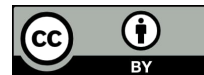


## “UNRELIABLE ELEMENTS”. PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS OF JEWISH ORIGIN IN THE SLOVAK ARMY AFTER 1939

IGOR BAKA – TAMARA JANECOVÁ



BAKA, I. – JANECOVÁ, T.: “Unreliable Elements”. Professional Soldiers of Jewish Origin in the Slovak Army after 1939. *Vojenská história*, 1, 27, 2023, pp 33-60, Bratislava.

The topic of persecution and discrimination of Jews in the army in Slovakia has already been the focus of several papers. Most of the attention was paid to the VI Labour Battalion of the Labour Corps of the Ministry of National Defence (MNO). However, some of the aspects of this topic have not received the historians’ interest to this day. Nor has more attention been paid to the status of persons who, even after 1939, served in the army on the basis of an exception as professional soldiers or worked as civilian employees in the MNO and were directly or indirectly exposed to the consequences of the anti-Jewish legal norms. This did not only concern the Jews themselves (only one of whom eventually served in the army on the basis of an exception), but also the category of so-called Jewish mongrels and, last but not least, the “Aryans” themselves, whose wives, however, were of Jewish origin. In the study, the authors focus on the first two categories of persons. They are not aiming merely at descriptive interpretation of the legislative and legal norms permitting the exclusion of Jews from the army. They would also like to document their reactions, which represented a desperate effort to keep their place in the army. For them, this was often the only option of livelihood in their given situation, and at the same time an opportunity for an exemption from discriminatory and inhumane anti-Jewish legislation. These reactions have been preserved in the form of various supplications and requests. Those represented (from their authors’ point of view) an extremely humiliating and desperate effort in every respect to conform to the demands of the regime derived from the official anti-Jewish stereotypes of the propaganda of the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party. The latter regarded the Jews as a hostile element. The text pays special attention to the personality of František M. Borský, whose fate in the Slovak Army has not yet been further examined.

**Key words:** Military history. Slovakia. Slovak Army after 1939, Jews

The topic of persecution and discrimination of Jews in the army in Slovakia has already been the focus of several papers. Logically, most of the attention was paid to the VI Labour Battalion of the Labour Corps of the Ministry of National Defence (Ministerstvo národnej obrany – MNO). However, some of the aspects of this topic have not received the historians’ interest to this day. Nor has more attention been paid to the status of persons who, even after 1939, served in the army on the basis of an exception as professional soldiers or worked as civilian employees in the MNO and were directly or indirectly exposed to the consequences of the anti-Jewish legal norms. This did not only concern the Jews themselves (only one of whom eventually served in the army on the basis of an exception), but also the category of so-called Jewish mongrels and, last but not least, the “Aryans” themselves, whose wives, however, were of Jewish origin. In the study, we focus on the first two categories of persons. We are not aiming merely at descriptive interpretation of the legislative and legal norms permitting the exclusion of Jews from the army. We would also like to document their reactions, which represented a desperate effort to keep their place in the army. For them, this was often the only option of livelihood in their given situation, and at the same time an opportunity for an exemption from discriminatory and inhumane anti-Jewish legislation. These reactions have been preserved in the form of various supplications and requests. Those represented (from their authors’ point of view) an extremely humiliating and desperate

effort in every respect to conform to the demands of the regime derived from the official anti-Jewish stereotypes of the propaganda of the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party. The latter regarded the Jews as a hostile element. The text pays special attention to the personality of František M. Borský, whose fate in the Slovak Army has not yet been further examined.<sup>1</sup>

The status of Jews in the army was already determined in the Government Decree No. 74/1939 Sl. Code. of 24 April 1939 "On the Exclusion of Jews from Public Services". According to this, they were no longer allowed to be employees of the state, its institutions and public corporations. Logically, therefore, it also applied to professional soldiers. The date for its implementation was set for 1 January 1940. However, the competent ministers were authorised to grant exemptions from its provisions "*due to public interest or other special considerations*". In reality, however, there were not many Jewish salaried employees in the army, and most of them were irreplaceable doctors, pharmacists and paramedics. Based on the official statement of the MNO of 25 July 1939, none of them professed the Jewish religion, all of them were either non-religious or converts. Most of them were released from the army in the second half of 1939 and early in 1940.<sup>2</sup>

Discrimination against Jews in the army was further specified in Government Decree No. 150/1939 Sl. Code of 21 June "On the regulation of the military duty of Jews". According to this, all Jewish officers, sergeants and men on active duty were reassigned to special labour units during their active service. This also concerned Jewish reservists on a military exercise. Such exercise was rigorously implemented as early as in September 1939 (partly earlier)<sup>3</sup> during the war on Poland. All Jews in the army, even enlisted reservists, were to be assigned to labour units and marked with a 5-cm-wide blue armband. Their military uniform should be without rank insignia and without facings and sleeve badges, but also without any decorations. Certain exceptions were to be made for Jewish doctors and pharmacists, but this was abolished shortly thereafter. Jews were also not allowed to carry a side-arm, they could not perform office work, managerial functions in warehouses, be assistants in army exchange or work as interpreters. By Government Decree No. 230/1939 Sl. Code of 19 September, Jews released from military service were deprived of their military ranks, the same as Jews of all military categories in the reserve. This Government Decree was

<sup>1</sup> For more on his personality see MEŠKO, Marek. Brigádny generál (generálmajor in memoriam) František Milan Borský (1899 – 1986) [Brigadier General (General Major in Memoriam) František Milan Borský (1899–1986)]. In *Obrana*, year XVI, 2008, vol. 8, p. 29; BYSTRICKÝ, Jozef. Generálmajor František Milan Borský. [General Major František Milan Borský] In ŠTAIGL, Jan. *Generáli: slovenská vojenská generalita 1918 – 2009*. [Generals: Slovak Military Generality 1918–2009] Bratislava : Magnet Press Slovakia, 2009, p. 22; Idem. Borský, František Milan. In CSÉFALVAY, František and col. *Vojenské osobnosti dejín Slovenska 1939 – 1945*. [Military Personalities in Slovak History 1939–1945] Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav, 2013, p. 26–27; MASKALÍK, Alex. *Elita armády: československá vojenská generalita 1918 – 1992*. [The Army Elite: Czechoslovak Military Generality 1918–1992] Košice : HWSK, 2012, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> As of that date, the Slovak Army had 656 officers, 535 sergeants and 28,492 enlisted men. For more detail see PEJS, Oldřich. Židé a slovenská armáda v prvním roce po jejím vzniku. [Jews and Slovak Army in the First Year after its Origin.] In *Vojenská história*, year 24, 2020, No. 1, p. 93–95, 103–105; Vojenský historický archív (Military History Archive – VHA) Bratislava, f. Ministerstvo národnej obrany (The Ministry of National Defence – MNO) 1939 – 1945, varia, box 4, to the serial number (ser. No.) 204 379, statement of attendance by religion. Status of 25. 7. 1939; f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 158, 620.

<sup>3</sup> In August 1939, there were about 22 Jewish soldiers in the military log cabins in the High Tatras, who were allegedly stripped of their military ranks and marked with blue bands on the right sleeves of their blouses. It is not clear whether this was an isolated case, as similar regulations are not known at this time, and this is the first known case of such a nature regarding the labelling of Jews. BAKA, Igor. *Politický systém a režim Slovenskej republiky v rokoch 1939 – 1940*. [Political System and Regime of the Slovak Republic in 1939–1940]. Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav, 2010, p. 98.

subsequently followed by Section 38 of Defence Act No. 20 Sl. Code of January 1940. This enacted that Jews, along with “Gypsies” (those who, according to the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior /Ministerstvo vnútra – MV/ of 18 June 1940, were of the “Gypsy race by both parents”, who also lived a nomadic life or avoided work) could not be members of the armed forces. Therefore, they were to perform work in special groups. Subsequently, on 31 January 1940, the MNO dismissed Roma and Jews from the armed forces without retaining their acquired ranks.<sup>4</sup> In justifying these measures before the Defence Committee of the Assembly, the Minister of National Defence, 1st Class Gen. Ferdinand Čatloš described these persons as an undesirable element who could not serve in the army, but “can provide benefit in the labour camps”.<sup>5</sup>

However, from the beginning, the MNO faced several requests from discharged salaried employees for readmission to the army. One of the options was the temporary retention of particular persons on duty because of their momentary irreplaceability. However, the first condition was the granting of the aforementioned ministerial exemption from Government Decree No. 74/1939 Sl. Code of 24 April 1939 “On the Exclusion of Jews from Public Services”. However, its holders subsequently had to apply for an exemption from Government Decree 63/1939 Sl. Code of 18 April “on the definition of the concept of a Jew and guidelines for the number of Jews in certain liberal professions”. This could be granted by the government “in cases of special consideration”.<sup>6</sup> However, the MNO approached

<sup>4</sup> BAKA, I. Postavenie Židov vo vzťahu k slovenskej brannej moci v rokoch 1939 – 1941 (do vzniku VI. robotného práporu). [The position of Jews in Relation to the Slovak Armed Forces in 1939–1941 (until the Formation of the VI Labour Battalion).] In *Acta Judaica Slovaca. SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry*, 2008, No. 14, p. 58-75; BALCOVÁ, Milena. Šiesty robotný prápor Pracovného zboru Národnej obrany a jeho činnosť v rokoch 1941 – 1944. [The Sixth Labour Battalion of the National Defence Labour Corps and its Activities in 194–1944.] In *Vojenská história*, year 16, 2012, No. 2, p. 79-97; KRALČÁK, Peter. *Pracovné jednotky slovenskej armády 1939 – 1945. [The Slovak Army Labour Units 1939–1945.]* Bratislava : Pro Militaria Historica, 2014; NIŽNANSKÝ, Eduard – BAKA, Igor – KAMENEC, Ivan (eds.). *Holokaust na Slovensku 5. Židovské pracovné tábory a strediská na Slovensku 1938 – 1944. Dokumenty [Holocaust in Slovakia 5. Jewish Labour Camps and Centres in Slovakia 1938–1944. Documents]* Bratislava : Dokumentačné stredisko holokaustu, 2004; PEJS, O. *Židé a slovenská armáda v prvom roku po jejím vzniku, [Jews and Slovak Army in the First Year after its Origin]*, ref., p. 88-109; SCHÖNBRUN, KNEŽO, Bernard (ed.). *Pracovné jednotky a útvary slovenskej armády 1939 – 1945. VI. robotný prápor. Zborník materiálov z medzinárodného seminára Bratislava 22. - 23. novembra 1995, [Labour Units and Units of the Slovak Army 1939–1945. VI. Labour Battalion. Proceedings of the International Seminar Bratislava 22–23 November 1995]* Bratislava : ZING Print, 1996; ŠVANDA, Petr. Služba Židov a Rómov vo vojenských pracovných jednotkách slovenskej brannej moci v rokoch 1940 – 1943. [Service of Jews and Roma in the Military Labour Units of the Slovak Armed Forces between 1940 and 1943.] In *Fenómén holokaustu: ideové korene, príčiny, priebeh a dôsledky: zborník z medzinárodnej vedecko-odbornej konferencie konanej dňa 27. – 28. marca 2008. [The Holocaust Phenomenon: Ideological Roots, Causes, Course and Consequences: Proceedings of the International Scientific and Professional Conference held on 27–28 March 2008.]* Bratislava : ŠEVT, 2008, p. 167-173.

