) in Berlin established a timetable for the “transfer,” and issued daily (later weekly) quotas limiting the number of “transferred” Germans. These were later modified in negotiation with the Czechoslovak government.

Ethnic cleansing is preconditioned by drawing lines between the alleged “ethnic” communities. Chad Bryant has demonstrated, however, that political leaders—during and after the war—struggled to draw clear distinctions between Czechs and Germans. Nazi leaders in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia met with frustration when they attempted to introduce discriminatory measures against the Czechs (though only after first excluding Jews). Similar problems arose in reestablished Czechoslovakia when political leaders sought to expel the Germans. Czechs and Germans in “mixed marriages” were a particular source of irritation for both Nazi policymakers and postwar Czechoslovak leaders.¹⁸

However, there was one significant difference in the implementation of Czech and Nazi nationalist policies. The Nazis systematically targeted the Czech intellectual and political elite, but they let most Czechs (at least in the short term) coexist with local Sudeten and Reich Germans. By contrast, after the Second World War, the Czechoslovak government made no plans for the coexistence of Czechs and Germans. This explains in part why, when drafting their anti-German measures, the Czechoslovak government and local Czech authorities drew inspiration not from Nazi anti-Czech measures, but instead from Nazi anti-Jewish policies, specifically those that the Nazis had employed against the Jews before deporting them to Theresienstadt or to death camps.

German expellees and their organizations (such as the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft) often compared their own suffering at the hands of Czech officials to the Nazi treatment of Jews. But there were two crucial differences: the Czechoslovak government did not plan a genocide of the German population, and the Allies supported the expulsion. There were, however, some striking similarities between Nazi anti-Jewish legislation and Czechoslovak anti-German legislation in the first three postwar years. For one, the Czechoslovak government allocated food ration coupons for Germans according to the limited rations that Jews had received in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; several local decrees in May, June, and July of 1945 referred explicitly to “Jewish rations.”¹⁹ Every German ex-Czechoslovak had to wear a white armband, often with the letter N for *Němec* (German) or with a swastika. Some local initiatives went even further.²⁰ Germans also had to hand in their radios, bicycles, sewing machines, and other personal items to the authorities, and they were not allowed to use public transportation.²¹ The Czechoslovaks established labor camps and concentration camps for Germans, often on the sites of Nazi concentration camps, including at the Lesser Fortress in Terezín (Theresienstadt).²²

In May 1945 Klement Gottwald, at that time Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Front, made the policy explicit. In a speech to the Moravian National Committee in Brno, he declared that the German ex-Czechoslovaks should be divided into three categories: those guilty of crimes against Czechoslovak interests were to be sentenced and punished; those who had not supported the Hitler regime and had been active in the resistance or had been in a Nazi prison could be accepted as Czechoslovak citizens; and the largest group—Germans who had neither resisted the Nazis nor been found guilty of any specific crimes—were to be sentenced to forced labor, have their property confiscated, and “be put on the level of the Jews under the Nazi regime.”²³ Though not explicit, Gottwald was probably referring to the treatment of the Jews before their deportation, the part of the Holocaust that Czechs had witnessed. Since the mass killing of the Jews took place, for the most part, outside Bohemia and Moravia, it was not part of Czech collective memory.²⁴ One would be hard-pressed to find such a statement in an official speech by a contemporary politician in Poland: where so many non-Jews had witnessed the mass killing, Gottwald’s statement would have meant an appeal for genocide.

Anti-Fascists and Their “Voluntary” Resettlement

During the war, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London debated intensely who should be spared from their planned anti-German legislation, ultimately agreeing that political opponents of Nazism should be exempt. However, the Czech underground in the Protectorate warned that the Czech population hated everything German and that any exceptions—even for anti-Nazis—would be unacceptable.²⁵ As Jan Láníček persuasively demonstrates, during the war exiled Jewish intellectuals, members of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, and Max Weinreich of the YIVO Institute for

Jewish Research in New York extensively discussed the legal position of Jews in postwar Czechoslovakia (both German- and Czech-speakers). Ultimately, attempts by Arnošt Frischer (the only Zionist in the Czechoslovak State Council, the exile parliament) to categorize Jews as a special national minority and to exclude them from anti-German legislation were in vain.²⁶

The Košice Program, issued by the National Front of the Czechs and Slovaks in newly-liberated Slovak territory in April 1945, stated that Czechoslovak citizens who were of either German or Magyar nationality based on the 1930 census forms would lose their Czechoslovak citizenship. The same document anticipated an exemption for “anti-fascists,” whom the government-in-exile defined as those who had actively opposed Konrad Henlein’s pro-Nazi party in the 1930s, who had suffered in concentration camps, *or* who had fled abroad and been active in military resistance to the Third Reich.²⁷ But Article 2, Section 1 of the Presidential Decree that officially stripped German and Magyar Czechoslovaks of their citizenship, issued by President Edvard Beneš on August 2, 1945, narrowed the definition of German or Magyar anti-fascists to “persons who can prove that they had remained faithful to the Czechoslovak Republic, who have never committed an offense against the Czech and Slovak nations, and either actively participated in the liberation of Czechoslovakia or suffered under the Nazi or Fascist terror.”²⁸ German and Hungarian Jews had to prove that they met all three conditions of the decree in order to regain Czechoslovak citizenship.²⁹

This approval process took up to two years, and it was highly dependent on decisions of the Local or District National Committees, the new administrative bodies that replaced the traditional councils in villages and towns. As Benjamin Frommer has demonstrated, these Committees played a crucial role in uprooting the democratic traditions of Czechoslovak society. Only nationally and politically “reliable” people of a Slav nationality could be members of these committees, which controlled not only citizenship claims and the issuance of passports, but also the local press, civic organizations, and the maintenance of public order and public morality. In areas that once had made up the former Sudetenland, where no “nationally reliable”—that is, Czech-speaking—people could be found, new settlers from the interior, often carpetbaggers and Communists, played the key role.³⁰

Even those Germans who held anti-fascist identity cards issued by the Committees faced discrimination because many Czechs did not distinguish between “good” and “bad” Germans. Some refused to allow returning concentration camp survivors entry into their old flats and houses; others denied survivors’ children admittance into schools; some teachers stood by as Czech children beat up their German-speaking schoolmates. They frequently received “German” (that is, wartime Jewish) food ration cards instead of the designated Czech rations. In addition, they had no access to state pensions or health insurance, even though many had been paying into those schemes for years. They soon found themselves living in poverty.

In an October 1945 letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), addressed specifically to leaders Klement Gottwald and Rudolf Slánský, the local German Communist officials of Liberec (Reichenberg) described these types of discrimination and highlighted the fact that three of their members had already committed suicide. “What Hitler and Henlein failed to do,” they wrote, “is now becoming a reality. Our comrades are beginning to doubt the proletarian-revolutionary character of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. They are losing faith in the idea of proletarian solidarity and the possibility of living as equals among equals.”³¹

In summer 1945 several German Social Democrats (DSAP)³² in dire circumstances asked the leadership of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party to help them. This was complicated by the fact that the Czechoslovak socialists were not familiar with their German counterparts because,

unlike the Communist Party, the Czechoslovak and German Social Democratic parties had been separate entities in the interwar years. They therefore asked Josef Zinner and Josef Lenk, two leaders of the prewar DSAP in British exile, to come to Prague and review the circumstances of their colleagues. Zinner and Lenk arrived in October 1945 and quickly came to the conclusion that the only solution was “voluntary” resettlement.³³

In a joint memorandum to the Czechoslovak government of November 20, 1945, the German Social Democrats and the German Communists estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 families of Communists and between 10,000 and 15,000 families of Social Democrats wanted to leave Czechoslovakia.³⁴ The Czechoslovak government immediately agreed to facilitate their departure, not only because this would accelerate the national homogenization of the state, but also because Czech Social Democrats and Communists held most of the ministerial posts in the government and did not want to face further criticism from their German comrades. Resettlement of German-speaking Communists and Social Democrats to the Soviet Zone of Germany began in late 1945.³⁵ Some preferred to resettle in the American Zone. Negotiations about this possibility lasted longer and transports did not begin until spring 1946.

