II. WESTERN EUROPE

By Milton Himmelfarb*

1. Germany and Austria

The history of the Jews of Germany and Austria in 1943-44 was relatively barren even of chronicles of torture and persecution; there were few Jews left to torture and persecute. Some Nazis were worried about their almost total disappearance. In November, 1943, Gauleiter Sauckel of Thuringia urged teachers to make a special effort to keep alive hatred of the Jews among the German youth. "At present," he said, "youth is growing up without knowing the Jews from its own experience. The coming generations must understand our hatred of the Jews and pass it on, so that hundreds of thousands of German soldiers will not have died in vain." In July, 1943, it was learned in Geneva that 18,000 persons considered Jews by the Nazis, with Aryan husbands or wives, were still living in Berlin and working on suburban farms. In November, a Swedish traveler estimated that there were about 15,000 Jews left in Germany. In January, 1944, the Berlin correspondent of the Swedish Sydsvenska Dagbladet reported that Jews could no longer be seen in the streets of Berlin. When he asked the German authorities why persons wearing the "Jew badge" had not been seen recently, he was told that some stayed indoors as much as possible, while others "have become more cheeky and simply remove the Stars of David, thinking that the authorities are too busy for such details." Actually, said the Swedish correspondent, the official explanations were lies, and when officials were drunk and indiscreet he heard "the most gruesome revelations regarding the liquidation of the Jews." In June, 1944, the Swedish Dagens Nyheter reported about a thousand Jews left in Austria, either persons over seventy years old or orphans under fourteen. The Gestapo was represented as believing that there were in addition about five to seven thousand Jews in Austria,

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against whom it was difficult to proceed because they were all in possession of documents showing they had been bombed-out in Germany or were Fascists from the Southern Tyrol.

In July, 1943, according to private advices reaching the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, all remaining Jews were banished from Munich and Cologne to internment in Terezin, Czechoslovakia. They numbered only a few hundred, and had not been previously deported because of age or infirmity. When the Nazis came into power, in 1933, there were about 10,000 Jews in Munich, of which the Jewish community dated back to the thirteenth century, and about 19,000 in Cologne, in which the community was flourishing under the Romans. It was also learned, in July, 1943, that the last 400 Jews in Hamburg, another great name among European Jewish communities, had been deported to Poland. During the incessant and deadly Allied air attacks on that port, Jews had not been admitted into any air-raid shelter.

A month later the Manchester Evening Chronicle reported the macabre fate of another group of refugees from Hamburg. These were "Aryan" evacuees from that city, sent on to make their homes in Lwow after having been bombed-out in Hamburg. Zealous Gestapo guards at the Lwow gas chambers for the extermination of Jews, before their mistake could be rectified, seized, stripped and executed the passengers on the incoming train.

The deepening numerical insignificance of German Jewry did not prevent the ponderous apparatus of the German State from continuing concern with its legal status. The official Reichsgesetzblatt of July 2, 1943, published the Thirteenth Order Supplementing the Citizenship Law of April 1, 1943, over the signatures of Minister of the Interior Frick, head of the Party Chancellery Bormann, Minister of Finance von Krosigk and Minister of Justice Thierack. This order was concerned mostly with establishing procedure by which the property of Jews would go to the German State upon their death, but the first clause simply removed Jews from the jurisdiction of the courts, leaving it to the police to determine their treatment as they saw fit.

According to a July, 1943, report of the Svenska Dagbladet, the status of "half-Jews" in Germany was becoming pre-
carious. They were no longer being admitted to schools above the secondary level; some were forbidden by local authorities to marry "Aryans"; they were being dismissed from many business firms which had been classified as "model works"; and rumors were rife that they would soon be ordered to wear the "Jew badge" and to leave posts of any consequence in which they might be employed. Die Wehrmacht, the army's mouthpiece, opposed any change in the status of "half-Jews," particularly their being declared ineligible for military service.

According to a statement by The Very Rev. Paul Vogt, head of the Zurich Flüchtlingshilfe, who made a thorough and careful examination of the history of those camps, between April 1942 and April 1944 two "model extermination camps for Jews" in Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau, Upper Silesia, were the scene of the extermination of 1,715,000 Jews. Pastor Vogt pointed out that his total included neither those killed in other extermination centers and in other ways, nor Hungarian Jews, the last to be attacked by the Nazis. The Czechoslovak government-in-exile published a similar report a few days later.

On several occasions German propaganda made interesting departures from its usual treatment of the Jewish theme. A German radio station, probably in Greece, was said in January, 1944, to be operating under the name of "Jewish Freedom Station," and to be directing broadcasts to Palestine urging the Jews to attack the "Arab terrorists." Dr. Goebbels's motive was clear enough once one had recovered sufficiently from the shock of learning of a Nazi "Jewish Freedom Station."

In October, 1943, a representative of the German Foreign Office made a declaration on German policy with respect to the Jews which showed that a case for the defense was beginning to be prepared against the day of Germany's defeat. The new line was that Jews were made to suffer not because of their "race" but because of their enmity to Germany. The German government had actually been very patient in reacting to Jewish enmity, which had been responsible for Germany's defeat in 1918. The boycott of German goods launched by the Jews in 1933, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann's "Jewish declaration of war" against Germany
given to Great Britain on September 3, 1939, justified Germany's "retaliation." Germany had encouraged emigration by Jews for many years until 1940, when she had to discontinue it because the Jews revealed her military secrets to her enemies. Only afterward, in September, 1941, was wearing the "Jew badge" made compulsory. The ghettos of Eastern Europe were in reality "dwelling quarters in which Jews enjoyed self-rule." Occasionally the German army had to attack these quarters because the hostile Jews converted them into centers of espionage and military operations. The recent complete elimination of the Jews from Denmark was necessary because they were a constant menace to Germany's interests.

2. France

Metropolitan France

The year 1943-44 was a part of the period inaugurated in August, 1942, when the deportations en masse began to Poland, and November, 1942, when the Germans countered the Allied landings in North Africa by abolishing the distinction between the "Occupied" and "Unoccupied" zones. It was a year which saw the end of Italian occupation in the southeast, its replacement by German occupation, and an immediate drastic deterioration in conditions for the not inconsiderable number of Jews who had made their way thither since June 1940.

The Swiss and Italian borders were carefully watched to prevent the escape of Jewish and non-Jewish fugitives from the Nazi terror, of whom a number did succeed in escaping. Gestapo raids in the cities drove many to seek refuge in the countryside. Deportations took place from Nice, Bayonne, Clermont-Ferrand, Aix-les-Bains, Grenoble and Mégeève. German airplanes machine-gunned fugitives trying to escape to Italy in boats. In Paris Jews continued to be seized for internment in the notorious Drancy camp and for deportation eastward. Some of those deported were doing slave labor in various parts of Germany and Poland. About 4,000 French Jews were reported in May, 1944, to be in the Poiniki camp in Poland, dying in dirt and disease.
Armed resistance to German persecution, both by Jews and by non-Jews, occurred in France and in the places of deportation. In September, 1943, German troops were temporarily fought off by Jews they had come to seize in several small towns in the southeast; in November, a maquis (guerrilla army) detachment liberated Jewish prisoners from the infamous Gurs camp; in May, 1944, French Jews who had escaped from Polish forced-labor camps were engaged in raids against the Germans and in forays to free other prisoners.

This resistance, however, while it served to reaffirm their fighting spirit, could have no great effect in lessening the number or lightening the suffering of Nazi victims. In the months before the Allied invasion a heightened tempo made itself felt in deportations and arrests, in the cities of Bordeaux, Toulouse, Paris, Nimes, Montauban, Avignon and Clermont-Ferrand. After the invasion more urgent matters did not cause the Nazis to forget the Jews; round-ups and deportations continued, with children not overlooked.

Several leading members of the French Jewish community disappeared from the scene. In September, 1943, Raoul Lambert and André Baur, directors of the Union générale des Juifs de France, were arrested, Lambert being charged with treason for having made a strong protest to Vichy against the treatment of the Jews interned in the Drancy camp. After he himself had been interned in Drancy for several months, he was deported to Poland. Victor Basch, the noted student of esthetics, defender of Alfred Dreyfus, once president of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (League for Human Rights) and active in the Alliance Israélite Universelle, was murdered in Lyons in January, 1944. In the same month, the clandestine Honneur et Patrie reported the execution of the mathematician Rene Bloch and his son. Léon Brunschvicg, one of France's most eminent professors of philosophy and a leading figure in the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, died of natural causes at Evian in February. In April, René Blum, a stage director and the brother of Léon Blum, was said by the underground to have died in a Nazi prison. Salomon Dyk, an agronomist who had investigated Jewish settlement possibilities throughout the world and had been associated with the French Ort since 1940,
died at Grenoble in May. Martin Weil and Alexander Charasch of ORT were deported, and others active in that organization went into hiding, though some ORT schools were still functioning in Limoges and Périgueux. Aimé Pallière, the famous convert to Judaism and author of "The Unknown Sanctuary," devoted to Jewish causes in France, Palestine and the rest of the world, was reported in June to have died in a concentration camp.

Economic oppression continued. In May, 1944, the special tax of 10% on Jewish property was increased to 20%, "to help destitute Jews." The property of deported and missing Jews was taken over by the Germans. Jewish firms continued to be liquidated. In October, 1943, Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, Vichy's Commissioner General for Jewish Affairs, gave the total number of liquidated Jewish businesses as 15,000. In January, 1944, the value of confiscated Jewish property was estimated to be 450,000,000 francs. A February, 1944, Swiss dispatch reported that Jewish property, "down to the stock in trade of Rebecca Kauffmann, who sells shoestrings in open-air markets," had been seized. In June, 1944, it was revealed that furniture taken from Jews was being distributed among Frenchmen bombed-out by Allied air raids.

This distribution of furniture was only one of several indications that the Nazi and Nazified authorities were trying to exploit the self-interest of the French in opposition to the Jews. In November, 1943, news was received that purchasers of confiscated Jewish property had formed an association in Paris to defend the validity of their purchases after the defeat of the Germans. Nevertheless, the Vichy radio was still complaining in April, 1944, that the French did "not realize the full implications of the Jewish danger."

There was good reason to believe that one of the most touchy problems after liberation would be the economic problem. In Algiers, in May, 1944, Michel Le Trocquer, a lawyer and the son of a prominent Socialist appointed by the French Committee of National Liberation to be Commissioner for the Administration of Liberated Areas, wrote a disquieting article in the Alger Républicain. He felt that "...public opinion would quite readily have accepted even a severe limitation on the proportion of Jews in certain
occupations, especially trade, but... was aroused to violent indignation by the arrests, the deportations and the severe conditions under which they were carried out... [After the war] it will be accepted that the Jews should be reinstated in decent conditions allowing them to live as free men, but there will be a tendency to be irritated at seeing them automatically restored to all the industrial, commercial and political positions which they may once have had.” The article concluded with the caution that the problem of the Jews in the post-war French economy would be one requiring “great prudence and great political skill,” one which would be exacerbated by any “psychological errors.”

Several of the Nazi French in charge of persecuting the Jews suffered discomfiture before they could be brought to justice in a liberated France. In February, 1944 Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, of the self-conferred aristocratical name and the shady antecedents, was dismissed from his post as Commissioner General for Jewish Affairs for “corrupt application of his authority.” He had again yielded to his old taste for peculation and embezzlement. Charles du Paty de Clam replaced him. In 1940 he had been an official of the pro-German Vichy government in Syria until it was expelled by the British and Free French armies. At the time of the Dreyfus Affair his namesake had been foremost in establishing Dreyfus’ “guilt”, a leading anti-Dreyfusard. He did not, however, seem to be efficient enough for the Nazis, since in June, a few weeks after the landings in Normandy, he was succeeded by Jean Artignac.

French Jews Abroad

Outside of France, French Jewish organizations were created or reconstituted. In Algeria the Alliance Israélite Universelle resumed activity in December, 1943. Among those prominent in it were René Mayer and René Cassin, respectively Commissioner of Merchant Marine and Communications and Chairman of the Juridical Commission of the French Committee of National Liberation, and Bernard Mélamédé, formerly of the Paris Hicém (Hias-Ica Emigration Association) and appointed the month before to the post of Director of the Office of Repatriation. In May,
1944, the Association pour le Rétablissement du Judaïsme en France et dans ses Possessions d'Outremer (ARJF-Association for the Reestablishment of Judaism in France and Its Overseas Possessions) was incorporated in New York by a group including Edouard and Robert de Rothschild, Edmond and Alfred Weil, André Meyer and Rabbi Simon Langer. Its chief aims are to reestablish the Jewish religious organization in France, to provide housing for worship, to supply ceremonial vestments, and to procure the services of rabbis and other religious officials needed by the congregations. One of the first things it did was to commission the Jewish Publication Society of America to print ten thousand prayer books in Hebrew and French for distribution to soldiers in France.

