tween information relating to the population as a whole, and the Jews in particular. There are various types of schools, some with Yiddish as the language of instruction, in others the study of Yiddish is compulsory. Of the libraries, the largest is the Sholem Aleichem Library which contains some 30,000 volumes of Judaica in Yiddish, Russian, and other languages. The single Yiddish-language newspaper is the Birobidjan Star. The L. Kaganovich Jewish Theater gives performances, and there also exist a number of amateur groups and clubs.

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15. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By Leon Shapiro—

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, now in the eastern sphere of influence, has been a country of western political traditions, the most democratic State in this part of Europe in the period between the two World Wars. Today, Czechoslovakia is economically the strongest country of this area and politically enjoys much more freedom than any other state within the Russian orbit. The elections of May 1946, the first since the end of the war, brought to power a national front government whose component parties maintain positions in relation to their electoral strength. Communists, who polled about thirty per cent of the vote, hold the premiership and key positions in the government. Following the general political trend a two-year economic plan was initiated, combined with far-reaching governmental control.

Jews of German Nationality

As part of the profound political changes, which took place immediately after liberation, only the Czechs and Slovaks retained full constitutional rights, and this, of course, had an important bearing on the Jewish situation in a country where
before the war a system of recognized "national minorities" existed. Jews, accordingly, had been part of the nationality groupings of their choosing: Czech, Slovak, Jew, Hungarian and German. In the prevailing state of strong post-war anti-German and anti-Hungarian feeling, the position of Jews, registering as Germans or Hungarians in 1930 was quite difficult when they attempted to regain their properties and to reestablish themselves in their former positions. The situation of German Jews in connection with the expulsion of Germans and the possible inclusion of persons of Jewish origin in the transports leaving for Germany was particularly distressing.

After a number of intercessions, however, special instructions were issued in September, 1946, by the Ministry of the Interior to the effect that Jews were to be separated and considered as a special group, not destined for expatriation. The instruction stated that where "the person of Jewish origin, of German or Hungarian nationality was loyal to the Czech Republic, in that the person did not commit any offense against the Czech and Slovak nations, there is no reason why preservation of Czech citizenship according to Paragraph 2 of decree 33–45 S. B. should be refused to the person concerned, if the person has applied in due time; or why it should not be decided that property of such a person should be excepted from confiscation according to Paragraph 1—1st, 2nd and 4th part of the decree C 108—45 S. B. This, of course, is even more true for persons of Jewish origin of German or Hungarian nationality who actually fought against the occupants . . ." According to local observers, no mass expulsion of Jews of German or Hungarian origin took place; only small numbers of Sudeten Jews actually left with the German transports.

Sub-Carpathian Jews

In the fall of 1946 between 8–9,000 Sub-Carpathian Jews were living in Czechoslovakia, of whom 6–7,000 live in the Czech lands and 2,000 in Slovakia. Although 6,000 of the 9,000 Sub-Carpathian Jews settled their citizenship status,
large numbers of those who registered as Jews or Ukrainians in the census still faced difficulties. There were constant reports that the Soviet Union was exerting pressure to compel these people to return to Carpatho-Russia. The vacillating position of the Czechoslovakian government in regard to the citizenship rights of these Jews is reflected in the conflicting measures taken by the authorities. On November 15, 1946, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that “after many months of delay and conflicting decisions, the Ministry of the Interior announced that 3,000 Sub-Carpathian Jews now in Czechoslovakia will be granted citizenship.” In its communication to the Council of Jewish Communities the Ministry said that the Russian repatriation authorities had agreed that all persons who registered as “Jewish nationals” in the census of 1930 would be granted Czech citizenship under the Russian-Czech agreement. On April 4, 1947, however, the Ministry of the Interior issued new instructions providing that only those Jews who had attended Czech or Slovak schools for at least three years might apply for Czech citizenship, and requiring that official proof of such attendance be submitted, rather than statements by teachers or headmasters which were accepted previously. With respect to the situation of Sub-Carpathian Jews still in Carpatho-Russia, it was reported in February, 1947, that a Czech government commission touring Carpatho-Russia was refusing to accept applications from Sub-Carpathian Jews in that area, who had not previously registered as of Czech or Slovak nationality.

Population—Transients

At the end of 1945 there were in Czechoslovakia some 55,000 Jews distributed as follows: 23,500 were in Bohemia and Moravia and Silesia, and 31,500 in Slovakia. This number included some 11,000 refugees, consisting mostly of former residents of Carpatho-Russia and Polish Jews. Little change has occurred in the local Jewish population during 1946. Figures of the Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech lands recorded 22,824 Jews as registered with the Jewish Communities on May 21, 1946. Figures for Slovakia were
not available. Although some 1,500 of the Sub-Carpathian Jews left the country during 1946, most of them for Belgium and France, this decrease was offset by the influx from Carpatho-Russia which had been continuing for some time.

During 1946 the problem of the so-called transient Jews who fled from Poland following the Kielce pogrom on July 4, 1946, became of great concern to the local Jewish organizations and to the JDC whose relief activities in Czechoslovakia expanded to meet the needs of the refugees. While in the preceding months the Czech government had unofficially permitted the Polish refugees to enter the country, in July the government decided to open its borders to the Jews officially. During the period July-September 1946, about 62,000 Jews passed through Czechoslovakia, particularly through the two cities of Nachod and Broumov on their way to safety in the American zone of Germany. In addition, some 13,000 Hungarian Jews passed through Bratislava during the months of July and August. The Czech border was closed on September 20 and was reopened in the middle of October 1946, but by this time, the number of infiltrates had dropped considerably. Throughout this period the Czech government showed an extremely sympathetic attitude towards the plight of Jewish transients, and in cooperation with UNRRA and JDC provided for their maintenance and other needs. As of March 1947, it was reported that during the last fifteen months the Czech government had spent 80 million Kruna to aid some 130,000 transients, mostly Jewish. The Joint Distribution Committee reported that in cooperation with Czech authorities, it had organized reception centers at the border points, and had extended other kinds of assistance to the transients.

