Eastern Europe

SOVIET UNION

During the period under review (July, 1950, through June, 1951), the strain placed on peace by Soviet expansion finally proved too much and open war erupted in Korea. The Korean war led to the increasing economic and political isolation of the Soviet-dominated empire. Inside the Soviet Union the expansion of war industry was further accelerated. A grandiose plan was set on foot to centralize and industrialize agriculture by bringing together many thousands of kolkhozes into a much smaller number of large agricultural enterprises. In these huge agricultural centers kolkhoz members would be subject to the rigid discipline of factory workers, and would live in "agrograds," or agricultural cities. At the same time a vigorous campaign was conducted to reduce the small plots of land the kolkhoz peasants were allowed to cultivate individually. Both plans ran into important economic obstacles and aroused the passive resistance of the peasants; in the end their scope and tempo had to be substantially reduced.

Unrest and dissatisfaction were strongest in the territories of national minorities. A wave of demotions and arrests swept the party and state organizations in the Ukraine, Estonia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Kirghiz, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, and in other territories inhabited by minorities. A new and violent drive was launched against the "nationalist deviations" of minority groups. Ukrainian and other minority-language poems expressing attachment in unpolitical terms to their native countryside and tongue were proscribed; historical and folklorist books celebrating the heroes and traditions of national minorities were revised, and their authors either purged or forced to recant. The expurgation of real or imagined "Western influences" assumed the proportions of a witchhunt.

Jewish Population

No new statistics were available on the number of Jews in the Soviet Union. About 2,000,000 could still be considered the best estimate.

There were important shifts in the geographical distribution of Soviet Jewry in the war and postwar years. The Western territories, which under the Czars had formed the Jewish Pale of Settlement, ceased to be a major Jewish population center when during the war the Nazis exterminated the majority of Jews living there. Of the minority which fled or were evacuated or deported to northern and eastern European Russia, to Siberia, or to Central Asia, one
part perished in concentration camps, and the other stayed on in the new settlements in the East. Of those who went back to European Russia after the war, many decided to migrate to the East again, and some were deported from the western border as “unreliable elements.”

In European Russia, Moscow was now the largest center of Jewish population; some sources estimated the number of persons of Jewish origin in the capital as high as 300,000.

A new concentration of Jewish population grew up in Central Asia. It was estimated that about a quarter of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union, some 500,000 persons, were now living in that area. Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, now possessed the third or fourth largest urban Jewish population in the Soviet Union. Many thousands of Jews were living in or around Alma-Ata, Frunze, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Karaganda.

In this Jewish population the “native,” or Bukharan Jews were now only a small minority. Most were “European” Jews unable or unwilling after the war to return to their old homes in the Ukraine, White Russia, or Eastern Poland. Their number was enlarged by a new wave of voluntary and forced migrations which began in 1948-49.

The Jewish population of Birobidjan, in Eastern Siberia, was estimated at 35-40,000, or not quite 2 per cent of Soviet Jewry. There was also some Jewish migration into Siberian territories outside of Birobidjan.

Concentration Camps

During the period under review, several investigations were made in democratic countries into the size and living conditions of the army of prisoners and slave laborers now forming so substantial a part of the Soviet population. During David Rousset’s libel action against a French pro-Communist magazine in Paris in January, 1951, and at the subsequent public hearings of the International Commission for the Fight Against the Regime of Concentration Camps held in Brussels in May, 1951, many documents were produced and dozens of witnesses heard. Among the latter were former Soviet officials and former inmates of Soviet prisons and labor camps. Many of the witnesses were Jews and the Jewish aspect of the problem was treated in their testimony.

Jewish Slave Labor

A summary of the Commission’s hearings, published in Ost-Probleme (Bad Nauheim) on September 22, 1951, contained a special section on Jews in Soviet prisons and camps. The testimony heard by the Commission bore on the years 1940-50. Though it consisted of disjointed items of information—the witnesses could report only what they had seen themselves—the testimony was sufficient to reveal a large proportion of Jews in the camps.

The witnesses reported that in one camp for women in the Donets basin there were only nuns and Jewish women; in Karaganda, there was a camp for German and Rumanian refugee Jews alone; slave laborers in one great kolkhoz in Kazakstan were exclusively Jewish; in one war-time transport, 80 per cent of the slave laborers were Jewish.
One witness described the great deportations from the Soviet-annexed territories of Eastern Poland during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact. According to this witness's estimate, 40 per cent of the deportees were Jewish. In reply to the question whether or not Jews were deported “as Jews,” the witness answered: “Yes, the Jews were arrested as Jews. They were considered unreliable because they came from the West.” In the opinion of the author of the summary, the high percentage of Jews among the deportees was due rather to the Jews having formed a large percentage of the refugees fleeing the Nazis.

In a chapter about resistance in slave labor camps, the summary described a hunger strike of Jewish women in a camp in Kazakhstan against the breaking up of families; it succeeded insofar as fathers were allowed to stay with their families, single men being sent on to another place.

The testimony offered at this investigation was corroborated by other sources. In a statement quoted in the Social Democratic magazine, *Die Zukunft* (Vienna), August, 1950, the former Soviet professor N. Golubjev, declared that in the prisons of the Russian secret police there was hardly a cell without Jews; in some categories (intellectuals, expelled party members), Jews figured in larger numbers than in others. In an article published in the *National Jewish Monthly* of the B'nai B'rith (Washington, D. C.), in September, 1951, Paul Andich, a Czech Jew who had lived in Russia until 1942, reported that during the first days of the German attack on Russia, a great many Jews were arrested by the secret police. In every one of the eleven prisons through which Andich had to go, he found many Jews among the prisoners. In the concentration camp of Aktiubinsk, there were thousands of Jewish refugees from the Baltic countries and Eastern Poland, as well as natives of various regions of the Soviet Union.

Similar statements by other former prisoners left no doubt that there were tens of thousands of Jews among the slave laborers, and that their percentage was substantially higher than the corresponding percentage of Jews among the total population.

DEPORTATION OF SOVIET JEWS

Recent deportations of Jews from the western territories of Russia were confirmed by new reports, although it was still impossible to obtain exact numbers and details. The Israel newspaper *Davar* wrote that there was no reason to doubt that Jews were being deported from western border areas, but that figures were wanting and the reports about mass deportations might have been exaggerated. It also reported new round-ups of former Zionists who had been released after serving long terms at hard labor in Siberia.

The *Ukrainian Bulletin* (New York City) announced on January 1, 1951, that Ukrainian nationalist partisans, in a raid on a secret police office at Mukačevo in the Carpatho-Ukraine on September 16, 1950, had captured secret instructions ordering the deportation of Ukrainian Jews who were charged with being “bourgeois reactionaries.” The fact that similar deportations were proceeding on a large scale in neighboring Hungary¹ lent a high degree of probability to these reports.

¹See Hungary, p. 333 f.
Religious and Communal Life

There were no Jewish communal or cultural organizations, schools, periodicals, or Jewish institutions of any kind in the Soviet Union, except for a few remaining synagogues. A delegation of American pro-Communist labor leaders that visited Russia in the summer of 1951 reported vaguely that the Jews “occupy a prominent part in every aspect of political, economic and cultural life,” and that many of them had been awarded Stalin prizes. According to a report published in the Daily Worker (New York City) on August 17, 1951, the delegation “learned” that “the place where Jewish culture was most extensively developed” was Birobidjan. There the Jewish people “had their own newspapers and schools” and “the Jewish language was taught to children.” It was extremely doubtful whether even in Birobidjan, into which neither the delegation nor any foreigners had been admitted for years, there existed any Jewish schools and newspapers (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951, [Vol. 52], pp. 335–36). In an interview with Geoffrey Spyer, a member of a foreign delegation of students, reported in the Jewish Chronicle (London) on September 14, 1951, the Moscow rabbi Shlomo Schleifer had stated that “there were in Russia no publications of any kind in Hebrew or Yiddish,” and that the synagogues held no Hebrew classes.

The only evidence of a “blossoming Jewish life” accessible to foreign visitors was the Moscow synagogue on Spasoglinichevsky Pereulok, whither all foreigners inquiring about Jewish life were directed. The descriptions of the synagogue and its congregation varied. G. Hobbs, reporting in the pro-Communist Jewish Clarion (London) on September, 1951, saw a “brightly lit, spacious hall”; Geoffrey Spyer reported having seen a “rather dilapidated building” with an interior “rather dark and badly weathered.” The photographs that he had managed to take of the synagogue were confiscated by Soviet border guards. Hobbs quoted the rabbi as saying that the congregation “numbered in the scores of thousands, fairly evenly spread over all ages”; according to Spyer, the rabbi told him that “the synagogue served a population of about ten thousand people.” According to Hobbs there were “some 200 people, mainly in the thirties and forties” present at the service he witnessed. A British delegation of women reported “some fifty men” present on a Tuesday morning, and “some hundred men and ten women” on a Friday night. Spyer saw “some thirty old men—the youngest must have been about fifty.”

Hobbs maintained that “there was no difficulty in obtaining kosher foods”; Spyer was told by the rabbi that “there was normally no kosher food available, but for the Holidays special supplies . . . could be obtained.”

Consensus of Reports

All reports agreed that in Moscow, a city with an estimated 300,000 Jews, there were only three synagogues; that there was no way of ascertaining the exact membership of the congregations; that only a small part of the esti-
mated membership attended services; that the synagogues were financed by voluntary contributions, mostly deposited anonymously in collection boxes; and that the activities of religious communities did not go beyond holding services—their were no educational, cultural, or welfare activities of any kind.

Little was known about religious life outside of Moscow. In Samarkand and Bukhara, according to a report in the Israel press, services were held on the High Holy Days in rooms serving other purposes during the rest of the year.

Rabbis were no longer seen at official Soviet functions, although it was a regular practice to invite representatives of all ethnic groups and to encourage the clergy, both Christian and Moslem, to attend in clerical garb. A new Committee for the Defense of Peace, formed in the summer of 1951, included representatives of the Orthodox, Armenian, and Lutheran churches and of the Moslem religious community, but no Jewish representatives (Jewish Chronicle, September 14, 1951).

There was some evidence of underground religious activities. Paul Andich, from whom we have already quoted, in writing of the early 1940's described clandestinely performed religious funeral rites and the religious and mutual-aid activities of small Jewish groups in Voroshilovgrad, Baku, and Yalta. He quoted his Soviet Jewish informants as saying that the Jewish youth was being increasingly attracted to religion.

