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1-1-1958

## The truth about the Prague trial.

Louis Harap

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### Recommended Citation

Harap, Louis, "The truth about the Prague trial." (1958). *PRISM: Political & Rights Issues & Social Movements*. 619.  
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/prism/619>

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PRAGUE TRIAL

by LOUIS HARAP

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Published by *Jewish Life*

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The contents of this pamphlet, with small additions and changes, were first published in *Jewish Life*, January 1953.

*Published by Jewish Life, 22 E. 17 St., Room 601, New York 3, N. Y.*

## INTRODUCTION

CERTAINLY few issues in the post-war period have aroused as much intensely hostile comment from the commercial press as the trial of the Rudolf Slansky group in Czechoslovakia from November 20-27, 1952. The English-Jewish and Yiddish press, as well as the general commercial newspapers and many Jewish leaders in this country and in Israel, have hurled the most vehement charges of "anti-Semitism" against the people's democracy of Czechoslovakia and against all socialist Europe. In sum, these charges added up to the accusation that Czechoslovakia and the socialist countries had deliberately undertaken to follow openly the nazi-like use of anti-Semitism in order to offer the Jews as a scapegoat for the alleged difficulties in the internal economy.

It is obvious that these charges call for calm, sober thinking on the part of all Jews, of every friend of Israel, of every follower of the Zionist leadership. This is especially true when one reads such arresting statements as that of Ned Russell in the New York *Herald Tribune* from Washington on November 28, 1952. "Among firm anti-Communists and anti-Russians," he wrote, "the prevailing attitude as a result of the testimony seems to be that *the defendants bungled their operations and were foolish enough to get caught*. In other words, those who hope for the overthrow of the Communist regime feel that shrewder persons are required to achieve this end." (Emphasis mine—L. H.)

Behind this case is the all-important question of the relation of the capitalist and socialist worlds upon which the peace of the world depends. Are we dealing with a

conspiracy to make Czechoslovakia a base for a war against the socialist world? Would this bring World War III closer? If so, the people should know it. We hope that our examination will throw light on the implications of this trial for world peace.

The answer to this question of war and peace in relation to this case should emerge from our scrutiny of a number of issues specifically raised by it. Some of the questions we must try to answer are these: Are the charges against the Slansky group true? Was anti-Semitism and scapegoating really the motivation for the Prague trial, as the press is dinning into our ears? Is anti-Zionism equivalent to hostility to the Jewish people? Is criticism of the Ben Gurion government to be equated with opposition to Israel and the people of Israel? Is anti-Zionism the same as anti-Semitism?

## I: THE CHARGE OF "ANTI-SEMITISM"

**L**ET us first consider the widespread outcry that the trial was "anti-Semitic" and intended by the Czech government to initiate direct incitement against the Jews in the socialist world, to use the Jews as "scapegoats" for internal difficulties. Amid the babel of drastic accusations of anti-Semitism, there are some counsels of caution. Thus, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, at the Philadelphia Zionist Organization fund dinner on December 2, 1952, declared: "I am not ready to draw conclusions" about the trial.

The widely publicised charge that Jews are being used as a "scapegoat" is false, for one reason, because the alleged need for it does not exist. Recent UN reports have shown, on the contrary, that Czechoslovakia is rapidly advancing in industrial production despite the damage inflicted by the conspirators. The UN *Economic Bulletin for Europe* issued

in August 1952 shows that Czechoslovakia increased its industrial production at a greater rate since 1948 than *any* of the Western European countries, even though the rate of increase was much smaller than in any of the other people's democracies. The most recent *Bulletin*, issued at Geneva in November 1952, shows that in the first two quarters of 1952, Czechoslovakia increased its industrial production at a *higher* rate than any of the other people's democracies. Thus the "scapegoat" theory is not based on economic fact.

We shall have more to say below about the truth of the charges. First, however, we should like to deal with the accusation that the trial was "anti-Semitic"—that is, that Jews were tried *because they were Jews*.

A scrutiny of two of the most authoritative articles thus far available to us and in which we would expect to find the presumed evidence of "anti-Semitism"—*For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!*, official weekly paper of the Cominform, for November 21 and November 28, 1952—shows that in no instance were any of the accused referred to as "Jews"! Nor do we ever see any reference to an "international Jewish conspiracy," a phrase supposedly quoted from the trial testimony in the American Jewish Telegraphic Agency report widely published in the English-Jewish press the week-end of November 28, 1952. The accounts in the Cominform bulletin do refer to "international Zionism" and "Jewish bourgeois nationalism." In other words, the trial record refers to men not as Jews, but as adherents of an *ideology* held by *some* Jews and opposed by other Jews as well as many non-Jews. We shall deal in the next section with the question of Zionism at the trial. What we here wish to emphasize is that the target was not Jews but adherents of an ideology, which is only one of a number held by Jews.

But it was not the ideology of the accused that was on trial. They were charged with certain criminal acts of high treason, espionage, sabotage and military treason.

Even though the Jewish *Day* is hysterically agitating about

the "anti-Semitism" of the trial, its editor, S. Dingol, was constrained to write on December 6, 1952, that "At the trial there was not one single word referring to the 'Jewishness' of the accused. There was reference simply to their 'Zionism' and 'bourgeois nationalism.'"

### ***Where Anti-Semitism Is a Crime***

The absence of any reference to Jews as such is easy to understand. In the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, anti-Semitism is a crime against the state, explicitly written into the constitution, together with a prohibition against all forms of racism and discrimination. What is more, this prohibition against anti-Semitism and racism is enforced.

