INTRODUCTION

During 1949–50 the Iron Curtain definitely descended upon the two and a half million Jews in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries, separating them by an almost impermeable wall from the rest of world Jewry. The process of Gleichschaltung ("levelling") of those countries within the Soviet orbit that were still formally independent was almost complete. Not only was every trace of a legal opposition liquidated but every sign of independent thinking, as well, was thoroughly stamped out in every field of economic, political, and cultural life. The official doctrine now admitted that "the people's democracy" was another form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"; although there were still some Communist-front organizations in the guise of political parties allied to the Communists in different "People's" and "Fatherland's" fronts, the Communist parties' monopoly over political and social activity was clearly established. All organizations and all public activities of any kind were brought under complete Communist domination and thoroughly purged of individuals and ideas considered "suspect" or "unreliable."

The Communist parties themselves underwent repeated and severe purges. The slightest deviation from the Soviet pattern was declared treasonable. Communists with independent influence and traditional roots in their own countries were increasingly replaced by agents trained in Moscow, and in some cases by Soviet overlords. Spectacular trials ending in death sentences were conducted against the former leaders and intellectually prominent members of the forbidden democratic parties, as well as against Communists suspected of doubting the infallibility of Moscow. Thousands of persons were executed for no greater offense than that their existence was considered a possible threat to the Communist regime in some possible future crisis. Tens of thousands were sent without benefit of trial to the concentration camps and slave labor gangs which had become legal institutions. The propaganda against the democratic countries and everything connected with Western influences, not only political, but cultural, artistic, and scientific, as well, assumed war-like proportions. Contact with foreign countries outside the Soviet bloc became dangerous; travel abroad ceased except on official missions; foreign travellers other than fellow-travellers were kept out of the Soviet satellite countries; private correspondence with foreign countries was censored and considered suspect; foreign journalists were expelled; even the diplomatic representations of foreign countries were cut to a bare minimum; all non-Communist foreigners were officially described

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as imperialist spies, and any information conveyed to them was deemed to constitute treason and espionage. Under these circumstances, it became increasingly difficult to secure an accurate picture of the developments affecting the daily life of Jewish communities remaining in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Jewish Communities

There were scarcely any Jewish communities to speak of, in the sense of groups possessing any autonomous communal life. In the Soviet Union there were no longer any Jewish newspapers or magazines, any Jewish schools, any Jewish welfare, fraternal, or social organizations; the existence of synagogues and religious communities outside of Moscow was dubious. In the satellite countries, all Jewish political groups, including the extreme left-wing Zionists, were prohibited; nearly all of the Jewish schools had been liquidated; Jewish welfare organizations and co-operatives, built up with American funds during the first years after World War II, had been either confiscated by the state or forcibly merged with non-Jewish organizations under complete Communist control. The representatives of foreign or international Jewish welfare organizations were expelled from all countries with the exception of Hungary, where their days were numbered. The remaining “Jewish” weeklies and magazines became simply organs of the Communist parties “for the Jews”; their main task was to attack Zionism, “Jewish nationalism,” “cosmopolitanism,” and other “reactionary” manifestations of Jewishness. Religious communities were still allowed to exist and to conduct religious services, if they followed closely the Communist line in every other respect, and took part in the Communist “peace” propaganda. But religious practices were discouraged by the pressure of the government-manipulated public opinion. Religious thinking was considered reactionary; abstention from work on Jewish holidays and adherence to the Jewish dietary laws became increasingly difficult, and, in some countries, anti-religious propaganda took the forms of outright provocations and threats.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism was still officially outlawed in all Soviet-dominated countries and open anti-Jewish demonstrations or riots were not reported. The equality of Jews was guaranteed in all state constitutions and legal discrimination on the basis of race was prohibited. But the campaign against “Jewish nationalism” and “Jewish cosmopolitanism” had some distinctly anti-Jewish overtones. The large percentage of Jews among the purged “deviationists,” the use of the former Jewish names of assimilated Soviet Jews during the purge, the characterization of Jewish offenders against the Communist party line as “rootless,” “passportless,” and “anti-patriotic”—all gave the impression that the Jews were considered as an unreliable, suspect, alien group. In the Soviet Union, almost all Jews had disappeared from leading political, diplomatic, military positions, and according to reliable reports, men of Jewish origin were banned from certain branches of the armed
forces, of the civil service, and of some institutions of higher education. On the other hand, in most of the satellite countries some Jews were still present in the leading cadres of the Communist party and the government.

Emigration

Under these conditions of economic crisis, cultural oppression, and political insecurity, complete assimilation or emigration were, for individual Jews, the only solutions to their problem. For the Jews of the Soviet Union proper, the second way was cut off by the general prohibition of emigration. In the satellite countries, the emigration policy differed from state to state. The general tendency seemed to be to retain those Jews who were ready to defend actively the Communist regime, to assimilate completely, and to renounce any Jewish allegiance and any ties with foreign Jews; and to release the remainder who were "unassimilable," in return for as much economic compensation as could be obtained and after as many delays and difficulties as possible. During 1949–50 the emigration of Jews from Czechoslovakia and Poland continued; a large number of those Jews who had remained in Bulgaria after the great exodus of 1948 was leaving the country. On the other hand, a limited number of Jews, most of whom were aged persons, was allowed to leave Rumania, and in Hungary the release of 3,000 of the 150,000 remaining Jews that had been agreed upon was meeting enormous difficulties. In all the satellite countries strong moral pressure was put on those who were preparing to leave, and vicious propaganda was conducted against Israel. The government of Israel was described as subservient to Western imperialism, the living conditions in Israel as those of starvation and destitution. This campaign was nourished by letters purportedly obtained from desperate emigrants, and by statements made by several emigrants who had returned from Israel to their countries of origin. There was no doubt, however, that a large majority of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary and Rumania, preferred to emigrate to Israel, or to any other place, if they could be permitted to do so.

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Soviet Union

Never had it been so difficult to obtain reliable information about the conditions of life of the Jews in the Soviet Union as it was during the period under review (July, 1949, to July, 1950). The Soviet press maintained an almost complete silence about Jewish life; all Jewish periodicals or publications dealing with Jewish problems were suppressed; all Jewish organizations were dissolved; travel to and from Soviet Russia was reduced to a trickle; the foreign diplomatic staffs and correspondents in Moscow were completely isolated and any communication with them was considered prima facie evidence of treason.

In November, 1948, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow had been suppressed; its leaders, as well as all the prominent Yiddish writers, had dis-
appeared. Jewish press and Jewish organizations had ceased to exist. Zionism and "Jewish nationalism" were proscribed as "agencies of Western imperialism." Although anti-Semitism was still officially prohibited, the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" carried distinct anti-Semitic overtones, and a considerable part of the intelligentsia of Jewish origin had been purged from the cultural life of the Soviet Union. There was an increasing number of instances of actual discrimination against Jews in jobs and education, and alarming reports about the deportation of Jews from some border provinces. This was the state of affairs described in the American Jewish Year Book, 1950, volume 51, p. 336-340 and confirmed during the period under review in articles written by American observers who had returned from the Soviet Union (Walter Bedell-Smith in The New York Times, Joseph Newman in the New York Herald Tribune, and Edmund Stevens in the Christian Science Monitor).

**Discrimination**

After World War II racial or religious discrimination continued illegal in the Soviet Union, but reports about discrimination against Jews in certain categories of employment came from several independent sources. Thus, Igor Gouzenko in his book The Iron Curtain, New York, 1946, and several other refugees from the ranks of the Soviet bureaucracy stated that there were internal Communist party directives which ordered the exclusion of Jews from certain positions and a diminution of their number in others. In the Christian Science Monitor (January 10, 1950), Edmund Stevens reported conversations with the head of a department in a large educational institution who told Stevens that he had received a directive to hire no new Jewish teachers and to dismiss those on his staff under convenient pretexts. Stevens came to the conclusion that the new Communist party instructions to deny Jews certain jobs were neither a reversion to old-time Czarist anti-Semitism, nor directed against the Jews as a race. The Jews were rather under attack "as a cultural group whose conduct was branded unreliable—and consequently subject to blacklisting." The Jewish Daily Forward, December 21, 1949, printed a letter from a former Red Army officer, recounting instances of discrimination against Jews in a training school for diplomats.

Whatever the reasons, during 1949-50 the percentage of Jews in high party, state, army, and foreign service positions continued to decline considerably.

This decline was evident in the composition of the Supreme Soviet elected in March, 1950. As far as could be ascertained, there were only 5 Jews among the 1,316 deputies of the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet: Lazar Kaganovich, the last Jewish member of the Politburo; Ilya Ehrenburg, the well-known writer; Rozalie Goldenberg, the only Jew among the five deputies elected to the Soviet of Nationalities from the province of Birobidjan; and Moshe Kud and Mark Spivak, elected in the Ukraine. A considerable percentage of Jews had participated in the Soviet Congresses during the twenties. In 1937, the percentage of Jews in the Soviet of the Union (the lower chamber of the Supreme Soviet) was still 5.6 per cent; it declined to
The reports of deportations of Jews from some border territories of the Soviet Union (see American Jewish Year Book, 1950, Volume 51, p. 340) were repeated during 1949–50. There was a report that the entire Jewish population of Lwow in Western Ukraine (formerly Eastern Poland) where 30,000 Soviet Jews had settled after World War II, had been completely evacuated. Similar reports came from Bessarabia and North Bukovina (The Yiddish [Morning] Journal, August 15, 1949; JTA, August 19, 1949, [from Tel Aviv]); in this case, they were denied and labelled as “fantastic” by the Soviet Embassy in Washington on August 18, 1949. According to these accounts, the Soviet authorities in Kishinev and Czernowitz had announced on July 1, 1949, that Jews wishing to emigrate to Israel should register with the local authorities; the majority of the local Jewish population registered and was sent to concentration camps near Murmansk. According to another report all Jews with relatives in the United States or England had been deported.

It remained impossible to confirm these accounts. The United States State Department received reports confirming simultaneous mass deportations of Greeks from the Black Sea area; but as to Ukrainian Jews, it could only say that reports of their deportation had reached the American Embassy in Moscow, but could not be verified, due to travel restrictions imposed on the Embassy personnel.

On March 13, 1950, it was reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) that the last two Jewish schools in the Soviet Union, located in Vilna and Kovno, respectively, were closed down during the summer of 1949 and their pupils transferred to Lithuanian schools where all subjects were taught in Lithuanian. The report added that no other Jewish schools had been in operation in the Soviet Union since 1948, not even in Birobidjan (see below).

At the same time, Soviet authorities prohibited all Jewish communal activities in Mukacevo in the Carpatho-Ukraine area which had been once a great center of Jewish religious and cultural life and had been annexed by the Soviet Union after World War II. (Jewish Chronicle, London, August 18, 1950; Israelitisches Wochenblatt, Zurich, August 25, 1950; Yiddish [Morning] Journal, August 22, 1950).
Religious Life

The only remaining Jewish institutions were the synagogues. It was impossible to ascertain how many of these were in existence outside of Moscow. In enumerating the existing religious associations in the Soviet Union SSR, a special volume of the Soviet Encyclopedia published in 1948, listed nine religious communities (seven Christian, one Moslem, one Buddhist) which had central organizations—adding that there were synagogues serving the needs of religious Jews but without a central organization. The number of such synagogues was not given. However, the Moscow synagogue was still holding services which were attended by a considerable audience during the Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur holidays in 1949. A report from Jerusalem in the Jewish Chronicle, London, August 4, 1950, mentioned that rabbis of “several” Soviet Jewish communities had written to the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs to ask for etrogim (to be sent to them for the holiday of Succoth in 1950). According to another report, Chief Rabbi Shlomo Schleiffer of Moscow, who had always been loyal to the Soviet government and had been a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, was arrested and deported in March, 1950, as was his assistant, one N. Chobrutsky who was said to have had close contacts with the Soviet secret police, the NKVD. The reasons for their arrest were unknown.

There was an increase in anti-religious propaganda in the Soviet Union during 1949-50, conducted mainly by the Soviet Society for Political and Scientific Research, a successor to the Bezbozhnik or Atheist Organization, officially dissolved in 1942. In June, 1950, Professor Ilya Bogdanov, addressing the Society, called for a more vigorous anti-religious campaign, stressing that the religious tolerance which had been practiced during World War II and for a few years afterward was not in accord with the Bolshevik principles. At a plenary session of the Society, held in August, 1950, it was decided to send a large number of anti-religious propagandists to all the Soviet republics and to print 29,000,000 anti-religious pamphlets. It was stressed that although religions should not be prohibited by law, they must be combatted ruthlessly.

Zionism and Cosmopolitanism

The ideological campaign against Zionism in the Soviet Union was waged more vigorously during 1949-50, and was joined with the purge of “cosmopolitan” tendencies described in the American Jewish Year Book, 1950, volume 51, p. 338-39.

Typical of the content and tone of this campaign was a report delivered by V. B. Lutsky, the most prominent Soviet expert on Jewish questions, at the joint meeting of the Learned Council of the Pacific Institute and the Moscow Branch of the Oriental Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, held in Moscow from April 4 to 6, 1950. According to an account in the magazine Voprosy Istorii.
V. B. Lutsky devoted part of his report to the tasks of the Eastern research front in the struggle against Zionism—the reactionary ideology of Jewish bourgeois nationalism. The speaker pointed out that this struggle has always been necessary, but that now it has become especially urgent since Zionism is one of the potent weapons of American and English imperialist policy in the Near East. Besides, at the present time, Anglo-American war-mongers are utilizing Zionism as a disruptive weapon on a world-wide scale. The immediate tasks of Soviet orientalists studying the Near East is to expose and smash the cosmopolitan ideology of the “united Jewish nation”—an ideology subjected to devastating criticism by both Lenin and Stalin.

PURGES

The purges of “cosmopolitans” continued during 1949–50 and took a heavy toll, especially among historians and economists. Among the historians accused of cosmopolitan “deviations” were J. J. Mints, A. A. Gurevich, N. L. Rubinshtein, and O. L. Vainshtein; J. J. Mints was dismissed from his post of editor of the journal Voprosy Istorii.

The percentage of Jews among those who were purged for cosmopolitanism was considerable in other fields, as well as that of social science. On the other hand, the practice of stressing the Jewish names of those “cosmopolitans” who employed Russian pseudonyms was discontinued after it elicited numerous protests in Jewish circles outside of the Soviet Union. But the fact that the majority of the purged cosmopolitans were Jews and that their Jewish names had been deliberately employed was admitted for the first time, as far as it is known, by a Communist Jewish source. On February 22, 1950, Angel Vagenstein, a Bulgarian Communist leader, who had returned from a prolonged trip to the Soviet Union, lectured in the Jewish Cultural Club in Sofia. According to a report published in Evreiski Vesti, the official Bulgarian weekly for Jews:

Comrade Vagenstein was prepared to explain one aspect of the fight against the cosmopolitans in the Soviet Union. It is characteristic of the Soviet approach to such a fight that it is always concretely pointed out who is the exponent of enemy ideology. Therefore, if such an exponent has a Russian name and is a Jew, his Jewish name is put in brackets. Is this concrete identification of the exponents of cosmopolitanism to be considered a manifestation of anti-Semitism? It is clear to any honest man who recognizes the existence and the strength of the Soviet Union, which are based on the indestructible foundations of brotherhood among nations and of love for all nations, that there is not even a hint of anti-Semitic intent in the use of the correct names of the cosmopolitan Jews. One is forced to state frankly that the majority of the small group of cosmopolitans in the Soviet Union are Jews. But millions of Jews in the Soviet Union are proud patriots of their great fatherland. . . .

The Soviet purges did not, however, remove all Soviet Jews from public life. There were still many Jewish names on the lists of persons who received awards for outstanding achievements in literature and art, or science and technology during 1949–50. However, the percentage of Jews among the prize-winners diminished, especially among the winners of first-class
awards, and most of the Jewish names occurred among the technicians, or in cases when a whole group (e.g., a factory's technical management or a film-producing team) received an award. Nevertheless, the percentage of Jews among the prize-winners remained greater than the percentage of Jews in the total population.

**Purges in Germany**

The purges were extended to the Russian occupation authorities in Germany. According to one report (Yiddish [Morning] Journal, July 17, 1949), twenty-eight high-ranking Soviet officers, most of whom were on the staff of Soviet-sponsored German newspapers, were arrested for holding "pro-Zionist views." Among those arrested were Colonel Misha Bernstein, political editor of the Tägliche Rundschau, Colonel David Neudorf, its economic editor, and Colonel Grischa Feldman, editor of the Neue Zeit. According to a later report (Yiddish [Morning] Journal, August 25, 1949), Major Vladimir Bloch, former editor of the Tägliche Rundschau, was sentenced by a Moscow court to twenty years of hard labor and committed suicide. The reports added that no Jews remained on the staff of official Soviet publications in Germany and Austria.

**Soviet Union and Israel**

The Soviet attitude towards Israel was changing from one of official friendliness to one of rather open hostility during 1949–50. Shortly after the announcement of the American loan to Israel, the Soviet minister to the Israeli government was recalled to Moscow; he did not return to Tel Aviv for six months. After a conciliatory visit to Moscow by Dr. Shmuel Eliashev, the head of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Eastern European Department, in September, 1949, formal diplomatic relations were resumed, but the attacks against Israel and its government by the Soviet press and radio did not stop. Israel was described as an "American colony," the economic difficulties of the country and all signs of social unrest were exaggerated, and Soviet agents and Arab broadcasts from Moscow supported anti-Israel agitation among the Arab refugees (Jon Kimche, in Jewish Chronicle, London, December 2, 1949, and in Overseas News Agency [ONA], November 28 and December 12, 1949). In the United Nations, the Soviet Union first supported the Australian plan for the internationalization of Jerusalem; but in April, 1950, it reversed its stand and recognized that the plan could not be enforced. A new wave of anti-Israel propaganda resulted from Israel's approval of the action of the United Nations in Korea in July, 1950. The Moscow radio charged on July 14, 1950, that Israel "sided openly with the aggressors" and the Soviet press called the Israel government a satellite of Western imperialism.

A public appeal by Premier Ben Gurion to the Soviet government to permit the emigration of those Jews who wished to participate in Israel's reconstruction, made in a speech in the settlement of Afikim on May 23, 1950, was ignored. The general prohibition against emigration remained in force. From the time of the establishment of Israel in May, 1948, to July, 1950,
only two elderly women and one war invalid had been allowed to emigrate to Israel from the Soviet Union.

**Cultural Activities**

The reports of the arrest of prominent Jewish writers, including Itzik Pfeffer, Peretz Markish, S. Halkin, and David Bergelson in November, 1948 (see *American Jewish Year Book*, 1950, Volume 51, p. 337-38) were confirmed by many independent sources during 1949-50. Although a world-wide protest campaign was conducted and many Jewish organizations and prominent individuals inquired about the fate of these writers, Soviet authorities maintained silence. A letter of inquiry sent by the New York Yiddish PEN Club to Soviet Ambassador Ivan Panyushkin in July, 1949, remained unanswered. The Soviet author Ilya Ehrenburg, asked about the matter in a press conference during his trip to London in July, 1950, admitted the liquidation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee; but when he was asked what had happened to Pfeffer, Markish, and Bergelson, he answered only that he did not know them personally, but if they had died he would have heard about it.

In the meantime, several reports about the arrest and subsequent fate of these writers appeared in the Jewish press abroad. The Yiddish *Morning Journal*, quoting reports from Warsaw, reported on June 4, 1950, that Pfeffer had been court-martialed and shot on charges of having engaged in espionage for the United States, and that Peretz Markish was in an insane asylum. According to other reports Pfeffer had investigated rumors of Jewish espionage activities in Minsk without reporting the matter to the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, and had been arrested as an accessory to these activities when the espionage was denounced to the authorities. Still another report, published in the New York Yiddish newspaper *The Day* on September 26, 1950, gave an eye-witness account of the deportation of the Jewish writers from Moscow supposedly emanating from the wife of a Soviet diplomat located in Canada. The Soviet embassy in Canada issued a denial (*Morning Freiheit*, October 14, 1950), stating that there was no discrimination against Jews or any other groups in the Soviet Union; the question of the deportation of the Jewish writers was passed over in silence.

The name of David Hoffstein was added to the list of Yiddish writers who had disappeared when a *Landsmanschaft* in New York headed by a leftist chairman who had consistently denied the reports about the arrest of the Jewish writers, sent a typewriter as a gift to Hoffstein. The gift was returned with the notation “addressee unknown.”

