

Double Refugee: From the White Army to the Harvard University

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Abstract

Samuel Jefimovich Mangeim was born in Gomel in July of 1897. The story of his life is at least unusual. He was a Jew, Belarusian and a democrat. Three words that determined his uneasy destiny and each one of them could have been fatal for him. The story began on the Russian Front of the WWI. Samuel was enlisted in 1915 and fought for two years. After the October Revolution he took part in the Russian Civil War. Unfortunately, he was on the „wrong“ side – the White Army. After the victory of the Bolshevik Red Army he became undesirable and had to run away from Russia very quickly. He wore two shirts, two pairs of trousers and a coat, owning nothing more. Belarus had just lost the fight for independence and was engulfed by Poland and Russia. Homecoming was impossible. Meet Samuel Mangeim, a refugee from bolshevism. He decided to go to the capital city of Czechoslovakia – Prague. That was a good choice for two reasons. 1. There was a big and nationally varied Jewish community (32000 persons) and only moderate antisemitism. [7] 2. Czechoslovak government refused to recognize the violent breakdown of Belarus. Russian and Belarusian refugees were widely accepted and offered scholarship programs. [8] Samuel won a scholarship and graduated at the Charles University in 1927. He became a Czechoslovak citizen and accepted a Czech name. Meet MUDr. Jiří Mangeim, a dentist in Prague. MUDr. Jiří Mangeim was very successful and also thoughtful. When the Nazis took control over Germany and started attacking Czechoslovakia, he caught his chance and applied for emigration passport to the USA. He embarked on the T.S.S. Statendam in October of 1938, only a few days after the Munich Agreement that ended the existence of Czechoslovakia as it was. Many of his colleagues were later deported to concentration camps and murdered. Meet Dr. Jiri Mangeim, a refugee from Nazism. He was actually escaping from two deadly dangers. One of them was Hitler's Germany and another one appeared in 1948. The new Czechoslovak government was fully devoted to Stalin. Belarusian survivors of the WWII were deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship and then passed to Moscow. [8] But Dr. Jiri Mangeim arrived safely to the USA and was accepted again. He naturalized himself as George Mangeim and decided to supplement his education at the Harvard University. Then he got married and founded a family. Dr. George Mangeim died in 1959. Where can his name be found? Neither between the victims of the WWI nor between the victims of holocaust. Nor was it forgotten like many names of the executed officers of the White Army. It's engraved on the memorial wall of Temple Israel Congregation on Staten Island. R.I.P

Keywords: Refugee, World War I, Nazism, Russian Civil War, White Army, Harvard University, Charles University, Prague, Gomel, New York

Acknowledgements: I'd like to thank my supervisor prof. Petr Svobodný for constant support and advice.

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