The truth is that the general press and leaders of middle class Jewish life, in their zeal to further hysterical war propaganda against the socialist countries, have promoted certain confusions that are not entirely innocent. Hatred of socialism, of the Soviet Union, of those who are fighting for negotiations and mutual concessions between the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve a desperately needed peace have led these forces to give the impression that anti-Zionism is tantamount to anti-Semitism, that opposition to the Ben Gurion government is anti-Israel. In the course of this trial, the Czechoslovak press made quite clear that it considered Zionism an evil force. It is hard to deny them justification for this view in the light of the revelations of the Prague trial about the use of Zionist organizations for espionage. But *Rude Pravo*, official Czechoslovak Communist organ, on November 25, 1952, reaffirmed the Communist Party's implacable condemnation of anti-Semitism: "It (the Party) must fight against Zionism. Lenin already pointed out that anti-Semitism and Zionism, or any form of fostering Jewish exceptionalism, are only head and tail of the same coin. Our Party has always emphasized that anti-Semitism is hostile to the working class, that it is base

and beneath human dignity.”

The editorial goes on to say: “Our Party, as a consistently internationalist Party, always fought against anti-Semitism.” Slansky had in fact used this hatred of anti-Semitism to further his designs. The Prague radio has stated that Slansky “was well aware that anti-Semitism is foreign to the principles of a Communist country. Nevertheless, he used his anti-Semitic argument as camouflage to protect his anti-state espionage center.”

In other words, Zionism is an ideology that is held by some Jews—and, it must be emphasized, opposed for a variety of reasons by many others, including certain Jewish religious groups, thousands of Israeli citizens and even by bourgeois assimilationists among wealthy Jews all over the world (for instance, the American Jewish Committee) and also by communists. Hence, *it is simply untrue to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, for what anti-Zionism opposes is an ideology and not Jews as such.* To hold otherwise is to assert something as absurd as, “anti-Republicanism is anti-Americanism” or “anti-Jimcrow is anti-American” or “to be anti-Tory is to be anti-British” or “anti-Malanism is anti-South Africa.”

Similarly, the current hysterical views about the Prague trial try to give the impression that the strong condemnation of the Ben Gurion regime expressed in Czechoslovakia is to be interpreted as anti-Israel and even anti-Semitic. But this too, is absurd, as becomes evident when one would say, “To be anti-Truman is to be anti-American” or “to be anti-De Gasperi is to be anti-Italian,” and so on.

### ***Jews As Leaders***

In the *New York Post* of December 23, 1952, Seymour Freiden wrote an article full of outright lies about the people’s democracies in which he states: “As in nazi Germany, being a Jew has become synonymous with a crime against the State.” The malicious falsity of this statement is ob-



vious, among other things, from the hard fact that many top leaders of the people's democracies are Jewish. Here are some of these Jewish officials. In *Czechoslovakia*, Minister of Justice Stefan Reitz; at least seven members of the Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party; Dr. Gertruda Sekaninova-Cartrkova, head of the Czech UN delegation at the current General Assembly. In *Poland*, Yakub Berman, third on the national list of candidates to the Sejm (Parliament) in the recent elections; Hilary Minc, vice premier and head of the State Commission for Economic Planning; Zambrowski, together with the first two, a member of the Polish Politburo. In *Rumania*, Bugitch, successor as foreign minister to the discredited Ana Pauker; at least four members of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers' (Communist) Party. In *Hungary*, President Matyas Rakosi and his two chief aides, Erno Gero and Zoltan Vass.

Consider: Jews occupy some of the highest and most important positions in the socialist countries. What anti-Semitic government has ever placed Jews in the highest posts? What sense can there be in the accusation that these countries are "officially anti-Semitic"; more, that they have now stepped into Hitler's shoes in relation to the Jewish people?

The Czech people's democracy is an implacable enemy of anti-Semitism *and* Zionism. It is no secret that communists have always opposed Zionism as a reactionary ideology. The anti-Zionism that has emerged from the Prague trial is nothing new. Much as it may horrify many well-intentioned followers of Zionism, what was exposed was that *Zionist organizations and individuals lent themselves to treasonable activity against the Czechoslovak people under the instigation primarily of U.S. intelligence.*

## II: THE QUESTION OF ZIONISM

LET us examine more specifically whether there is plausibility in the charges made in the trial against certain Zionist leaders and Zionist organizations.

One thing should be clear at the outset. *The conspirators were punished for deeds, not thoughts.* The deeds, whose actuality was bolstered by evidence and documents and witnesses, which led to the confessions, were directly intended to inflict damage on the people's Czechoslovakia. Hence it is contrary to fact to say, as did the *New Republic* (December 8, 1952), that "the trial serves warning on all Jews who remain under Communist rule that from now on Zionism, even Jewish activity, is a crime punishable by death." Zionist *belief* and other bourgeois-nationalist *opinions* are not unlawful in people's Czechoslovakia; sabotage and espionage *are* unlawful—as they are in capitalist countries—even if perpetrated under the shield of Zionism.

The charge against certain Zionists and Zionist organizations was that they engaged in espionage and activities to undermine the people's Czechoslovakia. Slansky testified that he used them "because the Zionists were conducting hostile activity aimed at the liquidation of the regime in Czechoslovakia." Especially did Slansky point out "the abuse of the emigration scheme under which Jews left for the capitalist countries, thereby removing from Czechoslovakia property of an unjustifiably large value and causing grave economic damage to Czechoslovakia."

### *Zionism as "Bourgeois Nationalism"*

What is there in Zionism that makes these charges credible? Some of the defendants at the trial were shown to be Jewish "bourgeois nationalists" in the Zionist form. The role played by this ideology in the operations of some of the defendants supports the belief that Zionist ideology is harmful to the interests of the working people—that is,

the majority—both in capitalist and socialist countries.

Many friends of Israel and fighters for its independence both inside and outside Israel are hostile to Zionist theory. Many others are simply ignorant of Zionist theory and confuse the political program of Zionism with their own feeling of sympathy for and devotion to Israel. We can here give only the briefest indication of the elements of Jewish bourgeois nationalism in its Zionist form. We shall show how some Zionist organizations and leaders were amenable to the plans of the enemies of peace and of the socialist countries.