The French Committee of National Liberation

The actions and declarations of the French Committee of National Liberation, which in 1944 began to style itself the Provisional Government, showed that it intended to maintain the traditions of emancipation and equality of the French Revolution and the Republic. In September, 1943, all anti-Jewish laws were abolished in Corsica. In October, the Crémieux Decree was declared to be still in effect in Algeria. In April, 1944, Henri Hoppenot, Minister in Washington of the French Committee, assured the American Jewish Committee that “as soon as France is liberated, the French authorities will not fail to treat all persons equally without racial discrimination.” At the end of June, 1944, François Coulet, Regional Commissioner for Normandy, issued a decree suspending all Vichy legislation discriminating against Jews, among others. The month before, a special committee had been established in Algiers to supervise relief work in France as it was liberated, and it announced that special attention would be given to the plight of the Jewish children whose parents had been killed or deported. Organized government action was recognized as necessary to supplement the kindness and generosity of the French people.

Some observers, however, wondered how much even the best-intentioned government could do to restore Jewish
property rights. The experience in North Africa proved the entire good faith of the provisional government, but it also indicated that in France itself, where the property relationships in an originally more complex economy had been further deliberately tangled, snarled and twisted, restoration of those rights might well be found too difficult. They saw in the wide publicity given to Michel LeTrocquer's _L'Alger Républicain_ article by the official information services a trial balloon sent up to gauge the reaction at home and abroad to the prospect that the Jews might not be "automatically restored to all the industrial, commercial and political positions which they may once have had."

**North Africa**

In North Africa, the capital event of the year was the revalidation of the Crémieux Decree, which had conferred French citizenship on the Algerian Jews _en bloc_ in 1870 and had been abrogated in 1940 by Vichy, and again in March, 1943, by General Henri Honoré Giraud. On October 21, 1943, it was announced the the Crémieux Decree was still valid, since Vichy legislation had been annulled and since none of Giraud’s promised administrative orders for the execution of his abrogation decree had been issued in the period of three months from March mentioned in the decree. The contention of Giraud that abrogation of the Crémieux Decree was vital for the satisfaction of Moslem demands and for the good conduct of the war was shown to have been only a pretext when General Georges Catroux, in charge of Moslem Affairs, did not put up any strong opposition to the revalidation of the Decree and when, in fact, it evoked no disturbances of any kind.

By July, 1943, refugees in Vichy internment camps in North Africa had been freed. Many joined the British Pioneer Corps and many were employed by the American Army or in private industry. Only the aged and the disabled had to rely on the relief funds provided by local communities, which in turn received subventions from abroad, chiefly from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Most Vichy restrictions on Jews had been removed, children had been readmitted to the schools, lawyers and
physicians were practicing again, and most civil servants had been reinstated in their pre-Vichy jobs.

In June, 1944, the only inmates of internment camps were political offenders, of whom none was known to be Jewish. The anti-Semitic movements which had flourished under Vichy had been suppressed. There were practically no Jewish refugees arriving any more. Of a boatload of almost 400 expected from Spain, fewer than 40 arrived, the very large majority not wishing to exchange the comparative freedom of movement and closeness to the European scene which they enjoyed in Spain for the relative confinement, however well meant, of UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and similar reception centers. Camps which could accommodate thousands were almost empty.

The North African Jewish Community

Relations between the Jews and the rest of the population were described as follows in May, 1944, by an experienced and sober observer: “The Jews of North Africa at present show a tendency toward better relations with the Arab elements. Among certain circles [of Europeans] this rapprochement creates a kind of suspicion about the Jews which is not calculated to simplify the problem.”

Within the community progress was made, the Jews advancing intellectually, socially and economically, despite wartime difficulties. Nevertheless, they continued to remain on a standard considerably below that of Europe (in normal times) and the United States. Poverty was still widespread, but to some degree it was alleviated by the traditional voluntary charitable organizations. A certain narrowness of sympathy might still be detected in the slowness of the community to contribute toward help for European refugees. On the other hand, the concern of some of the Europeans in North Africa with the problems of relatives and landsleit abroad was too absorbing to allow for much interest in local work.

Especially in Morocco, but also wherever else Jews did not have French citizenship, there seemed to be an increasing desire to obtain emancipation and equality by emigration
after the war. The political stirring in the Jewish community, of which the desire to emigrate was one symptom, was also manifested by a pronounced rise in Zionist sentiment throughout North Africa, especially among the younger elements. In addition to the general factors making for the spread of Zionist and pro-Palestine feeling since the rise of Hitler and, especially, since the advent of the Vichy regime, the presence of Jewish Palestine units serving with the British Eighth Army in North Africa had an unmistakable influence. The excellent impression the members of these units made, especially in Libya, where, on their own initiative and in their free hours, they contributed to the relief of the stricken Jewish community and gave a powerful impetus to educational and cultural activity, was one of the chief causes for the swift growth of the prestige and popularity of Hebrew and one of the causes for the increased popularity of Zionism.

The selection of delegates to the projected conference of the World Jewish Congress in New York in May, 1944, aroused a flurry of excitement in the community. Ideological issues were somewhat obscured by personalities. The postponement and tacit abandonment of the conference did not prevent continued heated debate.

Algeria

In June, 1944, the Algerian Jewish community was pressing for a more clear-cut and explicit reaffirmation of the Crémieux Decree and annulment of the Giraud ordinance than the Committee of National Liberation’s declaration of October, 1943. Fear was expressed that otherwise there would be the possibility of a future “misunderstanding” about the status of Algerian Jews. This fear was strengthened by the lack of clarity in the legal situation of Jewish property confiscated or subjected to forced sale under the Vichy regime. There were enough vested interests opposing restoration of such property to make the Jews uneasy. Nor were the purely legal rights of the matter beyond dispute. It was reported that the National Liberation Committee’s Committee on Jewish Property was proposing to divide Jewish property into three categories: 1) that which had
been seized and sold by the Vichy authorities; 2) that which had been sold by its owner between the time Vichy announced its intention to introduce anti-Jewish laws and the actual date of their introduction; and 3) that which had been sold before Vichy’s announcement of its intention to apply the anti-Jewish laws to North Africa, in anticipation of that announcement and of subsequent confiscation.

Perhaps the majority of Jews affected by the question of restoration had taken the advice of the Consistoire Israélite and retained possession of their belongings until they were actually seized by Vichy. In April, 1943 an order was issued allowing Jews who had suffered expropriation to reclaim their property within a month. Most of those eligible filed claims within the stated period and got their property back.

Uncertainty weighed primarily on those who had anticipated seizure by selling their property themselves. Most of them insisted that the sale had actually, if not overtly, been transacted under duress and that, in compliance with the United Nations declaration that sales under enemy pressure were null and void, their property should be returned. It seemed to be the consensus of the lawyers that only sales made after Vichy’s announcement of pending anti-Jewish legislation would be considered as having been transacted under duress, and that prior sales would be deemed voluntary and irrevocable.

3. Belgium

On June 14, 1943, the Belgian government-in-exile estimated that 52,000 Jews had been deported from Belgium.

In September, after Italy’s capitulation, there was a renewed intensification in the campaign of arrests and deportation against those still remaining. Children were reported gassed at Brasschaet, north of Antwerp, and tormented and beaten in the Malines concentration camp. The underground press charged, in January, 1944, that three out of every five Jews arrested the previous summer had died in the Malines camp or in the course of deportation. In February, 1944, Jews of Turkish nationality, theretofore relatively unmolested, were sent to Malines. In the first
week of March the Nazi dragnet gathered in a thousand Jews living in concealment.

The underground existence of a large number of Jews would have been impossible without the active help of a large number of Christians, heedless of danger to themselves. By August, 1943, the resistance movement had organized machinery to obtain ration books for Jews and political fugitives. During that month, the Nazi authorities published a proclamation offering all Belgians in the provinces of Brabant and Limburg immunity from punishment if they turned over to the police Jews whom they had been sheltering; no reports are available on the extent to which this offer was accepted. In September, 1943, a daring raid on a convent removed fifteen Jewish girls to safety the day before the Gestapo had announced it would come to deport them. These girls were only a few of many being hidden by the clergy, frequently in church property. In July, two pro-Nazi weeklies, the French-language *Ami du Peuple* and the Flemish-language *Volksaanval*, had to suspend publication because of popular boycott.

The Belgian government-in-exile continued to give proof of its democratic attitude and intent. In September, 1943, when the tempo of deportations began to speed up again, it issued a long statement reaffirming its previous position, condemning the new persecutions, and concluding that "any Belgian who assists in such measures will be guilty of giving aid to the enemy and will render himself liable to heavy legal penalties." In April, 1944, replying to an inquiry from the American Jewish Committee regarding discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds in post-liberation administration of relief, Count Robert van der Straten-Ponthoz, the ambassador to the United States, stated:

"The ordinances promulgated against the Jews in Belgium by the German authorities are unconstitutional and will be considered null and void as soon as the territory is liberated. The Council of Ministers has already taken measures to that effect.... As to aliens, the Belgian Government has always refused to make a distinction between Jews and persons of another religion. It intends to continue that policy."
4. Luxembourg

Before the war broke out there were about 3,000 Jews in the Duchy of Luxembourg. In August, 1943, Joseph Bech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government-in-exile, made this highly interesting and significant statement:

"Since the invasion of my country by the Germans all the Luxembourg and foreign Jews have been expelled from Luxembourg to France and elsewhere, or deported to Poland, their belongings being confiscated. Only a few old people, too old to be transplanted, have been left in a concentration camp in the Ardennes, where they have now been for the past three years . . . .

There has never been the least anti-Semitic feeling in our country, and the spirit of tolerance and liberalism so natural in the Luxembourg character is poles apart from the racial prejudice of the National Socialist system, whose victims in their thousands had since 1933 found refuge and the greatest hospitality in my country . . . My Jewish compatriots, with all other Luxembourgers, will after victory return to their homes in our liberated and free Luxembourg."

Almost a year later, in June, 1944, Prime Minister Pierre Dupong assured the World Jewish Congress that Jewish aliens formerly residing in the country would be permitted to return after the war.

5. The Netherlands

Early in December, 1943, Anton Mussert, leader of the Netherlands Nazis, informed journalists at a press reception in Berlin that the Jewish problem no longer existed in Holland. There were no more Jews there. He was probably exaggerating, but not much. Two months earlier Premier Peter Gerbrandy of the Netherlands government-in-exile had announced the deportation of the last 5,000 of the pre-war 65,000 Jews of Amsterdam, including the members of the Central Jewish Council. After this deportation, the Premier said, there were "hardly any Jews left on Netherlands soil." In November a Swiss newspaper estimated that
15,000 to 20,000 of the 300,000 or so Hollanders in Switzerland were Jews. Before the German invasion in 1940 there were more than 150,000 Jews in the Netherlands, including about 20,000 refugees. Some Netherlands Jews arrived in Palestine in July, 1944, having been exchanged for German nationals interned by the British. They said that nine of every ten Netherlands Jews had been deported to Poland.

According to available information, the German treatment of Jews was a long, obscene horror. Jews were arrested for deportation while under anaesthetic on operating tables or in the throes of childbirth. Children in concentration camps were helped to die of diphtheria; adults were exposed to pneumonia. A variety of ingenious tortures was developed, the most inventive sadists apparently being in charge of the Vught and Westerbork camps. It was reported that several thousands of Jews married to non-Jews in childless unions, offered the alternative of sterilization or deportation, chose sterilization. Some were deported after being sterilized. So fierce and unrelenting was the Gestapo hunt for Jews who had "dived under" that some, out of terror and exhaustion, gave themselves up to be deported to the Polish gas chambers. Others were duped into surrendering by assurances that their escape could be bought or that they were to be exchanged for Germans held by the Allies.

The attitude of the Christian population was admirable. Fifteen to twenty thousand Jews could not be hidden from the Gestapo without the rest of the population's almost complete solidarity, despite savage reprisals against those caught giving shelter to fugitives. Many individual acts of self-sacrificing heroism and devotion by nurses, policemen, and peasants were reported. More than six thousand physicians maintained an unbroken refusal to do the Nazis' sterilization work, even at the cost of having their licenses revoked. After two months of almost total suspension of medical service, the German occupying authority gave in and, in September, 1943, some 6,200 medical men were allowed to resume practice. The Mussert press raged against the obstinate persistence of teachers in rejecting anti-Semitism for themselves and their pupils. The Reformed Church, in February, 1944, urged all its pastors to consider carefully whether Nazi communicants should be admitted
to the sacraments. No general exclusion was ordered, but among the many conflicts stressed between Nazism and Christianity was Nazi anti-Semitism, a mask for "aversion to the Jewish God and Bible."

The Netherlands government-in-exile was at one with its people. Denunciations of the Nazi murders and deportations were made by officials, published in the official press and broadcast to the homeland. In October, 1943, Premier Gerbrandy promised that "the Dutch people will... do its utmost to heal as best it can the wounds that have been inflicted upon the Jews..." Earlier that month the government had named Salomon Rodrigues Pereira, formerly Chief Rabbi of the Portuguese Israelite Community of The Hague, as Jewish chaplain to the Netherlands army in England and adviser on Jewish affairs. At his reception in London, the following January, the Netherlands government and people were praised by representatives of the British and European Jewish communities, for their undeviating adherence to the principles of equality.