On February 15, 1946 the Czechoslovak government issued a memorandum that described the procedure for the “voluntary” resettlement of anti-fascists. People who wanted to take part had to register with the district committees of the two political parties in order to verify their 1939 membership in either the German Social Democratic or Communist Party. Those lists were then sent to the District National Committees, which again ruled on the applicants’ eligibility and could prevent people it considered vital to the economy—particularly to industry—from leaving. If approved, anti-fascists could take all their movable property with them. When justifying to the Allies the resettlement of the anti-fascists, the Czechoslovak government argued that anti-fascist Germans were needed for the democratic reconstruction of Germany. They were included in the quota of expelled Germans, but as an April 1946 decree of the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Security emphasized, “those transports must not cause any delay in the *normal transfer* [of other Germans].”³⁶ Out of some 150,000 acknowledged anti-fascists, approximately 100,000 decided to leave.

The “Other” Anti-fascists

Most of the German-speaking Czechoslovaks imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps had not been active in leftist parties before the war. Many were Jews (or those defined as such by the Nuremberg Laws) imprisoned for “racial,” rather than political reasons. In a letter to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 23, 1946, Lev Zelmanovits, the head of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) in Czechoslovakia,³⁷ requested that the anti-fascist transfers to Germany be broadened to include German-speaking Jewish survivors. Zelmanovits suggested that a committee, with representatives of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties as well as of the Association of Liberated Political Prisoners and similar organizations, could decide on an applicant’s eligibility for the anti-fascist transports.³⁸ His plan was never realized, and Jewish victims of Nazi persecution remained second class “anti-fascists” dependent on the Social Democratic and Communist leaders. At the beginning of March 1946, Zelmanovits met with Elfan Rees, a Welsh theologian who served as the welfare and repatriation officer of the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia. They agreed to work together on behalf of the neglected German-speaking Jews.³⁹ Although Zelmanovits did lead some important negotiations in favor of refugees, his position with the Czechoslovak government was significantly weaker than that of Rees and the UNRRA Mission.



Dr. Elfan Rees, early 1950s. World Council of Churches Archives.

At the beginning of April 1946 Jews from Chomutov (Komotau) and Žatec (Saaz) handed Rees a memorandum that briefly summarized the prevailing hardships of the German-speaking Jews, including “Mischlinge” and those in “mixed” marriages:

Even though they were harshly persecuted under the Hitler regime ... they—with few exceptions—are now suffering again because they are largely considered “Germans” and treated as such. Nobody acknowledges that nearly all of these Jews were in concentration camps or labor camps and that all those families lost most of their relatives in the gas chambers.... We were not allowed to visit the theatres, concerts, cinemas, and so on, for six years, and we have to do without these again, because some of us do not know Czech and others speak it only with difficulty. We still cannot go to the pubs, unless we decide to do so as mutes.⁴⁰

The memorandum further explained how the “Aryan” husbands and wives had also suffered during the war because they had not divorced their Jewish spouses and had protected them from deportation and thus the gas chambers. For this they had faced humiliation, and now, after the war, instead of receiving acknowledgement, they were again suffering, this time for being German. Moreover, they were unable to find jobs because they did not know Czech or Slovak. But, even if they knew Czech, the memorandum argued, they would still be in danger. For all these reasons, the authors sought to leave Czechoslovakia. They wanted to emigrate on an individual basis, but the American and British military authorities recently had refused to accept individuals and allowed only group transports.⁴¹

They thus needed an organization to coordinate their transportation. In their memorandum, the Jews of Chomutov (Komotau) and Žatec (Saaz), led by Berthold Kornisch, pointed out that the Social Democratic and Communist anti-fascists were allowed to leave with all their belongings and that all former Austrian citizens could do so as well.⁴² Many of these people not only had not suffered during the war, but had even profited from it. Thus, the authors of the memorandum thought it only fair that they too be allowed to take their movable property. It would be unjust to be forced to leave behind property that one’s non-Jewish spouse had saved from the Nazis.⁴³

Rees received the memorandum on April 4, 1946 and almost immediately started negotiations on the Jews' behalf.⁴⁴ On April 8 he met with Vladimír Clementis⁴⁵ of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with whom he discussed not only the German-speaking Jews, but also the legal standing of the approximately 8,000 Jews from Subcarpathian Ruthenia. With respect to the German-speaking Jews, Clementis thought the government would oblige, but he said he would have to discuss this with Minister of Interior Václav Nosek.⁴⁶

In order to guarantee that the German-speaking Jews of Czechoslovakia would be eligible for UNRRA care, Rees employed legal arguments that he previously had used to advocate for Polish Jews. In December 1945, Rees had asked the Washington headquarters of UNRRA to allow the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia to assume responsibility for supplying Polish Jewish refugees who, as part of the *Brichah*, were illegally crossing the border from Poland into Czechoslovakia in great numbers. Rees argued that they belonged to the persecuted groups designated in UNRRA Resolution no. 57, which concerned "persons who have been obliged to leave their country or place of origin or former residence or who have been deported therefrom, by action of the enemy, because of race, religion, or activities in favor of the United Nations."⁴⁷ These Polish Jews, Rees argued, had been "unsuccessfully repatriated" because they were unwilling or unable to stay in their country of citizenship. At first, UNRRA's European Regional Office (ERO) in London refused the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia's request, but in early January 1946 UNRRA headquarters in Washington approved the request and even promised additional supplies for Polish Jewish refugees.⁴⁸ This decision was crucial in persuading the Czechoslovak government not only to allow the transit of Polish Jewish refugees across its territory, but also to coordinate it.

In his cable to headquarters in Washington and London in April 1946, Rees used the same argument to advocate on behalf of the Czechoslovak German-speaking Jews. Most had been in concentration camps and therefore belonged to the persecuted groups identified in Resolution no. 57. They were now unwilling or unable to remain in Czechoslovakia and were "likely to be included voluntarily in those 'expelled' to Germany. In this event are such persons [categorized as] unsuccessfully repatriated DPs and [therefore] eligible for UNRRA care in Germany." Rees estimated the number to be as high as 3,000 people, including a small number of non-Jews who also had been victims of Nazi oppression.⁴⁹ Within only a few days, he received permission from London to categorize this group as unsuccessfully repatriated.

This approval was of key importance. In the meantime, Zelmanovits had negotiated with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior (responsible for the German expulsions), which refused to pay for the transfer of any additional anti-fascists, even though they were in favor of the expulsion of as many Germans as possible. Zelmanovits turned to Rees, and because UNRRA classified the German-speaking Jews as "unsuccessfully repatriated" DPs, UNRRA could finance their transfer.⁵⁰ Rees replied that "the cost of such a movement, in so far as it arises within the Republic, can be met from proceeds of sale of UNRRA goods and will be met in Germany by other UNRRA funds." The Jews would be included in the total quota for transfer.⁵¹ Thanks to Rees's advocacy, the first German-speaking Czechoslovak Jews were included in an anti-fascist transport as early as June 25, 1946.⁵²

The news about the transports spread quickly, mostly through the Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands, and applications began pouring in.⁵³ In order to be included in a "voluntary" resettlement, applicants filled out the same forms as the Social Democratic and Communist anti-fascists. They had to explain their wartime suffering, such as the specifics of their internment. In the upper left-hand corner of each application, UNRRA officials would then indicate whether the person

belonged to a “J” (Jewish) transport or, if the applicant had been in concentration camp but was not Jewish, to an anti-fascist transport.

On the Margins of Communities

Hundreds of letters and applications in the United Nations archive provide evidence of people who desperately wanted to get out of their former homeland. A few personal stories help illustrate the complicated circumstances and identities that defined life for Czechoslovakia’s German-speaking Jews. Terezie Brümmeler, born in 1900, a Jew from Liberec (Reichenberg), asked UNRRA for help in June 1946. Her Christian husband had been sent to a labor camp where he most likely had died.⁵⁴ She wrote in Czech: “I am totally alone. I face difficulties from the local authorities all the time because I declared German nationality [in the 1930 census] and got German ration cards, even though I had already asked for the ration cards of people of Czech nationality. Up to now, they have never satisfied my requests and I am in great need here. Nor have I received [that is, been returned, my Czechoslovak] citizenship yet.”⁵⁵

Another example is Emil Gläser, the son of a Christian and a Jew, born in the town of Lovosice (Lovositz), in 1897. As a “Mischling” he was imprisoned first in Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), Bohemia, in August 1943, and then in Amberg, Bavaria. On June 6, 1945, he was imprisoned again—this time by the Czechs—and was not released until June 12, 1946. His Christian wife and his son (b. 1928) were imprisoned alongside him.⁵⁶

The approximately three thousand applicants for the UNRRA transports also included many Jews who had never been citizens of Czechoslovakia. Some were German and Austrian Jews who had come to Czechoslovakia in the 1930s as refugees; others were Polish Jews who ended up in Czechoslovakia at the end of the war. The label “Sudeten/German Jews” that Rees used was therefore accurate only for some of the applicants.