The real cause of the problems of the Jewish people is the basic opposition of interest between the owning class, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, and the workers, both Jewish and non-Jewish. But Zionism tries to persuade the Jewish people that the conflict which is the cause of their problems is the antagonism between the Jewish and non-Jewish groups. Zionism does this by playing upon the fear of anti-Semitism among the Jewish people.

Anti-Semitism, says Zionist theory, is inevitable in *any* country in which non-Jews are the majority, even one in which the working people are the ruling power. Therefore the enemies of all Jews are all non-Jews and the Jewish question can be solved only by the isolation of all Jews in Israel, whither they should immigrate. (The fact that American Zionists today refuse to emigrate to Israel does not alter this ideology but only shows its bankruptcy and the gap between theory and practice.) Zionist theory denies that the working class movement is anti-racist in principle and that the hopes for the final eradication of anti-Semitism rest upon the success of that movement. Zionists deny that the enemy of the Jewish people are those who exploit all the workers for profit and who further their aims by means, among others, of dividing the workers by anti-Semitism.

It is this refusal to acknowledge that basic class divisions exist and operate *within* a nation or national group that is

the essential characteristic which *Jewish* bourgeois nationalism shares with all other forms of bourgeois nationalism, whether Slovak, American, Yugoslav or any other variety. Thus Zionism holds out as the "solution" to the Jewish question the "ingathering of the exiles," the immigration of the entire world Jewry to Israel. Yet the primary desire of Jews, as of all other people, for a happy and prosperous life remains unrealized and frustrated in a capitalist Israel. In effect, therefore, the Zionist movement diverts the attention and energies of the Jewish masses from alliance and common struggle with the working class. Yet an organic part of the struggle of the workers is the combating and finally the eradication of all forms of racism and discrimination, which are tactics of an owning class.

The Zionist movement offers the Jewish people the illusory hope that their problems will be solved in a capitalist Jewish state which actually only perpetuates the suffering of the people, presses down their standard of living, and pursues a bankrupting policy of war preparations. Thus, bourgeois nationalism, Jewish or otherwise, collaborates with the program of the owning class against the interests of the working people. At present this means an orientation upon and subservience to Washington, the leader of world capitalism, as is the case with the Ben Gurion government today. The Prague trial showed that this cooperation in anti-Soviet global policy includes participation in espionage and sabotage conspiracies under the stimulus of Washington to weaken and ultimately to overturn the Socialist countries.

### ***Zionism and Reactionary Governments***

The fact is that certain Zionists unfortunately lent themselves to the plans of the United States intelligence, which is preparing an anti-Soviet war, and made themselves available to the schemes of reactionaries and oppressive governments. This is not new. Zionist history is full of examples

of Zionist leaders offering to make deals with reactionary governments in exchange for sponsorship of a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine. Thus Theodore Herzl himself, founder of political Zionism, tried successively to reach agreements with the Sultan of Turkey, the tsarist government of Russia and with Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. Early in the twenties the Zionist Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky even negotiated with Petlura, Ukrainian counter-revolutionary butcher of the Jews, to this end. If some Zionists disclaim responsibility for such Revisionist activity, one can answer that this activity does not differ in essentials from the method of more respectable Zionists. This classical Zionist tactic finally succeeded when Palestine was "given" to the Jews as a "homeland" under the British mandate. And in the thirties, the fascist wing of the Zionists, the Revisionists ("Betar," Revisionist youth movement, was specifically cited in the Prague trial for terrorism), even had dealings with progromist Pilsudski and fascist Mussolini to wrest Palestine from the British for the Jews under fascist auspices.

A new phase of Zionist policy was entered after the War of Liberation and the establishment of the state of Israel, which occurred in the midst of the cold war. The Ben Gurion regime did not for long publicly maintain friendly relations with the countries without whom independence for Israel could not have been won, either militarily or diplomatically—that is, the Soviet Union and the new democracies, particularly Czechoslovakia, which sold arms to Israel at a time when the United States had embargoed shipments of arms and was imprisoning Americans who attempted to smuggle arms to Israel. At first by intrigue and soon thereafter as a matter of state policy, the Ben Gurion government adopted a hostile attitude toward these countries of socialism partly because Washington imposed this condition for "aid" to the infant state and partly because of the governing parties' own hostility to socialism.

Only a few months after the War of Liberation ended,

Henry Morgenthau, Jr. granted an interview after his return from a visit to Israel. The *New York Times* of November 2, 1948, headlined this story thus: "Morgenthau Sees Israel Soviet Foe." His message was that "the new state would ultimately become a 'hard core of resistance' against communism in the Mediterranean."

In 1951, Ben Gurion visited the United States. At a Madison Square Garden meeting at which Ben Gurion was on the platform, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. asserted that "the task of Israel is to fight against communism." *JEWISH LIFE* published in August 1951 a report from Tel Aviv by I. Elsky which said: "So far as Ben Gurion himself is concerned, he left no doubt whatsoever about the real purpose of his American journey. His statements on the 'task of Israel to fight against communism,' on German rearmament if the Germans should agree once again to go to war, his sharing a banquet with representatives of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian pogrom bands, who had fled from the people's justice—all these statements showed quite conclusively just what Ben Gurion discussed with Truman, Acheson and Marshall."