Anti-Semitism and Discrimination

Many reports reaching foreign countries spoke of increasing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. According to the report by J. L. Teller published in the Christian Science Monitor (Boston) on February 3, 1951, anti-Semitic outbreaks had assumed the proportions of minor riots in a number of small Ukrainian towns, and there were assaults on individual Jews even in Moscow and Odessa. Soviet officials were indifferent to Jewish complaints and took no effective steps to curb anti-Semitic incidents, although anti-Semitic propaganda was still outlawed by the Soviet constitution and criminal law.

ANTI-SEMITIC STEREOTYPES IN SOVIET PRESS

There was one case of a Soviet press organ publishing material that evoked anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices. On December 20, 1950, the satirical magazine Krokodil printed a "true story" about one Sara Shmerkovna Pestunovich, who was depicted as a woman engaged in black-market activities, who refused to work, wanting to live off other people, and constantly complaining of being persecuted and discriminated against. The word "Jew" did not appear in the story; but the name Sara, daughter of Shmerkes, and the activities and attitudes imputed to her, could not but appeal to anti-Semitic prejudices.

"COSMOPOLITANISM" AND "JEWISH NATIONALISM"

"Cosmopolitanism" and "Jewish nationalism" still figured among the chief reasons for dismissals, deportations, and arrests. A letter by Jan Olechovski,
published in the *Daily Telegraph* (London) at the beginning of September, 1951, cited reports of Jewish refugees from Odessa, Minsk, and other Soviet cities where between March and June, 1951, Jewish employees of the nationalized department stores had been obliged to answer detailed questions about their communications with relatives or friends in Israel, or with Israel diplomatic personnel in Moscow. A number of these Jewish employees in Odessa were deported, and one was arrested because he had received a bulletin of the Israel embassy. In Minsk, four trade union officials were dismissed for receiving Jewish periodicals, probably from Poland.

The letter cited, as an example of anti-Semitic purges, the expulsion of three Jewish professors of chemistry, Kabacznik, Wolkensztein, and Syrkin, from the Soviet Academy of Science. There were many Jews among the scholars purged for “cosmopolitanism,” “bourgeois objectivism,” and “abstract scholasticism” in other fields of research.

**ELIMINATION OF JEWS FROM CULTURAL LIFE AND GOVERNMENT**

The new edition of the Soviet encyclopedia (the first volume of which appeared in 1948), omitted many Jewish names that had appeared in the former edition; there were no Jews on its editorial staff, although four Jews had been listed as editors in the previous edition.

There were virtually no Jews remaining in the higher echelons of party and state officialdom. Only in the Soviet republics of Central Asia were there still Jews among the secretaries of regional and local party committees.

In October, 1950, Leo Sakharovich Mekhlis, Minister of State Control, was relieved of his duties after having been dropped, in the March, 1950 elections, from the list of deputies to the Supreme Soviet. The seventy-fifth birthday of Maxim Litvinov, former foreign minister and once a prominent member of the Bolshevik Old Guard, passed unnoticed in the Soviet press. Lazar Kaganovich of the Politburo and the journalist Ilya Ehrenburg remained the only persons of Jewish origin who stood high in the Soviet hierarchy. Along with three other persons having Jewish-sounding names, they were the only Jews among the 1,316 deputies of the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, elected in March, 1950.

On February 18, 1951, when the legislatures of most of the individual Soviet republics were elected, the results were similar. Among the members of the Soviet of the Russian Federative Republic there were two Jews: Leva Benkovich, a deputy from Birobidjan, and Abram Bychovsky, elected from Molotov (formerly Perm) in the Urals.

**Birobidjan**

After a long and almost complete blackout of any real news from Birobidjan, the Tel Aviv newspaper *Haaretz* was able, on March 29, 1951, to print information about post-1948 developments. Its survey was mainly based on reports presented to a regional conference of the Communist party in Khabarovsk by Pavel Simonov, chief secretary of the party in Birobidjan and a non-Jew, and Leva Benkovich, his Jewish aide.
POPULATION

The population of Birobidjan was 140,000, of whom about 30 per cent were Jews. During the preceding two years only a few hundred Jews, most of them relatives of old residents, had been added to the Jewish population. There was no large-scale Jewish migration to Birobidjan, although many Jews had settled in other parts of Siberia, especially in the province of Krasnoyarsk.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

In the early 1940's the territory, because it bordered on Japanese-occupied Manchuria, was considered a frontier area; this was the pretext for refusing to permit anyone to visit the area. Though Birobidjan now bordered on Communist China, it was still barred to all visitors.

PURGE OF LOCAL LEADERS

A new comprehensive purge of local Communist leaders, in which Jewish Communists were particularly affected, was conducted during 1949 and 1950. Among those purged were: S. Kushnir, former first secretary of the Communist party in the territory; A. Bakhmutsky, the party's second secretary; Goldmacher, a former deputy to the Supreme Soviet; Silberstein, chairman of the executive committee of the local Soviet; Eli Wattenberg, secretary of ICOR and the American Birobidjan Committee before his emigration to the Soviet Union; and Leah Lishnianskaya, another former deputy to the Supreme Soviet. All were accused of "Jewish nationalism" and "cosmopolitanism," and demoted. The editorial staff of the Birobidjaner Shtern, last remaining Yiddish-language newspaper in the Soviet Union, was arrested and the newspaper suspended. Non-Jewish Communists were appointed to the key positions formerly held by Jewish Communists; other Jewish Communists, recently brought over from European Russia, were appointed to serve as their assistants.

Jewish schools or cultural institutions were not mentioned in the reports, and no information was given about religious life.

LIQUIDATION

Haaretz concluded from all this that the Soviet leaders had decided to discontinue the Birobidjan "experiment," its official liquidation being put off only out of consideration for its effect on public opinion outside the Soviet Union.

On August 26, 1951, the Belgrade radio reported that the Jewish Autonomous Province of Birobidjan had been abolished by order of the Soviet government and incorporated into the province of Khabarovsk. This report was neither confirmed nor denied by official Soviet sources.
Relations with Israel

At the official level, Israel-Soviet diplomatic relations remained "correct." When Israel's minister to Moscow, Mordecai Namir, resigned in the summer of 1950, the Israel government proposed the appointment of Zalman Shazar, a member of the cabinet, to the post; but the Soviet government refused to accept him, presumably because he had belonged to an anti-Communist Socialist group in Russia during the revolution. Finally Shmuel Eliashov, head of the East European Division of the Israel Foreign Office, was appointed to fill the vacancy.

Anti-Israel Propaganda

Typical of the Soviet attitude toward Israel was an article by Vatulina, former chief of the Middle East section of the Institute of International Politics and Economics, published in the journal Voprosy Ekonomiki. Mrs. Vatulina described the kibbutzim as capitalist enterprises dominated by Western finance, and complained that a third of Israel's budget was being devoted to military purposes in order "to suppress the Arab liberation movement" and "to prepare for war against the Soviet Union."

On May 13, 1951, M. Marinin wrote in the Moscow Pravda that the visit of several Israel ministers to the United States was the culmination of the transformation of Israel into an American colony. The seizure of Israel's economy by American monopolists was going ahead full steam; the Israel general staff had had secret conferences with American Intelligence agents; Israel was concluding a secret military pact with Turkey.

Such comments were often repeated in the Soviet press. Arabic-language broadcasts from Moscow and Soviet agents in the Middle East were reported to be inciting Arab refugees from Palestine and Arab public opinion in general to a revolutionary struggle against "the Israel agents of imperialism."

Emigration

From the Israel and Zionist side, hopes were repeatedly expressed that the Soviet Union would finally permit some Russian Jews to emigrate. In June, 1951, Israel Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett declared at a Mapai meeting that Israel had not forgotten the Jews in Russia, and that the time would come when the second largest Jewish population in the world would be allowed to emigrate. On August 19, 1951, Itzhak Raphael, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department, told the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem that "many thousands" of Russian Jews might yet come to Israel. The Congress adopted a resolution calling on the Soviet Union to unbar its doors to emigration.

Meanwhile, several Soviet Jews had been allowed to join their families in Israel, among them Mrs. Tova Lerner, aged seventy-six, from Czernowitz. Three years before she had written a letter to Stalin; thanks to his interven-
tion she was permitted to depart. The Associated Press, in reporting her arrival in Tel Aviv, remarked that her passport had been stamped, on June 19, 1951, with the first immigration visa the Israel legation in Moscow had ever issued.

Israel statistics for 1950 reported the arrival of 166 Jewish immigrants whose principal country of residence had been Russia, and 98 immigrants who had been residents of the Baltic states. It was not clear, however, whether the Soviet-annexed provinces of Poland and Rumania were counted as belonging to Russia, and how many of the immigrants had left their "principal country of residence" before the reoccupation of these territories by Soviet armies at the close of the war.

Joseph Gordon

For the Jews in Poland, the period under review was one of continuing mass emigration and forced liquidation of the organized Jewish community. After a valiant struggle for survival, the small Jewish community, surrounded as it was by the Communist police state, had to give up. People and leadership alike realized that there was no way out; those who wanted to be Jewish and had the opportunity to leave the country did so in overwhelming numbers; the rest—those who for one reason or another remained in Poland—were quickly disappearing in the surrounding population.

Emigration

Although the Polish government officially opened the doors to Jewish emigration to Israel in September, 1949 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1951, [Vol. 52], p. 344), the Jewish Communists bitterly opposed the exodus. In addition to violent denunciations of emigration over the radio, at factory meetings, etc., there appeared in the Yiddish newspapers special articles, purportedly datelined from Israel, describing in detail the misery, exploitation, and brutality awaiting immigrants to Israel. News stories from Tel Aviv, Haifa, and other cities reported beatings of new arrivals, and even cases of murder allegedly committed by the "Fascist" police of Israel (Dos Naye Leben, September 8, 1950). More serious were the various forms of administrative pressure, veiled threats, and searchings of homes, ostensibly for foreign money (which emigrants had no right to take with them). In effect, registration for emigration was tantamount to total ostracism—loss of social status, loss of citizenship, and loss of employment in shops and factories—all of which, considering the delays in departure and the uncertain general situation, demanded of those who registered for emigration real courage and determination.

