INTRODUCTION

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE in the Soviet hierarchy during the period under review (July 1, 1957 through June 30, 1958) took place on March 27, 1958, when Nikita Khrushchev, retaining the post of first secretary of the Communist party, replaced Nikolai Bulganin as prime minister of the Soviet Union. Bulganin, who also lost his membership in the ruling Presidium of the party, was later described publicly as a member of the “anti-Party” group of Georgi Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Lazar Kaganovich. At the time of writing there had been no purge trials of this group, but all of its members had been removed from Moscow and deprived of influence. Khrushchev had direction of both the party and the government, but he apparently still felt a need to take into account the wishes of the Party apparatus, the professional intelligentsia, the industrial managers, and the army.

The internal relaxation initiated after Stalin’s death continued. Thus Adlai Stevenson, who visited the Soviet Union in 1958, reported that “the fear of Stalin’s time no longer exists,” that promulgation of a new criminal code was imminent, and that “there is talk of a genuine rule of law in the USSR, where the courts have been a mechanism of party control.” 1 The very handling of the Pasternak affair showed that while the regime would still not tolerate opposition it was avoiding the extreme measures of Stalin. On the other hand, it was recalled that reports about “rule of law,” judicial reforms, and a new criminal code had been heard for some time, but were still only reports.

Widespread contacts with foreign countries, initiated after the 20th congress of the Communist party in February 1956, were extended to include foreign trips by groups of artists and scientists and a student-exchange program. Simultaneously, Soviet leaders continued to promote “socialist realism” in art and literature, and Literaturnaya Gazeta (March 6, 1958) described the fight against “revisionism” as one of the foremost tasks of Soviet writers, particularly since revisionist influences had “reached our literature.” Novy Mir (June 1958) and Zvezda (July 1958) had articles on the revisionist heresy in Yugoslavia and Poland respectively.

Economic Policy

After reorganizing the Soviet system of industrial management in May 1957 (see American Jewish Year Book, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 314), Khrushchev introduced reforms in agriculture. The collectives took over most of the functions

of the machine-tractor stations, for three decades the chief instrument of cen-
tralized control over agriculture. Compulsory deliveries of agricultural com-
modities at fixed low prices were discarded; by increasing the prices it paid the
peasants, the government hoped to stimulate higher agricultural production.
The virgin-lands program and emphasis on corn considerably increased the
food supply available to Soviet consumers.

The Seven-Year Plan for 1959–1965 presented the most ambitious target
ever proposed by the Kremlin leaders.

Foreign Policy

Moscow continued to call for “peace,” “disarmament,” etc. That these terms
had their own special meanings for the Soviet rulers was once again made clear
in the course of the Geneva conference on nuclear tests, which opened on
October 31, 1958, and another Geneva conference, on prevention of surprise
attacks, which opened on November 10, 1958. In November 1958 the Soviet
government demanded that West Berlin be made a demilitarized free city.
Khrushchev said that if an agreement to that effect were not negotiated within
six months, Russia would turn over full control of East Germany and the
Soviet sector of Berlin to the East German government.

In the Middle East the Soviet Union continued to exploit the aspirations
of the people for progress and independence. When in July 1958 the United
States sent a military force into Lebanon at the request of President Camille
Chamoun, Moscow warned that it could not remain indifferent to events so
close to the borders of the Soviet Union. Anti-Western demonstrations were
organized throughout the Soviet area, and Russia vetoed the United States
proposal in the United Nations Security Council for the organization of a UN
force to police dangerous areas in the Middle East.

Soviet policy toward Israel remained overtly hostile and Israel was de-
nounced as an imperialist advance post governed by “capitalist bourgeois
Zionists.”

The Soviet Union expanded its program of foreign aid to underdeveloped
countries, coupled with skillful propaganda.

Relationships with the Satellite Countries

On June 17, 1958, Pravda announced the execution of Imre Nagy, who had
headed the Hungarian government during the revolt of 1956. Nagy’s execu-
tion was a clear warning that “revisionist” rebels might expect to be dealt
with harshly. The anti-Tito campaign increased in momentum, and Com-
munist parties in the satellites condemned Titoism in terms reminiscent of
Stalin’s day. Only the Polish party made the standard ideological charges
against Yugoslavia in a more comradely tone.

The concept of “different roads to socialism” was still applied in Poland and
perhaps to some extent in Hungary, where an intra-party struggle was rumored

2 The first book on Israel published in the Soviet Union was Gosudarstvo Israel: Ego Polozenie
i Politika (The State of Israel: Its Position and Policy), by K. Ivanov and Z. Cheinis, Moscow,
Gospolitisdat, 1958, 147 pp.
to be continuing between the followers of Kádár and those of Rákosi. Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania continued to follow the Kremlin line faithfully. The influence of Red China in the Soviet satellite system grew considerably, and appeared to be exerted in support of the more rigid Stalinist elements within the satellite parties.

**Jewish Situation**

There was no official anti-Semitism in the countries of the Soviet bloc. But visitors reported anti-Jewish attitudes in the public and the party bureaucracy. The individual countries of the Soviet sphere varied in their policies toward Jews. The Soviet Union permitted Jews to have synagogues and to attend to their elementary religious needs, but there were no Jewish schools or Yiddish books, and the Soviet authorities promoted assimilation. In the satellites Jewish communities were able to carry on communal and cultural work and to maintain, under difficult conditions, not only their religious life but also cultural institutions of various types. Jewish emigration from the USSR was still prohibited, but some of the satellite countries permitted more Jews to leave for Israel.

