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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 74, Folder 4, Tiso, Jozef, 1983.

PUBLIC COMMITTEE IN ISRAEL
OF SURVIVORS OF AUSCHWITZ

and other extermination camps

ERUSALEM 91021

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הועדה הציבורית בישראל לניצולי אושוויץ
ומחנות ריכוז אחרים

תל-אביב 61012

ירושלים 91021

ת.ד. 1303 טל. 767631

ת.ד. 2126 טל. 222049

November 16, 1983

Re: Jozef Tiso--convicted and executed war criminal to be proclaimed a martyr?

Your Holiness:

Mr. Martin Zapletal, Secretary of Holocaust Survivors USA, has informed us in a letter dated August 10, 1983, that the Vatican's representative to the U.N. in New York, Dr. Chili, has granted permission for the prayer to elevate the "martyr," Jozef Tiso, to sainthood.

It was our understanding that this was not taking place, as your Holiness will see from the enclosed three Newsletters. (No. 20, p. 1 is our letter to your Holiness of July 1, 1982, occasioned by events described in No. 19, p. 1. No. 21, p. 1 is a reply conveyed by Father Stiasny of Ratisbonne in Jerusalem.)

Since seemingly the action to canonize the convicted and executed war criminal Tiso is continuing, we beg your Holiness for confirmation of the message relayed to us through Father Joseph Stiasny of Ratisbonne, as mentioned above.

In the names of the victims and survivors of Auschwitz and other extermination camps, we hope that your Holiness will not tolerate this action to continue and trust that our letter will find favor in the eyes of your Holiness.

Very respectfully:

Josef Foltys
Chairman

Erich Kulka
Hon. Chairman

Lilli Kopecky
Gen. Secretary

Papa Giovanni Paolo II
Il Vaticano
Roma

are waiting for that - then AUSCHWITZ, in the not too distant future will be merely a legend.

כאשר השרידים האחרונים של גוינו אושוויץ לא יוכלו לשאת עוד עדות - ויש קבוצות מסוימות המצפות לרגע זה - הרי שאושוויץ תהפך למושג בלבד. והדבר יקרה בעתיד הלא רחוק.

Aromatic vapours must have emanated from my body that night, for one of the girls shouted, "I swear to God, I smell apples!" "She's hallucinating," somebody said. "We all will go mad in this place."

Next morning, I had a royal breakfast in the toilet.

In the next issue: The Road to the Political Department

VOICE of AUSCHWITZ No 37 - JERUSALEM 1987

IV. A. Documentary Film on Slovak Jewry

Our friend and member Martin Zapletal of New York advised us well in advance of the first showing of this documentary film.

Our representatives were present at the first showing in Israel on November 14, 1986, in the hall of the Diaspora Museum, filled to capacity. The film has been produced on the initiative of Mr. Jack Garfein, working in Canada and the U.S. He had been deported to Auschwitz in 1942 at the age of thirteen together with his family and hundreds of other Jewish co-citizens from his native Slovak city of Bardejov. Jack Garfein is the sole survivor of his family.

This one hour documentary, produced by the CBC, made it clear to the public in Canada and the U.S. - for the first time - that the representatives and employees of the Slovak puppet state shared the guilt for the murder of the Jews. Mr. Garfein documented this fact by presenting the collaboration of the former Slovak gardist, Stefan Reichstaetter, today living as a respected citizen in Canada.

Jack Garfein is not unknown in Israel. In 1985, he was introduced by our Chairman, Josef Foltys, to Dr. Yitzchak Arad, Chairman of Yad Vashem. Garfein presented a plan to dedicate a forest in memory and in honor of the one and one half million Jewish children murdered by the Nazis, but the film won priority.

To the question of what is the purpose of this documentary film, Mr. Garfein gave the following answer:

We feel that the vast majority of the Slovak people living in Canada and the USA are not aware of the role which the Slovak State played under the leadership of the Catholic priest Josef Tiso during World War II.* The reason that Slovaks are so misinformed is that people like Kirschbaum, the former leader of the Academic Hlinka Guards and other Slovakian representatives from that time have kept their criminal pasts a secret. What we are trying to do is to confront the truth in relation to Kirschbaum, to Reichstatter and to many other people who during and after the war, on false names and pretenses, came from Slovakia to Canada.

A big problem is also the Vatican. In response to the efforts of some Slovak groups from abroad to proclaim this former head of the Slovak puppet state a saint - this man who has been sentenced and executed, Josef Tiso - the Vatican remains silent. The Vatican should come out and make a statement revealing the truth of Tiso's collaboration with Nazi Germany. It should expose his role in the tragedy of about one hundred thousand Jewish citizens from Slovakia, who Tiso's Government deprived of all human rights and deported to the extermination camps.

I am aware, and I greatly appreciate what your Committee achieved with your protest action against the worship of Tiso's memory with prayers in the Churches. In my opinion, the Israeli Government should take a position and should press the Vatican to officially condemn Tiso and what he and his government did to the Jewish citizens of Slovakia. This film is the first step, and I will not rest until the whole truth about the crimes committed on my people by responsible Slovak representatives is revealed and punishment meted out.

tor's Note: Re: Catholic priest, Josef Tiso, ment of the Slovak State (created "by the grace of ,"). See, our issues No.11 p.1, no.20 p.1, No.25, 26. p.11. and No. 34. p.2.