Registration of those who wished to leave Poland terminated on August 31, 1950. The Communist Volks Sztyme, on September 8, 1950, stated editorially that "only a small minority has accepted the Zionist ways," and that "a con-
siderable majority of the productive Jewish masses refused" the Zionist offer. But available statistics appeared to disprove this, particularly if one took into consideration the difficulties put in the way of prospective emigrants.

The mass movement continued through March, 1951, when it was stopped. By that time 29,000 Polish Jews had arrived in Israel from the time of the inauguration of the open-door policy in September, 1949. The actual flow of refugees started in December, 1949; the bulk of the emigrants departed in 1950, when nearly 25,000 Jews—an average of 2,000 monthly—left Poland. An incomplete breakdown of this total shows that 20,463 adults and 7,000 children left Poland.

It was interesting to note in this connection a statement made by Michel Mirski, a leading Jewish Communist in Poland. Referring to the Jewish exodus, Mirski expressed his gratification that “40 per cent of the registered have refused to go and remained in Poland” (Volks Sztyme, October 8, 1950). If one accepts Mirski’s figure, it becomes quite clear, in light of the fact that 29,000 Jews had left the country for Israel, that altogether some 50,000 had registered for emigration, constituting about two-thirds of the entire Jewish community. Although mass emigration was ended, official Israel sources estimated that another 8,000 Jews were still to be expected in Israel, and that they would arrive in small groups.

Jewish Population

Available figures of the second national postwar census, conducted in Poland on December 3, 1950, give no indication of the total number or demographic characteristics of the Jewish population. Jewish officials of the Polish state carefully refrained from citing figures, and precise data on the number of Jews in Poland were therefore not available. If one takes into consideration the fact that there were approximately 75,000 Jews in Poland in June, 1949, and that since December, 1949, over 29,000 had left for Israel, it is reasonable to assume that in April, 1951, the total Jewish population of Poland was about 45,000. There were no figures on the geographic distribution of the Jewish community, except that it was reported that the largest groups were concentrated in the western part of Poland, in Lower Silesia.

Liquidation of the Jewish Economy

There were no reliable statistics on the employment, income, and living conditions of Polish Jews. This type of information disappeared from Polish publications when, under heavy Communist pressure, profound social and economic transformations were wrought in the Jewish community. What occurred in the course of the last year or so can best be described as the enforced total elimination of Jews from the traditional Jewish occupations. The close-knit Jewish social and economic structure was gradually destroyed, leaving the disunited individuals to their own fate in an environment where a
distinctive Jewish life was scarcely possible any longer. This was a direct and expected result of the general economic policy of the state, which aimed at the creation of a "new Socialist Poland." This policy was proclaimed again and again. Hand in hand with intensified industrialization went the elimination of private retail trade and of small producers, according to the announced aims of the Six-Year Plan.

On the Jewish scene, this economic course was embarked upon with the dissolution and merger of the Jewish producer co-operatives in December, 1949 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 339). Thereafter, all those artisans, small independent producers, and entrepreneurs who had somehow managed to survive were forced to abandon their occupations and to look for employment in the state-owned factories and co-operatives, sometimes even having to change their trade or to enter allied fields. The latest figures on the occupational distribution of Polish Jews, published in December, 1948 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950 [Vol. 51], p. 342) showed that, out of a total of 36,954 gainfully employed, 4,380 persons derived their livelihood from commercial enterprises, and 17,080 worked in heavy and light industry—chiefly co-operatives, which at that time were independent and autonomous.

Describing the repercussions of the nationalization policy on the economic status of the Polish Jews, a Communist Jewish writer pointed with satisfaction to the fact that the "so-called specifically Jewish economy" and Jewish occupations had disappeared in Poland, as had the Jewish "possessing classes . . . Jewish factory owners, merchants . . . Jewish artisans, and all their personnel, middlemen, and corrupted intelligentsia." Instead, the Jewish laboring masses had found "wide open for them the doors . . . of the people's socialist economy" (Volks Sztyme, April 7, 1951). This was true as to its first part, Jewish merchants, artisans, etc. having indeed disappeared from many of the areas of the economy in which they had traditionally figured. But their absorption in state-owned industry and state-managed co-operatives was more painful and difficult than the Communist writers liked to acknowledge. The incorporation of Jewish artisans and workers into the nationalized industry was accompanied by all sorts of difficulties, including manifestations of open hostility and anti-Jewish feeling on the part of the Polish working classes. Newcomers were received in such an "unfriendly way" that Dos Naye Leben of September 29, 1950, at that time the organ of the Central Committee of Polish Jews, protested against "regrettable events" which had taken place, particularly in a number of state co-operatives in Lodz. After making a cautious but insistent appeal that the ousted artisans and workers be employed in the nationalized industry, the editorial went on to say that "one must take care of these people and they should not be deprived of their living quarters." Thus Dos Naye Leben, perhaps inadvertently, brought additional evidence of the hardships facing the declassed—in this case in the all-important field of living accommodations. As housing was still a problem in the devastated Polish cities, it was a fearful catastrophe for the new socially non-privileged groups to lose not only their means of livelihood, but also their living quarters.
Communal Affairs

The Central Committee of Polish Jews was stripped of all its functional activities toward the end of 1949, when all Jewish social and educational work was taken over by the state. By that time it had become a purely consultative body of indefinite character (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951, [Vol. 52], p. 339). As all Jewish political groups had been dissolved, the Central Committee was directed by an all-Communist leadership. Despite this, within less than a year even this fictitious form of Jewish communal representation was considered unnecessary because of the "completely changed social relations ... in the Jewish milieu...." (Dos Naye Leben, October 6, 1950). Herz Smoliar, president of the Central Committee, in an article devoted to the ideological and organizational consolidation of the Jewish working population in Poland, noted "that the Jewish bourgeoisie and nationalistic groups tried to transform the committees into organs of Jewish autonomy," and now "when our efforts against those destructive nationalistic elements have been intensified and increased, the time has come to create new organizational forms for Jewish life" (idem.).

REORGANIZATION OF COMMUNAL BODIES

Accordingly, at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of Polish Jews and the Board of the Jewish Cultural Society, held in Warsaw on October 6, 1950, it was decided to recommend the dissolution of both those organizations and the creation of a new agency which would be more appropriate to the needs of a "Socialist Poland." Propaganda meetings were called throughout the country, and a nation-wide conference of all Jewish social organizations was held in Warsaw on October 29, 1950. At this conference, at which Dworakowsky, representative of the United Polish Workers party (Communist) was present, it was decided to liquidate both the Central Committee of Polish Jews and the Jewish Cultural Society.

It was further resolved to create a new organization, the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews. Among the tasks of the Cultural and Social Union were the "rallying of the entire Jewish working population in the general struggle of the Polish masses for peace and the realization of the Six-Year Plan ... and the unmasking of the Jewish warmongers. ..." The Union was also "to organize cultural and educational work among the Jewish population in the spirit of the ideology of the United Polish Workers party" (Volks Sztyme, November 1, 2, 4, 1950). An interesting feature of the new Union was its voluntary character; a nation-wide drive was undertaken to enlist members. Since the local leaders apparently included men and women who could not be trusted politically, particularly with respect to emigration to Israel, the old local and regional committees were gradually disbanded, as were the affiliates of the defunct Cultural Society, and in their stead new local unions were created. As of March, 1951, thirty-four such local agencies had been created (Volks Sztyme, March 6, 1951).

The Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews was headed by a central
board of forty-six members which elected a presidium of eleven. Among those chosen were Herz Smoliar, President; Joel Lazebnik, General Secretary; David Sfard, Salo Fiszgrund, Szymon Zachariach, and Michel Mirski.

Religious Life

There was little to report on Jewish religious life. Nothing on this subject appeared in the press. According to official sources, there were in Poland at the beginning of 1951 seventy synagogues and forty Talmud Torahs (Poland Today, April, 1951, Vol. VI, No. 4). It is quite possible that this number of synagogues existed, but recent arrivals in Israel reported that as a result of emigration, Jewish religious life in Poland had experienced a sharp decline. A report by a correspondent of Haboker (Israel), quoted in the Yiddish newspaper The Day (New York, February 18, 1951), indicated that practically all the rabbis had gone to Israel—except for Lodz and Warsaw and one or two other cities, all congregations were without rabbis. Though some courageous Orthodox Jews were making strenuous efforts to continue their way of life, the objective conditions and complete control of the country by the state made this more and more difficult. One sad effect of this state of affairs was the neglect of Jewish cemeteries. It seems, however, that some restoration was undertaken during the year in the old Jewish cemetery of Warsaw (Volks Sztyme, December 23, 1950).

There were also reports of an increase in mixed marriages and of a Polonization of Jewish names.

Jewish Education

On September 1, 1950, the “schools with Yiddish as their language of instruction” began their second academic year under state administration. Reports from various cities pointed to continued existence of obstacles in the way of the normal functioning of the educational system. Lack of teachers and of text books in Yiddish continued to plague the schools, as had been the case during 1949 and 1950. Some of the school buildings were in urgent need of repairs.

These problems were presented and discussed to some extent at a nationwide conference held in Wroclaw on August 20, 1950, of parents’ committees and councils of overseers of the Jewish schools. These councils, created by a governmental decree of February 26, 1949, were actually governmental advisory agencies, active particularly in the field of Communist indoctrination of the youth. Two hundred and eighty-seven delegates, including twenty-six representatives of the teaching profession, participated in the conference. No data on the number of Jewish schools, students, and teachers, or information on Jewish content of the curriculum were disclosed at the meeting, nor were such data and information available elsewhere. It appeared, however, that at the beginning of the academic year Jewish schools functioned in Wroclaw (500 children), Lignice (300 children), Lodz, Walbrzych, Krakow, Bielawa,
ADULT EDUCATION

In the field of adult education, evening courses were reportedly given in Lodz, Wroclaw, Szczecin, and other cities, with a total of 2,000 adults receiving or completing a program of elementary education. These courses, conceived as a part of a national campaign against illiteracy, were supervised by the state, and included courses in the Polish and Yiddish languages, Jewish history, mathematics, modern Poland, etc.