### ***Israel's Foreign Policy***

To readers of *JEWISH LIFE* of the past few years, this aggressively anti-Soviet policy is not surprising news. We have followed step by step the increasing subserviency of the Ben Gurion regime to Washington's policy of preparing an anti-Soviet war. This very past year we have shown that the deal made between the renazified Adenauer regime and the Ben Gurion government for "reparations" was a product of Washington's pressure to whitewash West Germany so as to make a rearmed Wehrmacht integrated into NATO palatable to the peoples of the world. We have exposed the United States "loans" to Israel as a means for integrating Israel with the anti-Soviet global strategy of Washington. We have shown how the Ben Gurion

policy of total economic orientation on the "dollar" has plunged Israel into chronic economic crisis. The series of articles by Victor Perlo (September 1952-January 1953) with relentless economic analysis showed how the Ben Gurion policy of subservience to Washington is converting Israel into a virtual American colony—that is, is destructive of the national interests of Israel.

We have shown how the Ben Gurion regime is petitioning Washington that Israel be allowed to be used as a base for an anti-Soviet war and has received and is begging to obtain more Mutual Security act funds. And we have shown how the Zionist organizations have become completely coordinated with these policies. In the December issue, which appeared only a week before the Prague trial opened, the writer said in an article on new developments in the Zionist Organization of America that "the new ZOA program means that this branch of the Zionist movement is an arm among the Jewish people for the execution in Israel of State Department policy of war preparations." Zionists in America like Representative Jacob J. Javits, Louis Lipsky and any number of others too numerous to mention have made no bones about their desire for the closest military alliance of Israel with Washington.

### *But Were They Guilty?*

But, the reader may say, even if all this is true, there is still a wide margin between policy openly expressed and publicly pursued and the kind of sabotage and espionage of which Zionists and others were accused and convicted in the Prague trial.

If the Ben Gurion regime permits the establishment of Israel as a base for an anti-Soviet war, is it far-fetched to believe that it may also permit its agencies and personnel to work for the intelligence service of the power to whom it has already surrendered its national interests? The illegal activity nailed in the trial is in fact completely consistent

with the policy of subservience to the desperate anti-Soviet strategy of Washington. Only the naive will deny that governments engage in espionage—if they can—to promote their purposes. *Not only is this illegal activity consistent* with and a continuation in underground form of Israel anti-Soviet policy under Washington's aegis: *it actually happened*, as the actors themselves have told us it did. When 14 men, some of whom were Zionists and others of whom deliberately used Zionism for their illegal purposes, all confess to an interlocking conspiracy of great complication in details, attested by documents and witnesses, it is irrational to charge that the conspiracy is a fabrication.

It is hard to believe that 14 men, who possessed considerable ability and were noted public figures, would all confess to something for which they knew the penalty was death unless they were guilty of what they confessed. The only sane conclusion at which one can arrive is that these men confessed because they were confronted with irrefutable evidence of their guilt.

### ***At the Rajk Trial***

It is relatively little known that certain Zionist organizations had already been involved in previous spying trials in the people's democracies. At the trial of Lazlo Rajk in Hungary in 1949, the people's prosecutor was interrogating Tiber Szonyi, a doctor who pleaded guilty to being an agent of American intelligence. The trial record states:

*"People's Prosecutor:* You were a member of the Zionist movement?

*"Szonyi:* As far as I know, Ferenc Vagi and Gyorgy Demeter [members of a right wing Zionist group organized by Allen W. Dulles in 1944 for espionage work in postwar Hungary—*L.H.*] were members of the Zionist movement. In this connection, it is known to me, and I experienced it in Switzerland, that in general the Zionist movement



maintained very close cooperation with the American secret service.

"P.P.: There is part of your statement where you mentioned that the Americans were organizing certain groups from other people's democracies whom they sent across, entrusting the carrying out of spying work to them. In which states did the American spy organizations put such groups, and did you maintain connections with any of them? . . .

"S.: In connection with Czechoslovakia, I have certain knowledge that the American intelligence center built up such a secret organization there." (*Laszlo Rajk and his Accomplices before the People's Court*, Budapest, 1949, p. 162.)

### **Other International Plots**

Anyone who even superficially examines the Prague trial in a rational way learns that the heart of the case was not "Zionism" but the attempt by United States intelligence to use Zionist organizations, among others, to Titoize Czechoslovakia. The essence of the matter was stated by the prosecutor. "State Prosecutor Josef Urvalek said," the *New York Times* reported on November 27, "that the accused stood in the same row with Premier Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, Laszlo Rajk of Hungary, Traicho Kostov of Bulgaria, Lucretiu Patrascanu of Rumania, Wladyslaw Gomułka of Poland and Koci Xoxe of Albania." Not a single one of these men is a Jew. Certain Zionists were *used* by the Czechoslovak agents of this anti-state conspiracy for Tito-like purposes. Do Zionists who are caught in a crime have immunity? Is a Jew exempt from legal prosecution for specific crimes because he is a Jew?

One would suppose from the hysterical campaign against the Prague trial that the Zionist movement was the only movement of international scope that had ever engaged in anti-state activities in the people's democracies. A

little investigation, however, shows that Zionism is no exception. Here are a few examples.

In an editorial in the AFL organ, *American Federationist*, of May 1950, the late AFL President William Green called on the members to "band together to aid the underground forces" in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. "These groups," he said, "would provide the best possible intelligence sources to guide all our efforts in the cold war." This was no idle statement. In an article in the *Reader's Digest* of September 1952, p. III, Donald Robinson wrote that a Czech in Prague had told him, "Our underground now has contacts inside the leadership of the Communist Party itself. Irving Brown has been working with us." Irving Brown is the AFL European representative who works with the International Confederation of Trade Unions. And the AFL has denounced the Prague trial as "anti-Semitic."

Another example. Jehovah's Witnesses is an international religious sect. The Warsaw radio reported on June 28, 1950, that officers of Jehovah's Witnesses of Lodz "who were traveling all over the country allegedly for religious purposes were in fact establishing and maintaining an espionage and diversionary network among the adherents of the sect and collecting information of a military, political and economic nature." The radio of Leipzig in East Germany reported on February 5, 1951, that seven members of Jehovah's Witnesses were sentenced in Halle for passing information on industrial installations in East Germany.