**THE SOVIET UNION**

Official Soviet publications contained no information on the number of Jews in the Soviet Union, their birth and death rates, their occupational distribution, or similar matters. Estimates of the number of Soviet Jews ranged from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000. What information was available on the Jewish population of various cities tended to support the lower estimate. Foreign visitors reported some 500,000 Jews in Moscow, followed by 250,000 in Leningrad. It was estimated that Kiev, Odessa, and Kharkov each had 100,000 to 150,000, while there were about 35,000 to 40,000 in Lithuania and in Latvia. Estimates of the number of Jews in the province of Bessarabia ranged from 30,000 to 80,000. Lwow and Cernauti were reported to have 30,000 each. According to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s Daily News Bulletin for June 11, 1958, a Moscow radio broadcast of June 7 said that Jews constituted about 60 per cent of the population of Birobidjan. This would suggest 95,000 to 100,000 Jews in Birobidjan—a figure far above that given in any previous report, and therefore to be treated with great reserve.

**Communal Life**

There was no organized Jewish communal life in the USSR, though Jews were recognized as a separate national group. The only Jewish institutions tolerated by the government were the so-called Jewish religious corporations ministering to religious needs, but there was no recent information on either the number of such corporations or their total membership. Jews were denied permission to establish a central communal body, a Jewish theater, Jewish
schools. The purpose of Soviet policy appeared to be the destruction of Jewish identification and the sense of Jewish belonging among all Russian Jews, except perhaps those in Birobidjan. References to the Jews as a national group were disappearing from official publications. Thus a 285-page book on the history of Kiev, published by Gosisdat in 1954, did not mention the word 'Jew' even once, although the city had long been a great center of Jewish life and as recently as the 1930's had been the home of many Jewish academic institutions.

To some extent, this may have been related to a general shift which appeared to be taking place in Soviet doctrine about minority nationalities. The concept of "national in form and socialist in content" seemed no longer to apply to all Soviet nationalities, and especially the Jews. Significantly, the only mention of the Jewish group in an authoritative Soviet publication in 1957 was this statement on p. 112 of Vol. 50 of the Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia (Great Soviet Encyclopedia), published in Moscow in 1957: "Two groups—Jews and Gypsies—connected in the past mostly with the southwestern and western regions of Russia, are dispersed throughout all the European parts of the USSR and beyond its borders. The language of the Jews is Yiddish, a Germanic tongue (result of residence in southern Germany during the Middle Ages). The majority of the Jews speak only the Russian, Ukrainian, or Byelorussian languages. The religion of the Jews is Judaism."

The Soviet leaders seemed apprehensive about world opinion. There were unconfirmed reports that a special office had been established in Moscow to counteract "capitalist lies" about the Jews in the Soviet Union. Again, Moscow Radio asserted, for the first time in a long while, that Jews enjoyed equal rights with all other Soviet nationalities and that anti-Semitism was severely punished; according to the announcer, this broadcast was in response to requests from American listeners for news about Soviet Jews. A Yiddish record by the popular singer Zinovy Shulman was played during the broadcast—something very new indeed.

There was very little contact between Russian Jews and Jews in the West. However, an official Jewish delegation from the Soviet Union participated in the commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the ghetto uprising in Warsaw. Among the delegates were Evgeni Dalmatovsky and General David Dragunsky.

Religious Life

Soviet authorities did not directly interfere with Jewish religious practices. Synagogues, where they still existed, were open for daily prayer. But Jewish religious life was disintegrating, and the absence of qualified rabbis of the younger generation threatened the existence of many communities. Foreign visitors reported almost insurmountable obstacles to a Jewish religious life in the Soviet Union. State enterprises and state schools looked with disfavor on those who adhered to "old Jewish superstitions." This was also true of academic institutions and professional societies, which influenced matters of professional advancement (change of jobs, etc.). Again, all religious activities outside of synagogues were prohibited, as were adult religious classes, schools for the religious education of Jewish children, etc. Circumcision was
practised by only a very small number of Jews, most of them far from the big cities.

Prayer books continued scarce. It was reported, however, that in addition to 4,000 previously printed, a second edition was soon to be issued. The rabbinical seminary that had opened in Moscow in January 1957, after decades of a total absence of rabbinical training, had some 30 students in 1958, a large proportion of them from Georgia. At the beginning of 1958 six new students from Tbilisi (Tiflis) were brought to the yeshivah by Hakham Immanuel of the Georgian Jewish Community. In 1958 the yeshivah had its first graduation, and the one newly-ordained rabbi went to the Jewish community of Perm. Soviet authorities approved plans for a new yeshivah building in the precincts of the Moscow synagogue, and about 500,000 rubles ($1 = 4 rubles at the official rate, 10 rubles at the more realistic tourist rate) were voluntarily contributed by Moscow Jews. Judah Leib Levin continued as rabbi of Moscow, and apparently also headed the yeshivah. Rabbi Klebanov was the rabbi of Leningrad. Both these rabbis sent greetings on Israel's 10th anniversary to Israel's Chief Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog.

Cultural Situation

The government continued to discourage Jewish cultural expression in Yiddish. There were no Jewish schools in the Soviet Union, no Jewish newspapers (except for the Birobidjaner Shtern), no Jewish theater, and Yiddish as a language was officially ignored.

Yiddish artists continued to appear on radio and the concert stage, but the Jews in the Soviet Union were still denied a cultural life such as that enjoyed by other national groups in Russia.

