Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

AFTER A PROTRACTED STRUGGLE, Nikita Khrushchev succeeded in July 1957 in securing the removal from top Communist Party and government positions of Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Georgi Malenkov, and Dmitri Shepilov. At the same time two other lesser party leaders, Mikail Pervukhin and Maxim Saburov, were removed from the Party presidium. The decision to remove them was taken at a plenary meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow June 22-29, 1957. Khrushchev and the 309-member Central Committee accused the deposed leaders, the so-called "anti-Party group," of wanting to lead the Party back to the pattern of leadership and the political line that had prevailed under Josef Stalin. While there were varying interpretations as to which of the contending men and factions represented what policy, it was clear that in this all-important fight for power a new and significant element had been introduced. In his duel with the oldest and most authoritative leaders of the Party, Khrushchev could not muster more than about half of the presidium votes. The powerful support he needed to break the deadlock came from the Soviet army. The backing of Marshal Georgi Zhukov, according to reliable reports, assured Khrushchev's victory. At the same Central Committee meeting, Zhukov was elevated to full membership in the Party presidium. After the June plenum, the influence of Marshal Zhukov and his role in the government of the Soviet Union seemed to increase, and the marshal's pronouncements indicated that he did not underestimate his newly acquired power position. But only four months later, Zhukov was expelled from the presidium and from the Central Committee on November 2, 1957. It seemed likely that the increasing popularity of the hero of World War II appeared to Khrushchev to threaten his personal position, and perhaps to foreshadow a Bonapartist ending of the Bolshevik revolution.

While the shakeup in the top hierarchy of the Soviet Union was symptomatic of the deep cleavages and divisions in the ruling group of the regime, there were so far no purge trials of the deposed leaders. At the time of writing they were still alive and, except for Zhukov, working on small government-assigned jobs; Zhukov had not yet been reassigned. Khrushchev had, for the time being, won the fight for direction of the Party and the government. But the fundamental power struggle was not yet fully resolved. In order to assure his victory over Zhukov, Khrushchev not only had to bring into play the full Central Committee of the Party but also, for the first time
in the history of the Soviet Union, had to appeal to hundreds of military men for help in the intra-Party struggle.

**Internal Relaxation**

The struggle for power did not yet appear to have reversed the trend toward internal relaxation which began after Stalin's death. Foreign observers reported that fear of the police and the authorities was no longer as great as it had been. The new mood was said to be noticeable in the behavior of people not only on the street, in meetings with foreigners, etc., but also in factories, where workers were demonstrably freer and more challenging than they had been before. It was reported that 70 per cent of Soviet prisoners had been released, and two-thirds of the labor camps in Siberia had been eliminated (*The New York Times*, May 16, 1957). At the same time Soviet authorities proposed major revisions of the penal law, to abolish the punishment of relatives of persons convicted of high treason and the imprisonment without trial of persons considered dangerous to society. It was reported also that special investigatory and parole commissions were being established to supervise Soviet prisons and direct the rehabilitation of convicts. On the other hand, there were reports of impending administrative deportations of unreliable elements to distant regions of the Soviet Union.

Soviet authorities now permitted widespread contacts with foreign countries. According to Intourist, more than 560,000 Soviet citizens visited foreign countries in 1956. Some 108,000 of them visited France, Italy, Great Britain, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. As the situation was still fluid and the struggle for control continued, it was difficult to say how long this trend would continue. At the same time, the Soviet hierarchy renewed its pressure on "stubborn" and "undisciplined" writers who could not understand the concept of "socialist realism" in arts and letters. On April 3, 1957, Dmitri Shepilov, then a member of the Party secretariat, declared that the Party would be irreconcilable in the struggle "against any and all manifestations of bourgeois ideology." Again, in June 1957, Yekaterina Furtseva, a leading Party presidium member, denounced the rebellious writers for what she termed the "aid and comfort" they were giving to the "imperialist enemy."

**Economic Policy**

The Supreme Soviet, at its session of May 1957, adopted Khrushchev's proposals for a sweeping revision of the Soviet system of industrial management. The administrative direction of the Soviet economy was decentralized to ninety-two economic districts. Some central ministries were abolished, although the new law preserved a central planning system and central supervision over distribution of raw materials. These drastic changes in economic management were described as a solution of the problems of waste and duplication which for years had plagued the Soviet economy. It was also claimed that the new system would create greater opportunities for individual initiative and application of skills.
Foreign Policy

The Soviet leaders continually declared their desire for international agreement and an end of tests of nuclear weapons. But they rejected Western disarmament proposals, and the London disarmament talks failed to produce any results, ending in a deadlock on September 6, 1957. Soviet leaders continued their trips abroad; thus, Khrushchev visited East Germany during the election campaign in West Germany. Moscow freely offered Egypt, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria military aid and the services of Soviet experts and military technicians. In the increasingly tense Middle East, the Soviet leaders supported Syria by threats against Turkey and Israel.

During the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Soviet revolution, the Soviet leaders apparently tried unsuccessfully to resurrect the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), which had been dissolved in February 1956. But on November 22, 1957, the Communist parties of sixty-four nations issued a manifesto appealing for peace and endorsing certain foreign policy proposals of the Soviet Union. This manifesto followed the publication of a joint policy statement of the delegations representing twelve Communist nations. (Yugoslavia, which joined in the peace manifesto, characteristically refused to sign the policy statement.) The Communist leaders also decided to start a new international publication, apparently to replace the defunct Cominform journal For a Lasting Peace, for a People’s Democracy, which had ceased publication in April 1956. They offered a “united front” to all political parties and organizations which would accept their offer. This offer seemed directed less at the West than at public opinion in the Middle East and the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa. These moves for “peace” and a “united front” followed close on the two Soviet Sputniks, which ascended into the stratosphere on October 4 and November 10, respectively.

Relations With the Satellite Countries

During 1956–57 the Soviet satellites were allowed a greater degree of autonomy. The concept of “different roads to socialism” was not uniformly applied to the different countries of the Soviet sphere. But the Soviet leadership, after the revolts in Poland and Hungary, appeared to recognize reluctantly that some modification of its centralized control was necessary. The purge of Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov, with the explanation that they had tried to shift the Party back to the Stalinist line, undoubtedly reinforced those local Communists who desired some measure of autonomy. In Warsaw the downfall of the “anti-Party group” evoked outright jubilation; in other parts of Eastern Europe the reaction was more reticent. Poland, of course, had an exceptionally “independent” status, with Wladyslaw Gomulka supported not only by his party but by the very influential Catholic Church. In Hungary, shaken by the suppressed revolt, the Kadar regime permitted some minor restoration of private trade. Rumania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia continued to follow the Kremlin closely.
During their visit to Prague in July 1957, both Khrushchev and Bulganin made it clear that Moscow was willing to leave considerable responsibility in the hands of local leaders, provided that they accepted the over-all political advice of the Kremlin and that their local innovations did not loosen the ties of their countries to the Soviet bloc.

Soviet policy toward Yugoslavia, while vacillating and sometimes reverting to "bitter arguments," was on the whole moderate and friendly. Both internal developments in the various satellite countries and their relations to Moscow were greatly influenced by the balance of forces within the top group in the Kremlin. At the same time, there was strong popular pressure for a change—a "revisionist" trend—in the satellite area, and there was a feeling that the satellite countries had become less monolithic than they had previously been.

Jewish Situation

No anti-Jewish laws were passed in the Soviet Union or the countries of the Soviet orbit. Anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish bias, however, continued to increase throughout the Soviet empire. While officially the "Jewish question" did not exist in the Soviet Union, all foreign observers agreed that Jews were singled out as a special category of citizens, and anti-Jewish attitudes were easily discernible both in government circles and among the population. Official suspicion of all things Jewish revived traditional popular anti-Jewish prejudice. While the removal of Kaganovich from the presidium of the Party was not connected with his Jewishness, with his departure there remained not a single Jew among the top ruling elite of the Soviet Union.

Leon Shapiro

SOVIET UNION

Despite the increased flow of information on the Soviet Union, there were still no reliable data on the number of Jews there. Foreign visitors to the Soviet Union during 1956–57 brought back various estimates, mostly between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000. Israel sources, quoting reports of eyewitnesses, indicated a figure of 3,000,000. A similar estimate was brought back by André Blumel, president of the French Zionist Federation, who visited the Soviet Union in the spring of 1957. Blumel was told that Moscow had about 500,000 Jews, Leningrad 250,000, Odessa 180,000, and Kiev 150,000.1 Other estimates indicated 200,000 Jews in Leningrad, and 100,000 each in Odessa and Kharkov. Minsk had an estimated 30,000 and Vilna about 25,000.2 Lithuania had an estimated 38,000 Jews,3 Latvia 35,000,4 and Estonia 2,000. Little was known about the Jewish population of Birobidjan, estimates for

---
2 The Day-Jewish Journal, August 9 and 10, 1957.
3 South African Jewish Times, Johannesburg, April 12, 1957.
which varied from 30,000 to 42,000.\textsuperscript{5} Foreign visitors to the Soviet Union also reported that the traditional centers of Jewish life in Byelorussia and the Ukraine had been shattered. There was no way of checking the conflicting estimates. Available information on the number of Russian Jews who perished under the Nazis made the 2,000,000 figure seem the more realistic, but it might well have to be revised upward.

