

Middle East

THE ARAB STATES

THE period under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953) was one of severe internal shocks in most of the Arab countries outside the Arabian Peninsula.

Syria

Syria entered the period under review with a dictatorship already firmly established. The army chief, Brigadier Adib Shishekli, had seized control of the army in Syria's third *coup d'état* in December 1949, and had installed an open and outright dictatorship in November 1951 by dismissing the Syrian President, parliament, and government and appointing Brigadier Fawzi Selo as his figurehead President-Premier. The year under review witnessed the stabilization and fortification of Shishekli's power. At the end of August 1952, he forced the press into conformity by withdrawing all licenses and by reissuing permits only for a smaller number of papers under tight control. At the same time, he founded the Arab Liberation Movement, envisaged as the single party (all other parties having been dissolved at the beginning of 1952) without which no modern dictatorship can exist. In December 1952 and January 1953 several decrees ordered the implementation of the land reform that had been promised again and again. In contrast to the land reform decreed in Egypt, the Syrian one was moderate and cautious. It hardly affected existing land tenure and ownership and concentrated mainly on land owned by the state, its distribution to landless farmers, its reappropriation where state lands had been illegally seized by the big landowners, and its development.

At about the same time, Shishekli consolidated his power by a new purge, after a plot had allegedly been discovered. This time he struck against those groups that had collaborated with him against the old parties—the Arab Socialists under Akram Hourani and the Renaissance Party under Michel 'Aflaq and Salahuddin Bitar. The leaders of these groups escaped to Lebanon, thus increasing the considerable number of political refugees from Syria. Simultaneously, further groups of army officers, Shishekli's old comrades in arms and co-conspirators, were dismissed or arrested, thus leaving Shishekli practically the sole survivor of the old army junta that had engi-

neered Syria's coups of 1949-51. This last purge had serious repercussions in the field of foreign politics: It created crises in Syria's relations with Lebanon, accused of permitting anti-Syrian activities by the Syrian exiles (who were compelled, finally, to leave for Europe), and with Iraq, charged with not only permitting but actively fostering and abetting activities against the Syrian regime on the part of Syrian refugee groups headed by high ex-officers of the army.

During the summer of 1953, Shishekli began giving his dictatorial regime a constitutional, democratic, and parliamentary appearance. On June 21, a new draft constitution was published, based on the presidential system of government and concentrating much power in the hands of the President-Premier; on July 10, that constitution was approved by the usual 99 per cent majority, in a plebiscite. On July 19, Shishekli formed his own cabinet, in accordance with the new constitution (his figurehead Fawzi Selo disappearing into oblivion). Political parties were permitted to apply for registration, and on October 9, 1953, elections were held for a new parliament.

Under this smooth surface, however, matters did not seem to be idyllic. Energetic activities were conducted on Syria's borders and even within Syria itself by various groups of exiles, who went so far as to create a Free Syrian Government in Exile reported to have its headquarters in Bagdad. The new constitution was violently denounced by a group of over a hundred Syrian political leaders, including practically every leader of importance. The plebiscite was laughed off as rigged. The only political parties to make use of the permission to legalize their existence were two small semi-Fascist groups that had collaborated with the dictator. Recruitment for the Liberation Movement failed completely. The elections were boycotted by all leaders of consequence, and the list of candidates elected hardly included one man of political standing or experience. The far-reaching social and agrarian reforms, so proudly decreed and publicized, had not yet been put into effect to any substantial degree. Under its parliamentary façade, the Syrian regime remained, therefore, a dictatorship beset by internal difficulties and rivalries, mildly reformist in intention but with little will or ability to implement serious reforms.

Egypt

The pattern of developments in Egypt was similar to that in Syria. It too was chiefly characterized by the dictatorship's fight against its internal foes, its use of reformist slogans and decrees (with little ability, so far, to put reforms into effect), and its attempts to coat its regime with respectable parliamentary procedures. The main difference between Syria and Egypt lay in the fact that in Egypt the ruling dictator was not one man, but a group of men, and in the greater strength of parliamentary traditions and of dissenting groups in Egypt. On the other hand, the Egyptian leaders appeared more serious-minded and able than the Syrian dictator.

After the *coup d'état* staged on July 23, 1952 by General Naguib and his junta, and after the forced abdication of King Farouk on July 26, there was a

month during which the military junta was content to remain in the background and to let civilian politicians form the cabinet (Ali Maher's cabinet); on September 7, 1952, Naguib himself took over as premier. While the ruthless purge carried on had so far affected only the old-time politicians, in October 1952 it began to include Naguib's own group: Rashad Muhanna, one of Naguib's closest collaborators, was purged from the Regency Council that had assumed the King's powers. On December 9 the constitution was abrogated and a committee was appointed to draft a new constitution. In January 1953 an alleged new plot against the regime was discovered, and a series of trials started that had not yet been completed in October. (Most of the accused were tried both for their activities before Naguib's coup, including charges of corruption and murder, and for their participation in plots against the new regime. Many past leaders had been in and out of prison continuously during 1952-53; among those sentenced so far to death or life imprisonment were ex-Regent Col. Rashad Muhanna and ex-Premier Ibrahim Abdul-Hadi.) In January 1953 all political parties were dissolved (the Muslim Brotherhood alone escaping that fate, both because it was close to the new regime and because it disclaimed the status of a political party); simultaneously, a National Liberation Movement was launched as the mass basis of the dictatorship. On June 18, 1953, the monarchy was finally abolished and the Republic of Egypt proclaimed; Naguib was proclaimed President of a three-year transitory regime, and formed a new cabinet with himself as premier and his military colleagues replacing most of the civilian ministers. In September 1953 a new plot against the regime was allegedly discovered and a new round of trials started.