**Birobidjan**

There was no news from or about the Autonomous Region of Birobidjan during the greater part of 1949–50. In July, 1948, several months before its liquidation, the Moscow *Aynikeit* had ceased to publish reports dealing with Birobidjan, and there was no information in other Soviet newspapers. The complete silence surrounding Birobidjan was broken only twice. In October,
1949, the Moscow Pravda published a telegram announcing that the collective and state farms of the territory of Birobidjan had fulfilled their quota of grain deliveries to the state before the scheduled date; but a dispatch by the Pravda correspondent V. Akorokov reported only that "unusually large industrial enterprises have been put into operation [in Birobidjan]." Mr. Akorokov also reported that the output of Birobidjan industries had increased tenfold since 1936, but did not give any absolute figures. The only statement by Mr. Akorokov containing concrete figures had to do with education: "about 25,000 children in Birobidjan attend 144 schools in which Yiddish is the language of instruction."

When the national conference of the American Birobidjan Committee (AMBIJAN) convened in New York City on December 11, 1949, the leaders of the organization published a report by B. Morshchikov in the December, 1949, issue of the Ambijan Bulletin. This report had been prepared, according to a footnote, in 1948.

**Population**

The Morshchikov article failed to give recent population figures, the number of Jewish settlers, the total Jewish population, or the percentage of the Jewish population of Birobidjan. The only reference to the number of Jews in Birobidjan referred to the period of the founding of the Autonomous Province in 1934. It reported the presence at that date of "more than 60,000 Jewish settlers," and asserted that after 1934 "the number grew constantly." Actually, the total population of Birobidjan in 1934 was estimated at about 50,000, and Jews constituted less than 20 per cent of the total. Five years later, in 1939, even pro-Soviet sources gave the number of Jews as 40,000, while less partisan observers estimated the Jewish population at 23,000. (See Sergius Yakobson, The Jews in the USSR, a report prepared by the Legislative Reference Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) The influx of settlers in Birobidjan after World War II may have increased the Jewish population of Birobidjan to about 35,000.

The Morshchikov report referred to "sixty-four large industrial enterprises," including a clothing factory, the Birokan paper mills, the Londoko lime works, a spinning and weaving mill, a furniture factory, a sawmill, an oil and fat factory, and a plant manufacturing prefabricated houses. No data were given about the number of workers or the extent of production.

According to Morshchikov, there were sixty-six kolkhozes (collective farms) with 187,000 acres of land, five state farms, and nine machine-tractor stations in Birobidjan. The report maintained that the state provided the kolkhozes with seed and agricultural machinery free of charge, that all agricultural processes were mechanized, and that the farmers were "reaping abundant crops." In 1947 and 1948 grain deliveries to the state had exceeded the prescribed quotas. No absolute figures were given of the production of the kolkhozes.

**Jewish Education**

The Ambijan Bulletin contained basically contradictory statements concerning the number of Jewish schools in Birobidjan. The Morshchikov report
stated that “the region had 138 schools attended by 17,600 children” (Ambijan Bulletin, December, 1949, p. 6). This statement obviously referred to all the schools of the province, both Jewish and non-Jewish, for the author added several lines further on, that “in many general and technical schools instruction was in the Jewish language.” But Mr. Akorokov, in the dispatch already quoted (Ambijan Bulletin, ibid., p. 3), stated that “about 25,000 children of the Jewish Autonomous Region attended 144 schools in which Yiddish is the language of instruction” [italics ours]. Confronted with the task of explaining how, out of a total of 139 schools, 144 could be Jewish, Ambijan asserted that from 1948 to 1949 the number of schools increased from 139 to 144 and the number of students from 17,600 to 25,000. But since Mr. Morshchikov clearly referred to all the schools of the province, the population of which was overwhelmingly non-Jewish, this explanation by the Ambijan would leave the majority of children, who were non-Jewish, without any school education at all. Actually the statistics referred to all the schools, of which only a small fraction—if any—had Yiddish instruction. A JTA report of March 13, 1950, indicated that no Jewish schools had been in operation in Birobidjan since 1948.

The Morshchikov article reported that in Birobidjan there were fifty-four houses of culture, twenty-four movie theaters, eighteen mobile movie units, twenty-nine libraries, and one Jewish theater. There were two newspapers, one in Russian, one in Yiddish. The report did not give their circulation. According to the last available official data (from the year 1939), the Russian Birobidzhanskaya Zvezda had a circulation of 14,700, the Yiddish Birobidzhaner Shtern a circulation of 1,500. According to Morshchikov, the Shtern still existed in 1948, before the general suppression of the Yiddish press in the USSR.

The Morshchikov report also stated that “together with all citizens of the Soviet Union, the inhabitants of Birobidjan enjoyed democratic rights.” Mr. Morshchikov described the sex and occupation of the eighty-five members of the provincial Soviet, but did not say how many of these members were Jews. The Jewish Autonomous Province “has sent five of its finest sons and daughters as deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,” he added. The impression left with the reader is that all the deputies were Jews. But the list of deputies to the Supreme Soviet as a result of the election of March 12, 1950, reveals that only one of the five Birobidjan deputies had a Jewish name. (There had been two Jews in the Birobidjan delegation to the previous Supreme Soviet.)

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POLAND

During the period under review (July, 1949, to July, 1950) the sweeping communization of Poland encompassed not only the country's foreign policy and internal administration, but the very structure of the Polish state, as well.

On March 20, 1950, legislation was adopted by the Polish Seym (parlia-
ment) concentrating all district and municipal administration in the centralized People's Councils patterned on the Soviet system. In addition to these local units which were to administer the life of the communities, there were to be County Councils, District Councils, and a supreme State Council headed by President Boleslaw Bierut. The establishment of this new structure rendered insignificant the role of the Seym, the last formal vestige of Western democracy in Poland. Similarly, and in line with increasing adjustment to the Soviet pattern, strenuous efforts were made to accelerate the collectivization of land by the use of producers co-operatives. As of March 31, 1950, 802 such units had been organized in Poland.

The decision of the Polish Foreign Trade Ministry to peg the value of the Polish zloty to that of Soviet ruble rather than that of the American dollar deserves special mention, as it was undoubtedly the most important step in the process of Polish integration into the Soviet economy.

Although the Polish government had taken strong measures against the Catholic church, including the nationalization of all church lands (except for small holdings managed by priests), an agreement on church-state relationships was concluded on April 15, 1950, between representatives of the government and the Roman Catholic episcopate in Poland. Among the subjects covered in the agreement which regulated broad aspects of church-state relationships were the role of the church in the fields of education and social welfare, and Poland's relations with Rome (Poland of Today, V, 5, May, 1950). The government did not, however, change its fundamental policy toward the church.

The Seym's startling appointment of the Soviet marshal, Konstantin Rokossovsky, to the post of Supreme Commander of Polish armed forces on November 8, 1949, was another strong manifestation of the Soviet control over Poland. At a meeting of the Central Committee of the (Communist) Polish Workers party held in Warsaw in May, 1950, Marshal Rokossovsky was elected to the Politburo, thus becoming a member of the small group that ruled Poland.

**Jewish Population**

No Jewish statistics were published in Poland during 1949-50, and the available reports by Jewish organizations gave no official figure or estimate of the number of Jews in Poland. According to reliable local observers, however, there were approximately 75,000 Jews in Poland in June, 1949. It was estimated that in May, 1950, the Polish Jewish community numbered approximately 65,000, including 12,000 in Lodz, 5,000 in Szeccin, 5,000 in Wroclaw, 4,000 in Walbrzych and 3,000 in Warsaw.

**Economic Status**

The increasing nationalization of the Polish economy and the growing pressure on small business had a far-reaching effect on Jewish economic life. By May, 1948, the Jewish co-operatives had already lost their autonomy and had become part of the state-controlled co-operative system, although the Jewish producer co-operatives had to some extent preserved their national
Jewish character by continuing to belong to the separate Center for Jewish Producers Co-operatives (Solidarnosc) [see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, p. 343]. It was clear while the reorganization was still in process that it represented only the first step in a long-range plan of complete economic assimilation, and that sooner or later the government would take over completely the Jewish co-operatives. The status of the Jewish producer co-operatives was constantly under discussion during 1949–50, and it was finally proposed that the Jewish units merge with their Polish counterpart, the Polish Workers Co-operatives. Speaking to the Central Committee of Polish Jews, P. Zelicki, president of Solidarnosc, explained the theory behind this move: unification was necessary not only to conform to Polish socialist policy, but also because of the complete social integration of the Jewish minority into Polish life. According to Mr. Zelicki, there was perfect harmony between the Polish and Jewish workers in the co-operatives, and hence no necessity for separate Jewish enterprises (Dos Naye Lebn, November 25, 1949). After five regional preparatory conventions an extraordinary congress of Jewish producer co-operatives was held in Warsaw on December 10, 1949. At this congress the Solidarnosc decided to dissolve and merge with the Polish Workers Co-operatives (CSP). The actual merger took place one day later in Warsaw at a special convention of both organizations. Thus ended one of the brightest chapters in the economic reconstruction of Polish Jewry in postwar Poland. There would, of course, be individual Jewish workers in the now unified producers' co-operatives. But the social and economic foundation of a Jewish group living in its own milieu and working in traditional Jewish professions had been destroyed.

For the record, the following figures may be of interest. On November 1, 1949, just before the merger, there were in Poland 159 Jewish producer co-operatives co-ordinated by the Solidarnosc. The total number employed was 15,445, of whom twenty-five per cent were non-Jews. In addition there were some thirty co-operatives containing about 1,000 Jewish workers who did not belong to the Solidarnosc. The total output of these co-operatives during the first ten months of 1949 was about $28,000,000.

According to the Economic Department of the Central Committee of Polish Jews, no data on occupational distribution of Polish Jews were available. Although most able-bodied Jewish men were working, in certain localities, particularly in the small villages of lower Silesia, the Jews continued to have difficulty in finding suitable employment (Dos Naye Lebn, November 25, 1949). In addition, there were still several thousand Jewish invalids, aged widows, etc., who were in the “hard core” category. To alleviate the plight of these groups plans were being laid for the industrial training of the largest possible number of individuals. ORT was participating in these plans which, it was hoped, would enable the trainees to secure positions in shops and factories.

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2 It may be interesting for the American reader to note that Oscar Lange, formerly professor at the University of Chicago and later Polish delegate to the United Nations, addressed this convention. He derided the theory of a Jewish exodus from Poland and assured the Jewish workers that their place in the country was secure.
Civic and Political Status

Under existing political conditions, and in a country where all publications were subject to state control, nothing of the popular feeling toward the Jews could emerge. Reliable sources indicated, however, that old prejudices and hostility against the Jews still existed to a considerable extent among broad segments of Polish society. The authorities appeared to be aware of this situation, as evidenced by their repeated assurances to the Jewish community that everything would be done to insure their equality. On August 5, 1949, the Polish government passed a decree guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion to all Polish citizens. Persons found guilty of outraging the religious feelings of others or desecrating religious objects or places of worship would be subject to long prison sentences. The decree also included among punishable offenses the offering of insult and causing humiliation to a religious group, and the use of physical violence against an individual because of his religious convictions (Jewish Life in Poland, September, 1949).

Community Organization

It had been clear for some time that a Jewish self-governing communal structure could not survive for long in a rigidly Communist Poland. Obviously, such a structure could continue only if it had a certain measure of autonomy in the conduct of all its varied activities, and could represent the different viewpoints existing in the community. With the gradual absorption of all Jewish social, cultural, and welfare institutions by the state and the total liquidation of all Jewish political parties, the Central Committee of Polish Jews was deprived of its very foundations. Created after the liberation of Poland as a representative Jewish body for a broad field of functional activities, the Central Committee had lost all of its administrative and supervisory functions by July, 1950. It had practically nothing to do except to translate into Yiddish the directives of the state (to the extent that this was necessary).

The leaders of the Central Committee were perfectly aware of this situation and even supplied the ideological basis for the changes. During the plenary session of the Central Committee held on November 18, 1949, both Hersz Smoliar, the chairman, and Joel Lazebnik, the secretary, reported their opposition to the "nationalistic theories of Jewish autonomism" which, according to them, were propagated among Polish Jewry by defunct Zionist groups. In the words of Mr. Lazebnik: "The only justification for all organizations in Poland ... is that they serve to translate into deeds the ideological principles on which is built the reality of Poland today ..." (Dos Naye Lebn, November 21, 1949). As a consequence of this new policy the Central Committee became somewhat of a consultative body to help the state in the management of Jewish affairs. The new tasks and program outlined at its meeting of November 18, 1949, were of a rather loose and indefinite character. The program called for the stimulation of Jewish activities in the state-directed schools, the theater, and the press, and the creation of the necessary
social atmosphere around all Jewish work. The Committee was also to strive to increase productivity among the Jewish people and combat "the ideology of nationalistic separatism in Jewish life."

The Central Committee of Polish Jews, which had become an all-Communist organization, was under the leadership of Herz Smolian, Joel Lazebnik, Szymon Zachariach, and Marek Bitter. Among the lesser known figures added to the Committee at its meeting on March 11, 1950, were I. Bialostocki, M. Gorin, and L. Maimon.

During the period under review all connections between the Jewish community and the outside Jewish world were broken. Polish Jews could no longer participate in world Jewish activities. Most of the political actions undertaken by the Central Committee of Polish Jews reflected the policies of the Polish government, rather than the specific interests of the Jewish population of Poland.

**Jewish Youth**

The fight to prevent a nationalist-Zionist influence upon the coming generation was the goal of all officially directed Jewish youth activities in Poland. It was difficult to estimate the degree of success of Communist propaganda in deterring Jewish youth from emigrating to Israel or in any other way influencing them to accept the official ideology. According to Communist spokesmen, Jewish youth had "liberated itself from Zionist advisers and proponents of emigration." Whatever the case may be, the pressure exerted by the various Communist agencies could not be underestimated. Vigorous efforts were made toward integrating Jewish youth in all the social and political activities of the country. Together with young Polish workers, Jewish youth had to participate in the crop harvesting, in the electrification program, in the "demonstrations for peace," etc. They also participated in *Sluzba Polsce* ("Service to Poland"), particularly as *udarniki* (shock-workers) in industries and factories. As the official Scouts organization was the only children's organization permitted in Jewish schools, the children were naturally subjected to propaganda and drilling. Toward the end of 1949 separate Jewish students' unions were dissolved, and in July, 1950, Jewish students belonged to the general Polish Union. A special youth organ, *Oyfgang*, with a circulation of 4,000, served as the exponent of the official Communist line. This magazine had a special Polish supplement for those who did not read Yiddish.

**Jewish Schools**

First among Jewish institutions to be taken over by the government, the Jewish schools were nationalized at the beginning of the academic year 1949-50. The nationalization visibly impaired the regular functioning of the schools and put them, at least in the beginning, in a rather awkward position. One of the difficult problems was the lack of qualified teachers, as the old teachers who were not sympathetic to the "new school" either were dropped or migrated to Israel. There was also a total lack of Yiddish textbooks capable of meeting the political criteria of the administration. The
Ministry of Education and the local Polish authorities who were called upon to administer the Jewish school system were often unprepared to solve specific problems arising in the Jewish schools in connection with supplementary subjects and differences in language. Parents and pupils alike felt the peculiarity of the new educational system, and a large number of children left the schools. The problem of "absentee pupils" became a subject of discussion among educators and school administrators, and the Yiddish press expressed concern over the increasing number of children without a workable knowledge of Yiddish (Dos Naye Lebn, December 16, 1949). The total number of schools decreased considerably, and during the academic year 1949–50 there were in Poland sixteen Yiddish junior high schools, two full gymnasiums with eleven grades (in Lodz and in Wroclaw), and one pedagogic seminary in Warsaw. The Jewish community had no formal voice in administration of the schools, except for L. Losovsky, member of the prae-sidium of the Jewish Cultural Society, who was appointed governmental inspector and liaison with the Jewish schools.

Hebrew schools had disappeared, as had all the evening classes in the Hebrew language for adults conducted by the various Zionist organizations. In the field of religious education, the religious congregations conducted forty-two parochial schools (talmud torahs), with an enrollment of 984 children, in August, 1949.

Religious Activities

The status of religious congregations, which had to a certain degree conserved some of the character of the ancient Kehilloth, was definitely clarified during the period under review. At a convention of the religious congregations held in Warsaw on August 9 and 10, 1949, at which fifty delegates representing local religious groups were present, the congregations formally constituted themselves a Religious Union of [Members of] Mosaic Faith in Poland. The Religious Union was legally recognized by the authorities and enjoyed every privilege as an organization administering exclusively to Jewish religious needs. The Union was permitted, in addition, to extend some material assistance to its needy members. According to the statutes under which the Religious Union functioned, it was obligated to remain independent of any foreign group, except that in religious matters requiring special clarification it might appeal to the Chief Rabbi of Israel. As a consequence of the emigration of the religious elements of the Polish Jewish population [see below], the number of congregations decreased, and in December, 1949, there were in Poland sixty-three Jewish religious communities, with the same number of synagogues and houses of worship. The congregations also administered sixteen ritual baths and thirty-six cemeteries.

An important change in the leadership of religious Jewry took place when Rabbi David Kahane, for many years the president of the Rabbinical Council, left Poland in September, 1949, for Israel. Rabbi Sholem Traystman was elected president of the Religious Union at the convention held in August, 1949. Regardless of what the future might hold for the Polish Jewish community, the traditional Jewish congregations co-ordinated in the Religious
Zionism and Relations with Israel

Soon after the Polish authorities had, in a special move, permitted Jewish emigration to Israel [see below], measures were taken to stop all Zionist activities. In a statement published by the Ministry of Public Administration on November 25, 1949, the attitude of the government was expressed as follows:

The Polish government has consented that those Polish citizens of Jewish nationality who wish to leave for Israel may do so . . . It is clear, however, that those who are applying for exit visas and leaving for the state of Israel are chiefly persons ideologically connected with the Zionist movement. This fact has had a direct influence upon the activities of Zionist political groups and organizations. It is mostly the Zionist militants who are leaving; as a result the normal process of the liquidation of the activities of those organizations and their dissolution is proceeding . . . (Folks-Sztyme, Warsaw, November 25, 1949).

Dissolution of Zionist Organizations

This was a clear statement of policy, and, coming as it did from the Ministry of Public Administration, it left little choice to the Zionist groups. During the months of November and December, 1949, and the early part of January, 1950, all Polish Zionist parties and organizations halted their activities. The Mizrahi (religious Zionist), Ihud (general Zionist), all labor Zionist groups, including the leftist Mapam, as well as the Zionist fund-raising groups disappeared from public life.

Anti-Zionist Propaganda

While the Zionist parties were being liquidated, anti-Zionist propaganda grew in scope and volume, gradually being extended to include in its purview the authorities and policies of the state of Israel. In the Jewish as well as in the Polish official publications, Trybuna Ludu, organ of the Communist party, and Rzeczpospolita, organ of the administration, the government of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion of Israel was exposed as anti-Soviet and subservient to Anglo-American interests. Not only were the foreign policies of Israel subjected to attack, but the internal policy of the Jewish state was severely criticized, as well. The Jewish press concentrated its attack on the alleged inability of Israel to solve its economic and social problems and absorb its immigrants.

Social Services

During the course of the period since the liberation of Poland in 1945 the Jewish community had built up a large network of social service and welfare

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2 The government was reported to have abolished the post of Jewish army chaplain, because of the small number of Jewish soldiers in military service (New York Yiddish [Morning] Journal, June 27, 1950).
agencies. With the help of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) modern welfare institutions had been organized throughout the country in every city with a Jewish population. These agencies functioned in almost every field of social service, including child welfare, care for the aged, medical aid, and vocational rehabilitation. Despite the relatively small size of the community, several hundred Jewish welfare units (clinics, orphanages, nurseries, clubs) were functioning in Poland during 1949. Some of these were attached to specialized agencies such as TOZ (health) and ORT (vocational rehabilitation); others were conducted by the Central Committee of Polish Jews and some even by political groups. (See American Jewish Year Book, 1950, p. 347.)

NATIONALIZATION OF WELFARE ACTIVITIES

As early as 1948 the Polish government had expressed a desire to place all Jewish welfare activities under state control, but the actual change came about only at the end of 1949. In November, 1949, the government announced its decision to take over all separate Jewish welfare and social activities and include them in the state-directed and state-supported social welfare program. The government felt there was no need in Poland for separate Jewish relief activities, as the time for emergency help had passed. The date of January 1, 1950, was set for the actual transfer of Jewish units and their absorption by the corresponding state institutions. The government promised to assure the maintenance of the specific Jewish aspects of some of the institutions so as not to infringe on the cultural and linguistic interests of the Jewish group. However, it was questionable to what extent and for how long the Jewish welfare agencies which had been taken over by the government would be able to maintain their Jewish character amidst the uniform totalitarian system prevailing in Poland.

Simultaneously with the decision to take over the Jewish welfare institutions, the Ministry of Public Administration notified the American Joint Distribution Committee that it must cease its activities in Poland. The JDC wound up its relief work in Poland on December 31, 1949, terminating over a third of a century of service to needy Polish Jews. It may be interesting to note that the closing of JDC activities in Poland followed similar government action with regard to the activities of CARE (Co-operative for American Remittances to Europe), the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Foster Plan for War Children, Inc. Twenty-two other foreign relief agencies had already been asked to leave at the beginning of 1949.