**Economic Situation**

On the whole, the economic position of the small Jewish community in Czechoslovakia improved considerably. The local Jews gradually adjusted themselves to the new conditions; their prospects, however, were better in the Czech lands than in Slovakia where anti-Jewish sentiment hampers the reestablishment of Jewish life. Despite the progress made by
Czechoslovak Jewry on the road to recovery, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was called upon to continue its program of relief and rehabilitation in that country where 227 Jewish communities benefited from JDC assistance in 1946.

The restitution of Jewish property registered little progress. The decree of May, 1945, nullified in principle all property transactions and transfers made after September 29, 1938. By the decree of November 30, 1945 (R/800/16/28) limited to Bohemia and Moravia, the Jewish Council of Elders was empowered to administer the Jewish property held by it as of May 5, 1945, and those properties which were owned by the Jewish religious communities, the Jewish associations, etc., as of September 29, 1938. On June 17, 1946 the previous measures were amended by law (No. 128) applying to the country as a whole. The general secretary of the Union of Jewish Communities of Bohemia and Moravia, Dr. Curt Wehle, is quoted to the effect that while the law signed on June 17, 1946 was generally satisfactory, there are several bases on which applications could be rejected: applicants must prove their political reliability, the public interest must not be damaged by the return of the property, and the circumstances of the original transfer were to be taken into account.

Moreover, under the policy of nationalization of large businesses, it was impossible for Jews who owned such businesses to recover them. Although early in 1946 the government turned over to the Council of Jewish Communities of Bohemia and Moravia the so-called Theresienstadt funds (60 million Kruna) made up of the confiscated funds of Jews who died in the Theresienstadt camp without leaving heirs; the government declared that this procedure did not imply any further commitments on its part. In fact, no general provision for heirless property has yet been made.

The complexities surrounding the restitution of Jewish properties and the political implications of this problem were well illustrated by the case of Emil Bear, seventy-year-old Jewish industrialist, whose factory in the Warnsdoř district of Bohemia was confiscated by the Germans. On March 6, 1947, the workers of this district went on strike in protest
against the return of the factory to its rightful owner alleging that Bear engaged in "Germanization" in the pre-Munich era, and demanding his deportation together with other Germans. According to the Council of Jewish Communities, Bear, registered as a Jewish national in the 1930 census, spent the war years in England. Bear's son fought with the Czech forces. In view of the commotion provoked by the case, a special parliamentary committee was nominated to investigate the situation, and the Czech Prime Minister, Klement Gottwald, receiving a delegation of Jews from Bohemia and Slovakia, assured them that the restitution of property to Jews and other Jewish rehabilitation measures would continue. The Prime minister also pledged that in doubtful cases involving the return of property to Jews, special investigating committees, including Jewish representatives, would be appointed to consider the dispute.

The implementing of the restitution legislation differs in Bohemia and Moravia from that in Slovakia, where anti-Semitism even among the local officials has created a particularly bitter situation. Although some 2,000 homes were restored to their rightful owners in the Czech lands, as of the end of 1946, there was practically no restitution in Slovakia.

Anti-Semitism

Jewish circles were particularly disturbed by recurrent anti-Semitic excesses which took place in Slovakia during 1946. Attacks on Jews were perpetrated in a number of cities, among others in Nove-Zamky, Surani, and Galanta. According to local observers they were carried out by the local population, incited by Hlinka adherents who succeeded in camouflaging themselves, even in occupying certain posts in the administration. Anti-Jewish statements have found their way to Slovak publications and daily papers. On the occasion of a Communist-headed partisans' congress in Bratislava, "groups of alleged partisans invaded Jewish homes and beat Jews. One group attacked a Jewish communal kitchen organization supported by the Joint Distribution Committee . . ." The authorities were well aware of the situation in Slovakia, and took
strenuous measures to prevent disorder. When it was expected that trouble might arise during the celebration of the second anniversary of the Slovak revolution between August 27 and 30, 1946, the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Ferjencik, issued a special proclamation on August 19, ordering the police to take energetic measures against anti-Jewish or anti-governmental outbreaks. Anti-Jewish sentiment in this part of the republic is quite widespread, related as it is to the politically peculiar and yet unstable situation in Slovakia. After the hanging of former Slovak puppet Prime Minister, Dr. Joseph Tiso, for example, anti-governmental pamphlets were distributed among the populace, some of which reportedly were written and printed in government offices.

The situation in the Czech lands proper is quite different, although some latent anti-Semitism could also be found there. Certain political parties even have found it necessary to initiate an open fight against anti-Semitism. On March 30, 1947, the JTA reported that at a meeting of the youth section of the Czech Social Democratic Party, Mr. Willim, the Secretary General, had charged that anti-Semitism "sometimes receives official support." Jewish leaders were recently disturbed by a statement of Václav Kopecky, Minister of Information, questioning the patriotism of the Sub-Carpathian Jews, and alleging that they entered the Czech Army only towards the end of the war. When reproached by Jewish and non-Jewish groups for his remarks, Kopecky defended himself against charges of anti-Semitism, declaring that he criticized Carpathian Jews only on the basis of the fact that some of them had entered the country from Carpathia which was ceded to Russia. This attitude, however, is in no sense typical of the responsible leaders of the Czechoslovakian republic, since in numerous statements the authoritative representatives of the government have displayed a friendly attitude towards Jews, and keen understanding of the special Jewish situation. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Masaryk, in a statement made in April 1947, at a meeting against anti-Semitism in the country, castigated anti-Jewish sentiment, asserting that he was ashamed that it was necessary to hold such meetings in Czechoslovakia.
At the end of May 1947, a ceremony took place in Theresin commemorating those who perished in the camp of Theresienstadt. The services were attended by thousands of Czechs and Jews from all parts of the country. Speakers included Vaclav Nozek, Minister of Interior and Josa David, Speaker of the Parliament.