The Egyptian regime was still grappling with the intrinsic problems of dictatorship, confronted with real or imaginary plots, busy with purges and the elimination of its opponents, unable to secure its own stability. Far-reaching land reform plans, decreed on the very first day of the regime, had hardly been put into effect. In contrast to Syria, no steps had been taken so far to reintroduce parliamentary patterns of government; although a new draft constitution had been published in August 1953, no action had been taken on it at the time of writing (October 1953), and the steps to normalize conditions, such as Naguib's appointment as President, were taken in a dictatorial fashion.

Jordan

The kingdom of Jordan continued to suffer from the aftermath of the assassination of King Abdullah in 1951, i.e., from the pangs and rivalries of the succession. Since it had become apparent that King Talal, Abdullah's son, was mentally unfit for the throne, he was so declared and ousted by parliament on August 11, 1952. As his brother Naif had become involved in intrigues—including, it was thought, Iraqi machination against Jordan's independence—Talal's son Hussein, a minor, was proclaimed king. He came of age and assumed the throne on May 2, 1953. The rivalry, distrust, and mutual jealousy between the Transjordanian and the Palestinian com-

ponents of the kingdom's population aggravated the atmosphere of instability and crisis, to which the state's complete dependence on British grants further contributed.

Iraq

In Iraq, the other Hashemite kingdom, a revolution similar to that of Naguib in Egypt had long been expected by observers. But when it took place in November 1952, it took a radically different form. The army did take over, indeed, after two days of riots; but far from deposing the old regime and initiating a reformist dictatorship, it stepped in, in spite of some declarations concerning reforms, as the defender of the old regime. The army chief who took over, General Nuruddin Mahmud, stepped down again as soon as the old group of politicians was ready to reassume power. The only important change brought about by the two months of outright military dictatorship was a switch over from indirect elections to the direct elections long clamored for by the opposition. But when elections were held, in January 1953, it turned out that the new system had made practically no change in the results. The same faces, the same forces, and the same groups reoccupied the same parliamentary seats they had occupied for the thirty years since the first Iraqi parliament was created.

Lebanon

Lebanon, too, had its revolution, in September 1952. As it involved hardly any violence, no purge, and no show trials, and no formal abrogation of the constitution, this Lebanese coup was hailed by some observers as truly conforming to the ideal of a "democratic" revolution. In reality, however, in Lebanon too it was the army that made the coup possible, although it did not itself take an active part in it. When after a protracted cabinet crisis and growing dissatisfaction with the corrupt system of nepotism maintained by President Bechara al-Khoury, the various opposition groups combined to demand al-Khoury's resignation and popular demonstrations and strikes backed up their demand, the commander of the army, General Fuad Shihab, refused to protect the President and the government and thus forced al-Khoury to bow to the opposition's demand and resign. On September 23, 1952, Camille Chamoun was elected President of the Republic (by the same chamber that had so far been loyal to his predecessor). Two weeks later, parliament granted the new government authority to legislate by decree for six months. When that time was up and it became apparent that no cabinet could muster a workable majority in the existing parliament, the chamber was dissolved. New elections were held in July 1953 (the first time that Arab women, outside Israel, were entitled to vote). Camille Chamoun's Presidency and the elections of July 1953 brought about certain changes in the strength and position of the various factions and groups in Lebanese political life. It would seem, however, that there had

so far not been any far-reaching change in the social or political setup of Lebanon and the popular desire for, and official promises of, basic reforms had so far been entirely unfulfilled.

Foreign Policy

In the field of Arab foreign policy, the innumerable lesser problems and issues confronting each Arab state were completely overshadowed during 1952-53 by the Anglo-Egyptian conflict, which could be regarded as the focal point of Middle Eastern politics at this juncture.

Naguib's regime was able to register its first major victory in the Sudan issue. Displaying a strong sense of realism, Naguib gave up Egypt's claim to sovereignty over the Sudan—a claim that had been jealously maintained, although never implemented, by all previous regimes and governments—and conceded to the Sudanese the right of self-determination, no doubt wishing, or even confident, that the Sudanese would use that right to vote for some kind of federation with Egypt. This concession paved the way, first for an agreement between Naguib and the previously anti-Egyptian Sudanese independence faction (October 29, 1952), and then for the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the Sudan concluded on February 12, 1953. Although some tripartite bickering over the implementation of the self-determination clauses of the agreement continued, in spite of the presence of two neutral international commissions in the Sudan, the issue was basically solved. This left the future of the British bases in the Suez Canal Area as the only issue in dispute between Britain and Egypt. On this issue, too, the differences had been narrowed down practically to the conditions under which the British and their Allies might be entitled to reoccupy the bases; who was to determine the existence of these conditions; and what should be the status of and control over the British technicians left behind to maintain the bases after the evacuation of British military forces. On these remaining issues informal negotiations had been held, broken off, and resumed several times during the period under review; exuberant optimism had alternated with gloomy predictions of utter deadlock and imminent armed clashes.