In August 1957 Yiddish writers were not invited to a joint meeting organized by the Union of Soviet Writers and delegates to the youth festival in Moscow. Alexei Surkov, secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers, later explained that as the result of inefficient organization an “error” had been made in not inviting the Yiddish writers and that Yiddish writers' groups existed in Moscow and other cities. Some days later, in the headquarters of the Union of Soviet Writers, guests at the festival met a group of Yiddish writers, including Zalman Vendrof, Joseph Rabin, Hirsh Tobin, Rachel Boimvol, Ziane Telesin, Yitshe Barukhovich, and Nahum Oislander, who spoke of the anomalous situation in which Yiddish writers lived and worked. According to the Warsaw Folks-shtimme for August 27 and September 3, they said that Yiddish books were not printed in the Soviet Union, and that Yiddish literature could not exist if it could not be published. A few days later, at another meeting with literary visitors to the festival, Soviet Yiddish writers read from their unpublished works. The New York Communist Freiheit had reported on May 2 that USSR Vice-Minister of Culture Danilov told Vilner, Sloves, and Yudin, of the left-wing Union of Jewish Societies of France, that there was no need of Yiddish books, as the number of Yiddish readers was constantly decreasing. In an interview with Unzer Vort of Paris,

1 It was reported that 70 Yiddish writers were affiliated with the Union of Soviet Writers, and that 20 more were not affiliated.
Ilya Ehrenburg insisted that “Russian Jews are not interested in a specific Jewish culture”; the younger Jewish generation “does not know Yiddish and is not interested in Jewish culture.”

While Yiddish books were not printed, Soviet authorities did permit the issuance of Jewish works in Russian, Ukrainian, and other translations. In 1957, Russian translations included David Bergelson, *Geveilte verk* (Selected Works), 75,000 copies; A. Vergellis, *Dursht* (Thirst), 5,000; M. Hartzman, *Ich hob dich lib, lebn* (I Love You, Life), 3,000; A. Gonter, *Zilberne fedim* (Silver Thread), 5,000; L. Kvitko, *Der fiddel* (The Violin), 300,000, *Dos lid fun main neshome* (The Song of My Soul), 20,000, and *Ikh alein* (Myself), 35,000; I. Kerler, *Main taten's vaingorten* (My Father's Vineyard), 3,000; M. Lifshitz, *Fun der heim* (From Home), 5,000; Peretz Markish, *Geveilte verk* (Selected Works), 10,000; A. Kushnirov, *Geveilte verk* (Selected Works), 5,000; Z. Telesin, *Lebedige vortslen* (Living Roots), 5,000; Z. Fininberg, *Geveilte verk* (Selected Works), 5,000; M. Shturman, *Lebn un arbet* (Life and Work), 5,000; S. Persov, *Geveilte verk* (Selected Works), 30,000; S. Gordon, *In veg* (On the Way), 30,000; Zalman Vendrof, *Dertseilungen fun der fergangenheit* (Tales of the Past), 30,000; I. Gordon, *Novellen un dertseilungen* (Short Stories and Tales), 30,000; G. Dobin, *Dertseilungen* (Tales), 30,000; N. Lurie, *Vald shilkait* (Forest Silence), 15,000; I. Rabin, *Novellen un dertseilungen* (Short Stories and Tales), 30,000.

Yiddish readings and song recitals continued to be one of the most important features of Jewish life in the Soviet Union, both the songs and the stage works following the traditional pattern. From September 25 through October 12, 1957, a program by a Jewish musical and dramatic ensemble, under the direction of Boris Landau and H. Fittelman, was presented in Leningrad. The program included excerpts from Hershele Ostropoler, *Grinefelder* by Peretz Hirshbein, and the *Kishinov makherin* by Abraham Goldfaden. Nehamah Lifshitz, a well-known singer of Yiddish folk songs and a soloist with the Lithuanian Philharmonic, took first prize in the all-Union competition of young stage artists in Moscow on March 6, 1958. Together with other singers, Miss Lifshitz was invited to present her Yiddish repertoire in ten concerts. On April 17, 1958, in the Home of Arts in Leningrad, she sang the *Song of the Ghetto, Main Shtetele Belz*, and a *Niggun* without words. At the beginning of June 1958, she again sang in Moscow with great success. The Leningrad Jewish musical ensemble played to enthusiastic audiences of both Jews and non-Jews in Moscow in June 1958, and later in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and other parts of the Soviet Union. It was estimated officially that about 3,000 Yiddish song recitals and readings had been given in the Soviet Union during 1957 before audiences totaling 3,000,000.

On the 60th birthday of the Yiddish poet Samuel Halkin, the Soviet government gave him the Order of the Red Labor Flag for his contribution to Soviet literature. The Yiddish writer, Yuri Finkel, passed away in Minsk in December 1957 at the age of 61. Announcement was also made of the passing of Boris Vershilov, who was closely connected with the Habimah Theater in Moscow (1923–1925) and later, in the early 1930’s, directed the Yiddish theater in Kiev.

Jewish writer-victims of Stalin were “indirectly” rehabilitated through publication of their names, memorial meetings, and reissuance of their works in
Russian translation. Thus volume 51 of the *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* (Moscow, April 1958) contained, besides other names of victims of Stalin’s terror, those of David Bergelson, Leib M. Kvitko, and Peretz Markish, all deceased in 1952. A Russian translation of poetry and tales by Itzik Feffer was published in 1958.

**Anti-Semitism**

Occasional articles, mostly in provincial publications, seemed to make a point of stressing the distinctively Jewish names of some of the men and women they criticized. It was repeatedly said by visitors to the Soviet Union that anti-Jewish feeling ran high among the people and bureaucracy. An article in *Pravda* for August 15, 1958, written by a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy, U. Mamadaliev, dealt with technical aspects of the oil industry, but the author felt it necessary to write: “The chemist Chaim Weizmann, former president of Israel, has shown a great capacity to write about or even to register patents in his own name in fields well-known and well-described in Soviet literature.” The author added: “Apparently the appetite for things which do not belong to them is great among certain men in Israel, and this hunger is not confined to Arab lands, but extends also to scientific discoveries.”

The situation of the Jews in the USSR caused great concern not only to the free world but also to Communists in the West and in most of the satellites. It was reported that the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union came in for sharp criticism at a meeting in Warsaw on April 20, 1958, attended by delegates to the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. In April 1958 Nikita Khrushchev told Serge Groussard of the Paris *Figaro* that the government encouraged Jewish settlement in Birobidjan. He added that this venture had failed because of the historical predisposition of Jews to individual endeavors and their dislike of collective labor and group discipline. The Moscow radio denied that Khrushchev had made this statement, and branded the *Figaro* story a forgery.