Cultural Activities

Up to the end of October, 1950, cultural activities were directed by the Jewish Cultural Society under the leadership of David Sfard. They included maintenance of thirty-nine libraries containing 55,000 books, fourteen Houses of Culture, twenty-seven clubs, eight drama circles with 126 members, and six orchestras with 139 musicians (Volks Sztyme, November 2, 1950). The situation changed when the Cultural Society was dissolved and its functions were taken over by the Cultural and Social Union. The existence of the Cultural Society was, according to the new line, no longer justified, as the time had come “to organize all cultural activities on the basis of Marxism-Leninism . . . and the dialectical Stalinist idea of patriotism . . . .” (Volks Sztyme, October 20, 1950). Whatever this new policy may have been meant to signify, the practical results were immediate: established cultural activities fell off sharply, and some were discontinued entirely. The disorganization of cultural work did not go unnoticed by the Communist leadership. At discussions held in the course of a session of the Cultural and Social Union in January, 1951, a number of delegates pointed to the lack of planning in promoting cultural activities, and great concern was expressed over the decline of the activities of orchestras, drama circles, etc. (Volks Sztyme, January 6, 1951).

HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

The Historical Institute, under the direction of B. Mark, continued its research and publication activities. A number of studies, based on the recently discovered second part of the archives collected by the late Emmanuel Ringelblum during the Nazi occupation, were contemplated. The documents in question were found on December 1, 1950, on the site of Novolipki 68 in Warsaw. Although work on the material was still in progress, preliminary reports and articles published by the members of the Institute pointed to a general tendency on the part of the Communist historian to identify the resistance movement in the ghetto with the Communist underground, and to explain the events in the ghetto in terms of a class struggle in which the so-called “bourgeoisie” allegedly collaborated with the Germans.

An indication of the same tendency was the celebration of the eighth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising on April 19, 1951, near the monument to the dead of the ghetto. Officials of the government and of the
Communist party and representatives of Jewish organizations participated in the ceremony. No Jewish memorial services were held; the celebration had little, if any, Jewish significance.

THEATER AND PUBLICATIONS

The two Jewish theaters in Lodz and Wroclaw, under the artistic direction of Ida Kaminska, presented during the period under review a number of plays by Yiddish, Polish, Russian, and other playwrights. Among the highlights of the repertory were Sholom Aleichem's *The Family Blank*, and a play by Ivan Popov based on Lenin's childhood. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Esther Kaminska was commemorated in a number of cities, and articles devoted to the great Yiddish actress appeared in the press.

The Yiddishe Bukh, which during 1950 issued thirteen volumes on various subjects, planned the publication of thirty books during 1951, including recent works by contemporary poets and novelists. As there was an apparent slackening of interest in Jewish books, a special drive for 1,500 subscribers was initiated by the Cultural and Social Union in April, 1951.

There was a further curtailment of the Yiddish press. On October 20, 1950, it was announced that the Central Committee of the United Polish Workers party had decided that the Yiddish weekly, *Die Volks Sztyme*, should be published four times a week. This announcement was followed, on October 29, 1950, by a decision by Jewish leaders to stop publication immediately of *Dos Naye Leben*, it being considered unnecessary under present conditions. *Die Nieder-Szlesie*, the local Wroclaw paper, was transformed into a supplementary page of the *Volks Sztyme*. *Yiddishe Shriften*, a magazine issued by the now defunct Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists, became the organ of the Cultural and Social Union, which also sponsored the youth organ, *Oyfgang*. *Die Bletter far Geshikhte* and *Idies* appeared, as before, under the direction of the Historical Institute.

Relations with Israel and Zionism

Formally correct diplomatic relations with Israel were maintained throughout the period under review. After the resignation of the Israel Minister, Israel Barzilai, who returned to his country, Leon Kubovi, Israel Minister Plenipotentiary in Czechoslovakia, was appointed minister to Poland as well, in June, 1951. Violent anti-Zionist propaganda was disseminated and the state of Israel was harshly attacked. Although Zionist activities had long before been prohibited and liquidated, Zionists not otherwise identified were accused of espionage and diversion, and of past collaboration with Nazis. The state of Israel was termed a "Fascist hideout" which had established a "Hitlerite ghetto for the Arabs" (*Dos Naye Leben*, October 4, 1950). The increasingly clear Western orientation of Israel called forth the most extreme insults in the Communist press. The visit of Israel's prime minister to the United States in May, 1951, led the Warsaw radio to comment that "Israel must become a base for American warmongers for their strategic plans" (*New York Times*, May 18, 1951).

LEON SHAPIRO
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

As a consequence of the sharpening conflict between East and West and increasing Soviet pressure, the economic situation of Czechoslovakia deteriorated rapidly during the period under review: trade with the West and the traditional export industries declined, and the entire economy was reorganized according to Russian needs. The productivity of labor and standards of living decreased; the reintroduction of food rationing and a merciless speed-up in the factories were the immediate consequences.

The widespread dissatisfaction was held down by increasing police terror, the vast system of concentration camps, and a series of purges in the government, army, diplomatic service, industry, and Communist party. In February, 1951, Foreign Minister Vladimir Clementis and most members of the Slovak provincial government were expelled from the party, arrested, and charged with nationalism, treason, and espionage. The purge struck at Communist leaders in Bohemia and Moravia as well. All in all, 150,000 members were expelled from the party.

A long series of reprisals against foreign diplomats and correspondents in Czechoslovakia culminated, on April 23, 1951, in the arrest of William N. Oatis, the Prague correspondent of the Associated Press; he was charged with espionage. Tried in July, Oatis was sentenced to ten years in jail for activities which, in a democratic country, would be considered as part of the regular duties of a foreign correspondent. Oatis’ imprisonment aroused public opinion in the United States and brought about a virtual rupture of all economic relations with the Prague regime.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS

Persecution of the churches was intensified. The Catholic church, the last remaining independent organization of any size, was its main target. Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague was interned in an undisclosed place, Archbishop Josef Karel Matocha of Olomouc in his palace. Several Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic bishops and abbots were tried in January, 1951, and received long prison terms. Most of the remaining bishops had to swear allegiance to the regime. The Communists appointed their creatures as canons of the Prague and Olomouc cathedrals; other “patriotic” priests were made capitular vicars or administrators of the Prague Archdiocesan and of several bishoprics. A bishop, won over by the Communists, began to ordain pro-government priests. The education of the clergy was placed entirely in the hands of the Ministry for Church Affairs, special courses being organized to train “loyal” priests. What all these measures aimed at was the domination of the Catholic Church, the forcing of a rupture between it and Rome, and its transformation into another instrument of the Communist regime.

The Orthodox church, the independent Czechoslovak church, and most of the Protestant churches, were already under Communist control. The Greek Catholic church in Eastern Slovakia was outlawed; a similar fate met such
nonconformist religious sects as the Jehovah Witnesses, the Salvation Army, and the International Bible Society. Even the Young Men’s Christian Association was dissolved.

**Jewish Population**

The size of the Jewish population remained unchanged. There were no exact statistics available, but most estimates placed it at about 15,000. Arnošt Kohn, secretary of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Prague, maintained in an interview in August, 1950 that there were “at the present moment” 11,500 Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, and about 10,000 in Slovakia, or a total of about 21,500 Jews in the country; but as other assertions by Kohn were demonstrably untrue, his figures deserved little credence. A month later, Gustav Sicher, Chief Rabbi of Prague, estimated the total Jewish population in the country at 14,000, of whom 4,000 lived in Prague. At about the same time, in October, 1950, the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency estimated the Jewish population of Czechoslovakia at 15,000.

**Communal, Religious, and Educational Life**

The local religious communities, with their two regional associations (one for Bohemia-Moravia and the other for Slovakia), were the only remaining Jewish organizations in the country; all other political, cultural, and welfare organizations had been liquidated. There were no reliable data on the number of religious communities. Arnošt Kohn, in the interview already mentioned, stated that forty-eight existed in Bohemia and Moravia; but, as we know from other reports, only nineteen were represented at a conference of their association in Karlovy Vary in July, 1950, and no conferences were reported or statistics published after this date. Věstník, the organ of the association, printed reports from about fifteen provincial communities. There was no information about the number or activities of the religious communities in Slovakia.

The Church Act of 1949 had provided for the granting, after the nationalization of all church and welfare funds, of state subsidies to all religions, and Kohn asserted in his interview that the state “supported and maintained all Jewish institutions.” But Chief Rabbi Gustav Sicher revealed that he was paid and the synagogues were maintained “out of funds accruing to the Jewish Kehilla from its property.” In many cases communities were selling synagogue buildings; in others, the properties of communities which had been dissolved for lack of members were “donated” to local authorities by their Communist administrators. Some synagogues were made over into churches for “loyal” Christian denominations.

**Religious Activities**

Of the thirty-five synagogues in Prague, only one, the famous Altneu Synagogue, was opened on weekdays as well as on the Sabbath; when a
delegate to the international student congress visited it on a Sabbath morn-
ing in the summer of 1950, he found about twenty-five male worshippers pres-
ent and “a number” of women. A second synagogue in Prague was open only
on Friday night and Saturday morning; a third, only on Friday night; the
rest were closed.

There was a lack of trained rabbis. Rabbi Sicher, who had returned to
Prague from Israel in 1947, remained at his post only because there was
nobody to take his place. When the rabbi of Bánská Bystrica died in 1950,
Věstník observed that he had been the last rabbi with an academic education
in Slovakia.

JEWISH EDUCATION

As to religious education, Rabbi Sicher explained to a foreign visitor that
“there was none organized because there was no demand for it.” Arnošt
Kohn assured another visitor that “religious instruction was given by local
rabbis.” In June, 1951, the Prague religious community officially announced
that during the school year 1950–51 such instruction had been given in
Prague to thirteen students in elementary and fifteen students in high schools.
In Olomouc, the second largest city of Moravia, five children were receiving
religious instruction.

Cultural Life

Cultural activities were in evidence only in Prague, where from time to
time the religious community organized social gatherings at which lectures
on political and cultural topics were delivered and recitations and concert
performances were given. Provincial communities gathered together occasion-
ally for funerals or consecrations of memorial plaques to the victims of
Nazi persecution.

The famous Jewish Museum of Prague had been nationalized in 1950 (see
AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 346); its valuable collections
seemed to be carefully administered; several catalogues classifying and
describing its treasures were published.

Věstník, weekly organ of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities
in Bohemia and Moravia, continued to appear regularly. It contained much
general Communist propaganda, especially in connection with the “peace
campaigns,” and numerous reports about fascism and anti-Semitism in the
Western world. There were also articles explaining Jewish holidays, but
very little about the life of Jews in Czechoslovakia.