Inter-Arab Cooperation

The activities of the Arab League remained at a low ebb all through 1952 and the first half of 1953. Egypt seemed unwilling to tie her hands in the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations and in the simultaneous talks about the (so far abortive) plans for a coordinated Western defense scheme for the Middle East, and determined to decide these questions according to her own interests and wisdom alone. The other Arab states wanted a say in these vital issues. The Arab League's collective security pact, its major political enterprise, remained a dead letter, although it was ratified by the seven member states after more than two years of debate and bickering, and officially went into effect on August 23, 1952. The League's architect and sec-

retary general, Abdul Rahman 'Azzam, was ousted in September 1952 and replaced by an Egyptian civil servant, 'Abdul Khaleq Hassouna. The League's member states increased from seven to eight with the accession of Libya in February-March 1953.

The League suffered a serious defeat when its appeals, negotiations, and threats failed to prevent Western Germany from signing and ratifying the reparations agreement with Israel, and when, in spite of threats of boycott and eternal hostility, the Arab states vied with each other for German capital investments, loans, trade, and experts.

ECONOMIC AND MILITARY COOPERATION

Beginning in the spring of 1953, however, the League's spirits revived. Two conferences of all the Arab ministers of finance and economy succeeded in arriving at two agreements facilitating trade and the movement of capital between the Arab states. Although these agreements did not provide for much more cooperation than is usual between friendly states all over the world, they constituted the first sign of economic cooperation among the Arab states. The bodies provided for in the Arab collective security pact—a conference of all the chiefs-of-staff and a Supreme Defense Council—did finally meet for the first time at the end of August and beginning of September 1953. The very fact of their meeting was to be considered a political asset and achievement.

Arab-Israel Conflict

The Arab League's main preoccupation, and the main field in which Arab cooperation was almost unanimous, remained the Arab-Israel conflict. At the Seventh Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, 1952-53, the Arabs barely escaped defeat when the Palestine item, which they had put on the agenda, crystalized into a draft resolution calling on the parties to the conflict to meet in direct negotiations, without conditioning these negotiations on the acceptance of all past resolutions of the Assembly. At the last moment, a two-thirds majority was prevented and the Arab states emerged from the UN without being called upon to open direct negotiations with Israel.

Throughout 1952-53, the Arab states denounced the border incidents due to Arab infiltration and marauding and Israel countermeasures as "Israel aggression" and exploited such incidents for internal and external propaganda purposes. The transfer of the Israel Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem on July 12, 1953, gave rise to another prolonged burst of Arab hostility and propaganda, encouraged and strengthened by the fact that the great powers, too, viewed that transfer with misgivings and denounced it. Beginning in September 1953, Syrian objections to certain Israel hydroelectric plans and works on the upper Jordan threatened to develop into a major crisis.

There was little change in Arab hostility to Israel. The Arab states officially continued to condition any negotiations on the full implementation

of the boundary provisions and other details of the partition decision of 1947. This quasi-moderate attitude was accompanied by a constant stream of abuse, threats, and proclamations of eternal hatred and plans of revenge both from official spokesmen and from the press, politicians, and agitators. A certain change towards moderation was discernible in Egypt alone. Most of the Egyptian statements ambiguously said that Egypt would devote her attention to "a solution of the Arab-Israel conflict" or the "Palestine Question" after a favorable solution of the Anglo-Egyptian conflict—wordings that allowed Western statesmen and observers to infer that what was meant was a *peaceful* and constructive solution, while at the same time leading the Arab public to believe that what was intended was a resumption of the Arab-Israel war and the liquidation of Israel. Be that as it may, no progress was apparent in any Egyptian-Israel conciliation.

ECONOMIC BOYCOTT

Most of the Arabs' energy and attention in their cold war with Israel continued to be focused on the economic boycott. Although the Arabs failed in their major boycott operation—the attempt to prevent the signing of the German-Israel reparations agreement—they continued pressing hard on European, American, and Asian companies and interests to discontinue operations, sever trade relations with, and refrain from new investments or ventures in Israel. Their pressure was intensified, in particular on airlines and shipping companies. Notwithstanding the slight progress made towards inter-Arab economic cooperation of a constructive character, the economic conferences referred to above devoted most of their time and attention to the organization of economic warfare against Israel.

Jews in the Middle East

Several aspects of the Arab-Israel tension continued to have repercussions on the situation of (non-Israeli) Jews throughout the Middle East.