As should be clear from these examples, most applicants for the UNRRA transports did not belong to Jewish religious communities; many had Christian spouses or were children of mixed marriages. This had helped them survive the Germans, but also meant that after the war they did not fit into any community of solidarity. They belonged neither to the Czech nor to the German national communities and were excluded from both non-Jewish and Jewish society. Most had never belonged to any political party. They could not have been in the Nazi Party had they wanted to, and if they were members of the Social Democratic or Communist Parties they would have been eligible to leave Czechoslovakia on the anti-fascist transports. Finally, and of greatest importance, most had lost their families. Their non-Jewish relatives were to be expelled and their Jewish relatives had been murdered.

The Council of the Jewish Communities and its key officials, President Arnošt Frischer and Secretary Kurt Wehle, tirelessly negotiated the legal status of the German-speaking Jews as well as of the Jews from Subcarpathian Ruthenia.⁵⁷ When German-speaking Jews were refused Czech ration cards, forced to wear the armband marking them as Germans, or included in a transport of expellees, they often turned to the Council for help. At a conference of the Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands held in October 1947, Wehle reported that all potential expellees had been helped immediately and had been exempted from the expulsion (often while waiting at the assembly points).⁵⁸

The Council offered Czech language courses to those Jews who had no, or imperfect, knowledge of the official state language.⁵⁹ In the late 1930s, the Jewish Community in Prague had similarly offered Czech courses to Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in order to facilitate their integration

into a highly nationalist Czech society.⁶⁰ The JDC decided to devote one of the two old people's homes, run by the Prague Jewish Community and fully financed by the JDC, to elderly German-speaking Jews who could not or would not learn Czech so late in life.⁶¹ The Council and the JDC also encouraged German-speaking Jews to move from the border regions to Prague, where speaking German or imperfect Czech on the streets was more acceptable.

The detailed report of Israel Jacobson, the head of the JDC in Czechoslovakia, sheds light on the different attitudes of the Council of the Jewish Communities and of the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia toward the German-speaking Jews. Whereas the Council decided to fight for Jews' right to stay in the country (provided of course that they agreed to learn Czech), and for their citizenship, Rees fought for their anti-fascist status, which would enable them to leave the country under better conditions.⁶² Many of those Jews categorized as German because of the 1930 census were bilingual (especially the younger generation), had friends among the Czech-speaking population, and wanted to stay. They were aided by the Council of the Jewish Communities, while anyone who wished to leave was asked by the Council to contact UNRRA.

The JDC also supported those who wanted to stay, but refused to support those who had applied for the UNRRA transports. The JDC treated the two groups of "unsuccessfully repatriated" Jews—the Sudeten German Jews and the Polish Jewish refugees—differently: Polish Jews were perceived as dedicated supporters of Zionism. The Jewishness of the applicants for the UNRRA transports was in contrast contested, with many instead bearing the stigma of being German. Nor did Jacobson hide his opinion about the Germans: reporting on their "almost violent" treatment by Czechoslovaks he added, "healthy!"⁶³



Joint Distribution Committee emigration office, Munich, 1945–1948. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy Aviva Kempner.

The lack of JDC funding for people in mixed marriages, especially those from the border regions, may, however, have also resulted from organizational dynamics, rather than prejudice. JDC funding was distributed through the Jewish communities. Immediately after the war, Jewish refugees

from Subcarpathian Ruthenia had begun to dominate the communities in the former Sudetenland, in some of which they came to make up more than ninety percent of the membership.⁶⁴ Most were Hasidim, and their practices had quickly reshaped the religious traditions and activities of these communities, which prior to the war had been largely Reform. This helps explain the occasional clashes between the relatives of the German-speaking community members who had married Christians and the mostly Yiddish-speaking Jews from Subcarpathian Ruthenia. The new leadership defined Jewishness more narrowly, and sometimes questioned the Jewishness of the people who applied for the UNRRA transports.

Clashes over Jewish identity were not unique to Czechoslovakia. On July 18, 1946, Richard Link Brookbank, the other member of the Repatriation Office of the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia alongside Rees, travelled to Bavaria to find a DP camp for the Czechoslovak German-speaking Jews. In Munich, he met J.C. Taylor, Deputy Chief of the Displaced Persons operations for the American Zone of Germany, who was moved by the hardships this group faced. Finding a suitable camp, however, was not easy. Taylor, Brookbank, and Major James Flannery from UNRRA in Germany agreed that they could not be sent to DP camps with Polish Jews. Apparently the reasoning was so obvious to Brookbank that he did not clarify this statement in his report. We can only speculate that when he refers to kibbutz-like organizations of Polish Jews in DP camps, he was anticipating multiple conflicts: between religious Jews and those who had chosen to marry outside the faith (or were brought up in a Jewish-Christian family); between Zionists and non-Zionists; between people of different generations; and between people who detested the Germans and those who considered German culture their own. After visiting Tutzing, Weilheim, Feldafing, Murnau, and Deggendorf, Flannery proposed that Brookbank open a special camp exclusively for Sudeten Jews in Windischbergerdorf,⁶⁵ close to Furth im Wald and Cham, just over the border from Czechoslovakia.⁶⁶

Intersecting Migrations

The period from July to September 1946 was extremely busy and demanding for Rees and the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia, as multiple migration issues came to a head. A large increase in Polish-Jewish refugees paired with changes in the implementation of Czechoslovak anti-German and anti-fascist policies directly impacted Rees and UNRRA's ability to act on the issue of the Czechoslovak German-speaking Jews.

After the Kielce pogrom on July 4, 1946, the number of Polish Jewish refugees crossing into Czechoslovakia increased to 5,000 a week.⁶⁷ Rees, as we have seen, felt morally bound to help not only the Czechoslovak German-speaking Jews, but the Polish-Jewish refugees as well. At a special meeting with representatives of the Czechoslovak Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Social Welfare on July 31, 1946, the Czechoslovak UNRRA officials, especially Rees, had to defend the Polish-Jewish refugees when Ministry of Interior officials depicted them as criminals who threatened not only Czechoslovakia's security, but also its public hygiene. Other arguments—for example, that the refugees would provoke antisemitism, would refuse to work, and would never assimilate—followed the well-known pattern of prejudices against the so-called *Ostjuden*, which had a century-long tradition in Bohemia. Rees promised that the Polish Jewish refugees would stay in reception centers, that they would not mix with the local population, that they would leave Czechoslovakia as soon as possible, and that they would enter the American Zone of Germany through Austria to avoid disrupting the expulsion of Germans to Bavaria.⁶⁸



UNRRA fits Jewish orphans arriving from Poland with Bata shoes; Prague, 1946. UN-UNRRA 66639, Seg 2.10, 3936, United Nations Archives.

Rees pledged that UNRRA would finance the camps and transportation, a necessary precondition for the Czechoslovak government to allow UNRRA to open special transit camps and to coordinate the movement of the Polish Jewish refugees. He insisted that UNRRA would cover all the expenses, even though the ERO in London was unwilling to finance the transit of Polish Jewish refugees.⁶⁹ UNRRA ultimately paid for supplies to the camps in Kukleny (Kuklena) (close to Hradec Králové [Königgrätz], east Bohemia) and Náchod (Nachod) at the Polish border, but the JDC paid for the staff, added extra portions of food for children, and also was responsible for the transit from Náchod south through Bratislava to Austria.⁷⁰

With regard to the Sudeten German Jews, Rees was under constant pressure from UNRRA in Munich, which frequently questioned the eligibility of the people being sent to Bavaria. Several times, Rees had to provide additional evidence to prove that a given person really had been in a concentration camp or labor camp and that he or she should therefore be accepted as “unsuccessfully repatriated.” Gertrude Richmond of UNRRA in Germany even questioned the “Jewishness” of some in the J-transports.⁷¹

In August 1946, the situation of the German-speaking Jews and of all the anti-fascists worsened dramatically. In parts of the Bohemian lands the elaborate machinery for the expulsion of the Germans was grinding to a halt. Under the agreement between the Czechoslovak government and the American military authorities, three trains a week, each carrying 1,200 people, were permitted to enter the American Zone. In their effort to make the region “free of Germans,” local authorities often decided to include anti-fascists in the transports if there were not enough “other Germans” available. In some places they were included against their will,⁷² but thousands more left “voluntarily” since they could no longer bear conditions in the border regions.⁷³ Beginning in September 1946, the only difference between anti-fascist transports and others was their name.⁷⁴ Though on some trains anti-fascists could still take their furniture, these were rare.