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16. HUNGARY

While Hungarian anti-semitism lacks the long, uninterrupted history of its Rumanian counterpart, it represents one of the underlying characteristics of Hungarian political life. A quarter of a century of systematic anti-Jewish agitation by a reactionary and anti-Semitic governmental system like that of Admiral Horthy bred a pestilence of the soul hard to cure. This continues to be the prime though not exclusive cause of the Jewish calamity in present-day Hungary.

Hungary's Jews might justifiably have hoped that the democratic victory over Nazism would restore the spirit of Hungary's liberal century as a moral basis for a sincere inter-group reconciliation. The stark realities of Hungary's present-day political and economic life, manifested in the utter ruin of Hungarian Jewry, have not only prevented reconciliation but further exacerbated tensions between Christians and Jews.

Among prime economic sources of this rampant "neo-anti-Semitism" in Hungary, as in other Nazi-ravaged countries, were the avarice and envy of hundreds of thousands of illegitimate holders of Jewish property. Well-to-do middle class elements constituted a stronger sector in the Hungarian

1 Prepared in the office of the American Jewish Committee.
than in any other Jewish community in eastern Europe, and
title to almost all of their former holdings was under em-
bittered dispute.

The Jewish Scapegoat

Hungary’s first year of liberation was marked by the
most profound economic crisis and most fantastic monetary
inflation in her history. Amid general suffering, the masses
found it simplest to fix all blame on the ever-convenient
Jewish scapegoat. Inspired by the dominant Communist
wing of the government coalition, and with a view to shifting
responsibility for the crisis, leftist propaganda placed exag-
gerated emphasis on the black market. The campaign against
“black trade” furnished, in the eyes of the anti-Semitically
predisposed masses, a fresh opportunity for anti-Jewish
agitation. And on the other side, likewise, sermons from
Catholic pulpits throughout the country charged the Jews
with responsibility for the deplorable economic situation.

There was, in addition, a widespread tendency to hold
Jews responsible for political and economic burdens imposed
by the peace treaty and the extra burdens entailed by the
Soviet bid for predominance in the Hungarian economy.
This was due to the fact that the Jews were the staunchest
partisans in Hungary of the cause of the democratic powers,
and that, during the war, Hitler’s propaganda identified
Jewry with democracy.

Another factor in the situation was that the necessary
punishment of at least the top leadership of the criminal pro-
Nazi conspiracy was, more often than not, explained as a
manifestation of “Jewish revenge.” In Hungary, far larger
numbers of Nazi leaders were sentenced to death or imprisoned
for life than in Rumania. Even people unaffected by reac-
tionary tendencies instinctively sympathized with such
“victims,” especially if they were relatives, friends or ac-
quaintances, and many of these non-political elements turned
against the Jews. The fact that the political police was headed
by a Jewish Communist, and, until recently, included a
considerable number of Jewish investigators, substantially
contributed to popular acceptance of the "Jewish revenge" theory.

At the same time statements from the right, like those of Cardinal Mindszenti, Catholic Primate, making peace between Jews and Gentiles dependent upon the liquidation of the political police and abandonment of the prosecution of war criminals, revived the ancient pattern of collective Jewish accountability. The Jews were held to blame for a situation entirely outside their influence and control. Although early in 1947 a number of Jewish employees were dropped from the payroll of the police, its leadership pattern, and the popular attitude to it, remained unchanged.

The second grievous source of social friction between Jews and non-Jews developed around the question of prisoners of war. Almost every Christian family in Hungary was affected by this problem as there were still several hundreds of thousands of Hungarian soldiers in Allied, chiefly Soviet, captivity. While most surviving Jewish deportees had returned home, at least from the West, the prisoners of war were still abroad. As a result, envy and hatred of their relatives was concentrated upon the Jews. Rumors circulated that Jews did not suffer at all, that the horrors of the gas chambers were Jewish inventions, and that there were more Jews in Hungary than ever before.

Finally, elimination of a part of the pro-Nazi element from public service led, for the great lack of other intellectually qualified candidates, to their replacement by Jewish officials. The ill-feeling this created was not noticeably mitigated by the dismissal of hundreds of Jewish state employees.

In an atmosphere of such manifold tensions the Jewish population was altogether dependent for security upon the government. As to its intentions, the government’s attitude was irreproachable. The important questions, however, were to what extent the general character and policies of this government affected the position and security of the Jews indirectly and, second, what assurances could be found as to the government’s sustained ability to safeguard the Jewish population.
Between the Firing Lines

Like their Rumanian co-religionists, the Jews in Hungary found themselves in a no-man's land between pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet firing lines. The chief difference in the situation is this: As a result of the unfettered democratic post-war election, political forces which in Rumania were driven into opposition were in Hungary an elected majority and a part of the government coalition. Since those elections, the chief objective of the Communist Party leadership has consisted in amputating, by stages and methods having little in common with democratic processes, the elected parliamentary majority represented by the Independent Smallholders Party.

Currently the determining factor of Hungarian domestic policies is the minority Communist Party led by repatriates from Moscow, some of Jewish descent. Their role and policies were increasingly exploited by the rising nationalist reaction, and distorted into confirmations of Hitler's myth of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" quest for world power. The Communists were committed to Hungary's one-sided pro-Soviet orientation, and used their exclusive-police power to eliminate from political life all elements opposed to this line, whether these were Fascists and reactionaries in reality, or genuine democratic elements, life-long opponents of Horthy, and defenders of Jewish rights. This Communist policy automatically served to confirm the mass mind, infected by the anti-Jewish miasma, in the notion that the Jews are responsible for Hungary's tribulations.