The war rages within him

A 'Journey Back' in powerful strides along the trail of the Nazi Holocaust

By DAVID HINCKLEY
Daily News Staff Writer

"My mother was 32 when she died," says Jack Garfein. He picks up a sepia-tinted photograph—all that remains of Blanka Garfein, a dark-haired woman with smooth skin.

"She grew up believing that if you lived by a set of rules things would not happen, like being killed because you followed the wrong religion."

Even before their train arrived at Auschwitz in 1944, her son now thinks, Blanka knew she was wrong. "She knew she was going to die. When we got off the train she pushed me away from the women and children over to the men. Which I thought meant she was sending me to die. For the rest of the war I hated her."

They never got to talk that one out. In the year before Allied troops arrived, Blanka Garfein, her husband, her daughter and more than 100 relatives were victims of a Nazi policy that reduced 6 million human beings to a few charred piles of bone fragments.

Finally Jack Garfein, 55, decided to go over his own story in a film called "The Journey Back," which has its first U.S. showing today in the Clurman Theater, 412 W. 42d St., at 1 p.m.

Back to Auschwitz

In the quasi-documentary, a Canadian Broadcasting Corp. crew follows Garfein back to Auschwitz and his hometown of Bardejov, which during the war was under Msgr. Josef Tiso's Fascist puppet state of Slovakia.

His own memories are intertwined among interviews with other survivors, whose testimony eventually leads him to a man named Stefan Reisteter, district supervisor for the Tiso regime and, at the very least, a passive accomplice in the deportation of Jews to Auschwitz.

The film builds to a confrontation between Garfein and Reisteter with CBC as intermediary. They meet on a street corner and Reisteter, today a well-known member of the Slovakian community in Canada, at first is cordial. "I think he recognized me," says Garfein, watching the scene with clearly measured calm.

Garfein asks why it all happened. Reisteter says he wasn't responsible.

It was the state's doing, it was a terrible shame. With nowhere else to go they shake hands and part. On film Garfein is shaken, disbelieving. Watching, he is calm.

This is not, he says, like Nicholas Gage's "Eleni," where hatred and frustration are focused on a single villain. "I don't seek vengeance," he says. "What I want is for Reisteter to say he's sorry, to admit he participated in one of the worst horrors of

'I thought she was sending me to die. For the rest of the war I hated her.'

human history. We owe that to the future. When you take the side of the devil you have to know there are consequences."

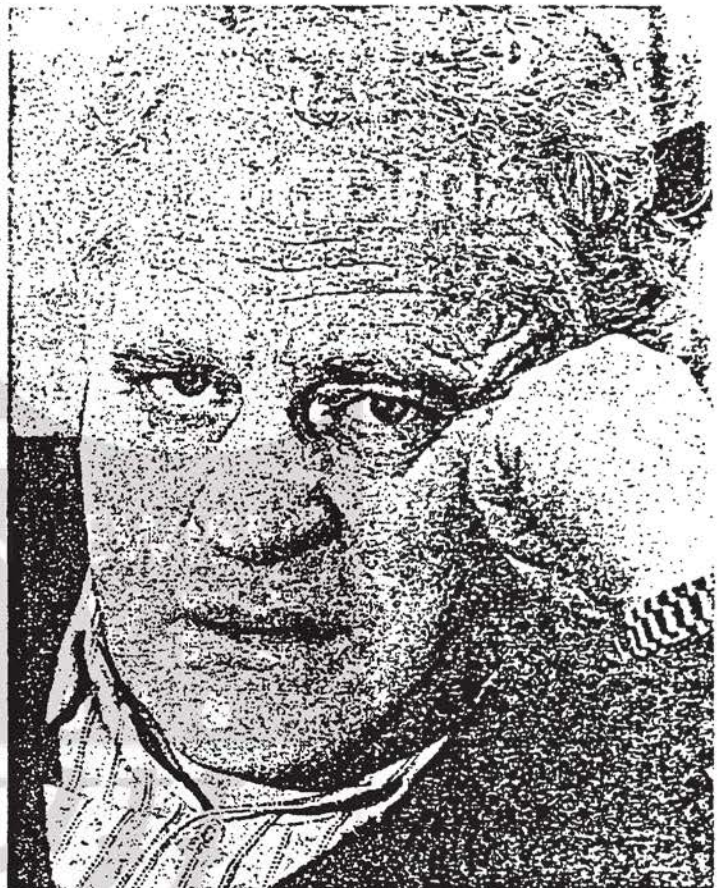
In the end the film's power comes more from the story of Jack Garfein, who readily admits he is here today mostly because the Nazis ran out of war before they ran out of victims.

Garfein was 14 on Liberation Day in the spring of 1945. He weighed 48 pounds. He was strong, though, and by the next fall he was an immigrant in a New York school. His first assignment was "What I Did on My Summer Vacation."