In other words, the world Zionist movement is only one of a number of movements being used by anti-communist intelligence agencies, headed by American intelligence, to undermine the people's democracies from within. When Zionists are caught at such espionage and sabotage, they are punished not because they are Zionists but because they broke the law and seriously endangered the existence of the state. Zionists and other Jews, as well as many non-Jewish Americans, may not agree with what is being ac-

complished in the people's democracies. But they certainly cannot deny the right of these states to protect their very existence and the construction of what the people of these countries regard as a life of increasing happiness and abundance by ferreting out all agents, Zionists as well as others, who threaten this construction by overt criminal acts.

### III: ROLE OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE

**I**S IT credible that the United States intelligence should have engaged in the operations which the Prague trial, as well as innumerable other trials in the people's democracies in the past few years, have revealed? There is nothing more obvious in the country today than the propaganda of hatred for socialism and the determination of Washington to stop at *nothing*, even war itself, to destroy the Soviet Union and the people's democracies.

Let us look some facts in the face. It is matter of ample public knowledge that Washington and private organizations (such as the Ford Foundation and Committee for a Free Europe) have allocated millions of dollars for the creation and support of espionage and underground activity against the people's democracies and the Soviet Union within those countries. These measures are patently part of the preparations for war. The coordinating body for all these activities is the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which operates in Washington, according to the budget of 1949, with over \$80,000,000 annually of non-accountable funds and maintains a staff of over 6,000 professional operators. CIA official Sherman Kent has stated in his book, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, Chapter 4, that his agency is interested in *total* intelligence

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The writer acknowledges valuable help in research, particularly in this section, from GERHARD HAGELBURG.

and not only in military matters; that CIA seeks information also about minute details of economy, population, organizations, attitudes and individuals in neutral and friendly countries as well as in what are considered potential enemy countries.

A more concrete picture of the CIA staff was given by Tris Coffin in *Coronet*, August 1951. This staff "includes such oddly assorted members as a Shanghai beggar, . . . a communist official in Eastern Europe. . . ." (My emphasis—L.H.)

### "Project X"

Then there is "Project X," most highly publicised as the agency for which \$100,000,000 of the Mutual Security act was assigned, whose function, to quote the act, is to finance the work of "selected persons who are residing in or escaped from" the Soviet Union or the people's democracies. The money is to be used "either to form such persons into elements of military forces supporting the North Atlantic Organization or for other purposes." (My emphasis—L.H.) Representative Charles J. Kersten, who sponsored "Project X" in Congress, elucidated the "other purposes" more explicitly: the funds are designed to "aid underground liberation movements in the Communist countries."

On December 17, 1951, a certain Colonel Leonard H. Nason wrote in the *Newark Star-Ledger*: "Without knowledge of the amount of money being spent, I can say that I know very well this country is carrying on espionage and diversionary activity behind the Iron Curtain. . . . The size of our diversionary effort behind the Iron Curtain is very large, which explains the frequency with which we get caught." (My emphasis—L.H.)

The *New York Times'* authoritative James Reston wrote on December 9, 1951: "The 'cold war' is being directed in Washington by the Department of Defense, the Department of State and an interdepartmental committee that

may be described as a sort of Department of Dirty Tricks. *The function of this interdepartmental psychological strategy board or Department of Dirty Tricks is to create behind the Iron Curtain all mischief short of war.*" (My emphasis—L. H.)

The evidence could be piled up as high as one likes, but enough has been said to stress the obvious—or what would be obvious if not for the hysteria which irrationally denies the obvious—that various United States intelligence agencies maintain a vast network for the purpose of espionage and sabotage in the Soviet Union and people's democracies. One such operation, which Gerhard Hagelberg described in our last issue ("The U.S.-Nazi Murder, Inc.") was exposed by sources and documentation that even Washington could not deny, and which demonstrated that the United States Army intelligence in West Germany had sponsored with money and training a gang of nazi murderers and cutthroats.

This espionage and sabotage program found its most comprehensive policy statement in the late presidential campaign in the "liberation" speeches by Eisenhower himself and on August 27, 1952, by John Foster Dulles. According to the *New York Times* account of August 28, the "liberation" program included "using such 'quiet' methods as passive resistance, non-cooperation, discontent, slowdown and industrial sabotage" and all sorts of aid, including supplies by air to "resistance movements" in the socialist countries. Judging from the evidence of the Prague trial and other trials, the "liberation" program has been in operation under the Truman administration for some time.

One could go on almost endlessly with evidence to show that the activities revealed by the Prague trial are completely in line with the war policies and plans loudly proclaimed thousands of times in the press and forums of the "free world." The numerous trials in the people's democracies confirm the existence of this "liberation" program further. The activities revealed at the Prague trial are

completely consistent with it. The actual existence of Titoist Yugoslavia is the final proof. To deny credibility and plausibility to the confessions at the Prague trial is thus to fly in the face of mountains of evidence.

#### IV: WHAT THE TRIAL REVEALED

**I**N THE light of our discussion, let us ascertain the facts of the trial itself, as brought forward by the defendants and witnesses and attested by documents.

The defendants were accused of one or more of four specific crimes and pleaded guilty to one or more charges of high treason, espionage, sabotage and military treason.

The objectives of the conspiracy were summarized by Rudolf Slansky: "The hostile activity of our anti-state conspiratorial center was to lead to the overthrow of the people's democratic system, to the restoration of capitalism in Czechoslovakia and to the wresting of the Republic from the Soviet Union and the entire camp of peace in the interests of the American and British imperialists in the same way as in Yugoslavia Tito and his counter-revolutionary associates brought about the restoration of capitalism and subordinated Yugoslavia to the Anglo-American imperialists."