6. Norway

In February, 1944, the Norwegian Embassy in Washington expressed the view that "there are probably very few Jews left in Norway by now..." The only news from Norway concerning Jews was that the Quisling press, in October, 1943, attacked the Red Cross in Norway "for acting against vital Norwegian and German interests" in sending supplies to Norwegian Jews deported to Germany and Poland, in defiance of orders by the Quisling government and the German occupation authorities.

The statement by the Embassy on the small number of Jews left in Norway was contained in a letter to the American Jewish Committee written in response to an inquiry; the letter said in part:

"Legal Norwegian authorities have never allowed any discrimination on the basis of race. As soon as part or the whole of Norway has been liberated rationing will be taken over by the legal Norwegian authorities, and
any discriminatory pre-existing rules will just be disregarded.

There are probably very few Jews left in Norway by now as about 50 per cent were helped by the Underground to escape to Sweden. It is believed that nearly all the others, those whom the Underground Organizations tried in vain to save, have been deported to Eastern Poland. When Norwegian Jews return to Norway after the liberation they will receive exactly the same treatment as other Norwegians exiled during occupation.”

7. Denmark

In 1944, no Jews were known to be left in Denmark. Between September and December, 1943, about seven thousand had succeeded in escaping to Sweden; all the others, who had not been killed, had been deported to the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. Between 8,000 and 8,500, including 1,500 to 2,000 refugees, had been in Denmark when it was overrun by the German army.

In August, 1943, sabotage and popular resistance led the Germans to demand of the Danish government, which theretofore had been allowed a large measure of independence, that it suppress those activities effectively. King Christian and his government refused, and the Germans imposed their own total military control. The cabinet resigned and the King was put under house arrest. Among the prominent Danes arrested at this time were leaders of the Jewish community. Some, like Dr. Erik Warburg, the King’s physician, were later released through the influence of the King or other highly placed persons.

The Gestapo chose Rosh Hashanah, September 30–October 1, to strike. At the end of August and the middle of September lists of names had been seized in the offices of the community, and bank deposits had been confiscated. On Rosh Hashanah the Germans began to round up all Jews, for deportation.

Yet seven thousand of the total eight or eight and a half thousand Jews of Denmark were safe in Sweden in 1944, constituting about a half of all Danes who had escaped to
Sweden since the end of the previous September. They were saved by the decency of the Christian population of both countries. Members of the resistance movement and the police had given them advance warning of the Gestapo’s intentions, and the Swedish government broadcast a declaration that anybody fleeing from Denmark would find refuge on Swedish soil. In the first three weeks of October, thousands of Jews ventured across the Kattegat Strait in boats. Some were drowned and many more were machine-gunned in their boats by Nazi patrols; but five thousand did reach safety, and it was Danish Christians—policemen, soldiers, fisherman, transport workers—who made it possible. A regular ferry service ran between Denmark and Sweden. Widespread sabotage of German vessels in Copenhagen harbor and of power stations, transport services, and war factories made it all the more difficult for the Germans to prevent the escape of the Jews and non-Jews. Nevertheless many of those who helped the fugitives were caught and imprisoned or killed in the act of helping. In the following two months, two thousand more Jews were added to the number already in Sweden. During that time a thousand to fifteen hundred Jews were assembled in Danish internment camps and then deported. Practically all were sent to Terezin, among them Dr. M. Friediger, the Chief Rabbi. At the end of the year there probably was not one Jew left in the country.

The Danish people’s opposition to Nazi doctrine and behavior expressed itself in other ways as well. On October 3, 1943, the Bishops of the Danish Church issued a pastoral letter of condemnation and protest which was read in every church in the country. Two days later the professors of Copenhagen University suspended classes for a week “in view of the disasters which have overcome our fellow-citizens.” Several of the professors were arrested. On October 10, the chief of police was dismissed for publicly dissociating the police from Nazi acts. In answer to the German promise that imprisoned Danish soldiers would be set free after all the Jews had been caught, the commanding general, speaking for his officers and men, replied: “The Danish army will not accept favors at the expense of other citizens.” The political parties, industrial associations, cham-
bers of commerce, labor unions, civil service organizations, professional bodies and youth groups, all publicly protested to the German authorities.

Early in 1944, Henrik de Kauffmann, Danish Minister in Washington, summarized briefly what had happened: "Danish citizens of the Jewish race form an integral part of the people of Denmark, and the recent Nazi persecution of Danish Jews was felt by all Danes as an attack directed against a member of the family of Denmark."

In May, 1944, the Swedish press reported that a number of Jews deported from Denmark were doing forced labor in war plants in Germany. In June the underground Danish press reported that the Danish Jews in Terezin were being sent to Poland.

8. Sweden

SPECIAL interest in Swedish events during the year under review was primarily linked with the escape of most of the Jews in Denmark to Swedish soil. That subject is treated in detail, in the chapters on Denmark and Refugee Migrations in the current Review.

Swedish public opinion strongly supported the government's initiative in favor of the Jews of Denmark. In October, 1943, the press, church, labor organizations and civic groups instantly made known their approval. The royal family made a public demonstration of its favorable attitude. Warm thanks were extended to the Swedish people and government by the Swedish Jewish community and a large number of Jewish organizations throughout the free world. In January, 1944, a Gallup poll survey showed that the Gestapo terror against the Danish Jews took second place among the occurrences of 1943 which had made the strongest impression in Sweden, and that 77% of the population supported the government's reaction to the terror.

While her activities on behalf of the Danish Jews were the most successful and most celebrated, Sweden gave proof of sincere sympathy with the Jews by a consistent pattern of less publicized action throughout the year. In October, 1943, the Privy Council reversed the decision of a lower court which had sentenced Professor Israel Holmgren, a Jew, to
imprisonment for four months for having violated the press statute by publishing statements against the leaders of the German government in a pamphlet accusing Hitler and his aides of direct responsibility for the slaughter of millions in Europe. In February, 1944, an appeal was made for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and for “homeless Jewish science” by Prince Eugen, the King’s brother, Archbishop Eiden, Professor Oesten Unden, formerly the Foreign Minister, and the rectors of all Swedish universities. In April, the press and prominent churchmen came out against the British White Paper on Palestine and in support of the Jewish settlement. In June, it was revealed that the Germans had rejected a Swedish offer to have the International Red Cross remove from Rumania 40,000 Jews, including children, on Swedish ships, as well as similar offers made previously. Throughout the year the leaders of the Swedish Church continued to denounce the “barbarous,” “sinful” and “un-Christian” conduct of the Germans and their satellites. Prominent among these clergymen was Archbishop Eiden, who frequently preached before King Gustav.

The Jewish community was chiefly occupied with the refugees from Denmark. Press reports about other activity within the community were few, and they were mainly concerned with its reaction to events abroad. In April, 1944, the Swedish Zionist Federation, under the chairmanship of Professor Hugo Valentin, known in the United States for his work on anti-Semitism, called for the revocation of the 1939 British White Paper on Palestine. In June, the community celebrated the seventy-fifth birthday of Dr. Marcus Ehrenpreis, chief rabbi of Stockholm.

9. Switzerland

Of the 100,000 refugees in Switzerland in June, 1944, about 25,000 were Jews. The majority of the latter had slipped across the French border since the summer of 1942, when the mass deportations began in France, and about two thousand had escaped from Italy since October, 1943. In June, the Joint Distribution Committee announced that 2,000 Yugoslavs, mostly Jewish, had arrived recently. Further details regarding Jewish refugees in Switzerland
are given in the chapter on Refugee Migrations in the present Review.

The Swiss people continued to measure their human responsibilities by their exacting tradition, and their government continued to welcome those who could escape and to ease their plight. In October, 1943, the press was ordered not to criticize the German terror in Denmark, but there could be no mistaking the attitude of all the Swiss. It was feared that relations with Germany, already tense, would be further exacerbated, perhaps dangerously, by the comment that the ban prevented from appearing. It was felt, too, that Swiss opinion was too well known at home and in the rest of the world to need editorial reaffirmation on this occasion. Only the previous August the government had confiscated another volume of the German Meyers Konversations Lexikon, this time because of an anti-Semitic attack on the Swiss refugee policy.

The Jewish community made extraordinary contributions of money and devotion to the care of the refugees. In addition to the assistance and encouragement given to the organizations functioning specifically as rescue and maintenance agencies, much support went to ORT, for vocational retraining, and OSE, for health. In September, 1943, a Swiss ORT committee was formed under the chairmanship of Armand Braunschwig, president of the Union of Jewish Communities. In December, ORT succeeded in having youngsters from its school in Italy brought to Switzerland. In April, 1944, two new trade schools were opened for young refugees and, in May, the creation was announced of a trade school for refugee girls, a training farm for truck-farming and a refugee camp. In November, 1943, OSE had a convention at which some of the most prominent men in the community joined the executive committee; its inspiration and practical guidance continued to come largely from Boris Tschlenoff. During that month, an OSE home was opened for refugee boys. The zeal and courage of the OSE staff in moving children from France to Switzerland, their great skill and understanding as social workers and teachers, and their dedication to their work are not sufficiently known.

The Jewish community expressed its feelings about matters beyond the Swiss borders as well. In February, 1944, the
Swiss Zionists called for the abrogation of the 1939 British White Paper on Palestine, the control of Palestine immigration by the Jewish Agency, and a Jewish Commonwealth. In April, when the Hungarian crisis became acute, the Union of Jewish Communities created a commission to coordinate the rescue of European Jews.

10. Italy

Twenty-two years of the infamy of Fascism ended on July 25, 1943, when Mussolini was deposed; less than a year later, on June 4, 1944, the Allies entered Rome. For the Jews of Italy, living in the areas dominated by the Nazis and their Fascist satellites, the history of that year was one of extortion, deportation and murder, while liberation was slowly making its way north with the Allied armies.

Sicily had already been invaded when Mussolini fell and, by the middle of August, was entirely in Allied hands. In the rest of Italy there was a marked improvement in the lot of the Jews during the month and a half from Mussolini's ouster until September 8, when the Badoglio government concluded an armistice with the Allies. Probably a mixture of sincere disgust with racism and a desire to ingratiate themselves with the American and British victors to whom they knew they would soon be surrendering, motivated the men in control of Italian politics during August, 1943, to hasten to do away with official anti-Semitism. A commission headed by the Minister of Justice was established to draw up the abolition of anti-Jewish legislation. Jewish citizens, interned because of their race, were released, and 150 of the political prisoners set free were Jews. Men high in the army and navy, dismissed when Mussolini introduced the "Aryan paragraph" into Italian public life, were recalled to their posts and, a few months later, in November, when the Badoglio government was functioning in southern Italy under Allied supervision, two Jews were appointed to posts in the cabinet: Guido Jung, an important Fascist official before anti-Semitism was introduced, as under secretary in the ministry of finance; and Mario Fano as under secretary in the ministry of communications. There were wholesale arrests
of Fascist officials who had been waxing fat on the extra-
ordinarily profitable corruption made possible by economic
"aryanization." The press reflected the opposition of the
Italian people to the racist measures, by its insistence on
their immediate annulment. The anti-Fascist parties, Social-
ist, Christian Democrat, Liberal, Action, and Communist,
urged compensation for Jews who had been expropriated. By
a decree issued in January, 1944, full civil and political
rights were restored to all who had been deprived of them
by reason of race or political affiliation.

Immediately after the capitulation of the Badoglio govern-
ment to the Allies, the Germans seized control of Italy far
to the south of Rome, and the direst persecution began.
Mussolini was snatched away from imprisonment at the
hands of his successors and was put at the head of the Fascist
Socialist Republic, a puppet government in the north.
Fascists who had committed themselves irrevocably joined
the new government and vied in cruelty with the Nazi
forces, military and Gestapo. In October, Mussolini’s cabinet
announced the reinstatement of the anti-Jewish measures
relaxed under Badoglio. There were mass arrests in Rome,
Milan, Turin and other cities. Jewish institutions were
closed, property was seized, wearing the “Jew badge” was
made compulsory. In Rome, the community was forced to
pay a ransom of fifty kilograms of gold and 2,500,000 lire
in currency. Of the thousands of Jews missing from the
total of almost 12,000 when the Allies entered, 3,000 had
been deported in October, 1943, and 1,500 the day before
Rome was taken. Mass murders were reported having
taken place in Piedmont and Lombardy, and revolting
massacres near the Swiss border. By the beginning of 1944,
a total of 10,000 Jews had been deported to Germany and
Poland, and 25,000 interned in concentration camps. By
June, 1944, many more thousands of Jews, Italian and
foreign, had been transported to Poland and its death camps.
Thirty-five per cent of all Jewish property had been confis-
cated in northern Italy, the Jews of Florence alone hav-
ing been despoiled of possessions worth 500,000,000 lire
($25,000,000 at the pre-war rate of exchange), and con-
siderable synagogue property. In May, it was announced
that 75,000 acres of farm land had been taken, as well as
all Jewish property in the Modena district; a month later, all the property of the Jews in Genoa had been seized.

A number of Jews succeeded in reaching Switzerland from northern Italy. As early as October, 1943, it was estimated that two thousand, including refugees (especially from Yugoslavia), had crossed the border into safety. At the same time, Jews fleeing the Gestapo in France added to the number already in northern Italy.

