

## Kzasov, Dimo

Dimo Kazasov was a prominent parliamentarian who decided to try to prevent the deportation of the Bulgarian Jews. He did this primarily by stirring large sections of the public to rise up against the persecution of Jews. Kazasov was a publicist and the editor of Bulgaria's largest newspaper. Between 1918 and 1935, with brief interludes, he had been a representative in Bulgaria's assembly, until the democracy became a dictatorship.

In 1940, discussions began regarding "the law for the protection of the nation" - an imitation of Germany's anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws. Kazasov wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister, copies of which were sent to the king and to the legislative assembly: "You have fallen low! In the past you fought at international conferences for the rights of Bulgarian minorities to live in peace in their countries of residence. And now you attack the Jewish minority in your own country. In so doing, you dishonor the entire Bulgarian People. 'The law for the protection of the nation' is a disgrace. You are attacking a minority which lives among us and which has sacrificed itself for this country. How dare you place them outside of the law? Whom are you trying to buy with the lies you are spreading regarding the riches which the Jews have amassed? This is not Jewish money, but Bulgarian money, since they are a part of the Bulgarian People. You have but one means by which to cover up your deceit - the whip and the censor. But the truth - whether you like it or not - will win..."

The letter shocked the regime. Kazasov was arrested by the political police. He was imprisoned for a number of days, but his standing and popularity prevented the authorities from extending his detention. He was explicitly warned that if he should again intervene on behalf of the Jews, he would be sent along with them to a concentration camp. His letter, however, had caused a chain reaction. Now other individuals and organizations no longer hesitated to publicize their opposition. Kazasov himself remained undeterred and did not give in to threats. He took advantage of every opportunity and every medium to protest the persecution of the Jews. When expulsions of Jews to the rural regions began, Kazasov took a further risk and hid the leader of the Jewish community and two other Jewish leaders. In late 1943 Kazasov

went underground, from where he continued to write pamphlets against the persecution of Jews.