Communal Life

There were no changes in the established Soviet goal of total assimilation of the Jewish minority. No Jewish newspapers (except for the Birobidjaner Shtern) and no publications, theaters, schools, or Jewish welfare institutions of any kind existed in the Soviet Union. The only Jewish institutions were the religious corporations, which were strictly limited by law to conducting religious worship and burial services. Recently repatriated Polish Jews reported that synagogues had ceased to exist in a number of Soviet cities but Jewish worship was carried on in private apartments. Joseph B. Salsberg, a Canadian Communist who subsequently left the Party, reported in a series of articles in the Morning Freiheit (December 5-12, 1956) on conversations he had in August 1956 with Soviet Communist leaders on Jewish life and Jews in general. Essentially, the Soviet leaders held that Jews had been largely integrated into the general life of the country, and that this was a "progressive" and positive phenomenon. According to Nikita Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Salsberg reported, it would be bad, even "reactionary," to foster Jewish "separatism" by establishing Jewish schools. Khrushchev emphasized that there was no need to organize a central Jewish communal body to function as a representative Jewish agency in the Soviet Union.

While the de-Stalinization policy somewhat improved the situation of Soviet Jews, their general position did not change significantly during the years of "collective leadership." Soviet policy toward the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union was still governed by the official opinion that "the Jews do not form a nation," and that the term "Jews" applied to "different folk groups all of whom are descended from the Jews of antiquity."\textsuperscript{6} The same sources indicated that "the Jewish question does not exist in the Soviet Union."

Although contacts between Russian Jews and Jews in the West had become easier, there was little if any contact between official Jewish bodies in the West and the Jewish religious corporations in the Soviet Union during 1956-57. In October 1956 a Soviet Jewish delegation came to Paris (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 310), but this did little to further relationships between Russian Jews and the Jews of the West.

Religious Life

There was no direct interference with Jewish religious services in the synagogues. But social pressure made it difficult to lead a Jewish religious life.

\textsuperscript{5} Allgemeine Wochenzeitung, Dusseldorf, May 31, 1957.  
\textsuperscript{6} Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyklopedia, vol. 15, 1952.
Practically all religious activities outside of the synagogues were forbidden. In addition, a tendency to link Judaism with Zionism placed Jews who practiced their religion in a dangerous position. A recent pamphlet on *The Jewish Religion, Its Origins and Its Essence*, issued by the Ukrainian Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, was characteristic and explicit. Written by T. K. Kicho as part of a general anti-religious drive, it emphasized the deep interrelation of the traditional Jewish religion, modern Zionism, and the State of Israel. Under these conditions very few Jews, working of necessity in state enterprises or in state-controlled institutions, could risk their livelihoods by open practice of religion. The Jewish religious corporations continued under strict supervision and control, and were administered by special trustees nominated by the Soviet authorities.

Under the continuing general policy of relaxation, Soviet authorities permitted the establishment of a rabbinical training program; a rabbinical seminary, called Kol Jacob, was in fact opened in Moscow on January 6, 1957. The seminary, housed in the building of the Great Synagogue, had at the beginning of 1957, thirty-five students and a teaching staff of eight. The majority of the students, all of whom were over nineteen years of age, came from Georgia; there were two from Uzbekistan. Among the teaching personnel were the Rabbis Shimon Trebnik, Chaim Katz, and Jaakov Kalmanson. Rabbi Solomon Shlieffer, chief rabbi of Moscow and organizer of the seminary, died on April 7, 1957, shortly after the school was started. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levine, who had been head of the seminary, succeeded Rabbi Shlieffer as chief rabbi of Moscow, and Rabbi Trebnik, formerly rabbi of Kiev, took over direction of the rabbinical school. According to Agudath Israel circles in London, Rabbi Levine, who was in his middle fifties, had previously been a rabbi in Dniepropetrovsk (Yekaterinoslav).

Before his death, Rabbi Shlieffer had also succeeded in publishing 10,000 copies of a prayer book. It was hoped that this would be the beginning of a continuing project for supplying religious Jews in the Soviet Union with prayer books, which had been practically unobtainable. Simultaneously, the Jewish community of Moscow issued, for the first time in decades, a calendar for the Jewish year 5717. This thirty-two page mimeographed publication contained, in addition to the calendar, a Kaddish text in Hebrew with a Russian transcription. According to *Ha-aretz* (Tel Aviv), Moscow had three large synagogues and fifty-six small prayer houses.

Despite obvious difficulties, religious Jews in the Soviet Union were trying to preserve what they could of Jewish religious tradition. Thus, matzoth were baked for Passover in a state factory under the supervision of a strictly Orthodox supervisor who, incidentally, also produced *tzitzes* (show-threads) for the needs of the Moscow community. Even the generations-old custom of engaging a special cantor for the High Holy Days had not entirely disappeared. Thus, the community of Kovno (Lithuania) brought in a cantor for the High Holy Days from far-off Czernowice.

Nevertheless, all recent visitors to the Soviet Union felt that Jewish re-

---

Religious life there was continuing to decline and disintegrate. Circumcision, according to these observers, was practiced only by small groups of Jews, the Sabbath was practically unobserved, and kosher meat was extremely difficult to obtain. Judging by reports of Russian Jews who recently came to Israel, intermarriage was extremely common. As religious schools for children were forbidden, the younger generation had practically no ties with Jewish religious tradition.

During 1956–57 the Soviet rabbinate was used by the government to foster Soviet foreign policy. During the Suez crisis, Izvestia, on November 29, 1956, carried a protest against the “armies of Great Britain, France, and Israel” signed by a number of rabbis and presidents of Jewish religious corporations. Among the signatories were Rabbis Shlieffer and Olievsky (Moscow), Lubanov (Leningrad), Panitsch and Bardach (Kiev), Diment (Odessa), Gurrari and Machnovetski (Lvov), Kagan and Jerusalemsky (Tashkent), Maslansky and Goldberg (Riga), Fried (Minsk), Rubenstein and Dozortsev (Baku), Vorkul (Kovno), Katz (Talyn), Openstein (Sverdlovsk), Aronovitch (Rostov), Rosen (Dniepropetrovsk), Shumiatski and Plask (Kursk), Landsman (Penza), Greenberg (Kishinev), and Cheifin (Omsk).

Cultural Situation

The more “liberal” mood after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, held in February 1956 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 304 and f.), had some beneficial effects on Jewish cultural life. It permitted the reappearance of Yiddish art on radio and the concert stage. There were also reports of a number of different projects in the fields of Jewish publishing, theater, newspapers, etc. But while there was an increase in the number of Jewish concerts and dramatic performances, larger Jewish cultural endeavors were still completely absent. This fact was noted by the Communist Jewish newspaper of Warsaw, Folksztyme. In its issue of November 10, 1956, it posed the question, “Why has not cultural Jewish life in the Soviet Union been fully rehabilitated and reestablished?” The Jewish minority still did not receive the same treatment in cultural matters as other national groups did, and Soviet leaders clearly had no intention of permitting any considerable revival of Jewish cultural life.

In September 1957 it was reported that a memorandum submitted to the Central Committee of the Communist Party by the Union of Soviet Writers pointed out that, although no Yiddish books had been published in the Soviet Union for many years, a large Yiddish literature existed in manuscript, and there were more than seventy Yiddish writers whose works could not be printed. The memorandum, allegedly signed by top Soviet writers, urged a revival of Yiddish publishing and other Jewish cultural activities. It had previously been announced that special commissions were preparing editions of works by the late David Bergelson, Peretz Markish and others. But no Yiddish publication appeared during 1957–58, and nothing was heard about the status of these projects.

According to reliable reports, the Yiddish writers living in Russia included: Shmuel Halkin, Zalman Wendroff, Hirsh Dobin, Zedek Dolgopolksi, Tevia Gan, Aaron Vergelis, Moishe Taif, Zieme Telesin, Motl Grubian, Eli Gordon, Hirsh Osherovitch, Itsche Boruchowitch, Abraham Gontar, Shaie Lubonitzki, Israel Serebriani, Joseph Rabin, Rifka Rubin, Shifra Cholodenko, Yuri Finkel, Isaac Plattner, Nota Lurie, Icik Kipnis, Hirsh Polianker, Eli Falkovitch, Abraham Frumkin, Luba Wasserman, Nochum Friedman, Buzi Miller, Mira Chemkina, Yankel Dobin, Chaim Maltinski, and Deborah Klarol. Works by some of these writers appeared in Russian translations in various magazines, but their original Yiddish work was ignored. The only possibility for publication in Yiddish—a very limited one—was in Yiddish newspapers in the satellite countries, particularly the Folksztyme in Warsaw.

The ban on Jewish cultural expression in Yiddish did not apply to the issuance of Yiddish literature in Russian, Ukrainian, and other translations. Russian translations of Sholom Aleichem appeared in 1956 and 1957: Dos Farchishufte Shnayderl appeared in an edition of 225,000 copies, and Funem Yarid un Andere Maasses in an edition of 165,000 copies. Nota Lurie's Der Vald Ruft was issued in an edition of 15,000 copies. Leib Kviatko's volume, Gesang fun Mayn Gemit, was published in Russian translation by Sovietski Pisatel. Works by three Jewish writers—Peretz Markish, Shmuel Halkin, and Leib Kviatko—were included in the special anthology issued in Moscow for the celebration of Poetry Day on September 30, 1956. The same anthology listed works by non-Jews Sergei Yessenin and Marina Zvetaeva, whose names had not appeared in recent Soviet publications. Some forthcoming translations from the Yiddish were announced in the literary monthly Druzjba Narodov, but the magazine, which regularly listed all forthcoming books, reported no plans for the issuance of books in Yiddish.

Some Jewish writers who had been persecuted for "cosmopolitanism," but had managed to survive, returned to their work. Among them were V. Goldstein, A. Isbach, and J. Greenberg, who were writing for the literary magazines Znamia and Novi Mir.