DISCRIMINATION

Although most Arab governments continued to distinguish between the Israel enemy and the loyal Jewish citizens of their respective countries, they were in many instances unable to put this vital distinction into effect. The government of Sa'udi Arabia, for instance, continued to apply the anti-Israel boycott to Jewish firms and traders having nothing to do with Israel. Thus it warned¹ Sa'udi merchants, in an official statement, against doing business with the Jewish merchants of Bahrein Island, and blicklisted firms in Turkey and Indonesia for no crime but the participation of Jews in their management. The Iraqi Chamber of Commerce, too, warned its members against trade with Jewish merchants in Persia. The Sa'udi Arabian government also persisted, in spite of previous Italian and United States protest (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 286), in its request to all foreign firms exporting to Sa'udi Arabia to submit certificates attesting to

¹ January 1953 (*Al-Ahram*, Cairo), January 31, 1953).

their (non-Jewish) faith; the Italian government was again compelled in May 1953 to protect its Jewish citizens against such discrimination by protesting to Sa'udi Arabia. Although the same practice was applied to other foreign countries, no protest on the part of other European or American governments had come to this writer's notice. Discrimination against foreign citizens of the Jewish faith applying for entry visas continued in most of the Arab countries. Thus, Jordanian authorities inquired as to the religion of foreigners wishing to cross the armistice lines for a visit to the Holy Places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and denied permission to foreigners of the Jewish faith. The American University at Beirut refused to admit American students of the Jewish faith, informing applicants that as Jews they would not be granted Lebanese entry visas. The same applied even to transit passengers of the Jewish faith; the American weekly *Newsweek* reported on April 20, 1953, that Jewish passengers on American airplanes in transit through Iraq airports were being "quietly advised" by the airlines to lie about their religion when filling out the questionnaires distributed by Iraqi airport authorities.

CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY

Proposals for special measures against, or even confiscation of, Jewish property in the Arab countries, either in retaliation for Israel's acquisition of the lands abandoned by the Arab refugees, or without that motivation, had been made throughout the period under review. More such suggestions were made during 1952-53, e.g., by Fadhel al-Jamali, then the Iraqi Foreign Minister and at the time of writing Iraqi Premier, to the Arab League Council in September 1952. These proposals were rejected by more moderate Arab statesmen (especially Egyptians and Lebanese), who understood the political importance of a clear distinction between Israel on the one hand and Arab citizens of the Jewish faith on the other hand. But agitation for such confiscation revived when certain Israel laws regarding abandoned property and the Israel Land Acquisition Law of March 1953 received unfavorable publicity. Thus, a group of Lebanese owners of property in Israel approached the Lebanese government in January 1953 with the demand that they be compensated by the confiscation of Lebanese Jewish property. The confiscation proposal was again on the agenda of the Arab League Council in March 1953. According to one report, an all-Arab meeting of chambers of commerce in May 1953 recommended to the Arab governments the confiscation of all Jewish property in the event Israel "seized" Arab property and the imposition of severe "restrictions" on Jewish property in any event; according to other reports, the chambers of commerce recommended outright confiscation. The Syrian government issued a decree in December 1952 providing that all Syrian Jews staying abroad would be considered as having emigrated to Israel and their property would be confiscated. (Many of these Syrian Jews resided, in fact, in Lebanon.) This decree was motivated partly by a desire to take over such Jewish property for the state instead of letting it fall into the hands of private persons, who had heretofore appropriated it without a legal basis. Although the exact situation was not quite clear (reports of August 1953 again refer to "plans"

to take over, and "lists" being drawn up), some Jewish property was obviously taken over. This included the school owned and operated by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Damascus. According to the Arabic press, the French Embassy protested against this expropriation and demanded the school's return; the Embassy received a "suitable"—i.e., negative—reply (*Al-Hayat*, Beirut, April 11, 1953). Most of the property of the Jews of Iraq, so far as it had not been "appropriated" by private persons, was still in the hands of a custodian appointed by the government. Proposals to use that property for the benefit of Palestinian Arab refugees or to dispose of it in other ways were rejected by the Iraqi government in May 1953; similar proposals continued, however, to be made and, according to latest reports, were again under consideration. Some movable property, such as jewelry, was sold by the custodian at a public auction during the summer of 1953.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Government administrative practice continued to be discriminatory in many instances. In January 1953, for instance, it was reported that Jewish journalists and correspondents had been ordered to leave Egypt, including the Jewish editor of the respected French language daily *Le Progrès Egyptien* (Jewish Telegraphic Agency [JTA], January 4, 1953). According to one source, the chief rabbi of Egypt told United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in a confidential conversation that while officially there was no anti-Jewish discrimination at all in Egypt, in practice Jews were compelled in all matters relating to passports, visas, exit permits, etc., to apply to a special office; such arrangements were unduly delayed when Jews were concerned; and that no Jew had been naturalized in Egypt since 1948. Dulles had, according to the same source, spoken to Deputy Premier Abdul-Nasser, who had promised speedy redress; nothing, however, had been done (*Jewish Observer and Middle East Report*, London, July 24, 1953). In December 1952 it was reported that foreign Jews resident in Egypt would not be allowed to return to Egypt once they left it.

In December 1952, the all-Arab congress of chambers of commerce recommended the withdrawal of all business licenses from Jewish banks in Arab countries, the removal of all Jews from banks and insurance companies, and the insertion of special anti-Jewish articles and provisions in all commercial and financial legislation and regulations; the congress reiterated this recommendation at another session in May 1953 (*Al-Bina*, Damascus, May 11, 1953).