Cultural Activities

An interesting side light on the character and the content of Jewish cultural work in Poland during 1949-50 was provided by the first Congress of Jewish Culture, held in Wroclaw on October 14 to 16, 1949. At this gathering, and in the presence of representatives of the government and foreign guests, the problems confronting Jewish artists, writers, and teachers were discussed. A large part of the proceedings was devoted to an exposition of the invidious influence of "cosmopolitanism" upon Jewish literature and bitter criticism
of the concept of world Jewish unity. A Jewish “progressive” culture, “national in form and socialist in content,” was set up as the goal of the future activities of the organization. According to official reports presented at the Congress, the society had 15,000 members affiliated with forty-nine local groups, in addition to forty-four libraries, forty-three reading rooms, and twenty clubs. After January 1, 1950, the budget of the society was met by the Committee of Cultural Affairs of the Council of Ministers.

**Drama and Publications**

The two Yiddish theaters in Lodz and Wroclaw were nationalized on January 1, 1950, and placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Art and Culture.

At a convention of Yiddish writers held in Warsaw on March 4, 1950, Farlag Yiddishe Bukh reported that its plans for 1950 called for the publication of twenty-one volumes in various literary fields.

With the suspension of all Zionist newspapers and publications, only those periodicals representing official, or Communist, agencies or viewpoints were being published in June, 1950. These were Dos Naye Lebn, organ of the Central Committee; Oyfgang, youth organ, and Die Nieder-Szlesie—a local Jewish paper published in Wroclaw. The Communist party had its Yiddish paper, Die Folks-Sztyme, and the Jewish writers and journalists published the periodical Yiddishe Shriften.

**Emigration**

As the Polish government did not look with favor at the emigration of its citizens, only small numbers of emigrants were able to leave Poland during the first eight months of 1949. This situation changed, however, with the inauguration of the new policy with respect to Jewish emigration to Israel which was put into effect on September 1, 1949. In a special release dated September 3, 1949, the government made known its willingness to allow those Jews who so desired to emigrate to Israel. A special procedure was worked out whereby prospective emigrants had to be certified by the Central Committee of Polish Jews before they could apply for exit visas. Would-be emigrants were required to renounce their Polish citizenship and travel with special documents issued by the authorities. Although the travel documents were valid for three months, the applicants had to leave within ten weeks after receipt of the papers. The amount of money and personal belongings emigrants were permitted to take out of the country was severely restricted. This open-door emigration policy was to be valid for one year ending September 1, 1950.

**Communist Opposition to Jewish Emigration**

Though Jewish emigration to Israel was a government policy, the Communist party, particularly its Jewish functionaries, continued to oppose it.

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3 It was reported that the liberal attitude toward Jewish emigration was decided by a government commission for the Jewish problem, headed by Franciszek Mazur of the Communist Politbureau (The [Yiddish] Day, July 2, 1950).
The official attitude of the Central Committee of Polish Jews was expressed at its session of November 18, 1949, when Joel Lazebnik, its secretary, clearly and unequivocally spoke out against "Jewish reactionaries" who "are the exponents of the theory of emigration from Poland" (Dos Naye Lebn, Warsaw, November 21, 1949). Along with a barrage of propaganda, a number of concrete measures were taken in order to prevent the registration of would-be emigrants and their departure. Special meetings were held in factories, shops, and producers co-operatives at which Zionist ideology and emigration to Israel were exposed as a form of collaboration with the enemies of the "popular democracies"—a "fifth-column" activity. There were reports of direct pressure put on the members of co-operatives and municipal and government employees to force them to renounce their plans for emigration, and persons engaged in certain professions deemed important for the reconstruction of Poland were refused permits. Letters from would-be emigrants who had had a "change of heart" and decided to stay in "democratic" Poland were published in the Yiddish press. Lists of the names of such persons appeared in the papers; and on January 27, 1950 Dos Naye Lebn editorially stated that

The Jewish workers who were misled by the Zionist propaganda . . . have now understood that to the extent that they and their families are still in Poland they have every opportunity to go back to creative labor for the good of their families and their children, who must live and not vegetate in the camps of Ben Gurion.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS

Estimates of the number of Jews who registered for emigration ranged from 20,000 to 40,000 and 50,000. Reliable local observers who were in a position to know the approximate number of applicants estimated them to number over 30,000.

As of May, 1950, only about 8,000 Jews had left Poland for Israel. Dr. Adolph Berman, former chairman of the Central Committee of Polish Jews, who left Poland for Israel, declared in an interview with the Jewish Chronicle (London, April 7, 1950) that during the time preceding his departure about 80 exit visas had been issued daily to prospective emigrants. According to Dr. Berman, Prime Minister Joseph Cyprankiewicz and other representatives of the administration had promised to increase the daily number of visas to about 160. As the open-door policy was to be continued to the end of August, 1950, the number of persons who had effectively benefited by the permission to leave the country would not be known until that date.

Personalia

At a special ceremony held on January 18, 1950, in the presence of high officials, S. Zachariach of the Central Committee of Polish Jews was honored by the President of the republic of Poland by being presented with the Banner of Labor. The same distinction was bestowed upon the well-known Jewish actress, Ida Kaminska, on July 22, 1949.

Leon Shapiro
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Of the 360,000 Jews who had lived in Czechoslovakia before World War II, and of the 55,000 Jewish survivors enumerated in June, 1948, only some 15,000 to 18,000 remained in Czechoslovakia in July, 1950. The number of those who still wanted to emigrate was estimated by different sources as between 4,000 and 10,000. About 4,000 Jews were said to be living in Prague, and 600 in Brno, the capital of Moravia, at the end of 1949.

Communal Life

All Jewish organizations, except for the Communist-dominated religious communities, were liquidated. The Zionist political organizations, which had survived in Czechoslovakia longer than in any other Communist-dominated country, were not dissolved by the authorities but disappeared at the end of 1949, when most of their members had left for Israel. In January, 1950, the government ordered the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to close its offices, and requested the departure of Henry Levy, the JDC director, as well as of all the foreign members of the JDC staff. The remaining funds, about $400,000, were taken over by the National Bank, to be distributed among local communities. At the same time, almost all of the remaining Jewish welfare institutions, among them the new Jewish hospital in Bratislava, were “nationalized.”

Jewish Museum

The same fate befell the famous Jewish Museum in Prague, one of the most remarkable in Europe. In this museum the Nazis had concentrated Jewish books, manuscripts, religious and art objects confiscated from many countries of Europe. After World War II, the museum belonged to the Prague Jewish community; in the spring of 1950, it was expropriated by the state under the pretext that the community did not have the means to maintain it. (This expropriation was advertised by the Jewish Communist press in other countries as the “foundation of the first Jewish state museum” in Prague.) An appeal by the Prague Jews for permission to transfer some of the objects in the museum to Israel was refused.

There were no Jewish schools in Czechoslovakia. Some efforts were made by the larger communities to teach religion to Jewish children in their free time, but the difficulties were tremendous, as the youngsters were scattered in very small groups in many public schools.

Culture

The “independent” Jewish weekly Tribuna in Bratislava (published in the Slovak language), which had adhered to the Communist line in all matters of general policy but betrayed some pro-Israel “weaknesses,” ceased publication in the spring of 1950.
Věstník, the official weekly Czech-language bulletin of the Jewish Religious Community of Prague, as well as of the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, remained the only Jewish periodical in the country. Throughout 1949-50, Věstník was characterized by an almost complete absence of news about, or comments upon, Jewish life in Czechoslovakia. About one-third of its space was filled with articles celebrating such events as the anniversaries of Stalin, Premier Klement Gottwald, the Russian Revolution, and the Czechoslovak coup d'état of 1948; another third was devoted to reports about such items as Nazism, Fascism, and anti-Semitism in the United States, England, South Africa, and Western Germany, and to adulation of the countries within the Soviet orbit, with special emphasis on Eastern Germany; many reports and articles were devoted to the description of the economic difficulties, class struggles, and Communist activities in Israel; the rest of the contents was devoted to explanations to the post-war generation of the religious meaning of the Jewish customs and holidays.

Religious Life

The new church laws which went into effect on November 1, 1949, provided that only clergymen who had sworn allegiance to the current regime would be allowed to perform their religious duties. The state assumed the financial administration of all churches, charities, welfare institutions, and other properties belonging to the religious communities. The communities had to submit inventories of their properties and budget estimates. In return, they were promised state subsidies and the state undertook to pay clergymen their salaries and pensions, to make grants for studies, and to grant bonuses for meritorious work. The government also undertook to supervise all seminaries and institutes for the education of clergy, and introduced compulsory courses of civic indoctrination in these schools. A special ministry was organized to supervise religious life. Fines and prison terms up to six months were provided for violations of the law.

Another law, dated December 7, 1949, made civil marriage obligatory. Religious ceremonies were permissible after the conclusion of a civil marriage, but only the civil marriage was considered legally valid, and church weddings performed without or before civil marriages were declared punishable. At the same time, records of vital statistics were transferred from the care of the clerical to that of the civil authorities.

Reaction of Religious Bodies

These laws were introduced despite sharp and prolonged resistance by the Catholic Church and some other religious groups. The Jewish communities did not take part in this resistance; as a matter of fact, their official representatives greeted the laws as a new guarantee of the equality of all religious denominations and of their financial security. The rabbis took the oath of allegiance and no persecution of Jewish religious leaders or activities was reported in connection with the "church struggle."

But the communities' hopes for financial security were evidently not fulfilled. Although the salaries of the rabbis were paid by the government, the
communities’ main source of revenue was still a voluntary tax of Jewish citizens; as the number and wealth of Czech Jews diminished rapidly and government subsidies proved too small to cover the deficit, the communities had to sell their buildings and other properties.

The number of Jewish religious communities declined rapidly. After World War II, 51 of the 217 pre-war kehillot had been reconstituted in Bohemia, Moravia, and Czechoslovak Silesia. In the summer of 1950, only 19 communities were represented at a conference of the central organization for these three provinces. No exact data are available concerning the number of religious communities still in existence in Slovakia in July, 1950 (there had been 79 in 1945); but the decrease in the Jewish communities of Slovakia was probably greater than that of the three provinces mentioned above, as the bulk of new emigrants were from Slovakia.

LIQUIDATION OF RELIGIOUS PROPERTY

The property of the thirty-two liquidated Jewish religious communities in Bohemia and Moravia, whose value was estimated at $5,000,000, was “voluntarily donated” to the municipalities, local Czech welfare institutions, and, in some instances, to Christian religious communities. This was done, as some delegates at the 1950 conference of kehillot complained, by Jewish Communist administrators without consultation with the rabbis or the central Jewish Council in Prague. This procedure was in marked contrast with the postwar disposition of those properties belonging to Jewish religious communities that had been liquidated by the Germans; in 1945 the properties belonging to those communities that had no members left after the Nazi occupation had been distributed among the surviving Jewish communities.

The liquidated synagogues were converted into dance halls, theatres, clubs, and libraries. One report from Vienna put the number of former synagogues which were taken over for such use within the period of one week at thirty-three. In one case at least, Vestnik reported that a former synagogue was taken over by a Protestant church. The synagogues of the old Moravian Jewish communities of Mikulov (Nikolsburg), Ivančice (Eibenschuetz), and Valašské Meziříčí were demolished because the buildings were in such a state of decay that they were a public hazard.

Reports in the Jewish press quoted places where women, for lack of rabbis, performed such religious duties as preaching in synagogues and performing religious weddings. The Tribuna in Bratislava reported shortly before its liquidation that it was increasingly difficult to gather a quorum for religious services not only in small places but also in the synagogues of Prague, Brno, and Bratislava.

Anti-Semitism

The new Czechoslovak constitution of May 9, 1948, as well as the penal law for the protection of the republic promulgated that year, prohibited any manifestations of, or propaganda inciting to racial or religious hatred.
The new penal law, in force since August 1, 1950, adopted and strengthened these provisions. Support of propaganda on behalf of Fascism or Nazism, or inciting to religious or racial hatred became subject to prison terms of from one to five years; if the act was committed through the mass media of the press, motion pictures, or radio, or in "any similarly efficient way," the term was to range from ten to twenty-five years. Acts or threats of violence against a group of citizens because of their nationality, race, religion, or because they were adherents of the Czechoslovak regime were to be punished by prison terms of from five to ten years; threats against individuals for this reason, or public incitement against a nationality, a language, or a race, were subject to prison terms of up to two years.

No overt anti-Semitic acts or incidents were reported, except for occasional desecrations of abandoned Jewish cemeteries reported by the Tribuna as occurring in several Slovak towns including Trenčianské, Teplice and Škalica.

According to reports from Jewish sources, latent anti-Semitism was widespread among the population, especially in Slovakia. During the purges of "pro-Western deviationists" at the end of 1949 some Jewish Communists were removed from offices, among them Eugen Loebl, deputy minister of foreign trade, Oskar Kosta, a high official in the ministry of information, and Eugen Klinger, the head of the press section of the foreign ministry. But enough men of Jewish origin remained in high positions to furnish anti-Semitic agitators with an opportunity to exploit the popular opposition to the regime for their own purposes.

**Emigration**

An agreement concluded with Israeli authorities at the beginning of 1949 provided for the emigration of 20,000 Czechoslovak Jews. During the period covered by this agreement there was to be almost unlimited emigration of Czech Jews to Israel. Only physicians, nurses, and some engineers needed in their jobs were refused exit permits, and persons of military age were required to display special certificates issued by military authorities. The fees for passports, however, were rather high. At the beginning, collective passports were issued for groups of emigrants, but later this practice was changed and every emigrant was required to have his individual passport. The emigrants were required to pay heavy taxes and duties. Among those who decided to stay were many aged or poor people who did not have the funds to emigrate.

Individual emigration of Jews was allowed even after the official conclusion of the 1949 emigration activity. In July, 1950, the Jewish Agency issued a circular asking those Jews who had registered for emigration in 1949 and had not been able to emigrate to fill out questionnaires to expedite the handling of their cases. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare reacted with a public statement which was printed in the Věstník on August 25, 1950, and which constituted a summary of the Czechoslovak government's attitude towards emigration to Israel as of that date:
The Czechoslovak Republic is, as is well known, not interested in supporting emigration, since planned economy and socialist reconstruction provide all able-bodied citizens, irrespective of nationality, race, or religion with the opportunity to take part in economic reconstruction. As for invalids or the aged, our social insurance and relief institutions provide a satisfactory livelihood to all citizens without discrimination. Thus, there are no material reasons for anybody to emigrate from Czechoslovakia. In individual cases, however, if all legal conditions are fulfilled, the Czechoslovak government allows all citizens without exception to emigrate. Like other citizens, the members of Jewish religious communities can apply for permission to emigrate in the prescribed way, and no action or intervention by the Jewish Agency is necessary... The circular of the Jewish Agency was issued without the Ministry's consent and its content is incompatible with the aims of the Czechoslovak government.

It was evident from this document that emigration, although not prohibited, was discouraged, and collaboration with Jewish or Israeli organizations frowned upon.

Illegal Jewish emigration from Czechoslovakia to Austria and Germany continued, although the borders were tightly guarded and the penalties for apprehended refugees and their helpers were long jail terms. According to a report made by the Jewish community in Vienna in May, 1950, 465 Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia had crossed the Austrian border during a period of ten weeks.

JOSEPH GORDON

RUMANIA

The Jewish population of Rumania was estimated at about 350,000 in July, 1949. A report by the JDC gave a figure of 342,000 as of September 1, 1949. During the period from September, 1949, to September, 1950, 35,000 Jews left Rumania for Israel in organized transports. The number of illegal emigrants was negligible in view of strict border controls in Rumania as well as in the neighboring Iron Curtain countries. On the other hand, the number of Jews on Rumanian territory was diminished by the deportation of Jews born in Bessarabia and North Bukovina to the Soviet Union in September, 1949 (see below). There were no statistics available about the natural increase or decrease of the Rumanian Jewish community, but in view of the difficult economic conditions and general insecurity, a substantial increase was highly improbable. Nevertheless, in September, 1950, the Rumanian Jews still constituted the most numerous Jewish community in the Soviet satellite states, and the largest Jewish population in any country on the European continent west of the Soviet Union.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

There were no reliable statistics concerning the employment, economic status, distribution of income, or living conditions of the Rumanian Jews. The wholesale expropriation of enterprises in the areas of small industry and commerce had left large segments of the Jewish population destitute.
Many Rumanian Jews had lived on foreign Jewish relief; after the ending of organized American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) activities in Rumania by the Rumanian government on March 7, 1949, the plight of many aged or unemployed Jews became desperate. Letters from Rumania, reports of foreign journalists and visitors, and information obtained from recent immigrants to Israel described the conditions of semi-starvation prevalent in the Jewish community of Rumania.

The absorption of the Jewish population into the new economic life of Rumania clearly had not kept pace with the elimination of their old sources of livelihood. The Jewish communities never published figures about the extent of unemployment in their midst; but they implicitly admitted its existence on a large scale by publishing figures for the number of unemployed Jews for whom they had procured jobs. Thus, according to an official report, during the month of September, 1949, 525 unemployed Jews were provided with jobs in the city of Bucharest, and 209 in Arad. A report by the Jewish Democratic Committee quoted in the New York Yiddish Freiheit on March 23, 1950, maintained that the Committee had placed 18,000 unemployed Jews in jobs during 1949. This would be a considerable number; it was, however, impossible to verify the figures or to find out on the basis of them the nature and duration of this employment, and how many Jews remained unemployed at the end of that period. At about the same time the number of Jewish breadwinners who were either unemployed or had only occasional jobs as unskilled workers was estimated by other sources at 40,000. With their families, they constituted a large percentage of the Jewish community.

**CONSCRIPTION**

There were repeated reports of large-scale conscriptions of Jews for forced labor, for the construction of roads, railways, and the Danube-Black Sea Canal. Contrary to some reports in the Jewish press, there was nothing to prove that these conscriptions were aimed at the Jewish community. All adult citizens in Rumania were subject to conscription for road building and similar heavy labor for several weeks; in addition, "non-productive" as well as "politically unreliable" elements could be confined by administrative procedure to years of forced labor in any of the numerous concentration camps in Rumania. These measures of general repression common to all Soviet-dominated countries hit the Jews harder than other groups because the percentage of people without "productive" jobs among them was larger. For the same reason Jews constituted a large percentage of persons put in jail for such economic offenses as attempting to evade expropriations or taxes, dealing on the black market, and committing infractions of rationing rules.

**DEPORTATION**

According to a detailed report published in the Jewish Daily Forward, New York, on October 4, 1949, a large-scale deportation of Bessarabian and North Bukovinian Jews to the Soviet Union took place in the fall of 1949. Both provinces had belonged to Rumania since 1918. During that time,
many Jews from these provinces had settled in the Rumanian capital or in the old Rumanian provinces. In 1940, Rumania had to cede both provinces to the Soviet Union; in 1941, they were reoccupied by the Rumanian armies, and again occupied by the Soviet Union after the war. Some of the Jewish survivors preferred to settle on Rumanian rather than on Soviet territory, claiming the same right as other Rumanian citizens.

But on September 1, 1949, the Rumanian police and militia, co-operating with the Soviet secret police, rounded up all Jews born in Bessarabia and North Bukovina, put them on trucks and delivered them to gathering points in railroad stations where they were put in box-cars and shipped over to Russia. The operation was thoroughly prepared, lists of persons liable to deportation being drawn up from ration-card and police registers. The deportation trains crossed the border in prearranged border stations or went to the port of Constanza, whence Russian boats transferred the deportees to Odessa. Their further destination and fate was not known.

Communal Life

The Jewish religious communities in Rumania were reorganized under a new statute published in the Official Gazette on July 12, 1949. According to this statute, only one Jewish community could function in each town; this community was to comprise all communal groups (e.g., Orthodox, Ashkenazic, Sephardic). It was the duty of this community “to create, maintain, and supervise the institutions necessary for the fulfillment of the religious needs of its followers.” All communities had to belong to a central body, the Federation of Rumanian Jewish Communities, which was to be the supreme administrative authority for all communities and all religious institutions. The Supreme Rabbinical Council of eleven members, appointed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs on the recommendation of the Federation, was to be the highest spiritual authority. All synagogues, cemeteries, ritual slaughter houses, ritual baths, etc., were to become the property of the local community. No rabbi or religious servant could officiate and no religious service of any kind could be carried out without the consent of the reorganized communities.

Later in July, a national conference of rabbis and representatives of the Orthodox, Ashkenazic, and Sephardic communities took place in Bucharest and effected the merger prescribed by the statute. In place of the independent Orthodox communities, Orthodox sections of the unified communities were established in Bucharest, Timisoara, Arad, Brasov, Cluj, Satu Mare, and Targu Mures. Sephardic sections were set up in Bucharest, Constanza, Timisoara, Ploesti, and several other cities. The conference pledged close co-operation with the Jewish Democratic Committee.