Polish repatriates from the Soviet Union reported continuing discriminations against Jews in employment and in institutions of higher learning. A careful perusal of the Soviet press indicated a virtual elimination of Jewish personnel from the diplomatic services, higher military ranks, and, to a large extent, periodical publications and the daily press. While there was no official limit on the number of Jews admitted to advanced technical and academic institutions, the existence of a quota was reported again and again by Jewish students in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev, in conversations with Jewish visitors from abroad.

**Relations With Israel**

Soviet leaders continued to court the Arab countries and accuse Israel of every possible sin, including preparations for war. During the Iraqi revolution
Soviet leaders warned Israel, in a note published in *Pravda* on August 2, 1958, not to permit American and British aircraft to fly over her territory to Jordan. The note concluded with a warning of possible "conflict with very dangerous consequences for the national interests of Israel." Again, during the Lebanese crisis, the Soviet radio accused the Israelis of supplying the Beirut government with arms captured during the Sinai campaign in 1956.

The first group of Jewish tourists from the Soviet Union visited Israel during the summer of 1958. The Soviet tourists included Sonia Frey, a lecturer at the Economic Institute of Moscow, Galina Sharkova, a reporter on the staff of *Ogonek*, David Sheposhnikov, a professor of botany at the University of Leningrad, Gregori Plotkin, a Ukrainian writer, and others. They visited Israel's factories and institutions of learning. Some spoke Hebrew and all seemed friendly. After their return to the Soviet Union the tourists wrote many hostile and distorted articles on the economic situation in Israel, the school system, and the like. The Soviet authorities were obviously trying to discredit Israel and lessen its attractiveness for Russian Jews. In October members of the Moscow synagogue were induced to send so-called spontaneous letters to the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem asking that members of the Israel embassy stay away from the Moscow synagogue since they behaved badly and even violated the Sabbath.

In June 1958 a Soviet court rejected Israel's claim for damages of $2,396,440 for the cancellation of contracts for Soviet oil deliveries to Israel at the time of the Sinai-Suez campaigns in 1956.

**Birobidjan**

While Soviet leaders were urging the youth to pioneer in the Siberian frontier regions, Birobidjan, situated in the Soviet Far East, was described in the press as a flourishing center of Jewish life. Solomon Kadiner, vice president of the Birobidjan Soviet, delivered a speech on the Moscow radio in which he said that Russian and Yiddish were the official languages of the autonomous region and that all official documents were printed in both languages. It was reported that Birobidjan had 12 middle schools, a boarding school, a musical institute, a teachers' seminary, and a library with some 10,000 volumes in Yiddish. No information was given about the language of instruction or the content of the curricula.

The *Birobidjane Shtern* continued to appear three times a week, the only Yiddish newspaper permitted in the Soviet Union. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency *Daily News Bulletin* of June 10, 1958, reported that during the summer of 1957, Khrushchev told a group of American businessmen, physicians, lawyers, and teachers, that "all that is left now in Birobidjan are signs in Yiddish at the railroad stations, but there are no Jews there." He added that if "they [the Jews] want to create a state within our borders like Birobidjan, nobody is against this, and it exists to this day, but the initiative must come from the Jews there." At the same time, the Soviet leader described the establishment of Jewish schools, theaters, etc., in Russia proper as unnecessary, unwanted, and expensive.
The Pasternak Affair

In October 1958 four Russian citizens were awarded the Nobel prize for 1958, three, Pavel Cherenkov, Igor Tamm, and Ilya Frank, for work in physics, and one Boris Pasternak, for literature. Frank and Pasternak were of Jewish origin. The Nobel physics prizes were accepted in Moscow with apparent satisfaction. But the literature award, which was announced a week before the science awards, brought a violent reaction from Moscow. The award to Pasternak was given for his poetic works and his novel, Doctor Zhivago, which remained unpublished in Russia but had become a best-seller in the West. Written in the great Russian literary tradition, the novel asked basic questions of life, death, resurrection, and the purpose of life. The novel also presented Pasternak's views on the position of the Jews in modern society, appearing to counsel assimilation or actual conversion. The Soviet leaders were not pleased with an author who, in describing life in Russia before and after the Bolshevik revolution, was frankly skeptical of major tenets of Marxism, critical of Communist practices, and overtly Christian in his philosophy and outlook.

Pasternak at first accepted the award and was "immensely thankful, touched, proud, astonished, and abashed." However, after continuous and concentrated attack on the award as a "hostile political act," and open threats of ostracism and exile from Russia, he withdrew his acceptance, explaining his refusal of the prize by "the meaning attributed to it in the society in which I live."

Leon Shapiro

POLAND

During the period under review (July 1, 1957, to June 30, 1958) Wladislaw Gomulka continued to be the dominant figure in Poland. Despite pressure from Moscow and internal difficulties, Poland was still the most liberal country in the Soviet area. But throughout the year, Gomulka demanded full compliance with party directives both from the Stalinists and from those who claimed that the "Polish road to socialism" included free and unhampered criticism of basic Marxist views. The party purge inaugurated in October 1957 was extended to include groups of the creative intelligentsia accused of "revisionist-liquidationist" sentiments.

Gomulka took a centrist course not only within Poland but also in his relations with other countries. Thus, Gomulka, Premier Joseph Cyrankiewicz, and Agriculture Minister Edward Ochab met with Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia in September 1957. In a joint declaration the leaders of both countries expressed their support of Soviet policy on disarmament, on unification of Germany, and on the Near East. At the same time they repeated that relations between Communist countries must be based on "equality, friendship, and noninterference in internal affairs."