That summer of 1946 the number of applications for UNRRA transports for Sudeten German Jews grew rapidly, but Rees could send only small groups of Jews on the trains with the anti-fascists. The largest, 105 people, left on August 3, but clearly a faster, more effective way had to be found. Registration for a future UNRRA transport did not necessarily protect German-speaking Jews from deportation. Many were threatened with early expulsion together with Germans, often to the Soviet

Zone. In Děčín (Tetschen), Šluknov (Schluckenau), and Varnsdorf (Warnsdorf), the anti-fascist identity cards were no longer valid as of August 1946.⁷⁵ Hundreds of requests poured in from individuals and groups of German-speaking Jews requesting that UNRRA include them in the earliest possible transports. Rees and Brookbank had already created a form in Czech and English requesting that the Local National Committees not include a person in a “transfer” of Germans because he or she would instead be leaving with an UNRRA transport—with unclear success. In some applications one finds the note “left,” but with no indication whether they departed with UNRRA assistance or as part of an expellee transport.

In response, Rees started to negotiate with UNRRA in Munich and with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior concerning special transports for German-speaking Jews. Negotiating with UNRRA in Germany and ERO in London, Rees and Brookbank emphasized the hopeless situation of the German-speaking Jews who were threatened with expulsion. While communicating with the Czechoslovak officials they pretended that this was a voluntary resettlement organized by the UNRRA Mission and that they only needed the approval of the Czechoslovak government. Eventually, they reached an agreement for the transport of three hundred people per week to Bavaria. They would be included in the quota of expelled Germans, but treated as DPs by UNRRA. The refugees could decide for themselves whether they wanted to settle in Germany or stay in the DP camps. Rees also had to accept preconditions that the Ministry of Interior laid out in a memorandum on September 4, 1946.

In the September 4 memorandum, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior informed all District National Committees in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, as well as all police headquarters in the Bohemian lands, about the planned “expatriation of Germans of Jewish origin and religion.”⁷⁶ Since they had been persecuted under the Nazi regime, the Czechoslovak state was offering them a special “transfer” to the American Zone of Germany organized (according to this memorandum) by the Council of the Jewish Communities and UNRRA. The Jewish communities were responsible for compiling lists of eligible people, which they then submitted to the Local and District National Committees for authorization. Each District National Committee was supposed to verify whether the people on the list truly were of Jewish origin or religion. Those who did not meet the criteria were excluded. Each person in the UNRRA-organized transports could take up to 100 kg of luggage⁷⁷ (others targeted for expulsion were allowed 30–70 kg)⁷⁸ and a maximum of 1,000 Reichsmarks, but, according to the law, could not take stamp collections, jewelry, and precious metals out of Czechoslovakia.⁷⁹

In a circular on August 29, 1946 the Council of the Jewish Communities also published the news about the planned UNRRA transports. In contrast to the later Ministry of Interior memorandum, which identifies the Council as one of the co-organizers, the Council actually distanced itself from the whole matter, stating that it could not have “its name linked with this emigration operation.”⁸⁰ We can only speculate about why the Council board was so cautious. Was it aware of the similarity between these transports and the Nazis’ deportation of Jews only a few years before? Or did other considerations play a role? The next transport should have left on September 9, 1946 with seventy people on board. But it did not.

Criticism and Retreat

In fact, the September 4 memorandum was withdrawn only six days later.⁸¹ One reason was criticism by Robert Murphy, political adviser to General Joseph T. McNarney, military governor of the

American Zone of Germany.⁸² The UNRRA documents suggest, however, that the withdrawal was primarily the result of media outrage. Both circumstances brought the matter to the attention of the Combined Repatriation Executive in Berlin,⁸³ and this forced the Czechoslovak government and UNRRA to drop their plans.

On September 4 J.C. Taylor, who had assisted Brookbank in his search for a suitable DP camp for the Sudeten German Jews, mentioned the expulsion of the Sudeten Jews in a radio broadcast in Munich. The story was immediately taken up by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) and likely by other news agencies as well. Consequently, the expulsion plans appeared in dozens of papers all over the world.⁸⁴ The most detailed article was published in the daily U.S. Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* under the title “3,000 German Jews to be expelled from Sudetenland, UNRRA reports.”⁸⁵ According to Taylor, who is quoted as the only source in the *Stars and Stripes* article, the Czechoslovak government had planned to expel the German Jews, with UNRRA attempting to persuade the government to drop this decision. When UNRRA did not succeed, it accepted them as DPs and helped them get at least their furniture out of the country. Taylor also questioned whether those people would really settle in Germany as the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia claimed. From his own experience with other DPs, he thought they would more likely stay in the DP camps. The article mentioned two other criticisms from Taylor. First, UNRRA in Germany should have questioned whether those people were really Jews; and, second, if the Czechoslovak justification for the expulsion of the Germans was that these people constituted a fifth column, how could Czechoslovakia expel the Jews, who had been persecuted by the Nazis?⁸⁶

The news about Czechs expelling their own Jews caused outrage all around. The Combined Repatriation Executive in Berlin warned the Czechoslovak government on September 9 that the expulsion of the Jews who had suffered under the Nazi regime contradicted the Allied agreements at the Potsdam Conference.⁸⁷ Combined with the bad publicity, this forced the Ministry of Interior to drop its plans for the special transfer, and to announce that they would not include anyone of Jewish religion or origin in the “transfer” (that is, the expulsion) of the Germans.⁸⁸

In response to the public outcry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the JDC representatives, started a media campaign to restore the good image of Czechoslovakia. Rudolf Kuráž, the consul general in New York City, called a press conference on September 5 to highlight the close cooperation between the government and various Jewish organizations in helping thousands of Jews from Poland to cross Czechoslovak territory. He also spoke about the more than fifty new Jewish communities established mainly by Jews who had just arrived from Subcarpathian Ruthenia (without mentioning, however, that most were still struggling to re-obtain Czechoslovak citizenship). He did admit that there was some antisemitism in Slovakia⁸⁹—which the Czechoslovak government was determined to eradicate—but he resolutely denied that Czechoslovakia was going to expel 3,000 Sudeten Jews to the American Zone of Germany.⁹⁰

The Czechoslovak government actually asked the JDC for help with its public image. Jacobson’s October 16, 1946 report for the Ministry of Interior summarized the “good publicity” Czechoslovakia was already garnering, and it provided a list of articles in newspapers all over the world—articles that mentioned the democratic character of the Czechoslovak authorities and their humane and generous treatment of the Jews fleeing Poland.⁹¹ The *Brichah* represented an obviously welcome public relations opportunity, for it helped draw attention away from the ethnic cleansing of the Germans.⁹² Jacobson was willing to paint a rosy picture of Czechoslovakia because, with the

Brichah still underway, hundreds of Polish Jewish refugees were crossing the border into Czechoslovakia every week; the JDC needed the government's cooperation.