On August 28, the merger was formally proclaimed in Bucharest, in a meeting presided over by H. Leibovici-Serban, a Communist and secretary-general of the Federation of Jewish Communities. Leon Stern, a Communist, was elected president of the unified community.

In September, 1949, the Ministry of Religious Affairs appointed the Supreme Rabbinical Council. Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen was appointed its
president; Rabbis I. Halpert, M. Eschkenazy, S. Glantz, M. Halevy, and H. Rabinovici of Bucharest, David Sperber of Brasov, Adler of Turda, Guttman of Jassy, Schoenfeld of Arad, and Friedman of Buhusi, were named as members. In its first meeting held in November, 1949, the Federation of Religious Communities and the Supreme Rabbinical Council decided to turn over all community buildings in areas where the communities had ceased to exist to the local Rumanian authorities. There were 206 local communities in Rumania at that time. The body reaffirmed its confidence in the chief rabbi.

The purpose of the unification and reorganization was to centralize community life and strengthen the control of all religious institutions by the Communist leaders, strongly entrenched in the central bodies. After this reorganization, the religious communities could not maintain any neutrality in political matters. They were used not only for the “peace propaganda” but also in campaigns against Zionism, Israel, and against American and Western European Jewry. Rabbis were forced to recite anti-Zionist prayers, and Communist leaders used the synagogues as a forum for their political speeches. There was a resistance against this practice in the communities; on several occasions worshipers left the services or tried to protest against Communist speakers. According to a report from Vienna, published in the Yiddish [Morning] Journal in New York on October 16, 1950, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen was beaten outside his synagogue after delivering a violent anti-Israel sermon on Rosh Hashanah, 1950.

Although religious services were not forbidden within the framework of the official communities, anti-religious propaganda was conducted outside the synagogues and especially among the youth. On Rosh Hashanah, (September 24), 1949, several hundred young Communists paraded through the Jewish sector of the capital, carrying posters reading “Religion is the opium of the people.” Though such demonstrations were repeated, the synagogues remained crowded with worshipers.

**Jewish Education**

The considerable number of schools teaching the Yiddish language (sixty-nine elementary and twenty-three high schools in June, 1948) had been reduced to three in 1949. These schools functioned in Bucharest, Timisoara, and Jassy; a fourth school promised in January, 1949, was never opened. There were 970 Jewish children in attendance. In addition, Yiddish-language courses were given in forty general schools in Rumania wherever there was a large percentage of Yiddish-speaking children and where the parents asked for it. According to Communist sources 7,000 children were taught Yiddish in Rumania; that number probably included the students of Yiddish schools as well as those who received instruction in the Yiddish language in Rumanian-schools. According to Mrs. Polia Barasch, government inspector for Yiddish education, there were ninety Yiddish teachers on the government payroll at the end of the 1948-49 school year. The publication of new Yiddish textbooks was hindered by the fact that no Yiddish typists or linotype operators could be found, but seven textbooks were printed nevertheless,
according to Mrs. Barasch. Courses were organized to train Yiddish teachers in the phonetic spelling in use in the Soviet Union.

According to an official statement (see American Jewish Year Book, 1950, Volume 51, p. 369) there had been 1,000 teachers for the 13,000 students in the ninety-two Yiddish schools in June, 1948. The steep decline in the number of teachers shows that most of the 7,000 children who were being taught Yiddish according to the statements cited above could be receiving no more than a token number of Yiddish-language lessons. The dismissal of several hundred teachers from the Yiddish schools closed during 1949-50 pointed to an extensive purge in the teaching profession.

In November, 1949, it was announced that Yiddish kindergartens would be opened in Bucharest and Timisoara, and that the schools in these two centers would offer a complete seven-year elementary course. The same announcement reported that the Bucharest school had been expanded to six classes. A school for the training of Yiddish teachers and kindergarten nurses was also opened in Bucharest during 1949-50.

The fight against Zionist and Jewish-nationalist ideology was considered one of the main tasks of the Yiddish Schools. In December, 1949, Mrs. Barasch complained in Unirea that certain Yiddish teachers “still have memories of the nationalist education they received when they were students themselves.” As an example, Mrs. Barasch cited a teacher who instructed his students in Hebrew, “not in order to increase their knowledge but to be able to carry on ... Zionist propaganda.”

Cultural Life

There were two Jewish theaters in Rumania. The theater in Bucharest had been taken over by the state in 1948, and the theater in Jassy, originally developed by an amateur group, was nationalized in July, 1949, a fact which was publicized as the founding of a second Jewish State Theater in Rumania. In the summer of 1949, the Bucharest theater conducted a country-wide tour and estimated that 50,000 visitors had seen its performances. Both theaters performed revolutionary plays and the fight against “Jewish nationalism” was considered one of their most important educational aims.

There were three Jewish periodicals, Unirea, in Rumanian, and Ikuj Bleter, in Yiddish, both published in Bucharest, and Uj Ut, in Hungarian, appearing in Cluj, in Transylvania. All three periodicals followed closely the Communist line. There were also weekly Yiddish-language broadcasts, used mostly for the purpose of disseminating propaganda against Israel.

Zionism

Although Zionist organizations in Rumania had been dissolved and their members purged from positions of influence in the communities during the period from December, 1948, to January, 1949, the fight against Zionism continued and became more and more violent during 1949-50.

In July, 1949, a new appeal to “continue the fight against Zionist nationalism with increasing vigor,” was published in Unirea, the organ of the Comi-
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The purpose of the campaign was to "liberate the Jewish workers from the ideological influence of Zionist nationalism," and special attention was to be given to the youth who joined *kibbutzim* (Zionist collectives). In August, *Unirea* complained of a "slackening of vigilance" against Zionism. Warning that all "nationalist intrigues" had not ceased with the dissolution of the Zionist organizations, it cited as an illustration the advice given by Zionist leaders to the Jewish population of Jassy not to attend the 1949 commemoration of the anniversary of the war-time pogrom in that city because the meeting was to take the form of a manifestation against "war-mongers who happen to be the bosses of Zionist nationalists." Urging greater vigilance in the combat against Zionist influence, *Unirea* complained of Zionist sympathies among school children and of the fact that some Zionists still held responsible positions in the Rumanian economy.

Theaters, school, and even synagogues were used for the fight against Jewish nationalism. In August, 1949, Bernhard Lebli, director of the Jewish State Theater, described how that theater fought "for the unmasking of Zionist nationalism" (see above). The same task was performed by the remaining three Jewish schools (see above). On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, October 3, 1949, Jewish Communists forced the recital in synagogues of special prayers directed against Zionism, the state of Israel, and foreign Jewish organizations which were charged with preparing a third World War. Most of the rabbis were forced to submit to this order by the exertion of strong pressure; those who resisted were threatened with immediate arrest, and had to yield.

In October, 1949, the anti-Zionist campaign reached a new climax in connection with reports of the trial of former Foreign Minister Laszlo Rajk in Hungary and his Jewish co-defendants, who were charged with criminal conspiracy and espionage in behalf of Zionism. According to *Unirea*, the Budapest trial "unmasked the poisonous character of Zionism as a branch of war-mongering big finance." On October 14, the fight was transferred to the columns of *Scanteia*, the central organ of the Rumanian Workers party and the most widely circulated publication in Rumania. *Scanteia* charged the Israeli government with all kinds of crimes, including discrimination against Jews whose skin was of a dark color.

In November, the attacks were focused on religious Jewry, which was described as a "bastion of clerical Zionism." Jewish Communists wearing prayer shawls and skull caps went to the synagogues and delivered violent attacks against Zionism and the state of Israel. A number of Jews who protested against one such speech delivered by Solomon Stern, the chairman of the Kehillah, in a Bucharest synagogue, were removed from the services and arrested. The first conference of the Rabbinical Council in Rumania, held in November, 1949, was forced to adopt a resolution against Zionism, particularly directed against the former chief rabbi, A. Safran. Similar speeches were held at a meeting of the Jewish Democratic Committee and transmitted by the official Rumanian radio. In these speeches the Zionists were accused of carrying on illegal activities in Rumania, of Fascism, and of espionage (Yiddish [Morning] Journal, December 5, 1949.)
A conference of the Jewish Democratic Committee held in March, 1950, removed six prominent communal leaders from its board for not having conducted the fight against Zionism with sufficient energy; it was the third purge of pro-Communist officials for laxity in this respect. The conference proclaimed 1950 as a year to combat Zionist nationalism and adopted an elaborate plan of propaganda against Israel, including publication of letters and articles showing "the misery of the masses" in Israel, individual talks against Zionism, street meetings, conferences denouncing Jewish nationalism, anti-Zionist exhibitions, etc. Special attention was devoted to authors of Jewish fiction, who were reprimanded for not participating in this "ideological struggle."

In April, 1950, the fight against Israel was again carried into the daily press and the newspaper Romania Libera carried a violent attack against Prime Minister David Ben Gurion of Israel. Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen extended the attack against other "Jewish war-mongers," including Henry Morgenthau Jr., Bernard Baruch, and Benjamin Cohen of the United States. The newspaper Scanteia joined the attack on Ben Gurion and the "American spy" Morgenthau on May 30, 1950.

As "ideological" campaigns seemed to have achieved meager results, the fight against Zionism was increasingly conducted by the means of police repression. In August, 1950, there were reports that the police had prepared lists of former Zionists for their removal from the cities of Bucharest, Jassy, Timisoara, and Cluj to Dobrudja and Altenia. These reports were officially denied, but many individual Zionists were arrested for their activities. In December, 1949, Leo Wolfsohn reported at an annual meeting of the United Rumanian Jews in the United States that 7,500 Zionists in Rumania were under arrest; it was impossible to verify the exactness of this figure. The meeting asked the Rumanian government to admit a delegation to investigate the situation of Jews in Rumania, but the government never answered. Several Zionist leaders were detained during the winter of 1950, after they had obtained all the necessary documents and fulfilled all conditions for emigration, and were preparing to go aboard the ships in the harbor of Constanta. Finally, specific reports announced in May, 1950, that 200 Zionists, including from forty to fifty prominent leaders, had been arrested. Two of the leaders, A. Dascalu, the secretary of the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair, and Zoltan Hirsch, secretary of the left-wing Ahдут Haavodah, were released. The others were kept in jail, supposedly for a big anti-Zionist trial. Among those detained were: Dr. A. Benveniste, former president of the Rumanian Zionist Organization, Dr. Loewenstein, B. Badi, H. Yakrakner, S. Unger, Dr. Drummer, Dan Iesanu, and Michael Leiba. According to some reports, the proceedings against them on charges of treason and espionage were conducted by Eugen Cristescu, a former officer of the Rumanian secret police during the regime of Ion Antonescu, who had worked for the Gestapo and had sent eight Zionist youths to jail under the Nazi rule. Among other things, the Zionist leaders were charged with supporting British agents and parachutists during the period of the Nazi rule—supposedly proof that they were in the service of British Intelligence.

In April, 1950, Rumanian authorities arrested Marcel Pohne, the Bucharest correspondent of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Leonard Kirscher,
the correspondent of the Associated Press. They were held incommunicado, and accused of espionage activities that included the giving of information of "treasonable Zionist activities" to the American and British Information Services in Bucharest. In May, Marcel Pohne was expelled from membership in the Association of Foreign Correspondents in Bucharest in which Communists held a majority.

Relations with Israel

The diplomatic relations between Israel and Rumania were cool, even on the official level, throughout 1949. The reasons were Rumanian propaganda against Israel as well as prohibition of Jewish emigration to Israel. On July 18, 1949, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett disclosed in a written statement to the Knesset that the Israeli government had sent the government of Rumania a note asking for the emigration of Rumanian Jews to Israel and had instructed its minister in Bucharest to open negotiations on the subject, but had received no answer. In August it was announced that Reuven Rubin, the Israeli Minister to Rumania was to be recalled for consultations, leaving the legation in the hands of a chargé d'affaires. An additional reason for this demonstration, it was said, was the Rumanian minister's absence from Tel Aviv and the fact that the legation there was represented by a chargé d'affaires, Paul Davidovici, who was a violent anti-Zionist.

At the end of August, Dr. Shmuel Eliashev, a high official of the Israeli Foreign Office, visited Bucharest in the course of his tour of Eastern-European capitals, and conducted negotiations with Ana Pauker, the Rumanian foreign minister. At the same time, an agreement was signed between nationalized Rumanian firms and private Israeli companies providing for an exchange of goods to the value of $3,000,000. Although no formal trade agreement was arrived at, there was a lively commercial exchange between Rumania and Israel throughout 1949.

After Mr. Eliashev's visit, relations between Rumania and Israel improved. Rumania appointed Nicholas Cioroiu its minister to Israel, and the emigration policies of the Rumanian government became more liberal. However, new diplomatic interventions became necessary and new negotiations were conducted when the transports to Israel met new difficulties in October, 1949. In November, it was announced that the Israel minister in Bucharest, Reuven Rubin, had offered his resignation. He left Bucharest on December 15. In February, 1950, the Israeli government nominated Ehud Avriel, previously Israel minister to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, as its prospective minister to Rumania; the appointment was approved by the Rumanian government on March 13.

Emigration

According to incomplete figures published by the Israeli legation in January, 1950, 6,272 Jews left Rumania for Israel during 1949. In January, 1949, 1,324 Jews had sailed for Israel under the terms of an old agreement between the Israeli government and the Jewish Democratic Committee of Rumania.
After that date, emigration practically stopped for several months. Only 1,360 Jews were allowed to leave Rumania during the period from February through October, 1949, of whom 40 per cent were not Rumanian nationals. The majority of these emigrants were elderly persons, many of them invalids; only 15 per cent were under forty-five years of age. There was practically no emigration during October. When the Israeli ship S. S. Eilat arrived in Constanza in the middle of October, Rumanian authorities refused to permit the embarkation of 240 waiting emigrants who had received exit visas earlier. The reason given was that the transport might be interpreted as an effort to start mass emigration. Eventually, only 63 non-Rumanian Jews were allowed to sail, 183 Rumanian Jews being detained. This incident provoked a demonstration by the Israeli relatives of the prospective immigrants at the Rumanian legation at Tel Aviv, as well as Israeli diplomatic representations.

The emigration regulations were not relaxed until November, 1949, when the emigration of certain categories of applicants, mostly elderly persons and those with near relatives in Israel, was again allowed. The Rumanian government insisted that the Jewish Agency not “interfere” with the organization of emigration, and that all transports use the Rumanian boat S. S. Transylvania, paying an exorbitant fee. In addition, there were reports of direct payments the Rumanian government received for each exit permit.

From November 9 to December 24, 1949, 3,588 Jews were able to leave Rumania. Reports by the JDC gave the total Jewish emigration from Rumania during 1949 as 7,112.

The size of the transports steadily increased during 1950. In January, 907 Jews left Rumania, 1,890 in February, 1,691 in March, 2,805 in April, 2,120 in May, 5,620 in June, 5,810 in July, 8,198 in August, and 6,444 in September. Some 35,500 Jews left Rumania during the first nine months of 1950, constituting approximately 10 per cent of the Rumanian Jewish community. Most of the emigrants were still elderly men and women, although some younger people appeared in the later transports. Technicians, skilled workers, professionals, and former Zionist leaders continued to be excluded.

**ANTI-EMIGRATION CAMPAIGN**

Throughout this period, a violent campaign against emigration was conducted by the Jewish Communists in Rumania. A special anti-Israel exhibition was circulated in Jewish centers which purported to describe the crowded camps, difficult living conditions, and police persecution of immigrants in Israel (some of the photographs exhibited were identified as pictures of the Warsaw ghetto under the Germans). Some of the prospective emigrants were forced to renounce Israeli visas, and Jewish newspapers printed the letters in which they “refused to become victims of capitalist exploitation in Israel.” In April, 1950, H. Leibovici-Serban, the secretary-general of the Federation of Jewish Communities, published a sharp warning to all Jews who were employed or “who can enter the field of production,” not to start “running around for traveling documents.” The agitation for emigration was described as an aid to imperialists who were preparing for a new war. Many people already prepared to emigrate were actually arrested;
in some cases, they were offered their freedom and exit permits in return for American dollars. Travelers who visited Rumanian harbors reported that they had seen signs in custom offices attacking as “parasites” those Jews who wanted to go to Israel and to take their possessions with them.

Notwithstanding this pressure, a large majority of the Jewish population asked for Israeli visas, and in July, 1950, there were reports hinting that the Rumanian government might overrule the Jewish Communists and further liberalize its emigration policies.

Illegal emigration was almost impossible in view of efficient police measures in Rumania and neighboring countries. The flow of Rumanian Jews through Hungary to Vienna had been reduced to a mere trickle.

POLITICAL REFUGEES

There were several cases of prominent Rumanian Jews on official business abroad who refused to return to Rumania and sought refuge in the democratic countries of Western Europe or in Israel. In August, 1949, Rehila Weinbaum, a delegate to the congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Milan, fled to Rome and asked for asylum in Italy. Miss Weinbaum declared that Rumanian Jews were being persecuted and practically all of them would emigrate if permitted. In May, 1950, it was announced that Misha Levin, former leader of the left-wing Zionist group Hashomer Hatzair in Bessarabia, later deputy in the Rumanian parliament, a prominent Communist and one of the leaders of the Jewish Democratic Committee, had deserted the Rumanian legation in Italy, asked for asylum, and finally emigrated to Israel.

JOSEPH GORDON

OF THE 49,000 Jewish survivors of World War II enumerated in Bulgaria in a census undertaken by the Jewish Consistory after the war, approximately 40,000 had left the country by the middle of 1949. (The number of emigrants was 37,000 according to the Jewish Consistory, 41,000 according to the Sofia office of the American Joint Distribution Committee [JDC].) At a conference of Jewish religious communities in Sofia on June 5, 1949, Professor Zhak Natan, the president of the Jewish Consistory, announced that there were approximately 5,000 Jews residing in Sofia, and 4,707 in the provinces. These figures were exclusive of the Jewish members of mixed marriages. According to the Jewish Consistory, the following Bulgarian cities and towns still had Jewish communities: Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse, Marek, Yambol, Varna, Vidin, Kustendil, Khaskovo, Pazardzhik, Pleven, Sliven, Burgas, and Stara Zagora.

Other sources estimated the number of Jews remaining in Bulgaria after the large-scale emigration at between 7,000 and 9,000. This number remained stationary until the summer of 1950 when the transports to Israel were resumed. At that time, 4,000 of the remaining members of the community registered for emigration.
Communal Life

After the mass exodus of 1948-49, the Jewish institutions were reorganized on the assumption that those Jews who had not emigrated wished to remain in Bulgaria in order to take part in the socialist reconstruction of that country and to become completely integrated into the Bulgarian nation.

The Zionist organizations had liquidated themselves "voluntarily" and their members had left for Israel at the end of 1948. The JDC offices in Sofia had been closed in May, 1949, when that organization considered its tasks fulfilled. In May, 1948, the Jewish section of the Fatherland Front had become part of that organization's Council for Nationalities. All the remaining specifically Jewish activities were concentrated in the Jewish communities and their central organization, the Jewish Consistory, which was completely dominated by the Communists.

NEW PROGRAM

On June 6, 1949, a conference of the Jewish communities, called by the Consistory, adopted unanimously the following decisions.

The emigration activity was to be considered as ended. The activities of the leadership of the Consistory during the period of emigration were approved as a whole; the leadership reproached itself for not having sufficiently impressed the emigrants with the bourgeois character of Israel, and for not having been more zealous in preventing specialists and skilled workers from emigrating from Bulgaria.

The Jewish Consistory was to be the only representation of Bulgarian Jewry. Local Jewish communities were to continue to exist in the fourteen towns enumerated above. All other Jewish communities were to be liquidated, and their properties taken over by the Consistory. The Jews who were scattered over the country would have to join one or another of the remaining communities. The budgets for all communities were to be approved and their financial disbursements administered by the Consistory. The Consistory was to maintain the office of the chief rabbi as well as the synagogues in all localities where there was a sufficient number of devout Jews.

The Consistory was to take over all the assets and liabilities of the JDC. The Committee for Rehabilitation (which had previously distributed foreign relief by agreement with foreign Jewish organizations) was to be liquidated and its functions taken over by the Consistory. ORT and OZE were to be allowed to continue their activities under the leadership of the Consistory. The same applied to Geula, the bank that financed co-operatives which had been founded with the help of foreign Jewish organizations.

The Jewish schools in Sofia and in the provinces were to be closed. In order to give Bulgarian Jews a "Marxist-Leninist" education, Jewish library associations and clubs were to continue their activities in Sofia as well as in those provincial towns which possessed Jewish populations. The Jewish Scientific Institute in Sofia was to continue to gather and examine historical documents and materials. Evreiski Vesti, the organ of the Consistory, was
to appear twice a month, rather than weekly, as before; its main task was to be to educate the Jews "in the spirit of socialist reconstruction," its secondary task to present information about the life of Jews in Israel and other countries.