By 1956, he was directing movies in which he helped introduce Ben Gazzara and Steve McQueen. In 1957, he married Carroll Baker, with whom he had two children. They divorced in 1969. Today he runs the Clurman Theater and produces shows like "Avner the Eccentric." He lives in a large, neat West Side apartment full of art and classical music.

"Day to day I enjoy myself," he says. "I just don't have the innocence of my mother and father. I can't pass to my grandchildren the optimism they passed to me. What happened in the camps changed everything."

For "The Journey Back" Garfein returned to Auschwitz, now random ruins on whose snow-swept platform Garfein can point to the spot where Josef Mengele, Angel of Death, made decisions.



JACK GARFEIN in his apartment on the West Side. PAT CARROLL DAILY NEWS

You go left, you go right. No one goes back. Garfein, shoved among the men, told Mengele he was 18. Moments later he tried to return and say he lied, he was 13. A Jewish guard blocked his path.

"I remember the smell of the camp," he says. "A terrible smell. And factory chimneys. When I got to Auschwitz and I saw chimneys shooting soot and ash I thought they were factories."

Returning to Bardejov for "The Journey Back," Garfein didn't find much to get sentimental about. His house was rubble. Some townspeople would not talk, fearing later taunts of "Jew-lover."

He looked up a friend to whom his father had entrusted a trunk of family

heirlooms and found one item, a red tapestry that had hung over his mother's bed. Now it hangs over the bed of the friend's daughter. She considers it her heirloom and will not return it.

So it continues, the parade of people who don't quite understand. "When I got to America the teacher had everyone in the class tell their parents' occupations. When she got to me I couldn't say anything. She brought me up to the front. I still couldn't speak. So she tapped her ruler and finally I burst into hysterics and shrieked, 'DEAD! DEAD!'

"And she said, 'You mean deceased.'"

"They just had no idea."

Honored Slovakian called a Fascist leader

By DAVID HINCKLEY
Daily News Staff Writer

Jack Garfein was "horrified" that fellow Slovaks would give a community service award to a man Garfein thinks should spend his life apologizing.

That was his motivation for telling his story in the film "The Journey Back," which will be shown today at 1 p.m. in the Clurman Theater, 412 W. 42d St.

Witnesses in "Journey" describe Stefan Reisteter, district supervisor for the Fascist Slovakia regime, as overseer for loading of Jews onto Auschwitz



Stefan Reisteter

is seen snapping off a Fascist salute.

When a Pennsylvania group honored Reisteter,

truth out." And while he's at it he thinks Slovaks should fight something else: the movement—which he traces to the right-wing Slovak Congress—to beatify Msgr. Josef Tiso, Fascist Slovakian ruler executed in 1947 for war crimes.

"Most Slovaks want nothing to do with these men when they know the truth," Garfein says.

Today's U.S. premiere of the film will have an audience of Slovakian Holocaust survivors. The CBC is working on a second part, tracing other Nazi connections.



afraid there is resistance to completing it.

Although he says he was told the second part would

representative says it's "very unlikely" it will be shown this year. "Something like this requires a lot of checking."

Estimated Number of Jews Killed In the Final Solution

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED PRE-FINAL SOLUTION POPULATION	ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION ANNIHILATED	
		NUMBER	PERCENT
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000	90
Baltic countries	253,000	228,000	90
Germany/Austria	240,000	210,000	90
Protectorate	90,000	80,000	89
Slovakia	90,000	75,000	83
Greece	70,000	54,000	77
The Netherlands	140,000	105,000	75
Hungary	650,000	450,000	70
SSR White Russia	375,000	245,000	65
SSR Ukraine*	1,500,000	900,000	60
Belgium	65,000	40,000	60
Yugoslavia	43,000	26,000	60
Rumania	600,000	300,000	50
Norway	1,800	900	50
France	350,000	90,000	26
Bulgaria	64,000	14,000	22
Italy	40,000	8,000	20
Luxembourg	5,000	1,000	20
Russia (RSFSR)	975,000	107,000	11
Denmark	8,000	---	---
Finland	2,000	---	---
TOTAL	8,861,800	5,933,900	67

*The Germans did not occupy all the territory of the republic.

From "The War Against the Jews 1933-1945," by Lucy S. Daudowicz. 1975 by Lucy S. Daudowicz. © 1975 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishers.