Many men prominent in the Italian Jewish community are definitely known to have been killed or deported; information about others is not yet at hand. In September, 1943, Vittorio Valobra and M. Luzzati, chairman and secretary of the Genoese Jewish relief, were seized, as was Alberto Recanati, a month later, when, as head of the Rome community he refused to supply the Germans with a list of its membership. Davide Ginsbourg, formerly professor of Russian literature at the University of Turin, after having been sentenced to five years of imprisonment for anti-Fascist activity, was tortured to death by the Gestapo in the Regina Coeli prison in Rome. Elio Morpurgo, formerly a senator and an important political figure, died at the age of 85 while being deported from Italy, the Gestapo having ignored a Fascist promise to leave him in peace, out of respect for his age and poor health. Professor Anton Israele Zolli, Chief Rabbi of Rome, formerly of Trieste, revealed that the rabbis of Modena, Florence and Genoa had all been deported.

On July 12, 1943, two days after the invasion of Sicily, the Allied Military Government proclaimed the abolition of all discriminatory laws. Within a month, the ownership of property reported confiscated from Jews was being investigated; Allied soldiers were attending synagogue services in Palermo immediately after its fall. Throughout the year, liberation for the Jews continued to accompany Allied gains according to the precedent set in Sicily. When Rome was freed, Sabbath services in the synagogue, resumed for the first time since the Germans occupied the city in September, 1943, were described as very moving; prayers of thanksgiving were offered in which the liberated and liberators joined. There were reports in the United States that the Allied Military Government had ordered the return of all
property confiscated from Jews only if the former owners were in Rome or when they returned there. These reports were under investigation as this account was being written, there being cause to doubt that the policy of restoring confiscated property was being made so narrow. Although there was no reason to believe that the Allied authorities had continued the ban imposed by the Fascists and Nazis on shehitah, it is not yet definitely known whether it was again being practiced in Rome.

When Rabbi Zolli spoke of the period during which the Nazis had been in control of Rome, he contrasted "the good hearts of the Italians" with the cruelty of the Germans. "The whole Italian population has been wonderful to us. . . [The Nazis] put a price of 300,000 lire on my head. . . I took refuge with one Catholic family. . . who did not know me. . . The son was soon caught and shot. I had to hide somewhere else. Then another Catholic family. . . took me in—people who had never heard of me—and they treated me like their father and even called me father. . . ." Of the Catholic Church he said: "What the Vatican did will be indelibly and eternally engraved in our hearts. . . . Priests and even high prelates did things that will forever be an honor to Catholicism."

Verification of this impression of the fine attitude and behavior of the Italian people and the Catholic Church came from other sources as well. From Jerusalem, the following was sent to the New York Times:

"Many reports have been received here from Jewish military chaplains serving in Italy and from Palestinian Jewish soldiers of the sympathetic and helpful conduct of the Italian people under the Fascist regime toward persecuted Jewish inhabitants.

"These letters confirm that the Italians did all they could to rescue and harbor Jews fleeing from oppression and certain death, even providing false passports for them under Italian names.

"The reports asserted that this was done with the full knowledge and support of King Victor Emmanuel. It also is known that many Jews found refuge in the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo as well as inside Vatican City itself."
It was frequently only by braving great danger that the Italian people and clergy could show their sympathy. In November, 1943, the Milanese underground in a daring raid succeeded in destroying the list of Jews, drawn up at the order of the Fascists to speed their arrest and internment. On the Swiss frontier, laymen and priests were arrested for assisting Jews across the border. In the churches of northern Italy Fascist cruelties were repeatedly denounced, and a number of priests were imprisoned for such attacks.

It cannot be said that all Jews behaved as well. Ugo Foa, the president of the Rome community and formerly a Fascist magistrate, in the early days of German occupation, took pains to let himself be seen in the company of a Gestapo officer, thus giving the impression that Jews had nothing to fear from the Nazis. He and several like-minded friends argued against Rabbi Zolli’s urgings that the Jews of Rome give up their businesses, suspend religious services, and scatter. Although Foa said he had received assurances that nothing would happen to them, the better educated and more alert elements understood the situation and went into hiding; the majority of the community, mostly peddlers and small merchants, relying on Foa’s assurances, remained and suffered the consequences.

Native and refugee Jews received assistance in the liberated areas. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee allocated $120,000 for its work in Italy during the first half of 1944. This was in addition to a grant made to the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees when the Italian mainland was first invaded; the purchase of clothing in Palestine for shipment to Italy; grants to enable schools, synagogues and other institutions to reopen; grants to develop workshops in camps, equipping hostels, and furnishing medical supplies. The JDC operated under the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees with the approval of the Allied Control Commission. Through diplomatic personnel attached to the Vatican, the JDC was able to extend some assistance to the Jews of Rome, during this occupation.

In May, 1944, before Rome fell to the Allies, a report
on conditions in southern Italy from North Africa disclosed
that there were then between four and five thousand Jewish
refugees in southern Italy and Sicily. Among them were
from 2,000 to 2,500 former internees of the Ferramonte
camp. Many of them, though theoretically free, continued
to live in the camp because of the shortage of housing and
other difficulties. Those able to do so lived in neighboring
villages, or in Bari, Naples and Palermo, where because
there was nothing else for them to do, they tried to engage
in trade. Of the four to five thousand Jewish refugees in
liberated Italy, the most numerous group was from Yugo-
slavia, after whom came those from Poland, Austria and
Germany, and Czechoslovakia. Most of them wished to
emigrate, and probably 60% wished to go to Palestine.
There were very few Jews of Italian nationality in liberated
Italy.

By the end of June, about two thousand Palestine entry
certificates had been distributed and about five hundred
refugees had left for the Holy Land. In Italy, as in North
Africa, the presence of Palestine Jewish units attached to
the British Eighth Army was an important factor in creating
a strong sentiment for Palestine. In their free time these
troops engaged in much relief and rehabilitation work, not
the least of which was the founding of several Hachsharah
(training) camps to prepare prospective immigrants for
agricultural work.

North Africa

Although as late as October, 1943, the provisional British
administration of Libya was of the opinion that international
law guaranteed the integrity of Italian municipal law there,
and, therefore, did not allow the formal abrogation of racist
legislation, all anti-Jewish measures were abandoned in
practice.

Years of warfare over the Libyan battleground, Fascist
harassment and Nazi persecution had left the Jewish com-
munity very weak; its condition would have been far worse,
had it not been for the friendly attitude of the Moslem
population. An originally poor Jewish community had been further impoverished. After the German armies had been driven out, there was great need of individual and community assistance. Unemployment was a problem, despite the availability of some jobs with the British military and civilian authorities, engaged in restoring a country stricken by war. Help was needed to replace the communal institutions, social, educational and religious, destroyed in the previous years. The JDC helped with funds and the Jewish troops from Palestine lent a hand in getting schools of various kinds started. The community was sufficiently impressed by the Palestine soldiers to ask the British administration for a Jewish school system with Hebrew as the language of instruction, and English and Arabic as other languages to be studied.

By June, 1944, almost all Jews who had been deported from Tripoli and Benghasi to other places in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica had been returned to their native cities. Of the estimated four thousand Italian Jews in Tunisia early in 1944, the majority were thought to be from Libya.

On June 28, 1944, Edward R. Stettinius, United States Under Secretary of State, announced that the British government was planning to follow the United States' lead in establishing a "refugee free port" at Fort Ontario, New York, by opening in Libya a haven of refuge for Jews fleeing Nazi extermination in Italy and Yugoslavia. A few days later, the British plan was attacked as "worthless" by Isaac Gruenbaum of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. He thought that in the absence of adequate provision for transportation facilities the plan was an empty gesture. While granting that a camp in Libya would be of value for Jews from Rumania or Bulgaria, Dr. Gruenbaum could see no point in establishing it for Jews from Italy, where there already were camps. He concluded his criticism by saying: "We will certainly be glad if this act increases the number of Jews saved, but in the meantime there remains the suspicion that the plan will remain only on paper to weaken pressure concerning Palestine."
11. Spain

During the past year, Spain's chief interest and importance derived from its position, adjacent to the European prison.

At the end of 1943, there were in Spain about fifteen to sixteen thousand refugees, of whom some 2,300 were thought to be Jewish. Of the latter, 1,200, or more than half, were stateless, mostly of Austrian, German, Polish and Russian origin; 500 were Polish citizens, 450 French, and 150 citizens of other Allied countries—Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Yugoslavia, etc. One thousand were in Barcelona, 300 in the Barcelona region and 700 in Madrid, 300 were interned in the Miranda camp. In addition to these there were 250 Levantine Sephardic refugees of Spanish nationality, whom the Nazis allowed to leave Paris between August and October, 1943. The Germans considered them Spaniards, but the Spanish government regarded them as refugees who would be in Spain only temporarily. From the point of view of their mentality and ambition, moreover, if not of the date of their arrival in Spain, and their original motives in returning to the country from which the last of their ancestors had been banished in 1492, a good proportion of the Sephardim established in Spain since well before the war, especially those in Barcelona, could also be considered refugees. A kind of economic inquisition had been putting slow but strong pressure on them to abandon Judaism and to lose their identity completely, but even at the price of calculated total assimilation they were unable to exercise any trade other than that of peddler, and to avoid repeated nuisance sentences of short terms of imprisonment on flimsy pretexts. Of this group perhaps the majority desired to go to Palestine.

All things considered, and in contrast to what was happening to Jews on the other side of the Pyrenees, the condition of the Jewish refugees in Spain was fairly good. Enough money to live on was furnished by the Jewish relief organizations, mainly the JDC, or by agencies of the various Allied nations; among the latter the Polish Red Cross showed an inclination to shift the burden of support for the families of Jewish citizens of Poland to the private Jewish agencies.
Except for those in Miranda, many refugees found Spain, and especially Barcelona, a not entirely unpleasant place in which to stay before they could return to their homes, above all in France. Proximity to France, providing a vantage point from which to follow the battle of Europe and to return right after the war, was one of the chief reasons why nine tenths of a projected convoy of nearly 400 decided to remain in Spain and not go to camps in North Africa. Another reason was the natural preference for freedom of movement in a city like Barcelona to sequestration in a Moroccan camp.

While nearly all preferred Spain to Morocco, only the real refugees were not interested in the possibility of emigration; these were those who felt that their true homes were the ones from which they would not have been uprooted but for Hitler and to which they ardently desired to return. Many, probably most of the others, regarded settling in the United States or Palestine as the best of all alternatives. This subject is more fully treated in the chapter on Refugee Migrations.

12. Portugal

By the middle of 1943, the Portuguese policy had been established for several years not to permit the entry of refugees if they did not have a valid entry visa for another country and satisfactory proof that they would be able to leave soon. Stateless persons, born in the old Russian Empire, were kept out, even if they had Nansen passports.

Before the war, entry to Portugal had not been so difficult. Between 1933 and 1940, several hundred Jewish refugees arrived in Portugal, mostly from Central Europe, and the large majority settled in Lisbon. After June, 1940, entry grew progressively less easy, but about one hundred thousand refugees were estimated to have passed through Portugal to the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Great Britain and Palestine, between then and the early part of 1944. Many, if not most, of them were Jews.

At the end of January, 1944 the total Jewish population, permanent and transient, was estimated at about 1,800.
Of these, 525 were the permanent community, with Portuguese nationality; another 150, of presumptive Portuguese nationality, had recently arrived from France and were confined to Curia and Coimbra until their nationality could be fully verified. Of the remaining 1,125, the stateless, mainly of German and Austrian origin, numbered about 445; the Poles, including some who in the eyes of the Portuguese were stateless because the Polish government had denationalized them, were about 490; and the others, Belgians, French, Dutch, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, etc., came to some 190.

The majority of the refugees were assigned to forced residence in Lisbon, Ericeira, the spa Caldas da Rainha, and various towns in the provinces. Most of them were being maintained by American Jewish relief agencies. Those who had arrived since 1940 were not permitted to work. In Caldas da Rainha and Ericeira, police permission was necessary to leave town, but there was freedom of movement and choice of residence within the town itself. Children were permitted to attend school provided tuition fees were paid for them. Religious activities were permitted; in Caldas da Rainha and Ericeira, prayer groups had been organized. Group recreational and vocational activity was not encouraged, although the police would occasionally authorize specific projects.
The story of Polish Jewry under the Nazi occupation is one of the most significant not only in World War II, but in all human history. It is a story of man's unbelievable inhumanity to man and of systematic and ruthless torture and murder of innocent men, women and children. It is also a story of incredible fortitude in suffering and of heroism in the face of overwhelming odds. This story can not, of course, be told in a brief survey even if all the facts were known, which is not the case.

The Nazi persecution and extermination of Jews in Poland were not improvised; they were carefully planned. Hitler repeatedly stated that one of his main objectives in this war is the complete destruction of the Jews of Europe and, eventually, of the rest of the world. The objective was always the same; only the methods varied with the time and available facilities. He did not start with a mass slaughter of European Jews because he would have deprived himself of one of his most important propaganda weapons for the conquest of the world. Instead, he followed a policy of humiliation, persecution, and slow starvation, at the same time using anti-Semitism to divide and conquer other countries.