The conference elected a new Central Committee of the Consistory, composed almost exclusively of Communist Jewish leaders. Its executive committee included Professor Zhak Natan as president, Dr. Herschel Astruk as vice-president, Isak Frances as secretary, the Jewish member of parliament, Israel Maier, and David Erokham; all of these persons were Communists. Since Chief Rabbi Daniel Zion had emigrated to Israel, the chief rabbinate was taken over by Dr. Asher Khanalet, the rabbi of Sofia. The conference decided to disaffiliate itself from the World Jewish Congress, described as an organization dominated by bourgeois Zionists and allied to Western imperialism.

Professor Natan reported to the conference that the Zionist organizations had admitted by their voluntary dissolution that they had no role to play in Bulgaria. However, according to Professor Natan, Zionist ideology was still surviving and had to be fought, because it represented "bourgeois nationalism" and "reactionary attempts to restore capitalism."

During the period that followed, the fight against Zionism and "Jewish nationalism" was conducted with increasing sharpness. Evreiski Vesti reprinted reports on the "nefarious" and "subversive" activities of the Zionists in other satellite countries, especially in Rumania and Hungary, as well as decisions by the Communist parties to strengthen the fight against "Jewish nationalism." Israel was depicted as a country where mass misery existed side by side with violent persecution of workers and "progressive elements." This description was enhanced not only by articles and speeches by Israeli Communist leaders but also by the publication of letters purportedly sent from Israel by disillusioned Bulgarian emigrants.

Political Activity

In the political field, the Consistory issued numerous statements "in the name of Bulgarian Jewry," greeting the Communist leaders and congresses, condemning Titoist "traitors" in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, asking the Bulgarian Jews to vote for government lists in elections, supporting the Stockholm peace campaign, protesting against "American imperialist intervention" in Korea and the Israeli government's support of the United Nations action in that area, etc. A special article in the Evreiski Vesti attacked the American Jewish Committee on September 15, 1949, as representing "the most reactionary part of the Jewish population in America" and conducting "anti-Soviet propaganda in the service of imperialists."

Cultural Activity

The cultural activities in the library reading rooms and clubs were conducted along the same lines. To quote one example: On December 21, 1949, the Jewish library association of the town of Stalin organized an affair to
combine the celebrations of Hanukkah and Stalin's birthday. The chairman said in his address that the Jews of the town of Stalin had several reasons to rejoice in these "Stalin days": first, the death sentence passed against the traitor Traicho Kostov; second, the electoral victory of the Communist party; third, the re-naming of their town in honor of Stalin; fourth, Stalin's seventieth birthday; and fifth, the "militant-national holiday of Hanukkah."

At the annual meeting of the Jewish community in Kustendil held on February 6, 1950, the chairman of the local library association reported that the activities of the organization had been "comparatively slight" during 1949 because its premises had been used first for the emigration activity, then as the party headquarters; when the premises at last became available, only a small number of members had been left to make use of them. Sofia was the only scene of more extensive cultural activities; the library association of that community organized several concerts and lectures in addition to the usual propaganda activities. The Evreiski Vesti published repeated appeals to the Jewish public to join the libraries and clubs and to attend their meetings, but the response seems to have been rather faint. In the spring of 1950, all books "with a nationalist Jewish tendency" were removed from the libraries.

Social Service

Some of the welfare institutions, as well as historical collections still maintained by Jewish organizations, were transferred to state authorities. In December, 1949, the rehabilitation and rest center for Jewish youth in Sofia was turned over to the municipality, and the Jewish Scientific Institute in Sofia transferred to the city archives a collection of documents about the Sofia Jews' history. Bet-Am, the well-known Jewish center in Sofia, was taken over by the authorities and turned into a Communist office.

Emigration

During the years before the mass emigration from Bulgaria, Jewish Communist leaders had repeatedly maintained that all Jews were completely happy in Bulgaria and none of them wished to leave the country. However, when the government opened the doors for emigration in November, 1948, four-fifths of the community emigrated. After that, the Jewish Communist leaders declared that those who remained were firmly resolved to consider "socialist Bulgaria" their only fatherland. But when the emigration was resumed in the summer of 1950, again half of the remaining community registered for exit permits.

Emigration Policy

Bulgaria's nationality policy seems to have been characterized by an endeavor to be rid of national minorities; the emigration of these minorities was one of the means used to attain the aim of a homogenous Bulgarian nation. Thus, the government allowed not only the emigration of Jews to
Israel, but also of Armenians to the Soviet Armenian Republic, and of Turks to Turkey. In the case of the Turks, the Bulgarian government used every method of diplomatic pressure to force Turkey to accept all the Bulgarian Turks, regardless of whether they could support themselves in Turkey, or could be considered loyal to that country. This general policy towards the emigration of minorities explains why Jewish emigration, "definitely concluded" in 1949, was again permitted to be resumed in the summer of 1950. All previous limitations were removed, and even doctors and technicians were allowed to leave Bulgaria. The only obstacle in the way of Jewish emigration was that many of the prospective emigrants were completely destitute. Nevertheless, new transports from Bulgaria began to reach Israeli ports in August, 1950.

JOSEPH GORDON

HUNGARY

THE PERIOD under review (July, 1949, to July, 1950) marked the beginning of the final phases of the liquidation of Jewish life in Hungary, because of the cumulative effect of three general political, economic, and social developments.

First, Hungary became completely isolated from any contact with the democratic West and Western influences, and completely subject to Soviet political, economic, ideological, and cultural dominance.

Second, the Soviet Union exploited its dominant position by using Hungary as an aggressive political agent operating within the Soviet sphere of influence.

Third, there was a total "nationalization" and elimination of every kind of private enterprise, including small industry, the handicrafts, and retail trade. Since this radical liquidation of economic positions traditional with the Jewish population of Hungary was unaccompanied by any provisions for adequate remedial economic and social solutions, the material situation of the bulk of the Jewish population became hopeless.

Jewish Population

The exact number of Jews in Hungary was uncertain, partly due to the indeterminate proportion of professing Jews, and of persons of Jewish origin, and partly to the lack of reliable statistics concerning the scope of Jewish emigration from Hungary after World War II.

In the spring of 1945, the Budapest Jewish Community and the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) had estimated the number of Jews in Hungary, including members of the Jewish religious community and persons of Jewish origin, at 142,000. Of this number 124,000 resided in Budapest, the capital, and 18,000 in provincial areas. Approximately 20,000 Hungarian Jewish deportees returned to Budapest, and 30,000 to provincial localities, increasing the total number of Jews to about 192,000 in 1946. However, the official government census of 1946 found that of this total only
143,624 persons declared themselves to be professing Jews. According to Jewish sources, there were some 96,500 professing Jews in Budapest, and 45,000 in provincial communities, making a total of 141,500, or approximately 1.5 per cent of a total population estimated at approximately 9,000,000.

There were no official or unofficial statistics available with regard to the emigration of Jews after the end of World War II. On March 26, 1950, Dana Adams Schmidt reported in The New York Times that as of that date a total of 27,000 Jews had emigrated from Hungary, of whom more than 20,000 had left illegally. On this basis Mr. Schmidt estimated the remaining Jewish population at about 150,000, without indicating whether this figure, as well as that of the total number of Jewish emigrants, included non-professing Jews, as well. The uncertainty is increased by the fact that no statistics about population trends among Jews had been published by July, 1950. On the basis of the above estimate of Jewish emigration, and the necessarily decreasing birth rate within a community with a large number of middle-aged and old persons and an abnormally high number of unmarried women, it is legitimate to assume that the number of professing Jews in Hungary was between 120,000 and 130,000 during 1949-50.

The age distribution of the Jewish population in Hungary was extremely unbalanced, due to a number of factors. The principal factor was the extermination by the Nazis of 76.6 per cent of all Hungarian Jews under the age of twenty. Other factors included: the constant decline in the birth rate since 1920, the year of the rise of official and organized anti-Semitism in Hungary, and the large-scale emigration of younger people from 1920 until the end of 1948. These factors contributed to transform Hungarian Jewry into a community of prevalently elderly and aged persons. In July, 1950, roughly 25 per cent of the Jewish population of Budapest was over the age of sixty, and the average age of the Jewish population was 46.0, as compared with 30.5 in 1920. The Jewish population picture in Hungary was further characterized by the presence of 25 per cent more women than men of marriageable age and by the fact that almost half of the children of under eighteen years of age were orphans.

Political and Economic Status

On August 10, 1949, the parliament of Hungary promulgated a new constitution which declared Hungary to be a "peoples' republic" and a "state of workers and working peasants." The constitution guaranteed to "all working people" full civil liberty, personal security, non-censorship of the mails, protection against legal searches and seizures, and freedom of assembly, speech and press, conscience, and religion. Following the pattern of the Soviet constitution, it also declared that all citizens were "equal before the law," and all discrimination because of sex, nationality or religion was punishable by law. All nationalities were guaranteed the right to education in their own mother tongue. It was the duty of the courts to punish "enemies of the working people" and to protect the "political, economic, and social order of the people's democracy, and the rights of the working people."
While there was no formal and official discrimination against Jews as a race or a religious entity, the rigid application to Jews of all the radical economic measures of class repression in the economic and social field affected them far more seriously than any other group. For before World War II Hungary had had the relatively most important Jewish economic middle class in all of Europe, an element which was predominantly responsible for Hungary's modern economic, industrial, commercial, and financial development. This middle class, previously the backbone of the Hungarian Jewish community, was completely expropriated by July, 1950.

Heavy industry and banking were confiscated by the government of Hungary during 1945 and 1946. Since the circle of persons directly affected by these measures was rather limited, these first nationalizations failed to occasion a major disturbance in the Jewish economic position. However, between the spring of 1948 and the end of 1949, enterprises in the areas of medium-sized industry and wholesale commerce, in which Jewish interests were widespread and dominant, were totally confiscated without compensation; the former owners and managers were forbidden to remain with their enterprises in any capacity. At the same time, small industry and retail trade were subjected to the competition of state enterprises and discriminatory taxation; state and co-operative enterprises were forbidden to purchase from private sources, from whom raw materials and merchandise were withheld.

Finally, in the fall of 1949, small industry and retail trade were ordered liquidated. Of 1,721 owners of retail stores nationalized by December 12, 1949, 1,504 were Jews. Of 491 buildings confiscated during the same campaign, 383 were owned by Jews. Only a few preferred private store owners were permitted to stay on as employees of local outlets of state-owned retail chain stores. With this complete liquidation of medium-sized industry, wholesale trade, small industry, and retail commerce, areas in which the Hungarian Jews were largely represented, the economic basis for the survival of the bulk of Hungarian Jewry ceased to exist, and the economic situation of the Jews in Hungary became untenable.

A very similar situation developed in the liberal professions. Jews constituted a large proportion of the Hungarian lawyers even after the mass exterminations during World War II. However, the liquidation of private enterprise automatically eliminated the bulk of the legal clientele, and rendered the position of Hungarian Jewish lawyers untenable. In addition, a large number of members of the bar was struck from the list of lawyers on "political grounds." During the course of 1948-49, the *Official Gazette* listed the names of 687 disbarred lawyers, of whom 439 were Jews or of Jewish origin.

Of the large number of Jews who had been employed in private industry and commerce, a small minority was permitted to engage in factory labor, but the overwhelming majority was discharged with a severance pay of three months' salary, and without the slightest chance to be re-employed or obtain a future income. The application of the Communist system in Hungary resulted in a tendency for surplus agricultural labor to be transferred to industrial work; preference in industrial employment was given to sturdy
young peasants over members of the expropriated Jewish middle class, physically and often mentally less suited for such labor.

**POLITICAL PURGES**

Another area in which Hungarian Jews suffered during 1949–50 because of their “alien class” background was that of Communist party membership and employment in the Communist-controlled public service. Thus, during the period from May to December, 1949, 310 Communist party section leaders and other party functionaries were ousted in various purges. In connection with the trial of László Rajk (see below) thirty-eight persons were arrested, eight of whom received heavy sentences. Of the thirty-eight, twenty-seven were Jews or of Jewish origin. Among the 310 persons ousted from the party and automatically from gainful employment during this period, 209 were Jews and 47 were of Jewish origin.

**Anti-Semitism**

Overt anti-Semitic expressions and manifestations emanated during 1949–50 from exponents or supporters of the Communist regime, both Jews and non-Jews. The main theme of the propaganda was the stereotype of the Jew as a capitalist profiteer. This theme was continuously repeated from the meeting platform and the judicial bench, in governmental offices, and in the Communist press. Even *Uj Elet*, the only Jewish weekly in Hungary and the official organ of the Jewish community, published this propaganda. The Ministry of Industry, headed by Istvan Kossa, and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Public Works, headed by Joseph Darvas, discharged the overwhelming majority of their Jewish employees. Both of these officials had anti-Semitic records. Minister Kossa constantly and publicly abused the Jews. During 1945–46, Darvas had been the leader of the viciously anti-Semitic wing of the National Peasant party, a Communist-front organization established by the Communists for the sole purpose of attracting peasant support away from the democratic Smallholders party. At provincial mass meetings of the National Peasant party, party spokesmen competed with one another in anti-Semitic utterances. Joseph Gem, a member of Parliament, accused the Jews at a mass meeting in the county of Szabolcs of sabotaging the five-year plan. Special police raids were frequently made on the Jewish quarter of Budapest, and hundreds of Jewish businessmen and intellectuals who had lost their sources of livelihood were taken to the internment camp of Kistarcsa on the charges of vagrancy and idleness.

On June 21, 1950, József Révai, the Minister of Public Enlightenment and dictator of Hungarian culture, publicly attacked both the Catholic Church and the Jewish middle class, which he denounced as the partisans and flunkies of capitalist-imperialist reaction. In addition, Mr. Révai expressed his concern over the sad lot of Hungarian Jews who had emigrated to Israel where they were subjected to the most ruthless “capitalist enslavement and exploitation.” The Hungarian government, he asserted, would no longer tolerate its citizens being lured into this “inhuman predicament.”
RAJK TRIAL

The trial for treason of László Rajk, former Minister of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs, and his seven co-defendants offered some insight into the attitude of the Hungarian regime to the Jewish community. As police minister, Rajk had been instrumental in obstructing criminal proceedings against the instigators of the major pogroms of Miskolc and Kunmadaras in 1946. Since the aim of the trial was to accumulate every possible charge against Rajk, it was generally expected that the charge of anti-Semitism would be included in the accusation. Contrary to these expectations, however, the charge of anti-Semitism was mentioned neither in the indictment nor at the trial. On the contrary, the indictment depicted Rajk and two of his Jewish co-defendants, Dr. Tibor Szonyi and Andrew Szalai, both of whom were Communist party functionaries, as friends of the Jews and accomplices of the Zionist movement which was "well known" is nothing but a "servant of capitalist imperialism" against the "people's democracy" all over the world. Together with Rajk, Szonyi and Szalai were sentenced to death and hanged. A third Jewish defendant, Paul Justus, a leader of the pro-Communist wing of the Social democratic party, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

By July, 1950, the former leaders of the Social Democratic party, most of whom were Jews, both those who opposed and those who supported the merger of their party with the Communist party, were either in jail or in exile. These included Dr. Ladislas Farago, Dr. Imre Gyoerki, and Joseph Buechler.

Religious Life

During 1949-50 the Hungarian government moved to transform all organized religious bodies in Hungary into propaganda agencies of the government. On December 7, 1949, The New York Times reported that the clergy of all denominations had been called upon to take a loyalty oath to the state. On January 14, 1950, the same source reported that the bishops of the Calvinist and Evangelical churches had taken the required oath. The Roman Catholic bishops permitted the Catholic clergy to do likewise, but declared that they themselves would not take the pledge unless and until they had been granted permission by the Vatican. But this resistance did not last long. On July 21, 1950, the Reuters Agency reported that the Hungarian Catholic bishops had met and decided to seek to come to the agreement which the government had been demanding for several years. The conditions set by the government for an agreement with the Catholic church were: the supreme authority of the state was to be recognized in all worldly and political affairs; the bishops were to take an oath of loyalty to the Republic of Hungary; the bishops were to accept the secularization of religious schools, and the right to approve or veto Vatican appointments of the chief and other bishops of the church was to be reserved to the state. In return, the state agreed to recognize the authority of the Vatican in strictly religious matters.
MERGER OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

The Jewish community organizations were also required to declare their loyalty to the government. In addition, in October, 1949, a large-scale propaganda campaign started for the merger of the various Jewish religious and other organizations into one body. The purpose of this move was to subject the complicated structure of Jewish organizations to direct state control through a leadership selected for this purpose. Other important aims of this merger were: the complete removal of all Zionist influence in Jewish affairs; the severance of all contacts between Hungarian Jewry and Jewish life in Israel and in the West; and the elimination of the original leadership of the Orthodox community.

On February 22, 1950, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) reported from Budapest that a nationwide parley of 234 representatives of all communities represented in both the Congressional (Neologue) and the Orthodox community organizations had unanimously merged their executive boards under the leadership of Louis Stoeckler, head of the Central Board of Jews (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, volume 51, p. 362-63). No Zionists were present at this meeting. Most of the members of the Orthodox executive board, including Samuel Kahan-Frankel, the widely respected head of the Board, were not nominated for membership in the executive board of the new organization. A previously unknown Rabbi Czitron was chosen to represent the former Orthodox community. Every Jewish society, organization, club, and fraternity, whatever its function, was automatically incorporated into the new over-all organization as a dependent and controlled sub-division.

Although, like all other denominations in Hungary, Jews enjoyed the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, the entire atmosphere of Communist Hungary militated against their participation in religious life. Thus, absence from work during the Jewish high holidays was permitted in theory, but rendered impossible in practice. Most Jews simply did not dare to take part in Jewish religious and cultural events or even to attend religious services.

Jewish Education and Culture

On September 6, 1949, the Associated Press reported that compulsory religious instruction had been abolished in Budapest by a decree of the Hungarian Presidential Council. A supplementary decree issued by the Minister of Religions and Public Instruction ordered parents who still wished their children to receive religious instruction to so notify the school authorities before September 15. On November 1, the JTA reported that 2,850 of the approximately 4,500 Jewish school-age children in Budapest had asked to receive religious education. However, on October 21, The New York Times reported that the facilities for religious teaching which the government had specifically promised when it nationalized denominational schools in June, 1948, would not be provided. The immediate reason for this breach of promise may have been that more than 90 per cent of the parents indicated that they wished their children to receive religious instruction. A dis-
patch from the JTA dated December 15, 1949, declared that among the Jewish population 90 per cent of all parents whose children were boys and 65 per cent of all parents whose children were girls indicated that they wished their children to receive religious instruction.

By August, 1949, the Hebrew Tarbut high school was the only Jewish school still open. On August 26, the JTA reported that this school had been closed by the government; on August 28 the Jewish Teachers College, and in January, 1950, the offices and training schools of the ORT were reported closed (JTA, January 25).

Private reports indicated that many of the parents’ requests for religious instruction were subsequently withdrawn, for fear that the children who received such instruction would be denied admission to Hungarian universities as “class enemies.”

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

On the diplomatic level, Hungary maintained formally correct relations with the state of Israel during 1949–50. However, early in 1949, anti-Zionist propaganda pressure had been greatly increased, and though the Zionist movement was dissolved, agitation against the idea of Zionism was one of the main themes of official propaganda. Beginning in the summer of 1949, special prominence was given to reports describing the difficulties and sufferings of immigrants in Israel. On June 13, 1950, József Révai reported to the Communist party executive that the “Hungarian authorities are receiving hundreds of letters from Jews clamoring to return to Hungary” (see above).

On November 29, 1949, the New York Yiddish [Morning] Journal reported that thirty-six members of the left-wing Zionist Hashomer Hatzair had been arrested in Budapest. On the other hand, the JTA reported on December 18, 1949, that the Hungarian Court of Appeals had acquitted three of the nine Zionist leaders imprisoned in June, 1949, and had reduced the sentence of the only woman defendant, Magda Weiss, from two and a half to one and a half years.

**Social Services**

All Jewish social and welfare activities in Hungary were provided during 1949–50 by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Because of the insolvency of Hungarian Jewry, even the few religious and cultural activities still permitted were dependent on JDC funds, as were the growing vocational training, producers' co-operative, and loan kassa projects.

Hungary was the only country within the Soviet sphere of influence where the activities of the JDC were still tolerated by the Communist regime during 1949–50. A great deal of patience was required by the JDC to carry on its work under the circumstances prevailing in Hungary. The peak of the adverse experiences of the JDC in Hungary occurred in December, 1949, when Israel Jacobson, head of the JDC office in Hungary, was arrested by the Hungarian political police as a “possible spy.” For two weeks Mr. Jacob-
son was held incommunicado and subjected to a secret police questioning. On January 3, 1950, the United States government sent a note of protest to Hungary and ordered the closing of the Hungarian consulates in New York and Cleveland. After an ordeal of two weeks, Mr. Jacobson was released from jail and expelled from Hungary.