The method Slansky used to realize these ends was to plant his fellow conspirators in key positions in the departments of foreign affairs, foreign trade, security, defense and in the Communist Party apparatus. *From these vantage points espionage was carried on, industry and finance were sabotaged and disorganized, military secrets betrayed and the "removal" of President Klement Gottwald planned.*

Behind the whole conspiracy was the United States intelligence service aided by British, French and Israel intelligence. The aim was to break Czechoslovakia away from cooperation with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies; to convert Czechoslovakia into an agency of Wash-

ington's policies (as Tito's Yugoslavia has become) and ultimately to bring capitalism back to Czechoslovakia. Agents were recruited from among the emigres "helped" by American intelligence agents Noel and Hermann Field, who were in charge of the emigre aid organization in Switzerland. Such agents were most easily to be found not only among adventurers but also those who were ideologically hostile to socialism and the Soviet Union, namely, Trotskyites, Slovak and Jewish nationalists (Zionists), that is, people who placed the interests of the dominant capitalist elements above those of the working class, the majority of the people.

Contact with the United States intelligence was maintained by the conspirators through such persons as Allen W. Dulles, brother of incoming Secretary of State John Foster Dulles; Sir Gladwyn Jebb, present British UN delegate; Konni Zilliacus, Tito enthusiast and former British Labor M.P.; Yugoslav Titoists, Israeli intelligence agents and others.

### ***The Zionist Involvement***

An important aspect of the trial was the evidence of the use of Zionist organizations and Israeli Zionist citizens to maintain contacts for espionage and sabotage of Czechoslovak industry and disorganization of finances. Named as Zionists, Jewish bourgeois nationalists or Israeli intelligence agents among the indicted conspirators were Otto Fischl, Vavro Hajdu, Bedrich Geminder and Andre Simone. Israeli Zionists involved were Shimon Orenstein, a former employee in the Israeli legation at Prague; Mordecai Oren, a Mapam leader, and Ehud Avriel, former Israeli minister to Czechoslovakia. Oren, for instance, testified that "in the interests of Zionism and of British intelligence I had meetings with the Tito fascist clique. In conversation with them I learned of Rudolf Slansky's collaboration with this clique. I was requested to transmit to Slansky immediately all documents concerning the attitude of Titoists regarding the

decisions of the Cominform and the workers' parties."

Another charge emerged from the testimony of Shimon Orenstein. In 1947—prior to the establishment of Israel—a secret meeting was held in Washington, said Orenstein, attended by President Truman, Dean Acheson, David Ben Gurion (later Israeli prime minister), Moshe Sharett (later Israeli foreign minister and then called Shertok) and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. At this meeting, Orenstein stated, Ben Gurion and Sharett agreed that Zionist organizations would be available for espionage and other subversive activity in the people's democracies in exchange for United States support for Zionists' aims in Palestine.

(News of this allegation was treated with great indignation by the Israel foreign office. A Jewish Telegraphic Agency dispatch from Jerusalem widely published in the English-Jewish press in this country the week-end of November 28, 1952, stated that foreign office "officials pointed out: 1. That in 1947 General George C. Marshall and not Mr. Acheson was secretary of state; 2. that Ben Gurion did not visit the United States in 1947; 3. that Mr. Ben Gurion first met the president in 1951; 4. that Mr. Sharett never met the president until 1952."

(Well, let's see the quality of such "factual refutations.")  
1. Acheson was undersecretary of state in 1947. We have no direct quotation from the trial as to the title, if any, by which he was designated in the testimony. We know that he was assigned to the Palestine question because he held a conference on it with UN delegate Warren Austin on April 30, 1947. 2. Ben Gurion *was* in the United States in 1947 and in a highly public way, at that. He arrived on May 9, 1947, to attend the Special UN Assembly session on Palestine and addressed that body on May 12 as a representative of the Jewish Agency; Sharett was also present and spoke before the UN on the same day. True, no meeting of Ben Gurion and Sharett with Truman is recorded in the press, so far as we know. But the evidence in the



Prague trial stated that the meeting was "secret" and who would expect publicity on it?)

Israeli minister to Czechoslovakia Ehud Avriel was placed in charge of this intelligence operation. In Prague he established contact with Slansky and Bedrich Geminder. In addition to espionage, one of the big deals that the indictment charges was carried through in pursuance of this arrangement was, as *Rude Pravo*, Czech Communist organ, put it, that under an agreement for emigration of Czech Jews to Israel, the conspirators had caused to be "withdrawn 6,000,000,000 crowns from Czechoslovak national property to cover up this deal." (To cover up favoritism to rich Jews, Fischl made things especially hard for the poorer emigrating Jews, so that over a year ago the Israel press was denouncing his attitude to poorer Jews.) Another deal charged was that defendants Evzen Loebel and Rudolf Margolius, then deputy ministers of foreign trade, made trade agreements with Israel whereby 17 per cent of the payments were deducted from Israel's bill for exported goods.

The indictment also named the Joint Distribution Committee (American Jewish organization for the relief of Jews all over the world) as extensively engaged in espionage, sabotage, black marketing in currency and smuggling. Illegal activities were also carried on by "Betar" (youth section of the right wing Zionist Revisionist organization) and other Zionist organizations.

Of the 14 conspirators, 11 were Jews. The non-Jews were Vladimir Clementis, Joseph Frank and Karl Svab. Confronted by overwhelming evidence, documents and witnesses, the defendants confessed to their part in the conspiracy. The trial brought out the fact that they all had long records as intelligence agents for foreign powers.