More discrimination was reported from Iraq, where only 6,000 Jews remained after the exodus of 1951-52. In June 1953 the government decreed that all Jews in prison—including many arbitrarily detained or sentenced in staged trials as "Zionists" or "Communists"—be automatically deprived of their Iraqi citizenship; some of them were, in fact, forcibly deported to Cyprus (i.e., Israel), in July 1953. In October 1952 it was reported that Iraqi security authorities had requested the government to deprive of their Iraqi citizenship all those Jews whose *relatives* had emigrated. When, in November 1952, opposition groups demonstrated against the government, it was

announced that any Jews arrested as demonstrators would be deprived of their citizenship and expelled from Iraq. The first victims of the purge, initiated in December 1952 to pacify the opposition, were Jewish employees of the finance ministry. Obviously Jewish names were prominent among those mentioned, in June 1953 and again in September 1953, as "Communist" prisoners who had rioted in prison and a number of whom had been killed. Many more Jewish absentees were deprived of their citizenship during the year under review.

In Syria a regime and an atmosphere of rabid discrimination against all minority groups, Jews included, was described at length in such general organs as the *Christian Science Monitor* (March 13, 1953) and the pro-Arab Middle East Institute's *Newsletter*, April 1, 1953.

In Lebanon demands were publicly made to reinvestigate the Lebanese citizenship of all those Jews who had acquired it by naturalization.

TRIALS

Some of the purge, spy, and other trials staged at various places and times in the Arab countries also involved Jews. When Lebanon tried several persons allegedly involved in espionage for Israel, in February 1953, a number of Jews were among the accused. A well-known Jewish pharmacist of Beirut² was tried, in May 1953, for having contravened the anti-Israel boycott law and having been in illegal contact with Israel. Another boycott trial against a local Jew had been held in Lebanon in November 1952, a similar trial in Iraq—in March 1953. An allegation that the Lebanese Jewish sport group of Maccabi was subversively training young Jews for military service in or for Israel, was officially denied in April 1953; in October 1953, however, the Maccabi group and the Jewish Scouts groups were dissolved by the government on the strength of that same military training allegedly given to Jewish youth for the benefit of Israel, as well as for other, unspecified, activities "affecting the security" of the Lebanese state.

VIOLENCE

There were a few instances of physical attack on Jews in the Arab countries. In April 1953 it was reported³ that Jews who had escaped from Syria to Lebanon were being kidnapped by Syrian agents and forcibly returned to Syria. The *Alliance Review* of June 1952 reported "isolated cases of attacks" on Jews in Iraq. On August 23, 1953, Rabbi Murad Ya'qub Alfiya was murdered in Beirut, Lebanon. The Lebanese police maintained that the slaying had no political or communal motives.

HOPEFUL SIGNS

Despite these instances of discrimination, fear of confiscation, and terror, there was evidence that the official distinction between Israel and the loyal Jewish citizens of the Arab states was being recognized in some quarters, particularly in Egypt. When the Egyptian regime started recruiting mem-

² Joseph Farhi.

³ Worldwide News Service, quoting Israel Arabic paper *Al-Yom*, April 17, 1953.

bers for its newly organized Liberation Movement, a delegation of Muslim scholars and Christian-Coptic priests visited the synagogue of Tanta town to invite their Jewish compatriots to join the movement. Naguib delivered several statements and admonitions warning his subjects against any discrimination against Egyptian citizens on the grounds of creed or race—including a speech on that subject at a meeting of the fanatical Muslim Brotherhood. In April 1953, Naguib paid a visit to the Karaite synagogue of Cairo, and in September he again paid a visit to the Jewish temple on the occasion of the New Year (as he had also done in 1952).

The Jewish communities and leaders throughout the region reciprocated with professions of loyalty and patriotism. In October 1952, the Jewish community of Alexandria donated £E100 (\$280) as an annual Naguib prize for the best student at the local military academy. During the Anglo-Egyptian crisis of May 1953, when Muslim sages declared a holy war, the chief rabbi of Egypt joined them with a call to his co-religionists and the Egyptian people in general to rally around Naguib. On May 31 the Jewish community of Cairo gave a special dinner to Muslim and Christian dignitaries and government representatives, to celebrate the end of the Muslim month of fast; speeches proclaiming Jewish-Egyptian patriotism and loyalty to Naguib and his government were made and replied to. When the Egyptian republic was proclaimed, on July 23, 1953, special prayers were held and speeches made in Jewish synagogues. The Jews of Syria did the same on the occasion of the proclamation of the new Syrian constitution.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

No important changes occurred, during the period under review, in the demographic, social, or organizational structure of the Jews of the Arab countries. Iraq's Jewry, once numbering 130,000 or more, remained stationary at about 6,000, deprived now of strength and standing, representation in parliament, economic assets, and most of its institutions. According to latest reports, all synagogues had been closed down; of all Jewish schools only one had remained open, and one Jewish hospital was still operating. Emigration of Jews from Syria—mainly to Lebanon—continued in a small trickle; the Jews of Syria—once a proud and rich community—now numbered no more than a mere 2,500-3,000. A few hundred more Jews from the Yemen had assembled waiting for arrangements for their transport to Israel; otherwise an impenetrable curtain had fallen on the sad remnants of the Jewry of the Yemen and no information was available as to their situation. The Jewish communal situation seemed to be best, practically normal—except for the instances of hidden discrimination listed above—in Lebanon and Egypt. Lebanon had, in fact, provided a haven of refuge for many Jews driven from Syria by the extremely difficult situation there.