<sup>5</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945. Fund Department, Ministerial Cabinet 1939 – 1944, box 4, Exposition if the Minister of National Defence in front of the Conscription Committee; KRALČÁK, P. *Pracovné jednotky slovenskej armády [Labour Units of the Slovak Army]*, ref., p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Article 1 of this Government Decree defined the term “Jew” as follows:

“1. Who is, or was, of the Israelite faith, even if they converted to a Christian faith after 30 October 1918,  
2. Who is, or was, non-denominational and descended from at least one parent of the Israelite faith,  
3. Who is descended from a person referred to in 1 or 2 (excluding such a descendant who converted on their own to any Christian faith before 30 October 1918),  
4. Who, after the effective date of this Regulation, has entered into marriage with a person referred to in points 1 to 3, for the duration of that marriage,  
5. Who, after the effective date of this Regulation, is living with a person referred to in paragraphs 1 to 3 in a common-law relationship outside marriage, as well as any descendants conceived by such a common-law relationship.” Slovak Code of Laws, Government Decree 63/1939 Sl. Code.

these applications rigorously from the outset.<sup>7</sup> The head of the personnel (human resources) department of the MNO, Inf. Mjr. Michal Lokšík, in a report to the Military Department of the Office of the President of the Republic dated 4 June 1940, justified this by the fact that “*the Ministry of National Defence was at one time the target of public attacks because of the Jewish question*”.<sup>8</sup> Yet he had already described the “Jewish question” in the army as concluded in his regular activity report of January 5, 1940. He justified his statement by claiming that all but one of the requests for exemption by Jewish salaried employees had been denied.<sup>9</sup> Only the experienced officer, General Staff Centurion (from 1 January 1940 General Staff Mjr.) František M. Borský, was to be temporarily retained in the army, who already since 15 March 1939 had served as a railway line commander and proved himself during the war against Poland, when he managed, in cooperation with the German transport command and German transport officer Col. Felix von Roeder, the transport of Slovak troops to the northern border of Slovakia and back. In doing so, his excellent knowledge of the German language was an advantage.<sup>10</sup> The decision to temporarily retain Borský in the service of the Slovak army by the MNO was also supported by his conversion to the Czechoslovak Church in April 1938, or to the Evangelical Church on 12 September 1939, as well as by changing his original surname Berger in February 1939.<sup>11</sup> In the meantime, Borský also applied for the exemption from the Government Decree 63/1939 Sl. Code of 18 April. Even in his case, however, the procedure was not simple and the opposite is true. He had already submitted the request in question to the Prime Minister’s Office on 20 June 1939, requesting to be exempted from the definition of a Jew under this regulation. In terms of content, this document was no different from the many similar requests made by people who at the time were already facing the consequences of the anti-Jewish legislation. Even in his supplication, therefore, one can find a number of arguments indirectly derived from the stereotypical claims of anti-Semitic propaganda, which considered Jews as a hostile element. Therefore, it is not surprising that he needed to distance himself from the Israeli religion, to emphasize his education and upbringing in a Roman Catholic Folk School (despite the fact that he later converted to Evangelicalism),

<sup>7</sup>This is also confirmed by the negative statement of the Head of the Personnel (Human Resources) Department of the Ministry of Defence, Mjr. Michal Lokšík dated 4 June 1940 addressed to the Office of the President of the Republic on the request of Cent. Ladislav Rosenzweig, still off duty at that time. The MNO responded identically to the request of the Prime Minister’s Office of 14 May 1940 to consider the case of former Economic Staff Sgt. Ladislav Kaufmann. He was not helped even by an extensive supplication addressed to Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka. Here, he pointed out to his catastrophic social situation. At the same time, he indirectly sought to refute anti-Jewish stereotypes in his case by, among other things, pointing to his merits for the establishment of the Slovak state. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 157 951, 156 849.

<sup>8</sup>VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 157 951.

<sup>9</sup>VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Presidium, 1939–1940 I. part, box 13, file mark 1027, Report on the Activity of the Head of the MNO Human Resources Department, Infantry Cent. M. Lokšík of 5. 1. 1940.

<sup>10</sup>In Borský’s qualification certificate, the following assessment is included on his activities during the war against Poland from the head of the 5th Section of the Staff of the Main Military Command (Hlavné vojenské veliteľstvo – HVV), General Staff Mjr. Viliam Kanák of 12 December 1939: “From 28 August 1939 to 15 October 1939, he acted as a regulatory commissioner in Bratislava. At this time, he proved himself very well in cooperation with the German Transport Command, as well as in managing the transport of Slovak troops to the east of the country and in demobilization.” Vojenský historický ústav (The Institute of Military History – VHÚ) Bratislava, Xerox copy of the F. M. Borský qualification certificate.

<sup>11</sup>VHA Bratislava, f. Ministerstvo národnej obrany – Hlavné vojenské veliteľstvo (The Ministry of National Defence – Chief Military Headquarters – MNO – HVV) 1939 – 1940, box 63, ser. No. 209 231, František Milan Borský, General Staff Cent. – Change of religion; VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the F. M. Borský record sheet.



as well as his Slovak national consciousness. He also had to submit attachments to the application itself. The list included his birth and marriage certificate as well as various official testimonies from his place of residence (testimony of the council of the village of Lakšárska Nová Ves, testimony of the Slovak Evangelical Folk School in Bratislava) and service commendations, which were supposed to support his claims.<sup>12</sup> Borský's request was additionally supported by the Minister of National Defence, 1st Class Gen. Ferdinand Čatloš. In a letter of recommendation registered at the Prime Minister's Office at the beginning of July 1939 he pointed out that *"the person in question is the only officer of the General Staff from among the Slovaks who has had special training in railway service as a railway line commander, and therefore, in view of the shortage of Slovaks, the Gen. Staff officer is indispensably needed"*. He stressed his Slovak consciousness (despite his non-Aryan origin), which was to be confirmed by the testimony of the board of directors of his native village.<sup>13</sup> However, even this did not suffice for the competent authorities, as Borský had to submit further documents and reasons for his request at the end of January 1940, following a verbal order from the MNO's Personnel Department on 28 December 1939. These included a certificate of citizenship, but also a confirmation that he had professed to be a Slovak in the census of 1 December 1930, a confirmation of subscription of a loan for the revival of the state.<sup>14</sup> "To be sure," Borský drew attention to his contribution to the golden treasure of the Slovak state. He also had to answer a question about his mother tongue and the use of Slovak in colloquial speech.<sup>15</sup> The humiliating position and the desire to convince his superiors of his indispensability most likely also determined the manner of Borský's appearance in public and in official affairs. In assessing his character both in 1939 and 1940, his qualification list states that he "performs his task most conscientiously and diligently". Both in his duty and off-duty affairs, he gave the impression of a modest and withdrawn man who avoided society, which, according to this evaluation report, may have been due to his "non-Aryan origins".<sup>16</sup>

Despite the fact that Borský fulfilled all the requirements for the processing of his application and also had a positive recommendation from the MNO, he did not receive a decision from the government in the following months. This fact, according to his superiors, caused him "some uncertainty about the future." Nevertheless, his career progression has not, so far, been fundamentally affected. In November 1940 (with effect from 1 July) he was even promoted to General Staff Col. and was awarded the high military Decoration for Heroism of the 3rd degree with a merit badge. Borský's promotion was recommended by his superior, head of the 5th Section of the Staff of the Main Military Command (Hlavné vojenské veliteľstvo – HVV), General Staff Mjr. Viliam Kanák *"if only due to the commanding and social prestige at the railway headquarters"*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, Inv. No. 130, to ser. No. 50 761 conf., Request of the Gen. Staff Cent. F. Borský for the Prime Ministership of 20. 6. 1939.

<sup>13</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, Inv. No. 130, to ser. No. 50 761 conf., Annex to the Request of the Gen. Staff Cent. F. Borský for the Prime Ministership of 20. 6. 1939.

<sup>14</sup> This was completed in February 1939. In addition to its economic meaning, it also had a political dimension. For the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party propaganda, it was a means of demonstrating the general support for the new regime among general public. In order to ensure the success of this action, the government used various types of coercive powers. For more details see e. g. BAKA, I. *Politický systém [Political System]*, ref., p. 110-116.

<sup>15</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, to No. 50 761 conf., Addendum to the Application of Gen. Staff Cent. F. Borský.

<sup>16</sup> VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the F. M. Borský qualification certificate.

<sup>17</sup> VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the F. M. Borský record sheet.

In the meantime, the MNO has partially corrected its original decision to release any other Jewish salaried employees. Already in early June 1940, the head of the Human Resources Department of the MNO, Mjr. Lokšík marked as an irreplaceable specialist Lieut. Doctor Karol Waldmann, who was temporarily retained in the army.<sup>18</sup> Shortly after the establishment of the Slovak State, he served as a pharmacy manager at the Military Hospital 3 in Prešov. His efforts to keep his place in the army are already documented by his application of 30 June 1939, where he applied (along with his wife and daughter) to be “declared an Aryan”. He stated to be of Slovak nationality, claiming that he and his family had converted to the Roman Catholic faith “out of deep belief” after a thorough religious study on 14 March 1939.<sup>19</sup> In his own words, he was the only active pharmacy officer of Slovak nationality in the Slovak army at that time. He also supported his request with the following words: *“I respectfully request the honourable Government to kindly give me an opportunity by granting this request of mine to prove my unconditional devotion and love for our dear country, nation and army by my honest, dedicated and untiring work. I could prove it - with God’s help - by working hard in my field and by my humble participation in the education of our youngest Slovak military-pharmacist generation. I feel – and, judging from the renewed comradeship and affection of my fellow Aryans, I also know – that if the honourable Government would magnanimously grant my respectful plead, I would never be a disgrace to them, and would have but one desire to prove that I am here stating nothing but the plain truth: that I would sacrifice my humble life at any moment in the cause of God and of the nation.”*<sup>20</sup> However, even this apparently desperate and humiliating effort to conform indirectly in every respect to the regime’s demands derived from anti-Jewish stereotypes did not help Waldmann, as he was subsequently dismissed from the army. The change of this decision was brought about only by the statement of the head of the medical service of the MNO, Health Care Mjr. Ladislav Dohnányi. He justified his request for Waldmann’s retention on active military duty in early 1940 on the grounds of a shortage of professional personnel. He backed it up by claiming that Waldmann was *“the oldest and most experienced military pharmacy professional with 10 years of active service.”*<sup>21</sup> In spite of the above, Waldmann did not stay in the army for long, as documents from a later period already list him as an indispensable civilian employee of the MNO.<sup>22</sup> From March 1940 he worked in the Military Medical Depot in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, General Staff Colonel František M. Borský remained the only Jewish salaried employee. However, even he did not “enjoy” his position for long. As soon as in January 1941 he had to quit his post as railway line commander. This decision was probably influenced

<sup>18</sup> JANEČOVÁ, Tamara. Ľudia píšú Čatlošovi (Prosobpisy Židov adresované Ministerstvu národnej obrany v rokoch 1939–1942). [People write to Čatloš (Petitions of Jews addressed to the Ministry of National Defence in 1939–1942).] In *Historický časopis*, year 69, 2021, No. 2, p. 350–352; VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 157 951.

<sup>19</sup> Other documents provide 19 March 1939 as the date of baptism. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6.

<sup>20</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – HVV 1939–1940, ser. No. 202 694, Petition of Lieut. Doctor PhMr. Karol Waldmann for the Slovak Government (via MNO) of 30. 6. 1939.

<sup>21</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – HVV 1939–1940, box 128, ser. No. 192 945, Lieut. Doctor PhMr. Karol Waldmann, former pharmacy admin. – assessment.

<sup>22</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 29 538, Announcement of the Military Health Depot in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš for the MNO, II/3 Department of 22. 9. 1942; VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6.

<sup>23</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, Inv. No. 130, to ser. No. 77 002, conf., Request of K. J. Waldmann for career development for the President of the Republic of 15. 10. 1941.

by the fact that he still had not received an exemption from the Government Decree 63/1939 Sl. Code of 18 April 1939. Subsequently, in February 1941, he was “discarded” to the post of administrator of the office of the Labour Corps Administration of the MNO. This happened despite the fact that as late as on 14 January, Čatloš himself had again recommended to the Prime Minister’s Office the favourable processing of his request for exemption from the provisions of Government Decree 63/39 Sl. Code, and thus his retention in military service. He also reiterated the arguments he had put forward in the 1939 statement quoted above.<sup>24</sup> Čatloš also returned to this case in his post-war memoirs, where he tried to justify his reassignment to the Labour Corps. At that time, Čatloš claimed that this decision was determined by German pressure. However, President Tiso’s unwillingness to grant Borský an exemption on the grounds of having converted to the Evangelical faith instead of Catholic, should also have played a role here.<sup>25</sup> However, this statement does not formally correspond to reality, since Tiso granted exemptions to Jews only on the basis of Government Decree 198/1939 Sl. Code on the legal status of Jews of 9 September 1941 (the so-called Jewish Code). However, the president’s influence on the government’s decision cannot be ruled out in practice in this case as well. On the contrary, German pressure was an argument used after the war by the former administrator of the Labour Corps, Jozef Kručko.<sup>26</sup> The case of Borský was again urged by Čatloš at the Prime Minister’s Office (along with the case of two civilians, K. Waldmann and his colleague Karol Hauser, as well as several “Aryan” salaried employees with wives of Jewish origin) at the end of July 1941. However, the enforcement of his exemption from the provisions of Government Decree 63/39 Sl. Code was no longer relevant.<sup>27</sup> Shortly thereafter, on 9 September 1941, a new government decree 198/1941 Sl. Code (the so-called Jewish Code) was enacted, which shifted the approach to the concept of a Jew from the German model to the racial principle.