CATHOLIC FRATERNAL WEEKLY

JEDNOTA

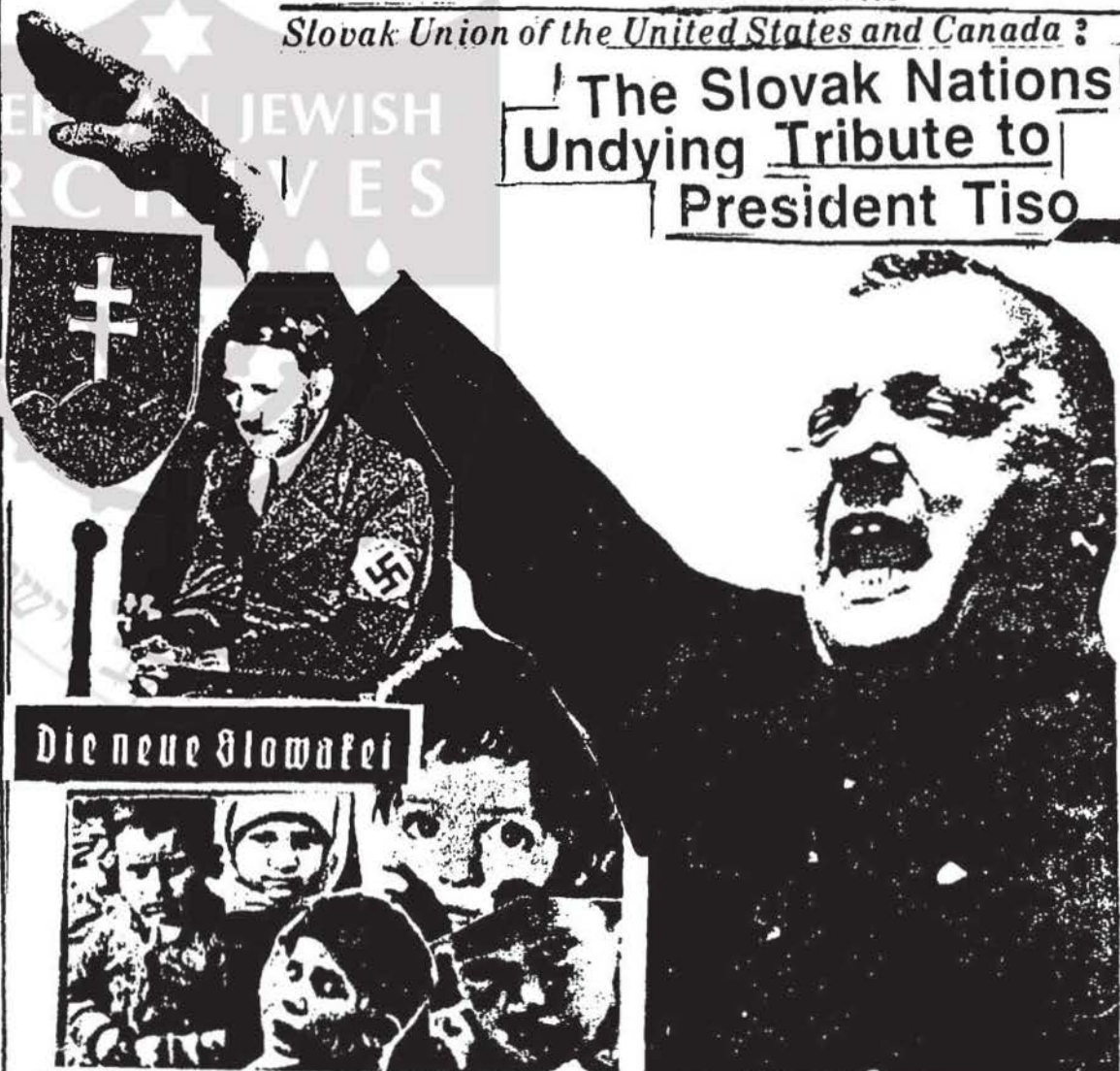
(THE UNION)

(USPS 273500)

Official Organ of the First Catholic

Slovak Union of the United States and Canada

The Slovak Nations
Undying Tribute to
President Tiso



Die neue Slowakei



The world is forgetting:

[start]

Original documents
faded and/or illegible



Decree No. 255/1940 of the Slovak Code ordered "all Jews to be excluded from studies of whatsoever nature in all schools and educational institutes except elementary schools." This was one of those barbarian orders which now resulted from the Slovak national socialism, which had been introduced following the visit of President Josef Tiso to Hitler in Salzburg on July 29. 1940. The policy of the Slovak Government toward the Jews was now determined by the programmatic declaration of Slovak national socialism made by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vojtech Tuka, at a course for commandants of the HLINKA GUARDS held in Trenčianske Teplice on January 21. 1941.

All the earlier humiliating and inhuman anti-Jewish legislation was codified in the notorious "ORDER (of the SLOVAK GOVERNMENT) of SEPTEMBER 9, 1941, concerning the legal position of Jews". No. 198/41 of the Slovak Code, which was referred to as the "JEWISH CODE".

Very few codes of law of civilized nations can boast of any document which derides all rules of humanity, decency, and culture, as brazenly as this "CODE". In many respects this Slovak version of anti-Jewish legislation went beyond even the anti-Jewish statutes, known as the Nuremberg Laws of the Third Reich. From the racial point of view the Jewish Code defined a Jew still more rigidly than hitherto, it applied equally to persons of mixed blood and of Jewish associations, The CODE ordered the compulsory registration and visible marking of JEWS by a large yellow STAR of David, which had to be worn on the chest. It ordered limitations upon marriages with Jews and sexual intercourse with Jews. It deprived Jews of the right to vote and to hold public office. It decreed the ineligibility of Jews for government employment, for the professions of public notaries, lawyers, civil engineers, medicine, veterinary surgery and pharmacy. It ordered all Jews between the ages 16 and 60 to perform forced labor according to the orders of the Ministry of the Interior, made them perpetually subject to searches of the person and homes, limited the secrecy of written communications or to assemble, and limited their exercise of religious worship and education. The CODE forbade the ritual slaughter of animals, restricted the education and employment of Jews, restricted the right of Jews to counsel and forbade Jews to petition or acquire at government offices. These laws restricted the right of Jews to acquire tangible property, cash or securities. Jews were forbidden "to possess the pictures, statues, and busts of national leaders" as well as "emblems of the state, and flags". Jews were not allowed to have "cameras, field glasses or records of national tunes/" The CODE cancelled tenancy agreements and leases, excluded Jews from public life, ordered the dismissal of all Jews from public office, prohibited appeals by Jews to the Supreme Administrative Tribunal, and denied the right to make claims for relief in the state courts. In short the CODE outlawed the Jews. Its 45 Year today and the TRAGEDY of Slovak JEWS beginning....