But since the government was also accusing Rees and the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia of deliberately creating a negative image of the country abroad, the Mission and Rees in particular had to justify their activities on behalf of the German Jews not only to the government but also to UNRRA leadership in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. When describing the history of all the negotiations concerning the "Sudeten German Jews," Rees emphasized how he had followed all instructions and orders, but he concealed the fact that people had already been sent to Germany as part of the anti-fascist transports.⁹³ Peter Alexejev, the head of the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia, later wrote an angry letter to all high-ranking UNRRA officers in Europe and the USA, accusing J.C. Taylor of having spread false reports. Regardless of the content of his report, Alexejev argued, Taylor had violated the internal rules of UNRRA because he had not asked its Mission to Czechoslovakia or the ERO to authorize his disclosure of their activities. Alexejev concluded: "The resulting article in the *Stars and Stripes* was a gross distortion of the truth and placed this Mission in an extremely embarrassing position with the government and especially with the Ministry of Interior which had cooperated so willingly in making plans."⁹⁴ The only institution that benefited from this situation was the Council of the Jewish Communities, which announced: "We have succeeded in getting the Ministry of Interior to issue a special regulation prohibiting the expulsion of persons of Jewish faith or origin who opted in 1930 for German nationality."⁹⁵

"For this group of people, the war and the misery linked to it have not yet come to an end"

The memorandum of September 10, 1946, which exempted people of Jewish origin from expulsion with non-Jewish Germans, considerably improved their situation. Hundreds of applicants for the UNRRA transports decided to stay in Czechoslovakia. They faced no threat of expulsion. The second-most oppressive legal discrimination, however, remained: regaining Czechoslovak citizenship, which was crucial for the restitution of property, employment, health insurance, and so on. Minister of Interior Nosek issued two and a half pages of instructions for the District and Local National Committees for how to deal with the citizenship of people who had suffered under Nazi rule but were of German or Hungarian nationality. The instructions began with a prologue about the well-known suffering of the Jews under the Nazi regime, but what followed was still only a half-hearted proposal. In contrast to Poland, which, in the first law passed by the provisional Polish government in 1944, offered Polish citizenship without preconditions to Jews who had been Polish citizens before 1939,⁹⁶ as late as September 1946, the Czechoslovak government stated that one should judge the Jews according to their "national behavior" before the Second World War and even before the First World War.⁹⁷ This vague formulation enabled the Czechoslovak officials to decide each case according to their disposition.

Many German-speaking Jews still wanted to leave Czechoslovakia. Immediately after the Ministry of Interior's change of course, the UNRRA Mission received letters of protest from the committees of German-speaking Jews. On September 12 the Prague committee wrote:

Although we do realize the good intentions of the Americans in opposing our emigration from our fatherland, we would like to stress that we would be leaving of our own free will, and that we intend to settle in Southern Germany. It will probably appear strange to you, that persecuted people wish to emigrate to the

country in which their persecution originated. We therefore want to explain the economic, psychological, and cultural reasons for our decision: The persons concerned all originate from German homes.... Even though some of them have sufficient knowledge of the Czech language, their pronunciation reveals that they are not of Czech birth. For these reasons, difficulties of all kinds arise, especially when working in occupations or professions suitable to their qualifications, and a number of them are without work.... We have no possibility to speak freely with our family members except in our homes.⁹⁸

A group of Sudeten German Jews also visited Zdeněk Toman, the head of the Political Intelligence Service at the Ministry of Interior, to request that he facilitate the UNRRA transports. In a confidential letter to Alexejev, Toman wrote about “Czechoslovak citizens of Jewish origin and German nationality” and their desire to “emigrate” to Germany, and he concluded that the Ministry would not be averse to working with UNRRA in this matter.⁹⁹

What followed therefore was a new round of negotiations in which all the actors were cautious not to be accused of initiating an expulsion.¹⁰⁰ Language was particularly important, and changing the wording was one possibility. Zelmanovits of the IGCR suggested to Rees that instead of “expellees” one needed to start calling these people “persons who have been recognized by the Czechoslovak authorities as ‘anti-fascists’ and who desire to emigrate from Czechoslovakia.”¹⁰¹ Ultimately, however, the Czechoslovak government preferred not to do anything to facilitate their departure. When it at one point feared another bout of bad publicity over Jews who wanted to leave Czechoslovakia, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Masaryk asked the JTA to publish a note stating that “No Jews of German origin have been deported from Czechoslovakia.”¹⁰²

In October 1946 the German-speaking Jews lost one of their most important allies when Alexejev dismissed Rees, allegedly as part of winding-down UNRRA operations in Prague. This explanation, however, is doubtful, because Rees was asked to hand over his duties to Gertrude Gates, a new member of the Repatriation Department; Rees’s close colleague Brookbank stayed as well. Rees most likely became a scapegoat following the memorandum of September 4.¹⁰³ However, Brookbank and Gates still tried to push the Ministry of Interior. In a letter to Mr. J. Hein of the Ministry’s Repatriation Department, Brookbank disclosed that two people already had committed suicide because of their hopeless situation, and that a group of between 1,500 and 2,000 was considering publicizing their hopelessness in the mass media abroad. He reassured Hein that if the Czechoslovak government decided to initiate the transport, then UNRRA in Germany and (through its good offices) the American military authorities would promise “that the former unfavorable publicity will not be repeated.”¹⁰⁴ Miroslav Kerner, of the Repatriation Office of the Ministry of Interior, put an end to these negotiations in a letter of December 1946: “The Ministry of Interior,” he wrote, “cannot organize their collective departure, for it might give the impression of a transfer [though it] has no objections to the private departure of those persons at their own expense.”¹⁰⁵

In spring 1947, close to a thousand German-speaking Jews still sat on their suitcases. They tried unsuccessfully to be included on the regular anti-fascist transports, which had started up again after winter. The German Social Democrat Lenk refused their request by noting that the Combined Repatriation Executive had reduced the quota for anti-fascists even though interest in resettlement among the political anti-fascists was still huge.¹⁰⁶ In a desperate letter posted in March the “Preparatory Committee of Sudeten Germans of Jewish Descent,” which had registered 700 people who still wanted to leave Czechoslovakia, accused the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia of not keeping their promises: “The registered participants of the transport have completely relied on UNRRA and have repeatedly been given verbal and written assurances. The participants have for

that reason organized their life here for a quick removal into the American Zone. Persons in this group had no other property except furniture, clothing, and linen.... Had UNRRA not repeatedly assured us that there would be a transport with belongings, many ... would have left without belongings. Today, this group is denied even the possibility to move with suitcases."¹⁰⁷ As this letter shows, some German-speaking Jews regretted that they had not joined the expellee transports for Germans. They concluded, "For this group of people, the war and the misery linked to it have not yet come to an end."¹⁰⁸

And in fact everyday life for these people continued to worsen. Representatives claimed that about 200 people were mired in such poverty that they could not buy food rations. It was worse in the border regions, where they were widely regarded as a fifth column. They demanded at least temporary Czechoslovak citizenship and the right to employment.¹⁰⁹ In April 1947 they indicated for the first time that if emigration to Germany remained a problem, they would be willing to emigrate elsewhere.¹¹⁰

The last documented attempt to resettle German-speaking Jews comes from May 1947. Hein from the Ministry of Interior, together with a Mr. Wetzel from the Preparatory Committee, visited Germany in search of a possible way to settle the group. The UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia arranged their welcome in Heidelberg. As a consequence, two options were discussed. The delegation got in touch with Philip Auerbach, the head of the State Commission for Victims of Racial, Religious, and Political Persecution at the Bavarian Ministry of Interior. Immigration to Bavaria, however, would be possible only in small groups on an individual basis. The other option was offered by the French Committee in Baden-Baden (in the French Zone of occupation), which suggested emigration to France or a French colony in Africa. The second option, however, was limited by occupation and age (up to 50 years). There was also a question of who would finance the resettlement. Emigration to France or French Africa would probably be financed by the French Committee. In the event of settlement in Bavaria, the Bavarian Ministry might finance the journey from the Czechoslovak border. It was unclear who would pay for transportation in Czechoslovakia.¹¹¹ The last documents on this matter from the archives in both Prague and New York mention only the visit to Germany in May 1947.

The story ends with unanswered questions. Many German-speaking Jews probably got stuck in Czechoslovakia. The two international agencies—UNRRA and ICGR—which were most willing to assist them closed their offices in Czechoslovakia at the end of June 1947. Without their help, the German-speaking Jews were abandoned.

Conclusion

What, in sum, do we know about the fate of the German-speaking Jews of Czechoslovakia? The UNRRA archival sources on "Sudeten-German Jews" indicate that some Jewish survivors were certainly expelled from Czechoslovakia. Rees makes specific mention of this: "It should be noted that, while the ... negotiations were proceeding, some Jews were expelled in ordinary transports although it seems clear that the Ministry of Interior was unaware of this."¹¹² Based on the records of the UNRRA Mission to Czechoslovakia, we can claim that surely dozens if not several hundred people who had suffered under racist laws during the German occupation were expelled with Germans. It is difficult to suggest more exact numbers. The UNRRA workers themselves often were not sure what happened to people who asked for their help. Moreover, this study has not dealt with the period of the "wild transfer" in the first three postwar months, when expulsion of Germans was often violent

and chaotic. There is good reason to think that some German-speaking Jews were expelled or even killed at this time. More research on this topic is needed. UNRRA helped at least 200 people leave Czechoslovakia in the so-called J-transport, mostly by adding wagons to the anti-fascist transports. Several hundred more German-speaking Jews left on an individual basis.