For some time, there were also several other salaried employees of Jewish origin serving in the army for various reasons. One of them was Infantry Lt. Jozef Lord in voluntary service, deployed at the Military Court in Bratislava, who converted to the Roman Catholic faith in January 1939. Nevertheless, his origins were discovered later in May 1940 as a result of an anonymous denouncement. Its author demanded from immediate correction from the MNO, “*because it is a disgrace for the Slovak Army when a Jew is still serving there in such an important place even today*”.<sup>28</sup> Paradoxically, Lord himself had only completed his compulsory two years of full-time military service in the autumn of 1939. At that time, the Prime Minister’s Office had already registered his request for exemption from the provisions of Government Decree 63/39 Sl. Code, dated 17 July 1939. As with hundreds of other requests, his contains arguments questioning his Jewish roots (upbringing in the spirit of Christian principles, declaring his Slovak nationality, etc.). In his plea, he also resorted to a desperate attempt to conform to his own arguments to the anti-Jewish stereotypes of anti-Semitic

<sup>24</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 50 761 conf., Statement of Gen. Čatloš for the Prime Ministership of 14. 1. 1941.

<sup>25</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Fund Department, Ministerial Cabinet 1939–1944, box 4, III/B Memories, Workers at this Construction.

<sup>26</sup> VHA Bratislava, Xerox copy of the record sheet and qualification certificate of F. M. Borský; CSÉFALVAY, František and col. *Vojenské osobnosti dejín Slovenska 1939 – 1945. [Military Personalities in Slovak History 1939–1945]* Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav 2013, p. 26-27; VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Fund Department, Ministerial Cabinet 1939–1944, box 4, III/B Memories, Workers at this Construction.

<sup>27</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 66 777 conf., Request of the MNO to the Prime Ministership of 29. 7. 1941.

<sup>28</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 158 002, Lord Jozef, JUDr., Infantry Lt. further serving as officer in CS service – Dismissal from the Service.

propaganda. He described his Jewish ancestry as a coincidence and denied its connection to his training as a lawyer, since, as he pointed out, no one in his family “is a lawyer, a doctor, a merchant or an innkeeper...”

In claiming so, he indirectly admitted that, in addition to his own discrimination, he also wanted to prevent his family's problems. The latter was, in his own words, existentially dependent on his employment.<sup>29</sup> Josef Lord was probably convinced that his application would be approved and that he would be exempted from the provisions of Government Decree 63/39 Sl. Code After completing his full-time military service, he therefore decided to remain in the army and in December 1939 he surprisingly received a promotion to lieutenant in the reserves. He was to remain in further voluntary active service until April and then August 1940. What was the reason behind this decision?

Here it can be assumed that Lord's superiors at the MNO's Justice Department knew of his origins, but kept them secret in an attempt to help him. This would be consistent with his status as an officer continuing to serve on active duty, with an atypical adjective “temporarily.”<sup>30</sup> This assumption is confirmed by the published memoirs of Samuel K. Korbel, who as Just. Mjr. was the head of the judicial department of the MNO at that time. It states: “*I also helped the Jewish military judge Dr. Lord and saved him from being transported to Poland. Even though I was not able to get a presidential exemption for him, I kept him at the military court (presumably as a civilian employee under a ministerial exemption – notice by I. B. – T. J.) until the transportation of Jews ceased, even against the express orders of the head of the personnel department, Major Lokšík, a well-known Germanophile and protégé of the Prime Minister, Dr. Tuka.*”<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Korbel's words about being saved from deportation can be questioned, since according to Constitutional Law No. 68/1942 Sl. Code on the Deportation of Jews of 15 May 1942, deportations did not apply to persons baptised before 14 March 1939.<sup>32</sup> Period documents also contradict his assertion about Lord's continued retention at military court. As already mentioned above, his dismissal from the army took place after an additional verification of his religious background in May 1940, based on an order from the head of the Personnel Department of the MNO, Infantry Mjr. Michal Lokšík of 11 June 1940.<sup>33</sup> Korbel's claims about Lokšík's alleged order to dismiss Lord also do not fit in terms of time, as the latter was no longer at the MNO in 1942, but was active on the Eastern Front. Korbel's words are also disputed by an entry in Lord's sheet record indicating that he was unemployed from 1940 to 1943. Subsequently, from March 1943 he was to be imprisoned in the Ilava detention camp.<sup>34</sup> He was to leave there only after the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, in which he took an active part. After its suppression, he joined the partisans. After the front had passed he joined the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps

<sup>29</sup> Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archive – SNA) Bratislava, f. Úrad predsedníctva vlády (Prime Minister's Office – ÚPV) 1938 – 1945, box 23, basic number 8760, Dr. Lord Jozef, Bratislava – Request for the Recognition of Christianity.

<sup>30</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 158 002.

<sup>31</sup> KORBEL, Samuel Karol. *Pamäti. [Memoirs]* Bratislava : Ústav pamäti národa, 2011, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> For more see: NIŽŇANSKÝ, E. Deportácie Židov zo Slovenska v roku 1942 a prijatie ústavného zákona č. 68/1942 o „vysťahovaní Židov“. [Deportation of Jews from Slovakia in 1942 and the Adoption of Constitutional Law No. 68/1942 on the “Deportation of Jews”.] In *Studia historica Nitriensia* X/2002, p. 85-156.

<sup>33</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 158 002.

<sup>34</sup> In the medallion of Jozef Lord, Jozef Sulaček provides different data: he states that Lord was discharged from the judicial services on 10 June 1940 and was to be assigned to the labour camp in Ilava on 22 October 1942. SULAČEK, Jozef. *Právnicki práva zbavení (Perzekúcie židovských právnikov na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945). [Lawyers Deprived of Law (Persecutions of Jewish Lawyers in Slovakia between 1938 and 1945).]* Part 2. Bratislava : Slovenské národné múzeum – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2015, p. 97.



in the USSR in March 1945. After the war, he continued his career as a military lawyer and attained the rank of Colonel of the Judicial Service in 1951. He served at military courts in Banská Bystrica, Prague, Tabor and Žilina. He retired for civilian life in 1953. Later, he worked at the Supreme Court of the Slovak Socialist Republic in Bratislava.<sup>35</sup> He was awarded the Czechoslovak War Cross 1939 and the 2nd Class SNU Order.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, the case of Artillery Lieut. Alexander Roth was specific. Originally, he was discharged from the army as early as on 31 July 1939, which was officially justified by his health condition. However, this action was immediately opposed by the commander of the Higher Military Command 3, Colonel of the General Staff Augustín Malár, as well as the Commander of Artillery Regiment 3 Artillery Lieut. Quido Dotzauer, who pointed to his military practice, experience and momentary indispensability. The release of Roth, on the contrary, was supported in late July 1939 by the commander of the artillery Col. Jozef Turanec. In addition to health reasons, he also pointed out to his “non-Aryan origins”.<sup>37</sup> However, Roth himself argued from the beginning that he did not belong in the category of a Jew due to his conversion and entry into the Reformed Christian Church before 1918 (in 1917 in particular).<sup>38</sup> Eventually, his dismissal was delayed, and in June 1940 he was even appointed commander of the 3rd Artillery Regiment’s Decontamination Squad. He was finally dismissed from the army on 30 September 1940. However, the MNO had to ban him from wearing his military uniform at the beginning of October. In his own words, this exemption was granted to him by the commander of Artillery Regiment 12.<sup>39</sup> However, Roth himself, who in the meantime has changed his name to Ruda to make it sound more Slovak, did not accept the dismissal and has appealed against the decision. According to military authorities, he could not sufficiently corroborate his claim of conversion in 1917 though. The MNO also suspected that he had in fact left the Reformed Christian Church and remained without confession. However, the District Office in Prešov held an opposite opinion, deciding by a decree of 14 November 1940 that the appointee did not fall under the definition of a Jew. The Minister of Justice, Gejza Fritz, who had intervened on Ruda’s behalf directly with Minister Čatloš at the turn of 1940/41, was also in favour of this decision in January 1941.<sup>40</sup> In the same way, Ruda was also supported a while later by his former superior, Col. Malár. In a letter dated 27 June 1941, he requested the Minister to receive Ruda in audience and grant his request for reactivation. He expressed satisfaction with his deployment during the Hungarian-Slovak armed conflict in March 1939, as well as the campaign against Poland in September 1939.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Vojenský archív – centrálna registratúra (Military Archive – Central Registry) Trnava, Record Sheet of Jozef Lord.

<sup>36</sup> Idem; SULAČEK, Jozef. *Právnicki práva zbavení (Perzekúcie židovských právnikov na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945). [Lawyers Deprived of Law (Persecutions of Jewish Lawyers in Slovakia between 1938 and 1945).]* Part 2. Bratislava : Slovenské národné múzeum – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2015, p. 97.

<sup>37</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – HVV 1939 – 1940, box 23, ser. No. 204 010, Roth Alexander, Artillery Lt. – activation – cancellation.

<sup>38</sup> In 1939, he was supposed to convert to the Evangelical Church.

<sup>39</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 164 456, Bulletin of the Chief of the H Group MNO Infantry Mjr. Michal Lokšík; VHA Praha, Qualification Certificate of Alexander Roth.

<sup>40</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, to No. 52 707, Letter from G. Fritz for MNO of 28. 1. 1941; ser. No. 57 339 II/3 conf., Letter from the Minister of Justice G. Fritz for the Minister gen. Čatloš.

<sup>41</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, Letter from Col. Malár of 27. 6. 1941.

Nevertheless, the MNO did not respond to Ruda's appeal and re-admission to the officer corps. The arguments of the Minister of Justice were rejected by Gen. Čatloš, who informed him in reply to his letter that *"in the case of the appointee, the military administration proceeded strictly objectively and decided the merits of the case lawfully, because the appointee is covered by the provision of paragraph 2 of Art. No 63/1939 Sl. Code."* According to Čatloš, Minister Fritz's private secretary should also have been informed of the whole matter beforehand. Nevertheless, he urged him to refer the whole matter to the Government for a decision.<sup>42</sup> The MNO was not won over even by Fritz's further intervention of 28 January 1941, in which he again rejected the MNO's arguments that Ruda should have been considered a Jew. According to him, there was no written evidence of his resignation from the Reformed Christian Church.<sup>43</sup>

Ruda himself did not receive an answer until after the publication of the so-called Jewish Code. On 16 October 1941, the headquarters of Divisional Area 2 notified him in this connection that his dismissal was deemed to be unnecessary, since he was regarded as a Jew under this new government decree. Ruda also objected to this claim though and argued that he fell into the category of a Jewish mongrel according to the Jewish Code. However, according to the MNO, he again failed to submit the relevant documents.<sup>44</sup> He managed to survive and after the war he worked as a district judge in Levice and Bratislava.<sup>45</sup>

The case of former Health care Lt. Col. MUDr. Ladislav Nemeš, was also specific. Until his dismissal on 18 December 1939 he served as chief physician at the Supplementary District Headquarters Banská Bystrica. However, an acute shortage of doctors in the army led to his being called up for a temporary period of active military service as a reserve officer. In addition, the Chief of Staff of the Divisional Area Command 2, General Staff Mjr. František Urban, at the beginning of March 1940, turned to the MNO with the question whether the appointee could remain in his post due to his indispensability and because of the lack of military doctors. However, the MNO disagreed and at the end of March ordered to immediately dismiss Nemeš from the army.<sup>46</sup> They did so despite his request to the Prime Minister's Office on 29 December 1939 for an exemption from Government Decree 63/1939 of 18 April 1939. In his request, he drew attention to his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1921, as well as his wife's "Aryan" origins.<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, however, the Prime Minister's Office did not support his request anyway, informing him only briefly at the end of April 1940 that *"the Ministerial Council has not yet acted on the requests made for the determination of the exemption in question, therefore your request could not be carried out either"*.<sup>48</sup> However, there was also

<sup>42</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 57 339 II/3 conf., Letter from Minister Gen. Čatloš to Minister of Justice G. Fritz of 9. 1. 1941.