According to the Warsaw Folksztyme, Yiddish art was presented on the radio and the concert stage in Moscow and throughout the Soviet Union. Concerts of Jewish music by Saul Lubimov were reported to have taken place in the fall of 1956 in the cities of Molotov, Tscheliabinsk, Sverdlovsk, Ufa, Omsk, and Irktusk. On April 3 and 4, 1957, evenings of Jewish music and drama were presented in Sverdlovsk by Mariana Gordon, a singer, and Leah Talline, a dramatic actress. These Yiddish performances indicated that new Jewish settlers, more attuned to Yiddish culture than the original Jewish settlers in Siberia, were now residing in those Siberian cities. On May 20, 1957, in the Moscow Hall of the Professional Unions, a concert of Jewish songs was given by Rosalia Golubieva. It was repeated on May 29 in Moscow's Gorki Park of Culture. On April 11, 12, and 13, 1957, Anna Guzik gave recitals of Jewish music for Moscow audiences, and from April 3 to April 23, 1957, a number of concerts of Jewish music and revues were performed in Leningrad by A. Loiter, Jakobovitch, and others. Jewish actors from Kovno, Riga, and other former Jewish traditional strongholds made concert tours throughout the cities of the Soviet Union. Among them were Klara
Waga and Max Resnick-Martov of Riga. The Yiddish language and songs were enthusiastically received by Jewish audiences everywhere, and formed an important aspect of Jewish life in the Soviet Union. According to the Warsaw Folksztyme, a special Committee for a Yiddish Theater was created in Moscow early in 1956. The committee consisted of Moishe Bielinsky, formerly of the Jewish Moscow State Theater; M. Goldblatt and Efraim Loiter, theater directors; and the composer Leib Pulver. There was a proposal to establish a theater in Pushkin Street in Moscow, and to name it after Sholom Aleichem. Plans called for thirty artists and a workshop with eighteen young apprentices, and a schedule of six months of performances in Moscow and performances during the rest of 1956 in other cities of the Soviet Union. Nothing further was heard about this plan, which was apparently dropped by the Kremlin leaders.

There was still no official rehabilitation of the Yiddish writers and intellectuals who had perished during the purges. They were, however, indirectly "rehabilitated" through publication of their names, continuous attention in the press, memorial evenings in their honor, etc. Thus on April 23, 1957, a memorial evening for Peretz Markish was held in the hall of the Club of Soviet Writers in Moscow. The participating speakers included the Russian writers Boris Lavrentiev, Vsevolod Ivanov, Michail Shetlov, S. Tregub, and David Markish, the son of the murdered writer, who read Russian verses dedicated to his father. Shmuel Halkin, Zalman Wendroff, and N. Lurie presented their reminiscences of Peretz Markish.

While there was no Jewish theater, orchestra, or writers' club, and consequently Jewish cultural activities were extremely limited, Jewish participation in Russian general cultural life was considerable. At the All-Russian Congress of the Workers of Art, there were 325 delegates of Greater Russian nationality, 58 Ukrainians, and 52 Jews. The Jewish delegation was thus the third largest of the thirty nationalities represented at the congress. At a conference of Soviet composers held in March 1957 in Moscow, 77 of the 407 delegates attending were Jewish.

**Anti-Semitism**

While anti-Jewish propaganda was totally absent from the Soviet press and Soviet publications, all recent visitors to the Soviet Union reported anti-Jewish feeling, both in everyday social life and among Soviet bureaucrats. Soviet spokesmen repeatedly denied anti-Jewish bias but frankly admitted that Soviet citizens resented the aspirations of their Jewish compatriots to high places in the Soviet hierarchy. In fact, Nikita Khrushchev said exactly this to Pierre Lochak, of the French Socialist delegation, who visited the Soviet Union in May 1956. Lochak also quoted Mikhail Pervukhin, at the time first deputy prime minister, as having drawn a significant distinction between Jewish intellectuals and "our own intelligentsia," meaning non-Jewish Russian intellectuals. Pervukhin's remarks appeared characteristic of the mood and attitude of the younger generation of Soviet bureaucrats.

12 Folksztyme, March 9, 1957.
In a talk with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Khrushchev emphasized that "a Communist could not be anti-Semitic," and claimed that Jews in the Soviet Union were given every opportunity for education and employment. Recent reports from the Soviet Union indicated, however, that Soviet Jews faced increasing discrimination in schools, universities, and employment. During 1956–57 the Jewish position deteriorated further as a result of the Middle Eastern crisis and the strong pro-Arab stand taken by the Soviet Union. The *Socialisticheski Vestnik*, published by the Russian Social Democratic Party-Mensheviks abroad, reported in December 1957 that the most important universities and institutes did not accept Jewish candidates, and schools of secondary importance admitted only small numbers of Jewish students. There were indications that a quota system severely limited the admission of Jewish candidates to universities. A recent visitor to Moscow was told by a Jewish student that opportunities for a scientific career for Jewish youths were practically nonexistent—notwithstanding the fact that a number of scientists of the older generation were Jews. Among the scientists who had contributed greatly to the Soviet successes in the field of atomics, space missiles, etc., were the Jewish physicists Lev Landau, Yaakov Frankel, V. L. Wechsler, L. O. Mandelstan, A. I. Ioffe, A. M. Frumkin, and G. S. Landsberg; Peter Kapitsa was of Jewish origin. As of October 1, 1955, out of a total of 228,893 scholarly workers in the Soviet Union, 24,620, or 11 per cent, were Jewish.

While there were no anti-Jewish laws on the books, it appeared that Jews were being gradually eliminated from important positions in government and industry. This was particularly true with respect to the army, the navy, and the diplomatic service. The recent decentralization of economic management in the Soviet Union promoted by Khrushchev seemed likely to decrease still further the economic opportunities of Russian Jews. As the direction of regional economy was transferred to local managerial groups, it seemed probable that the local authorities in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Kirghizia, etc., would employ even fewer Jewish professionals in positions commensurate with their qualifications. Many recent Polish repatriates from the Soviet Union stressed that the anti-Jewish pressures exercised by the government inevitably encouraged the latent folk anti-Semitism which had been restrained by special laws promulgated in the early years of the Soviet regime. André Blumel reported the existence of overt anti-Semitism as well as increasing anti-Jewish discrimination in the government. According to Blumel, there were no longer any Jews in the editorial offices of *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, nor were there Jews in the diplomatic service.

Important information on Russian Jewry was brought back by the Israel delegation to the Youth Festival held in Moscow in August 1957. Though screened by Soviet authorities and forced to stop distribution of their literature, the Israeli delegates had an opportunity to see many Jewish individuals, some who had come from far-away places, to see and speak with the representatives of the Jewish state. Basing their conclusions on first-hand informa-

---

14 JTA, October 9, 1957.
15 *Kulturnoe Stroitelstvo SSR*, Moscow, 1956.
tion from numerous individuals who approached them in Moscow, the
Israeli delegates reported that Russian Jews were victims of far-reaching dis-

This report was corroborated by a young Harvard student who also was in
Moscow during the Youth Festival. He was told by many Jews that while
conditions had improved after Stalin's death, they feared that Jewish life
would return to what it had been under Stalin. The Israel delegation re-
ported that great interest in Israel and in Jewish life in foreign countries
was manifested by the Jewish youth of the Soviet Union. While totally iso-
lated from Jewish life in Israel and the West, they expressed enthusiasm for
Israel, and many hoped they would be able to visit that country in the not-
too-distant future.

Relations with Israel

In his political report to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party
(February 1956), Khrushchev referred repeatedly to the "Arabian East," and
this political expression indicates the current Soviet concept of the Middle
East. During the Suez crisis (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol.
58]), the Soviet demanded strong sanctions against Israel, depicted by Soviet
propaganda as a tool of Anglo-American imperialism. The Moscow radio
broadcasts beamed to Arab countries were unequivocal in their pro-Arab
stand. The Soviet Union warned Israel that a new attack on Egypt would
create the risk of a large-scale military conflict, and repeatedly hinted that
such a conflict would threaten the very existence of the State of Israel. The
Soviet Ambassador to Israel, Alexander N. Abramov, was recalled to Moscow
on November 5, 1956 as a warning. (He returned to Tel Aviv in April 1957.)
On November 6, 1956, the Soviet Union canceled its contracts to deliver
crude oil to Israel in 1956 and 1957. (Two Israel firms, Jordan Investment,
Ltd., and Delek Israel Fuel Corporation, which had the contracts to purchase
the oil, instituted proceedings in the arbitration tribunal of the Soviet Min-
istry of Foreign Trade over the cancellation of the contracts.) Pravda, Izvestia,
and other Soviet publications repeatedly declared that Israel's acceptance of
the Eisenhower Doctrine (see p. 212) precluded any possibility of bettering
Soviet-Israel relations. At the same time the Soviet Union intensified its politi-
cal and economic activities in the Middle East. Soviet cultural missions and
athletic teams visited one Arab country after another. Soviet military aid to
Arab countries, especially Egypt and Syria, continued. Immediately after
Moscow made its arms deal with Egypt, it offered arms and economic aid to
Syria on Israel's northern border. After the Suez crisis, Soviet arms were sent
to Latakia, Syrian port on the Mediterranean. In August 1957 an agreement
was signed for Soviet help in industrializing Syria and modernizing her com-
munications system. Following this agreement, Soviet technical missions and
specialized personnel were sent to Syria, where Soviet influence was growing
at an extremely rapid pace (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58],
p. 317).

