

MAGYARS AND JEWS IN SLOVAKIA

BY

JOHN KARPATY

Our January issue contained statistics relating to the numerical strength of the Magyar minority in Slovakia, showing that *the Magyars in that country number 180.000 souls.*

Naturally there are people, quite a number of people, who dispute the accuracy of that figure. In Slovakia itself in particular there are calculations and computations in circulation which, accepting the figures of the 1930 Czecho-Slovak Census, put the number of Magyars at no more than 67.000. German statisticians and demographers — who, it would seem, lack reliable data — are dependent for their information on Slovak propaganda statistics. This has led to the peculiar fact that, *though Czecho-Slovakia has collapsed, the spirit of Czecho-Slovakism is still alive.* It is alive and active in persons who, when the Czecho-Slovak Republic existed, fought against it, who were the most stubborn opposers of the anti-minority methods of the Czecho-Slovak Census, in which the Slovaks were registered under the same heading as the Czechs. At the time it was impossible to determine how many Czechs and how many Slovaks there were in the towns of Upper Hungary. The number of Germans, who could not by any stretch of imagination be registered as Czecho-Slovaks, was cut down by the same methods used to lessen the number of Magyars. Experts who at the time and later on criticized the Czecho-Slovak census, declared that in certain nationality areas the census officials had been told beforehand how large a percentage of Magyars they might register. These abuses were the subject of constant protests voiced by the leaders of the German, Slovak and Magyar minorities in the Press and in Parliament. It is therefore most unreasonable that in the present changed circumstance the figures of the census

taken by the Czecho-Slovak Administration should still be quoted in order to decrease the number of minority citizens of Magyar race.

Slovak and German authorities who accept the figures of the Czecho-Slovak census as correct where the Magyar minority is concerned (for German works on the subject see, for instance, Franz Riedl's "*Das Deutschtum zwischen Preßburg and Bartfeld*" Volk und Reich Verlag, Berlin 1940 and Otto Albrecht Isbert's "*Ungarn*", Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, Berlin 1941), argue that a large number of Jews registered as Magyars, which was a mistake, for according to modern racial theories the Jews must be separated from the body of every other nation and regarded as a separate racial and national unit. They declare that if the Jews are counted separately the number of Magyars found by the Czecho-Slovak census is correct.

Those, however, who know what the nationality policy of the Czecho-Slovak Republic was in theory and practice, realize that this argument cannot be accepted as wholly convincing. The Czecho-Slovak minority policy treated the Jews in two different ways. *On the one hand, forestalling the present racial theories, the Czechs declared the Jews to be a separate nationality; on the other hand, when the census was taken, the Jews were supposed to be allowed to choose the nationality to which they wished to belong.* That should have meant that people of Jewish faith were free to declare themselves either Jewish nationals or Czechs, Czecho-Slovaks, Slovaks, Germans or Magyars. By means of the pressure brought to bear on them by the authorities, however, it was easy to persuade the Jews to register either as Jewish nationals or as members of the majority nation. *The Czechs took care that the Jews should not be allowed to swell the ranks of any of the national minorities, preferring that, if they did not increase the number of Czecho-Slovaks, they should figure as a small and harmless minority in Czecho-Slovakia's nationality statistics.* With their nationality policy the Czech democrats in practice were a good way ahead of the present racial theories.

Let us take the figures of the Czecho-Slovak Census and see in what proportion the Jews of the areas belonging

to Slovakia before the first Vienna Award professed to belong to the several nationalities. We have two columns of figures to study, one for 1921, the other for 1930. These columns are as follows:

<i>Jews</i>		
<i>Nationality</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>1930</i>
Czecho-Slovak	21.7 ⁰ / ₀	36.3 ⁰ / ₀
German	14.5 ⁰ / ₀	30.34 ⁰ / ₀
Magyar	8.6 ⁰ / ₀	2.07 ⁰ / ₀
Jewish	53.5 ⁰ / ₀	31.29 ⁰ / ₀