The so-called national councils, with communal, municipal, and regional administrative functions, received considerably increased jurisdiction and
authority. In the elections to the councils in February 1958, the PRR (Communist) candidates easily won the top places. Yet the atmosphere surrounding the electoral campaign and the electoral system, which permitted a choice among several candidates running on a single list, showed some trend toward democratization and decentralization. Relative freedom of discussion was also permitted in the Sejm (parliament), where the Catholic group often introduced its own amendments to bills. But at times it seemed that Poland was moving back to a more rigid and orthodox policy, as in the case of the young writer Marek Hlasko, who left Poland. Hlasko was under heavy attack in Poland as well as in the Soviet Union for his work, which was accused of fostering demoralization and revolt among the Polish youth. His recent writing was not accepted for publication in Warsaw.

The agreement with the Roman Catholic church remained in effect, but relations between state and church were seriously strained. In July 1958 the authorities raided the ancient monastery of Jasna Gora at Czestochowa, accusing the church of overstepping the limits of its legitimate concern by such activities as printing special propagandistic literature. At the time of writing there were signs of an accelerating campaign against the church, particularly in connection with the problem of religious teaching in state schools.

The number of agricultural collectives continued to decline, going from 2,200 in the spring of 1957 to 1,926 in August 1957. Significantly, the new five-year plan, covering the years 1961–1965, did not touch on collectivization, but stressed heavy industry.

**Anti-Semitism**

There was no official anti-Semitism in Poland. The leadership of the central government took strenuous measures to fight the continuous anti-Jewish discrimination and the sporadic anti-Semitic incidents that occurred in various localities, in some cases apparently with the connivance of local authorities. Yet neither the October 1956 revolution nor the substantial emigration of Jews from Poland had any visible impact on the violent anti-Semitic feelings so common in Poland. Jewish children, particularly those of families repatriated from Russia and thus unable to speak Polish, were attacked in schools and on the streets. Families of repatriates found it difficult to obtain housing, and many were evicted from newly acquired homes with the silent approval of the police authorities. There were reports of vandalism against many Jewish cemeteries and of attacks on Jews on trains and street cars. In the late summer of 1957, the Communist party’s central committee requested all local party organizations to take stern measures against anti-Semitism in the party, in schools, and in various state enterprises. This was followed by special conferences of local party officials with representatives of Jewish organizations, to initiate local campaigns against anti-Semitism. At the Jewish Cultural and Social Union’s meeting in Warsaw on November 9–10, 1957, Hirsh Smoliar, the president, stated that anti-Jewish incidents were on the way out, but admitted frankly that the anti-Semitic wave had endangered the very existence of Jewish life in Poland.

Anti-Jewish feelings were possibly exceeded only by the traditional Polish
dislike of Russians. Anti-Semitism among Communist-party members and functionaries was acknowledged by Alexander Slaw, secretary of the party's commission for minorities, in an article published in Nowe Drogi in May 1958.

**Emigration and Repatriation**

New regulations, enacted toward the end of 1957, resulted in a considerable decrease in the number of Jews leaving Poland. Among other things, the regulations required payment in dollars for passenger and baggage transportation to Genoa and Trieste. Over 80,000 Jews left Poland for Israel in 1957, but in the first half of 1958 monthly departures averaged only 270.

Repatriation of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union fell during 1958 to 300 a month. The 1957 Russo-Polish general agreement on the repatriation of Polish citizens was to expire on December 31, 1958, but there were reports that the agreement would be extended. It was possible that the extension would bring additional Jewish repatriates to Poland, despite the obstacles which the Soviet authorities placed in the way of Jews seeking repatriation.

There were some differences of opinion about the number of Jews who wanted to leave Poland, but there was no doubt that the repatriates from Russia considered their present status as a temporary arrangement, pending their departure for Israel and other countries.

**Jewish Population**

Accurate data on the Jewish population in Poland were not available. The best estimates, as of January 1958, indicated a total of 41,000 Jews, including 11,000 repatriated from the Soviet Union. The largest Jewish communities were Warsaw, 7,000; Wroclaw (Breslau), 6,500; Lodz, 6,000; Szczecin (Stettin), 3,000; Walbrzych, 2,000; Cracow, 1,200, and Katowice, 1,000. Repatriated Jews were reported to be residing in 27 cities, as follows: Wroclaw, about 2,000; Lignice, 2,000; Walbrzych, 830; Szczecin, 800; Lodz, 800; Dzierzonow, 420; Bielawa, 530; Zgorzelec, 450; Warsaw, 600; Swidnica, 100, and 17 smaller communities, 2,500.

**Communal Life**

After a period of greater tolerance toward emigration, while it was at its peak, the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews reverted to its traditional anti-emigration, anti-Israel position. There were no changes in the leadership of the union. Hirsh Smoliar and David Sfard continuing as president and secretary general.

While probably most Polish Jews despised and suspected the Cultural and Social Union as a Communist creature, it remained legally and politically the most powerful Jewish communal body. The religious congregations continued to minister to religious needs and to engage in some social-welfare work, but began to come under renewed attack by leaders of the union on the ground that there was no need for two central organizations in a small community.

According to reliable reports, the leaders of the union were somewhat un-
It was easy about the revisionism and critical attitudes of some of their local members. It was clear that the union would have to adjust its policy to the changing line laid down by the party for all of Poland.

In November 1957 the Cultural and Social Union reaffirmed in principle its decision to cooperate with the World Jewish Congress. For the first time since 1948, three representatives of Polish Jewry, Hirsh Smoliar, David Sfard, and Michal Mirsky, were present as observers at the meeting of the World Jewish Congress executive in July 1958 in Geneva. A delegation from Poland also participated in the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in July 1957. The delegates were Berl Mark, A. Aizenbach, and T. Berinshtain.