27 JTA, Aug. 30 and Sept. 6, 1957.
28 JTA, September 11, 1957.
29 JTA, September 6, 1957.
CHAZAN AFFAIR

On September 7, 1957, Eliahu Chazan, an attaché of the Israeli ambassador, was arrested in Odessa. According to the Israeli foreign minister, Chazan was abducted, questioned for twenty-six hours, and threatened with death unless he would agree to spy for Russia. The Soviet authorities charged that Chazan was caught in the act of giving anti-Soviet literature to a Soviet citizen, and called the Israel account a "provocative fabrication." After the incident, Chazan and his family left the Soviet Union and returned to Israel.

During 1956–57 only a few individuals, most of them aged relatives of Israeli citizens, received permission to leave the Soviet Union for Israel. In his conversation with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Khrushchev admitted that it was difficult for a Jew who wanted to settle in Israel, or even visit the Jewish state, to leave Russia. Khrushchev added that "If Israel continues her present policy she will be destroyed." 20

BIROBIDJAN

Little was published in the Soviet press about the so-called "Jewish autonomous region." As stated above, current estimates of Jewish population there varied from 30,000 to 42,000. The only Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union, the Birobidjaner Shtern, continued to appear three times a week. According to the Warsaw Folksstyme of July 31, 1956, this newspaper also served as a cultural medium for the promotion of Yiddish musical and dramatic activities. No current information was available on schools and technical institutes previously reported as functioning in Birobidjan.

LEON SHAPIRO

POLAND

The events of October 1956 will go down in the annals of Polish history as the beginning of a new and important era in both Soviet-Polish relations and the internal life of the Polish people. In October 1956, when Władysław Gomułka came to power (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 307), Poland and the Soviet Union became "equal partners in the camp of Socialist countries," with Poland apparently pursuing its "own path on the road to Socialism." Given the geographical position of Poland and the fact that since the liberation the Polish economy had been geared substantially to Soviet planning, it was clear that the Gomułka policy of national independence would be beset by all sorts of difficulties, and beset it was. In the economic sphere the new regime had to face steadily decreasing production and a consequent rise in unemployment. Oddly enough, this was accompanied by inflationary pressures, employee absenteeism, and black-

20 JTA, October 9, 1957.
marketeteering. In this connection it is worth noting that in June 1957 the United States agreed to help Poland’s “independent” economy with two loans aggregating $95,000,000.

Immediately after his election as secretary general of the PPR (Communist) Party, Gomulka faced a fight against the Stalinists, who held a number of important positions in the Party and who naturally continued to oppose his “liberal” policies. Gomulka succeeded in dislodging the Stalinists, only to face the radical “revisionist” views of the “liberal” wing of the Party, which had staunchly supported him during the October 1956 revolution. While the term “revisionist” was not well defined, it was applied essentially to Party intellectuals whose views were suspected of including not only criticism of current Soviet policy and demands for more freedom at home, but also opposition to some basic Marxist doctrines. After protracted internal debate, Gomulka discarded the “revisionists,” and the weekly Po-Prostu, mouthpiece of the young Party intellectuals, was ordered to cease publication. The banning of Po-Prostu was followed by student riots in Warsaw (October 3), Cracow (October 10), Lodz, and other cities. The riots, which followed widespread workers’ strikes in August and September 1957, undoubtedly indicated the temper of the country and the fact that the Poles were bent on using the relative freedoms they had won in October 1956. It must be emphasized, however, that both the students and the workers, apparently aware of the limits imposed upon them by the geography of their country, showed notable restraint in their demands. At any rate, the events did not undermine the stability of the Gomulka regime. While the old Communist policy in Poland seemed to have been a rigid reflection of the general line dictated by the Soviet Union, it was apparent that Gomulka’s aim was to manage the affairs of the state on a basis more compatible with the needs of the Polish masses. He promoted a centrist course, while simultaneously aiming to hold on to the newly won advantages of Polish “national Communism” and to preserve friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

With Gomulka in power, the Polish Sejm (parliament) regained a degree of importance in the state machinery, and both the Democratic and United Peasant parties in the parliament strove to achieve a larger measure of independence from the dominant Communist Party.

During 1956–57 Gomulka liquidated the secret security police and released Polish peasants from forced collectivization of the land. In fact, of the approximately 12,500 collectives that had previously existed, only some 2,200 remained in operation. The new regime also introduced a far-reaching decentralization of the country’s administrative apparatus and, taking a cue from Yugoslavia, established workers’ committees in the factories—with, however, rather limited functions. The Gomulka regime reached an agreement with the Polish Catholic Church, headed by Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, to permit religious teaching in the schools; this agreement, as well as the whole attitude of the Church, which was clearly conscious of Poland’s difficult position, undoubtedly added to the relative stability of the regime. While there could be no doubt that the Gomulka policy enjoyed a large measure of popular support, certain groups, mainly intellectuals, continued to question the basic fundamental tenets of the Communist Party, and took advan-
tage of their freedom of speech to criticize and openly challenge various official policies.

Anti-Semitism

The official anti-Semitism initiated in the Soviet Union during Josef Stalin’s lifetime and forced on the satellite countries by the Party was not applied rigidly in Poland. Poland, however, had the dubious distinction of having preserved the popular anti-Semitism so characteristic of its history, and only strong police measures prevented repetition of the Kielce pogrom of July 4, 1946, in other cities. The tragic aspects of this historical phenomenon became clearly apparent after the Gomulka revolution in October 1956. The plain fact was that anti-Jewish feelings, which had run high in the period immediately preceding Gomulka, became violent in the course of the liberalization undertaken by the new regime. It manifested itself in many ways: In a number of instances Jews were eliminated from their jobs in government and industry, and there were many cases of physical attacks on individual Jews; Jewish children were abused and attacked in schools and on the streets. Again, reports from Walbrzych, Dzerzonow, and Szczecin told of Jewish families being forced to give up their apartments, which were then taken over by non-Jews. As de-Stalinization of Poland continued, the anti-Jewish wave became increasingly violent.

The Jewish Cultural and Social Union of Poland was alarmed by these developments and made a number of official representations to the authorities. As early as August 1956 a delegation of the Union called on the president of the Council of Polish Teachers and pointed out the serious predicament of Jewish children in state-controlled schools. Again on September 26, 1956, it met with the secretary of the Communist Party and requested that the question of anti-Semitism be discussed by the top committees of the Party (Folksztyme, Warsaw, Sept. 29, 1956). At the 8th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland in October 1956 the Jewish Cultural and Social Union presented a demand for cessation of the increasing anti-Semitic agitation in the country (Folksztyme, Oct. 23, 1956). The Polish officials candidly admitted the substantial increase in anti-Jewish incidents, and made repeated appeals to the populace to stop the excesses. In a special interview, Prime Minister Joseph Cyrankiewicz acknowledged the growth of anti-Semitism in Poland, and invited Party organs and professional labor organizations to fight it (Folksztyme, Mar. 2, 1957).

While the Party and top state authorities tried to put a stop to anti-Jewish incidents, judging from reports in the Polish press, little was being done on the local level to stop Jew-baiting by the masses of the Polish people. A feeling of panic was reported spreading among Jewish communities in Poland; the urge to leave the country became strong and the number of those wanting to go to Israel increased. In the past the Jewish Communists, who essentially controlled Jewish public life, had branded talk of emigration as near to treason. Now, however, they appealed for freedom for those who wished to do so to leave Poland, and were ready to assist Jews preparing to go to
Israel—including Jewish members of the Communist Party, as well as skilled workers and professionals.

Emigration and Repatriation

Jewish emigration from Poland was resumed in May 1956 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 320). With the increase in anti-Semitism, it gained considerable momentum during the second half of 1956 and the first three months of 1957. Precise figures on Jewish emigration from Poland were not available, but it was estimated that from October 1956 to July 1957 some 27,000 Jews left Poland for Israel; it was expected that in the later months of 1957 the rate of emigration would slacken somewhat, coming to about 1,500 a month.

Simultaneously with the Jewish emigration from Poland to Israel occurred the repatriation of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union. This came as the result of a general arrangement concluded in Moscow on November 18, 1956, stipulating that Polish nationals still in the Soviet Union since World War II would be permitted to return to their mother country. After continuing negotiations, a formal agreement indicating the scope and conditions of the repatriation was signed on March 25, 1957. Jews who had Polish citizenship on September 17, 1939 (the date when Poland was partitioned between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union) were covered by the agreement. It was estimated that the total number of Polish repatriates, including Jews, who might return from the Soviet Union would reach some 120,000 in 1957 and a like number in 1958. There were various estimates of the number of Jewish repatriates who had, in fact, returned to Poland. It would seem, on the basis of available data, that some 15,000 had arrived in Poland by the end of June 1957. Some local observers estimated that another 15,000 would arrive by the end of 1958. Of the 15,000, an estimated 4,000 left Poland for Israel; the rest were resettled in cities with Jewish communities. Some were placed in camps in and around Wroclaw or were housed in the building of the Cultural and Social Union in Warsaw. According to some reports, the Russians demanded that repatriated Jews not be permitted to proceed immediately to Israel and that they remain in Poland for at least the duration of the repatriation agreement, due to expire at the end of 1958.

The arrival of the Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union radically changed the character and demographic structure of the Jewish community in Poland. Since most of the newcomers had spent the war years in the Soviet Union, their children spoke chiefly Russian, and they themselves had been out of Jewish life for over fifteen years.

Jewish Population

Accurate data on the Jewish population of Poland were not available. The most acceptable estimates varied from about 40,000 to 45,000 as of July 1957. According to unidentified Polish government sources, there were some 40,000 Jews in Poland in mid-1957 (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Aug. 26, 1957). There was no way of checking these figures, particularly in view of the
extreme fluidity of the population, with continuous arrivals from the Soviet
Union and departures for Israel. According to semi-official statistics, 52 per
cent of the total Jewish population in 1956 were workers (one-third of whom
were in heavy industry, and two-thirds in light industry); 12 per cent were
self-employed artisans (Folksztyme, June 27, 1956). It was also reported that
about 20 per cent of the Jewish population were white-collar workers, some
in the employ of the various municipalities and the state. Most of the Jews
in Poland were concentrated in Lower Silesia, particularly in the cities of
Wroclaw, Walbrzych, Lignice, etc.