First, there was an attempt made to concentrate the Jews into one region, the so-called Lublin Reservation. The original plan was to concentrate the great majority of Polish and other European Jews in the Lublin area, which could not by any means either receive them or supply sufficient food and shelter for them. The intention of the Nazis was to demonstrate to the world that the Jews cannot survive except by living in the midst of, and exploiting, other peoples. Later, when the Lublin Reservation failed because diseases caused by overcrowding and starvation spread from there to the German Army itself, Hitler segregated the Jews in ghettos and condemned them to a regime of slow starvation. Meanwhile the Nazis were organizing "sightseeing tours"
of German and satellite newspapermen to show them how inferior a race the Jews were and to what state of degradation and deprivation they could be reduced. This was the chief reason for the touring of the ghettos and for the frequent descriptions of the wretched life in the ghettos in which the German and the German-dominated press gloried.

However, when Allied successes began to inspire some doubts in the Nazi leadership of their ultimate victory, they were determined to keep at least one promise, to make up in some measure for the many they had broken. This was their promise to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Poland became the slaughterhouse to which Jews from all over Europe were sent to be massacred. The ghetto system, where the Jews were dying at the rate of sixteen times their pre-war mortality, appeared too slow. Fearing that their domination of Europe would not long continue, the Germans decided to employ the more speedy method of outright mass murder. Day after day they transported thousands of Jews, first from the Warsaw ghetto and later from other ghettos and towns, to places of execution. Some of these Jews were mowed down by machine-gunfire; others were asphyxiated in gas chambers; many more were sent to die in overcrowded and disease-ridden camps.

The Jews of Warsaw, the first to realize that they were doomed, asked for arms to defend themselves from outright slaughter. At first some Jews, for religious and other reasons, refused to engage in a hopeless fight which would merely hasten their doom. But by April 19, 1943, the 40,000 remaining Jews of Warsaw were convinced that it was better to die fighting than to be slaughtered like the nearly five hundred thousand who had already been deported from the city, and the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto began. The story of that battle is now almost fully known. It will remain, for centuries to come, a great saga of human heroism and of the unbreakable spirit of the Polish Jews. For more than a month, a few thousand wretched and hungry Jews, penned up in a ghetto, separated from the rest of the population by an eight foot brick wall, fought the mighty German Army. The Nazis were able to win only after putting the torch to the ghetto and destroying most of its buildings. More than a thousand Nazi soldiers lost their lives in that first civilian, open, armed uprising against Hitlerism in Europe.
The extermination and mass slaughter continued at an increasing pace during the period under review, and so did the resistance of the doomed Jews. The example of Warsaw was soon followed in others places. Between July 1 and November 15, 1943, according to reports from Jewish underground sources, the ghettos of Bendzin, Czenstochow, Mieltz, Radom, Piotrkow, Bialystok, and Vilna, and in Eastern Galicia the ghettos of Stryj, Sambor, Kolomyja, Drohobycz, and Boryslaw, were liquidated. In addition, the Nazis continued to transport Jews from western and southern European countries to labor camps or to liquidation centers in Poland. On November 3, 1943, the Nazis liquidated the Trawniki camp, which contained 10,000 Jews, mainly survivors of the battle of the Warsaw ghetto. In the typical Nazi manner the people were first led out of the camp and told that they were going to work at digging ditches for military purposes. The work done, they were forced to strip and were machine-gunned to death. The same procedure was repeated two days later, on November 5, in the Poniatow camp, where 1,500 Jews were massacred. By November, 1943, all the ghettos were virtually liquidated; the few surviving Jews were either in labor camps or were hiding in the woods or in the so-called “Aryan” quarters of the larger cities. The only exception was the ghetto of Lodz, located in territory which the Nazis have incorporated into the Reich, where 30,000 Polish Jews and about one hundred thousand Jews from abroad, practically all highly skilled workers, were concentrated and forced to work for the German war machine. However, in the middle of January, 1944, the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto also was begun, with the massacre of 20,000 Jews in one day.

Armed resistance in extermination camps spread throughout the ghettos. In Bialystok, the Jews fought for a month and the Nazis again had to use heavy ammunition and the torch to quell the insurrection. In August, 1943, Tremblinka, the camp with gas chambers, where the Nazis had murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews, was completely destroyed by its inmates, who slew thirty German and Ukrainian guards. The Jews seized the ammunition, set fire to the buildings, and destroyed the gas chambers. Two hundred succeeded in escaping to the neighboring woods. Resistance was also offered by the 7,000 surviving Jews of Tarnow,
when Nazi soldiers came to liquidate the ghetto. Many Jews were killed in the battle and the others were sent to the Oświęcim death camp. In Stryj, where only 250 Jews remained, several of the German policemen sent to liquidate the ghetto were killed and some Jews escaped and joined the guerrilla units.

A particularly harrowing story came out of Lwow, a city which before the war contained a Jewish population of over 100,000. On July 1, 1941, only ten days after the German attack on the Soviet Union, the city was occupied by the Nazis. Immediately pillaging, plundering and murdering of Jews began. Several thousand were rounded up and shot in the rear of the local prison. A Ukrainian police force was created to help the Gestapo. On the anniversary of the assassination of the Ukrainian leader, Semion Petlura, several thousand of the most prominent Jews were deported; they have never been heard from since. Mass murders and massacres continued regularly and the final liquidation came on the 18th and 19th of November, 1943. The remaining Jews, who had been placed in a labor camp in the outskirts of the city, anticipating liquidation, attacked the German guards with hand grenades and pistols. Women's units fought side by side with men's units. Scores of Germans were killed, but only a few Jews managed to escape. After the revolt, the 6,000 survivors were massacred.

Resistance also was offered in Sobibor, Tarnow, Sosnowiec, and smaller towns throughout the country. Everywhere these revolts were ruthlessly suppressed and drowned in a sea of Jewish blood. Nevertheless, resistance continued, and the Jews at least exacted a price for the murder of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children. What is more, they died fighting and demonstrated that the human spirit cannot be conquered by brute force.

Numbers of Jewish groups and parties have taken part in the fight. Orthodox Jews and non-observers; conservatives and radicals; workers, businessmen and professionals; Bundists, Agudists, Zionists, and Communists,—all participated in the battle of the Warsaw ghetto as well as in the subsequent battles in the other Polish cities and towns. Under the leadership of the 28-year old Jewish engineer Michael Klepfish, the Jewish Fighter Organization headed the revolt in Warsaw which was prepared by an underground coordina-
tion committee, uniting the Bund and the Jewish National Committee composed of all the Zionist groups. After the liquidation of the ghettos, this Coordination Committee continued to function and to render valuable service to the surviving Jews in the labor camps and in hiding.

Poland in Exile

The tragic death of Premier Wladislaw Sikorski, on July 4, 1943, in an airplane crash off Gibraltar, deprived the Polish Government-in-Exile of a strong and greatly respected leader. In the reshuffling of the government, President Raczkiewicz assumed much greater power, and General Kazimierz Sosnkowski was appointed Commander-in-Chief while Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, the leader of the Peasant Party, became Prime Minister. The new cabinet also included Dr. Ludwik Grosfeld, a Jewish lawyer, representing the Polish Socialist Party, as Minister of Finance. Great apprehension was expressed in Jewish circles concerning the appointment of General Sosnkowski, who was known as a rabid anti-Semite, especially in connection with his activities during the Russo-Polish war of 1920. At that time, many Polish Jews had volunteered to join the Polish Army to fight off the Soviet invasion. General Sosnkowski, then minister of war, accusing them of sympathy for the Soviets, and therefore of being a danger to Poland, ordered the Jewish soldiers disarmed and sent to an isolation camp in Jablonna in the Carpathian Mountains. Thus, General Sosnkowski became notorious throughout Poland as the man who first set up a special concentration camp for Jewish soldiers.

In this connection, it may be noted here that General Wladislaw Anders, head of the Polish units evacuated from Russia, was generally considered an anti-Semite. In spite of his denials, it has been definitely proven that, in an order of the day addressed to his officers, he stated that while he understood how they felt about the Jews, remembering that they had welcomed the Bolsheviks to Poland, the officers should, nevertheless, try to conceal those feelings at present because "anti-Semitism is unpalatable to the Anglo-Saxon world."

The Jewish representatives in the National Council, Dr. Emanuel Szerer, who succeeded the late Samuel Zygielbojm,
and Dr. Ignacy Szwarzbart have repeatedly called the attention of the government and the National Council to the existence of anti-Semitism in the Polish army. They charged that anti-Semitic propaganda was being disseminated in the armed forces by reactionary elements, and demanded action. The leaders of the Polish Socialist Party and of the Peasant Party supported the Jewish members of the Council and, on January 16, 1944, the Council adopted a resolution declaring that "brotherly relations between members of all races and denominations in the Polish forces are absolutely necessary." In press interviews, General Sosnkowski and General Kukiel, Defense Minister, denied the existence of wide-spread anti-Semitism in the army. However, the subject was brought up in the British House of Commons where a plea was made that those Jewish soldiers who so desire, be permitted to leave the Polish Army and join the British forces. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden then disclosed that two groups of Jewish soldiers numbering 200 had been permitted to transfer to a British Pioneer Unit, but that no further transfers would be allowed. In the meantime, 24 Jewish soldiers who had left the Polish forces because of persecution were brought by the Polish military authorities before a court-martial on charges of desertion. After considerable protests and agitation in the United States as well as in Great Britain, the convicted soldiers were pardoned.

In this connection, it should be emphasized that the Jewish representatives did not ask for the right of Jewish soldiers to transfer to the British Army. On the contrary, they stressed their right and duty as Polish citizens to remain in the Polish army, but at the same time requested severe punishment for those who were responsible for anti-Semitism in the armed forces. The Polish government promised to do this as well as to stop all anti-Jewish propaganda in the Army.

Sympathy for the plight of the Jews in Poland was expressed on various occasions by government representatives. After considerable delay, the government ordered the underground leadership to provide the Jews with arms. Those arms made the revolt in the ghettos possible. It also was revealed that, at the end of 1942, a special Relief Council for Jews was established under the jurisdiction of the Delegate of the Polish Government-in-Exile in Poland. The Council, headed by the Delegate, is composed of representa-
tives of the Polish Socialist Party, the Peasant Party and the Democratic Party, and the two Jewish groups—the Bund and the Jewish National Council. Its activities are non-political, and consisted in giving Jews material assistance and aid in finding shelter in "Aryan" quarters, in providing Jews with identification papers, and helping them to secure work. Similarly, on April 20, 1944, the Polish Government-in-Exile created within the Ministry of Interior in London a Council for the Rescue of the Jewish Population in Poland. This Council is composed of three Polish and three Jewish representatives. The creation of the two Councils, in Poland and in London, was considered evidence of the Polish government’s willingness to help save the remnants of Polish Jewry, which on the eve of liberation, were estimated at between three and eight hundred thousand.

2. U. S. S. R.

Atrocities

As the Red Army was driving the Nazis out of the Soviet Union along a 2,000 mile front, the gruesome picture of Nazi brutality unfolded in the hundreds of towns, villages and cities. The reports that seeped through Nazi censorship during the occupation were unfortunately fully confirmed. In liberated town after town, tales of incredible German bestiality and mass massacre of hundreds of thousands of civilians were told. Of course, the Jews were among the first and favorite victims of the Nazis and, in the many Ukrainian, Crimean and White Russian towns known in Jewish history for centuries as containing important Jewish communities, all Jews were wiped out. The full story of Nazi atrocities cannot yet be told, because all facts are not known. But town after town revealed the same story of atrocities and mass murders.

An official government commission to investigate Nazi atrocities was sent to Caucasia after its liberation. The report of that commission, based on eyewitness accounts, revealed that thousands of Jews were drowned in the oil wells around the city of Maikop. Among those victims were refugees
from Galicia and White Russia who had been sent to the Caucasus. The report also revealed that in the town of Shackty, near Rostov, the advancing Red Army found the corpses of 30,000 Jews who had been drowned, by the fleeing Nazis, in flooded coal mines.

After the liberation of Odessa, a city with a population of more than 153,000 Jews before the outbreak of the war, no Jews were left in the city, and it was charged that the Nazis in one day had massacred 25,000 persons, most of them Jews. Some of the Jews of Odessa had succeeded in fleeing with the Red Army before the occupation by the Germans, and some had joined the guerilla bands.

A similar story was told about the former Jewish population in Kiev. Nahum Lieberman, an editor of Rostov, who had spent 16 months under the Germans in Kiev, described the tragedy of the Jewish community in Kiev, in the following terms:

"Soon after the Germans entered the city, a large number of Jews was packed into a cinema building,—men, women and children. They were kept there all night. The following morning the city was shaken by a terrific explosion. The cinema was blown up. The fire raged for six days. A few days later, the Germans put up posters in the streets ordering all Jews to assemble in the cemetery, and threatening that anyone found sheltering a Jew would be shot. The same night the news spread through the city that thousands of Jews had been massacred in the cemetery. The massacre continued for three days."