The above figures show clearly in what proportion the Jews of Slovakia, under the pressure of the Czecho-Slovak minority policy, professed to belong to the several nationalities. It may be established that in the first years of the Republic the Jews took advantage of the permission to describe themselves as Jewish nationals. *In 1921 the percentage of Jews who availed themselves of this right was 53.5. By the time the second census was taken, it had decreased, which proves that the Jews had gradually given up their own nationality and joined other nationalities. The question that interests us is not whether this development was spontaneous and in keeping with facts, but what its effects were on nationality statistics. We see from the above figures that the Jews helped to increase the numerical strength chiefly of two nationalities, the Germans and the Czecho-Slovaks. While in 1921 only 14.5% declared in favour of German nationality, ten years later 30.34% of them professed to be Germans. In 1921, 21.7% of the Jews declared themselves Czecho-Slovaks, by 1930 the proportion was 36.3%. The proportion of Jews professing to be Czecho-Slovaks had grown in ten years by 14.6%, that of Jews professing to be Germans by as much as 15.84%. From this it follows that in the first ten years of the Czecho-Slovak Republic's existence the tendency was for the Jews to join the German minority.*

What do we see in connection with the Jews and the Magyar national minority in Slovakia? In 1921, as we have seen, 8.6% of the Jews of Slovakia professed to be

Magyars. *When the census was taken ten years later, only 2.07% of them registered as Magyars.* From this we must conclude that the nationality policy pursued by the Czecho-Slovak Republic and the methods used in taking the census were responsible for almost entirely separating the Jews from the Magyars; in other words, that the Czechs carried out in practice then what certain Slovak propagandists are now urging as desirable.

If we compare the nationality statistics of the Jews with their number as a whole, certain very interesting points emerge. In the first ten years of the Czecho-Slovak Republic's existence the number of Jews living in Slovakia was 135.914. This was the number of people of Jewish faith; it therefore included those who professed to be of Jewish nationality. If now we convert into numbers the percentages of Jews registered in the various nationality categories, we shall see how many Jews there were in each of them.

Let us take the Magyar Jews first. In 1930, 2.07% of the Jews in Slovakia declared themselves Magyars. When we calculate what 2.07% of the total number of Jews was, we find that *according to the figures of the Czecho-Slovak Census 283 Jews were registered as Magyars.* If we accept modern racial theories and decide to separate all Jews from the body of the Magyar minority, we must deduct that number from the number of Magyars actually living in present-day Slovakia in 1930. But even if we do separate all the Magyar Jews from the Magyar minority, which numbers 184.122 souls, it will be seen that the Magyars of Slovakia still numbered over 180.000.

For the sake of comparison, and because the question is interesting and important, we shall now proceed to examine this matter in connection with the rest of the national minorities.

In 1930, 36.3% of the Jews of Slovakia declared themselves Czecho-Slovaks, *which means that 49,536 persons did so.* The difficulty here is that we have no means of determining how many of that number registered as Czechs and how many as Slovaks.

In 1930, 30.34% of the Jews declared themselves Germans. *This percentage is equivalent to 41.236 souls.*

We have deducted the number of Magyar Jews from the number of Magyars and were prevented from making a similar deduction in the case of the Czechs and Slovaks only because we have no means of determining how many Jews registered as Czechs and Slovaks respectively to the German minority. *In 1930 there were 147.601 Germans in Slovakia. If from that number we deduct the number of the Jews who registered as Germans, we shall find that the actual number of Germans of pure Aryan stock in Slovakia at that date was 106.365.*

Here something must be said about Franz Riedl's work referred to above. That German author gives the number of Jews in Slovakia in 1930 as 63.385. There is an item in the Czecho-Slovak statistics that closely approaches Riedl's figure. This item is the number of *Jewish nationals* (not that of people of Jewish religion) in Slovakia. According to Czecho-Slovak statistics, in 1930 there were 70.929 persons of Jewish nationality in Slovakia. We thus see that Franz Riedl was fairly accurate in his estimation of the number of *Jewish nationals* in Slovakia in 1930. *There were, however, several tens of thousands of people belonging to the Jewish faith in Slovakia besides those professing to be of Jewish nationality, and these masses were divided among the different nationalities.* They represented the numbers that, in keeping with modern racial theories (which demand that Jews must be completely separated from all other nations irrespectively of whether they regard themselves as a religious, racial or national body) we have deducted from the figures denoting the numerical strength of the various nationalities. In the work mentioned above Franz Riedl has made the great mistake of neglecting to subtract the number of German Jews from the number of German nationals. In this way he puts the number of Germans in Slovakia at 147.601 instead of 106.365