Communal Life

The stabilization of the "liberal" line inaugurated by Gomulka had an
important bearing on Jewish life in Poland. Having slipped away from the
Russian concept of "Communist centralism," Poland permitted a develop-
ment of Jewish activities without example in the satellite area. The change
in the political climate within Poland also permitted a continuous effort to
achieve closer contact with Jews in other countries. In May 1957, Arieh L.
Tartakower and A. L. Easterman, representing the World Jewish Congress,
visited Warsaw, where they concluded an arrangement with the Cultural and
Social Union of Polish Jews marking a renewal of cooperation between these
two bodies. While the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews remained,
legally and politically, the central communal Jewish body in Poland, the
changed conditions enabled the religious congregations (kehillot) to regain
the position of importance that they had lost several years before. At a con-
ference of the Cultural and Social Union held in Warsaw on December 1
and 2, 1956, the religious congregations were for the first time officially
represented, and their presence was felt both in the character of the problems
discussed by the delegates and the manner in which they were discussed.
The representatives of the religious congregations, in fact, requested the
introduction of Jewish religious instruction in the Jewish schools and the
enlargement of courses in Jewish history to include study of the Bible. They
also suggested that the time had come for more sympathetic treatment of
the State of Israel by the Yiddish newspaper Folksztyme. Judging from re-
ports of the conference published in the press, these proposals were thor-
oughly and freely discussed by the delegates. It is worth noting that the
concluding resolution adopted by the delegates acknowledged past errors in
the general policies of the Union and promised to take measures to improve
the situation, taking into consideration the desires of the religious groups.
The resolution also mentioned the right of all Jews to emigrate, while em-
phasizing the rights of those who chose to remain in Poland (Folksztyme,
Dec. 8, 1956). Though this conference was held at a time when emigration
had already reached large proportions, it is noteworthy that the delegates
appeared deeply interested in both local affairs and the general problems
affecting the life and activities of the Polish Jewish community. Among the
communities represented at the plenum were those of Warsaw, Lodz, Lignice,
There was no change in the leadership of the Union—Hercz Smoliar and
David Sfard continued as president and secretary general of the organization, respectively.

**Religious Life**

There was little doubt that, notwithstanding continuous emigration, the new political mood in Poland permitted some renewal of Jewish religious activities. However, objective conditions were not conducive to an active Jewish religious life, and it was clear that nothing short of heroic action could arrest the disintegration of religious Polish Jewry. The depleted religious communities continued to minister to Jewish religious needs, care for Jewish cemeteries, and provide social welfare services, such as summer camps and kosher kitchens for repatriates. While the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations continued to claim twenty-three affiliated kehillot, there was an almost total lack of rabbinical personnel, qualified shochtim, and mohelim (ritual slaughterers and circumcisers). There was only one itinerant mohel, in all Poland, David Springfeder. Only one synagogue remained in Warsaw, the so-called Nozyk Shul at Twarda Street 6, the address of the Union of Religious Congregations. Only two small Talmud Torahs functioned in Lodz and Wroclaw, and for all intents and purposes Jewish religious education was nonexistent.

On December 16, 1956, a congress of Jewish religious congregations took place in Warsaw. The questions discussed by the delegates included: the training of shochtim, the disposition of the Torah Scrolls of disbanding congregations, and the production of matzoth for Passover. The delegates complained bitterly that the lack of qualified shochtim curtailed the supply of kosher meat. They also indicated that the matzoth factory in Wroclaw was not properly equipped and did not, consequently, give the necessary guarantee of kashrut (Folksztyme, Dec. 19, 1956). While limited by law to purely religious activities, the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations in Poland during 1956–57 undoubtedly attained a better standing among the Jews of Poland than in previous years. Dr. Alexander Libo and Isaac Frenkel were president and vice-president, respectively, of the Union, and Rabbi David Percowitch continued as chief rabbi of Warsaw, assisted by Rabbi Nathaniel Shmukler.

**Social Welfare**

In December 1956, following the arrival of large groups of Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union, the Cultural and Social Union created a special commission for the care of repatriates. The commission extended its services both to those who were to remain in Poland and to those who were to emigrate from Poland to other countries. Composed of representatives from the Cultural and Social Union and from the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations, the commission worked in close contact with the all-Polish Committee for Repatriation and with governmental authorities. As there was no other appropriate Jewish body to deal with the intricate problems facing the repatriates, the commission was obliged to take care of their housing, legal
problems, and retraining, though it had neither the adequate means nor the specialized personnel needed for this kind of operation. It soon became clear that the organizing of aid on behalf of repatriates required outside help. In September 1957, at the suggestion of Polish authorities, Charles Jordan, director general for overseas operations of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), went to Poland to determine what could be done to alleviate the plight of the repatriates. Jordan remained in Poland for about two weeks and received the assurance of Prime Minister Cynkiewicz that the JDC would be permitted to conduct in Poland an unhindered program of social assistance on behalf of the Polish Jews recently repatriated from the Soviet Union. Following Jordan’s visit, a JDC representative went to Poland, and a special Jewish Aid Committee was established in Warsaw for the purpose of aiding the Jewish repatriates. (This marked the resumption of JDC activities in Poland after an interruption of eight years; JDC had been expelled from Poland on December 31, 1949.) The Jewish Aid Committee included two representatives each of the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews and the Union of Religious Congregations and two individuals representing the repatriates. It was decided that a similar pattern of representation would apply wherever local aid committees were formed by other interested parties. Initial activities were to include feeding of about 1,470 school children, medical aid in the seven cities where the majority of repatriates had been relocated, establishment of kindergartens in every town where needed, and assistance to the home for the aged in Lodz, which had sixty-eight inmates. The situation of the repatriated Jews was beset with particular difficulties. The newcomers naturally desired to reside in places where there were substantial Jewish communities, and this immediately created complicated housing and employment problems. On the other hand, local Polish officials were psychologically and otherwise unprepared to deal with the situation, and in a large number of cases housing and employment needs of the Jewish repatriates were handled with outright and open hostility.

**Jewish Education**

The wave of emigration created a difficult situation for the Jewish school system in Poland, and Jewish educators were worried about the dim prospects of the schools for the academic year 1957–58. As a result of the emigration, enrollment in Jewish schools decreased considerably, but school authorities refused to close some of the schools, hoping that part of the decrease might be compensated for by the children arriving with repatriated families. It was officially reported that the total enrollment of seven Yiddish elementary schools in the academic year 1956–57 was 2,254 (Folksztyme, Mar. 30, 1957). This number included 544 pupils of the school in Lodz and 350 in Wroclaw. In addition, Jewish schools functioned in Czerzonow, Bielawa, Lignice, Szczecin, and Warsaw.

The decreasing enrollment was only one of the difficulties confronting the Jewish schools. Another and very important one was the necessity of adjusting school curricula to the new needs and demands of the community. During the winter of 1956–57 Jewish history had been introduced as a
separate course in the teaching program of the Jewish schools. Again the question arose of introducing Hebrew and elements of the Bible, at least in the upper grades. The Cultural and Social Union decided to suggest to the government that the study of Hebrew be added to the curriculum starting in the fifth year. In a category by itself was the problem of providing education for children of repatriated families, most of whom did not speak Yiddish.

Cultural Activities

During 1956–57 various cultural activities supported by the Cultural and Social Union underwent considerable changes. The widespread system of choirs, clubs, amateur orchestras, and dance groups was seriously affected by the continuous emigration, and many local observers expressed fears as to the future of those organizations.

The publishing house Yiddish Buch held a national congress on February 17, 1957, in Warsaw, which was attended by eighty delegates representing various interested organizations. During 1956 Yiddish Buch published seven volumes; ten books, including the first part of the History of the Jews in Poland by Berl Mark and the second volume of the Selected Writings of Abraham Raisin, were in preparation. The Jewish Historical Institute continued its work in fields of early and modern Jewish history. It was reported that the institute library had some 40,000 volumes, in addition to a rich archival division with important collections of Jewish newspapers and periodicals, both old and recent, in Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, etc.

On December 8, 1956, Folksztyme, the only Yiddish newspaper in Poland, which until that date had been the organ of the Communist Party, became the newspaper “of all the Jews of Poland.” A statement to this effect was published in the December 8, 1956, issue of the paper. To add significance to the event, the masthead of the paper was changed, and the former reference to the Communist Party was removed. In connection with Folksztyme it is interesting to report that, beginning June 25, 1957, the paper published a weekly supplement in Polish, intended for those Jews who did not speak Yiddish.

Personalia

Moishe Broderson, the well-known Polish Yiddish writer, who returned to Poland from the Soviet Union on July 25, 1956, died in Warsaw on August 17, 1956.

Several Jewish leaders who were connected with the old Stalinist line disappeared from public life. Among them were Hilary Minc and Jacob Berman, the latter, after protracted investigation, having been expelled from the Party as one of those responsible for the police regime in Poland during the years the Stalinists were in power. The only Jew remaining in the top ruling group of the Party was Roman Zambrowski, who, incidentally, was bitterly denounced and attacked by the Stalinist wing of the Party. The Sejm had five Jewish deputies—Leon Chajn, Roman Zambrowski, Bronislaw Drobner, Joseph Olszewski, and Julian Hochfeld.