<sup>43</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, to No. 52 707, Letter from G. Fritz for MNO of 28. 1. 1941.

<sup>44</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, Inv. No. 130, to ser. No. 78 294, Letter from A. Ruda to the MNO Human Resources Department of 24. 10. 1941; ser. No. 55 165.

<sup>45</sup> SULAČEK, Jozef. *Právnicki práva zbavení (Perzekúcie židovských právnikov na Slovensku v rokoch 1938 – 1945). [Lawyers Deprived of Law (Persecutions of Jewish Lawyers in Slovakia between 1938 and 1945).]* Part 2. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2015, p. 134. Apart from that, Sulaček states that Roth changed his surname to Rudý after 1945.

<sup>46</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 153 407, MUDr. Nemeš Ladislav, Health Care Lt. Col. in reserve – Notification.

<sup>47</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 3485/42, Request of L. Nemeš for the Prime Ministership of 29. 12. 1939.

<sup>48</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 3485/42, Statement of the Prime Ministership of 26. 4. 1940.

a great deal of alibism in this claim, since the government already had the opinion of the District Office in Banská Bystrica, which, at its request, had investigated Nemeš' financial circumstances, his relationship to the Slovak language, his level of national awareness, and his involvement in civic life.<sup>49</sup> Even though this authority found nothing objectionable in his conduct, it had already stated on 13 March 1940 that it had failed to find "*circumstances worthy of special consideration*" for the granting of the exemption.<sup>50</sup> In spite of that, he was indispensable for the civil sector due to his occupation, therefore he was permitted to carry out his medical practice in Ladce from 1 February<sup>51</sup>. On 8 May 1942, he asked the Prime Minister's Office (Úrad predsedníctva vlády – ÚPV) to return his unapproved request for the exemption ("*since I urgently need the attachments*"<sup>52</sup>). It is highly likely that he used the documents subsequently when requesting the presidential exemption from the so called Jewish Code. The ÚPV returned the documents to Nemeš on 20 May 1942 and in the course of that year he obtained a so-called yellow legitimization (work permit).<sup>53</sup> It is questionable whether he was also granted the presidential exemption afterwards. After the war, he worked as a hospital doctor in Ladce and as a state district doctor in Santovka.

The uncompromising decision of the MNO in the case of MUDr. Nemeš was probably precipitated by the conclusion of an agreement between the head of the MNO Labour Service, Infantry Mjr. Jozef M. Kristín and the head of the MNO medical service, Health Care Mjr. MUDr. Pavel Trusík of 31 March 1940. According to her, the urgent shortage of military doctors (which was caused by the dismissal of Jewish salaried employees) was to be solved by assigning all full-time Jewish doctors to military hospitals.<sup>54</sup>

In order to thoroughly "purify" the army from Jews and their direct influence in the future as well as to prevent similar cases when the Jewish roots of some of the salaried employees

<sup>49</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 3485/42, Instructions of the Prime Ministership for the District Office in Banská Bystrica of 23. 1. 1940.

<sup>50</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 3485/42, Statement of the District Office in Banská Bystrica of 13. 3. 1940 for the Prime Ministership.

<sup>51</sup> SULAČEK, Jozef. *Biele plášte (tragické osudy židovských lekárov na Slovensku v období druhej svetovej vojny)*. [White Coats (the tragic fate of Jewish doctors in Slovakia during the World War 2).] Part 2. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2006, p. 68. According to the published chronicle of the Ladce municipality, he worked as a factory doctor in a cement factory from 1941. See: <<https://www.ladce.sk/online-kronika-1989-2013/>>, rok 1941. We have not found the text of the exemption itself, and we do not know which authority it was granted by to Nemeš. We assume that this was an exemption granted by the Ministry of the Interior, which in the course of 1941 granted about 170 exemptions to Jewish doctors, see: SULAČEK, Jozef. *Biele plášte (tragické osudy židovských lekárov na Slovensku v období druhej svetovej vojny)*. [White Coats (the tragic fate of Jewish doctors in Slovakia during the World War 2).] Part 1. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2006, p. 62.

<sup>52</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 3485/42, Request of Ladislav Nemeš for the return of his request for exemption, Ladce 8. 5. 1942.

<sup>53</sup> As noted by Sulaček, most exemptions were granted to Jewish doctors in 1942. On 2 December 1941 and on 22 April 1942 again, the Government extended the deadline for dismissal from the state and public services until 31 December 1942. "Gradually, most of them were given yellow licenses, awarded by the Ministry of the department from 24 April 1942." SULAČEK, Jozef. *Biele plášte (tragické osudy židovských lekárov na Slovensku v období druhej svetovej vojny)*. [White Coats (the tragic fate of Jewish doctors in Slovakia during the World War 2).] Part 1. Bratislava : SNM – Múzeum židovskej kultúry, 2006, p. 90.

<sup>54</sup> However, this agreement has been only slowly implemented in practice. This is confirmed by the urgency of Mjr. Trusík, who in October 1940 complained to the MNO that there was not a single Jewish doctor on duty in the area of the 1st Division Headquarters in Military Hospital 1. The situation was subsequently solved only by the intervention of the division commander, artillery col. Jozef Turanec. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 154 742, Jewish doctors – referral to military hospitals.

were discovered only afterwards, the MNO ordered “*a careful examination of the nationality and religion of all salaried employees*” as early as September 1940. At the same time, the MNO was concerned that the army might continue to deploy persons who had concealed their Jewish origins. In fact, the army relied on their record sheet when ascertaining the origin of the salaried employees, containing their religion and mother tongue. The cases of converts who did not have a record of baptism in their personal files seemed problematic.<sup>55</sup> However, from the MNO point of view, however, it was not only the salaried employees themselves, or employees of Jewish origin, who appeared to be unreliable. In the army (as well as in other areas of the state and public administration), the Jewish origin of the immediate family of its members was sufficient from the regime’s point of view. This requirement was supported by Point 4 of Article 1 of the aforementioned Government Decree No. 63/1939 Sl. Code of 18 April, which defined the term “Jew”. It is stated here that anyone who, after the effective date of this Decree, entered into a marriage with a person falling within this category (for the duration of the marriage) shall be deemed to be a Jew. The aforementioned criteria corresponded to the wording of the bulletin, according to which the Human Resources Department of the MNO was to be provided by 15 October 1940 with “*statements of salaried employees of the Jewish religion, salaried employees who are of a different religion but have Jewish wives, and salaried employees of no religion*”.<sup>56</sup> However, the implementation of this task was delayed as the various commands had to examine the baptism and marriage certificates of all the salaried employees assigned to them as well as their family members.<sup>57</sup> We only have a few partial reports from subordinate commands and one undated document containing 11 names.<sup>58</sup> However, it is not clear whether this is a complete list of all persons according to the required criteria. 9 of them were military salaried employees and two were civilian employees of the MNO. None of these persons professed the Jewish religion. The same applied to their wives. In three cases, the persons were converted. This included, in addition to the aforementioned General Staff Mjr. František Borský and Karol Waldmann (already mentioned as a civilian employee) also the civilian employee Karol Hauser. The remaining salaried employees are listed because of the Jewish origins of their wives, despite the fact that most of them have converted in the meantime. Even though all these marriages were entered into before the effective date of the Government Decree 63/1939, more or less discrimination from the MNO was also experienced in practice by these military salaried employees.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the systematic effort to “purify” the army of Jews, the replenishment commands paradoxically continued to report several of them as “Aryans” in their records even at this time. This was revealed by the course of mobilisation for the war against USSR in the summer of 1941. As the situation was brought to the attention by the German Military Mission, the MNO immediately investigated the situation. Eventually, only three such cases were found in the ranks of reserve officers. This was due to the fact that they were

<sup>55</sup> PEJS, O. *Židé a slovenská armáda v prvním roce po jejím vzniku (Jews and Slovak Army in the First Year after its Origin)*, ref., p. 106.

<sup>56</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 6, ser. No. 163 843, Examination of the Salaried Employees’ Nationality and Religion.

<sup>57</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – varia, box 16, Report of the Commander of Artillery Regiment 12 to Headquarters of the 2nd Division, 24. 10. 1940.

<sup>58</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – varia, box 3, ser. No. 54 560, Headquarters of the 1st Division to Group H of the MNO of 12 October 1940; ser. No. 53 719, Headquarters of the 2nd Division to Group H of the MNO of 23 October 1940; box 16, Report of the Commissary of the MNO to Group H – MNO of 15 October 1940.

<sup>59</sup> SNA Bratislava, f. ÚPV, box 24, basic number 1326/41, 10 515; box 26 a, ser. No. 1334.



converts, or persons without religion, who had no record of their origins in their record sheets.<sup>60</sup>

The search for the Jewish origins of the military salaried employees and their family members continued in the autumn of 1941 after the issue of the aforementioned Decree 198/1941 Sl. Code of 9 September. This inhumane and particularly drastic rule of law represented an important milestone in the development of anti-Jewish legislation in Slovakia. It summarised the previous anti-Jewish legislation, making it even stricter, shifting the approach to the concept of a Jew to the racial principle, following the German model. However, in addition to the new definition of Jew, it also defined the category of Jewish mongrel.<sup>61</sup> Even though some of the persons so defined could be employed by the state (those descended from one Jewish grandparent by race), no Jewish mongrel could become a non-commissioned officer or an officer of the Slovak Armed Forces, according to Section 15 of this regulation.<sup>62</sup> However, initially, the interpretation of this section was not entirely clear in the military environment.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the MNO issued a clarifying order on 11 November 1941, which emphasized that Jewish mongrels, unlike Jews, “were subject to conscription like other Aryans.” However, they could only serve as riflemen or workers, without any military grades. In practice, this meant, *inter alia*, that they could be assigned to active military service in armed or labour service, but they did not have to serve in the VI Labour Battalion.<sup>64</sup> In justifying this measure in the inter-ministerial comments, reference was made to Section 22 of Government Decree 198/1941 Sl. Code, according to which Jewish mongrels (as opposed to Jews) were not subject to the labour obligation. According to the statement of the Ministry of Interior of 31 October 1941, the decision of the MNO was “in accordance with the provisions of the Jewish Code”.<sup>65</sup>

The impact of the so-called Jewish Code was also to be felt with even greater intensity by “Aryans” living in a marriage with a Jewish person. Pursuant to Article 15 (3) of this

<sup>60</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential Files Part I 1940–1942, box. 177, inv. No. 224, ser. No. 67 549, Conscription of Jews as reserve officers for active military service – dismissal from the armed forces.

<sup>61</sup> The definition of a Jew was contained in Article 1 of this regulation:

“(1) Pursuant to this regulation, the following shall be deemed to be a Jew, irrespective of sex:

a) who is descended from at least three grandparents Jewish by race;

b) a Jewish mongrel who is descended from two grandparents Jewish by race (Art. 2(a)), if

1. They were or became a member of the Israelite (Jewish) religion on or after 20 April 1939.

2. They entered into marriage with a Jew after 20 April 1939 [(a)],

3. They were born in a marriage with a Jew [(a)], entered into after 20 April 1939,

4. They were born out of wedlock to a Jew [(a)] and was born as an illegitimate child after 20 February 1940.

(2) Pursuant to the provisions of this regulation, a Jewish grandparent by race shall mean one who belonged to the Israelite (Jewish) religion.