Religious Life

The Union of Jewish Religious Congregations provided for Jewish religious needs in 26 localities. The religious congregations' Va'ad ha-Kehillot continued to take care of burial, cemeteries, mikvaot, and shehitah, and also provided for the special needs of repatriates through kosher kitchens and summer camps for children. It was reported that in 1958 there were 10 small schools of the Talmud Torah type, where children received the rudiments of a Jewish religious education. While there were daily religious services in 26 cities, there was an almost total lack of rabbis, shohatim, and mohalim. At the beginning of 1958 a New York mohel, Rabbi Harry Bronstein, went to Poland and performed a number of circumcisions, particularly among the children of repatriates from the Soviet Union.

There were only two rabbis in Poland, David Percowitch of Warsaw and Morenu of Lodz. Alexander Libo resigned for personal reasons as president of the Union of Religious Congregations and was succeeded by Isaac Frankel.

Jewish Education

The Cultural and Social Union sought to assure the existence of Yiddish schools. These schools faced new conditions created by emigration and by the need of the repatriates' children for different methods of instruction, particularly with respect to language. The lack of textbooks on Yiddish literature, Yiddish language, and Jewish history continued to plague the Yiddish school system. In December 1957 a refresher course for teachers of Jewish history and Yiddish, sponsored by the ministry of education, was inaugurated in Warsaw. At the beginning of the 1957-58 school year the estimated number of pupils in the Yiddish schools was: Szcezin, 200; Walbrzych, 55; Bielawa, 20-30; Dzierzonow, 70-80; Lignice, 400; Wroclaw, 350; Lodz, 333.

Social Welfare

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) program re-established its Polish operation in November 1957, and it was estimated that by September 1958 over 15,000 persons in Poland had benefited from JDC aid. The JDC program in Poland operated through a central Jewish aid committee composed of representatives of the Cultural and Social Union, the religious congregations, and repatriated Jews from the Soviet Union, with
Salo Fiszgrund serving as president and Isaac Frankel as vice president. This central body operated through 14 local committees, all financed and supervised by JDC. The relief program included one-time grants to new arrivals, monthly grants to students and to the physically handicapped, meals for children, and medical care. In September 1958, five to six thousand individuals were receiving monthly aid from JDC. JDC also provided for care of the aged and made special allocations for the upkeep of Jewish cemeteries and for vocational training. In 1958 JDC provided Passover aid by arranging for baking matzot locally under the supervision of rabbinical authorities.

The Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) program was re-established in Poland in December 1957. As of May 31, 1958, ORT institutions were working in 16 towns. Over 1,400 individuals received vocational training in 24 different trades in 55 training workshops and 12 vocational courses. In addition, ORT provided vocational training to some 270 youths organized in four Jewish schools.

To assist in the integration of repatriated Jews, in the summer of 1958 the government established easier terms for those buying homes in Poland. Under the new rules, repatriates were allowed from three to six months to make down payments.

Producer Cooperatives

The Jewish producer cooperatives, an important feature of Jewish economic life in postwar Poland, reappeared on the scene nine years after their dissolution in December 1949 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1951 [Vol. 52], p. 338). The economic integration of Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union presented the Polish Jewish community with a very difficult problem. As these repatriates were viewed with suspicion and received little sympathy from the Polish bureaucrats, it was clear that they would find it difficult to obtain employment in factories or in state enterprises. After much soul-searching, the Cultural and Social Union decided to revive the Jewish producer cooperatives as the best means of channeling the repatriates toward productive occupations. In the development of this program the Cultural and Social Union had to overcome a number of difficulties, the chief of which was the problem of obtaining the necessary credits. By June 1958, 11 Jewish producer cooperatives—tailoring, knitting, shoe-making, etc.—were established in Lodz, Wroclaw (2), Swidnica, Warsaw, Bytom, Zary, Gliwice, Lignice, Zgorzelec, and Dzierzonow. In the first six months of 1958 the 517 individuals in these cooperatives produced goods worth over 9,580,000 zlotas (at the official rate, 24 zlotas = $1). The cooperatives received credit amounting to over 7,150,000 zlotas, of which 70 per cent was supplied by the government and 30 per cent by the JDC-supported Jewish aid committee.

Cultural Activities

During 1957 Jewish cultural activities in Poland were undermined by continuous emigration. At the same time there were Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union who did not know and were not interested in Yiddish. The
first institutions to feel the effects of emigration were the clubs, around which were centered Yiddish speakers' groups, dramatic circles, youth sections, etc. While there were no accurate data on the number of active clubs, it was reported that at the end of 1957 there were 10 Jewish dramatic circles and four Jewish choruses.

The publishing house *Yiddish Bukh* continued its activities. It published a 400-page volume of Jewish songs, in an edition of 1,000. Another volume, by Joseph Sandel, contained studies of Jewish artists who perished under the Nazi occupation, and 70 reproductions of their works.

The Yiddish state theater, whose performances were continuously praised by critics, often played to half-empty houses.

The death of Sholem Asch on July 10, 1957, caused sorrow throughout his native community. *Folksztyme* (*Folks-shtimme*) published a large number of articles about him and critical appraisals of his work, and memorial evenings were organized in all cities with Jewish populations. On October 5, 1957, an evening devoted to Sholem Asch was organized in Kutno, the city of his birth. It was sponsored by non-Jewish cultural organizations, since only two Jewish families remained there. It was also reported that the Polish state publishing agency was preparing to publish Asch's works in Polish translation.

The Jewish section of the Polish Union of Writers was little affected by emigration, and in 1958 it continued its activities under the chairmanship of Berl Mark.

**Fifteenth Anniversary of Warsaw Ghetto Revolt**

The 15th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto revolt was celebrated in April 1958. Representatives of 17 countries, including Jewish leaders of the Western world, participated. General David Dragunsky, representing the Soviet Union, addressed both the closed meetings and the ceremonial gatherings organized in Warsaw.