This trend was exceedingly disturbing to the Communist leaders themselves, who would be glad to be relieved of tremendous complications that affect their position as deeply as that of the Jews. They do not feel equal to coping with their primary mission of representing an exclusive pro-Soviet political line, and at the same time challenging the rising tide of anti-Semitism indirectly but inevitably promoted by their own basic policy. The tragic result is that while they never miss an opportunity to charge their opponents with Fascist anti-Semitism, even when unjustified, in actual practice they overlook the most vicious anti-Jewish manifestations. Their
position leads them to connive at the prevalence of anti-Semitism within the lower ranks even of the masses following them, and to compromise with the mass mood at the expense of Jewish interests and security.

Anti-Semitic Attacks

Thus, in the mining town of Salgotarjan, the Smallholders Party won the parliamentary elections. The local Communist miners' paper charged the Jews with voting against the Communists. Next day, 8,000 miners marched to town, and with the slogan "Death to the Jews" attacked the Jewish population and destroyed Jewish property. No investigation followed.

In December 1946, the workers of the large industrial combine at Csepel staged a demonstration demanding the dismissal of all Jewish employees.

The most dangerous medium of anti-Jewish agitation is the National Peasant Party, a small revolutionary party of landless peasants under so-called "peasant-intellectual" leadership and utilized by the Communists as a political tool and counter-weight among the peasantry against the majority Smallholders Party.

The leaders of this group, Peter Veres and Joseph Darvas, are exploiting this privileged position as a license for unbridled Jew-baiting. "Out with the Jews and Gypsies," and "The Jews are worse than the Germans" are their standard slogans. The Smallholders daily Magyar Nemzet characterized this propaganda in the following manner: "The same dangerous and brutal commonplaces, the same hackneyed lies as heard at Nazi meetings two years ago... the very same hatred, blindness, giddiness and inhumanity as under Szalasi." Yet last March, following the discovery of an anti-Communist conspiracy involving a number of Smallholders deputies, and the elimination of three Smallholders ministers from the coalition cabinet, one of the vacant ministerial posts was entrusted to this same Jew-baiting Peasant Party leader, Peter Veres.
On September 5, 1946, a pogrom instigated by local leaders of Veres' party was narrowly averted in the town of Hajduszoboszlo. On July 30, 1946, in the town of Miskolc, under the influence of high-pitched official anti-black-market propaganda, 25,000 workers from nearby foundries marched into town, and wound up their demonstrations by attacking and killing two Jews charged with having sold flour above the legal price. Next day the same mob captured and killed the Jewish police officer who had tried to protect the victims. This event fully substantiated earlier assertions that many former Nazis found shelter in the Communist Party, and from that vantage point continued to spread their own propaganda. For nine months following the Miskolc riot there was no further major anti-Jewish outbreak.

Thirty-six persons were charged with participation in the riot but their whitewashing started almost immediately. The indictment itself stated that the outbreak "was not of an anti-Semitic nature." In spite of the emphatic demand of the Jewish community leadership that the perpetrators be punished according to law, all charges gradually were dropped. On April 7, 1946, Kis Újság, official organ of the Smallholders Party, demanded to know who was responsible for the release of three of the main culprits.

In December 1946, death sentences imposed on three perpetrators of the earlier anti-Jewish riot at Kunmadaras (see American Jewish Year Book, 1945-46) were commuted. One of the murderers was freed, one had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment, another's reduced to two years and two months. A number of policemen, implicated in conniving with the murderers, had their sentences reduced to five years.

It is a matter of record that the Social Democratic Party leadership, although strongly influenced by the Communists in other matters, has been sharply and consistently opposed to these developments. It is also a fact that the leadership of the largely powerless majority Smallholders Party displayed a correct attitude on these problems without being able substantially to modify the trend. On the other hand, the right wing of this party registered contamination by the
prevailing mass anti-Semitism, and, in some localities, actively contributed to the anti-Jewish mood of the masses. Thus Ianos Nagyivan, one of the local party leaders, became notorious as an anti-Semitic agitator. The “anti-Communist conspiracy” discovered in March 1947, planned, according to the indictment, among other things, the curtailment of Jewish rights, and deportation of Jews whose forbears entered the country after 1868.

Retarded Status of Restitution

The same compromising spirit also prevailed with regard to the problems of the material rehabilitation of Jewry. In spite of the welter of laws and decrees dealing with this subject, the Jews in Hungary have retrieved only an insignificant part of their property.

A large proportion of the surviving Jewish population consists of aged people and children incapable of supporting themselves. The majority of those capable of working are prevented from doing so by lack of means, of tools, of a workshop, even of clothing and shoes.

The greater half of the Jewish population is dependent for its daily needs on the Jews of America, as represented by the Joint Distribution Committee. This assistance from America, huge as it is in terms of expenditure, cannot possibly cover the financial means of restoring tens of thousands of shattered economic existences.

Only fulfilment of the just claims of Jews on property restitution and compensation could do justice to this fundamental social need of Hungarian Jewry. Two years of consistent official disinclination to cope with the problem according to the dictates of justice would seem to have created a status of economic helplessness and of secondary citizenship for the Jews of Hungary. Should this official attitude be permitted to prevail, this status would become permanent. The peace treaties with Hungary and Rumania contain binding obligations with respect to restitution and compensation. According to the Hungarian rulers’ attitude,
the Jews of Hungary have a choice only between acquiescence in their present misery, or the onslaught of anti-Semitic vengeance. To accept any such reasoning would be tantamount to recognition of the bankruptcy of state power and responsibility and a surrender to mob rule.