Lebanon

There were 6,000 Jews in Lebanon out of a total population of 1,200,000. The Jewish population was distributed between Beirut (5,500), and Saida (500). The majority were Lebanese citizens, but there was a large number of

Syrian Jews and those of French, English, Italian, and Greek nationalities, most of whom had, however, been born in Lebanon. They were mostly professional and commercial people, engaged in business, banking, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, and teaching in the public schools. A certain number of Syrians originally from Damascus and Aleppo who had settled in Lebanon had sought to emigrate to Europe or the United States, not for political reasons, but because of unemployment. Jewish aliens were tolerated but were not permitted to work.

The Jewish community of Lebanon had a statute which was established by the state. According to a law promulgated in 1952, the community was competent in every field except that of inheritance, where the law was the same for all Lebanese citizens. The community enjoyed very extensive legal powers.

The Jewish community was directed by a community council of twelve members elected every two years by the members of the community, who paid a tax known as *arikah*. J. Attie was its current president, Joseph Saadia, vice president, Selim Levy, treasurer, and Jacques Stambouli, secretary general. Lebanese Jews were represented in parliament by a deputy designated as the minority deputy, who represented all of the country's minorities.

Beside the schools conducted by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, there was one communal school. The total enrollment of the Alliance schools was 1,500, their curriculum on an elementary school level. The budget of the schools was met by the Alliance and the community jointly. The president of the community's education committee was Toufic Attie.

There was one synagogue at Beirut, and many small prayer houses. M. Lichtmann was the chief rabbi *ad interim*. Despite the lack of qualified teachers, religious and Hebrew education was well developed in Lebanon.

The Lebanon Jewish community had no relations, cultural or otherwise, with Israel.

There were numerous social welfare services, noteworthy being the philanthropic institutions for the sick and needy, for providing poor children with food and clothing, a milk dispensary, and vacation camps.

These services were financed by voluntary contributions, and coordinated by the communal council without whose prior consent no service could be created or function.

Cultural activities were almost nonexistent.

Egypt

The Jewish population of Egypt was 35,000, out of a total population of 22,000,000, having decreased from 75,000 in 1947, before the Israel-Arab war. Most of the Egyptian Jews were in business or the professions, as merchants, bankers, brokers, and lawyers. Some 35,000 Egyptian Jews had emigrated during the period 1948-52, about 25,000 for Israel.

There were no bodies recognized as representative of the Jewish community. Only Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum had official recognition. However,

there were in fact two organized communities, one in Cairo and one in Alexandria, presided over by Salvatore Sicurel and Edwin Goar, respectively.

Egyptian Jewry attended to the Jewish education of its children through ten schools, four in Cairo (enrollment 750), four in Alexandria (700), two in Port Said (100), and two in Tanta (150). These communal schools had a French-Arabic curriculum and were financed through allocations by the French government.

Jewish medical services were concentrated in the Centre Social. All cultural activities had ended in 1947. All relations with Zionism and Israel, which had ended in 1947, were still prohibited. (In 1939 there had been five leading Zionist clubs and organizations, as well as a branch of the Maccabi World Union.)

The degree of normalization and restoration of calm that seemed to have taken place in Egyptian Jewry may be seen in the fact that Salvatore Sicurel, the head of the Jewish community, who had resigned from his office in January 1952 after the "Black Saturday" of Cairo, resumed office at the beginning of 1953. Sicurel stated that the new Egyptian regime appeared to him to be displaying a more decent and hopeful attitude towards the Jewish community and that, under the new government, a solution of the problem of Jewish existence in Egypt could be hoped for.

SH. YIN'AM

IRAN

ON July 7, 1952, a short-lived attempt was made by the Shah of Iran to replace Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq by Qavam Sultaneh. The religious faction led by Ayatullah Abu'l-Qassem Kashani and the Communist Tudeh Party joined hands with Mossadeq to oust the new government. The Shah retreated and restored Mossadeq to power, giving him a free hand to act as he wished, and granting him control of the army. At the beginning of August parliament voted Mossadeq power to legislate by decree for six months. In August, Kashani was elected speaker of the Majlis. It was thought that the economic difficulties of Iran would defeat the government. Most of the nationalized oil industry continued idle, and the government was unable to sell oil in the world market because of the British boycott. Nevertheless, the salaries of government employees were paid regularly, and the fishing industry in the Caspian sea was nationalized without any opposition from the Soviet Union, which previously had held the monopoly.