After the recapture of Orel, it was learned that its entire Jewish population had been massacred. According to the reports of Tass, the official Soviet News Agency, "First the heads of the Jewish families were summoned by the Gestapo. They were never seen afterwards. Subsequently, whole families were led away from their homes and were found murdered on the Bolkhov highway, near the shooting range of the dynamo factory."

Thus, in town after town liberated by the Red Army, the same story of mass murder, atrocity and torture was told. According to a report of Pravda, the Germans had completely exterminated the Jewish population of the Donetz
Basin. Three thousand Jews were shot or hanged in Krantorsk. Thousands were killed in Gorlovka. After the reoccupation of the city of Taganrog, the Red Army discovered that 10,000 Jews had been massacred by the Nazis in that city. The victims included Jews brought to Taganrog from neighboring towns as well as some from Bessarabia, besides the Jewish population of the city itself. After the re-occupation of Kharkov, the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, it was found that the city was also completely without Jews. The first battalion that entered Kharkov was headed by the Jew Chaim Kazham who stated: “Some Jews of the city were hidden by the Ukrainian peasants in the neighboring villages. Others were supplied with documents stating that they were Christian. The Gestapo, however, carried out a thorough search in all villages and arrested everybody whom they suspected of being Jewish. The Jewish cemetery was uprooted and all the Jewish library buildings, together with all their books were burned down by the Nazis.” After the liberation of Dnepropetrovsk in October, 1943, the Moscow radio reported that the Germans had murdered 20,000 Jews in that city.

The official Soviet Commission investigating German atrocities against the civilian population also reported that the Nazis had wiped out the Jewish population in many smaller towns and villages. For instance, the town of Liady, in the Vitebsk area, once a well-known Jewish religious center, was completely razed by the Nazis, and gruesome stories of torture followed by massacre were told by eye-witnesses. It was also reported that 3,000 Jewish soldiers who were among the Russian troops captured in the Ukraine by the Germans, were executed. After the liberation of Berdichev, in March, 1944, the Soviet Commission reported that, immediately after the occupation of that city in July, 1941, the Nazis had massacred all the Jews in the Berdichev province.

The full story will not be known for some time, but according to the most reliable information of American newspaper correspondents in Russia, it is estimated that about one million Jews had been exterminated by the Nazis, especially during their retreat from the Ukraine and Crimea. According to the census of 1938, the pre-war Jewish population of
Russia was between three and one-half and four million. That means that about 25 to 30 per cent of all the Russian Jews were killed during the nearly three years of German occupation.

**Jewish War Effort**

Fortunately, however, hundreds of thousands of Jews had succeeded in fleeing before the German armies into the interior of Russia and in joining their fellow-Jews there in contributing to the general fight of the Soviet Union against the Hitlerite invaders. According to all reports, they have done their share and more. Nine Jews have won the highest decoration, that of Hero of the Soviet Union. The Soviet press has been full of praise for a group of Jews who had been evacuated from the Galician oil regions. They were sent to the Russian oil fields and, by introducing improved methods, have considerably increased the Soviet production. It was also reported that 6% of the soldiers of the Polish divisions, which were fighting beside the Red Army, were Polish Jews. Stories of bravery and heroism of Jewish soldiers in the Red Army and in guerilla bands are continually reported in the Soviet press. One of the Jewish guerilla leaders in White Russia, known generally as Shimen, was credited with killing 2,000 Germans and defeating many enemy units. Several Jewish army men were mentioned by name in the orders of the day of Premier Stalin and cited for bravery. It was reported that Jews were very active in the guerilla movement in western White Russia as well as in the Ukraine and have thus considerably contributed to the liberation of those provinces. Several Jews have occupied important positions in the Red Army, including several generals, among them Mikhail Cherniavsky, who at 43 became a lieutenant general and was considered one of the outstanding leaders of the Red Army. According to official figures of the Soviet Union, 32,067 Jews have been decorated for heroism and bravery during the war. This put the Jews in fourth place among the nationalities of the U. S. S. R. on the basis of decorations received for bravery. The number of awards received by Jews is far in excess of the Jewish proportion of the general population.
Communal Life

Since 1941 a determined attempt by the Soviet Jewish community towards cooperation with the other Jewish communities has been under way. The outstanding event, in connection with this effort, was the visit of Professor Solomon Mikhoels, chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and the well-known poet Colonel Itzik Fefer, to the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.

Many outstanding Jews of the Soviet Union participated in the third annual meeting of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in April, 1944. The conference again reaffirmed its desire to cooperate with Jewish communities in other countries in the common struggle against Hitlerism. These efforts toward rapprochement with the Jews of other countries did not remain without result. Jewish leaders in the United States and Great Britain have repeatedly expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Jews of Soviet Russia, and special efforts in this direction have been made by the Jewish community in Palestine. The changed attitude of the Soviet Jewish community towards Jews in other countries was evidenced in various ways. New Year messages to the Jews of the United States and other countries were sent by Samuel Chobrutsky, president of the Moscow Jewish community. Various appeals for cooperation and solidarity were made by Soviet Jewish leaders.

The attitude of the Soviet government towards the Jewish religion, the same as towards all other religions, also changed considerably. A special bureau for Jewish religious matters has been established in Moscow and facilities were granted to rebuild religious life in the Soviet areas liberated from the Nazis. The Jewish community in Moscow has also been recognized as the authorized representative of the Moscow Jews, which means that the community as such has been maintaining official relations with the government. It was reported that a rabbinical seminary was to be organized in the Soviet Union which would receive the same rights and facilities as the seminaries of other religions. According to all reports, religious fervor among Jews has considerably increased during the war, and the synagogues are crowded. Many uniforms, even those of high ranking officers, could
be seen in the synagogues, a thing that was inconceivable only a short while ago in Soviet Russia. Also, the attitude of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet Jewish community towards Palestine seems to have changed considerably, although no official statement has been made on the subject.

3. Baltic Countries

Earlier reports of the massacres of the Jews in Riga and other Latvian cities were confirmed, during the period under review, by the few Jews who succeeded in escaping from the country. The Jewish population of Latvia, estimated at 94,000 before the war, has been almost completely wiped out. Swedish newspapers have reported that there were no more ghettos in Latvia because virtually all Jews there had been murdered. The few hundred survivors were put to forced labor. According to various reports, mass executions took place in the woods near Bigernieju on the Lubansk highway, where the majority of the Jews in Riga were liquidated. Of the 30,000 persons living in the Riga ghetto in December, 1941, only 3,000 remained by August, 1942. By the end of 1943, there were no more Jews left in Riga or in the other important cities of Latvia. Also executed in Latvia were Jews who were brought thither from Austria, Czechoslovakia and France.

A similar story can be told about Lithuania. There, too, it is reported, Nazis and Lithuanian Quislings have executed the great majority of the Jewish population. Thus, according to the Swedish press, in July, 1943, only 30,000 Jews remained in Lithuania of the pre-war population of 156,000. The remainder were confined in forced labor camps. Practically all the Jewish provincial communities were annihilated and, by the end of 1943, only a few thousand Jews remained in the ghettos of Kovno and Vilno. The Lithuanian official census of 1943 reported no Jews in Vilno, which, according to the 1939 pre-war Polish census had 54,000 Jews, or 28% of the population. When the Red Army occupied Vilno, war correspondents reported having found only three Jews, who told them that the entire Jewish population had been wiped out. It would seem that some Lithuanian Jews escaped to forests and joined partisan bands. According to
one report, six partisan detachments composed of Jews have been actually fighting the Germans in Lithuania.

Although members of the Catholic hierarchy have denounced the German anti-Jewish massacres and have called upon their followers to refuse collaboration with the Nazis, a large section of the Lithuanian population, according to reports, have cooperated with the country's enemies.

In Estonia, where before the war there was a tiny Jewish community (less than 5,000 in a total population of 1,125,000) there were no Jews left by the end of 1943. The Deutsche Zeitung in Osten, published by the Nazis in Riga, reported that the Estonians were forced by the Nazis to proclaim the 26th of October as an annual national holiday to celebrate the elimination of Jews from their country.

4. Bohemia-Moravia

CZECHOSLOVAKIA was the first country to fall to the Hitler invasion. The Nazis had conquered the country without firing a shot and had proceeded to divide it against itself. They had set up several Quisling regimes of which, as far as the Jews were concerned, the one in Slovakia was the most vicious. For a while, the situation in Bohemia and Moravia was better than in most of the other Nazi-occupied countries. However, the Nazi grip tightened from month to month and the movement for the extermination of the Jewish population gained in momentum. According to Swiss dispatches, by the end of 1943, Jewish property confiscated and "Aryanized" in Sudetenland alone was valued at over eight and one-half billion Czech kronen (about $300,000,000), which practically meant all Jewish property in the province.

The great majority of Czech Jews have either already been "liquidated" or are being held in the Terezin (Theresienstadt) camp. Many of these have been in the camp as long as three or four years. Jews from other Nazi-occupied countries, including 1,600 Danish Jews, are confined in this camp, together with Jews deported from Germany, Austria and Bohemia-Moravia. Several reports, not officially confirmed, stated that the transfer of Jews from Terezin to Poland increased during the year. It is, however, known that during the months of August and September, 1943, some seven thousand
Czechoslovak Jews were transferred from Terezin to the concentration camp at Birkenau, Upper Silesia. The Germans stated that, at the beginning of March, 1944, there were in the Terezin concentration camp two hundred and forty thousand Jews of all nationalities, whereas other reports placed the number at only forty-five thousand.

Those Jews who were still left in Czechoslovakia saw their ration cards further decreased in food value. Jews in Prague could not obtain anything but bread, potatoes, and margarine, and were forbidden to buy clothes and shoes. There was no restaurant in the whole city of Prague that was allowed to serve Jews. All Jewish apartments were registered and placed at the disposal of Germans who were coming to Prague in increasing numbers. Upon their arrival they were given Jewish apartments of their own choosing, which the Jews were forced to vacate. All Jewish schools, which were established in the Protectorate after the segregation of Jewish school children, were closed, and no private instruction of Jewish children was permitted.

Reports continued to appear showing the friendliness of Czech Christians towards Jews. Cases were frequent of individuals being sentenced to long-term imprisonment either for helping Jews evade deportation, or for providing them with food. Several times the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile called upon the Czech people to assist Jews whenever possible. Thus, for instance, the Government called upon the Czechoslovak physicians to refuse to sterilize Jews with “Aryan” spouses, who had been offered by the Germans the choice of submitting to sterilization or being deported. Repeated assurances were made by President Benes, Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, and other government representatives that, in the future Czechoslovakian Jews would enjoy full equality of rights as they did before the German occupation. The Government also promised to punish all those who are collaborating with the Germans in the persecution of Jews. Some concern, however, was aroused in Jewish circles by President Benes’ proposed solution of the problem of minorities. Dr. Benes believes in the elimination of minorities by means of exchanges of populations or complete assimilation. Either solution would, according to many, adversely affect the Jews,
IV. SOUTHERN EUROPE

By Eugene Hevesi*

1. Hungary

On March 19, 1944, Hitler wiped out the last vestige of a distinction between those nations which indulged in the illusion of being his allies, and those which he had subjugated by force. On that day, his legions started and, within a few days completed, the military occupation of Hungary. Since then, eight hundred thousand native Jews, and large numbers of Jewish refugees from Nazi-dominated neighbor lands, the last large and physically intact Jewish population in Europe, together with many so-called "non-Aryans," are under absolute Nazi subjugation.

To realize the portent of the change, we have to consider the following antecedents. By the end of 1943, Hungary's anti-Jewish legislation had been carried out to the hilt. Under its provisions, about half of the Jewish breadwinners had been statutorily deprived of their occupations and became, to a large extent, dependent on Jewish charity. At various times large numbers of Jews, occasionally hundreds of thousands, were put to compulsory labor, partly in Hungary, partly at the Russian front. It was reported that, on one occasion, only 20% of a Jewish labor force of some 20,000 men returned home from Russia, the rest having been lost without a trace. This large-scale labor service resulted in a further grave deterioration of the general economic situation of the Jewish masses. Finally, during the second half of 1943, the government proceeded with the first confiscations of Jewish property, by expropriating, against the issuance of government bonds of less than questionable value, Jewish landed property to the extent of some 700,000 yokes.

On the other hand, however, the following circumstances permitted the Jews of Hungary at least to live and hope for

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liberation. Roughly, one-half of the Jewish breadwinners remained in a position to continue their original occupations and to eke out a living for their families. Considerable numbers of those who lost their original occupations, found some devious but tolerated ways to earn at least some irregular income. Others were permitted to take jobs as industrial laborers, a field which the "Jew Law" did not close to them. The Jewish community was permitted to organize large-scale self-help for the benefit of non-employed and destitute Jews. It was able to do so because, with the exception of land, no Jewish property right was violated or curtailed until the fateful spring of 1944.