Since spontaneous performance of the governments of Rumania and Hungary in the domain of restitution has been found grossly wanting, the greatest emphasis will have to be laid on the satisfactory execution of the relevant provisions of the treaties of peace. There is one respect in which the Hungarian government has complied with the claims of the Jewish community. Even prior to inclusion of the relevant obligation in the peace treaty, a law was enacted for the establishment of a Rehabilitation Fund to administer properties of Nazi victims dying heirless, for purposes of Jewish relief and rehabilitation in Hungary. Two-thirds of the positions on the Fund’s board will be filled by representatives of the two (Congressional and Orthodox) Jewish Central Boards, one third of the seats will be reserved for Catholic and Protestant organizations representing converted Jews. Recently, Lajos Stoeccker, president of the Congressional Board, and Samuel Kahan-Frankl, President of the Orthodox Board, were appointed by the President of the Republic as chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the Fund. There is considerable Jewish heirless property in Hungary. Unless administrative practices prevent the transfer to the Fund of certain important categories of heirless assets, its operations may, to some extent, contribute to the alleviation of the fundamental difficulties of Hungarian Jewry.

This would be all the more necessary and justified, as another important item of Hungarian Jewish property, the contents of the so-called Hungarian gold train, and other assets transferred, at the end of the war, by Hungarian Nazis to Austrian territory, have been diverted from utilization within Hungary. Although recognized as Hungarian Jewish property, these assets, valued at several million dollars, have been turned over by the United States authorities to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees for general purposes of Jewish relief and rehabilitation outside of Hun-
gary. A further part of the treasure is in the custody of France, and it is not definitely known what disposition will be made of it.

Communal Activities

In the domain of Jewish communal life, attention is centered on the impending elections of a new governing board for the large Budapest Congressional (Neologue) Community. The present provisional leadership headed by Lajos Stoeckler has held office on the basis of an agreement between Zionists and non-Zionists, and was opposed by a rather strong anti-Zionist wing. A few months ago, an understanding was reached with the latter which might have secured the election, by unanimous vote, of an all-inclusive intra-party community leadership. Soon thereafter, the Zionists withdrew from the agreement, and decided to run a separate list of candidates. The elections will, on the basis of a new electoral statute, be both secret and proportional.

While the desire to emigrate has not in any marked degree diminished, the Jews of Hungary display much less readiness than Rumanian Jews to embark upon an Odyssey of wandering about and languishing in displaced persons' camps. In the spring of 1947, there was no major illegal exodus to the West comparable to that of Jews from Rumania. But fundamentally, the Jews of Hungary, survivors of the once politically, economically and psychologically best integrated Jewish community in Eastern Europe, now feel that their reintegration within the nation has tragically failed, and that they cannot face the future with any real confidence or sense of security.
Since Rumania’s surrender to the anti-Nazi Allied camp represented by the Red Army, two and a half years ago, the nation has split into two irreconcilably opposed camps. Caught in between the hostile sides, Rumanian Jews are once again beset by the insecurity which has so often characterized their existence since the end of Ottoman rule. To large numbers among them, emigration appears the only solution of a tragic dilemma. But the world’s peremptorily negative answer to their quest for another place under the sun binds most of them inseparably to the hazards of life in Rumania.

A solution assuring peace, security and a fresh start in life for these victims of Hitler could be achieved only in the context of an unprecedented effort towards a genuine democratic order. The great moment of liberation from Hitler’s tyranny could have served as a unique opportunity for at least an attempt to establish the foundations of such a democracy in Rumania. History decreed otherwise. The basic menace to democratic popular effort in Eastern Europe—one-sided great power interference with democratic self-determination—almost immediately extinguished this thin ray of hope for Jewish security in Rumania.

Violation of national pride can produce only reaction and resistance even in the most backward of nations. In Rumania, historic political, social and cultural inadequacies assert themselves with increasingly ominous virulence. The Jews are again the first and last target of nationalist revenge.

The Jews of Rumania are aware that the present regime is opposed to anti-Semitism, and is trying to ward off or at

1 Prepared in the office of the American Jewish Committee.
least mitigate racial tensions. But an artificially constituted minority regime cannot help keeping a wary eye on the mood of the masses, and in its desperate quest for popular support will often sacrifice principle to expediency, the minority to the majority, the weak to the strong, and justice to governmental self-interest. If, in particular, national submission to one-sided foreign interests stands supreme in a minority regime's obligations and objectives, bargaining and compromise become the essence of political performance.

**Jewish Claims Sacrificed**

This political circumspection of the government has resulted in endless delays in the prosecution of most of Rumania's notorious leading war criminals, including the instigators of the Jassy pogrom which alone cost 14,000 Jewish lives. It has resulted in commutation of most capital sentences, including that of blood-stained Radu Lecca, Commissar for Jewish Affairs under General Antonescu, to life imprisonment. In the economic domain, especially with regard to property restitution, the balance between the regime's formal equalitarian preachments and hard-boiled realistic policies resulted in an interpretation of "equality" under which the claims of the Jews for reinstatement into their rightful dues were treated as privilege-hunting and favoritism. In the eyes of the regime, all, including "repentant" Iron Guardists, were equally victims of Hitler.

This attitude has led the government to deny the Jews, by a policy of procrastination, most of the benefits of a just economic restoration. But it has displayed, in general, considerable goodwill with regard to other matters of less weighty political consequence to the regime. There has, for instance, been no interference with the freedom of religious practice. The right of taxation of its members by Jewish communities has been reaffirmed, and the collection of arrears by state authorities assured. Although the government takes the official position that Jews are Rumanians of Jewish faith constituting a religious community, the Minister of Nationalities nevertheless has declared that Rumanian Jewry may receive the status
of a national minority if so desired by a majority of Jews. This indicates a certain degree of relaxation in official opposition to Zionism and emigration to Palestine.