Emigration

After 1949, Jewish emigration to Israel was reduced to a trickle; in October,
1950, the Jewish Agency closed its offices in Prague and Bratislava. Its spokes-
men maintained at that time that 5,000 of the remaining Czechoslovakia
Jews wished to emigrate. The official attitude toward emigration was sum-
marized by Arnošt Kohn as follows:
The laws in Czechoslovakia do not differentiate between Jew and non-Jew. Since there is a shortage of labor there is a restriction on emigration, but anyone who has near relatives living outside Czechoslovakia is permitted to leave, except doctors, because of the great shortage in the medical profession.

During 1950, only 401 Jews from Czechoslovakia were able to reach Israel. Legal emigration to other countries was almost non-existent, but a number of Jews figured among the people who left the country illegally and among Czechoslovaks abroad who refused to go back when recalled by their government.

JOSEPH GORDON

HUNGARY

IN COMMUNIST HUNGARY, by the end of 1950, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population had been driven from their jobs and occupations, together with other middle-class elements. Early in 1951 the inevitable conclusion of this was a decision by the Hungarian government to deport large contingents of this "superfluous" group from the cities. In the light of the many previous Soviet deportations, there seemed to be only one fate in store for these victims: ultimate deportation to the slave labor areas of the Soviet Union itself.

Thus in the seventh year following their first mass deportation under Nazism, thousands of Hungarian Jews were again facing deportation and ultimate physical elimination. The Jews were not, however, the sole victims of the deportations; they shared the fate of the entire outcast and ruined middle class, and of all those deemed undesirable by the Communist regime. Among the deportees were democrats, conservative nationalists, and reactionaries. The deportations overshadowed all other events in Hungarian Jewish life, and it is with them that this review will be chiefly concerned.

Jewish Population

In the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951 (Vol. 52, p. 363), a detailed statistical evaluation of the Jewish population of Hungary showed that there were approximately 143,000 professing Jews in the country, about 100,000 of whom resided in Budapest. The total population of the country was over 9,000,000. Official reticence makes it impossible to ascertain statistically what the more recent population trends were in Hungary; but in the light of the insignificant Jewish emigration from that country during the period under review (July 1, 1950, through June 30, 1951), it is safe to estimate the number of professing Jews, as of January 1, 1951, at about 140,000, of whom approximately 100,000 were still living in the capital. As we shall see, a half year later both the Jewish population of Budapest and the total Jewish population of Hungary had been substantially reduced, owing chiefly to the deportations.

The economic situation of the general and of the Jewish population was
considerably worsened by the recent rapid deterioration of Hungarian economic life. Crop shortages and the incessant requisitioning of supplies by the Soviet Union aggravated the economic crisis. During the last six months of the period under review, there was a widespread lack of food, clothing, and fuel.

**Political and Civic Status**

After their elimination from the economy, most Jewish households, to keep alive, had to sell the remainder of their personal possessions and to engage clandestinely in trade, which was prohibited by Communist regulations and severely punished through court and administrative procedures. In addition to being denounced for "unfriendly criticism" of the regime, pro-Western sympathies, or simply "unreliability," thousands of Jews, because of their attempts to earn a living in the only way still available to them, ended up in prisons and concentration camps.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) reported from Rome on October 8, 1950 that a number of prominent Hungarian Jews had been arrested in a continuing campaign against the middle class. The dispatch mentioned the names of several of the people arrested. On March 22, 1951, the JTA disclosed the arrest of Rabbi Kraus of Sopron and Rabbi Moskowitz of Miskolcz, adding that "their fate is unknown." People sent to jail were condemned at Communist mock trials; inmates of concentration camps were condemned by simple administrative order of the secret police.

**Anti-Semitism**

The prominent role played by Jewish Communists in the present Hungarian government exacerbated the latent anti-Semitism of large sections of the population. During the last weeks of 1950, anti-Semitic disturbances occurred in Miskolcz, Szeged, Tokaj, Sopron, and a number of other localities. In some places Jewish homes were demolished and a number of Jews beaten up. In many cases local Communist leaders took part in anti-Semitic agitation; local authorities often arrested the Jewish victims of riots as "black-marketeers" (*Jewish Morning Journal*, December 31, 1950).

According to information received by the Hungarian National Committee in New York, and revealed by Bela Fabian, a member of that committee and a former member of the Board of the Budapest Jewish community, the leaders of this new anti-Semitic campaign were Istvan Kossa, deputy secretary general of the Communist party, and Joseph Gem, Communist member of parliament. The latter, in a speech in Nyiregyháza, declared that the Jews were sabotaging the Five-Year Plan, had sided with the United States, and were enemies of the Soviet Union (*New Leader*, January 15, 1951).

**POGROM IN TOKAJ**

A few days later, on February 19, 1950, the president of the Jewish community of nearby Tokaj and his wife were beaten to death in their home by
a mob. A few hours after the crime, the president and rabbi of the Jewish community of Debreczen arrived on the scene. They were immediately arrested, but were released later on condition they would say nothing about the murder. The next day all the Jews of Tokaj prepared to leave the locality. They were told that if they attempted to leave, they would be immediately interned. No investigation was made of the Tokaj pogrom; as in the case of the Communist-instigated pogroms of Miskolcz and Kunmadaras in 1946 and 1947, the culprits got off unpunished.

**Discharge of Jews from Public Positions**

In a letter from Budapest printed on June 30, 1951, by the New York Hungarian-language weekly *Az Ember*, the discharge of Hungarian public servants, even if Communist party members, and of educated elements of the population in general, among them many Jews, was described as continuing unabated. They were being systematically replaced by hastily trained former manual workers and farm laborers. In addition, Soviet technical and commercial experts arrived in ever increasing numbers to replace former Hungarian—especially Hungarian Jewish—officials.

**Community Organization**

All possibility of a free and genuine Jewish communal life vanished with the merger, early in 1950, of the Progressive and Orthodox Jewish communities into one organization under trustees appointed by and responsible to the Communist rulers (see *American Jewish Year Book*, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 368). There were no Jewish schools left, no Jewish education, no youth activities. The Jewish Cultural Association, the old Jewish Literary Society, and a number of other long-established institutions which had been active as late as 1950, were now out of existence. The famous Jewish hospitals and sanatoriums of Budapest had been nationalized.

Apart from the central offices of the unified community, the synagogues were the only communal institutions still open and functioning. But they were living on borrowed time. The pulpit, as well as *Uj Elet* ("New Life"), the only Jewish weekly newspaper, were still needed as propaganda organs of the regime and had assiduously to purvey the official line.

Occasionally, *Uj Elet* printed an article on the biblical portion of the week, or on some point of ancient Jewish history, to justify its claim to be a Jewish newspaper. But 95 per cent of its content was official propaganda. Marshal Stalin was hailed as the "redeemer of mankind"; the Hungarian Communist leader, Mathias Rakosi, was called "our great leader and teacher." The Kremlin's "peace campaign" was faithfully promoted, often in biblical terms; the Western democracies, particularly the United States, were described as centers of Nazism and anti-Semitism.
Deportations

Two different types of deportation must be distinguished. The earlier type consisted of individuals who had been in jail or in internment camps as a result of court or administrative decisions; these were secretly deported to the Soviet Union. The second type included people who had never been charged with any offense. They were removed to the northeastern regions of Hungary, simply on the ground of their social origin or past political activity.

DEPORTATION OF "OFFENDERS"

Mass deportations of the first type started sometime during the second half of 1950. At first the deportees (as reported from Vienna by John MacCormac in *The New York Times* on December 28, 1950) consisted of people who had been sentenced to prison terms exceeding two years, or who had been interned in concentration camps for indefinite periods. The Soviet Union was reported to be exchanging them for Soviet technicians entrusted with the task of helping the satellites to build up their heavy industry in strict accordance with Russia's interests and wishes. Various sources of information estimated the number of these deportees at between 20,000 and 50,000; others, however, said that only some 5,000 had been deported. The official secrecy surrounding these events made it impossible to appraise the relative merits of these differing estimates. The victims came from all classes of society, and included peasants, laborers, intellectuals, businessmen, etc. A large number of the 2,000 Social Democratic leaders arrested or interned during 1949 and 1950 (many of whom were Jewish) were among those deported. All sources agreed that there was an especially high proportion of middle-class Jews. Jewish deportees were made up both of those imprisoned for political reasons, and those jailed or interned for economic offenses. The final destination of the deportees in the Soviet Union was unknown. All that was known was that most of the transports crossed the Hungarian Soviet border at Rahovo. Private sources reported that some of the victims were sent to Rumania to help build the Danube-Black Sea canal.

Hundreds of letters arrived in the United States informing Hungarians settled here that their relatives in concentration camps in Hungary had disappeared without a trace, or had failed to answer letters, or had been "transferred" to "another place of detention," the location of which was not disclosed. The Hungarian National Committee in New York reported on November 5, 1950, that relatives paying their monthly visit to inmates of the Kistarcsa internment camp were told their kin had left for a destination which "cannot yet be disclosed."

DEPORTATION OF "UNDESIRABLES"

The second type of mass deportation started early in May, 1951, with the rounding up in Budapest of "socially undesirable and hostile" elements, meaning persons (and entire families) belonging to the middle and upper-middle classes and to the aristocracy. They were charged with the commission
of no crime or offense. On the basis of Communist social dogma they were simply presumed to be hostile to the regime.

Elimination of a potential source of opposition was the main reason for these deportations; apart from this there were the Communist regime's desire to persuade the laboring masses of the country of their favored position in the economy, and the more distant consideration of the Soviet need for slave labor. The elimination of the middle class promised new and more comfortable homes to a number of workers' families and a certain alleviation of the grave food shortage in the cities, at the same time that the huge flow of supplies from Hungary to the Soviet Union and its satellites could continue undiminished.

Beginning in May, 1951, thousands of Hungarian citizens each week received notice to get ready within twenty-four hours for eviction from their homes and transportation to some distant eastern rural area in the vicinity of the Hungarian-Soviet border. At first, evictions took place twice a week in Budapest; later, the number of weekly raids was increased to three. At the same time the action was extended to a number of provincial towns. For example, unconfirmed private reports indicated that among other local middle-class elements, the entire Jewish population of the city of Debreczen was deported. Except for the Jews of Budapest, the Jews of Debreczen had been the only Jewish community to emerge relatively unscathed from the Nazi occupation of 1944.

