

SUMMARIES

RETURN TO NOUGHT

Leo Herrmann's report on his visit to Prague and the situation of the Jews
in Czechoslovakia in autumn 1945

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Little first-hand information has been published about the situation of the Jews in East Central Europe after World War II. For Czechoslovakia, this gap could be partly filled in by the diary notes of Leo Herrmann, General Secretary of the Palestine Settlement Fund, who visited Prague in autumn 1945. His day to day impressions of the post-Holocaust situation in the Bohemian Lands and incidentally also in Slovakia give a moving account of the devastation and destruction of Jewish culture and social life, of the mental and psychical effects that the planned mass murder and the frightful conditions in concentration camps and ghettos had on those who survived, and, last not least, of the post-war anti-Semitism in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, Herrmann came to Prague with a view to urging the Czechoslovak Government to oppose the new wave of anti-Semitism; on the other hand he initiated preparations for the emigration of the remnants of the Holocaust to Palestine, which, as it seemed to many Czechoslovak Jews, was the only place in the world for Jews to live in freedom and dignity.