**Leftists Seek Control**

On the other hand, there were political attempts to place the supreme representative organizations of Rumanian Jewry under the control of elements representing the left wing of the government coalition. The Jewish Democratic Committee created for this purpose has so far failed to achieve this objective to the extent desired. Both the old Union of Rumanian Jews led by Dr. William Filderman, and most Zionist groups maintained considerable resiliency in the face of these attempts at Communist infiltration, and both the Union and the Jewish National (Zionist) Party succeeded in preserving their independence. At the parliamentary elections, however, the Jewish groups could participate only by agreeing to place their candidates for the coming elections on the joint slate of the coalition bloc. The three Jewish groups were allotted one candidacy each, but only the candidates of the Union and of the government-supporting Democratic Committee were elected. The candidate of the Jewish National Party was defeated. In addition to these two, some 25 Jews were elected members of parliament, on the general slate of the Socialist and Communist parties.

During the electoral campaign, various cabinet members made promises to the effect that forced sales of Jewish properties under the Nazi regime would at long last be invalidated, Jewish property restituted and that heirless Jewish property would be used for the relief of Jewish survivors of deportations and massacres.

All these promises had the time-honored character and value of the accustomed protestations of Rumanian governments. In March 1947, the Union of Rumanian Jews and the Jewish National Party were compelled to launch a joint and futile campaign intended to press upon the government fulfillment of its election promises. So far none of the promised legislative measures have been forthcoming.
This regime's negative attitude is defended on the grounds that fulfillment of these Jewish claims, however justified, would strengthen popular anti-Semitic tendencies. The truth of the matter is that true dispensation of justice at a sufficiently early stage of the post-war period would have resolved the controversy. Today, the unresolved dispute between legitimate Jewish and unlawful non-Jewish interests constitutes a permanent irritant in Christian-Jewish relations.

In May 1947, government assistance to Jewish hospitals, schools and cultural institutions was drastically reduced to less than one-tenth of the requirements.

Regime Opposes Minority Clauses

At the Paris Conference (September 1946) dealing with the satellite peace treaties, the Foreign Minister, George Tatarescu, reiterated to American and other Jewish representatives present, promises made by his colleagues to the Jews in Bucharest. At the same time, the Rumanian delegation submitted a written statement to the Peace Conference in which it rejected, as contrary to the principle of sovereignty, the British-sponsored amendment safeguarding against discrimination on grounds of race, sex, language or religion in Hungary and Rumania. In the question of Jewish property, the government has remained true to the principle and practice of discrimination against the Jews. Under cover of this official attitude, existing restitution provisions are overwhelmingly sabotaged, through manifold legal subterfuges and misinterpretations, by members of the Rumanian judiciary.

A recent order providing for the surrender of heirless Jewish property to local Jewish communities of which the deceased owner was a member is being kept in abeyance "until formal ratification of the peace treaty." Even if put in force, the prescribed transfer to local communities instead of a publicly operated Jewish central fund would offer easy and ready-made opportunities for frustrating the purpose of the decree. All this forecasts continued economic insecurity and indigence for the great majority of the Jewish population.

This treatment of the needs and aspirations of Jewry is
explained on the basis of the current "democratic socialist transformation" of Rumania. This, which in the end could solve—it is said—all problems of society, including the problems of Jewish economic readjustment and of anti-Semitism, within a new, "classless" society in Rumania. Meanwhile a minority regime distrusted by, and distrustful of, the masses of a backward people rules by means of dictatorial coercion.

**Political Persecution and Insecurity**

This situation is aggravated by the fact that the regime is bent on the extirpation of all native political tendencies opposed to the official external and internal political trend, without regard to the quality of their past record and ideological background. The only yardstick for judgment is their subservience or opposition to the regime. The former Iron Guard mass murderer, equipped with a membership card of one of the coalition parties, is a certified democrat. Non-conformists, socialists, democrats or liberals, opposed to the regime on grounds of democratic principle, or the peasant masses fighting in the name of national self-determination, are lumped together with Rumania's great variety of real reactionaries and jingoes, under the collective term "Fascists." On May 5, 1947, for instance, mass arrests of opponents of the regime were reported (*The New York Times*, May 7). Among those reported arrested was Victor Slavescu, former Minister of Finance. The latter is one of the few tried liberals of Rumania, and gave determined and active support to the efforts to prevent, in 1936, a vicious attack upon the economic rights of Rumania's minority elements, notably the Jews, initiated by Georg Tatarescu, then Prime Minister and now Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister in the Groza government.

This basic policy of the regime may serve as a surface deterrent against active forms of opposition. But for adherents of democracy, and notably for the Jews, the political persecution of proven democrats and liberals in a country where their scarcity value is so very great, is another source of perplexity and insecurity. In general, this policy cannot but increase the sum total of opposition to the regime.
Jews Caught in the Middle

In this battle of political passions, the Jews are caught in the middle. For their respective followers, the programs of both camps are equally valid and justified as far as political programs go. But the Jews are held collectively responsible by each side for any manifestations of allegiance to the other. If a Jew perseveres in his contacts with the old Liberal or National Peasant parties, or with the independent Social Democrats, then it is "the Jews" who get cautioned against siding with the "Fascists." If a Jew is a supporter of the regime, even to the extent of holding some public office, then "the Jews" are responsible for the acts of a government branded as "the mere tool of the imperialist invader," and the "despoiler of Rumanian independence." In a country where anti-Jewish prejudice and sloganeering over-simplification of political issues are basic evils, the dangers of this situation are greatly enhanced by the conspicuous role within the regime of a few communist leaders of Jewish origin on the one hand, and by unfortunate political statements against the Jews even by hitherto blameless elements of the opposition such as Jon Michalache, Vice-Chairman of the National Peasant Party.

18. OTHER BALKAN COUNTRIES

BULGARIA

The memorandum submitted on August 20, 1946 to the Paris Peace Conference by the nine leading Jewish organizations of the Western world, stated that prior to the Nazi movement, anti-Semitism had not been a factor in the life of the Bulgarian people. It gratefully registered the fact that

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1 Prepared in the office of the American Jewish Committee.
2 See the article on the Peace Treaties, p. 562.
since the Jews of Bulgaria were never deported to other countries, virtually the whole of the Jewish population survived. Their deportation was prevented by the "democratic spirit of the Bulgarian people." On these grounds, the Jewish organizations decided not to plead for inclusion in the treaty with Bulgaria of the major clauses of Jewish interest, urged in connection with the treaties with the Rumanian and Hungarian treaties.