Article 2 provided the definition of Jewish mongrel:

“Pursuant to this regulation, a Jewish mongrel shall mean:

a) Anyone who comes from two Jewish grandparents by race (Art. 1 (2)), if not considered a Jew under Art. 1

b) Anyone, who comes from one Jewish grandparent by race (Art. 1 (2)).

Slovak Code 1941, Regulation 198/41 Sl. Code on the legal status of Jews.

<sup>62</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>63</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Ordinary files, box 19, ser. No. 46 652/15-1941, Jewish mongrel – conscription.

<sup>64</sup> It can be assumed that a number of persons identified as Jewish mongrels subsequently sought reassignment from the VI Labour Battalion. This is suggested by the request of František Preis of May 1942. VHA Bratislava, f. 53, sig. 53/41-88/1/1, Order of the MNO of 11. November 1941; f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Pracovný zbor národnej obrany 1940 – 1945 (Labour Corps of the National Defence 1940–1945 – PZNO), box 105, Inv. No. 106, Request of František Preis for reassignment to the V Labour Battalion of 28 May 1942.

<sup>65</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Ordinary files, box 19, ser. No. 46 652/15-1941, Jewish mongrel – conscription.

regulation, such persons could not be employed in the state services. The only hope for persons discriminated against under the so-called Jewish Code was Article 255 of that regulation, which allowed for the issuance of partial or complete presidential exemptions from its provisions.

According to the MNO regulation of 15 September 1941, all military salaried employees (officers, sergeants, non-commissioned officers) had to fill in a questionnaire shortly after the issue of the so-called Jewish Code, aimed at finding out whether there was anyone among them who fell into the category of a Jew, a Jewish “mongrel”, but also a person living in a marriage with a Jewish woman. This regulation also applied to all civilian employees of the military administration (including contractual employees). The recipients of this questionnaire were asked to answer four questions. These were aimed at finding who comes from three, two or one Jewish grandparents by race or if any of them was a “non-Jewish spouse of a Jew”.<sup>66</sup>

Persons who fell into the categories in question were allowed to remain in the military temporarily, but had to subsequently apply for a presidential exemption. Several military salaried employees actually applied for such exemption. In addition to the aforementioned Col. Borský and several officers with a Jewish wife, there were also four salaried employees who, according to the anti-Jewish legislation, fell under the concept of Jewish “mongrels”. These were two junior officers and two warrant officers. In particular: Chief Sergeant Major – Warrant Officer Viliam Sokol, Chief Sergeant Major – Economic Warrant Officer Pavol Plechlo<sup>67</sup>, Artillery Lieutenant Štefan Holota<sup>68</sup> and Infantry Lieutenant Jozef Sokol (brother of Viliam Sokol).<sup>69</sup>

However, even in the case of military salaried employees, the President’s exemption granting was not just a formal process. This is documented by the contents of the preserved applications to his office. They were also accompanied by the MNO’s statement, as well as various documents confirming the facts stated in the application (e.g. a copy of the baptismal certificate, etc.). These documents confirm that once again, even the “Aryan” officers did not escape the humiliating procedure, which was an open assault on the very dignity of all applicants for exemption.

The successful completion of the humiliating request for a presidential exemption was conditioned by a positive statement from the MNO. Different approaches can be distinguished here in respect to the category of applicants. The largest was a group of “Aryan” officers with a Jewish wife. In several cases, the MNO referred to the long-standing merits of the applicants, their national and Christian beliefs, but also argued on professional criteria, or their current indispensability in their assigned function. Proof of the wife’s conversion to the Christian faith was quoted as a positive attribute for granting the exemption. This is

<sup>66</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 72 456 conf., MNO bulletin of 15. 9. 1941.

<sup>67</sup> Some documents enlist his surname as Plekla. However, he himself admitted that this was a garble of his original surname. It has been possibly created by the intervention of Hungarian officials even before the establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. By a decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 6 January 1940, he was allowed to change his surname from “Kohn Plekla” to Plechlo. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – HVV 1939 – 1940, box 139, ser. No. 209 241, Kohn – Plechlo, Economic Staff Sergeant, sl. – change of surname and citizenship.

<sup>68</sup> Originally a corporal in the reserve, activated at his own request on 1 March 1940 at the rank of Artillery Lt. and assigned to Artillery Regiment 2 in Ružomberok. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO – HVV 1939 – 1940, box 81, ser. No. 212 327, Artillery Lt. Štefan Holota, activation.

<sup>69</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, service of persons of Jewish origin and with Jewish relatives in the Slovak Army.

confirmed by the fact that the wives of all military applicants were baptised.<sup>70</sup> Their national or political opinions were also pointed out.<sup>71</sup>

In the case of the request for an exemption for the four military salaried employees identified as Jewish “mongrels”, the MNO argued similarly. E.g. the request of Economic Staff Sergeant Pavol Plechlo of November 1941 was supported based on professional criteria. In doing so, they referred to the lack of skilled staff in the economic administration.<sup>72</sup> In the case of two other junior officers (Artillery Lt. Štefan Holota, Infantry Lt. Jozef Sokol), the MNO appreciated their stay on the Eastern Front in the campaign against the USSR. In the case of Holota, the MNO also highlighted his Christian upbringing, to which was said to have been guided from early childhood.<sup>73</sup>

The MNO also used professional criteria for its assessment of the application of the only Jewish officer of the Slovak Army, General Staff Mjr. František M. Borský. They stressed that this officer was “*indispensable to the Slovak Army in 1939–40 as the only very well skilled expert in the railway administration.*” The decision to keep him in the service was supported, among other things, by pointing to his and his wife’s conversion to the Christian faith. However, the situation changed with Borský’s reassignment to the Labour Corps. Therefore, it is not surprising that the MNO did not show any interest in further retaining this highly qualified officer in the army. This is confirmed by the following statement: “*At the time the army is not dependent on the services of General Staff Col. Borský and can spare him, which it proved by reassigning Col. Borský, even though being an officer of the General Staff, to the Labour Corps, where he is now serving.*” On the one hand, the MNO admitted the possibility of granting an exemption “on grounds of humanity” (as he was a long-serving professional soldier), but this was put on the back burner. At the same time, they added that “*otherwise the Slovak Army has no interest in granting an exemption and thus retaining Col. Borský in the ranks of Slovak officers.*”<sup>74</sup> This uncompromising attitude, backed up by ideological reasons, was not softened by the fact that Borský immediately established himself in the new conditions and contributed greatly to the building of the Labour Corps. This is documented by his publication “The Year of the MNO Labour Corps” from the beginning of 1942.<sup>75</sup> The

<sup>70</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box. 106, inv. No. 130.

<sup>71</sup> For example, in the case of the wife of Aut. Mjr. Henrich Makoň, her membership in HSLS was emphasised. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 79 434, undated statement of MNO for presidential office for the granting of exemption for Aut. Mjr. H. Makoň under regulation No. 198/41 Sl. Code.

<sup>72</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 74 894, statement of the MNO on the request of Economic Staff Sergeant Pavol Plechlo for the Presidential office.

<sup>73</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 81 073, 82 294,

<sup>74</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 78 587 confidential, report of the MNO to the request of General Staff Col. František Borský.

<sup>75</sup> Borský even “smuggled in” a complimentary statement about the members of the VI Labour Battalion. In the context of construction of the Šúr Canal, he openly admitted that “*although works had not started until the end of the summer of 1941, the 600 workers of the MNO Labour Corps – Jews and Gypsies – had so far done considerable work there.*”. BORSKÝ, František. *Rok pracovného zboru MNO. (The year of the MNO Labour Corps.)* Bratislava : Veliteľstvo pracovného zboru MNO, 1942, p. 20. This statement did not comply with the anti-Semitic narrative of Jews as enemies of the Slovak nation sabotaging its work and building efforts. This is confirmed by the fact that even though the Cultural and Publicity Department was given the task of creating a separate permanent section on the activities of the Labour Corps in the military magazines, the reader learned nothing about the deployment and achievements of Jews or Roma.

MNO was not discouraged from publishing it even by Borský's origin, despite the fact that it was an important promotional material available in all bookstores at the time.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, one can speculate about the intervention of the German military authorities in Slovakia. Even Čatloš himself referred to this in the case of Borský after the war (as already mentioned), but the contemporary documents do not yet shed any further light on this issue.

The Presidential Office also acted consistently in reviewing the actual applications of military salaried employees and sought to obtain as much information about them as possible. This is also confirmed by the request of the head of its Military Department, General Staff Col. Koloman Brezány of 2 March 1942, addressed to the Human Resources Department of the MNO for an urgent examination of the property and family circumstances of several of them. This request reflected the anti-Semitic discourse of the time (its religious, political, national and economic levels) and derived once again from the validity of established anti-Jewish stereotypes. In these particular cases, it was the suspected accumulation of wealth and the moral and political unreliability of the persons under review. The attached list, of course, contained Col. F. Borský and all four Jewish "mongrels". Since these fears were not confirmed, the President eventually granted exemptions from the so-called Jewish Code to all military salaried employees of "Aryan" origin and their family members until 31 March 1942 (despite the negative statement of the MNO on two applications), as well as to Jewish "mongrels".<sup>77</sup>

Only his statement on the request of Col. Borský remains unclear. Nevertheless, he was dismissed from the army just a few days later, without retaining the ranks he had acquired. The fact that he unsuccessfully intervened directly in the Jewish concentration centre at Patrónka in favour of his sister-in-law, who was included in the prepared transport at the end of March already was stated as the cause of his professional degradation in the period shortly after the start of the deportations. This accusation was made by Interior Minister Alexander Mach. In a letter to Gen. Čatloš of 28 March, he demanded the prevention of any further interventions on the part of this officer in favour of any Jews. He also wanted to eliminate the impression that a high-ranking officer of the Slovak Army might obstruct legal anti-Jewish measures in public. At the same time, he expected Čatloš to draw consequences against Borský, given that both he and his wife were of Jewish origin.<sup>78</sup> In his statement of 1 April 1942, Borský himself admitted that his wife had written to the Ministry of the Interior on behalf of her sister (who was caring for their sick father). He was not trying to conceal his own presence at Patrónka at the time of the transport preparations. However, he rejected any intervention of his own on behalf of his sister-in-law. The difficult situation in which he and his family found themselves as a result of Mach's intervention at the time of the deportations nevertheless forced him, at the cost of his own dignity, to apologize and make a humiliating plea for a benevolent consideration of the whole case. He referred to his long-standing military service and previous merits.<sup>79</sup> However, he no longer received

<sup>76</sup> Slovenské vojsko, year III, 1. 3. 1942, Vol. 5-6, Annex dedicated to the MNO Labour Corps, year I, p. 90, Knižka o Pracovnom sboe MNO.

<sup>77</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130.

<sup>78</sup> In his letter, Mach stated, inter alia: "I respectfully request that appropriate steps be taken to definitively prevent this senior officer of the Slovak Army from appearing in uniform to protect Jews and to give the public the impression that a senior army officer may be obstructing lawful anti-Jewish measures. Since Borský himself and his wife are Jewish please consider his described behaviour to see if the implications should be drawn. Thank you." VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 94 948 explanatory letter from Mach to Čatloš of 28. 3. 1942.