Only a minority of German-speaking Jews remained in Czechoslovakia. They included, on the one hand, a few hundred people who could adapt to the linguistic homogenization of Czechoslovak society. Most were bilingual and young. The other group who stayed, also numbering in the hundreds, were old people with insufficient knowledge of Czech, who had hoped UNRRA would help them to leave the country, but simply got stuck. Those people were envious of those who were expelled with the Germans with transports paid for by the Czechoslovak government. The everyday lives of these German-speaking Jewish survivors were so hopeless that they longed for transport to Germany.

The arbitrariness of expulsion, an act that for some was punishment but for others relief, was not unique to Czechoslovakia. Just over the border in Lower Silesia, local German citizens were expelled to the American Zone of Germany after Lower Silesia was awarded to Poland at Potsdam. By mistake, one train of Lower Silesian expellees arrived in the British Zone. The British soldiers who opened the train were surprised to discover that, in contrast to what it said in the passenger lists, the people on this train were not Germans, but Polish Jews. A JDC worker immediately appeared and arranged for their transfer to the American Zone.¹¹³ They had in fact paid to be included in this transport from Wrocław (Breslau). It was much more comfortable to travel this way than to take the usual route through the Náchod transit camp, Bratislava, and Vienna. Transports for Jews could be seen as acts of charity.

Getting German-speaking Jews out of Czechoslovakia under at least slightly better conditions than other “Germans” proved largely unfeasible. Initially the marginality and social isolation of the German-speaking Jews meant that they lacked an obvious champion. But, their potential to rouse international media attention and diplomacy also became limiting. They did not fit into any of the standard identity categories: they were not fully recognized as Jews, Germans, anti-fascists, or, in many cases, even as Czechoslovak citizens. One of the consequences of this uncertain identity was that few felt obligated to assist them and no one was sure where they belonged. Even Jewish charitable organizations were not prepared to help them because they did not want to go to either Palestine or America, but to southern Germany, something Jewish aid workers could hardly understand.

The Czechoslovak government, especially the Ministry of Interior, contributed enormously to the uncertainty of the legal situation of the German-speaking Jews, and increased doubts about the loyalty or patriotism of Jews in general and of those who spoke German and Hungarian in particular. Only more than a year after the end of the war and primarily out of fear of international criticism, did the Ministry of Interior ban any collective transfer of these victims of wartime and postwar circumstances. The same ministry, however, refused to do anything that might ease the pain and sorrow of these people or diminish their determination to leave Czechoslovakia.

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Zaflucht: Die Tschechoslowakei und ihre Flüchtlinge aus NS-Deutschland 1933–1938 (2012, in Czech 2008). In 2016 she initiated the establishment of the Prague Forum for Romani Histories, an international academic platform for research on the history of Roma and Sinti (www.romanihistories.usd.cas.cz).

Notes

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1. Hilda Elsner, application form, 28 May 1946, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, Fonds AG-018 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) (1943–1946), Sub Fonds AG-018-016 Czechoslovakia Mission (UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission), S-1326-0000-0037.

2. See Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, “Německy hovořící osoby židovského původu (vyznání),” in *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů*, ed. Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2010), II.1, 168–70; Jan Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938–1948: Beyond Idealization and Condemnation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), 149; Magdalena Sedlická, “‘Němečtí Židé’ v Československu v letech 1945–1948,” *Historie—otázky—problémy* 8, no. 1 (2016): 120–31.

3. Mirek Němec, *Erziehung zum Staatsbürger? Deutsche Sekundarschulen in der Tschechoslowakei 1918–1938* (Essen: Klartext, 2010), 228. I explain the higher level of bilingualism among the Jews by their specific migration history during the second half of the nineteenth century when they could—after the abolishment of mobility restrictions—move from the dominantly Czech-language countryside to larger cities, including cities with a majority German-speaking population (mostly in the border regions). Kateřina Čapková, “Raum und Zeit als Faktoren der nationalen Identifikation der Prager Juden,” in *Praha-Prag 1900–1945: Literaturstadt zweier Sprachen*, ed. Peter Becher and Anna Knechtel (Passau: Karl Stutz, 2010), 21–30.

4. Bruno Blau, “Nationality among Czechoslovak Jewry,” *Historia Judaica* X (1948): 152.

5. See Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

6. For more on the pitfalls of the census data from the interwar Czechoslovakia, see Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews? National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2012), 47–55. For more on the census and statistics, especially for Prague, see Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen: Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 29–88.

7. The impact of national categories for citizenship was already obvious after the Munich Agreement of September 1938, when Germany annexed the Sudetenland. The agreement between Czechoslovakia and the German Reich from November 20, 1938 distinguished between the German-speaking inhabitants of the Sudetenland, who would become citizens of the German Reich, and the Czech speakers, who would remain Czechoslovaks. Based on this agreement, German-speaking opponents of the Nazi regime (including Jews) had difficulties obtaining Czechoslovak citizenship and receiving permission to stay in the Czechoslovak interior. For wording of the Czechoslovak-German agreement, see Vladimír Verner, *Státní občanství a domovské právo republiky Československé* (Prague: Právnícké vydavatelství JUDr Václav Tomsa, 1947), 227–34. This

collection of documents also demonstrates the transition of the definition of Czechoslovak citizenship based on the domicile before the Nazi occupation to the nationalist definition after 1945.

8. Estimations of the number of Czechoslovak Jews who survived differ. The numbers here are from the JDC report of May 1946. Report for May and June 1946, 30 June, 1946, Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Geneva Collection 1945–1954, G 45-54/4/6/3/CZ.107, item ID 755508.

9. In the statistics of the Council of the Jewish Communities, the two groups were distinguished as A-Jews and B-Jews (or Jews and racial Jews). This distinction was also adopted in the JDC reports, see n. 8 above.

10. The number of Subcarpathian and German Jews in the Bohemian lands comes from the secretary of the Council of the Jewish Communities Kurt Wehle's speech at the conference for the representatives of the Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands, 26 October 1947, Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Prague, fond 425, box 226 call no. 425-226-1.

11. Kateřina Čapková, "Germans or Jews? German-Speaking Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia after World War II," *Jewish History Quarterly* 2013/2, 348–62; Jan Láníček, "What did it mean to be Loyal? Jewish Survivors in Post-War Czechoslovakia in a Comparative Perspective," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 60, no. 3 (2014), 384–404; Lisa Peschel, "'A Joyful Act of Worship': Survivor Testimony on Czech Culture in the Terezín Ghetto and Postwar Reintegration in Czechoslovakia, 1945–48," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26, no. 2 (2012), 209–28. For an introduction to the broader set of problems facing the German-speaking Jews of central Europe, see Kateřina Čapková and David Rechter, "Germans or Jews? German-Speaking Jews in Post-War Europe: An Introduction," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 16 (2017): 69–74.

12. Letter from the Council of the Jewish Communities in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia to the Office of the Presidium of the Government, 20 June 1946, National Archives Prague (NA), Úřad předsednictva vlády–běžná spisovna 1945–59, call no. 406, box 181.

13. As an example, when Emanuel Goldberger, a lieutenant in the British Army, applied to regain his Czechoslovak citizenship, the Ministry of Defense opposed his application, arguing that he had voluntarily joined the Czechoslovak Corps in England in 1942 "only in order not to suffer as a Jew." Ministry of National Defense to Ministry of Interior, 24 July 1947, NA, Ministerstvo vnitra I–nová registratura 1936–1953, box 1421, A 5511. The case is also quoted in Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 195. The Interviews Collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague includes several interviews with German-speaking Jews who faced discrimination after the war. Their stories are shocking, but ultimately these people wanted to stay in Czechoslovakia and avoided expulsion. See the collection of the Shoah History Department, the Jewish Museum in Prague, interviews 266, 374, 382, 404, 435, 580, 707, and 1005.

14. Most of the remaining Germans were not allowed to leave because they were needed for the economy in the border lands. For more on the expulsion of Germans, see Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů* (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2010–2011), 3 volumes; David W. Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing: The Transformation of the German-Czech Borderlands after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Detlef Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung 1938–1945: Pläne und Entscheidungen zum "Transfer" der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001).