In May 1946, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Bulgaria declared that the statement included in the findings of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that most of the Jews of Eastern Europe desired to emigrate did not apply to Bulgaria.

While the present Communist-sponsored Fatherland Front government of Bulgaria faced the same grave political issues as other regimes in Eastern Europe, the Federation of Jewish Communities, reorganized under the aegis of the Fatherland Front, insisted that Bulgaria's Jewish population was living in a friendly atmosphere. The government, it was held, was both determined and able to give protection against anti-Semitism and discrimination. On this basis, all Jewish groups were urged by the Federation to join the Jewish section of the Fatherland Front, a suggestion subsequently acted upon by the United Zionist Organization of Bulgaria.

Restitution of Property

Recent reports indicate that full restitution is being made to Jews of immovable property which was taken over by the pro-Nazi government itself. If such property is torn down by rehabilitation authorities, a total of six years' rent is paid the owner. Movable property which was in the custody of the state has been returned, and lost property of this nature is being compensated for. However, very little movable property held by individual possessors has been recovered. Securities, bank accounts and other fiscal property are being restored but, due to the depreciation of the currency, only at considerably reduced values.
In August 1946, amendments to the rehabilitation law of 1945 were adopted which provided for the return of about 500,000,000 levas to Jews who lost property under the pro-Nazi regime. Under these amendments, property sold to pay the special "Jew taxes" will also be returned or compensation paid. In addition, the government assured the payment of another 50,000,000 levas as compensation for personal belongings stolen from individuals.

**Precarious Economic Outlook**

In October 1946, an educational law for minorities was enacted, under the terms of which all Jewish schools will be supported by the state. In January 1947, the government allocated 10,000,000 levas (about $35,000) toward the reconstruction of the Jewish Hospital in Sofia, and contributed 20,000,000 levas worth of materials to two Jewish producers' co-operatives established by the Joint Distribution Committee.

A decree issued on November 21, 1946, ordered that confiscated properties transferred by the authorities to third persons be restored to the original owners, with the state recompensing the purchaser for whatever he paid the government for the property.

As a result of these policies, early in 1947, some improvement became noticeable in the situation of Bulgarian Jewry. Basically, however, this remains precarious. Most Jews still find themselves unable to get started anew in productive life. Storekeepers and other businessmen are finding it difficult to reestablish their business. Many stores were destroyed or severely damaged during the war. It is almost impossible to find premises to rent, and the rental is far too high for most Jews. As a result, unemployment is still rampant among them. The present modest improvement of their situation is to a considerable extent due to the aid extended by American Jewry through the Joint Distribution Committee.

That anti-Semitism is still likely to be a factor to reckon with, is indicated by a statement made on December 4, 1946, by Premier Georgi Dimitroff, to the effect that "while in
various European countries anti-Semitism is increasing, we shall not allow this to happen in Bulgaria. We shall punish severely, even put to death, preachers of racial hatred.”

YUGOSLAVIA

News of Jewish life in Yugoslavia has been extremely meager. It is, therefore, difficult to reconstruct a valid and comprehensive picture of the Jewish situation there, or even the sequence of events of specific Jewish interest.

Before the advent of Hitler, anti-Semitism played only a minor role in Yugoslavia. Large areas of the country, especially those which had belonged to old Serbia, have always been free of anti-Semitism. Regions like Croatia and Slovenia which, before World War I, had been under Austro-Hungarian rule, showed a tendency in the direction of anti-Semitic practices. But whatever the original predispositions of the regional populations, any large-scale, organized anti-Semitic movement in contemporary Yugoslavia would not likely succeed. Tito’s government is so firmly entrenched that official assurances on the curbing of anti-Semitism may be readily accepted.

With regard to the economic restoration of the surviving 15,000 Jews, the situation is different. On July 23, 1946, Sava N. Kosanovic, Yugoslav ambassador to the U. S., declared that the Jews in his country are “harmoniously rebuilding their lives.” It seems manifest that this “rebuilding” must proceed along entirely new lines. Foreign trade and domestic credit have become state monopolies, free enterprise is gone, private trade is under attack, and the expropriation of capital enterprises has become the foundation of a new state economy. In this situation there is obviously no room for many Jews in their original pursuits and positions. It goes without saying that the elimination of industrialists, large merchants, bankers and bank managers, and the confiscation of their possessions, have affected Jews belonging to these
categories on an equal basis with others. Nor can there be any doubt that the process of restitution of Nazi-confiscated Jewish properties must have been subordinated to the over-all program of economic and social transformation.

On November 11, 1946, The New York Times, reported that “many Jews from Zagreb who fled from the country (under Nazism) have been judged collaborators in absentia, and their property has been seized. Their shops are being taken over by the state-operated store chain “NAMA.”

GREECE

Greece is suffering from every ailment that could plague a modern state. Lack of national unity, international security, economic resiliency, decent and adequate administration, civil liberties, the spirit of tolerance and understanding, and economic policies directed at improving the prosperity of the broad masses, constitute the background of a virulent state of civil war, foreign intervention and counter-intervention, economic dislocation, inequitable distribution of goods, and official venality.

In a country where broad strata of the population live on black bread and olives exclusively, and where there is no security for the person outside of city limits, the hopeless situation of a thoroughly pauperized Jewish population is easily imagined. The numerically insignificant surviving Jewish community of barely 10,000 souls is an additional factor bound to lessen the weight of its claims on the political level. A political cleavage between the present Zionist Jewish leadership and pre-war Jewish leaders, whose role in the economic domain enabled them to maintain some influence with government circles, further hampered the Jewish community.