At the end of July 1952 Mossadeq registered a major victory when the International Court, to which Great Britain had appealed, decided that it had no jurisdiction in the Anglo-Iranian dispute and withdrew its request of a year before that neither party make any move that would materially alter the *status quo*. On August 27, 1952, new British proposals were submitted to Mossadeq, this time backed by the United States. Mossadeq rejected these proposals; his own counterproposals were in turn rejected by Great Britain. On October 16, 1952, Iran severed diplomatic relations

with Great Britain. In January and February 1953 the United States made renewed attempts to mediate or facilitate the resumption of Anglo-Iranian negotiations; these attempts, too, failed. The resulting deterioration in relations between Iran and the United States was further aggravated by growing American concern over the increasing activity and influence of the Communist-dominated Tudeh Party, and Mossadeq's failure to take strong action against it. This finally led to the public announcement in August 1953 that Iran would not receive the increased American economic aid that Mossadeq had requested unless the Anglo-Iranian dispute and the Tudeh problem were satisfactorily solved. This rebuff contributed to Mossadeq's ultimate downfall in August 1953.

Mossadeq slowly gathered all power into his own hands. He received complete authority from the Majlis for one additional year, in spite of the opposition of Kashani and other former supporters. By July 1953 he was the sole ruler of the country, having received absolute authority from the Majlis. The increase of his power caused growing opposition in the Majlis and especially in the army. Though for several months Mossadeq succeeded in defeating all opposition, dissolving the Majlis and receiving almost unanimous support in a carefully staged national referendum, it nevertheless became more and more obvious that he was losing support in Iran.

The control of the army had always been in the hands of the royal family and was the main source of its strength. The outcome of the events of July 21, 1952, marked the official transfer of control of the army from the Shah to Mossadeq. Almost all members of the royal family were sent out of Iran under one pretext or another. The Shah no longer interfered in the affairs of state, and spent most of his time outside Teheran. The Tudeh Party vehemently attacked the king and the royal family without fear. Anti-royalist slogans appeared all over Iran and violent attacks were printed in the Tudeh press.

This campaign was intended to culminate in the complete expulsion of the Shah on February 28, 1953, and to leave Mossadeq as the sole ruler of the country. The devoted friends of the Shah in the army and the efforts of Ayatullah Kashani prevented the Shah from leaving, and foiled Mossadeq's plans. The day which should have been the end of the rule of the Shah became the turning point in the respective fortunes of the Shah and Mossadeq. The Tudeh, which had recently cooperated with Kashani, now renewed its attacks on this old religious leader. A new speaker was elected in the Majlis, and the man who had always been known as the enemy of the royal house of Pahlevi now became its supporter. Kashani no longer had the unquestioned following of the masses, but was still a factor in the affairs of Iran.

Political Parties

Mossadeq's main support came from the national fascist Pan-Iranian Party and the Iran Party. Neither of these groups had many members, but the Iran Party included many influential individuals in its ranks who were close advisers of Mossadeq.

The Tudeh, although illegal, remained the only well-organized and important political party in Iran. Its membership was far greater than that of all the other parties together. The Tudeh had infiltrated into all walks of life, and had a large following in all branches of industry. The intellectual groups, the university students, colleges and high schools, all contained groups of Tudeh. Though Mossadeq was anti-Communist, he nevertheless used the Tudeh and strengthened it as a force against the Shah and Kashani. The Tudeh, incidentally, was the only political party which admitted Jewish members.

Minor changes took place in the political parties during the period under review (July 1952 through June 1953). Some of the old parties either disappeared or amalgamated with other groups. The extreme anti-Semitic right-wing Sumka, which patterned itself on the Nazis, dissolved itself, a small insignificant group calling itself Arya strongly opposed by the Mossadeq government taking its place.

A new group was the Social Democratic Party Nira-Sevom, which supported the Mossadeq government. This group grew considerably in numbers, and attracted some of the intellectual elements away from the Tudeh Party.

Revolution

In August 1953 the showdown between Mossadeq and the Shah, that had been imminent since the crisis of February, finally occurred, and resulted in Mossadeq's fall. On August 13 the Shah dismissed Mossadeq and appointed General Fazlollah Zahedi as the new premier. Mossadeq refused to recognize the legal validity of this order, and riots engineered jointly by Mossadeq and the Tudeh forced the Shah to leave Iran. Within a few days, however, pro-royalist rioters, supported by the army—whose officers had failed in similar anti-Mossadeq plots in the fall of 1952 and in February 1953—gained the upper hand. Mossadeq and his supporters, defeated, surrendered; the Shah was recalled and reascended his throne; and General Zahedi assumed office.

The first acts of the new regime, in addition to the energetic purge of Mossadeq's followers, were to take strong steps against the Tudeh Party and to make a determined effort to enforce the ban on its existence.

Relations of Political Parties to Jews

The government and the political parties ignored the Jews as a factor in their affairs. The exception was the Tudeh Party, which devoted much space in its press to attacking international Jewish organizations working in Iran, such as the Jewish Agency, the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT), after the Prague trials and the

arrest of the Jewish doctors in Moscow (*see* p. 273). Especially active in this attack were the Jewish segments of the Tudeh Party. Its weekly newspaper, *Nissan*, and its predecessor, *Bene Adam*, led the attack against their fellow-Jews and drew the attention of the general public to "the international imperialistic organizations." They even collected signatures for a petition to the government to close the offices of these organizations. As the Jewish community in Iran was not organized and the central Jewish committee in Teheran wielded no influence, there was no responsible Jewish organization to give the lie to these accusations.