Leon Shapiro
OF ALL THE COUNTRIES of the Soviet orbit, Czechoslovakia was the one which had been the least affected by the repercussions of the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist Party (see p. 319). The Hungarian events of October 1956 (see p. 338) affirmed the determination of the Czechoslovak government and Communist Party to pursue a policy of strict alignment with the Kremlin; Czechoslovakia succeeded in remaining a reliable satellite, with no changes in personnel and no deviation from orthodoxy. The monolithic façade was not disturbed by factional struggles. Whatever concessions were made to the new exigencies were made half-heartedly and without conviction. These concessions consisted of relaxed restrictions on travel, freer literary expression, some degree of artistic freedom, no show trials, and limited tolerance of criticism. Outwardly at least, the people reacted cautiously.

Jewish Population

During the period between July 1, 1956, and June 30, 1957, the number of Czechoslovakia's Jews was further reduced. The decrease was due to two factors: the excess of deaths over births flowing from the age distribution of a population whose majority was over fifty years of age; and the trickle of emigrants who were permitted to leave the country, mostly in order to join close relatives abroad. An Associated Press report from Prague (Christian Science Monitor, June 29, 1957) stated that about 150 Jews had left Czechoslovakia for Israel from 1954 until the Suez crisis in November 1956, when the door was again shut.

According to the same report, Rudolf Iltis, the executive secretary of the Council of Jewish Communities, estimated the total number of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, the so-called Czech lands, at about 10,000; of this number only 500 were said to be children. A private source put the Jewish population of Slovakia at under 5,000.

Communal Organization

The community framework of Czechoslovakia's Jewry underwent no changes (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 323). The fourth congress, or Assembly of Delegates, of the Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech lands met on December 9 and 10, 1956, in Prague. It was attended by forty-one delegates. A new slate of officers was chosen. Emil Neumann was reelected chairman of the Council (Rada). Richard Spitz and Maximilian Goldberger were elected vice chairmen. Representatives of the nine Jewish religious communities which constituted the administrative units of organized Jewish life in Bohemia and Moravia, each comprising several synagogal congregations, were nominated to the Board of the Council. Five of the nine religious communities were in Bohemia (Prague, Plzeň,
Karlovy Vary, Ústí nad Labem, and Liberec), and four in Moravia (Brno, Kyjov, Olomouc and Ostrava). Ex officio members were the chief rabbi, Gustav Sicher; the district rabbi, Richard Feder; and Rudolf Iltis, the executive secretary.

In Slovakia, the geographical division consisted of districts (kraj), each subdivided into local religious communities. Functionally, the Slovak religious communities corresponded to the synagogal congregations in the western parts of the country. Eliáš Katz was chief rabbi of Slovakia; Benjamin Eichler, chairman of the Central Association of Jewish Religious Communities.

A new development, and a definite step forward, was the resumption of contacts between the Czechoslovak rabbinate and lay leadership and representatives of Jewish life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Kurt Wilhelm, chief rabbi of Sweden, visited Czechoslovakia in April 1956, and in July 1956 several American rabbis also visited the country. Jacob Kaplan, the chief rabbi of France, and other visitors from West European countries as well as the United States announced that they would attend the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Rabbi Sicher's installation as chief rabbi on July 19-21, 1957. Contacts between the Jewish community in Czechoslovakia and communities in other East European countries, especially Rumania and Hungary, were intensified. "A Message to Our Co-religionists Abroad," adopted by the Prague congress, expressed the hope that these beginnings of cooperation would not be cut off "in the icy air of the cold war."

On October 25, 1956, a delegation of Czechoslovak Jews composed of Rabbis Sicher and Katz, and Rudolf Iltis flew to Paris to attend the unveiling of the Memorial of the Unknown Jewish Martyr. This was the first visit of Czech Jewish leaders to the West since 1947. A scroll summarizing the sufferings of Jews from Czechoslovakia during World War II was deposited in the memorial; it concluded:

Of 457 religious communities (in Bohemia and Moravia), 407 were destroyed; of 468 temples of God, 157 were razed; of 82,400 members of our religious society, 77,000 were killed; of 18,000 children, 17,800 were killed. All three institutions of learning were destroyed. Of more than 100 rabbis, only 2 remain alive.

An interesting development during the summer of 1957 was the request received by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany from both the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia and Moravia and from the Federation of Jewish Communities in Slovakia for funds for the relief of the victims of Nazism. This was the first time such a request had been made.

**Attitude to Israel and Zionism**

There was still no full-fledged repudiation of the "Zionist-Titoist-Imperialist conspiracy" which had been the slogan of the purge trials of 1952 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1954 [Vol. 55], p. 388 and f.). Titoism had been dropped from the amalgam, but Zionism remained its basic ingredient. If anything, the anti-Zionist emphasis, in line with the role assigned to
Czechoslovakia in Moscow’s Middle East strategy as a supplier of arms and experts, was accentuated.

On March 31, 1957, Rudo Právo, the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, announced that

the organs of the Czech criminal service arrested a large group of persons who besides other illegal activities supplied espionage data to a representative of a foreign state. At a meeting of these people on March 27, Moshe Schatz, the secretary-archivist of the Israel Legation in Prague, was apprehended when turning over to the aforementioned persons large sums of money for which he obtained information pertaining to the security of the state.

Actually, according to the official Israel version, Moshe Schatz was arrested while visiting a Jewish friend. His money and personal effects were spread out on a table in the friend’s apartment, a pistol was added to his belongings by the arresting officer, and pictures were taken of Schatz. These were adduced as proof of Schatz’s guilt, and he was expelled from Czechoslovakia on March 30, 1957.

The Prague incident was not an isolated occurrence. It was the most important expression of official anti-Zionism since it involved an Israeli citizen possessing diplomatic immunity. But it was preceded by searches of Jewish homes and arrests of Jewish citizens in several cities of southern and northern Bohemia.

Religious Activities

The major concerns of Jewish religious life in Czechoslovakia during 1956–57 were the lack of trained religious leaders and qualified religious teachers, and the inability of the communities to provide for the upkeep of cemeteries, especially in towns which no longer had any active Jewish congregations.

Rabbi Sicher explained to the Assembly of Delegates (see above, p. 332) that “whereas elsewhere there is an abundance of young theologians for whom there are no synagogues, [in Czechoslovakia] the catastrophic lack of rabbis is becoming menacing.” But the government was adamant in not authorizing the appointment of rabbis from neighboring countries. Consequently, the vacancy in Banská Bystrica was filled by the appointment of Gustav Wald, the former shochet (“ritual slaughterer”) of Košice, who thus became the third rabbi of Slovakia. The other Slovakian rabbis were Eliáš Katz, the chief rabbi, and Solomon Steiner of Košice. The Jewish Post, published by Agudat Israel in London, noted in its issue of September 6, 1957, that daily services were being held in the Alt-Neu Synagogue in Prague, and that kosher meat and sacramental wine were available.

Religious school instruction, permitted if ten parents petitioned the school authorities, was virtually nonexistent, either because there were not enough Jewish children in a given school, or because the parents did not dare to sign the necessary petition, or because no teachers were available. Possibly, the dearth of teachers was frequently the decisive factor. The handful of
rabbis had to attend to all religious and ritual functions in Czechoslovakia. They could not assume the added responsibility of conducting regular Bible classes in the dispersed localities.

The decay of Jewish cemeteries proved a financial problem the Jewish communities were unable to cope with. Voluntary work brigades made makeshift repairs. The situation was further aggravated by acts of vandalism.

Cultural Activity

The monthly twelve-page Věstník of the Jewish Religious Communities in Czechoslovakia published by the Jewish Religious Community of Prague continued to be the only Jewish periodical in the country. It did not deviate in content and orientation from the established pattern. The occasional omission of an unsigned political editorial on the theme of "peace" and the "tasks of the peoples in the Peoples' Democracies" seemed to have little significance (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 325).

Most Jewish scientific and historical work was performed by the Jewish State Museum, which, however, was not supervised by the Jewish Council. The museum's director was Hana Volavková. In March 1957 the Jewish Museum announced the creation of a preparatory committee to form a Society of Friends of Jewish Memorabilia. In November 1957 the administration of the Jewish Museum in Prague planned regular concerts of synagogue music to be held in the former building of the Maicel Synagogue.

In June 1957 the Diary of Anne Frank was introduced to the Prague theatre in a Czech translation of the American dramatization. The book had appeared in Czech in 1956. By 1957 its four editions had been sold out. A volume of Jewish stories by Arnost Lustig, entitled Night and Hopes, was to be put out by the publishing house Nasevojosko in 1957.

As in previous years, the publication of a Jewish Year Book (almanac) for the year 5718 was announced in August 1957. It contained articles by Rabbis Sicher, Feder, Katz and Davidovič, and essays, stories and poems by the writers Pavel Eisner, František Gottlieb, F. R. Kraus, Jifi Weil, et al. During the week of October 7 to 14, 1956, the public was invited to three exhibitions arranged in Prague: one devoted to the notorious concentration camp of Theresienstadt, one to Jewish musicological literature, and one commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Jewish Museum. The Library of the Jewish Religious Community of Prague prepared an exhibition of manuscripts, some dating from the twelfth century, first prints and rare copies of Judaica and Hebraica to be displayed on the centenary of its founding, July 19, 1957.

Personalia

On November 2, 1956, Emil Utitz died in Jena, East Germany, at the age of eighty-three. He was one of the last representatives of two extraordinary generations of German-Jewish scientists and writers from Bohemia and Moravia (Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, Karl Kraus, Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel, and many others). A professor of esthetics at various universities of
Germany before 1933 and afterwards at the German University of Prague, and a survivor of the concentration camp of Theresienstadt, he had made his home in Prague after 1945. His most important work was the *Grundlegung der Allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft* ("Foundations of General Aesthetics"), which was published in 1914.