<sup>79</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. 53, sig. 53/42-88/1/11, Transcript of the statement of Col. F. Borského of 1. 4. 1942; VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I. 1940–1942, box. 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 94 948, Borský František, Gen. Staff Col., dismissal from the Slov. Army – Notification.



any understanding and conciliatory approach. Minister Čatloš, on the contrary, informed A. Mach on 4 April that Col. Borský would be dismissed from the Army in accordance with Government Decree 198/1941 Sl. Code. However, the resolution of this case was still pending in view of the expected decision of the Presidential Office on the matter of exemptions from the so-called Jewish Code for the above-mentioned Slovak officers. Given this argument, it can be assumed that these documents included a decision for Borský and his family. As the relevant documents arrived at the MNO on 4 April, the official decision on Borský's dismissal from the army was made as early as 7 April, with effect from 10 April.<sup>80</sup> He automatically lost his acquired ranks as well as Slovak military decorations (the commemorative medal for the defence of Slovakia Javorina – Orava and the military decoration For Heroism with the label For Merit).<sup>81</sup>

Here the question arises as to what accounted for Čatloš's uncompromising attitude, also in view of the fact that Mach did not directly request Borský's dismissal from the army in his official correspondence. At first sight, the latter is in fact inconsistent with his initial engagement in favour of Borský's request for an exemption. On the other hand, the Minister's decision fully corresponds with the MNO's position on his request for an exemption from the so-called Jewish Code. It is probable that the attitude of the German military authorities in Slovakia also contributed to this uncompromising decision. Nevertheless, the German transport commander Col. Felix Freiherr von Diersburg Roeder paradoxically proposed to keep Borský in state service. According to the official record of the General Staff Col. Štefan Tatarka, he was to claim that if he was released without any material funds, "*he could possibly harm us and the Germans*". However, this procedure was objected by the German military attaché Col. Heinrich Becker.<sup>82</sup> The MNO therefore followed this advice only partially, as already on 1 June Borský was deployed as a civilian worker to assist the railway construction administration in Prešov. The MNO recommended his temporary employment, stating that "*he is a very good former general staff officer who has earned considerable merits in the Slovak Army*".<sup>83</sup> He and his immediate family were saved from deportation only by the aforementioned Constitutional Law 68/1942 Sl. Code on the Deportation of Jews, according to which persons baptised before 14 March 1939 were not to be included in the transports. Additionally, he and his immediate family (his wife and two underage sons) were also protected from deportation by the presidential exemption of 24 July 1942, which, despite the above, he eventually received.<sup>84</sup> It is not entirely clear whether the original request for an exemption for Borský has been withdrawn, or whether it was merely being reconsidered additionally. In any case, as early as 25 April 1942, the Presidential Office asked the MNO to give an urgent opinion (by 27 April) on

<sup>80</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 94 948 confidential, letter from Gen. Čatloš for A. Mach of 4. 4. 1942.

<sup>81</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I. 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 94 995, Borský František, former Col. – return of commemorative medals.

<sup>82</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. 53, sig. 53/42-88/1/11, official record of Lt. Col. Tatarka from the interview with Col. Roeder of 7. 4. 1942.

<sup>83</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, undated manuscript of a letter to the Ministry of Transport and Public Works; VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the record sheet and qualification certificate of F. M. Borský.

<sup>84</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. 53, sig. 53/42 – 88/10/11, Notification of the Office of the President of the Republic for F. Borský of 24. 7. 1942.

Borský's request for an exemption from the provisions of the so-called Jewish Code.<sup>85</sup> The decisive factor for its positive processing was therefore the blessing of the MNO, which finally and surprisingly supported this former officer's request for an exemption. This was despite his initially negative opinion and his subsequent dismissal from the army. It can be assumed that the conscience of the army leaders was "awakened" after all. At this point, even they were probably not indifferent what fate would befall Borský and his family in the face of the ongoing deportations. Therefore, in its opinion, the MNO once again highlighted his merits for the development of the Slovak military transport system, both in terms of organisation and personnel. These were to manifest themselves already during the Hungarian-Slovak armed conflict in March 1939 and subsequently also during the war against Poland in September 1939. The MNO also appreciated his participation in organising the Labour Corps.<sup>86</sup> Eventually, due to the presidential exemption, the MNO also granted Borský a retirement pension (retirement allowance of 17,123 Ks per year and an educational allowance for his son in the amount of 3,000 Ks per year, and from January 1943 also a cost of living allowance of 2,000 Ks per year).<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, his situation deteriorated in January 1943, as he became completely unemployed. In April, he got finally employed as an accountant at the State Land Office, at the Fund for the Administration of Agricultural Property in Piešťany.<sup>88</sup> Here he lived to see the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, in which he took an active part.<sup>89</sup>

In the following months, the list of military salaried employees with presidential exemptions expanded to include at least one additional person with Jewish ancestry. She was a Jewish "mongrel", Sergeant Aviator Fridrich Michal Preis. After completing his pilot training at the Flying School in Trenčianske Biskupice, he was accepted into the enlisted corps of non-commissioned officers on 15 February 1942 and was promoted to sergeant on the same day. Subsequently, he served in Spišská Nová Ves as a pilot of the 2nd Squadron of the Aviation Regiment. In a letter of recommendation from the MNO to the Presidential Office, his evaluation states that "*in military, personal and character terms, he has proven himself to be very good and reliable. With his exemplary conduct and impeccable military behaviour, he gives hope that he will make an exemplary Air Force non-commissioned officer. He also excels professionally in terms of aviation, he is understanding, diligent and proactive.*" Sgt. Preis received his Presidential exemption on 28 September 1942.

This exemption was also received by several civilian employees of the Military Administration. However, the list of persons was not very long, also due to the state-security

<sup>85</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 96 082 conf.

<sup>86</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 96 082, Recommendation signed on behalf of the Minister 1st Class Gen. Anton Pulanich.

<sup>87</sup> VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the record sheet and qualification certificate of F. M. Borský.

<sup>88</sup> After the war was over, on 23 March 1947, as a witness before the National Court in the trial of František Bošňák, Borský himself commented on these circumstances as follows: "I was unemployed from 1 January 1943 to 1 April 1943, since I was dismissed from the civil service. At the intervention from Mr. Ladislav Lipták, former member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Mr. František Bošňák, as the central director of the Fund for the Administration of Agricultural Estates, accepted me very willingly into the service of his office as an accountant, although I explicitly introduced myself to him as a former Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff, persecuted by the regime of that time. He also willingly approved the salary conditions, which actually enabled me to be materially secure with my family until the beginning of the Slovak National Uprising, and at least relatively protected from the worst persecution." SNA, f. Národný súd (National Court), Tnľud 11/45, František Bošňák, box 8, witness statement of František Borský of 23. 3. 1947.

<sup>89</sup> VHÚ Bratislava, Xerox copy of the record sheet and qualification certificate of F. M. Borský.

character of the army, where the presence of Jews as the greatest enemies of the Slovak nation was fundamentally rejected. This is confirmed by the negative opinion of the MNO of March 1942 on the request of the Jewish Central Office, dated 12 December 1941, that the Military Administration employed a number of capable mechanical engineers and technicians of Jewish origin. However, the MNO decided to do so despite the acute shortage of these professions in the army and the initially positive opinion of its Human Resources Department as well as representatives of the automobile administration.<sup>90</sup> Eventually, the commander of the Corps' automobile fleet, Aut. Cent. Anton Melzer, opposed the acceptance of Jewish engineers, despite the lack of his own trained staff. He justified his statement on the ground that his institute *"is of great importance for the motorisation of the army and it is not desirable for an element unreliable for the state to be allowed to look into the smallest details at the SAP"*.<sup>91</sup> In early April 1942, the MNO even ordered the dismissal of all Jewish employees of the Military Administration by 10 April. However, this measure (which was probably related to the start of the Jewish deportations) was revoked for the persons whose momentary indispensability was proven.<sup>92</sup> The aforementioned former Jewish officer Karol Waldmann, working in the Military Medical Depot in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, finally received a presidential exemption.<sup>93</sup> He remained in the army even after the issuance of the so-called Jewish Code on the basis of the ministerial exemption of 27 November 1941 as an irreplaceable civilian employee, which, however, was additionally conditioned by the fulfilment of the aforementioned paragraph 255 of this regulation. The MNO continued to grant an exemption in this case due to a shortage of active duty pharmacy officers. It still valued Waldmann's many years of experience in the field as well as his previous loyalty, even though it suspected him of opportunism on the issue of his conversion. He and his family were to be baptised only a few days after the declaration of independence in March 1939.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, Waldmann received his exemption on 14 August 1942, on the basis of which his employment relationship with the MNO was adjusted.<sup>95</sup> On 30 October 1942, his colleague, the aforementioned Karol Hauser, also received a presidential exemption. Even in his case, the MNO valued his previous long experience in the army at the rank of sergeant and also his temporary indispensability. In his case, the positive opinion of the MNO also referred to the "Aryan" origin of his wife and the Catholic faith of his family, to which he himself had converted in 1919 already.<sup>96</sup> In addition to the two of them, the military administration also employed at least one other Jew – a contract technical officer,

<sup>90</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 222, ser. No. 92 189/conf. II/3 1942, Inclusion of Jewish mechanical engineers into the military administration services.

<sup>91</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 222, ser. No. 1111/conf. 1942, Statement of Cent. Melzer for the Military Administration – Automobile Administration of 4. 3. 1942.

<sup>92</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 222, inv. No. 278, ser. No. 94 973 conf., Jewish employees – dismissal from the military administration services.

<sup>93</sup> Here he served as head of the Pharmaceuticals Department and warehouse technical manager. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 77 002 conf., Statement of the MNO on the request of K. Waldmann for the Presidential Office of 22. 11. 1941.

<sup>94</sup> Idem.

<sup>95</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 29 538, Notification of the Military Health Depot in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš to the Ministry of Defence, Department II/3 of 22. 9. 1942.

<sup>96</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249, ser. No. 108 775/conf., PhMr. Waldmann Karol and Hauser Karol, civ. Contractual employees of VZS – granting of the cost of living allowance; VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 106, inv. No. 130, ser. No. 77 003 conf.

Ing. Ľudovít Fabián, assigned to the State Hydrological and Metrological Institute. He also lived to see the presidential exemption in the end.<sup>97</sup>

According to one of the official documents from 1944, the MNO with the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister's Office protected a total of 57 (indirectly 37) persons.<sup>98</sup> In addition to the aforementioned employees of the military administration, it is also necessary to include several dozen temporarily irreplaceable specialists (60 people in September 1943), who were retained by the MNO after the Jews with the actual labour duty were transferred from the VI Labour Battalion under the Ministry of the Interior at the turn of May and June 1943. In their case, however, they were not persons exempted from the provisions of the so-called Jewish Code.<sup>99</sup> They were granted a certain monthly premium and the essentials connected with the provision of the staff. However, the issue of their medical care, disability and old-age provision has never been resolved.<sup>100</sup> As far as their numbers are concerned, they did not change much even in the later period. At the turn of May and June 1944, the National Defence (Národnej obrany – NO) Labour Corps, along with other branches of the army, registered 58 such employees.<sup>101</sup> According to a report by the head of the budget department of the MNO of 24 August 1944, a total of 40 “non-Aryan civilian employees” were working for the Labour Corps, and another 17 such persons were registered by the Military Administration.<sup>102</sup> On 1 June 1944, the Ministry of the Interior, with the approval of the Supreme Council for the Defence of the State, was also to assign 30 “non-Aryan specialist doctors” to the Medical Department of the Military Administration. They were subsequently to be redistributed to Military Hospitals and Institutes and have the status of civilian employees with a monthly salary of 1,500 Ks. However, they could only hold auxiliary and ancillary functions. In addition, they were to be under scrutiny by their superiors as well as intelligence officers on suspicion of committing anti-state activities.<sup>103</sup> However, the extent to which this measure has actually been implemented is questionable.

Until the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, nothing changed in the employment of these persons. However, as of 30 August, 51 of them were already considered missing. It can be therefore assumed that most of them deserted to insurgent territory. The remaining five

<sup>97</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, Inv. No. 249, to ser. No. 94 964 – II/3, transcript of the decision of the Office of the President of the Republic on the exemption from the so-called Jewish Code for Ľ. Fabian, his son and wife, of 1 April 1942.

<sup>98</sup> NIŽŇANSKÝ, Eduard – KAMENEC, Ivan. *Holokaust na Slovensku 2. Prezident, vláda, Snem SR a Štátna rada o židovskej otázke (1939 – 1945). Dokumenty [Holocaust in Slovakia 2. The President, the Government, the Slovak Parliament and the State Council on the Jewish Question (1939–1945). Documents]* Bratislava : Dokumentačné stredisko holokaustu 2003, doc. 124, p. 297.