15. Tomáš Staněk and Adrian von Arburg, "Organizované divoké odsuny? Úloha ústředních státních orgánů při provádění 'evakuace' německého obyvatelstva (květen až září 1945), 1. část: Předpoklady a vývoj do konce května," *Soudobé dějiny* 2005/3–4, 465–533; and, "Organizované divoké odsuny? Úloha ústředních státních orgánů při provádění 'evakuace' německého obyvatelstva (květen až září 1945), 2. část: Československá armáda vytváří 'hotové skutečnosti,' vláda je před cizinou legitimizuje," *Soudobé dějiny* 2006/1–2, 13–49; and, "Organizované divoké odsuny? Úloha ústředních státních orgánů při provádění 'evakuace' německého

obyvatelstva (květen až září 1945), 3. část: Snaha vlády a civilních úřadů o řízení ‘divokého odsunu,’” *Soudobé dějiny* 2006/3–4, 321–76.

16. Annex to no. 59, “Transfer of German populations from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary,” in *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, series I, vol. I, *The Conference at Potsdam July–August 1945*, ed. Rohan Butler and M. E. Pelly (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1984), 103, 104.

17. See Tomáš Staněk, *Poválečné ‘excesy’ v českých zemích v roce 1945 a jejich vyšetřování* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 2005).

18. Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and, “Czech, or German? Nazi Occupation, Postwar Expulsions, and the Origins of the Central European Nation-State,” *European Studies Forum* 31, no. 1 (2008): 37–42. For the problematic legal status of people in mixed German-Czech marriages in the postwar period, see also Benjamin Frommer, “Expulsion or Integration: Unmixing Interethnic Marriage in Postwar Czechoslovakia,” *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 381–410 and Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 181–93.

19. Arburg and Staněk, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951*, II.1, documents no. 45, 86, 95, 263, 295E, 328, 347A, and 364B.

20. See for instance the local decree of June 19, 1945 from Pardubice, which ordered local Germans to wear a yellow triangle with a black quadrangle and forbade people with those badges from using public spaces, Arburg and Staněk, *Vysídlení Němců a proměny*, II.1, doc. 211.

21. Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, “Restrikce v každodenním životě,” in *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů*, ed. Arburg and Staněk (Středokluky, Czech Republic: Zdeněk Susa, 2010), II.1, 91–93.

22. The treatment of the Germans (some SS) in the Lesser Fortress of Terezin in May 1945 was particularly brutal. After his visit to the camp, the Jewish film-maker and journalist Jiří Weiss (1913–2004), who was a war correspondent in Britain, wrote to Czechoslovak Minister of Interior Václav Nosek on May 25, 1945: “It seemed to me as if I saw a film from the Nazi concentration camp, but the rank-badges were Czech.” Arburg and Staněk, *Vysídlení Němců a proměny*, II.1, doc. 85. See also Staněk, *Poválečné ‘excesy’ v českých zemích v roce 1945 a jejich vyšetřování*.

23. For the full text of Gottwald’s May 22, 1945 instructions see Arburg and Staněk, *Vysídlení Němců a proměny*, II.1, doc. 67.

24. See also Derek Paton, “The Politicization of Mass Murder: Immediate Czech Reactions to the Shoah, 1945–49,” in *The Phoney Peace: Power and Culture in Central Europe 1945–49*, ed. Robert B. Pynsent (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2000), 79–81.

25. Bryant, *Prague in Black*, 219–21.

26. Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 116–45.

27. Jan Kuklík et al., *Vývoj československého práva 1945–1989* (Prague: Linde, 2009), 11–14.

28. Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety Prezidenta Republiky 1940–1945: Dokumenty* (Brno: Doplněk, 2002), docs. 21, 345.

29. For more on the Hungarian-speaking Jews, mostly in south Slovakia, see Anna Cichopek-Gajraj, *Beyond Violence: Jewish Survivors in Poland and Slovakia, 1944–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 165–76.

30. Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45–49.

31. Hana Mejdrová ed., *Trpký úděl: Výbor dokumentů k dějinám německé sociální demokracie v ČSR v letech 1937–1948* (Prague: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 1997), doc. 4, 115–17.

32. Deutsche Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik.
33. Summary Report about the Resettlement of the German Anti-Fascists, Members of German Social Democratic Party, Mejdrová, *Trpký úděľ*, doc. 40 (9 September 1946), 153–54.
34. Mejdrová, *Trpký úděľ*, doc. 7 (20 November 1945), 119.
35. Adrian von Arburg, “Hier gibt es kein Zurück mehr’: Vertreibung, Aussiedlung, Flucht und Ausreise deutscher Antifaschisten aus der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1951,” in *I oni byli proti* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 2008), 198–200.
36. Prozatímní směrnice pro odsun Němců—antifašistů z ČSR do amerického okupačního pásma, 24 April 1946, NA, Ministerstvo práce a sociální péče (MPSP), Repatriace, call no. 170, box 18; emphasis added.
37. The IGCR was created in 1938 on the initiative of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt to administer intergovernmental efforts to resettle refugees from Nazi Germany. Its work expanded in 1943 to cover all European refugees, and terminated in 1947 when its work was taken over by the International Refugee Organization. For more on Zelmanovits and his work in London exile, see Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 46, 61–65.
38. Lev Zelmanovits to Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 February 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
39. Lev Zelmanovits to Elfan Rees, 6 March 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
40. Memorandum from Berthold Kornisch, 20 March 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0040. UNRRA translation slightly amended here.
41. Czechoslovak Germans were prohibited from voluntarily immigrating on an individual basis to the American Zone; those who attempted to do so were denied entry and thus the transit camps at the border were overcrowded. Memorandum from the Ministry of Interior to All National Committees, 26 January 1946, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, Teritoriální odbory—obyčejné (TO-O), 1945–50, Germany, box 13.
42. The repatriation department of UNRRA helped German-speaking Austrian citizens living in Czechoslovakia to leave the country and return to Austria with their moveable property. Their situation was far more favorable than that of German-speaking former citizens of Czechoslovakia whose expulsion was organized by the Czechoslovak government. Arburg and Staněk, “Rakušané a Švýcaři”, in *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951*, II.1, 166–67.
43. Memorandum from Berthold Kornisch, 20 March 1946.
44. Berthold Kornisch to UNRRA, undated, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0040. The document is undated, but must have been written in June 1946.
45. Vladimír Clementis, a Slovak Communist politician, became the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs after the death of Jan Masaryk in March 1948. He was sentenced to death in the Slánský trial in December 1952.
46. Conference memorandum, Rees and Milton Winn with Clementis at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 April 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0041.
47. UNRRA Resolution no. 57, “A Resolution Relating to Operations in Enemy and Ex-Enemy Areas with Respect to Displaced Persons and Epidemic Control,” quoted in Peter Alexejev to the Ministry of Interior, 9 July 1946, *ibid.*, S-1326-0000-0035.
48. Rees to Alexejev, “Supplies for Unsuccessfully Repatriated DPs,” 15 July 1946, *ibid.*, S-1326-0000-0041.
49. Cable from UNRRA Prague to London and Washington, 13 April 1946, *ibid.*, S-1326-0000-0035.