**HUNGARY**

The Hungarian popular uprising of October and November 1956 was foreshadowed by the democratic elections of 1947—the only free election ever held behind the Iron Curtain—in which 83 per cent of the Hungarian people voted against the Communist Party and the Soviet rule which it symbolized.

But the immediate cause of the revolution was to be found in the train of events that followed Nikita Krushchev’s denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party early in 1956. Krushchev’s attack on the Josef Stalin cult undermined the authority of the Communist regime, and demoralized the Party leadership. All the sins which Krushchev attributed to Stalin’s personality were visible to the Hungarian people in their own rulers; “de-Stalinization” in Hungary could only mean the destruction of the whole system of terror and the overthrow of the Communist leaders who had operated it. Adequate concessions made in time might have eased the transformation of the regime. But reforms were obstructed by Mátyás Rákosi, the Stalinist party boss of Hungary, and his associates. Instead of making concessions to the peasants on collectivization of agriculture, and slowing the pace of industrialization, Rákosi and his supporters in Moscow decided to appease popular opinion by staging, in March 1956, a posthumous rehabilitation of the executed Communist leader László Rajk. He was declared to have been an innocent victim of “fabricated charges” by Gábor Péter, the head of Rákosi’s own secret police. This only reinforced popular conviction that the entire regime was beyond redemption. More than 300 prisoners were released in connection with the “rehabilitation” of Rajk. Many of them were Jews, condemned as accomplices of Rajk—a rabid anti-Semite who had been officially charged with the crime of “Zionism.” In this atmosphere, Communist writers with long records of faithful service to the system, like Stalin prize winners Gyula Hány, Tamás Aczél, Tibor Déry, and many others (among them a considerable number of persons of Jewish origin) became sharp critics of the regime. At first, this criticism centered on the absence of spiritual freedom and the enforced party line in literature. When the Party’s Central Committee reaffirmed its right to dictate literary and artistic trends, the opposition of the intellectuals became more embittered. Their example influenced the students, the workers,
and ultimately the peasant masses. Thus, the Union of Hungarian Writers and its review, *Irodalmi Ujság* (“Literary News”) were soon joined by the League of Working Youth (the Communist youth federation) as a center of reform agitation. The meetings held by these groups attracted large crowds, and turned into bitter demonstrations against the regime throughout the summer of 1956. *Irodalmi Ujság* and other publications of the rebellious groups were read all over the country; workers and peasants paid high prices for the scarce copies.

In the face of this popular mood, and as a gesture of appeasement to Tito, the Kremlin finally decided to eliminate Rákosi. His dismissal took place on July 18, 1956, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Party in the presence of Anastas I. Mikoyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. Shortly thereafter, on July 22, General Mihály Farkas, former Stalinist minister of defense, was expelled from the party and in the early part of October was arrested together with his son, a high official of the secret police. The hopes for improvement raised by these changes were, however, immediately dashed by the appointment, announced also on July 18, of Rákosi’s close associate, Ernő Gerő to succeed him as his secretary of the Party. József Révai, ideological chief under Rákosi, remained, and Imre Horváth, another Rákosi associate, was appointed foreign minister on July 30. The only anti-Rákosist brought back to power by Gerő was János Kádár, who had been interior minister at the time of the Rajk trial but had subsequently been imprisoned and tortured. Although on October 14 Imre Nagy, the former prime minister ousted by Rákosi in July 1954, was readmitted to party membership, he was not given any role in the government. The government-staged reburial of László Rajk on October 6 offered an opportunity for the mass hostility to the Gerő regime to manifest itself openly. In general, Gerő still tried to substitute appeasing gestures like his visit to Tito’s Yugoslavia for meaningful concessions to the people’s desires. One such gesture was a statement by Oscar Betlen, a member of the Hungarian Party’s executive committee, reported in the Israel *Ha-aretz* by its Bucharest correspondent on September 17. Betlen was said to have declared that the Communist Party of Hungary “no longer considered world Zionism as an agent of American imperialism and a hostile trend against the State.” The spokesman added that the persecution of Jews as Zionists was “a regrettable mistake of the Stalinist era that will not recur,” and promised that on humanitarian grounds, for the purpose of reuniting families, Jews would again be permitted to emigrate from Hungary.

It was in this mood of mounting discontent that the Hungarians heard the first news of Poland’s demand for greater independence from Soviet rule. The events in Poland aroused enormous excitement and enthusiasm in Hungary. Hungarians were especially impressed by the role of the workers in the Polish uprising. The Gerő regime itself felt compelled to broadcast messages of congratulations to Poland. The protests and demands of the Hungarian intellectuals, workers, and students became more vocal, articulate, and specific than ever before. There was a universal outcry for national freedom and individual liberties alike.
Hungarian Uprising

On October 22 a number of student meetings took place in Budapest. At the most important of these, the students adopted a list of sixteen demands which expressed their views on national policy. On October 23 the streets of Budapest were crowded with students and workers, who demanded the ouster of Ernő Gerő, Hungarian Communist chief, the formation of a new government by Imre Nagy, withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, free elections, freedom of expression, the reestablishment of political parties, and sweeping changes in the conditions of both workers and peasants. The demonstrations became open revolt, and Gerő called on Soviet troops to quell it. The Communist Central Committee installed Nagy as premier and elected Titoist János Kádár to the Politburo.

Soviet forces, with tanks, artillery, armored cars, and supported by jet planes, marched into Budapest on October 24 to put down the revolt. The revolt appeared to have been quelled after bloody fighting and an appeal by Premier Nagy, who promised a program of broad democratization. But after Soviet tanks and Hungarian security police fired on unarmed crowds, the rebels renewed their resistance on October 25. Gerő was replaced by Kádár as Communist Party chief, but the rebels refused to lay down their arms. The insurrection spread throughout Hungary and was joined by thousands of officers and soldiers of the Hungarian army. Nagy sought to win the confidence of the nationalists by bringing into his cabinet Bela Kovacs and Zoltan Tildy, leaders of the outlawed Smallholders Party.

On October 28 the revolt appeared to have succeeded when Nagy announced that the Soviet Union had agreed to remove its troops from Budapest, and that he would open negotiations at once for removal of Soviet troops from all of Hungary. As Soviet troops were reported leaving the city on October 30, Nagy promised free elections and an early end of the one-party dictatorship. At the same time the Soviet Union announced its willingness to consider withdrawal of its troops from Hungary, Poland, and Rumania.

But by November 1 Budapest was again ringed by Soviet tanks, and more Soviet forces were advancing toward the city. Nagy protested to the Soviet Union and appealed to the United Nations. He also repudiated Hungarian membership in the Warsaw Pact, the military alliance of Soviet satellites. On November 4 the Soviet forces unleashed a massive surprise attack on Budapest. They crushed the revolutionaries, removed Nagy, and installed Kádár as puppet premier of Hungary.

The peaceful and nonviolent political demonstrations had been met with violent attacks by the Communist secret police. The popular resistance which followed had been crushed only by massive Soviet armed intervention. These facts were officially confirmed by the report of the Special Committee on Hungary of the General Assembly of the United Nations, issued on June 20, 1957.

Throughout the apparently victorious phase of the uprising, almost no anti-Semitic agitation or excesses took place, despite three and a half decades
of anti-Semitic indoctrination under the Horthy regime, Nazism, and Communism, and the conspicuous role of Jewish Communists like Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas, and Péter.

This fact was established as the result of a thorough investigation conducted in Vienna and in the Austrian refugee camps by the European Office of the American Jewish Committee, which, in a statement issued on November 16, declared reports to the contrary to be "complete fabrications," and "obviously part of the Communist propaganda campaign to depict the Hungarian revolution as a 'Fascist plot'." Nor did the months following the suppression of the Hungarian fight for freedom see any acts of popular anti-Semitism.

Jewish Community

The outstanding event in the life of Hungarian Jewry itself was the fact that during the uprising more than 13 per cent of the estimated Jewish population of 135,000 had left the country. In the western part of Hungary the many old Jewish communities had lost almost their entire population. On June 18, 1956, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported, on the basis of a summary by the Budapest Jewish community, that at the time there were fifty-nine organized Jewish communities, with a total of seventy-nine rabbis and fifty-nine cantors and other religious personnel, eighty-nine Talmud Torahs (mostly with one teacher each), and some 3,200 students. After the revolution a number of these communities and institutions ceased to exist. In Budapest there was one elementary Jewish school for boys, and one for girls; one Jewish hospital; and a number of homes for the aged and orphanages.

On September 4, 1957, after seven years of separation from the World Jewish Congress, the National Office of Hungarian Jews announced its reaffiliation. A liaison committee with the World Jewish Congress was formed, with the permission of the Hungarian government.

During the revolution, indications were received in Israel and the United States that the revolutionary government of Imre Nagy had agreed to the emigration of a limited monthly number of Jews over a certain age from Hungary to Israel. The Kádár regime continued to abide by the Nagy agreement.

In June 1957 the Central Board of the National Office of Hungarian Jews requested the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany to support the national office in cultural activities. These included work in Jewish history, documentation of the period of persecution during World War II, and a Festschrift to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the Theological Seminary of Hungary. In the fall of 1957, there were nine students attending the seminary.