The documents presented in this ALBUM, - speak clearly. In continuation of an antisemitic tradition of several years the SLOVAK Government joined the anti-jewish crusade without reservations. The progress was exactly like events in those European countries that had been occupied by the Nazis. First, a furious antisemitic campaign, followed by robbery made lawful by Act, which deprived the appointed victims of their property, their means of livelihood and the fruits of their labour. Finally the fiendish, minutely planned transformation of moral into actual MURDER, into the mass-liquidation of tens, of thousands, of millions...

The Jewish Tragedy in SLOVAKIA might have been sensibly smaller in statistical extent if the "GOVERNMENT" and its agents had shown less zeal. The crime whose origin our collection of documents attempts to penetrate begin on MARCH 14, 1939, when the gang of SLOVAK adventures sold their souls to HITLER and MARCH 1942, when their lust for Jewish property drove them to sell EICHMANN SLOVAK JEWS wholesale, in return for buying from him, at 5 0 0 M a r k s each, - their death.

This was the position of the TISO regime, whose right hand rested on the HOLINES WORD while its left hand blessed those who burned, robbed and murdered innocent Jews.

Slovak Jewry played a tragic, but active and honourable part in this latest catastrophe of humanity. It did not submit helplessly to its fate, but fought with all possible means against the inevitable. The story of those battles for bare life in which the Slovak Jews lost a majority of their best representatives bear at the same time witness to their unconquerable will to live, to work and to fight for the RIGHTS of Man.

(DOCUMENTATION-ALBUM
" SLOVAKIA 1939-1945 "
We Will Not Forget....)

Martin and Margita Zapletal
Martin and Margita ZAPLETAL

was created from SLOVAK documentation compiled by:

To the superficial observer, the present publication of a book, dealing with the Tragedy of Slovak Jewry, - might appear somewhat belated, even untimely. In the nearest forty-five years that have passed since the breakdown of the German regime of crime and terror fresh grass has overgrown many of the mass graves, the scars have faded a little, and the strong pulse of new life is beginning to drown the horror and lamentation of the past. The work of the international war crimes court at Nuremberg and elsewhere, is nearing its end. In the meantime the hope of a disgraced humanity that those remaining war criminals who have hitherto succeeded to evade justice, is vanishing.

Much has changed since the day on which the gates of the concentration camps opened before the human wrecks of their inmates - many a hand has been shown, more than one dark connection has been revealed. This collection of authentic documents is not offered as an instrument of revenge. It does not want to accuse where the judgment of history has long been pronounced. Its aim is to utter a warning, a constant warning, an appeal to the conscience of humanity for all time to come: NEVER AGAIN to allow fascists, nazis or imperialists to play their bestial game with the life of whole ethnographic groups; it wants to contribute, to help make sure that a full realisation of the significance of the bloody heritage of the second world war should nip in the bud all hidden or open trickeries of irresponsible politics, which might lead humanity once again towards the dreadful goal marked by a new Oswetim, Majdanek, Mauthausen, Treblinka, Buchenwald.

A repetition of the tragedy would not affect the Slovak Jews to any great extent; these were exterminated so thoroughly and mercilessly during the years 1939 to 1945 that not one of the once happy and prosperous community has lived through the murderous storm without the irreplaceable loss of part or all of his family, without severe mental shock, or gravely impaired health. And those who have lived to see the moment of liberation at all are an infinitesimal minority.

The extent of the tragedy of the Jews whose home was the territory of present Slovakia in CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALISTIC REPUBLIC, - is defined by the overpowering figure of 108,000 dead. The territory of the Slovak STATE as it was during the war was somewhat smaller; in this region 60,000 Jews were exterminated. This figure covers all that JEWISH life comprised in Slovakia: old men, desiring only lasting rest in the graves of their fathers; unborn children, healthy men and women, renowned scientists and scholars; common folk; tradesmen, artisans, farmers, workers of the hand and brain; mine, yours, his -- father, mother, brother, sisters, friend, fellow-Jew; every single one of those 108,000 was loved, respected by someone, known, necessary, helpful, irreplaceable, personally close to someone. Each one of those 108,000, had he died at home would have been buried in the manner prescribed by his faith, would have been mourned by his family, his friend, his congregation. If we attempt to translate this dreadful statistical figure into terms of human fellowship, devotion and sympathy, we evoke the vision of a vast funeral procession of unford millions, a grief that is unending.