With the change of Soviet policy, the general Tudeh press no longer bothered itself with Jews and Jewish organizations. The Jewish Communists, however, continued their attacks. The only other Jewish newspaper, the *Olam Yahood*, attempted not too successfully to rally the Zionist and traditional elements against the encroachments of the Tudeh in Jewish circles. The Tudeh had infiltrated into Jewish schools and organized their students. Some of the teachers in those schools were Tudeh members who used their positions for political propoganda. The struggle among the Jewish youth in Iran was between Tudeh and Zionist influence. Domestic developments and the influence of returnees from Israel did not help the Zionist groups.

Jewish Community

The Jewish community in Iran had always stayed out of the political life of the country. The Jews were always loyal to the government in power. They could not vote in the elections of the country and did not participate in its political life. The Jews could elect their representative to the Majlis in the same manner as other minorities. No Jewish representative had yet been elected to the present Majlis.

Community Organization

The Jews in Iran had never been a well-organized community. The Jewish member of the Majlis and the committee over which he presided represented the Jews *vis-à-vis* the government. But they exerted little influence in the Jewish communities of Teheran and the provinces. There was no central body to look after the interests of the 40,000 Jews living in Teheran. Special *ad hoc* committees were created as the need arose. Thus, there was a committee of the Friends of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which assisted with its school feeding and other child care programs. A committee of the Jewish hospital cooperated with the JDC in maintaining the only Jewish clinic in Iran. A Jewish ladies' committee set up a children's welfare center. A special committee collected money for clothing the poor children in winter, another provided coal to poor families, and still another helped with *matzot* for Passover.

Each provincial community had its own committee, usually composed of the few well-to-do Jews in the town. This committee took care of the school, and cooperated with the Alliance, the JDC, ORT, or the Jewish Agency, as required. Very rarely could such committees contribute funds, but they did help in the conduct of the projects set up by these organizations.

Population

It was estimated that about 80,000 Jews were left in Iran, of whom approximately 40,000 lived in Teheran, 15,000 in Shiraz, less than 6,000 in Isfahan, 4,000 in Hamadan, and between 1,000 and 2,000 in Semandej, Yazd, Meshed, and Kermanshah. The rest were scattered in small villages and towns.

Information about the economic situation of the Jewish community of Isfahan, one of the poorest in Iran, revealed that about 400 persons were peddlers, some 120 shopkeepers, 25 to 30 merchants and commission agents, 15 masons, 20 dealers in luxury items, 3 physicians, and about 40 scavengers (sic). In addition some 100 to 150 widows were factory workers.

Social Services

There were 7,500 Jewish children attending the Alliance schools in twelve communities. The Ozar Hatorah opened schools in the other centers and cooperated with the Alliance in providing Hebrew and religious education in all Alliance schools. The ORT had about 2,000 students in its schools in Teheran, Isfahan, and Shiraz. The JDC had feeding centers in almost all communities and also provided clothing and full medical care for the school children. In addition, it conducted an extensive medical program in all the larger Jewish communities. All Jewish welfare activities in Iran had either been started or developed and improved by the JDC.

Relations with Israel

Mossadeq's Foreign Minister Hasein Fatemi closed the offices of the Jewish Agency in Teheran on Israel's Independence Day in April 1953, in order to gain the support of the Arab countries in its fight against England. Iraqi politicians had repeatedly intervened with Kashani—religious ties between the Shi'ite Moslems of Iran and Iraq being traditionally strong—to ban the activities of the Jewish Agency and other Jewish organizations in Iran. The offices were however soon reopened, and in May 1953 Iran signed a commercial treaty with Israel. The main opponent of Israel in the government was Fatemi. He annulled a concession permitting El Al planes to land in Teheran, and this prevented the resumption of the air-lift from Iran. Fatemi and other spokesmen of the Mossadeq régime also from time to time published semi-official statements to the effect that Iran had "cancelled its recog-

niton of Israel." (Officially, the recall of the Iranian representative from Israel, in 1951, had been motivated by technical reasons, and Iran's *de facto* recognition of Israel had never been officially withdrawn.) Nevertheless, Mossadeq himself authorized negotiations with Israel which resulted in an agreement between the Bank Melli of Iran and the Bank Leumi, enabling the resumption of commercial intercourse between the two countries. At the beginning of September 1953 a Jewish deputation called on the prime minister to express the loyalty of the Jewish community to the Shah and his new régime, as well as its deep concern over the fanatical Moslem propaganda conducted by extremist groups. A similar deputation had expressed the same loyalty and the same concern to Premier Mossadeq in July 1952.

Emigration

The Jewish Agency office in Teheran no longer had to deal with thousands of applicants. Nevertheless emigration continued at the pace of transportation available. Jews in small towns and villages suffered from the economic crisis in Iran. But the regulations imposed by the Israel Government prevented any large emigration. Villages which were to have been liquidated two years before were still unable to emigrate because of the restrictions. Emigration therefore was much smaller than in previous years; during the second half of 1952, 1,346 Jews emigrated from Iran to Israel via Turkey. Three El Al planes and two Air France planes moved 354 people during the winter months of 1952-53, when the overland route was closed. During May and June 1953 an additional 277 people left in two transports via Turkey. It was planned to send regular transports via Turkey of about 200 persons each month.