During the years after World War II, the Hungarian activities of the JDC constituted the largest single relief and welfare program conducted in any country of Europe. The average yearly cost of these operations and services was between $7,000,000 and $8,000,000. Some 70,000 persons were dependent for their lives upon JDC help in June, 1950.

**Emigration**

When Rumania relaxed her opposition to the emigration of Jews to Israel in November, 1949, Hungary remained the only country which officially prohibited and prevented such emigration. Many “illegal” prospective emigrants were intercepted at the Hungarian frontiers and jailed. In the summer of 1949, entire groups of “illegal” emigrants were detained and extradited to Hungary by the Czechoslovak authorities by agreement with the Hungarian government. After long negotiations with the representatives of the Israeli government, in November, 1949, both the Jewish and the general press services reported that a total of 3,000 Jews would be permitted to leave Hungary. The prospective emigrants belonged to the two categories: 1,000 persons who had members of their immediate families living in Israel, provided those had not left Hungary “illegally” (without exit permits) after January 1, 1948; and 2,000 persons over the age of fifty-five. The agreement provided priorities within these two categories to leading functionaries of the dissolved Zionist organizations, including those who had been sentenced to imprisonment or internment. The diplomatic representatives of Israel obtained the right to recommend candidates for emigration, but the final decision was reserved to the Hungarian authorities. Private reports from Hungary indicated that every emigrant had to undertake to pay a fee of $330 to the Hungarian treasury. On May 10, 1950, the New York Yiddish newspaper, *The Day*, reported that $1,000 had to be paid for every emigrant; in addition emigrants lost much of their property. Nevertheless, as soon as the news of the agreement became known, some 14,000 persons asked to be placed on the emigration list. Well-informed Hungarian Jewish sources estimated the number of those who would leave Hungary at the first opportunity at 60,000.

The fulfillment of this agreement by the Hungarian government was proceeding slowly. The first small transport, consisting of 210 persons, was permitted to leave Hungary toward the end of April, 1950, more than five months after the conclusion of the agreement. As of July, 1950, only approximately 800 persons had been able to avail themselves of the opportunity to emigrate. As of the same date, the agreement with regard to the inclusion of Zionist leaders had been unfulfilled, although there had been reports to the effect that forty of them would receive exit permits.

This attitude taken by the Hungarian authorities created the impression
that the intent of the Hungarian government in entering into this agreement was to appease public opinion abroad, without actually giving up its basic anti-emigration policy.

Mark Landes-Rosen

Israel

The period under review [July, 1949, to July, 1950] was a year of consolidation for the state of Israel following the dislocations and changes of the War of Independence. Peacetime reconversion in Israel could not, however, proceed in the manner normal in any postwar country. The special position of the Jewish people and the special purposes for which the Jewish state had been created made it imperative that the mass immigration of Jews superimpose its mark upon that process. As a result, Israel was forced to devote a great part of its energies to the solution of the problems created by mass immigration, problems which affected every sphere of life, public and private, social, economic, political, and cultural.

Immigration

In July, 1949, the strain of mass immigration began to be seriously felt. Many economists held that since transit camps in Israel were being filled much faster than the immigrants could be settled, the economy of the country would be endangered by a continuation of unrestricted immigration. But the coalition government of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion refused to regulate immigration.

Nevertheless, as the evacuation of the displaced person (DP) camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy neared completion, the rate of immigration slowed down of itself. In the summer of 1949 news of hardships undergone by immigrants in Israel reached Europe, and tended to discourage prospective immigrants to Israel. Immigration from Oriental countries took its place, at the rate of 12,000 immigrants per month.

Jewish Agency

Both the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the state of Israel concerned themselves with the task of immigration during 1949-50. Working with a budget of IL 40,000,000 ($112,000,000) the Jewish Agency, in co-operation with the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) brought Jews to Israel. While the Jewish Agency selected the immigrants and organized immigrant groups, the JDC transported immigrants from their homes or DP camps to ports, and thence by sea or air to Israel. The Agency took over again at Israel ports, receiving and processing immigrants and distributing them to transit camps or to their relatives. From the camps they were sent to cities and villages or new settlements as soon as houses or work could be

1 For statistics of immigration to Israel, see p. 397.
found for them. Since all available housing was filled to capacity by March, 1949, the population of transit camps swelled rapidly from 60,000 in April, 1949, to the high mark of 92,674 on March 14, 1950. Thus, one-fourth of the 400,000 immigrants and one-tenth of all Israelis lived in camps, constituting a whole community within the state.

Unfortunately, perhaps because many of the immigrants relied on the care and resources of the welfare organizations, the transit camps did not get emptied. After one year of “welfare immigration” the Jewish Agency and the government of Israel decided to empty the camps and send all immigrants to work where labor was scarce. Camps were turned into temporary settlements where inhabitants had to feed and fend for themselves. This move was dictated by reasons of finance no less than of morale, as it became clear that keeping, clothing, and feeding nearly one hundred thousand immigrants cost the Agency IL 8,500,000 ($23,800,000) a year—three times as much as the IL 2,500,000 ($7,000,000) spent on housing.

The Jewish Agency’s responsibility ended when the immigrants left the transit camps. Here the state of Israel took over, first looking for employment for the immigrants. A monthly average of 25,125 supernumerary workers threatened to swamp the labor market of a country notoriously suffering from underproduction. To avoid unemployment the government devised work relief schemes which rotated the available unskilled jobs.

Israel and World Zionism

By the end of the first quarter of 1950, the Jewish Agency felt that it could no longer bear the main burden of immigration due to a lack of funds. At a meeting of the Zionist General Council in Jerusalem in April, 1950, the question was discussed of the relation and comparative functions of the Jewish Agency and the state of Israel. Linked with this was the question of the relation of the world Zionist movement to the state of Israel, its government and policy.

Two main points of view were advanced. The American members of the Agency described a waning of enthusiasm for Israel after the establishment of the state and the end of the war. If this was allowed to develop, the gap between the state and world Jewry would broaden from year to year. The Zionist movement was needed to link the state of Israel with the Jews abroad. Nahum Goldmann, chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency, envisaged a Zionist movement in various countries with such economic functions as the mobilizing of philanthropic funds and private investments, and such political functions as the constitution of public relations or pressure groups for Israel.

On the other hand, the Israel leaders maintained that the Zionist partnership was based on commonly held aims and ideals. Immigration and settlement were not, they held, instruments for the use of the Zionist organizations—rather, Zionist organizations were for the service of immigrants and their settlement.

The Zionist General Council agreed in April and May, 1950, to form a Joint Board of Development and Co-ordination with the government of
Israel which would consist of four Agency members, four cabinet ministers, and one Jewish National Fund director. It also decided to co-ordinate the planning and execution of immigration absorption and housing schemes and to supervise agricultural development. The budgets were to be co-ordinated and streamlined. The Joint Board was to decide on the division of functions between government and Agency. It soon became clear that the state was to undertake more and more of the immigration functions as the Agency’s resources declined, and its assets were made over to the government as collateral for loans.

Israel and the United Nations

In its foreign affairs Israel faced problems which sprang directly from the establishment of the state and from the war. Following the achievement by Dr. Ralph Bunche of the United Nations (UN) of the delicate task of making armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, Volume 51, pp. 393-94), there was reason to hope that formal peace was not far off. Consequently, the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC), set up by the UN General Assembly on December 11, 1948, and composed of delegates from the United States, France, and Turkey, tried to carry on the peace mission. The Commission, which had convened in Lausanne (Switzerland) in April, 1949, worked into the summer of 1949, without, however, making any progress. The demands of the Arabs were that Israel take back unconditionally all the 750,000 Arabs who had become homeless as the result of the war. Israel replied that it would treat the Arab refugee question only as part of a general peace settlement, but not separately. Furthermore, the Arabs refused to meet with Israel directly, insisting on separate negotiations through the Commission. The Commission for its part was not capable of bringing the parties any closer.

On August 8, 1949, after weeks of rumors that the United States had demanded that Israel accept 250,000 Arab refugees even without a peace settlement, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett surprised the Knesset (Israel Parliament) with the announcement that Israel would be willing to admit 100,000 refugees within the framework of a general peace settlement and the solution of the refugee problem as a whole.

CLAPP SURVEY

After a break of activities the PCC reconvened on August 23, 1949. Realizing that neither an early peace nor an early return of Arab refugees could be expected, the PCC agreed to a United States proposal that a “survey group” be established, to estimate the economic absorptive capacity of those Arab states willing to resettle Arab refugees. The group, headed by Gordon E. Clapp, chairman of the United States Tennessee Valley Authority, with British, French, and Turkish vice-chairmen, went to work at once. In Washington President Harry S. Truman pledged full United States support. The interim survey report, published on November 19, 1949, assumed that “the continued political stalemate of Arabs and Jews precludes large-scale repatriation and resettlement of refugees.” It proposed a relief and public works
program to aid the refugees which would cost $54,900,000. At least $48,000,000 of this was to come from sources outside of the Middle East. On December 8, 1949, the UN General Assembly voted $54,900,000, of which $48,000,000 was to be contributed by member states. Major General Howard Kennedy of Canada was appointed to head the project agency.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JERUSALEM

During this shift of emphasis, the PCC itself met in New York to continue its efforts. On September 13, 1949, the PCC published its plan for the international administration of Jerusalem, in conformity with the provisions of the UN General Council resolution of December 11, 1948. Since both Israel and Jordan, the powers sharing the occupation of Jerusalem, had for two years strongly opposed an international regime of Jerusalem, it was particularly difficult for the PCC to agree on a workable plan. The new proposal envisaged a two-zone international area of a permanently disarmed greater Jerusalem, with a UN Commissioner as supreme authority. The UN was to have "full permanent authority over the Jerusalem area" and the Commissioner was to be empowered to employ guards to protect the holy places and to allow free access to them. The plan implicitly forbade immigration to Jerusalem which might "alter the present equilibrium of the area."

Israel at once rejected the scheme, declaring that a settlement which to any extent severed Jewish Jerusalem from the state of Israel was unrealistic. Israeli public opinion was certain that internationalization could not come about, since it could not be realized in practice.

Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the UN, nominated a UN Representative in Jerusalem to co-operate with the local authorities in the interim until a Commissioner should be appointed. Alberto Gonzales Fernandez of Colombia was scheduled to go to Jerusalem on September 21, 1949. Widespread opposition was aroused in Israel both by what was considered to be haste in sending the Commissioner and by the fact that Senor Fernandez was known to be a pronounced friend of the Arabs. Jerusalem's indignation culminated in a Herut meeting at which former commanders of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Irgun) threatened to revive their underground activities if the international regime was proceeded with. Out of consideration for the tenseness of the situation Senor Fernandez postponed his trip to Jerusalem indefinitely.

DEBATE ON INTERNATIONALIZATION

Despite this foreshadowing of UN intentions, the Israel UN delegation was confident that any internationalization plan was unrealizable and that no two-thirds vote could therefore be rallied to pass it. But as the General Assembly's work progressed, interested world opinion began to gather on the Jerusalem issue. The National United Jewish Appeal conference in Washington, D.C., on October 24, 1949, requested President Truman "to lend the weight of his influence to ensure an equitable solution of the Jerusalem problem, and to prevent any alteration of Israel's boundaries." In Rome, the Pope on October 11, 1949, called on the world to join the Catholics in a "crusade of prayer" for Jerusalem.

In the debate which began before the special Ad Hoc Political Committee on Palestine on November 24, 1949, the United States called on Israel and
Jordan to "agree to internationalization, recognizing the world's wish for that city's international character and the need for such agreement." The United States delegation took a stand in favor of the PCC internationalization plan. The Australian delegation went much farther than the PCC and issued an internationalization plan of its own, warning that "Jerusalem must become a truly UN city, neither Jewish nor Arab." At about the same time the PCC in its New York sessions issued a program to safeguard the Holy Places outside of Jerusalem to which Israel agreed.

**DECISION ON INTERNATIONALIZATION**

On November 29, 1949, a subcommittee of seventeen members was formed to consider the various plans. Although Mr. Sharett appealed to the subcommittee to accept a minimum agreement with his government for the Holy Places, the combined Australian-Arab plan received the support of the Soviet Union and the Arab and Latin-American states. A last-minute Netherlands compromise plan was defeated. On December 9, 1949, the General Assembly voted 34 to 14 to put Jerusalem under supreme UN authority, making it a corpus separatum in the Holy Land. The strongly worded resolution instructed the Trusteeship Council, at its next meeting, to complete preparation of a statute for Jerusalem. "The Trusteeship Council shall not allow any action taken by any interested government to divert it from adopting and implementing the statute." Great Britain and the United States were among the delegations opposing the plan. Sir Alexander Cadogan declared that Britain would take no part in implementing the decision, while Secretary of State Dean Acheson said the United States would continue to fulfill the obligation imposed by the UN. On December 10, 1949, the UN voted $10,000,000 for the administration of Jerusalem.

**REACTION IN ISRAEL**

In Israel the decision unleashed a country-wide storm of protest, indignation, and resistance to the separation of Jerusalem. Rabbis cabled Mr. Lie from Jerusalem. One thousand Haganah veterans took an oath to defend Jerusalem again, and a crowd took the biblical oath over the grave of Theodor Herzl, "If I forget thee Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten." The Knesset in a special session on December 4, 1949, unanimously rejected certain provisions of the UN partition decision of 1947 as no longer binding in the light of the subsequent invasion, war, and defense of Israel. Ben Gurion led the nation in insisting that "Jerusalem is and must remain a Jewish city." He moved his home and offices to Jerusalem on December 14, 1949. All government offices, except the foreign and defense ministries, also moved there. The Knesset and its committees thenceforth met only in Jerusalem.

**GARREAU PLAN**

In an attempt to discharge the UN's decision to internationalize Jerusalem in the face of Israel and Jordan opposition, Roger Garreau, chairman of the UN Trusteeship Council, published yet another plan on January 30, 1950, as a basis for negotiations with Israel and Jordan. Under the Garreau plan only the Wailing Wall and the Christian Holy Places would be administered
by the Trusteeship Council, while the rest remained under Jewish and Jordan control. However, both states involved rejected the plan. The American Christian Palestine Committee published a plan in support of this approach on January 19, 1950.  

The Trusteeship Council met in Geneva from January 19 through April 4, 1950, to draft the Jerusalem statute, but was unable to settle the most important section, that dealing with the actual commencement of the administration. The Soviet Union on April 19 reversed its Jerusalem policy. In a letter to Trygve Lie, Jacob Malik, UN representative of the Soviet Union, declared “it has become clear that the General Assembly resolution does not satisfy the Arab or Jewish populations of either Jerusalem or Palestine as a whole. The Soviet government does not consider it possible to continue its support of the [internationalization] resolution.” This, it was generally agreed, broke the alliance of the Soviet-Arab-Latin bloc and doomed the UN plan. To fill the vacuum thus created, the Israel government submitted a memorandum to the Trusteeship Council on May 28, 1950, proposing a new plan which would give the UN direct international responsibility for the holy places, but leave the political and secular life of the city to the free determination of its people.

Meantime the PCC continued in various ways to seek a new approach to the peace-making problem, but no progress was registered. The Israel government was convinced that the Arab states were unwilling to make peace, and that a prolonged state of armistice, a small-scale “cold war,” was to be anticipated.

Israel and the Arab States

Even before the last armistice agreement was signed with Syria on July 20, 1949, the Arab states were voicing their desire for revenge. Early in July the Arab radio station in Palestine warned its listeners to “guard your gun” for future eventualities. Similar talk of war and of a second round came from all the Arab League countries. The Israel government decided therefore to continue to give defense priority. Ben Gurion retained the ministry of the defense department for himself.

MILITARY DEFENSE

On August 10, 1949, the Knesset passed the Conscription Law, under which all men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine, and all unmarried women between eighteen and twenty-six, were to be drafted for two years' service in the army. Furthermore, all men up to forty-nine were to be trained in reserves, and then be called for one month's annual service. The defense of the country was entrusted to a strong citizen's army, led by professional officers, permanently under training, and capable of being called at a moment's notice.

In the atmosphere of Arab threats of revenge, Israel leaders began steeing home morale. Chief of Staff Yigal Yadin declared in November, 1949: “We will act swiftly in our own defense—and not only in our own country; we

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2 For details of this plan, see Zionist and Pro-Israel Activities, p. 118.
will carry the battle ground into enemy territory.” Such an atmosphere was, of course, poisonous for peace in the Middle East, a peace which Israel needed desperately in order to concentrate on immigration and reconversion. However, Israel was particularly concerned over the supplying of arms to the Middle East by the Western powers.

**ARMS EMBARGO**

The UN Security Council’s embargo on arms to the Middle Eastern warring countries was lifted on August 11, 1949, on the recommendation of Dr. Bunche. Israel’s Aubrey Eban had objected to this recommendation, stating it could result only in an arms race among the rival Arab states and between the Arab states and Israel. But, once the embargo was lifted, Israel diplomats intervened in Western states with a view to securing a general decision to sell arms to Israel. The declaration to this effect was announced on May 25, 1950, at the London conference of the Big Three foreign ministers. Britain, France, and the United States agreed to “recognize that the Arab states and Israel need to maintain a certain level of armed forces for their internal security and legitimate defense and for the defense of the area as a whole. All applications for arms and war materials will be considered in the light of these principles.” Yet they cautioned that “the governments declare their opposition to the development of an arms race between the Arab states and Israel.” The statement was received with satisfaction by Israel.

**Recognition of Israel**

Israel’s place in the family of nations was further acknowledged by recognition from several nations of the world. On April 24, 1950, the British government accorded Israel full *de jure* recognition, subject to “explanations” on two points: non-recognition of Jewish rule in Jerusalem and of Israel’s present borders as necessarily final. This step normalized Israel-British relations. The Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg recognized Israel *de jure* on January 16, 1950, and Italy did the same on January 19. Relations with Australia were raised to legation level, and Austria sent a consul to Tel Aviv.

Of particular importance were Israel’s endeavors to receive recognition from Middle Eastern countries. After some negotiation, Turkey accorded Israel *de facto* recognition on November 30, 1949, after a consulate had been opened in Ankara to regulate immigration on October 16. Eliahu Sassoon, head of the Middle East division of the Israel foreign ministry, was nominated to Ankara, denoting the importance laid by Israel on diplomatic relations with an Asiatic power.

In January, 1950, the government of Iran decided to appoint a minister to Israel in order to safeguard the extensive Iranian interests. *De jure* recognition by Iran came on March 15, 1950; the same week Turkey granted Israel *de jure* recognition.

Recognition by India, which had long been hoped for, finally materialized on September 17, 1950.
Domestic Legislation

In the domestic field the Knesset passed some very important laws. The development law set up a development authority with wide powers to sell and lease public property for planned development, as a complement to the revised law of the custodian of abandoned (Arab) property. Such property of runaway Arabs ran into many millions of pounds. The custodian took under his control 83,000 rooms and 7,500 offices and shops. He housed 170,000 immigrants in deserted Arab townships like Acre, Safed and Jaffa. In all, there were 3,500,000 dunams (nearly 1,000,000 acres) of Arab-owned land in Israel, of which 250,000 dunams (60,000 acres) were under the Custodian’s control. Under the terms of the new law, these vast properties could be converted, sold, mortgaged, leased, demolished, and otherwise altered. The Custodian therefore held such property no longer solely for the owner, but also for the benefit of the country.

The great shortage of housing was reflected in the law of subleases. To enable war veterans and immigrants to find accommodations more easily, a law was passed making sublettings to such persons lawful, even if the original lease forbade subleases.

Problems arising out of immigration came up in several legislative forms. Thus, child marriage was the custom among Yemenite Jews, as a relic of oriental customs. To halt this practice in Israel, marriages of persons under seventeen years of age were prohibited, and persons under eighteen years of age needed special consent to be married.

CONSTITUTION

By far the most important problem facing the Knesset was whether to draft a constitution at this stage. Ben Gurion and some members of Knesset opposed drafting a constitution, arguing that the declaration of statehood contained all the elements of a constitution. They proposed instead passage of a series of laws of a nature fundamental to a constitution, such as laws regulating and defining the powers of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the government, and laws dealing with immigration, nationality, minorities, and holy places. Ben Gurion was supported by the whole religious bloc, who maintained that the Torah, or tradition, was the exclusive repository of all constitutional precepts and hence the unalterable constitution of Israel. Some members of Knesset suggested a gradual change to constitutional laws; others compared Israel with England, which had no written constitution. Ben Gurion and the religious bloc were agreed that the passing of a constitution would unleash a storm of controversy which might split the coalition government and divide the country.

Mapam, Herut and the small center parties held an opposed view. They believed that the state could not properly function without a constitution, and that the country was entitled to know its fundamental rights. They maintained that citizens of all states lived under a written and clear constitution.