50. Zelmanovits to Rees, 7 May 1946, *ibid.*
51. Rees to Zelmanovits, 10 May 1946, *ibid.*
52. UNRRA Prague cable to UNRRA Nuremberg, 24 June 1946, *ibid.*
53. Monthly report from Rees to Alexejev, 8 July 1946, *ibid.*, S-1326-0000-0032.
54. A “Christian” could obviously also be from a Jewish family, but interestingly, the term “Christian” is mostly used in the archival documents from this collection for the non-Jewish partner and “Jew” for the person persecuted because of the Nuremberg Laws, even though many of those people were baptized and raised their children in the Christian faith.
55. Letter from Terezie Brümmler to UNRRA, Prague, 19 June 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0037.
56. Dr Emil Glässner, application form, 31 October 1946, *ibid.*
57. Kurt Wehle, “The Jews in Bohemia and Moravia: 1945–1949,” in *The Jews of Czechoslovakia*, vol. 3, ed. Avigdor Dagan, Gertrude Hirschler, and Lewis Weiner (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), 499–530.
58. Speech by Kurt Wehle, 26 October 1947, ABS, call no. 425-226-1, p. 9 of the speech. It was only in November 1945 that German-speaking Czechoslovak Jews were officially exempted from wearing the white armbands required of Czechoslovak Germans. See Arburg and Staněk, *Vysídlení Němců a proměny*, II.1, 170.
59. JDC Activities in Czechoslovakia, 1 November 1946, AJJDC, Geneva Collection 1945–1954, G 45-54/4/6/3/CZ.113, item 755578.
60. Kateřina Čapková and Michal Frankl, *Unsichere Zuflucht: Die Tschechoslowakei und ihre Flüchtlinge aus NS-Deutschland und Österreich 1933–1938* (Vienna-Cologne-Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 177.
61. JDC Activities in Czechoslovakia, 1 November 1946.
62. Israel G. Jacobson, report, 23 January 1947, AJJDC, New York Collection, 1945–1954, NY AR 1945-54/4/26/2/201, item ID 665912.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Kateřina Čapková, “Dilemmas of Minority Politics: Jewish Migrants in Post-War Czechoslovakia and Poland,” in *Postwar Jewish Displacement and Rebirth, 1945–1967*, ed. Manfred Gerstenfeld and Françoise Ouzan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 63–75.
65. The report says “Windenbergersdorf,” but the only DP camp that approximates this description is Windischbergerdorf.
66. Brookbank to Rees, report on a trip to Germany from 18 July to 27 July 1946, 29 July 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
67. Minutes of a meeting on the Displaced Persons problem in Czechoslovakia, held at Mission headquarters on 30 July 1946, 31 July 1946, *ibid.*, 1.
68. *Ibid.*, 2–5. See also, the report on the meeting at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs with UNRRA and representatives of the Ministries of Interior and Social Welfare, from 24 January 1946. NA, UNRRA, box 66, call no. 419.
69. Meeting of 11 July 1946, *ibid.*
70. Meeting about the Displaced Persons with representatives of the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Social Welfare, 29 July 1946, *ibid.*

71. For instance, letter from UNRRA Prague to Miss Richmond, 14 August 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
72. Mejdrová, *Trpký úděl*, doc. 40 (9 September 1946).
73. Mejdrová, *Trpký úděl*, doc. 25 (25 June 1946).
74. Arburg, “Hier gibt es kein Zurück mehr,” 205–206.
75. Prague to the National Committee in Děčín, 14 August 1946; and Prague to the National Committee in Varnsdorf and Šluknov, 28 August 1946, both, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
76. Expatriation appears in the UNRRA English translation. Expatriation of Germans of Jewish origin and religion, 4 September 1946, *ibid.* The Czech original calls it “vystěhovací akce”—transfer. No. B-300/9753-46-Ref. B, 4 September 1946, NA, Ministerstvo vnitra–dodatky (MV-D), box 215, file “Odsun Němců 1945–1946.”
77. No. B-300/9753-46-Ref. B, 4 September 1946.
78. The allowed number of kilos of property varied over time and by zone. The expellees to the Soviet Zone could never take more than 50 kg; the expellees to the American Zone were always allowed to take 70.
79. Circular of the Czechoslovak Mission, Arrangements for the Transfer of Jews of German Nationality, 10 August 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
80. Circular of the Council of Jewish Communities, no. 34, 29 August 1946, *ibid.*
81. See No. B-300/10690-Ref. B, 10 September 1946, NA, MV-D, box 215; see also Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 171; Čapková, “Germans or Jews? German-Speaking Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia after World War II,” 359.
82. Israel G. Jacobson, report, 23 January 1947, 7. Láníček uses other sources for the same claim. Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 171.
83. For more on the Combined Repatriation Executive, see R. M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 160–61.
84. The news was “*Czechs to Expel German Jews*. Czechoslovakia plans to expel between 2,000 and 3,000 German Jews from the Sudetenland, according to an announcement by U.N.R.R.A. quoted by Munich radio.” Among the periodicals are also local papers such as *Hartlepool Mail*, *Durham* (4 September 1946), *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (4 September), *Lincolnshire Echo* (4 September), and *Gloucestershire Echo* (4 September), but also *The Palestine Post* (5 September).
85. It appeared in the Munich edition on September 5, 1946 and in the U.S. edition the next day.
86. “3,000 German Jews To Be Expelled From Sudetenland, UNRRA Reports,” *The Stars and Stripes*, 6 September 1946, 4. I thank Catharine Giordano, the archivist of the *Stars and Stripes* Archive, for finding this report for me.
87. Brookbank to ERO London, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
88. Kučera, Ministry of Interior to all district and local national committees and security authorities, Prohibition to remove persons of Jewish origin, ref. 300/10690 Ref. B, 10 September 1946, *ibid.*
89. On anti-Jewish riots in Bratislava during the Partisan congress in early August 1946, which became a topic of international media attention, see Cichopek-Gajraj, *Beyond Violence*, 118–19.
90. “Czech Government Helping Polish Jews Who Cross into Czechoslovakia, Consul Reports,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 6 September 1946.

91. Letter from Jacobson to Ministry of Interior, 16 October 1946, NA, MPSP, box 19.
92. Láníček also mentions the Brichal's importance for improving the image of Czechoslovakia. Láníček, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 176.
93. Rees to Alexejev, aide memoire on Sudeten Germans of Jewish origin, 11 September 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
94. Alexejev to Brigadiar C.W. Greenslade, acting chief of UNRRA Germany and many more officials of UNRRA in Washington and London, 17 October 1946, *ibid.*
95. Council of Jewish Religious Communities, circular no. 37, 18 September 1946, *ibid.*
96. Janina Zakrzewska and Andrzej Gwiżdż, eds., *Konstytucja i podstawowe akty ustawodawcze Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej* (Warsaw: Prawnicze, 1966), 8.
97. Nosek, the Minister of Interior, to all District and Local National Committees, to all Police Headquarters and Repatriation Offices, no. Z/S-3559/89-17/9-46, 13 September 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
98. The Preparatory Committee, Prague, signed by Stern, Rostovsky, and Berman, letter to UNRRA, Prague, 12 September 1946, *ibid.* The letter exists in Czech, German, and English (UNRRA's English translation slightly amended here).
99. Confidential Letter from Toman to Alexejev, 5 October 1946, *ibid.*
100. For instance, see the controversy around Alexejev's mistranslation of Toman's letter, Alexejev to Majer, Ministry of Food, 4 November 1946; Alexejev to Majer, Ministry of Food, 7 November 1946; Toman to Alexejev, 13 November 1946, *ibid.* See also Toman to Alexejev, 13 November 1946, NA, UNRRA, box 66, call no. 419.
101. Zelmanovits to Rees, 16 September 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1326-0000-0035.
102. "No Jews of German Origin Have Been Deported from Czechoslovakia, Masaryk declares," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 7 November 1946.
103. Letter from Alexejev to Rees, 4 October 1946, UNA, UNRRA-Czechoslovakia Mission, S-1320-0000-0002.
104. Brookbank to Hein, approved by Gates, 16 November 1946, *ibid.*, S-1326-0000-0035.
105. Kerner to UNRRA, Prague, 23 December 1946, *ibid.*
106. Letter from the Preparatory Committee established in October 1946 to UNRRA, Prague, 18 March 1947, *ibid.* The letter exists in Czech, German and English versions; the English translation is slightly amended here.
107. *Ibid.*
108. *Ibid.*
109. Ferencova to Alexejev, 19 May 1947, *ibid.*
110. Preparatory Committee to Alexejev, 11 April 1947, *ibid.*
111. In May 1947, Zelmanovits offered between 7,000 and 8,000 pounds sterling from the IGCGR budget for the transfer of the German-speaking Jews. It is unclear whether this money was really available. A draft of a letter to IGCGR stated: "Czechoslovak representative Zelmanovits has 7000–8000 pounds funds for S.G.J. [Sudeten German Jews]." Draft of a letter to IGCGR, May 1947, *ibid.*

112. Rees to Alexejev, aide memoire on Sudeten Germans of Jewish origin, 11 September 1946. Jacobson from the JDC formulated a similar statement in an internal report: "No mass expulsion of Jews of German or Hungarian origin has taken place; only small numbers of Sudeten German Jews have actually left with German transports." JDC Activities in Czechoslovakia, 2.

113. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw, Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (MZO), call no. 1028, p. 77. Operation Swallow-train no. 338 conveying approximately 1,700 German Jews to British Zone, arriving Marienthal July 5, 1946. Douglas describes this same train based on documents from the British Foreign Office archives: *Orderly and Humane*, 159.