### ***Slansky and Geminder***

*Rudolf Slansky*, former general secretary of the Czecho-

slovak Communist Party, the leader of the conspiracy, aspired to become the "Czechoslovak Tito." Police documents of 1924 and 1925 showed that he had been arrested, made a statement to the police renouncing the Communist Party and had become a police spy. A police document of 1927 noted that he belonged to the Trotskyite faction. In 1930, he became a United States intelligence agent. During the war he re-established contact with the United States and also with British intelligence. He admitted that during the war he was responsible for the murder of Jan Sverma, Communist leader, during the Slovak national uprising. In 1945, he became an agent for "western imperialists." In 1946 he established contact with Konni Zilliacus, who became his intermediary with western intelligence. (Zilliacus is a publicly avowed Titoist.)

Slansky became a powerful figure in the Communist Party and in the Czech postwar government. From this vantage point *he personally selected* his 13 co-defendants for his ring and *placed them in key positions where they could execute sabotage and espionage. Slansky managed to conceal the dubious past of these agents so that they escaped detection for some time.*

In 1948 he met Moshe Pijade, Titoist. "I made it quite clear to Pijade," Slansky testified, "that I regarded the measures of the Tito clique as correct and assured him that my stand was identical with that of Tito and his accomplices and that I was pursuing a similar line in Czechoslovakia."

*Bedrich Geminder*, former head of the International Department of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was a close personal friend of Slansky. He was a Trotskyite and a Jewish bourgeois nationalist. Geminder's main job seems to have been to make contacts. He was the contact man between Slansky and Zilliacus. Documents were submitted to show that these three men were involved in an effort to bring Czechoslovakia into the Marshall Plan set-up and to tie the country economically to the capitalist

world. (Readers will remember that the *New York Times* and other newspapers here were full at that time of excited speculation that Czechoslovakia was breaking with the Soviet policy and might accept Marshall Plan funds.) Geminder was also the contact with journalists, diplomats and employees of the Israel and Yugoslav ministries. Geminder testified that "the United States imperialists sought by means of the Zionist agency in the Czechoslovak Republic and its representatives to destroy the political and economic foundations of the country."

### ***Clementis and Frank***

*Vladimir Clementis*, former minister of foreign affairs, was a Slovak bourgeois nationalist who joined up with the Slansky group in 1948. The testimony of witnesses evoked his confession that he was arrested in Paris in 1938 and then became an agent of French intelligence. Clementis supplied information to Zilliacus, organized an espionage ring in Hungary and entered espionage relations with the French and British ambassadors in Prague and with United States Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt. He testified that Steinhardt approached him in 1948 on behalf of John Foster Dulles, foreign policy specialist of the Republican machine, for help in getting the wealthy Petschek family out of the country. Steinhardt had helped to smuggle the wealthy Czech families of Schwarzenberg, Lobkovitz and Barton out of the country with considerable property, Clementis testified.

(A revealing story about Clementis was released by the United Press on November 28. When Clementis was ordered back to Czechoslovakia from his post as Czech UN delegate in 1949, he sent an emissary to the Czech "underground" in the United States, which UP reports has its agents today "behind the 'Iron Curtain'." This intermediary was to ascertain whether Clementis could be helped to remain in this country. The names of those involved

are secret but, says UP, they are known to be an American official and three newsmen and a representative of the Czech "underground" in New York. A prominent newspaper editor who was involved wanted to publish the story of Clementis' "Leap to Freedom." After three days' consideration, perhaps believing he still had a role to play, Clementis decided to return home. The UP story thus gives independent confirmation from a hostile point of view of the Prague trial evidence.)

*Joseph Frank* was appointed on Slansky's instructions as deputy general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party for industry, trade and finance. Confronted with evidence, he confessed that he tortured and was responsible for the death of Soviet and French prisoners of war at nazi concentration camps. He undermined Czechoslovak foreign trade by selling goods cheaper to the capitalist countries than to people's democracies, by overfilling orders to capitalist countries and underfilling orders to people's democracies.

### ***Reicin and Svab***

*Bedrich Reicin* was formerly deputy minister of national defense. After he was arrested by the Gestapo as a Communist and Jew, he agreed to become a Gestapo agent. As such he confessed to betraying to the nazis members of the underground central committee of the Communist Party, the editors of *Rude Pravo* and Julius Fuchik, the heroic Czech Communist murdered by the nazis whose memoirs, smuggled out of a nazi prison, is one of the great documents to come out of the war. As a reward for his informing, the Gestapo allowed Reicin to "escape" to Moscow, where he contacted Slansky. Back in Prague after the war, Reicin worked with western military attaches.

In particular he worked with Yugoslav Colonel Ivano-

vitch, whom Reicin in January 1946 gave a plan of the burial place of secret archives of Karl Hermann Frank, nazi head of Bohemia and Moravia. These archives contained lists of Gestapo agents, including those inside the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The night after Reicin gave this information to the Yugoslav attache, two full years before Tito's breakaway, United States Army agents retrieved the archives and thus could blackmail these agents into working for United States intelligence. (The *New York Times* of November 25, 1952, notes that "an incident of this kind did take place and led to a Czechoslovak protest at the time.")

*Karl Svab* was former deputy minister of national security. Svab had confessed to torturing prisoners of war in nazi concentration camps. Virtually in charge of security, Svab confessed that he filled the security agency with former policemen, "Zionists and other hostile elements." He sabotaged the investigation of a spy ring after testimony at the Rajk trial in Hungary in 1949 had revealed that Noel Field had agents in Czechoslovakia.

### ***And the Rest***

*Arthur London* was formerly deputy minister of foreign affairs. He was a Trotskyite and a United States intelligence agent whom Slansky placed in the foreign affairs office to keep an eye on Clementis. London's job was in the department of personnel and he appointed Trotskyites, Zionists and other bourgeois nationalists to responsible jobs in the ministries and to diplomatic posts abroad. He had contact with Noel Field.

*Vavro Hajdu* was also former deputy minister of foreign affairs. He was a Zionist and was recruited into the British intelligence while in England in 1941. He worked with Arthur London to worsen relations with the Soviet Union.