On June 13, 1950, fifteen months after the Knesset had first met as the Constituent Assembly and six months after the debate had started, a
compromise along the lines of Ben Gurion's proposal was adopted by a vote of 50 to 38. The Knesset voted to adopt a constitution by gradual enactment of a number of fundamental laws, over an unspecified period of time, and delegated to its legislative committee the task of "preparing a draft constitution, constructed article by article in such a manner that each of them shall in itself constitute a fundamental law. Each article shall be brought before the Knesset as the committee completes its work, and all articles together shall comprise the constitution of the state." Implementation of this novel procedure was awaited by jurists with great interest.

**NATIONALITY AND IMMIGRATION LAWS**

Another important issue that faced Knesset was a decision on the passage of nationality and "ingathering of exiles" (immigration) laws, which constituted basic legislation. The "ingathering of exiles" law, which opened with the declaration that "every Jew is entitled to immigrate to Israel," was the only law in Israel which distinguished between Jews and non-Jews. This distinction arose from the peculiar relations of the Jews to Israel, and was not meant as a form of discrimination against Arabs, or other groups. Under the nationality bill, all persons who were resident in Israel, were former Palestine citizens, and had registered in the 1948 census were to become citizens of Israel. The same applied to persons born in Israel after May, 1948. The most sweeping measure, however, declared that all persons resident in Israel on the date of the new law were to become Israel citizens, but foreign nationals could opt out within three months. Dual nationality was thereby to be recognized, but persons claiming dual nationality were to be regarded as Israelis by Israel law. Nationality could be acquired by residence of three within five years, and "some knowledge of Hebrew."

**Domestic Politics**

After the Knesset elections of January, 1949, Mapam, the left-wing socialist party, and the General Zionists, representing middle-class ideology, had decided not to join the coalition government of Mapai (Labor) and the Religious Bloc. This decision had not been welcome to either Mapam, who found its opposition role unconstructive, or Mapai, who needed the backing of Mapam's agricultural settlements to achieve economic recovery and integration. Mapai's Knesset leader Zalman Aharonowits opened the door to negotiations with Mapam on September 30, 1949. At the same time the General Zionists were invited to consider rejoining the government. Mapam demanded the assurance that the government would not join the Atlantic Pact, or accept Marshall Plan aid. Mapam also objected to the austerity regime, insofar as anti-inflation meant the reduction of wages; it also demanded the reinstatement of leading Mapam officers in the Israel army command. The General Zionists, who had been kept in a state of suspended negotiations pending agreement with Mapam, demanded that the government introduce changes in its economic policy, in order to favor free enterprise.

Since Mapai refused to make these concessions, on March 6, 1950, Mapam's party convention decided by a large majority to break off negotiations; simul-
taneously the General Zionists also withdrew. On May 5, 1950, the General Zionists were again invited to come into the government, and two seats were offered them; however they declined.

The split between Mapai and Mapam was carried into the Histadrut (Labor Federation). Mapai had a majority in the Executive Council of the Histadrut, the most powerful political and economic body in the country, where a great many questions arose in which political and economic policy had to be determined. There was frequent opposition between Mapam and Mapai and an atmosphere was produced which at times threatened to cause a split within the Histadrut. One issue of contention was the Histadrut's decision to join the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and withdraw from the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions. This decision was finally carried out over Mapam opposition in September, 1950, only because the Federation had become very anti-Zionist. Another issue on which Mapam and Mapai differed was the government's reduction of wage bonuses tied in to the cost of living in the course of general price reductions. Mapam seized upon this unpopular step by the government to recruit trade union members at the expense of Mapai and to organize demonstrations and protests.

**Budgets**

As the Knesset had not begun its existence until March, 1949, the first regular annual budget of the government, for April, 1949, through March 31, 1950, was late in being enacted. The regular budget fell into three parts: a defense budget, which remained secret, a normal budget of IL 40,000,000 ($112,000,000), and a special budget for development of IL 55,000,000 ($154,000,000). The development budget was to be financed from special sources, the principal source being allocations from the $10,000,000 loan of the United States Import-Export Bank. The normal budget represented a serious problem, as resources had to be found to cover rapidly expanding state services. Only IL 8,500,000 ($23,800,000) out of the IL 40,000,000 came from income taxes, while IL 16,500,000 ($46,200,000) came from customs, excise, and fuel taxes. This reflected the large amount of goods imported into Israel. The low income from taxes showed that the burden of indirect taxation was very considerable, and constantly growing. Whereas inland revenue rates were high, the low total revealed that income tax returns were not being received from one-third of all income earners, consisting mainly of working people and small traders, estimated at 50,000. This was a deficiency dating from the chaotic days of the mandatory regime.

Special taxes were levied to cover the deficit of the budget, and to drain away some of the inflationary incomes, mainly among wage earners. A 5 per cent immigration tax on incomes was added, and a "luxury tax," netting IL 1,000,000 ($28,000,000), was introduced on so many articles that it was in reality a purchase tax on all items except standard goods and food.
The budget for 1950–51 grew to IL 59,000,000 ($165,200,000), with the omission again of the undisclosed defense budget. The development budget rose to IL 65,000,000 ($182,000,000), income taxes to IL 14,000,000 ($39,200,000) and customs, excise, and fuel taxes to IL 27,000,000 ($75,600,000), due mainly to heavy tobacco and import levies. The luxury tax totalled IL 3,500,000 ($9,800,000). A special high tax was charged on unbuilt urban property, a measure designed to avoid land speculation and to spur building.

Economic Life

Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan's budget speech gave a survey of the country's economic position and revealed some very interesting items. There were 15,200 officials in the service of the government, including teachers and excluding a police force of over 3,000; this was a rate per capita of the population lower than that of the United States. The ratio of pay between highest and lowest public official was less than three to one, a fact which probably explained the quality of some of the public servants. On the subject of the number of automobiles in Israel, which had been criticized as excessive, it was learned that there were only 7,700 passenger cars out of over 40,000 motor vehicles, and that 185 of the vehicles belonged to the government. Of 170,000 immigrants, and tens of thousands of veterans, about 165,000 had been absorbed into the country's economy during 1949–50. Only 5,612 were completely unemployed, exclusive of individuals in immigrants' camps. During the period from May, 1948, through February, 1950, 280,000 persons were housed. There were 345,000 wage earners in Israel in May, 1950, as compared with 255,000 in 1947. While the size of the Yishuv (Settlement) had increased 65 per cent between 1947 and 1950, national output had increased only 35 per cent. The actual output of production and services per capita had decreased an average of 18 per cent. The national income was about IL 220,000,000 ($616,000,000), and national expenditure equalled that figure. In 1949, IL 87,000,000 ($243,600,000) was invested in Israel enterprises, a figure much below the IL 320,000,000 ($896,000,000) required for investment in 1949–50. By the middle of 1950 only IL 120,000,000 ($336,000,000) of this total had been made up.

Inflation and Labor Shortage

Inflationary tendencies continued during 1949–50, although the government went to great lengths in its efforts to combat them. The country suffered from underproduction of most forms of consumer goods owing to a shortage of foreign currency to buy the raw materials which were not available in Israel. The scarcity of consumer goods raised prices, and with it the cost of living. Hand in hand with this went a shortage of skilled labor needed to cope with the many tasks of economic integration and expansion in practically every field of economic activity. The large defense force swallowed a considerable part of skilled labor. As a result of the high living costs and
the shortage of skilled labor, wages soared. Thus, building workers and truck drivers earned IL6 ($16.80) per day, although union rates were only IL3 ($8.40) per day. No skilled laborers would agree to work at the official rates, and there was a "free market" in labor. This shortage was at its worst while 100,000 immigrants sat idle in transit camps. The problem was one of administration and distribution, a matter which time would adjust. Yet the battle of integration was against time. The government experienced innumerable obstacles in getting the immigrants trained in the scarce jobs. Skilled laborers refused to forego their good wages to be sent on training missions in camps in the Negev, and there was a natural reluctance among unions to develop too large an addition to their ranks for fear it might endanger their scarcity value, or even develop sources of "cheap labor," especially among Yemenite and oriental laborers.

Austerity Plan

The government's fight to reduce the cost of living assumed tangible shape in the austerity plan, which aimed to cut consumption and control prices and distribution through the rationing of all scarce goods and services. In May, 1949, a rigid and widespread food rationing system was introduced under which Bernard Joseph, the minister of food and supply, allowed every citizen about 2,500 calories of food value per day. On the whole the rationing system provided a well-balanced diet, but in practice it was not considered sufficient for persons engaged in hard physical work. Distribution, which was in the hands of marketing organizations, left much to be desired. These deficiencies brought the entire rationing system into some disrepute. In addition, administrative inexperience and a specially hard winter combined to make rationing difficult. Between December, 1949, and April, 1950, the Israel menu saw no potatoes, little rice, two eggs per week, and 700 grams (one and one-half pounds) of meat, four ounces of coffee and two ounces of tea per month. In order to combat the inevitable black market, special tribunals were set up to deal out heavy punishment. The official index showed a drop of 15 per cent in the cost of living. In an effort to effect further price reductions, Dr. Joseph claimed that under the austerity scheme a person could be fed on IL 6.25 ($17.50) per month. In order to regulate the production of essential commodities, the government introduced standardized production of lakol (utility) goods in clothing and furniture. This was a real boon to the population, since it made good quality goods available at reasonable prices.

Balance of Trade

The balance of trade was one of Israel's greatest problems, since it was aggravated by the desire of the population to maintain a high and rising standard of living, which was incompatible with the need to maintain a large army. The Mapai government promised its adherents to keep the standard of living high. But it soon became evident that cuts in consumption meant cuts in that standard, as scarcity of goods and services reduced the many small comforts of life.

In 1949, imports amounted to IL 87,712,333 ($244,594,532), most of which
was paid for in dollars or other hard currency. Exports during the same period were only IL 10,599,543 ($29,678,720). Israel's economic task was to reduce imports by half and increase exports more than four times, in order to reach a balance.

**INVESTMENTS**

While Dr. Joseph was battling to maintain austerity standards and reduce inflation, Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan laid emphasis on attracting foreign capital for investment. For this purpose conditions had to be made attractive rather than austere. Dr. Joseph's policy of reducing prices was abandoned in November, 1949, when it was realized that no further price cuts could be made artificially, merely by administrative order. The workers objected very strongly to any further cuts in their wage bonuses. Mapam took advantage of this resistance, and sought to undermine Mapai prestige within the Histadrut movement. After November, 1949, emphasis was laid on attracting foreign and local investment to Israel enterprises.

**INVESTMENT LEGISLATION**

To attract foreign investment, the Encouragement of Capital Investment law was passed by the Knesset on March 29, 1950. This law provided for the appointment of a government investment center, to co-ordinate new enterprises and guide investors, mainly from abroad. A number of special benefits were to be given to those investing money in building or in industry, and a number of benefits were given to investors from abroad. For instance, while all buildings put up after May 15, 1950, were exempt from property taxes for five years, foreign investors were allowed to take out of Israel 10 per cent per annum of profits, interest, and depreciation, in foreign currency, contrary to normal Israel currency laws. Similar encouragement was given to enterprises designated by the authorities as of special pioneering importance.

The fruits of this new law were not immediately visible. Foreign investors were slow in investing in Israel industry so long as the difficult economic situation continued. However, among large foreign enterprises which did invest in Israel industry were Philips Radio and Lamp, Kaiser-Frazer automobiles, General Tires, and Philco Refrigerators.

**Agricultural Collectives**

The collective movement, which had for forty years been the backbone of labor Zionism, went through a severe crisis during 1949–50. Until 1948 the kibbutzim (collectives) had been pioneers in every field of voluntary Zionist activity, and had shown the way to a new form of social life. After May 15, 1948, the state took over many of the tasks formerly discharged by voluntary work and particularly by the kibbutzim. The government itself opened up the Negev, defended the country, brought in immigrants, and supervised agricultural expansion. Much of the need for voluntary pioneering seemed to be over; in addition, many pioneers who had settled in the kibbutzim during the difficult first three decades of the century grew tired of
the struggle. But the national economy required a greatly increased agricultural output. There were 211 kibbutzim in 1949, and there was a shortage in every one of them of the manpower necessary to cultivate the land intensively. Also, though most of the new immigrants were untrained for agriculture, or for the special forms of kibbutz life, they were without land, homes, or work.

**Ben Gurion Plan**

In October, 1949, Prime Minister Ben Gurion advocated a new policy: every kibbutz was to take in new immigrants as members or as hired laborers who could opt for membership after one year. But the kibbutzim were reluctant to recruit new members, since they were not prepared to disrupt the social integrity and harmony of their settlements by admitting members who might prove unsuitable. They unanimously rejected hiring immigrant labor, as contrary to their principle of "self-labor."

Hence, the kibbutzim remained at a virtually static level. While the Yishuv increased from 600,000 to 1,000,000 between September, 1947, and September, 1949, the kibbutz population increased only from 47,408 to 61,073 during the same period. This discrepancy grew even greater as Oriental Jewry, to whom kibbutz life was alien and unacceptable, became the largest proportion of the new immigrants. Of the immigrants who arrived after the creation of the state and up to July, 1950, 50 per cent were settled on the land. Most of these went into villages, or formed settlements, not on the collective kibbutz pattern, but on that of the *moshav ovdim* co-operatives with a large measure of individuality. Of 13,955 immigrant families (about 45,000 individuals) who settled on the land in 1949, 8,072 formed over 85 *moshavim*.

**Arabs**

There were 175,000 Arabs in Israel in July, 1950, as against 108,000 in the summer of 1949. This growth stemmed partly from the annexation by Israel of a series of Arab villages on the border line with Trans-Jordan, in accordance with the armistice agreements of April, 1949; partly from infiltrations across the border. Infiltration presented a grave danger to Israel, as a large number of both Jews and Arabs lost their lives during 1949–50 from attacks by Arab marauders. The Jewish security authorities were forced to react sharply to this threat, and took strong measures to combat this danger.

Under armistice agreements, 1,227 refugee Arabs returned to Israel officially to rejoin their relatives, between July, 1949, and March, 1950. The process was then discontinued. On the other hand, a group of Arab notables from Jaffa were allowed to leave Israel to join their families abroad and to take their money with them.

Arab residents in Israel improved their position after the inevitable dislocations of the war. Israel's Arab farmers made notable progress under the guidance of their Jewish neighbors. Twenty Arab farming co-operatives were registered with the authorities, and the ministry of agriculture
set up a special department to serve Arab needs. The Arabs themselves demanded special departments to attend to their problems, and strongly objected to the abolition of the ministry of minorities. The Arab department of the Histadrut created a Laborers' and Workers' Fellaheen Bank, with a capital of IL 100,000 ($280,000). The Histadrut was particularly interested in raising the Arab standard of living, in order to remove the danger of competition in the form of cheaper labor. Despite these evidences of an amelioration of their status, the position of the Arabs in Israel remained somewhat delicate. One year of uneasy peace was not enough to allow them to adjust to the rapidly changing pattern of Israel's social and economic life.

Education

In the field of science and learning, the Hebrew University continued to make new progress. Although the Hebrew University was handicapped by separation from its laboratories, lecture halls, and libraries on Mount Scopus, and the student body met in over twenty temporary buildings, about 1,400 students enrolled during the academic year 1949-50.

INNOVATIONS IN HEBREW UNIVERSITY

The opening of the two professional faculties of medicine and law marked a departure from the University's traditional principles of pure learning. A faculty of economics and social science was also being planned. In addition, the university adjusted itself to Anglo-American standards by a bachelor's degree for three years of undergraduate study and a master's degree for a further year's study.

On May 5, 1950, the Hebrew University marked its twenty-fifth jubilee. Celebrations were attended by scholars from many lands, and Professor Selig Brodetsky was introduced as president of the Hebrew University, in succession to Dr. Chaim Weizmann.

WEIZMANN INSTITUTE

The Weizmann Institute at Rehovoth was formally opened on November 2, 1949. The Institute, which was almost exclusively financed by American Jewry, was headed by President Weizmann. Institutes of physics and physical chemistry were opened and the foundations were laid for an institute of biology and biochemistry. The aim of the Weizmann Institute was to promote scientific research on the technical level, as distinguished from that of the Hebrew University, which was to disseminate scientific knowledge and scholarship of a theoretic nature.

FREE COMPULSORY EDUCATION

One of the greatest achievements of the government of Israel during 1949-50 was the education law. Although there had been no compulsory education in Palestine under the British Mandate, 94 per cent of the Jews and approximately 30 per cent of the Arab children had attended school. The new law made school attendance compulsory and free for all Jewish
and Arab children between the ages of six and eleven; the upper age-limit was to rise to thirteen by 1952. Parents of children who had not completed elementary education were required to register them. The children involved were mainly from Arab families or children from immigrant families who had not previously attended any Israel school; some 6 per cent came from poor and prolific Jewish families and had according to the oriental custom been sent to work or kept on the streets. The new law also required juveniles between the ages of fourteen and seventeen to attend elementary school, insofar as they had not previously attended any school. This was a transitory measure to eradicate illiteracy among those who had not learned to write, but were still educable.

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

The law presented a number of problems, such as the relation of Jewish to Arab education. Zalman Shazar, minister of education, explained that there were 35,000 illiterates in Israel, most of whom belonged to the Arab and Oriental Jewish groups. The number of Arab children enrolled in Israel schools during 1948–49 had been 7,500; during 1949–50, 15,000 Arab children attended school under the new law. In all, 129,487 children attended school during 1949–50; 181,000 were expected to attend in 1952.

The shortage of teachers and school buildings was acute, among both Jews and Arabs. Special courses for Arab teachers were held in Nazareth, while a training college for Arab teachers in secondary schools was opened in Haifa. There were 6,294 Jewish and 176 Arab school teachers, teaching in 591 Jewish and 73 Arab schools respectively—a ratio of 1 teacher per 16 pupils and 1 school per 154 pupils. Two-thirds of all the schools were elementary. This low proportion of pupils to schools was true only for the countryside, and reflected the inefficiency of the existence of school systems (see below). In the towns there were 400 to 500 pupils per school. There were 492 elementary schools with an enrollment of 91,997, and 39 secondary schools of which only one was an Arab secondary school, with an enrollment of 10,902. There were 19 training colleges for teachers with 1,532 pupils, and 24 professional schools with 2,096 pupils, all of whom were Jewish. In 37 yeshivot, about one-half of which were located in Jerusalem, 4,314 boys were taught along traditional lines.

Under the education law 1,000 teachers were enrolled in the course of eight months, and 450 new classrooms were built. One-half of the cost of education was to come from city and village councils, the other half from the government.

A great deal of difficulty was encountered in the enforcement of the law. Local authorities found difficulties in paying for schools which had previously been maintained by school fees and by voluntary support from the organizations and parties to which the schools belonged. The state of Israel’s education budget also proved insufficient. Teachers could not be trained in time or in sufficient numbers. The shortage of school accommodations, which could not be overcome in so short a time, was somehow adjusted by holding school both in the morning and in the afternoon for alternate classes. How-
ever, this double session system proved a great strain on children and teachers alike.

POLITICS IN EDUCATION

The most troublesome question in education concerned, however, neither the children’s benefit nor the advancement of learning. It involved the interest of four political groups which had built up the voluntary school systems in Israel. Histadrut (Labor), Mizrahi (Orthodox), Agudat Israel (Orthodox), and the General (non-political) system vied with each other in increasing attendances at their schools and consequently in opening new schools. The competition often culminated in bad tempers and violence, and cost the Knesset much valuable debating time. There were two Cabinet crises over this question in January and February, 1950, when Orthodox ministers wanted to resign. In some immigrant camps there were serious disturbances whose causes ministry, parliamentary, and judicial inquiry committees sought to sift out.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

In 1949–50 the division of school attendance according to school system was as follows: 45 per cent General, 25 per cent Histadrut, 21.5 per cent Mizrahi, and 5 per cent Agudat Israel. 4.5 per cent of the school population attended other schools, of which the 9 schools of the Alliance Israeli Universelle (Alliance) formed the largest group. Eugene Weill, secretary general of the Alliance, signed an agreement with the Israeli ministry of education by which all Alliance schools were brought under government supervision; while English was the first foreign language in all state schools, French was to be the first foreign language in Alliance schools.

During the debates in the Knesset on education and the school systems, Ben Gurion unsuccessfully favored one unified system with various types of teachers and curricula. Zalman Shazar, minister of education, defended the party system as opposed to the principle of unified education. But this was done on the grounds that it gave parents the freedom to choose the type of education they wished their children to have. Knesset reorganized the national educational system on March 22, 1950. In the immigrant camps only one form of state education was permitted, but allowances were made for religious teaching, as well.

SCHOOLS AS A HEBRAIZING INFLUENCE

The school, and to a lesser extent the army, was the principal means of giving a Hebrew education to the young generation. Non-Jewish elements in the country adjusted themselves to the fact that Hebrew was the sole official language. Arabs learned Hebrew, and Hebrew was taught in all Arab and in all Catholic missionary schools.