While in the reoccupied territories in the south and in the north, Hungarian army units committed grave atrocities against the local non-Hungarian and the Jewish populations, in the original pre-war territory of Hungary, Jews dwelt unharmed, and in personal, physical security. Jews dwelt safely in their original homes; there were no restrictions on their liberty of movement, travel, or recreation, and no discrimination against them in the distribution of food supply. They were protected also from the malignity of the local Nazi groups. Finally, since the summer of 1941, when two-thirds of what was to be the first transport of 18,000 Jews deported from Hungary to Eastern Galicia, were massacred by Ukrainian bands under German command, there were no further mass deportations of Jews until the Nazi occupation of the land.

These facts indicate that with the beginning of the Allied military successes, the Hungarian government changed its one-way compromising with Hitler, into a desperate two-way compromising, in so far as Jewish policies were concerned, with both Hitler and the democracies; the fear of the government for the ultimate disastrous consequences of further concessions to Hitler became a determining factor. The political consequence of this change was a conservative trend in anti-Jewish policies. The Hungarian government refused to countenance the idea of mass exterminations and mass expropriations. It tried to keep Hungary's active anti-Semitism within the bounds of the domestic "Jew Law,"
by preventing inroads into Jewish economic and social positions which would immediately affect the life and property of the victims. In their need of arguments of mitigation for the hour of reckoning with the victorious Allies, the government even went so far as to tolerate, between the summer of 1943 and the spring of 1944, the renewed influx of large numbers of foreign Jews from Poland and Slovakia.

This trend toward mildness in the treatment of Jews did not lack popular support. The main current of public opinion failed to take the side of Nazism against the Jews. It proved overwhelmingly anti-Nazi and largely decent towards the Jews. It was this popular sentiment which gave the government the necessary political foothold and support in its efforts to avoid or, at least, delay taking the extreme anti-Jewish measures demanded by Hungary's fatal position as a Nazi satellite.

Popular sympathy and solidarity with the Jews was shown in many ways. These ranged from daring individual manifestations of solidarity, to mass demonstrations and outright political action in the defense of the Jews. Only a few examples can be cited here. In the fall of 1943, a new party program of the Smallholders Party was announced, which included the demand for abolition of the anti-Jewish laws. The demand was backed by many Catholic and Protestant clergymen close to the peasant movement. In December, 1943, Deputy Andrew Bajcsy-Zsilinszky introduced in parliament a resolution of the same party demanding the immediate revocation of the “Jew law” which the resolution characterized as a “disgrace for Hungary.” All liberal and socialist members of parliament backed the resolution. Earlier, in September, 1943, Ferenc Nagy, chairman of the Peasant League, at a meeting of this group representing three million landless peasants, demanded the abolition of all legislation discriminating against any Hungarian citizen. In December, 1943, a pro-Jewish demonstration took place in Budapest on the occasion of the presentation of the imported Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda-film “The Eternal Jew.” The public caused such an uproar that the film had to be withdrawn from circulation. In March, 1943,
the Budapest Nazi daily *Uj Magyarság* complained: "Hungarian women no longer confine their madness to listening to broadcasts from England. Some now go so far as to demonstrate their sympathies in the streets. Especially ladies in new spring suits who wear the Star of David on their costumes."

These facts and many others were indicative of an atmosphere in which it was possible for Hugo Csergo, secretary of the Jewish community of Budapest, to declare in a widely discussed public address, in January, 1944, that "the restoration of lost rights and liberties is not just a Jewish demand, but an eternal ideal of humanism; that is why we shall reconquer them. Hungary has lived for two centuries in the liberal spirit, and the transitory period we are now living through cannot deflect us from our proper course." But, alas, an atmosphere in which such brave hopes could be so openly expressed could exist only in an independent Hungary, and Hungary's independence was completely at the mercy of her Nazi "ally."

The occupation of Hungary put a sudden end to the last vestige of that independence. One of the official German pretexts for the occupation was "the unrestricted presence of some one million Jews as a concrete menace to the safety of German arms on the Balkan peninsula."

Since then, Hitler's soldiery and Gestapo have the land in their grip, a compliant puppet government is posing as national authority, and the leadership of Hungarian national opposition to Hitler, — democrats, socialists, liberals, peasant leaders, writers and thinkers, fighters for freedom, adherents of the Allied cause and defenders of the unfortunate Jew are all in the merciless clutches of the Gestapo.

Thus, all external and internal conditions requisite for the "liquidation" of Hungarian Jewry, the last remaining major bloc of Jewish existence in Europe, were established.

With tender regard for the sentiments of the Hungarian people, the process of liquidation is not being carried out on Hungarian soil. As early as April, 1944, the entire Jewish population of Carpatho-Ruthenia, a territory re-occupied by Hungary in 1940, some 60,000 to 80,000 people
of both sexes and all ages, were deported to extermination camps in German-occupied Polish Silesia. This was a joint operation of the German and Hungarian military authorities, and was motivated by alleged military considerations.

That this action was, in fact, the first chapter in an all-out campaign of extermination, became increasingly evident in the course of May and June.

On May 30, reports from London based on news from the Polish underground stated that 62 railway cars packed with Jewish children had arrived in Poland from Hungary, en route to the Oswiecim (Auschwitz) "extermination camp" in Silesia. In the same month, the Hungarian Nazi press started clamoring for the deportation, rather than the internment of Jews in ghettos and concentration camps, on the ground that the latter procedure does not serve the "national cause" because it only stimulates popular sympathy for the victims. Nevertheless, many in Hungary still clung to the hope that transportation difficulties would not permit the deportation of 800,000 to 1,000,000 people, that the westward push of the victorious Red Army would not allow sufficient time for the execution of such plans, and that even the lackey government would not dare to lend itself to the execution of these fiendish designs. These tragically unjustified hopes seemed to have found some substantiation in a declaration made, on June 5, by Lajos Szasz, Minister of Industry in the puppet cabinet: "The radical measures taken in our country for the solution of the Jewish problem must not disturb the country's economy. The government regards the country's production as being more important than the Jewish problem. We do not aim at exterminating the Jews. The government regulations do not indicate such aims. It would be unworthy of Hungarians to contemplate the physical annihilation of Jews. The Jewish problem cannot be solved by anti-Semitism based on hatred . . . ."

A few days later, mass deportations from Hungary started. By the end of June, news emanating from every available source of information, agreed in stating that 400,000 to 450,000 Jews had already been deported, and that the re-
remainder is in the process of being deported at the rate of 12,000 to 13,000 persons a day. All the transports are being directed to the notorious extermination area in Polish Silesia, and a large proportion of the deportees perished en route.

Thus, the only large Jewish group in western Europe, which had managed to hold out until the very dawn of victory, appears to be destined not to see the day of liberation.

Against the background of these catastrophic developments, it is almost meaningless as well as hardly necessary to mention that during the first period of the new regime under Hitler, all Jewish property was confiscated, all Jewish business liquidated or "Aryanized," all Jews eliminated from all kinds of occupations and professions, and that almost all were concentrated in hastily established ghettos, concentration and labor camps, many of which are near or within the most bombed industrial and communications centers of the country.

While there is a segment in Hungarian society which seeks profit from this tragedy, the program of extermination has generally met with passionate popular condemnation and opposition. Tens of thousands of Christian Hungarians are known to have rushed to the aid of Jews in distress, trying to shield and hide them, to take over their homes and valuables for safekeeping, and to help them in their futile attempts to escape. When the confinement of Jews in camps and ghettos started, in many places masses of townsfolk swarmed to the places of confinement, carrying food and clothing for the inmates. Both Catholic and Protestant clergymen issued thousands of spurious birth certificates, in the vain hope of saving their bearers from persecution. In one small community, the rabbi and all four Christian clergymen were arrested for connivance in such measures. Many Hungarians have been prosecuted for wearing the yellow badge in protest against the shocking persecutions, and young Christian girls have frequently been parading the streets of cities and towns arm-in-arm with young Jews wearing the Star of David. Many Christians refused to leave their dwellings in sections designated for ghettos. The hiding of Jewish property by Christian friends and well-
wishers assumed proportions which forced the government to form strong special police units to search for such belongings. On May 4, the entire leadership of the Union of Front Fighters of Hungary, led by Chairman General Count Joseph Takach-Tolvay, resigned in protest against a government order expelling all Jews from membership in the organization. Throughout the entire period, the local Nazi press did not cease complaining about these demonstrations, bitterly denouncing Christians who helped or openly fraternized with Jews. One of these Nazi journals expressed the view that "never has been so much friendliness demonstrated towards the Jews as in these crucial days of liberation from the Jewish yoke." On May 9, 1944, the government threatened with severe punishment, including internment, any Hungarians who aided or sheltered Jews. But despite these warnings and the appeals of the Nazi-controlled press, hundreds of people were arrested for hiding Jews and helping them to escape. Even high government officials were accused of such conduct. According to a report by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, published on July 9, the opposition of the Hungarian people was mounting daily. The United States War Refugee Board reported having received information that in many places large groups of people were threatening open revolt against the deportations of Jews, and the Office of War Information has learned that most deportations were being carried out at night, in order to avoid clashes with "angry mobs" who attempted to rescue Jews.

But, alas, these brave demonstrations were futile, as were the solemn warnings of the governments of the Allies, led by President Roosevelt. On March 24, only five days after the Nazi occupation of Hungary, President Roosevelt issued a statement warning that "all who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death" will be punished, and appealing to the Hungarian people to do all in their power to prevent the threatened extermination of the Jews. The President's statement was supported by British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, in a corresponding declaration. On June 4, a similar appeal to the people of Hungary was made public by the members of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, followed, on June 21, by a
statement of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, endorsed on June 26 by Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.

Unfortunately, the decision is with Hitler, who is losing everything and has, therefore, nothing to lose by crowning his record of inhumanity with the doom of another million human beings.

2. Rumania

According to the best available information, of the original pre-war Jewish population of Rumania, numbering about 800,000, some 300,000 to 350,000 may be alive on Rumanian territory. Of the pre-war total, some 180,000 were in territories ceded to Hungary and Bulgaria; 200,000 have been deported to the deadly concentration camps of the southern Ukrainian province of Transnistria held by Rumania until the spring of 1944 when it was liberated by Soviet Russia; of these deportees some 160,000 perished; finally, at least 126,000 Jews were killed throughout Rumania.

The experiences, during the year, of the 300,000 Jews dragging out a wretched existence in Rumania proper (outside of Transnistria) can be but vaguely imagined from the information available.

In September, 1943, the minister of labor reported that the confiscation of Jewish property in Rumania, which had started in 1940, was complete. No detailed reports of the results were issued, but the newspaper Timpul revealed that, up to the end of 1942, 104,000 yokes of land, 92,000 buildings and almost 13,000 firms had been “Rumanified.” By September, 1943, most of the Jewish-owned trade licences had been withdrawn. At the same time all business enterprises were ordered to employ two Rumanians for each “indispensable” Jew still employed, on the basis of special permits, “in order that they [Jewish employees] could be replaced by Rumanians at a moment’s notice.”

In spite of this drastic elimination of the Jewish masses from economic life, the Government continued to extort
the second half of a four billion lei special tax imposed upon the Jews in the first half of 1943. Most Jews were forced to sell their last belongings in order to pay the levy. Even so, the final date of payment had to be extended until the end of 1943. In addition, Jews unable to serve in labor battalions for reasons of health, were liable to pay a special "Jewish military tax" before November 1. The sanction in both cases was deportation to Transnistria. In February, 1944, foreign Jews were, however, exempted from the law of confiscation of Jewish property.

Discrimination against the Jews in the distribution of food was maintained throughout the year under review, with the exception of some privileged categories, like bearers of high military orders, war widows, and disabled soldiers of the last war. In general, Jews obtained only half of the meat and bread rations allotted to others, and only one sixth of the normal sugar ration.

At the same time, conscription of Jewish men and women between 16 and 60 years of age continued unabated. Those failing to comply were tried by military courts. According to a report to the Stockholm Dagens Nyheter of January 5, 1944, about half of a force of Jewish slave laborers on the Russian front had died "owing to lack of food, clothing and medical care."

In September, 1943, some 6,000 Polish Jews who, together with large numbers of other Polish refugees had fled to Rumania after the conquest of Poland in 1939, were turned over by the Antonescu government to the Germans.

The most tragic chapter in the history of Rumania's Jews was, however, the fate of those 200,000 who were deported to Transnistria during 1942 and 1943. When, in the early months of 1944, their repatriation to Rumanian territory was carried out, only some 40,000 were found alive in Transnistria — about 160,000 human beings had evidently perished from starvation, exposure and disease.

The decision to repatriate the survivors was probably motivated by such factors as the irresistible onslaught towards the West of the Russian army; the menace of retribution for atrocities brought home to the Rumanian government notably by President Roosevelt's warnings; and the incon-
venience of permitting a considerable number of Jews to go over to the Allied side. It was also said that, through neutral channels, the President's War Refugee Board had a share in bringing the repatriation about.

Whatever the decisive motive may have been, the step was utilized by the government for extortion. Huge ransoms disguised as fees for identity cards were demanded. The price of these was determined by the "beneficiary's" blocked financial means. The total sum had to be advanced immediately by the Jewish Central Office.