This figure, 108,000, is more than a statistical total. It includes mothers, children, infants; helpless old men and women; it tells of despair, the screams of horrified astonishment, terror, cries to pity, of human beings of flesh and blood, who were thinking, feeling, working, loving life and standing in terror of the death that had become inevitable for them; of destinies beyond the power of a normal brain to comprehend; of a misery which no words, no technical means of reproduction, no collection of documentary material can describe. The few words that have come down to us, the sentences scrawled on stolen scraps of paper with wooden splinters dyed in open wounds and smuggled out of the forecourt of hell, and which often meant death for their recipients - these simple, spontaneous, unaffected words are convincing beyond any doubt in their sense of humanity.

Some few examples may suffice to show the full import of these letters to a humanity unwilling to grasp the testimony of these records of the Jewish tragedy from Oswetim, Lodzh, Treblinka: "Today while I was at work, my wife and children were taken away; last night, while I was sleeping, my trousers, shirt and jacket were stolen; I am orphaned and naked"; or "Please tell Ilonka that her mother and sister have died; let Chajim, it he, s still at home, say Kaddish for his father, who was shot last night by a drunken guard; please send a lot of money, if you can, by a reliable messenger, so that I can buy something here"; or "Here in Oswetim we've had transfers as well, but a different kind to what understand by the word: here it means murder..."

The "INDEPENDENT", "FREE" SLOVAKIA of Msgr. Dr. Tiso, prof. Dr. Tuka and Mach negotiated the question of deporting the Jews as early as 1941. - a further sharpening of the anti-Jewish trend resulted from the Statutory Decree No. 130 1940 of May 29. 1940, which ordered that "Jews and gypsies shall perform labor for the benefit of the state, in lieu of military duty

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GRAMERCY CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT CORP.

17 November, 1988

Rabbi Marc Tenenbaum
45 East Eighty-Ninth Street
New York, New York 10128
Apartment #18F

Dear Rabbi:

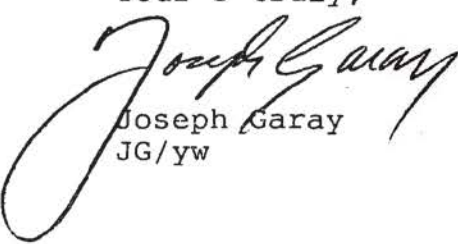
I hope that you remember me from the holidays and our discussion about certain material, which is in my possession.

I would like to turn this material over to you with documentation that was given to me by a friend which will prove that the "Quisling Fascist Bishop 'TISO'", who was the President of Slovakia, was, indeed, involved in the Jewish atrocities in Slovakia.

I am sure that after reviewing these documents, you will have many questions to ask me. Please do not hesitate to contact me at my office, 212-213-1106, and I will be more than happy to meet with you, at your convenience, to discuss these documents.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter.

Your's truly,


Joseph Garay
JG/yw



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

PROGRAM FOR CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION OF MEMORIAL ALBUM BY
MARTIN AND MARGIT ZAPLETAL, FROM THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
ASSOCIATION; GROUP OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 10:30 A.M. FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 21, 1984

1. Introductory Remarks by Steven Ludsin, U.S. Holocaust
Memorial Council

--Welcome to Guests
--Introduction of Mr. P.
Zapletal, Mr. Garfein,
Holocaust Survivors Gro
Garay, for Second Gener
Novak.
--Invite other guests to
affiliation)

2. Josef Garay will di
Slovak Jews

3. Jack Garfein will i
their son Peter. He w
about, and Mr. and Mrs

4. Mr. and Mrs. Zaple
Deputy Assistant Secre
explain about the albu

5. Viera Novak will s
for the Second Generat

6. Mr. Palmer will re

7. Palmer will presen
accept it on behalf of
a memorial for the tra

8. Remarks by Dr. Andrew Valuchek on behalf of the
Czechoslovak National Council of America.

9. Remarks by Dr. Michael Novak.

10. Cantor Michael Peerless of the Beth-el Hebrew
Congregation of Alexandria will chant the Kaddish (prayer
for the dead), and Amel-an rakhamin.

11. Concluding remarks by Mr. Ludsin.



At right, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Zapletal of Woodside, N.Y., present an album documenting the extermination of Czechoslovakian Jewry by the Nazis to Mark Palmer, far left, deputy assistant secretary of state, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs. Palmer turned the album over to Prof. Seymour Siegel, second from left, executive director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, for deposit in the archives of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Looking on is Steven Ludsin, third from left, member, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. The Sept. 21 ceremony at the State Department marked the 43rd anniversary of the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws in Slovakia.