The national office's library was visited by 1,200 persons monthly. The national office conducted a Jewish social service agency, which provided applicants with clothing and food.
RUMANIA

IN THE SUMMER of 1957, in the wake of the dismissal of Georgi M. Malenkov, Vayacheslav Molotov, and Lazar Kaganovich from the Presidium of the Soviet Union, and on similar charges, Joseph Kishinevsky, the Jewish secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of Rumania, was removed from the Politburo, together with a non-Jewish colleague, Miron Constantinescu. No ill feeling against Jews was expressed in the resolution of dismissal, which was adopted by the central committee meeting in Bucharest from June 28 to July 3, 1957. But an abstract of the resolution, published in *La Nation Roumaine* (August 1957), indicated that Kishinevsky's dismissal, as well as that of Constantinescu, was based on alleged intrigues with another Jewish Communist who had been purged in 1952—Ana Pauker. Under the influence of Miss Pauker, formerly Rumanian foreign minister and for a time its most powerful political figure, the resolution maintained, the defendants had carried on "anti-party, factionalist, and diversionist activity" for years. They had "followed in the footsteps of Ana Pauker," had "created a personal cult around her," etc. Ana Pauker, herself, who had been variously reported as having been tried, imprisoned, and even executed, was still very much alive. Colonel Alexander Cohn, a Rumanian medical officer who had recently fled the country, reported Ana Pauker to be living in luxury in Bucharest (*Time*, March 25, 1957, p. 28-29). The association of Kishinevsky with Ana Pauker as a partner in crime, as disseminated in Bucharest newspapers on July 9, 1957, could not fail but appear to the public as evidence of a "Jewish conspiracy." A trend toward a more repressive official policy toward Rumanian Jews was a possibility.

*Labor in Exile* (Paris), the publication of the free trade unionists of the Soviet satellite countries, reported in its May 1957 issue that a recent reform instituted by the government in industrial production had resulted in serious unemployment. *Adeverul*, the newspaper of the Rumanian immigrants in Israel, reported at the same time (May 31, 1957) that the unemployment had resulted in special hardships for the Jewish population. The government's reforms were aimed particularly at paring down the administrative personnel, where Jews were heavily represented. But in the reassignment of this personnel to production jobs preference was given to non-Jews, and there was reportedly discrimination against the Jews.

Jewish Population

According to the census of February 1956, the Jewish population of Rumania numbered 144,198. Of these, 43,942 were said to be living in the capital, Bucharest. Notwithstanding the results of the census (published as late as the fall of 1956), the Jewish population of Rumania still continued to be estimated officially at 250,000 (*see American Jewish Year Book, 1957* [Vol. 58], p. 328), by no less a person than the chief rabbi of Rumania,
Moses Rosen ([London] Jewish Chronicle and Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 24, 1957). The figures obtained by the census may have been smaller than the government expected, or desired. At any rate, the statistics, as published in Bucharest newspapers, were accompanied by a footnote to the effect that all information in the census was "given voluntarily." At a press conference in London, during his visit to that city, Chief Rabbi Rosen stated the matter more precisely. When queried on this discrepancy between the official figures and the unofficial estimate, the chief rabbi replied: "In a census 40 per cent of the Jewish population denies its connection with the Jewish people" (Jewish Daily Forward, June 1, 1957).

The number of Jews giving Yiddish as their native tongue in this census was 34,236, or 23 per cent of the total. This would seem to indicate an even greater tendency toward the alienation of Rumanian Jews from their origin—particularly when these results are compared with those secured in the last census before World War II, when 69 per cent of the Jews, or three times the present number, gave Yiddish as their native tongue (Algemayne Encyclopedia, vol. "Yidn D," New York, 1950). Yet the anti-Semitism of the pre-war regime also provided ample ground for the denial of Jewishness in a census—and in that census, too, information on identity was given voluntarily.

Religious and Cultural Life

Chief Rabbi Rosen visited England in the spring of 1957 at the invitation of the chief rabbi of the British Empire, Israel Brodie, and of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. His description of Jewish life in Rumania confirmed on the whole the statements he had made the year before, during his good will tour of Sweden (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 328). According to Rabbi Rosen, there were 100 large and about 50 small Jewish communities in Rumania, about 500 synagogues, hundreds of Talmud Torahs (Hebrew schools), and one yeshiva (rabbinical seminary) in the city of Arad, in Transylvania. The communities received small subsidies from the government but earned the bulk of their income from taxes on kosher meat and from the sale of matzoth and religious articles. In Bucharest, with the largest Jewish population in the country, there were twelve Talmud Torahs. Perhaps the most intensive religious life was to be found in Transylvania where, according to Rabbi Rosen, between 70 and 80 per cent of the children were receiving Jewish religious instruction.

Chief Rabbi Rosen made several significant remarks on the government-imposed isolation of Rumanian Jewry. The Jews of Rumania, he noted, deeply regret the existence of an "iron curtain" between themselves and all other Jews. The density of this curtain may be deduced from his comment that, "now, at last" the Warsaw Yiddishe Folksztyme could be obtained in Rumania. In other words, even the official publication of the Communist Jews of Poland had not been allowed to circulate in Rumania until recently.

Early in 1957 a Jewish religious periodical Revista Cultului Mosaic din R.P.R. (Review of the Jewish Faith in the Rumanian People's Republic), began to appear. It had a meagre eight pages with tri-lingual text—Rumanian,
Yiddish and Hebrew—the Rumanian part crowding the other two off the pages. In addition to the usual Communist propaganda and the appropriate religious messages for Jewish holidays, the review published news of other, nonreligious community affairs, such as cultural events and social activities. Both issues appearing in February 1957 contained reports of a two-day conference of the Superior Council of the Jewish community that had taken place in January 1957. The comprehensive reports to these meetings by Chief Rabbi Rosen and Israel Bacal, the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities, contained many interesting details about Jewish life in Rumania.

Rabbi Rosen reported that the matzoth bakery of the Federation of Jewish Communities, located in Cluj, Transylvania, had been enlarged and modernized. During the previous year (1956) 750,000 kilograms of matzoth had been produced. The federation also manufactured prayer shawls, whose sale during 1956 amounted to 1,000. Ten thousand prayer books and Bibles were sold and 14,000 copies of a Jewish calendar.

Israel Bacal reported that four Yiddish books had been published during 1956: a Yiddish translation of a novel by the Rumanian writer Mihail Sadoveanu; a volume of fables by the Rumanian Jewish poet Eleazar Steinberg; a volume of Sholom Aleichem's writings; and an anthology of new Yiddish verse. Bacal described significant achievements in the Yiddish theater. The Yiddish State Theater in Bucharest had been rebuilt at the cost of 7,000,000 lei ($1,167,000), and two new Yiddish theaters had been opened, one in Pitesti and another in Bărăsd. The eightieth anniversary of the Yiddish theater had been celebrated with much fanfare both in Bucharest and Jassy. (The first Yiddish theater in the world opened in Jassy in 1876 under the direction of Abraham Goldfaden.) România, a periodical published in New York by the Committee of Democratic Parties in Rumania in Exile, reported that a street in Bucharest had been named after Goldfaden (January 15, 1957). The same item noted that another street in Bucharest had been named after the Jewish scholar Rabbi Moses Gaster.

News of Jewish cultural activities in Rumania could also occasionally be found in the Warsaw Yiddishe Folksztyme, as well as in the Rumanian Revista Cultului Mosaic, described above. Apparently, the Rumanian Jews' love of the theater continued unabated and expressed itself in the care and development of the Yiddish stage. Thus, a studio for Jewish actors had been begun in Bucharest. The students were supported and fed in a special kosher kitchen by the Jewish community of Bucharest. On the other hand, there was no mention of schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction.

The Jewish State Theater in Bucharest was said to have performed a Yiddish version of The Diary of Anne Frank with resounding success. Furthermore, in a contest of dramatic arts among all the minority-language theaters in Rumania, the Jewish state theaters in Bucharest and Jassy had been awarded official honorary scrolls (Yiddishe Folksztyme [Warsaw], March 14, June 4, 18, and 25, July 2, 1957). According to the same source, there were Jewish "houses of culture," or cultural clubs, in Bucharest and Jassy. Significantly, the one in Jassy was named after the famous Jewish actor Shlomo Michaels, who died mysteriously in the Soviet Union in 1948. In April 1957 there were celebrations in commemoration of the uprising of the Warsaw
Ghetto: it is of interest that the program performed at Jassy included a recitation of poems by Itzik Feffer, the Russian Jewish poet killed under the Stalin regime.

Emigration

All efforts made during 1957 to secure Jewish emigration from Rumania to Israel failed. In Israel, Rumanian immigrants formed a committee to reunite separated families. A pamphlet published by this committee in 1956 illustrated the tragedies that had befallen these families. During the first few years after World War II, when emigration to Israel had been unrestricted, a large number of Jews had left Rumania, equipped with passports and visas, on the promise of the Rumanian government that the rest of their families could follow at their convenience. But the Rumanian government had stopped this emigration suddenly and without warning after January 1949, and as a result some 10,000 families had been separated. Unfortunately, the majority of those allowed to leave had been elderly people. The immigration to Israel from Rumania contained the largest percentage of older people among all immigrants (59.9 per cent). One of the results of this situation was that, although the Rumanian immigrants formed one of the smallest groups in Israel, Rumanian Jews formed the largest single national group in the Malben old age home.

At the time of writing (September 1957) there seemed to be no prospect of changing this policy of the Rumanian government. Zionism continued to be suppressed. While there had been reports that “all Zionist leaders have been released” (see American Jewish Year Book, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 330), and Chief Rabbi Rosen had stated, on his visit to London, that “most of the Zionist leaders have been released from prison,” (JTA, May 24, 1957), Dr. Cohn reported (Time, op. cit.) that some 250 Zionist leaders were still in prison.