CATEGORIES OF DEPORTEES

There were three categories of deportees. Those assigned to the first category had to surrender themselves within three hours of receipt of the removal order, relinquishing all property without compensation. Persons in the second category obtained half a day's delay for "liquidating their affairs." On paper, they were permitted to take along 500 kilograms of personal property per family (which in most cases failed to reach the deportees' destination). The third category of persons was required to find employment as rural or industrial laborers within a fixed period of time, on pain of banishment. For the most part, however, no employment was available to middle-class people unskilled in factory or farm work, particularly the aged.

There was no recourse from deportation orders, which were subject to execution without delay. A large number of the deportees were victims of private denunciation. Many of the informers were former Arrow Cross Nazis, as were many of the secret police. This was one of the explanations for the disproportionate number of Jewish deportees.

Deportees were sent to the bleak northeastern areas of Hungary, where they were "resettled" in primitive villages or on farmsteads affording scarcely any shelter; most of them had to camp in open fields and meadows. They included people of every age and physical condition; all had to work in the wheat and rice fields.

HUNGARY'S JUSTIFICATION OF DEPORTATIONS

The Hungarian government sought both to justify and to minimize the scope of the deportations. In an official statement published by the Hun-
arian press on June 15 and 16, 1951, it admitted the deportation of 924 families, adding that only “archdukes, princes, counts, barons, generals, police chiefs of the Horthy regime, wholesalers, landowners,” and other “fascist elements” were among them. But hundreds of letters received in the United States testified to the fact that tens of thousands of people had already been deported, and that the deportations were continuing unabated.

Among the “fascist elements” deported were such people as Lajos Lang, one-time representative of the Democratic party in the upper house of the Hungarian parliament, and former member of the Board of the Budapest Jewish community; Baron Andor Dirsztay, a former high official of the finance ministry and son of a founder of the National Association for Jewish Culture and the Jewish Mensa Acadamica; Ferencz Halasz, a leading Jewish lawyer in Budapest; Baron Paul Kornfeld, banker; Aurel Varannay, leader of the liberal wing of the Budapest Jewish community; and many other Jews—but not a single known former leading Nazi or anti-Semite. The non-Jewish victims included people like Charles Rassay, Gabriel Ugron, and Rudolf Rupert, former liberal political leaders and staunch defenders of Jewish rights.

It must be emphasized that the above names are mentioned here only because they were reported in the public press. Many other prominent Jews were deported—including several rabbis, former Jewish community leaders, Zionist functionaries, lawyers, businessmen, writers, and artists—whose names were not reported in the press.

ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF DEPORTEES

It would be futile to expect the Communist government in Hungary to publish statistics on the deportees. For these we must rely on estimates made by sources abroad. Thus, on June 8, 1951, Judith Listowel reported from London to the National Catholic Conference News Service that "reports received from Stockholm stated that at least 50,000 Hungarians have been marked for deportation." According to Lord Vansittart (in a speech delivered in the British House of Lords on June 13, 1951), by the middle of June, 1951, 35,000 persons had been deported, out of a planned total of 100,000. On July 12, 1951, the JTA reported from Israel that at least 10,000 Hungarian Jews had already been deported. Sources close to the Hungarian National Council in New York believed that 35 to 40 per cent of the persons deported by the end of July, 1951 were Jews. An unusually well-informed source in Vienna estimated the total number of deportees by the end of June, 1951, at between 20,000 and 30,000, of whom about 5,000 were Jews.

MAINTENANCE OF DEPORTEES

Half of the deportees' maintenance was supposed to be furnished by the government, the other half by the local community to which the victims were assigned. In most cases, because of the difficult economic situation of the country, neither "provider" fulfilled its obligations, and many of the deportees had therefore to live on what they could glean from fields and orchards at night.
FOREIGN PROTEST

As of July, 1951, Israel was the only foreign government to deliver an official note of protest against the deportations to the Hungarian government. As reported by the Hungarian Jewish Uj Elet on June 21, 1951, the protest was publicly rejected by Hungary as an "illegal intervention" in its internal affairs.¹

EMIGRATION

More than two years before, the Hungarian government had agreed to permit the emigration of 3,000 Jews to Israel. Some 2,400 persons did leave, including 207 Jews who were allowed to depart for Israel early in July (JTA, July 2, 1951).

RUMANIA

The rapid integration of Rumania into the Soviet orbit placed an increasing strain on that country's economy. Natural resources, especially oil and timber, were being quickly used up; industrial and agricultural labor, because of the speed-up imposed on them, were suffering a decline in their standards of living; and forced labor was introduced on an increasing scale. Rumania's aggressive attitude toward Yugoslavia led to numerous border incidents and to mass deportations of the members of the Yugoslav minority living near the frontier. The deportations were later extended to include members of other minorities; finally, in the summer of 1951, "unreliable" elements in the Rumanian urban population began to be deported. The persecution of the churches affected the Catholic as well as Orthodox clergy, and culminated in a series of "treason and espionage" trials against church dignitaries and laymen.

Jewish Population

Of an estimated 350,000 Jews living in Rumania in July, 1949, about 80,000 were permitted to leave for Israel in the subsequent two years. In July, 1951 there were about 270,000 Jews left in Rumania, with emigration still continuing. Rumania still possessed the largest Jewish population of all the countries of the European continent west of Russia.

ECONOMIC POSITION

A large part of the Jewish community had been dispossessed and left destitute and without employment by the wholesale nationalization of small trades and business in the years 1946–48. Communist propaganda in Western countries, citing isolated cases of Jews who became well-paid skilled workers,

¹ Editor's Note. On July 27, 1951, President Harry S. Truman in a strongly worded statement condemned the deportation policies of the Hungarian government. The President's warning was soon followed by a similar statement by Secretary of State Dean Acheson. During August, reports from Hungary seemed to indicate that the deportations had been suspended, or at least considerably curtailed.
claimed that the expropriated Jews had found employment in the nationalized economy. But statistics on the employment, income, and standards of living of the Jewish population were never published. Letters from Rumania, the testimony of emigrants, and reports of foreign welfare organizations emphasized the fact that large numbers of Jews were unemployed and destitute.

Some statistics came to light which permitted an assessment of the situation. In the spring of 1948, the "Restratification Department" of the Communist-dominated Jewish Democratic Committee stated, in a confidential document, that 40 per cent of an estimated 345,000 Rumanian Jews had been engaged in the commercial field; this 40 per cent, classed as "elements engaged in speculation," had largely been eliminated from the economy. The Restratification Department estimated that approximately one-half of the Jewish population consisted of children, elderly persons, and housewives; of the 175,000 persons able to work, only 75,000 were gainfully employed, leaving 100,000 without means of livelihood. The committee's plan provided for the "restratification" of 58,550 in three years: 32,000 were to be retrained for manual work; 8,000 were to be trained as draftsmen, foremen, and supervisors; 13,500 were to be resettled as farmers; and 4,850 were to be absorbed in producers co-operatives.

Subsequently, the Jewish Democratic Committee announced that it had placed 18,000 Jews in jobs during the year 1949 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 351), and 13,000 more during 1950. It was impossible to verify these figures; but even if we take them at face value, assuming that there was no significant number of repeaters, we find that only a third of the "superfluous" Jewish population was re-employed. The high percentage of Jews among those arrested as "speculators" or deported to forced labor camps because they did not have "productive" jobs, confirmed the conclusion that, for the majority of economically displaced Jews, emigration was the only solution to their problems.

Anti-Semitism

It was difficult to assess the extent of anti-Semitism in Rumania, as anti-Semitic incidents were never reported in the press. But all emigrants and many letters complained of growing anti-Jewish sentiment, and of their enhancement by the government's anti-Zionist propaganda.

There were several convictions for anti-Semitic atrocities committed during the war. In one reported case, seven persons in Galati were sentenced for recent anti-Semitic attacks to prison terms ranging from three to eighteen months.

Communal and Religious Life

After the purges of recent years, all the remaining Jewish institutions had come under complete Communist control. The religious communities of
different rites were now unified. Religious services were on the whole allowed to proceed without serious interference, but it was increasingly difficult for Jews to obtain matzohs and to be excused from work on religious holidays. In their preaching and other activities, the rabbis had to promote the official "anti-imperialist" and anti-Zionist line, and to participate in repeated "peace campaigns."

**Jewish Education**

In 1949, there were three elementary Yiddish schools (as compared with the sixty-nine elementary and twenty-three high schools officially reported in 1948, before their "nationalization"). On March 12, 1950, the Romanian News, organ of the Rumanian embassy in Washington, still gave the number of Yiddish schools as 3, adding that 100 other grammar schools were conducting courses in the Yiddish language and literature. The number of students receiving instruction in Yiddish was given as 7,291, the number of Yiddish teachers as 90. Two Yiddish kindergartens were to be opened in Timisoara and Jassy, and a "teachers' college" for training instructors for Yiddish classes was to be established. The report stressed that "Jews knowing the Rumanian or Hungarian languages were free to join State schools with the Rumanian or Hungarian teaching language [sic]."

On April 15, 1951 the Romanian News published statistics on "nurseries, kindergartens, and primary schools employing languages other than Rumanian." There were 3,036 such, 8 of which were listed as Yiddish. This latter figure probably included the 3 Yiddish primary schools and the kindergartens and nurseries in Bucharest, Jassy, and Timisoara. These 8 Yiddish schools compared unfavorably in number not only with the 2,163 Hungarian, 488 German, and 188 Russian and Ukrainian schools and kindergartens, but also with the school figures for such small minorities as the Slovaks (with 29 schools), Czechs (9), and Tatars (71).

The same report mentioned 2 Yiddish institutions among the 140 "theoretical, technical, and pedagogical schools" conducted in minority languages. One of the two Yiddish schools was doubtless the "teachers' college" already referred to.

**Cultural Life**

There were two Jewish state theaters, one in Bucharest and the other in Jassy. During the 1949-50 season, the Bucharest theater performed three plays by Sholom Aleichem, one by A. Goldfaden, two plays by Soviet authors, and two by young Rumanian Jewish playwrights. Of the latter, one celebrated the liberation of Rumania by the Red Army, and another portrayed "the struggle of honest Jews against nationalist diversions." The Bucharest theater had 105 people on its payroll and a budget of 25,000,000 lei; its company made extensive tours of the country.
The cultural association Ikuf listed 35 art groups, musical societies, and orchestras, and a choral group of 140 singers.