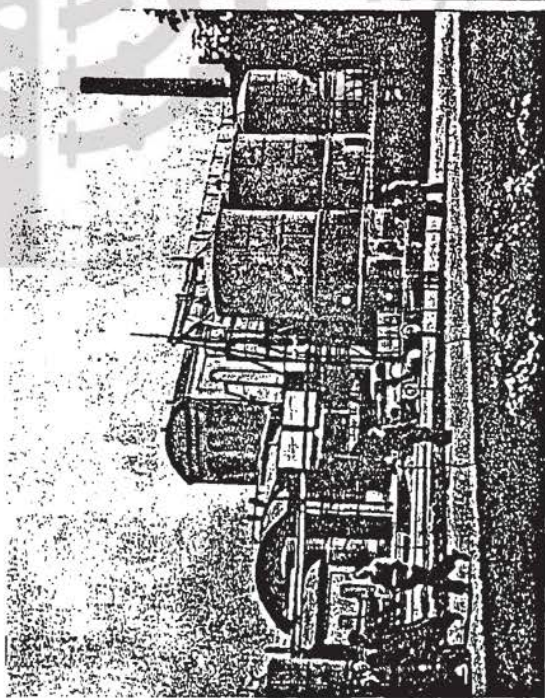
J. Tiso a A. Hitler
nad plánmi vojnovaj
agresie



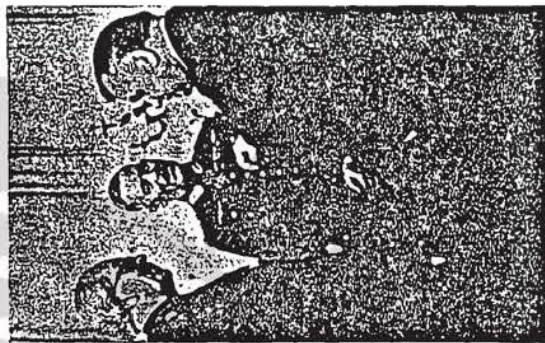
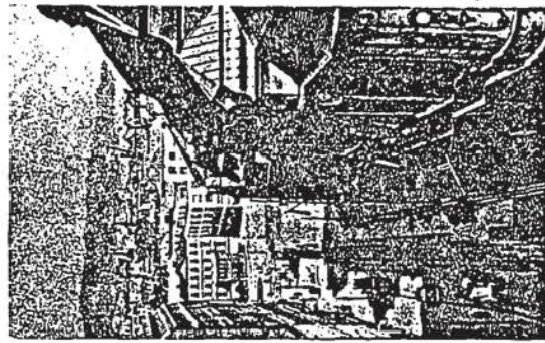
A. Mešič
vyznamenáva
príslušníkov HG



Závesd Apella
v Bratislave koncom
tridsiatych rokov



J. Tiso a V. Tuka
a pohorje maršalom
W. Keitelom roku 1942
Bratislava roku 1942



*Parroco, demagogo
e traditore:
i tre volti di Tiso*



Anche l'invocato della carta di Presidente della Repubblica slo-
vacca, minatore Tiso non dimasticò mai il "suo" parroco di
Sereč, nella sua chiesa aveva, sotto le volte del "suo" po-
stolo, a sfidare ancora e a dire le comari quando più tutti erano
i fedeli davanti al microfono, invece, si trasformava in un gran-
dioso demagogo per ottenere l'appoggio dei comunisti aveva
promesso la riforma agraria, che per il era guardato bene dal
attuare, ingannava la base della del nazionalismo, aveva vio-
lato la Slovacchia ai nazisti, l'atto più gravoso della sua car-
riera fu quello illustrato dalla foto grande: quando discese i sol-
dati della Wehrmacht nazista che avevano conquistato nel maggio
l'insurrezione nazionale scoppiata alla fine del 1944.



vacca e mostrò di credere, almeno ufficialmente, alla favola ignobile del ghetto felice « sotto la protezione del Reich ».

Di fronte a tanta passività, gli esponenti più fanatici del Partito popolare di Hlinka si sentirono autorizzati a chiedere anche la deportazione di tutti gli ebrei risparmiati grazie alla cosiddetta legge costituzionale del 15 maggio 1942: i battezzati prima del 14 marzo 1939, i coniugati con ariani prima del 10 settembre 1941, i professionisti ritenuti provvisoriamente indispensabili alla vita dello Stato, gli esentati da Tiso. Contro questi « privilegiati » si scagliò il 7 febbraio 1943, con un violentissimo discorso a Ruzomberok, il ministro dell'Interno, Mach. « E' necessario riprendere la lotta — disse — Verrà la primavera e vi assicuro che riprenderanno i trasporti degli ebrei! ».

A questo punto, trattandosi di ebrei battezzati, il Vaticano intervenne con più energia delle altre volte, pur servendosi, sempre della strada diplomatica. Il 7 aprile, fattosi finalmente ricevere da Tuka, monsignor Burzio ebbe con lui un vivace scambio di idee. E il 5 maggio, la Segreteria di Stato consegnò a mezzo di Sidor una nota di protesta, in cui si diceva tra l'altro: « La Santa Sede verrebbe meno al suo divino mandato se non deplorasse quelle disposizioni e quelle misure che colpiscono gravemente degli uomini nei loro naturali diritti umani, per il semplice fatto di appartenere ad una determinata stirpe ». Il 5 giugno, monsignor Burzio annunciava con qualche cautela che in seguito al passo vaticano l'idea di ulteriori deportazioni era stata abbandonata. Purtroppo, si sbagliava.