<sup>99</sup> A total of 49 Jews were originally retained as civilian employees of the military administration for the needs of the MNO. In September 1943, there were already 60 of them. These were mostly doctors and dental technicians, but also university graduates in various technical fields. For more see: BAKA, I. VI Labour Battalion of the MNO Labour Corps and the deportation of Jews in 1942. In *Vojenská história*, year 26, 2022, vol. 2, p. 121-122.

<sup>100</sup> According to the report of the Intendancy of the Labour Corps of the NO in May 1944, the question of the treatment of Jewish civilian employees was dealt with in the same way as in the case of the men in the military infirmaries. VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, ser. No. 415 741, Social insurance of Jewish employees – report.

<sup>101</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, ser. No. 415 741, Report of the MNO Intendancy in Trenčín, undated.

<sup>102</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, Head of the MNO Budget Department to the Labour Corps Headquarters, 24. 8. 1944.

<sup>103</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, ser. No. 421679, Chief Medical Officer of the Military Health Administration for the NO Labour Corps Administration of ? 5. 1944.



persons were left to the discretion of the Labour Corps.<sup>104</sup> As of 30 October, they were finally handed over to the Ministry of Interior as “unnecessary”. Therefore, their further fate is unknown.<sup>105</sup> However, they were most probably victims of the second stage of deportations to Nazi concentration camps. However, one must also consider the Jews temporarily employed in enterprises important for the defence of the state. The opinion of the MNO Military Administration, which kept records of all such enterprises, was also important in the decision to employ them on the grounds of their indispensability.<sup>106</sup> According to the report of the Labour Corps Headquarters of 29 October 1942 to the Cabinet of the Minister of National Defence, a total of 23 persons of Jewish origin worked in enterprises important for the defence of the state in individual districts, 7 of whom worked directly in MNO enterprises.<sup>107</sup>

It can be stated that in all the requests for exemption researched above, the President of the Republic has ruled in the affirmative. This was due to the fact that the applicants fell into the category of persons to whom he granted the most exemptions. This included mainly converts and persons who already had a work exemption from the relevant ministry as indispensable specialists. The MNO’s application of strictly professional criteria in assessing applications from persons of Jewish origin is confirmed by its initially negative opinion on the exemption in the case of Col. Borský. This is consistent with a number of other cases (also from the past) where its position was to refuse a request for an exemption from the anti-Jewish regulations. Since 1939, various persons who had come into contact with the army in the past and referred directly or indirectly to their merits in their pleadings also contacted the MNO.<sup>108</sup>

The importance of presidential exemptions logically increased after the beginning of the transports of Jews at the end of March 1942. In fact, the Ministry of the Interior had already issued a decree exempting certain persons from deportation before they had started, including their holders. However, this regulation applied, among others, to Jews married to a non-Jew baptised before 10 September 1941, Jews baptised before that date, or Jews awaiting a decision on the granting of an exemption.<sup>109</sup> From the outset, however, the deportations constituted a violent action that had no legal basis. Therefore, even the holders of exemptions were sometimes included in the transports.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the situation became clearer for the group in question only after the adoption of Constitutional Law No. 68/1942 Sl. Code on the eviction of Jews of 15 May 1942, which protected certain groups of

<sup>104</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, ser. No. 422 816, Jewish workers of the Ministry of Interior – hand-over.

<sup>105</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. PZNO, box 141, inv. No. 143, ser. No. 422 608, Jewish civilian employees, hand-over to the Ministry of Interior; ser. No. 415 884, Social insurance of Jewish employees – inquiry.

<sup>106</sup> In June 1943, however, the MNO complained to the Ministry of the Interior that these enterprises were not obliged to inform the Military Administration of the employment of Jews without prior request. How the issue was resolved, however, is unclear. VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939–1945, Confidential files Part II 1943–1945, box 343.

<sup>107</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. 53, sig. 53/42 – 88/1/11, report of the Labour Corps Headquarters of 29. 10. 1942; f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 222, inv. No. 278, ser. No. 94 973, Jewish employees – dismissal from the military administration services.

<sup>108</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. MNO 1939 – 1945, Confidential files Part I 1940–1942, box 198, inv. No. 249; For more see: JANEČOVÁ, Tamara. *Ľudia píšú Čatlošovi* (Prosobpisy Židov adresované Ministerstvu národnej obrany v rokoch 1939 – 1942). [People write to Čatloš (Petitions of Jews addressed to the Ministry of National Defence in 1939–1942).] In *Historický časopis*, year 69, 2021, vol. 2, p. 345–369.

<sup>109</sup> NIŽŇANSKÝ, E. *Nacizmus, holokaust, slovenský štát*. [Nazism, Holocaust, Slovak State.] Bratislava : Kalligram 2010, p. 141.

<sup>110</sup> For more see: KAMENEC, I. *Po stopách tragédie*. [In the Footsteps of a Tragedy.] Bratislava : Archa 1991, p. 173.

the population from deportation. Article 2 in paragraph 1a, also protected at least the two civilian employees of the MNO mentioned above (both Waldmann and Hauser), as well as former Lt. Col. Borský, since according to its wording, the deportations did not apply to Jews who had become members of a Christian denomination before 14 March 1939. Under this paragraph of Article 2, in addition to the spouse and minor children of such persons, nor their parents could have been evicted.<sup>111</sup>

In the spring of 1943, the “quaint” case of Infantry Lt. Jozef Moreň surfaced. Additionally, it was found that this officer also fell into the category of a Jewish mongrel within the meaning of Article 2 (b) of Government Decree No. 198/1941 Sl. Code (he was descended from a Jewish grandparent by race). Therefore, he was relieved of his acquired rank and dismissed from active military service on 15 May 1943. His benefits were also stopped at the end of May. The case of this officer was all the more interesting because in November 1939 he officially changed his original name Morgenstern. In 1939–1940, he also served for a time as an aide to the Minister of National Defence himself, commander of the MNO Auxiliary Company, as well as a liaison officer to the German Military Mission.<sup>112</sup> To what extent this assignment helped him avoid the effects of anti-Jewish discriminatory measures, however, remains unclear.

As for the further fates of the persons in question, some, as already indicated in the case of F. Borský and J. Lord were involved in the Slovak National Uprising.<sup>113</sup> At least Staff Sergeant Viliam Sokol<sup>114</sup>, also his brother Infantry Cent. Jozef Sokol<sup>115</sup> and Captain Fridrich,

<sup>111</sup> For more see: NIŽŇANSKÝ, E. *Deportácie Židov zo Slovenska v roku 1942 a prijatie ústavného zákona č. 68/1942 [Deportation of Jews from Slovakia in 1942 and adoption of Constitutional Law No. 68/1942]*, ref., p. 85-156.

<sup>112</sup> VHA Bratislava, f. Domáce rozkazy a dôverné domáce rozkazy MNO 1939 – 1945 (Domestic orders and confidential domestic orders of the MNO 1939–1945), box 1, 2; f. MNO – HVV, 1939 – 1940, box 127, ser. No. 192.018/Personal 1940, box 81, ser. No. 212.566 conf./personal 1939.

<sup>113</sup> Initially, Borský worked within the 1st Czechoslovak Partisan Brigade of M. R. Štefánik, later at the headquarters of the 1st Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia (from 1 October 1944 served as the deputy head of the 4th Department of the Headquarters). After the suppression of the Uprising, he fought as a partisan in the mountains until April 1945. Subsequently, he was recruited into the Czechoslovak Army, where he was promoted to General Staff Col. on 1 June 1945 and to Brigadier General in February 1947. BYSTRICKÝ, Jozef. Borský, František Milan. In CSÉFALVAY, František and col. *Vojenské osobnosti dejín Slovenska 1939 – 1945. [Military Personalities in Slovak History 1939–1945]* Bratislava : Vojenský historický ústav, 2013, p. 26-27; MASKALÍK, Alex. *Elita armády: československá vojenská generalita 1918 – 1992. [The Army Elite: Czechoslovak Military Generality 1918–1992]* Košice : HWSK, 2012, p. 115. We learn about his further fate from his grandson's narration: “In 1950 he was tried by the Communists in a fabricated trial. They couldn't prove anything to him, but they forced him to leave his job and the army, which marked him deeply. He lived quietly in the village of Chrástne near Košice. He worked as a farmer in a co-operative. He died in Nitra in 1986.” BORSKÝ, Peter – VRÁBEL, Viktor. *Partizánske hnutie v okolitých lesoch. (Partisan Movement in the Neighbouring Woods.)* František Milan Borský. Available on the Banka municipality website: <<https://www.obecbanka.sk/navstevnik/zaujímavost/odboj-na-banke/>>.

<sup>114</sup> From October 1941, he served with Artillery Regiment 11 in Žilina. From October 1942 to the end of 1943 he was on the Eastern Front. As a member of the Žilina Garrison he was involved in the fighting for the Strečno gorge. After the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising he worked in a Partisan unit, after crossing the front he was recruited into the Czechoslovak Army. In 1957, he achieved the rank of colonel. Vojenský archív – Centrálna registratúra (Military Archive – Central Registry) Trnava, Sheet record of Viliam Sokol.

<sup>115</sup> Before the Uprising, he served as deputy commander of Military Hospital 1 and participated in its preparation. He went to the Uprising despite the disarmament of the Bratislava Garrison. Here he served at the headquarters of the VI. Tactical Group as the head of the Intelligence Department. After suppression thereof, he was captured in the mountains in early November. Until mid-April 1945 he was in German prison camps. After war, he served in the CS Army and in October 1949, he achieved the ranking of professional Inf. Mjr. Department of Care for War Veterans and Military Pensioners of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, No. 26031 C; VHA Praha, Qualification certificate of Jozef Sokol.

Michal Preis (Bedrich Potocký after his name change) were active in the fight against the German occupiers.<sup>116</sup> All five also served in the Czechoslovak Army after the war. Pavol Plechlo was also enlisted, despite his non-participation in the Uprising. He was promoted to Economic Service Lieutenant in 1946 and retired from the Army in 1953 with the rank of Capt.<sup>117</sup> So far, we did not manage to find out the fates of other persons.

I. BAKA – T. JANECOVÁ: “UNRELIABLE ELEMENTS”.  
PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS OF JEWISH ORIGIN IN THE SLOVAK ARMY  
AFTER 1939

The topic of persecution and discrimination of Jews in relation to the armed forces in Slovakia after 1939 has already been the focus of several papers. Logically, most of the attention was paid to the VI Labour Battalion of the Labour Corps of the Ministry of National Defence (MNO), where Jews (as well as Roma) included in the actual labour duty were concentrated in 1941 – 1943.

However, several of the aspects of this topic have not received the historians' interest to this day. Nor has more attention been paid to the status of persons who, even after dismissal of the Jews from the army in January 1940 remained on the basis of an exemption as professional soldiers or worked as civilian employees in the MNO and were directly or indirectly exposed to the consequences of the anti-Jewish legal norms. This did not only concern the Jews themselves (only one of whom eventually served in the army on the basis of an exception), but also the category of so-called Jewish mongrels and, last but not least, the “Aryans” themselves, whose wives, however, were of Jewish origin. In the study, we focus on the first two categories of persons. We are not aiming merely at descriptive interpretation of the legislative and legal norms permitting the exclusion of Jews from the army. We would also like to document their reactions, which represented a desperate effort to keep their place in the army. For them, this was often the only option of livelihood in their given situation, and at the same time an opportunity for an exemption from discriminatory and inhumane anti-Jewish legislation. These reactions have been preserved in the form of various supplications and requests. Those represented (from their authors' point of view) an extremely humiliating and desperate effort in every respect to conform to the demands of the regime derived from the official anti-Jewish stereotypes of the propaganda of the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party. The latter regarded the Jews as a hostile element. The text

<sup>116</sup> From February 1942, he worked as a pilot of Squadron 2 in Spišská Nová Ves, from summer to October 1942 he participated in providing courier service between Bratislava and Slovak troops on the eastern front. In the second half of 1943, he trained with Bomber Squadron 41 in Saki, Crimea. He was promoted to professional sergeant on 15 February 1944. After the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising, he served as a member of a combined squadron of the insurgent army. In the night from 7 to 8 October 1944 he was in a group of Slovak airmen from the insurgent territory moved to the Soviet side. Here, as a member of the Czechoslovak Air Group in Przemyśl, he completed his training on Soviet aircrafts. In 1945, he participated in the liberation of Czechoslovakia as a member of the 1st Czechoslovak Mixed Air Division in the USSR. Department of Care for War Veterans and Military Pensioners of the SR Ministry of Defence, Record Sheet of Bedrich Potocký; ŠUMICHRASŤ, Peter – KLABNÍK, Viliam. *Slovenské letectvo 1939 – 1944. 2. diel. [Slovak Air Force 1939–1944. Vol. 2]* Bratislava : Magnet Press Slovakia, 2000, p. 117-122.