There were three periodicals for Jews, Unirea in Rumanian, Ikuf Bleter in Yiddish, and Uj Ut in Hungarian, the last published in Cluj (Transylvania). In March, 1950, the circulation of the Rumanian magazine was officially reported as 25,000, the Hungarian as 8,200, and the Yiddish as 4,200. In January, 1951, Unirea was suddenly discontinued after a purge of its staff, some of whose members allegedly applied for emigration permits. It was replaced by a new periodical, called Viata Noua. All periodicals were controlled by the Jewish Democratic Committee and followed the Communist line.

According to the Romanian News (April 15, 1951), three books in Yiddish were published by the state publishing houses in the first half of 1950. Another official report spoke of "three important works in Yiddish on subjects related to party activities" published by the Rumanian Workers [Communist] party. Ikuf printed booklets containing collections of Jewish songs. In addition, some books by Sholom Aleichem appeared in Rumanian translations.

Yiddish broadcasts on the state radio were devoted mainly to anti-Zionist propaganda.

**Campaign Against Israel and Zionism**

In spite of the fact that all Zionist activities had been outlawed and all Jewish organizations repeatedly purged (see American Jewish Year Book, 1950 [Vol. 51], 1951 [Vol. 52]), sympathy for Israel and Zionism was widespread. In December, 1950, H. Leibovici Serban, a leader of the Jewish Democratic Committee, wrote in Unirea that the influence of Zionism "has been largely removed," but complained of general apathy and the leaders' "remoteness from the masses." In January, 1951, special courses in anti-Zionist propaganda were organized for "activists" of the committee.

Attacks on Israel and Zionism were stepped up in the Jewish as well as in the general press, and in both Yiddish and Rumanian broadcasts, assuming fantastic proportions. In July, 1950, Scanteia, central organ of the Communist party, wrote that Israel would soon become a battleground, because the Americans were building a railroad from Istanbul to Cairo through Israel territory. In September, the Bucharest radio maintained that immigrants in Israel were living "in promiscuity, disease, and starvation"; that the Israel judicial system was comparable to that "of Tito's Yugoslavia, monarchist and fascist Greece, and Franco Spain"; and that acts in "defense of peace" were being punished by years of imprisonment, while "a Jew who murders an Arab is allowed to go free." In October, the radio maintained that the Arab minority in Israel "was receiving worse treatment than the Jews did under Hitler." In March, 1951, the Bucharest radio attacked the rulers of Israel for negotiating with "Hitler's successors at Bonn" and asking them to pay them "two Deutsche Mark for every Jew killed." In July, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen declared in Jassy that the rulers of Israel, together with
American and British imperialists, wanted to start a war against the Soviet Union and against the Rumanian People’s Republic.

A special exhibition, called “Realities of Israel,” went about the country. The pictures and cartoons depicted misery, starvation, and riots; some of them derived from the Warsaw ghetto under Nazi rule. It was reported that 500–600 Jews came to view the exhibits every day, and that many of them were weeping when they came out.

The Rumanian Zionists were accused of collaborating with the Nazis under the Antonescu government, of sabotage, espionage, and treason. In December, 1950, Bercu Feldman, Communist Deputy and leader of the Jewish Democratic Committee, stated that if the government were thoroughly to investigate recent acts of sabotage, it would find that Zionist agents had had a hand in them.

In the summer of 1950 many Zionist leaders were arrested, most of them when they were on the point of leaving the country in government-approved transports bound for Israel. The number of these prisoners was variously estimated at fifty, seventy, one hundred and several hundred by different Jewish sources. Never brought to trial, they were held incommunicado for many months, in spite of the many protests from Jewish organizations abroad.

Emigration

In spite of propaganda and intimidation, emigration continued throughout 1950–51. According to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) computations, 47,213 Jews left Rumania in 1950; 46,166 Jewish immigrants whose principal country of residence had been Rumania reached Israel in 1950, according to official Israel statistics. During the first quarter of 1951, the JDC counted 10,877 departures; the exodus continued throughout the spring and summer at the same rate. Technicians, engineers, doctors, and skilled workers were still excluded, and Israel sources complained that the transports were composed mainly of elderly and infirm people. Zionist leaders were held in jail and not allowed to emigrate. In August, 1951, there were repeated cases of approved emigrants being notified so late of the date of their departure that they were not able to settle their affairs and reach the port of Constanza in time. The Rumanian ship Transylvania, the only means of transportation permitted the emigrants, sailed half empty.

Joseph Gordon

BULGARIA

The period under review was for Bulgaria one of mounting political tension and increasing isolation from the non-Communist world. The United States broke off diplomatic relations with that country on February 21, 1950, protesting against the arrests and tortures to which Bulgarian employees of the American Legation in Sofia were subjected. Bulgaria was repeatedly charged with breaking provisions of the peace treaty concerning
disarmament and human rights, and with sending armed agents into Greece to work against that country's government. Mass expulsions of members of the Turkish minority took place; these were expropriated, deported from their homes, and dumped on the Turkish border without the consent of the Turkish government. This led to a permanent conflict with Bulgaria's eastern neighbor. On the Yugoslav frontier, there was a never-ending succession of troop concentrations and border clashes.

Inside the country, unrest and persecution increased. Peasant resistance against forced collectivization and compulsory delivery of farm products was suppressed by police action. With all non-Communist groups outlawed, repeated purges struck at "unreliable" elements inside the Communist party. The army was placed under direct Soviet control. Almost all the war-time Bulgarian resistance leaders were removed and replaced by Moscow-trained agents. Dobri Terpeshev, commander of the native resistance groups which had fought against the Nazis, was one of the most prominent victims. For a time even Vulko Chervenkov, premier of the government and head of the Communist party, seemed to have fallen from favor; in April, 1951, his name disappeared from the Jewish magazine, Evreiski Vesti, which until then had featured his words and deeds in every issue but it reappeared several months later.

Jewish Population

Only a small minority of the 49,000 Jewish survivors of war and Nazism was left in Bulgaria after the great exodus of 1948–49. In the middle of 1949, the number of Jews in Bulgaria was officially stated to be almost 10,000; unofficial Jewish sources estimated the Jewish population at 7,000 to 9,000. Only about 100 Jewish immigrants whose "principal country of residence" had been Bulgaria reached Israel in the second half of 1949; 986 such immigrants arrived there in 1950. The number of Jews in Bulgaria in July, 1951, could be estimated at 6,000 to 8,000. Five-sixths to seven-eighths of the post-war Bulgarian Jewish community had emigrated to Israel.

Anti-Semitism

Nothing about anti-Semitism was printed in the Bulgarian Jewish press, but emigrants from Bulgaria complained that anti-Semitism, long absent from the country, was again noticeable among certain sections of the population, particularly among those dissatisfied with the present regime, who tended to blame the few Jews in official positions for their plight.

Communal and Cultural Life

The Zionist movement having been liquidated, Hebrew schools and other Jewish schools closed, Jewish welfare institutions "nationalized," and even
the Jewish Section of the Fatherland Front abolished, all that remained of Jewish communal life (at least in name) were the religious communities with their central organization, the Jewish Consistory in Sofia, a few clubs and libraries, and the Jewish Scientific Institute. These were completely dominated by the Communists, and served as auxiliary organs to carry the party line to the remaining Jewish population. They had to take part in the “peace campaigns,” to attack the “Western imperialists,” to denounce Zionism as an imperialist agency and Israel as an “Anglo-American colony,” to condemn Titoist “traitors” and to rejoice at the purges and executions of “deviationists.” Their “educational” endeavors were concentrated on the fight against “cosmopolitanism” and “Jewish nationalism.” Reports from the communities, published in Evreiski Vesti, offered some glimpses into the Bulgarian Jewish communal life.

REPORT FROM PLOVDIV

On January 1, 1950, half a year after the exodus, Evreiski Vesti printed a report from Plovdiv, one of the larger cities and home of one of the oldest and most important Jewish communities in the country. After the exodus, 503 Jewish families with 1,364 members were left in the Plovdiv Jewish community. They felt isolated and had lost interest in all Jewish activity, according to the report; the Jewish library was deserted. But the Communist “activists” soon gathered and “found new ways for common work.” The first measure taken to revive Jewish life was the transformation of the Jewish library into a general one for its part of the city. “Progressive” literature was introduced and (as we know from other reports) “Jewish nationalistic” works were removed. The library thus became “a center of Marxist-Leninist enlightenment.” The community organized two Jewish meetings: one, a Fatherland Front election rally, the other, a celebration of the birthday of “our beloved Stalin.” The municipal kindergarten “took in a considerable number of Jewish children,” in order to train them to become “active participants in Socialist reconstruction.” A summer camp was organized to instil in Jewish children the “spirit of Septemriichata,” the Communist pioneers. The Jewish Polyclinic founded by American relief organizations and the best equipped institution of its kind in the city, was converted into a “genuine people’s medical center,” serving the entire population of the city and of the surrounding villages. Finally, the report stressed that Plovdiv Jewry was to fulfil “a grandiose task of international importance” by defending peace against capitalist intrigues, under the leadership of the Soviet Union and the great Stalin.

The report revealed that Jewish schools and kindergartens had been liquidated even in places where there were a considerable number of Jewish families and children of school age; that Jewish libraries, health centers, etc., had been transformed into institutions serving the entire population, although the Jewish communities were still charged with their maintenance; and that “specifically Jewish activities” consisted mainly of the dissemination of Communist propaganda among the Jews.
SOFIA

Sofia was the only place having a more extensive Jewish cultural life. The Jewish library association of that city, called Emil Shekerdzhiiski, organized a series of lectures and concerts, in addition to engaging in the usual propaganda activities. The annual meeting of the association, held on March 26, 1950, listed 15,000 books in the library and 800 members. The library organized a “people’s university,” i.e., a series of lectures on “scientific and political topics,” but there were complaints that the attendance was poor. A Jewish choir of 100 members was connected with the association. There were meetings celebrating the anniversary of the Communist liberation of Bulgaria, Stalin’s birthday, etc., and election meetings.

