

Abstract

The topic of the dissertation is the integration of Jewish citizens into the majority population between the years 1945–1948. It focuses primarily on three Jewish population groups in the Czech lands whose reintegration was fraught with difficulties. The groups in question were „German Jews“, people who declared Jewish nationality, and Jewish optants from the former territory of Carpathian Ruthenia who decided to settle in Czechoslovakia after World War II. Their legal standing was unclear, in particular in the immediate post-war years. The most important issue for them was acquiring Czechoslovak citizenship, something that could help them become full-fledged citizens, and so had a significant impact on the future of these individuals. For this reason, the submitted work focuses on the bureaucratic actions that influenced the everyday lives of Jewish citizens. Many lower-level government clerks were unsure about how to proceed with the Jews' citizenship applications. The important criteria that often decided the outcome of the applications became the 1930 census, but especially the applicants' stated nationality or mother tongue. Furthermore, the dissertation focuses on the problems that the Jews faced when they were denied citizenship. For „German Jews“, this meant being forcefully deported, while for Jewish optants it meant being forcefully returned to territories that were now part of the Soviet Union. After they returned home from concentration camps or exile, Jews in the Czech lands were again forced to prove their loyalty to the republic and overturn deep-rooted anti-Semitic prejudices. They de facto also fought for their identity and right to be equal and full-fledged citizens of the newly founded Czech and Slovak nation-state.

The dissertation also outlines the activities of the leading members of the various Jewish communities and their umbrella organization, the Council of the Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, which tried to hasten the elimination of the consequences and remnants of the wartime persecution of Jewish citizens. It also includes the reminiscences of Jewish survivors and their views on their post-war treatment.

Finally, the text briefly discusses the situation of Jews in Slovakia during the Third Republic. It emphasizes the increase in anti-Semitic attitudes in the society, and their escalation into outright pogroms and violence against Jews. To set the focus of the dissertation into a wider Central European context, the author briefly summarizes the position of Jews in Poland and Hungary.

Keywords

Jews, Czechoslovakia, minority, citizenship, German nationality, Jewish nationality, adaptation, loyalty, optants, anti-Semitic riots, pogroms, prejudices, assimilation, emigration.