Last fall, Dr. Max Gottschalk, director of foreign affairs of the American Jewish Committee, paid a visit to Greece, and consulted both the Central Board of Jews and representatives of the government. Dr. Gottschalk felt that anti-Semitism
was by far not as deeply entrenched and widespread a popular mood in Greece as in some other Eastern European lands. While the inevitable psychological aftermath of the Nazi regime may still be felt to a certain extent, the chief source of anti-Jewish sentiment was the fear of the illegitimate holders of looted Jewish property that they might be compelled to disgorge these assets.

Property Restitution Laws

The inclination to side with the numerical majority in questions involving the dispensation of justice to the minority seems to be a common trait of all regimes lacking popular support and political stability. Greece was the very first country to enact, in January 1946, property restitution laws which, on their face value, promised to furnish adequate solutions to the problems involved, including the important question of the use of Jewish heirless property. A very large percentage of the 63,000 Jewish victims of Nazism in Greece died without leaving heirs. Today their property is administered by the state. But since the enactment of these laws, sixteen months have gone by and the necessary executive orders have still not been issued. Dr. Gottschalk discussed this matter with the Minister of Justice and other high officials, and obtained firm promises for an early settlement of the problem. These authoritative promises have not, so far, been honored.

The extremely precarious condition of Greek Jewry may considerably improve if these laws are carried into effect. The homes, real estate, shops and factories of Jews would be returned, and the considerable assets left behind by heirless victims would be used for the rehabilitation of needy Jews. At the time of the enactment of the restitution laws, the Greek government declared that these laws would not be invalidated through any change of government, having been endorsed by all Greek political factions as well as the preceding regime.

However difficult the general economic situation in Greece
may be, the problem of Greek Jewry must be solved without further delay.

Today only some forty per cent of the 10,000 surviving Jews are self-supporting, and most exist precariously as small traders, petty craftsmen and peddlers. The majority of the Jewish population is dependent on assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee.

Among the events of the year, the desecration of the ancient Jewish cemetery of Salonika deserves mention. Tombstones taken from the cemetery have been used in the reconstruction of a Greek Orthodox church. The action was defended by the authorities on the grounds that the cemetery had been expropriated by the government, and therefore the Jewish community had no rights to the tombstones. During his sojourn in Athens, Dr. Gottschalk complained of this abuse to the government and to Archbishop Damaskinos who promised to put an end to the scandalous situation. Appropriate measures were taken by the government shortly thereafter.

TURKEY

The present republican regime in Turkey has, ever since its establishment, following World War I, sought the political, economic and cultural elimination of the country's non-Moslem minorities, Greeks, Armenians and Jews alike. Although by 1923, the total of these minorities was reduced, through massacres and population exchanges, to a mere 260,000, pressure against the remainder continued unabated throughout World War II.

Minorities were excluded from civic rights through their inadmissibility to the sole recognized political party of the country. They were excluded from public service, and were refused commissions in the army where, however, they had to serve in labor battalions without arms.

In the economic sphere, their once important role was gradually reduced to insignificance through the application
of all the discriminatory techniques at the disposal of centralized economic management by the state.

In the cultural sphere, minorities were equally oppressed. They were forbidden to speak their own languages in public, and their religious, cultural and charitable institutions were placed under rigid state control. Officially, no Jewish or Christian religious instruction is permitted. Priests and rabbis must be of Turkish birth and nationality so that there are no candidates to fill vacant positions, among them the chief rabbinate which is supposed to serve as the official representative of Turkish Jewry.

During the Second World War, at the peak of Nazi power and influence, this basic trend in Turkey degenerated into an all-out campaign for total economic eradication of the minorities. The objective, often frankly admitted, was to eliminate Christians and Jews completely from every field of activity.

Expropriation of Minorities

Most direct and powerful means of achieving this objective was the enactment of the notorious Varlik (wealth) levy in November 1942. Under this decree, anonymous tax commissions consisting of Turkish private citizens were authorized to assess each taxpayer in secret, without consultation or appeal, and without consideration of any previously established scale. Within fifteen days, each taxpayer had to pay the assessed levy in cash. All assets of defaulting taxpayers were confiscated within one month. By virtue of his insolvency resulting from his total expropriation, the taxpayer was automatically condemned to forced labor until he had "worked off" his arrears at the rate of one Turkish pound pay for a day's work.

The levy decree was used for the single purpose of economically completely ruining all members of the minorities. While Moslem Turks were not assessed at all, or assessed within five per cent of their estimated wealth, Jews and Christians were taxed far in excess of their entire resources.
On September 12, 1943, The New York Times reported that, on the average, Greeks were assessed 152 per cent of their total property, Jews 168 per cent and Armenians 252 per cent.

Of a total assessment under the decree of 456 million Turkish pounds, the 260,000 members of the minorities (of whom only some one third were breadwinners) were assessed to the tune of 280 million pounds, while the 17 million Moslem Turks only to the amount of 176 million pounds. Most of the actually collected 320 million pounds came from the minorities. Those minority elements who failed to pay up in full, were deported to forced labor camps.

Together with the other minority groups, the 85,000 Jews of Turkey are still suffering from the crippling effects of the Varlik. While in March 1944, the decree itself was abrogated, and the inmates of the labor camps released, none of the confiscated property was returned. Completely ruined, most Jews still find it hard to earn a living, and some 7,000 of the 50,000 Jews living in Istanbul are dependent on Jewish community relief. Part of the necessary funds is contributed by the Joint Distribution Committee.

In recent months, a certain degree of relaxation has been observed in the regime's attitude to the minorities, especially to the Jews. The most noticeable symptom of the change is an abatement of anti-Jewish agitation in the state-controlled press. There are indications of a somewhat more tolerant official attitude also toward business ventures by members of the minorities. What these symptoms may hold forth in terms of sustained betterment in the future cannot be foretold today. The present improvement may well be attributed to temporary political expediency dictated by the financial assistance promised by the United States.