**Relations With Israel**

In November 1957 Poland and Israel entered into a new trade agreement, involving goods worth $5,000,000 on each side. Although relations between Poland and Israel remained friendly, an Israeli diplomat, Jacob Barmore, was ordered on July 8, 1958, to leave Poland within 48 hours. The Poles accused him of "recruiting Polish citizens for activities contrary to the interests of the Polish nation." Barmore denied this charge.

Leon Shapiro

**Czechoslovakia**

In November 1957 President Antonin Zapotocký died and Antonín Novotný became president. Zapotocký, though unwaveringly subservient to Moscow, had spent his formative years in the Czech Social Democratic party before World War I and had taken part in the factional fights of the first ten years
of the Communist International. Novotný personified the younger generation of militants brought up in Stalinism from the beginning.

The landing of United States troops in Lebanon in July 1958 was dutifully described in the Czech press as akin to the 1956 attack on Egypt by "British, French and Israel mercenaries." Internally, a perceptible tightening of administrative control on the small Jewish population was reflected in an outpouring of "loyalty proclamations" from the weak and defenseless Jewish community. Věstník, the monthly 12-page publication of the Jewish Religious Communities in Czechoslovakia, devoted more and more space to eulogies of the "new socialist order," the Soviet Union as "the greatest force against reaction and anti-Semitism," and the Communist party, "the party of the builders of a new life."

Within two years, four peace proclamations were issued by the Council of Jewish Religious Communities (RŽNO) in the Czech lands (Bohemia and Moravia) and the Association of Jewish Religious Communities (ÚSŽNO) in Slovakia. The last appeal, a peace and disarmament petition addressed to the United Nations in June 1958, was signed not only by all Czechoslovak rabbis and the top officials of the Jewish central bodies but also, for the first time, by spokesmen of 45 congregations in Bohemia and Moravia and of 25 Slovak congregations.

Accentuated repressive measures against "reactionary Zionism" resulted in a new wave of arrests. On November 13, 1957, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Daily News Bulletin reported that the regional rabbi of Northern Bohemia, Bernát Farkaš, and nine co-defendants had been sentenced in a secret trial to prison terms of unknown duration.

There was a steady trickle of reports of arrests, police chicanery, and harassment against Jews. On September 26, 1958, United Press International (UPI) reported from Vienna that at least ten prominent Jews in Czechoslovakia and Rumania had been arrested. The UPI article gave the names of four Jewish leaders, Ernest Meisel and Walter Stein of Prague, Ernst Loeff of Prostejov, and Tiberius Ney of Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), charged with "Zionism and undermining the friendly relations between Czechoslovakia and Egypt."

Jewish Population

The Jewish population of Czechoslovakia had been estimated at less than 15,000 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 332). The Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Daily News Bulletin of June 5, 1958, however, quoted Rudolf Iltis, executive secretary of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Prague, as setting the number of Jews at a little over 20,000, while Rabbi Gustav Sicher gave an estimate of 18,000 to the Budapest Uj Élet in July 1958. Little detail has ever been given in the source material printed inside Czechoslovakia.

Communal Organization and Religious Activities

During 1957–58, 48 Jewish congregations were listed as active in the Czech-speaking provinces of Bohemia and Moravia. They were grouped in nine Jew-
ish religious communities set up as administrative centers, each comprising a number of local subdivisions called synagogal congregations. Their executive agency was the Council of the Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech lands. The chairman of the Council, Emil Neumann, resigned in the spring of 1958, and František Fuchs of Prague was named acting chairman on May 18, 1958.

On June 1, 1958, the assembly of delegates of the 42 Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia—corresponding to the Czech synagogal congregations—met in Bratislava and it elected a new board of the Central Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia, composed of Chief Rabbi Eliáš Katz (ex officio), Benjamin Eichler, chairman, František Komjáty and Ignác Gross, vice-chairmen, and Gabriel Kraus.

The religious life of the Slovak communities was supervised by three rabbis—Chief Rabbi Katz in Bratislava, Rabbi Solomon Steiner in Košice, and Rabbi Gustav Wald in Banská Bystrica—aided by eight “lay ministers.” A resolution adopted by the assembly called for the creation of a school in Bratislava to train religious functionaries, cantors, and shohatim. Hope was also expressed for a Jewish museum in Bratislava.

A new kosher restaurant was opened in Nitra and a new ritual slaughterhouse in Michalovce. With these additions, there was kosher slaughtering in Bratislava, Košice, Levíce, Nitra, and Michalovce, and kosher public eating facilities were available in Bratislava, Košice, Piešťany, Trenava, and Nitra.

The arrest of Rabbi Farkas left only three rabbis in the Czech areas: Gustav Sicher in Prague; Emil Davidovič, the regional rabbi for all of Bohemia; and the aged Richard Feder in Brno for Moravia. Jewish homes for the aged existed in Poděbrady, Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), Brno, and Bratislava. A new synagogue, kosher restaurant, and ritual bath (mikvah) were inaugurated in Karlovy Vary.

The festive celebration of the tenth anniversary of Gustav Sicher’s installation as chief rabbi took place from July 19 to July 21, 1957, and was attended by Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan of France, Rabbi Harold H. Gordon of the New York Board of Rabbis, four rabbis from Hungary—Benjamin Schwartz, Imre Beneschofsky, László Salgó, and Joseph Katona—and Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania. But subsequent official contacts between representatives of the Jewish community of Czechoslovakia and representatives of Jewish life in other countries were largely limited to visits to and from other Soviet satellites. In December 1957, Rudolf Iltis went to Budapest where he delivered a message from Sicher (who visited Hungary himself in July 1958) for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Chief Rabbi Benjamin Schwartz. In April 1958 a delegation composed of Rabbis Katz and Davidovič and Rudolf Iltis attended the 15th anniversary of the ghetto uprising in Warsaw. The Rumanian delegation to the Warsaw gathering, led by Israel Bacal, the chairman of the Association of Jewish Communities, visited Prague on its return trip to Bucharest. From the West, the Czechoslovak community was visited by Otto H. Heim of Zurich, a representative of the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (CJMCAG) in October 1957 and again in June 1958, and by Rabbi Simon Noveck, director of adult education for B’nai B’rith, in June 1958.
A memorial to the martyred Jews of the town of Třebíč in Western Moravia was unveiled on October 27, 1957.