<sup>117</sup> In the Slovak Army, he worked at the MNO Intendancy in Bratislava. On 1 January 1943, he was promoted to the rank of Flag-bearer – Warrant Officer, on 1 January 1944 to Staff Warrant Officer and on 1 January 1945 to officer's Deputy Sergeant Major. Before the Uprising, he served in Trenčín, where his office was evacuated. In his own words, he did not take part in the Uprising because of the lack of information about its outbreak and subsequently because of the arrival of the Germans. Vojenský archív – Centrálna registratúra (Military Archive – Central Registry) Trnava, Sheet record of Pavel Plechlo.

pays special attention to the personality of František M. Borský, whose fate in the Slovak Army has not yet been further examined. He was the only officer designated by the period legislation as a Jew who could remain in the Slovak Army after 1940. In 1939, he served as railway line commander, proving indispensable during the war against Poland. His conversion to the Czechoslovak Church in April 1938, or to the Evangelical Church in September 1939, also helped him. On 1 July 1940, he even lived to see the promotion to General Staff Col. As early as in February 1941, he was “discarded” to the post of administrator of the office of the Labour Corps Administration. Eventually, he was discharged from the army (like other Jews) without retaining the ranks he had acquired. In April 1942, he was punished this way for intervening on behalf of his own sister-in-law, who was included in a Jewish transport. However, his further stay in the army was still questionable, as the MNO did not consider him necessary anymore and at the end of 1941 did not support his request for exemption from the so-called Jewish Code. He and his immediate family were saved from deportation only by the aforementioned Constitutional Law 68/1942 Sl. Code on the Deportation of Jews, according to which persons baptised before 14 March 1939 were not to be included in the transports. Additionally, he and his immediate family were also protected from deportation by a presidential exemption of 24 July 1942. Thanks to his, he also avoided the humiliating provisions of the so-called Jewish Code. In the end, an additional recommendation from the MNO, which at least acknowledged his merits, also helped him.

I. BAKA – T. JANECOVÁ: „UNZUVERLÄSSIGE ELEMENTE“.  
BERUFSSOLDATEN JÜDISCHER HERKUNFT IN DER SLOWAKISCHEN ARMEE  
NACH 1939

Die Frage der Verfolgung und Diskriminierung von Juden im Zusammenhang mit der Wehrmacht in der Slowakei nach 1939 wurde bereits in mehreren Arbeiten behandelt. Logischerweise wurde die größte Aufmerksamkeit dem VI. Arbeitsbataillon des Arbeitskorps des Ministeriums für nationale Verteidigung (MNO) gewidmet, in dem in den Jahren 1941 – 1943 Juden (aber auch Roma) zum Arbeitsdienst eingeteilt waren.

Mehrere Aspekte dieser Problematik wecken jedoch bis heute nicht das Interesse der Historiker. Auch der Status derjenigen, die auch nach der Entlassung der Juden aus der Armee im Januar 1940 aufgrund von Ausnahmeregelungen als Berufssoldaten in den Reihen der Armee verblieben oder als Zivilangestellte im MNO arbeiteten und direkt oder indirekt den Folgen der antijüdischen Rechtsnormen ausgesetzt waren, wurde keine größere Beachtung geschenkt. Es handelte sich dabei nicht nur um die Juden selbst (von denen letztlich nur einer aufgrund einer Ausnahmegenehmigung in der Armee diente), sondern auch um die Kategorie der sogenannten jüdischen Mischlinge und nicht zuletzt um die „Arier“ selbst, deren Ehefrauen jedoch jüdischer Herkunft waren. In dieser Studie konzentrieren wir uns auf die ersten zwei Kategorien von Personen. Unser Ziel ist nicht nur eine deskriptive Auslegung der legislativ-rechtlichen Normen, die den Ausschluss der Juden aus der Armee ermöglichten. Wir wollen auch ihre Reaktionen dokumentieren, die einen verzweiferten Versuch darstellten, ihren Platz in der Armee zu behalten. Für sie war dies oft die einzige Möglichkeit, ihren Lebensunterhalt zu bestreiten, und gleichzeitig die Möglichkeit, eine Ausnahmegenehmigung von der diskriminierenden und unmenschlichen antijüdischen Gesetzgebung zu erhalten. Diese Reaktionen blieben in Form von verschiedenen Bittschriften und Ersuchen erhalten. Sie stellten (aus der Sicht ihrer Verfasser) ein äußerst demütigendes und verzweifertes Bemühen dar, in jeder Hinsicht den Forderungen des Regimes zu entsprechen, die von den offiziellen antijüdischen Stereotypen der Volkspropaganda ausgehend entstanden. Die Propaganda betrachtete die Juden nämlich



als ein feindliches Element. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird im Text der Persönlichkeit von František M. Borský gewidmet, dessen Schicksal in der slowakischen Armee noch nicht näher bearbeitet wurde. Er war nämlich der einzige Offizier, der nach der damaligen Gesetzgebung als Jude bezeichnet wurde und auch nach 1940 in der slowakischen Armee bleiben konnte. Im Jahr 1939 diente er als Eisenbahn-Kommandant und erwies sich während des Krieges gegen Polen als unentbehrlich. Dazu trug auch sein Übertritt zur Tschechoslowakischen Kirche im April 1938, bzw. zur Evangelischen Kirche A. B. im September 1939 bei. Am 1. Juli 1940 erhielt er sogar eine Beförderung zum Oberst i Gst. Bereits im Februar 1941 wurde er jedoch auf den Posten des Büroleiters der Verwaltung des Arbeitskorps „versetzt“. Auch er wurde schließlich aus der Armee entlassen, und zwar (wie die anderen Juden) ohne die erworbenen Dienstgrade behalten zu können. Im April 1942 wurde er auf diese Weise bestraft, weil er sich für seine eigene Schwägerin einsetzte, die in einen Judentransport aufgenommen wurde. Sein weiterer Verbleib in der Armee war jedoch fraglich, da das MNO ihn nicht mehr für notwendig erachtete und seinen Antrag auf eine Ausnahme vom sogenannten Judenkodex bereits Ende 1941 nicht unterstützte. Er und seine unmittelbare Familie wurden nur durch das Verfassungsgesetz 68/1942 des slowakischen Gesetzbuchs über die Aussiedlung der Juden vor der Deportation bewahrt, das unter anderem vorsah, dass Personen, die spätestens bis zum 14. März 1939 getauft worden waren, nicht in die Transporte einbezogen werden sollten. Zusätzlich waren er und seine unmittelbare Familie auch durch eine präsidiale Ausnahme vom 24. Juli 1942 vor der Deportation geschützt. Dadurch konnte er jedoch auch die demütigenden Bestimmungen des sogenannten Judenkodex vermeiden. Letztlich half ihm auch die zusätzliche Empfehlung des MNO, das seine Verdienste zumindest auf diese Weise honorierte.

#### I. BAKA – T. JANECOVÁ: „NESPOĽAHLIVÉ ŽIVLY“. VOJACI Z POVOLANIA SO ŽIDOVSKÝM PÔVODOM V SLOVENSKEJ ARMÁDE PO ROKU 1939

Problematika perzekúcie a diskriminácie Židov vo vzťahu k brannej moci na Slovensku po roku 1939 už bola predmetom viacerých prác. Najväčšia pozornosť sa logicky venovala VI. robotnému práporu Pracovného zboru Ministerstva národnej obrany (MNO), kde boli v rokoch 1941 – 1943 koncentrovaní Židia (ale aj Rómovia) prezenčnej pracovnej povinnosti.

Viaceré aspekty tejto problematiky sa však dodnes nestretli so záujmom historikov. Väčšia pozornosť nebola venovaná ani postaveniu osôb, ktoré aj po prepustení Židov z armády v januári 1940 zostali vďaka výnimkám v jej radoch ako vojaci z povolania alebo pracovali ako civilní zamestnanci na MNO a priamo či nepriamo boli vystavení dôsledkom protizidovských právnych noriem. Nešlo pritom len o samotných Židov (z ktorých nakoniec v armáde na základe výnimky pôsobil len jeden), ale tiež o kategóriu tzv. židovských miešancov a v neposlednom rade aj o samotných „árijských“, ktorých manželky však mali židovský pôvod. V štúdiu sa zameriavame na prvé dve kategórie osôb. Naším cieľom nie je len deskriptívny výklad legislatívno-právnych noriem umožňujúcich vyradenie Židov z armády. Chceme tiež zdokumentovať aj ich reakcie, ktoré predstavovali zúfalú snahu udržať si miesto v armáde. To pre nich v danej situácii predstavovalo často jedinou možnosť ich živobytia, a zároveň možnosť pre udelenie výnimky z diskriminačnej a nehumánnej protizidovskej legislatívy. Tieto reakcie sa zachovali v podobe rôznych prosbopisov a žiadostí. Tie predstavovali (z pohľadu ich autorov) nesmierne ponížujúcu a zúfalú snahu prispôbiť sa v každom ohľade požiadavkám režimu odvodzovaným od oficiálnych protizidovských stereotypov ľudáckej propagandy. Tá totiž Židov považovala za nepriateľský živý. Osobitná pozornosť sa v texte venuje osobnosti Františka M. Borského, ktorého osudy v slovenskej armáde doteraz neboli bližšie spracované. Bol to pritom jediný dôstojník označený dobovou

legislatívou za Žida, ktorý mohol aj po roku 1940 zostať v slovenskej armáde. V roku 1939 pôsobil vo funkcii železničného traťového veliteľa, pričom ako nenahraditeľný sa ukázal počas vojny proti Poľsku. Aj jemu pomohlo konvertovanie k Cirkvi československej v apríli 1938, resp. evanjelickej a. v. v septembri 1939. 1. júla 1940 sa dokonca dočkal povýšenia na pplk. gšt. Už vo februári 1941 však bol „odložený“ na miesto správcu kancelárie Správy Pracovného zboru. Z armády bol nakoniec aj on prepustený a to (rovnako ako ostatní Židia) bez ponechania nadobudnutých hodností. V apríli 1942 bol takto potrestaný za intervenciu v prospech vlastnej švagrinej zaradenej do židovského transportu. Jeho ďalšie zotrvanie v armáde však bolo aj tak otáznne, keďže MNO ho už nepovažovalo za potrebného a už koncom roka 1941 nepodporilo jeho žiadosť o výnimku spod tzv. židovského kódexu. Pred deportáciou ho spolu s najbližšou rodinou zachránil až ústavný zákon 68/1942 Sl. z. o vysťahovaní Židov, podľa ktorého sa do transportov nemali zaraďovať okrem iných osoby pokrstené najneskoršie do 14. marca 1939. Dodatočne ho spolu s najbližšou rodinou pred deportáciami chránila tiež prezidentská výnimka z 24. júla 1942. Vďaka nej sa však vyhol tiež ponižujúcim ustanoveniam tzv. židovského kódexu. Pomohlo mu pritom nakoniec aj dodatočné odporúčenie MNO, ktoré aspoň takto ocenilo jeho zásluhy.

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PhDr. Igor BAKA, PhD.

Vojenský historický ústav (The Institute of Military History), Krajná 27, 821 04 Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Email: igorbaka@centrum.sk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9870-1232>

Mgr. Tamara JANECOVÁ, PhD.

Trnavská univerzita v Trnave, Pedagogická fakulta (University of Trnava in Trnava, Faculty of Education), Priemyselná 4, 918 43 Trnava, Slovak Republic

Email: tamara.janecova@truni.sk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8873-6965>