Nel frattempo, però, era avvenuto qualcosa di estremamente importante. Alla fine del mese di aprile del '43, il rappresentante pontificio in Slovacchia aveva ottenuto finalmente la prova inconfutabile e definitiva di ciò che aveva sempre sospettato: ad Auschwitz i deportati ebrei erano sterminati nelle camere a gas e bruciati nei forni crematori. A fornirgliela era stata la circostanziata relazione di un gruppo di evasi dallo spaventoso « lager » polacco, che gli fu consegnata dagli stessi autori nel corso di un incontro clandestino nel villaggio di Jur.

Si trattava di un rapporto estremamente preciso, corredato perfino di schizzi e di piantine. Non v'è dubbio che monsignor Burzio abbia fatto pervenire il rapporto al Vaticano. Eppure, neanche quel documento riuscì a smuovere Pio XII dalla linea di passività e di cautela seguita fino allora. Neanche il « rapporto su Auschwitz » bastò a fargli prendere una posizione rigorosa e decisa contro monsignor Tiso e i dirigenti cattolici della Slovacchia.

Ormai, però, il gioco era a carte scoperte. Ognuno dei due interlocutori si rendeva conto che l'altro « sapeva ». Il governo di Bratislava non poteva far altro che cercare fragilissimi alibi, che il Vaticano a sua volta era costretto ad accettare. E' in questo tragico gioco che si inserisce il documento più interessante e grave tra quelli scoperti recentemente negli archivi slovacchi. Si tratta



Monsignor Jozef Tiso a Banska Bystrica — che era stata la capitale della repubblica partigiana — subito dopo la sanguinosa repressione nazista, della insurrezione nazionale ai primi di novembre del 1944. Gli è accanto, il generale Hofler, criminale di guerra.

— lo riproduciamo integralmente in fotografia — di un lungo rapporto dell'ambasciatore Karol Sidor su un colloquio con il pro-Segretario di Stato monsignor Domenico Tardini (Maglione nel frattempo era morto).

Il documento porta la data del 22 febbraio 1944. Di fronte alle contestazioni di Tardini sulla questione delle deportazioni, Sidor non può offrirgli altro che questa risposta: « Gli slovacchi, direttamente, sul loro territorio, non hanno assassinato nemmeno un ebreo ». Il che significa che gli ebrei slovacchi sono stati assassinati, ma in Polonia, ad Auschwitz, e per mano dei tedeschi! Ed è terribile che questa ipocrita garanzia — queste « mani pulite » che grondano sangue — siano bastate al Vaticano per non prendere posizione contro i dirigenti slovacchi, che pure erano evidentemente — dopo la confessione di Sidor — complici coscienti del genocidio ebraico.

Il 29 agosto 1944, la situazione si capovolge all'improvviso. La popolazione insorge, l'esercito passa dalla parte degli insorti, e tutte le regioni centrali del paese costituiscono una repubblica partigiana. Sette divisioni naziste, chiamate da Tiso, intervengono per soffocare nel sangue l'insurrezione nazionale, ma solo il 27 ottobre riescono ad aver ragione della disperata difesa degli insorti e ad espugnare Banska Bystrica, capitale della zona libera. Ma la resistenza continua sulle montagne, mentre dalla gola di Dukla cominciano ad irrompere le truppe sovietiche.

Per gli ebrei che non sono riusciti ad unirsi ai partigiani, è la fine: l'arrivo dei tedeschi in Slovacchia coincide con il loro rastrella-

mento sistematico. Le autorità slovacche sono completamente estromesse. Il Vaticano interviene ancora, con una nota del 20 settembre, ma questa volta ogni esortazione è inutile: non bastano le mosse diplomatiche per fermare i nazisti. A questo punto, forse, Pio XII comincia a temere che i suoi timori — espressi quando Tiso gli aveva chiesto se poteva aspirare alla carica di Presidente della Repubblica — stiano per avverarsi. Il 29 ottobre, la Segreteria di Stato prega monsignor Burzio di recarsi da Tiso per dirgli che le ultime deportazioni hanno causato « viva pena al Santo Padre » e per richiamarlo « a sentimenti e propositi conformi alla sua dignità e alla coscienza sacerdotale ». Ma soprattutto, Burzio deve fargli rilevare « che le ingiustizie commesse sotto il suo governo nuocciono al prestigio della sua patria, e che di esse profitano gli avversari per screditare il clero e la Chiesa... ».

Se le cose si mettono male — si era chiesto cinque anni prima Pio XII — l'ira della popolazione non si rivolgerà contro la Chiesa? Ma poiché nemmeno di fronte a quel pericolo il Pontefice aveva minacciato di sospenderlo dalla sua dignità sacerdotale, monsignor Tiso si recò ai primi di novembre del 1944 in Banska Bystrica, dopo aver decorato gli uomini della Wehrmacht che avevano invaso il suo paese e che avevano sterminato i suoi connazionali. Poi, nel duomo della città, officiò una solenne funzione di ringraziamento per la « liberazione » della patria. Al fondo della navata, il comandante delle truppe naziste, generale Hofler — che figurava nell'elenco dei criminali di guerra degli Alleati — suonava all'organo le note alte e solenni di un corale di Bach...



UN DOCUMENTARIO DI TIPIE NUOVE

PIO XII E TISO

IL
DILETTO
FIGLIO
DEPORTA
GLI
EBREI

di Cesare Pillon