Half a year later, after several membership campaigns, the association listed 1,200 members. The library though it had acquired many “Marxist-Leninist classics” and Soviet books, was reported as still having the same number of volumes on its shelves—15,000. Among the topics of lectures at the “people’s university” were: “The Great Stalin Pact for the Reconstruction of Nature,” “The Celebration of the Anniversary of Lenin’s Death,” “The Anniversary of the Founding of the Red Army,” and “The Leading Role of the Soviet Union in the Anti-imperialist Camp and its Fight for Peace and People’s Democracy.” There were also meetings devoted to Soviet-Bulgarian friendship, to the “heroes of North Korea,” and the anniversary of the October Revolution. This program was typical of the kind of “Jewish” education promoted in the satellite countries. The report complained that the participation of members and of citizens in the work of the library was not satisfactory, and that the attendance at meetings was poor. This was the case with all library associations. Evreiski Vesti published repeated appeals to the Jewish public to join the associations, but the response would seem to have been less than enthusiastic.

In the spring of 1950, all books “with a nationalist Jewish tendency” were removed from the libraries; this was probably the reason why the number of books in the Sofia Jewish library remained the same after the acquisition of so many Communist works.

JEWISH SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE

Of all Jewish institutions, the Jewish Scientific Institute in Sofia, whose work was mainly devoted to the ancient history of Bulgarian Jews and to the collection of folklore materials, seemed to have been least disturbed in its activities. Its director, A. Askenazi, held lectures and published articles in which he tried to interpret the history of Bulgarian Jews in a Marxist spirit. These publications and the collections of the Institute were well advertised abroad; they were almost the only concrete examples of the “blossoming Jewish cultural life in Bulgaria.”

REDUCTION OF BUDGETS OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES

In 1951, the government began to reduce the activities and the budgets of even the regimented Jewish communities. A plenary meeting of the Consistory, held on January 21, decided to cut the budget “in accordance with
The short communique did not say how large the cuts were. There had been no conference of the communities since June, 1949 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 360); the plenary meeting decided to convene a new conference in the second half of March, but as of August, 1951, Evreiski Vestsi had printed no reports about the conference or its postponement.

Emigration

After the great wave of emigration of 1949, the Jewish Communist leaders emphatically asserted that those Jews who had remained in Bulgaria were firm in considering it their only fatherland; they had no wish or intention to emigrate. Violent campaigns were conducted against Israel, which was depicted, not only in articles and speeches but also in letters purportedly sent from Israel by disillusioned immigrants, as a country of misery and oppression.

But in the middle of 1950 Jewish leaders were again overruled by the government, and the emigration of Jews from Bulgaria recommenced. The main reason for this would seem to have been a desire on the part of the Bulgarian authorities to achieve ethnic homogeneity. The Armenians having been sent to Soviet Armenia and the Turks driven across the border into Turkey, it seemed illogical to hold the small Jewish minority in Bulgaria, especially when a good profit in dollars could be made by transporting the emigrants over the Black Sea in Bulgarian vessels. According to some reports, even doctors and technicians were allowed to leave. Of the 9,000 remaining Jews, 4,000 applied for emigration permits. However, only 986 Jewish immigrants from Bulgaria arrived in Israel in 1950; the figures for the first half of 1951 were not yet available at the time of this writing.

Joseph Gordon

YUGOSLAVIA

The two years that have elapsed since Yugoslavia was last reported on in these pages (see American Jewish Year Book, 1950 [Vol. 51]), was a period of increasing conflict with the Soviet Union and the Soviet satellites on the one hand, and of a slow rapprochement with the Western democratic powers, on the other. The latter supported Yugoslavia economically and politically in its fight to preserve its national independence. Pressed by public opinion in the democratic world and the passive resistance of the native population, the Yugoslav government introduced some internal reforms: forced collectivization was stopped, the compulsory delivery of agrarian products was eased, and the economic administration was decentralized. Workers were promised a greater share in the management of nationalized industries, and there was some talk about broadening civil rights and liberalizing police and court procedures. Still, Yugoslavia remained a dictatorship; one party ruled, with the aid of a powerful police, and no legal opposition
The economic situation in Yugoslavia deteriorated to a point where only American assistance was able to stave off the threat of famine and of a complete breakdown in the plans for industrializing the country.

One of the consequences of Yugoslavia's change of camp was a relaxation of the police regulations restricting the entry of foreign travelers and limiting communications with foreign countries; a great many foreign diplomats, journalists, delegates, and other observers were admitted. This made possible the procuring of more reliable information on conditions in general, as well as on the situation of the small Yugoslav Jewish minority.

**Jewish Population**

Of the pre-war Jewish population of more than 80,000, only about 14,000 survived the war and Nazi occupation. Of the latter, 7,000 left the country before the two-year period under review, most of them in 1948-49 when the Yugoslav government permitted mass emigration to Israel. Only a trickle continued to reach Israel between August, 1949, and the end of 1950. In December, 1950, Yugoslav Jewish sources reported to the World Jewish Congress that 6,244 Jews were still living in Yugoslavia, 1,397 of them in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, and 1,180 in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and of the Yugoslav Federation. According to other reports, about 1,000 Jews were living in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and an old Sephardic center; 400 in Subotica; 400 in Novisad; 250 in Osijek; and 150 in Skoplje, the capital of Yugoslav Macedonia. In June, 1951, emigration to Israel was allowed to resume and 750 Jews left with the first boat.

**The Government and the Jewish Community**

Thanks to Yugoslavia's breaking with the Soviet Union in the summer of 1948, just before the campaign against Zionism and "Jewish nationalism" was launched in Russia and all the satellite countries, the Yugoslav Jews escaped the persecution suffered by their coreligionists in those lands. Since the Yugoslav Communists claimed to be fighting against national oppression and for equality of all nations, and sought to win the sympathies of democratic public opinion, they could not afford to treat Yugoslavia's minorities harshly. The few remaining Jewish organizations had already been forced to conform to party and state policies before the break with the Cominform; and as the Jews claimed no special rights except that of emigration, which the government was ready to concede, there was no clash of interests between the government and the Jewish community.

At the end of 1950, Professor Albert Vajs, President of the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities, was allowed to declare to a foreign correspondent, George Bilainkin (The American Hebrew, Jan. 26, 1951), that the Yugoslav Jews "are an ethnical religious group with special needs, a special form of life, and special traditions," and that the Jewish community "includes Communists and Zionists, Orthodox and Conservative Jews"—all,
however, (he was careful to add), “under the common political ideology of
the National Front.” The Federation remained a part of the World Jewish
Congress when all other Eastern European Jewish groups renounced their
affiliation. In October, 1950, when a delegation from Israel’s Histadrut at-
tended a Yugoslav labor union congress, it was not only introduced to local
Jewish leaders, but was also received by Marshal Tito. The Yugoslav leader
stressed the friendly interest he took in the progress of Israel, and his gov-
ernment’s resolve to allow free emigration. Similar views were voiced by
Moshe Pijade, Vice-President of the Yugoslav Federal Republic and influen-
tial member of the Politburo, in an interview given to The Jewish Chronicle
during his visit to London in March, 1951.

In domestic matters, the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities had
to support the government’s policy without reservation. In the March, 1950
elections, it issued a manifesto calling on Jews to vote for the government
list, maintaining that under Tito, Yugoslavia’s Jews had for the first time in
history achieved equality, freedom, and security.

**Economic Conditions**

This proclamation also made much of the fact (as did Pijade in his inter-
view and Tito in many speeches) that the social structure of the Jewish com-
munity had been completely altered, the Jews having been successfully in-
tegrated into the new economy. However, there were no concrete statistics
offered in support of this claim. The Histadrut delegation reported upon
returning to Israel that almost all Yugoslav Jews saw in emigration the only
possible solution for their problems.

Some men of Jewish origin were prominent in the country’s affairs. In
addition to Moshe Pijade, there was a Jewish deputy minister in the Federal
Government, a Jewish deputy minister in the provincial government of
Serbia, a Jewish parliamentary deputy from Sarajevo, two Jewish generals,
and several Jewish junior diplomats and university professors. There were
no purges of Jewish officials or intellectuals.

**Cultural and Religious Life**

Little was known about Jewish communal life, except for a statement by
the Israel minister in Belgrade, Moshe Ishai, that Yugoslav Jews “were not
restricted to religious activities, but also occupied themselves with a fair
amount of social work.” But according to a report by Richard Yaffe (Zionist
Review, London, March 3, 1950), “there was practically no Jewish life left in
Yugoslavia”; there was only one young rabbi still remaining in Belgrade,
who was obliged to conduct half of the service according to the Sephardic
and half according to the Askenazic rites, there being so few believers.
Twenty to thirty persons attended Sabbath services in the capital; when
Yaffe visited the synagogue during the Shevuot holidays, it was difficult to
get a minyan (prayer quorum) together. Professor Vajs admitted to Yaffe
that there could not be a real Jewish life with so few Jews, but added that the existence of a Jewish state "reminds us here that we are Jews."

Fund raising for Israel was, it would seem, one of the few activities the communities carried on outside the religious sphere. In November, 1949, 4,500,000 dinars, collected by the Jews in a special fund-raising campaign for Israel, were turned over to the Israel representative in Belgrade.

**Emigration**

After the exodus of 1948-49 (see *American Jewish Year Book*, 1950 [Vol. 51], p. 378), the desire of the remaining Jews to emigrate would seem to have temporarily abated, partly because of reports coming in about the difficult life awaiting new settlers in Israel, partly because the growing rapprochement with the West caused Jews in Yugoslavia to feel more secure. The mass departures which had been predicted for the fall and winter of 1949 did not materialize; only 107 Yugoslav Jews reached Israel between August and December of that year. In 1950, the total number of Yugoslav Jewish immigrants to Israel was 375. But as the economic situation deteriorated, many of those who were hesitating decided to emigrate. When new transports were organized in 1951, there were thousands of applicants; 750 Jews left with the first transport in June, and 800 more were prepared to leave with the second transport in September. Yugoslav authorities permitted even non-Jewish members of Jewish families to emigrate; a report from Israel in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, April 15, 1950, indicated that among 100 new settlers from Yugoslavia in the Ein Keren settlement, 90 had Christian wives. Restrictions on emigration existed only for doctors, chemists, and technicians, but individual exceptions were made even in these categories. The government provided collective passports and permitted emigrants to take along all personal belongings except medical and scientific instruments; negotiations were still pending for the transfer of the money which the emigrants had to deposit in the Yugoslav National Bank before their departure.

*JOSEPH GORDON*