The effect of the general military situation upon Rumania's Quislings was indicated also by the fact that in March, 1944, 120 Jewish refugee children were allowed to sail on a Swedish Red Cross vessel to Palestine. In April, 506 additional Rumanian Jews were brought to Palestine on Turkish steamers. The President's War Refugee Board was responsible for the successful execution of these rescue missions.

3. Slovakia

Of the pre-war Jewish population of about 95,000, in July, 1943, approximately 18,000 remained in Slovakia. This number included 3,000 Jews spared because they were judged "economically indispensable," and 5,000 baptized Jews. The rest had been deported to internment camps or extermination points in Eastern Galicia. The number of deported Jews who remain alive is unknown, as news from Poland is scarce and unreliable. What is known of the fate of Polish Jewry does not, however, warrant much hope for the survival of large numbers of deported Slovak Jews.

The life of the small remnants of the Jewish communities in Slovakia has been embittered by the puppet government and the Hlinka Guard, its Nazi-Fascist militia, blindly complying with directives from Berlin. At the end of August, 1943, all Jews were forbidden by an order of Sano Mach, Minister of the Interior, to appear in the streets unless going and coming from work. In December, 1943, about 4,000 Jews were engaged in forced labor, mainly on road construction and flood control work. By the end of 1942, the confiscation of Jewish property valued at $160,000,000 was completed and in the spring of the succeeding year, the last
stage of this wholesale pillage started with the distribution of Jewish-owned estates and houses. The real objective of the campaign was revealed by the fact that only members of the Hlinka Guard and of the German Folk Party in Slovakia could apply for leases or for sales permits. According to a report of the Slovak Land Office, by August, 1943, a total of 104,000 yokes of land had passed into "Aryan" hands. On November 3, 1943, the government ordered the registration with the Statistical Board in Bratislava of all debts owed by Jews deported or absent from the country. The purpose of the decree has not been clarified.

By the end of December, 1943, the elimination of Jews from business life was almost complete. Lumbering was the only industry under Nazi press attack for tolerating the employment of a small number of Jewish experts. Drastic curbs imposed upon Jewish business men gravely affected the country's economic life. According to the Bratislava Nazi paper Grenzbote of December 24, 1943, Hungarian and neutral merchants have persistently refused to deal with "pure" Slovakian firms which did not employ Jewish managers. The foreign merchants claimed, complains the Nazi organ, that Slovaks were so inefficient that it proved impossible to do business with them. This may have been the reason for the report of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile that Slovak commissioners appointed "Aryanizers" of Jewish firms have manifested a growing tendency to employ Jews clandestinely as managers. These and other categories of "economically indispensable" Jews obtain small salaries and consequently pay low taxes, complained Gardista, organ of the Hlinka Guard. At the same time, they get free lodgings from their employers, as a consequence of which, the paper alleged, "they can afford to buy food at high prices."

Throughout the year under review, the Slovak and local German Nazi press continued its campaign for the deportation and extermination of all Jews. Under the impact of growing Allied military successes, the anti-Semitic press tends to stress the alleged threat of "Jewish revenge" in the advent of an Allied victory. "Jews are quietly compiling black-lists of Aryans active in anti-Semitic policies for 'the day of reckoning'" Gardista asserted in August, 1943.
At the same time, *Grenzbote*, official German Nazi paper, complained that the Slovak population which in 1940 was still highly receptive to anti-Jewish ideas, was becoming more and more friendly towards Jews. Both leading Nazi organs consistently warn against relaxation of anti-Jewish measures and plead for the deportation of all Jews from Slovakia.

Fear of a new wave of deportations seized the Jewish community when on January 27, 1944, a new registration of Jews over the age of thirteen was ordered. Motivation for this measure was the official intent of “getting rid of foreign Jews.” It is probable that the contemplated deportation may not have occurred because of the victorious advance of the Russian army in the spring of 1944 almost to the frontiers of Slovakia. Growing popular dislike of anti-Jewish bestiality may have been an additional factor of retardation. Reiterated warnings by the Czechoslovak government-in-exile addressed to the people and to the puppet government of Slovakia, against participation in further anti-Jewish atrocities are likely to have bolstered the spirit of resistance, and the fear of retribution.

4. Yugoslavia

Until the capitulation of Italy in September, 1943, there was a marked difference between the treatment of the tragic remainder of Yugoslavia’s original Jewish population of about 80,000, in the territories held by German and Quisling forces, on one hand, and by Italian troops, on the other.

In the German-occupied or controlled territories, almost all Jews had been bestially murdered by S. S. troops, the Gestapo, or the Croatian Ustashi. By the summer of 1943, not a single Jewish inmate remained in several camps originally used for the confinement of Jewish prisoners. Except in Zagreb and in Belgrade, where a few old Jewish men and women were reported to have survived, no Jew remained alive in towns in the German-controlled area.

In the Italian-occupied parts of Croatia, Dalmatia and Herzegovina, along the Adriatic coast, Jews were robbed of their property and banned from all occupations but they were
permitted to live. Italian commanders even admitted many refugees escaping from the German and Ustashi-held sectors. The Italians also tolerated the flight of Jews from Yugoslavia to Italian territory. By August, 1943, of the more than 7,500 Jews, who had succeeded in reaching Italy, about 6,000 were Yugoslav Jews, the rest German and Austrian refugees. According to reports reaching the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, their treatment in Italy had been relatively humane. Some 1,500 Yugoslav Jews succeeded in crossing the Hungarian border where they were interned.

Conditions in Italian-held sections of Yugoslavia changed drastically after the withdrawal or disarmament of Italian troops. In the port of Spalato (Split) 600 Jewish refugees were rounded up by the Gestapo and deported to Poland. The news that all Jews living in the eastern or Bulgarian-occupied districts of Bitolje, Skoplje and Stip, had also been deported to Poland, indicates that deportation to the Polish extermination areas has become the general lot of Yugoslavia's Jewish survivors.

Many Jews have been fighting on the side of Yugoslavia's heroic patriot armies, and several Jewish guerilla units are known to be participating in the fight against the invader. In December, 1943, it became known that Dr. Moshe Pijade, a Jewish physician and writer, had been named vice-president of the Yugoslav National Council formed by Marshal Tito.

5. Bulgaria

According to an official announcement by the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, in December, 1943, there were 37,147 Jews in that country. Of these, 25,032, who had lived in Sofia, the capital, had been deported to ghettos in provincial towns, or imprisoned in concentration camps.

The expulsion from the capital completed not only the elimination of Jews from the country's economic life, but also their segregation from their non-Jewish co-nationals. The final step in this direction was the exclusion of Jewish children from all public, including elementary, schools. Jews had long been barred from universities and high schools.
In January, 1944, Jews having Bulgarian-sounding names were given two months within which to change them to Jewish names.

Towards the end of 1943, Jews expelled from Sofia were permitted to return for ten days, in order to sell or to store movable personal property left behind in their confiscated homes. The property could be sold only to the commissariat of Jewish affairs, and the proceeds were placed in blocked accounts from which only limited monthly allowances could be withdrawn.

The Jews of Bulgaria were more fortunate than their co-religionists in other Balkan countries in one important respect—there were no deportations of Jews from Bulgaria proper. On the other hand, most able-bodied Jews between 17 and 45 years of age were subject to compulsory labor, and many were forced to drain swampland in Thrazia and other Bulgarian-occupied Greek and Jugoslav territories.

The victories of the Allies, notably the swift advance of the Russian army towards the Balkans, made a deep impression upon the Bulgarian population. Despite intensive propaganda by their own government and German Nazi official agitation, there were manifestations of popular doubts of the correctness of the government's pro-Nazi policy. In Sofia, there were even demonstrations against the expulsion of Jews. But this trend failed to develop sufficient strength to move the German-controlled government to retreat from the line of radical anti-Semitism. Not even the fact that the expulsion of the Jews from Sofia proved, in the words of the liberal daily Zora, a "catastrophe for the economic structure of Bulgaria," had any serious effect upon this Nazi-dictated policy.

Nevertheless, as Allied victories increased, active popular resistance to the Germans and their collaborators grew. That Jews participated in such resistance is indicated by the fact that in October, 1943, the German DNB news agency reported that a list of Bulgarian saboteurs "contained the names of no less than 141 Jews," and that "of a band of seven terrorists recently arrested in Bulgaria, no less than six were Jews."
6. Greece

The summer and fall of 1943 saw the end of the weird tragedy of Greece’s Jewish population of over 73,000.

In the early summer, the German authorities of occupation carried out, under horrifying circumstances, the mass deportation of Jews from entire Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia, and from the main center of Jewish life in Greece, the city of Salonika. It was not long before it became known that Salonika’s estimated 53,000 deportees were destined for Oswiecim, and other extermination camps in occupied Poland. No Jews remain in Salonika, Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia. Reports reaching London, in March, 1944, from Polish underground sources indicated that most of the deportees from Greece perished in the “gas chambers” of the German extermination camps.

These mass murders left only one important Jewish community in Greece, that of Athens, the capital, comprising some 15,000 souls. The death knell of this last outpost of Jewish life sounded late in the fall of 1943, in the wake of the surrender of Italy to the Allies, when the Germans disarmed Italian troops garrisoning parts of Greek territory, including the capital. Where the Italians had been in control, Jews had experienced incomparably less cruelty in the enforcement of anti-Jewish measures. In Athens, the relative restraint of the Italian authorities, combined with the sympathetic attitude of their Christian compatriots, secured for the Jews of the city at least physical safety and the hope of survival — until the Germans came.

But the deadly designs of the Nazis in Athens were to a large extent frustrated by the courage of a rabbi, supported by the overwhelming majority of the Greek people.

Shortly after the capitulation of Italy, a delegation of the German Commission charged with the task of “liquidating” European Jews under the direction of Alfred Rosenberg, arrived in Athens. They demanded from Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Barzilai a list of the members of the community. The Chief Rabbi pleaded for, and obtained, a respite of three days for the preparation and delivery of the list. During these days, he destroyed all records of the community and
disappeared. This delay enabled the patriotic Greek population to prepare for the rescue of the Jews of Athens. Within less than a week, the entire Jewish population of the city was made to “disappear.” Tens of thousands of Greek families had taken in Jews for hiding. In the meantime, with the aid of religious and civil functionaries, even of the collaborating regime, many thousands of false identification cards were obtained for Jews.

The German counter-measures were ruthless. The Jews were ordered to return to their original homes under the penalty of death. All Greek heads of families not reporting persons living in their households who were not members of their families, were threatened with heavy penalties, including, under certain circumstances, that of death. The overwhelming majority of both Jews and Greeks did not yield to these threats. Although, during the spring of 1944, an estimated 2,000 Jews were betrayed by persons tempted by the German offer promising informers half of a captured Jew’s property, the great majority of the Jews of Athens, are reported to have been helped in escaping to the territories ruled by the various patriotic resistance groups of Greece. On the other hand, all captured Jews were, according to a report from Cairo of April 27, 1944, executed by the Nazis. At the same time, it was reported that all Jews in the town of Heracleion on Crete, were wiped out by the Germans.

7. Turkey

Officially, the government of the Turkish republic, a non-belligerent ally of Great Britain, is not anti-Semitic. Turkish Jews, however, are adversely affected by a government measure which has been in effect since 1942. The decree, amounting to a very marked discrimination against all non-Turkish national, ethnical and religious minorities, revealed a stark nationalistic, anti-minority propensity on the part of the government. Affecting variously Greek, Armenian, Slav and Jewish minorities, the measure could not be considered as the expression of a one-sidedly anti-Jewish, but rather of a general anti-minority program.

This measure provided for a general capital tax nominally

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affecting all residents of the country. However, its burden fell with unequal weight upon the various minorities. The tax rates on Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Slavs were various multiples of the basic tax. Armenians were most severely affected, Jews were next while Greeks and Slavs experienced the third highest rate of the discriminatory levy which was evidently designed to bring about the economic bankruptcy of the Jewish, Armenian, Greek and Slav populations in Turkey.

As a consequence of the impact of this legislation, large numbers of Jews and members of other minority groups were sentenced to labor camps to work off their tax payments. This was tantamount, in many instances, to servitude without time limit.

Such a policy maintained by a government oriented toward the Allies, could not fail to have moral repercussions upon the democratic world. In December, 1943, following the Cairo conferences between President Ismet Inonu, President Roosevelt, and Prime Minister Churchill, more than 1,000 inmates, many of them Jews, were released from confinement in labor camps. This action did not mean the formal abrogation of the discriminatory tax measure, but it was interpreted as a temporary suspension of one of the worst effects of its application.

Since the beginning of 1944, the Turkish government proved an important factor in aiding the rescue of Jewish refugees from the Balkans. In January, the government expressed its willingness to cooperate with President Roosevelt’s War Refugee Board and other rescue organizations. Several Turkish ships were placed at the disposal of organizations engaged in the rescue of Jewish refugees from Rumania and Bulgaria. On March 12, 1944, Ira A. Hirschmann, representative of the War Refugee Board, reported that the Turkish government had agreed to the passage through its territory of 5,000 children en route to Palestine. By April, Turkey had become a corridor of refuge for an average of 150 persons a week who were leaving Nazi-ruled Europe for some final haven. As a temporary measure, the Turkish government seemed willing to permit the transit of an increasing number of refugees.