*Evzen Loebel* and *Rudolf Margolius* were formerly deputy

ministers of foreign trade. They were agents of Hermann and Noel Field. Their function in the conspiracy, in the words of Loebel, was this: "By means of foreign trade we endeavored to bind the economy of the Republic to the West in such a way that this country would be completely dependent on the capitalist states and a toy in the hands of Western imperialists." They worked closely with Avriel, Israeli minister at Prague, and tried to disorient economic development and economic relations with the Soviet Union.

*Ludvik Frejka* was formerly head of the national economy department, which devised and supervised the two- and five-year plans. He was an agent of Allen W. Dulles through Hermann and Noel Field. He sabotaged the development of industry and economic relations with the Soviet Union.

*Otto Fischl* was formerly deputy minister of finance. He served as a Gestapo agent under the Nazi occupation and was an assistant to Hitler's financial experts in Czechoslovakia during the occupation. He was also an important agent of Israel intelligence and a central figure in organizing Zionist activity for the conspiracy. He offered a trade and payments scheme with Israel that was disadvantageous to the Czech economy.

*Otto Sling* was regional secretary of the Communist Party in Brno. He was an agent of the British aid group to emigres which served as an espionage center. One of Sling's functions was to prevent accurate information from getting to Czechoslovak President Klement Gottwald.

*Andre Simone* was former editor of *Rude Pravo*. He was a Zionist, Trotskyite and a foreign intelligence agent. Slansky assigned to him the main task of maintaining contact with capitalist journalists and to further the theme, in the Titoist manner, that "Czechoslovakia was heading for socialism in its own way." He admitted contact with the Overseas News Agency, a New York press service originally an offshoot of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He also transmitted espionage information for Clementis.

On November 27, sentence was pronounced: death by hanging for 11, life imprisonment for three (Arthur London, Vavro Hajdu and Evzen Lobel.) On December 3, the 11 were hanged. All the accused had waived appeal.

In view of the facts that we have surveyed as to the trial and its background, the following from "The Periscope" in *Newsweek* of December 31, 1951, will round out our examination. "Observers from both sides of the Iron Curtain are fully aware that Russia is not suffering from 'spy hysteria' in declaring that the United States has undercover agents working inside the curtain. The United States, like most other powers, of course has such intelligence and psychological warfare agents at work. The 'spy hysteria' charge had to be made for the record and for the benefit of neutral nations."

And, we may add, thoroughly to confuse the Jewish people and the working people of the world.

## CONCLUSION

**WE** have shown that the convicted members of the Slansky group, when confronted with evidence, documents and witnesses, confessed to involvement under the auspices of United States intelligence in a conspiracy to damage and ultimately to overturn the Czechoslovak people's democracy. We have shown that the wild, hysterical charges of anti-Semitism are unfounded but that Zionists and Zionist organizations permitted themselves to be used in the attempt to Titoize Czechoslovakia.

Exposure of the conspiracy was in the interest of peace. All who are for peace—and that includes the overwhelming majority of mankind, and of course the Jewish people, whether Zionist, anti-Zionist or non-Zionist, all friends of Israel and the people of Israel—will view it as such. For it will be recalled that World War II might have been averted

if the western powers had not handed Czechoslovakia to Hitler at Munich. In post-war Czechoslovakia, too, a dangerous step toward war might have occurred if the plans of Washington had succeeded and the conspirators had turned that country into a military base from which to launch an anti-Soviet war, as Tito's Yugoslavia is now.

Finally, the trial should provide the occasion for deep thought among the Jewish people and their leadership. The members and supporters of Zionist organizations, particularly, need to shake themselves free of the hysterical and baseless charges that the trial was anti-Semitic and instead begin to consider what Zionist organizations and Israel citizens were doing in the midst of such a conspiracy under Washington's auspices against a state that has declared war on anti-Semitism and all forms of racism and on war itself. The baseless charge of anti-Semitism in the Prague trial is neither the first, nor will it be the last, false accusation of this kind against the socialist countries. Jews should ponder whether the Ben Gurion government and Zionist leadership are really working for the survival of the people of Israel and of the Jews by allowing themselves to be used as instruments of those who would let loose **World War III**. For the realization of such **war plans** would mean the destruction of Israel and devastation of the world.

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## INTERVIEW WITH CZECH CHIEF RABBI

By Sam Russell

**I**N AN exclusive interview with me in Prague on November 29, 1952, the Chief Rabbi of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Gustav Sichl, completely exposed all the tales about the existence of anti-Semitism in that country.

"I want to make it clear," the chief rabbi declared, "that there is no such thing as oppression of the Jewish religion in Czechoslovakia. There is not a single question in this connection about which I have the slightest complaint." . . . "As far as the trial is concerned," he added, "I would just point out that criminals can be of Jewish origin as well as non-Jews."

I pointed out that since the beginning of the Slansky trial the western press and radio had declared that anti-Semitism was being officially encouraged in Czechoslovakia and had even said there had been anti-Semitic demonstrations.

"That is complete nonsense," he declared, "and, as you have no doubt been able to see for yourself, there has been no such thing. To my mind, there was absolutely no question of the Czechoslovak government instituting a trial like this for any such purpose. For the first time in our history there is a definite law in Czechoslovakia forbidding anti-Semitism and declaring anti-Semitism a crime. Maybe, as a result of the Hitler propaganda, some traces of anti-Semitism may still exist in the minds and hearts of some people, but that is all."

Dr. Sichl then again stressed the point that Jews have complete freedom of worship in Czechoslovakia. Every facility is provided for the observance of Jewish ritual and custom, such as a special slaughterhouse for the slaughter of animals for food, according to Jewish rites, provision of ritual baths and other similar facilities. . . .

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