TRADE SCHOOLS

The new law also envisaged compulsory attendance at trade schools for all children between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who did not have a
secondary education. The oldest and most important of the trade schools was Mikveh Israel, founded and maintained by the Alliance since 1875. By arrangement with the government, a joint administrative board was formed, and the school was put at the service of the ministry of agriculture.

**Religious Life**

Religion in Israel occupied a singular place. While about 70 per cent of the Jews in Israel followed some form of religious practice, not more than 20 per cent were Orthodox. The religious issue occupied a great deal of public attention. Religious ministers threatened to leave the coalition government over the official importing of non-kosher meat as well as over the educational issues mentioned above. This compelled the government to import for rationing only kosher meat. An Orthodox demand that all travel on Saturdays be banned was overwhelmingly defeated in the Knesset.

**CHRISTIANS**

The 45,000 Christians of Israel, divided among all the churches and sects of the world, were cared for by special departments within the ministry of religion. IL 500,000 ($1,400,000) was set aside for their religious needs. Four officers of the government were appointed to serve as liaison with the churches, monasteries, and pilgrims, thereby helping to avoid misunderstandings and friction between the authorities and the Christian sector of the population.

The transfer of power in Israel created problems relating to the immense properties of some of the churches. The property of the Russian Orthodox Church, amounting to IL 7,000,000 ($19,600,000) had in mandatory days been administered by a government trustee. The Israel government returned the administration of these properties to the Soviet government. The Protestant Lutheran church began proceedings to claim the return of its own properties in Israel, consisting of hospitals, schools, and churches. Many of the Lutheran leaders were Germans, a fact which caused the government to feel very reluctant to restore possession of these assets to the Lutheran church. As the Israel government refused to recognize the governments of either the Western or Eastern zone of Germany, negotiations were being conducted through the Swiss Lutheran church; there was hope that some form of understanding would be arrived at.

**Cultural Activities**

The cultural life of Israel was primarily keyed to achieve the cultural integration of the immigrants and their Hebraization. Symptomatic of this effort was a sponsored drive to adopt Hebrew names. During 1949, over 18,000 persons adopted Hebrew names; among those who changed their names were such government ministers as Moshe Sharett, Judah Leib Maimon, and Zalman Shazar.
The national Israel pastime, newspaper reading, was reflected in the following figures: There were eleven Hebrew dailies, three of them evening papers. Although they cost twenty-eight pruta (eight cents), they sold 145,000 copies daily. On the other hand, the great cultural gulf between immigrant and resident was shown in the figure of five foreign-language papers, which sold 52,000 copies daily.

Among Hebrew literary periodicals, Yavneh, an occasional religious publication of an academic nature, made a contribution to the state's fundamental problems with a symposium on “The State and Its Problems.” The minister of education undertook the renewed publication of Leshonenu, a quarterly dealing with language problems. Gazit, published by Gabriel Talpir since 1932, remained the leading literary and art journal. Molad, Gilyonot, and Beterem were ideologically close to Mapai. Sulam was a new Herut publication; Atidot dealt with the problems of Israel’s youth. The new periodical Israel was published in English and Hebrew by Mapai. Ashmoret was the name of a new journal for young Mapai members.

**SCHOLARSHIP**

The year 1949–50 was one of encyclopedic enterprises. In July, 1949, on the initiative of the Histadrut, steps were taken to create an Israel Bibliographical Society, to encourage and centralize bibliographical activity. Among the outstanding encyclopedic publications was the issuance of the first volume of the Encyclopedia Hebraica. The occasion was celebrated with a festive meeting in Tel Aviv's Habimah Theater. Both President Weizmann and Prime Minister Ben Gurion supported this monumental work, which was to cover 100,000 subjects. The second volume of the Encyclopedia Talmudit (Talmudic), planned as a sixteen-volume work, was published in Jerusalem. The Mosad Bialik (Bialik Foundation) of Jerusalem published the first volume of the Encyclopedia Mikrait (Biblical) under the learned authorship of Professors Eliezer Sukenik, Naphtali Peretz Tur-Sinai (Tortczyner), and Enrico Cassuto. The Bialik Foundation also added some important volumes to its list, including Michael Avi Yonah’s Historical Geography of Eretz Israel and Simon Bodenheimer’s Fauna of the Bible Lands. The Kiryat Sepher publishing company produced an Anthology of Hebrew Love Poetry, ranging from the biblical Song of Songs through the medieval Solomon ibn Gabriol and Judah ha-Levi to the modern Saul Tchernichovsky.

**Literature**

Hebrew literature in Israel continued to be characterized during 1949–50 by a stream of books dealing with the war, in the form of memoirs, diaries, novels, short stories, and poetry. Public interest in the various aspects of the Israel-Arab conflict seemed not to have flagged. Among the host of war books mention may be made of: Perakim be-Milhemet Yisrael (“Israel War Chapters”); Megillat ha-Ir ha-Atikah (“Scroll of the Old City”); and Yizkor Kfar Etzion (“Remember Kfar Etzion”). Pamphlets included Nirim Mul Oyev
("Paths before the Enemy") and *Ha-Gedud ha-Shishi Mesaper* ("The Sixth Brigade Reports"). Aryeh Navon’s books of war cartoons entitled *Alpayim Shanah ve-Shanah*, and Yosef Bass’s collection of cartoons from the newspaper *Haaretz* delighted the public and were a new departure in graphic expression for Israel.

**TRENDS IN LITERATURE**

At a convention opened in Tel Aviv on December 21, 1949, which was attended by the minister of education and Yosef Sprinzak, the speaker of the Knesset, a sharp division of approach between the older generation of writers and the younger became manifest. Speaking for the older writers, A. Kariv declared that Israel ought to be spiritually different from all other states. The representatives of the younger writers preferred Israel literature to be more practical and down to earth; they found their natural outlet in war books and contemporary problems. The conference showed that new literary talent was growing up in Israel, although no one writer had yet risen to real prominence.

**NEW WRITING**

Among these talented newer writers were: Nathan Alterman, whose *Hatoor ha-Shevii* ("The Seventh Column") created a sensation; S. Yizhar; and Nathan Shaham, whom the common critical consensus regarded as the outstanding novelist of the younger generation. These writers showed not only a penchant for topical and journalistic treatment of the Israeli War of Independence, but also the ability to treat that subject seriously. Yizhar’s *Sippur Hirvet* and *Hizzah ha-Shavuyi* ("The Tale of Hirvet Hizzah" and "The Prisoner") caused a minor tempest in the Israeli press. For the author dealtsearchingly with the controversial problem of what attitude Israel ought to take toward the former Arab enemies. Shaham’s *Ha-Elim Atzelim* was vigorous and well-plotted; though not profound, it was the work of an author who reflected and possessed an attitude of "civilized realism."

The newer writers’ interest in the practical was to be observed in the publication of a relatively large number of reference works during 1949–50. These ranged from encyclopedias to handbooks on a variety of subjects, including agriculture, technology, and aeronautics. Hebrew literature was no longer the private preserve of intellectuals; the language in which this literature was written was utilitarian. Simultaneously with this preoccupation with the immediate present, there was a growing interest in the achievements of the early Zionist pioneers to Israel.

**POETRY**

David Shimoni, one of the classic poets of modern Hebrew poetry, published the second volumes of his *Shirim* ("Poems"). Long recognized as a traditionalist, Shimoni again showed himself the spokesman for the Zionist pioneer of the twenties. Interesting for its historical interest was the publi-

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3 The material in this section concerning Hebrew and Yiddish literature was prepared by Gabriel Preil. For detailed information about the books referred to, see *Jewish Book Annual*, 1950–51.
cation in one volume of the poems written by Naphtali Hertz Imber, the author of *Hatikvah*, the Zionist national anthem.

Uri Zvi Gruenberg, considered by many one of the outstanding contemporary Hebrew poets, published two pamphlets in limited editions. Both *Min ha-hakhilil u-min ha-Kahol* (“From the Rose and from the Blue”) and *Al Daat ha-Nes ha-Nikhsaf* ("Knowing the Longed-for Miracle") possessed the strength and romantic nostalgia characteristic of Gruenberg's writing.

Joshua Rabinow, who lost his only daughter at the age of eighteen in the War, depicted the sacrifice of Israel's youth poignantly and symbolically in *Mul Har ha-Akedah* ("Facing the Sacrificial Mountain").

Anda Pinkerfeld-Amir dealt in her volume *Gadish* ("Sheaf") with the eternal feminine preoccupation, love, in a style possessing both grace and a half-playful melancholy.

Shimshon Meltzer took Jewish folklore as his theme in his graceful and clever, if somewhat repetitious *Sefer ha-Shirot veha-Baladot* ("The Book of Songs and Ballads").

Two volumes of verse by younger poets were less traditional, and received a mixed reception. Abba Kovner’s *Perida min ha-Darom* ("Parting from the South") was almost unrelievedly tense in tone, and somewhat contrived in metaphor, but possessed fine poetic strength. Amir Gilboa’s *Sheva Reshuyot* ("Seven Realms") was the work of a very promising poet, who seemed to have been most influenced by the moderns.

**FICTION**

Despite the preoccupation with the war, J. H. Brenner continued to appeal to many readers. Brenner’s writings were in the process of being collected; the first volume of his *Ketavim* ("Writings") attracted a new generation of readers by the same qualities of sincerity, frankness, and hatred for humbug that had endeared Brenner to their parents several decades before.

Dvora Baron, long regarded as an outstanding story teller, again displayed the coupling of feminine gentleness with almost masculine starkness that was her forte.

*Be-Tzel Anashim Tovim* ("In the Shadow of Good People") by Asher Barash contained four stories about a Jewish small town in Eastern Europe.

Joseph Aricha showed a predilection for violent realism in his *Pesak Din* ("Decision Rendered") that made him noteworthy among the newer writers.

In *Ir Kesumah* ("Enchanted City"), Joshua Bar Joseph told the story of three generations of a Jewish family that settled in Safed in Palestine during the eighteenth century. The second volume of a trilogy, the book was well-integrated, had suspense, and showed the author’s ability to work on a large canvas.

**NON-FICTION**

The year 1949–50 saw the publication of a number of distinguished volumes of essays. Outstanding was Israel Cohen’s *Demut el Demut* ("From Image to Image"). Written elegantly, this book did not mince words, and was a provocative exposition of certain aspects of the Hebrew literary scene.
Tzeror Maftehot ("A Bundle of Keys") by Eliezer Steinman, was tragic and often sardonic in tone in dealing with life and literature.

Jacob Kopelovitz showed in his Bedor Oleh the wholesomeness and balance of the older literary critics. Though more precious, M. E. Zhak's Arugot ("Looms") placed the author in the same school.

Ephraim Shmueli, one of the erudite essayists and historians in Israel, in his Anshe ha-Renaissance ("Men of the Renaissance"), the first of a projected three-volume work, dealt comprehensively with much of Machiavelli's life and doctrines.

"Rabbi Benjamin" (psuedonym of Redle Feldman), the noted publicist and essayist whose seventieth birthday was celebrated in 1950, published a book of memoirs entitled Mi-Zborow ad Kineret ("From Zborow to Kineret").

Sefer Ha-Gevurah ("The Book of Heroism") was the third volume of a historical-literary anthology compiled by Israel Halpern which described the inception of the Jewish self-defense organizations in Palestine.

Anda Pinkerfeld was also the editor of Lamed He ("Thirty-five"), an impressive volume of tribute to thirty-five young men who fell in the line of duty while fighting in the Israel War of Independence.

LITERARY AWARDS

Three literary awards were granted to Israeli writers. In Jerusalem, the David Yellin prize, totalling IL 1,000 ($2,800), was divided between Asher Barash, for his volume of poems Be-Tzel Tzaharayim ("In the Shade of the Afternoon"), and Dr. Yehezkiel Kaufman for his monumental Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Israelit ("The History of the Jewish Religion"). The Ussishkin award was presented to the veteran writer Moshe Smilanski and to Joshua Bar Joseph (see above). The Brenner prize for literature went to Shin Shalom.

YIDDISH

A number of books, periodicals, and pamphlets in the Yiddish language made their appearance in Israel. Di Goldene Keyt ("The Golden Chain"), a quarterly put out by Mapai under the editorship of the Yiddish poet, A. Sutzkever, had a sale of no less than fifteen hundred copies in Israel. Considering the high literary standards of this periodical, this sale was impressive. A Yiddish weekly Letzte Nayes ("Late News"), edited by M. Zava, also began to appear. Permission was also granted for the appearance of Yiddishe Bilder ("Jewish Pictures"), a periodical formerly published by refugees in Munich.

A Pioneer Library (A Bibleotek Farn Hechalutz) had been set up in Tel Aviv and such books as Erd ("Soil"), Yisroel in Kamf ("Israel at War"), and Joseph Breslavsky's Negev were beginning to come off the presses.

An outstanding literary event of the year was the visit to Israel of the Hebrew and Yiddish writer and poet, Zalman Shneur. Israel writers were also being looked after materially for the first time. Near Herzlia, the foundation stone was laid for a rest home for writers.

The flow of foreign language books to Israel, always considerable, was not maintained at the previous level, owing to currency restrictions. Nevertheless,
the demand for foreign books was greater than ever, in spite of the many Hebrew translations of important books. Book importers tried to stretch the little foreign money by importing quick-selling, cheap literature. This lowered the level of general foreign language reading, but went to satisfy the extensive thirst for foreign, especially English-language, reading matter.

Music

In Israel's musical life, the state radio service, Kol Israel, brought good music into many homes. The Israel Symphony Orchestra was again fortunate in securing great guest conductors and packed audiences. Most important was the visit of Dr. Serge Koussevitsky, who made a great impression upon the Israel public through his enthusiastic and able handling of the orchestra. Dr. Koussevitsky donated his music library to the Hebrew University. Izler Solomon also led the Israel Symphony orchestra and was well received.

Other guest artists who visited Israel included the French conductor Charles Burck, the French pianist Paul Loyonnet, the Italian pianist Sangiorgi, and the American duo-piano team of Vitya Vronsky and Victor Babin. A scandal was created however, when the famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin appeared as soloist. Because Mr. Menuhin had performed in Europe with the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwaengler, who was suspected of pro-Nazi sympathies, he was severely criticized and even hissed on his appearance in Tel Aviv. Paul Ben Haim, an Israel composer, played his Second Piano Concerto, a modern work which received much acclaim and was later performed in London. Other musical publications of 1949-50 included the *Yizkor* and *Song of Praise* by Odeon Partos, arranged for viola and violin; *Two Songs of Faith* by Karel Salomon; and *Sonatina for Riano* by Paul Ben Haim. The Histadrut's cultural center continued the publication of works of modern Israel composers. The Israel Composers Association set up a recording company, Zlil, which made recordings in Israel, and sent them to the United States for processing and copying. The ministry of education set up a music department, under the pianist Frank Pelleg, to supervise publicly maintained musical enterprises and encourage private ones. In April, 1950, the annual musical festival took place again at Kibbutz Ein Gev, east of Lake Tiberias. In June, 1950, the government sponsored a country-wide Week of Jewish Music. Israel composers were slowly crystallizing a new style of writing. They were endeavoring to find new forms of expression, combining the traditional with the oriental.

Art

Painting and sculpture received a new impetus in Israel during the post-war year. The year opened with an exhibition in Tel Aviv of 145 productions by United States artists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, sent to Israel as "a token of solidarity with the creative forces in Israel." Many other exhibitions were held of the work of such native artists as A. Avni, Ludwig Schwerin, Zila Binder, Shulamit Tal, M. Kastel, Shoshana Kafri, A. Steinmatzky, J. Stern, I. Frenkel, M. Mokady, and J. Kize, as well as of the work of several foreign
artists, such as Michael Kikoine and Edward Matuszak. The work of the sculptress Hannah Orloff was published in book form, and received applause. Nathan Rapaport, the Israel sculptor who had created a monument to the Ghetto uprising in Warsaw, was at work in Paris on statues to commemorate the sieges of Negbah and Yad Mordechai in Israel during the Arab-Israel war.

Museums

Migration opened up new possibilities for the development of Jewish art. Shanghai immigrants, for instance, brought with them Chinese art treasures for which the Bezalel National Museum in Jerusalem set aside a special room. In March, 1950, Israel had already received three thousand out of ten thousand art objects recovered from the loot taken by the Nazis from synagogues and Jewish homes. Forty per cent of all the recovered loot was to go to Jewish communities in the Western hemisphere, including the United States.

Theater

The theater was again the center of all cultural life in Israel, and, next to the radio, the chief exponent of the living Hebrew tongue. However, the grave crisis which the traditional theaters, Habimah, Ohel, and Mataté had encountered in 1948 continued to be felt during 1949-50. These three theaters, created in the spirit of the Russian-Jewish school before World War II, suffered from a marked lack of new talent and new spirit. Audiences had fallen off, although there was an increase in population and in Hebrew-speaking individuals. Habimah emerged from the crisis, and threw itself into a new series of productions, discarding all the old repertoire and many old actors, and seeking new producers, though it continued to play classics. Thus, Harold Clurman, New York producer, staged Hostages by Robles. Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream and Othello, produced by Julius Gellner of London, were great successes. Erich Schoenlank of Amsterdam produced Carl Zuckmayer's Barbara Blomberg. Young Love by A. Ashman, Habimah's biblical play of the year, was another reminder that the Hebrew theater needed more native plays of intrinsic value.

Ohel produced plays by J. de Vries, Valentine Kataieff, and Moliere in perfunctory fashion. The Hebrew original Incubator on the Rocks, a comedy concerning kibbutz life, was better than ordinary. But Ohel's great attraction of the year was not strictly in its own line of comic theater. Elizabeth Bergner toured Israel as the guest of Ohel, reading Hebrew excerpts from the Bible, G. B. Shaw's St. Joan in English, and Arthur Schnitzler's Fraulein Else in German. Before her departure she created a scholarship at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The most dynamic of the Israel theatrical groups, was the Chamber Theater, a recently founded troupe. Its repertoire included Nights of Wrath; Born Yesterday; Schwartz's The Shadow, produced by Leo Lindberg of Zurich; Blondzinde Shtern ("Wandering Stars"), by Sholem Aleichem; J. B. Priestley's Ever Since Paradise; and the Hebrew original They Will Arrive Tomorrow by Nathan Shaham.
THEATRICAL INNOVATIONS

Great interest was focussed on new stage ventures and guest troupes. Tziratron (Circus) was founded to encourage young local talent in circus and variety turns. Satyrikon, a marionette satirical theatre, made fun of big and small in the French manner. Plans were laid for opening a biblical theater in Jerusalem. Bamatenu produced Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* to delight the young. A school of drama was founded at Ramat Gan; and the kibbutzim formed a theatrical troupe called Mizra. A new revue made its bow in Tel Aviv: Tzil Tzil was the third revue theater running in Israel. Outstanding among guest actors were the French pantomime artists Marcel Marceau and Pierre Sonier. Their success brought demand for more of this acting, which was new to the Israel public.

Films

Israel films had a good first year. Many documentaries were made by public institutions and private enterprise. Some of them were of good quality and received high praise at film festivals. There were also religious films. The beginnings were laid for a "thriller" on the bible scroll discoveries near Jericho in 1947.

Personalia

Among the well-known individuals who died in Israel during 1949-50, the following are worthy of mention.

Shimon Dehan, the mayor of Tiberias since 1937, died on May 11, 1950.

Yehuda Gur (Grazovski), noted Hebrew lexicographer, scholar, and author, died in January, 1950.

Julius Guttman, professor of Jewish philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and author of a number of studies on religious philosophy, Kant, Spinoza, and Yehudah ha-Levi, died on May 25, 1950.

Aharon Kaminka, a delegate at the first Zionist Congress, died in March, 1950. He was a well-known Israel scholar who translated many Greek classics into Hebrew and carried out important biblical and talmudic research.

Yaacov Klebsinski, one of Israel's best-known educators and authors, died in February, 1950.

Menasha Meyerowitz, a survivor of the Bilu pioneers who established the first settlements in Palestine in 1882, died in July, 1950. He was a member of the first elected Jewish Assembly in Palestine and of the Jewish Provisional Committee which directed Jewish affairs after World War I.

Max Shornstein, formerly chief rabbi of Denmark, died in November, 1949.

Meir Siko, Hebrew writer and author of a number of books, who had settled in Palestine in 1912, died on October 4, 1950.

Abraham Sonne, chief secretary of the Zionist Executive in London during 1920, died in June, 1950. He was the author (under the pseudonym of Avraham ben Yitzhak) of several outstanding Hebrew poems, which, however, he refused to have published.
Avraham Tabib, who represented Mapai in the Israel Knesset, died in May, 1950.

Jacob Jochanan Thon, one of the founders and the first president of the Provisional Committee of the Jews of Palestine and of the Jewish National Committee, died on March 9, 1950.

Emanuel Tuvim, founder of the Zebulun Seafaring Society, died in an accident on February 28, 1950.


Helmuth Lowenberg