Cultural Activities

The Jewish state museum was in charge of the restoration of the old Pinkas Synagogue in Prague which dates back to medieval times. This synagogue was made into a memorial to the Jewish victims of Nazism in Bohemia and Moravia, and the names of 77,257 Jews who perished in the holocaust were inscribed on its walls. In May 1958 Hana Volavková, the head of the museum, explained the idea underlying the memorial in an address to representatives of the press. “There was no room for big words,” she said, “nor for impressive materials, for bronze or stone. In the traditional spirit only the simplest means were used, namely naked walls and inscriptions.”

The old rural synagogue of Prague-Michle was restored by the state museum and converted into a library and exhibition hall for 1,500 Torah scrolls.

The state museum published a Catalogue of Paintings of Jewish Children in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, with Czech, German, French, and English captions, which won international attention. Invitations to exhibit the paintings were received from Geneva, Leipzig, Vienna, and Haifa. In June 1958 paintings and drawings by artists who had survived Theresienstadt were shown by the state museum in the Maisel synagogue in Prague.

The Jewish Year Book (Almanac) for the year 5719 was published in September 1958. It contained contributions from Rabbis Sicher, Feder, and Katz, Kurt Wilhelm of Stockholm and Imre Beneschofsky of Budapest, and articles and poems by Pavel Eisner, František Gottlieb, František R. Kraus, Arnošt Lustig, Jiří Weil, Hana Volavková, the deceased writer S. Kohn, the poet Ilka Weber who died in Theresienstadt, and others. Jiří Weil published a novel Harfenik (The Harp Player) dealing with the Jews of Prague between the time of Napoleon and 1848. The Naše Vojsko publishing house issued a translation of Der oifshtand in varshauer getto (The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising) by Berl Mark, director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Its Czech title was Hrdinné Kapitoly (Heroic Chapters).

The play The Diary of Anne Frank, which was performed in Prague in 1957, had its première in Brno, the capital of Moravia, on June 28, 1958, in the Julius Fučík Theater. ASAF, the quartet of Budapest cantors, under the direction of Chief Cantor Marin Lorand, gave two concerts in Prague in January 1958, and then proceeded to Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně, Liberec, and Plzeň.

Personalia

Pavel Eisner, linguist, essayist, and translator, and the leading Jewish writer in the Czech language—the only outstanding Czech Jewish literary personality who survived the Nazi years—died on July 8, 1958, at the age of 69.
ON JUNE 20, 1957, the United Nations Committee of Inquiry on Hungary issued its report on the Hungarian uprising of November 1956. The committee, composed of representatives of Australia, Ceylon, Denmark, Tunisia, and Uruguay, unanimously condemned the Soviet Union for crushing the revolution and destroying the legal government of Premier Imre Nagy. The report also stated that the Soviet-imposed regime of János Kádár did not represent the Hungarian people, but control through Soviet military aid and terroristic repression.

The reign of terror continued throughout the period under review. On August 3, 1957, The New York Times reported from Budapest that by that time 105 death sentences had been carried out and some 50,000 people were in jail. On September 9, a private report to the UN General Assembly named 1,400 Hungarians executed or deported to the Soviet Union, stressing that this number represented only a part of the victims of the Kádár regime. Although most trials and executions were carried out in secret, there were frequent reports of the sentencing of entire groups of people, conservative politicians of the pre-war regime, Communist intellectuals and workers, churchmen, students, and army officers. Among the victims were many Jews, particularly writers.

On September 14, 1957, the General Assembly of the UN adopted a resolution, by a vote of 60 to 10 with 10 abstentions, declaring that the Soviet Union had deprived Hungary of liberty and independence, imposed an illegal regime by military force, deported Hungarian citizens en masse, and violated both the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the treatment of prisoners of war and the Declaration of Human Rights. The resolution called on the Soviet Union to cease these violations and respect the independence of Hungary and the human rights of its citizens. It also designated Prince Wan Waithayakon of Thailand as special UN representative on the Hungarian problem, authorizing him to take all appropriate steps to achieve the objectives of the resolution. He immediately requested admission to Hungary both from the Soviet government and the Kádár regime. The request was rebuffed on the ground that it constituted "illegal interference" in the domestic affairs of Hungary.

On January 27, 1958, Kádár announced his resignation as premier and he was succeeded by his first deputy, Ferenc Muennich. Kádár himself retained the post of first secretary of the Communist party. The Muennich cabinet appeared to be more Stalinist than its predecessor. Muennich had always supported whatever tendencies prevailed in the Kremlin. His first deputy, Antal Apró, a former close associate of Mátyás Rákosi, was known as a confirmed Stalinist. Like the Kádár cabinet, the original Muennich government had only one member of Jewish descent: General Géza Révész, the Moscow-trained minister of defense. In February, however, Foreign Minister Imre Horvath died. His successor, Endre Sik, was of Jewish parentage, a brother of László Sik, a Catholic priest and one-time leading religious poet in Hungary. Endre Sik, a former Hungarian envoy to Washington, was considered an old-line Stalinist.
Nikita Khrushchev visited Budapest on April 9, 1958. Defending the Soviet role in suppressing the revolt, he declared that it was the duty of a socialist country to come to the aid of another socialist country when menaced by what he called the fascist imperialism of America. A joint Soviet-Hungarian communiqué issued on the occasion pledged a relentless fight against “revisionism,” as well as against “sectarianism and dogmatism,” the three “mistakes” that had “opened an abyss between the party and the masses” in Hungary.

This communiqué appears to have foreshadowed the secret execution, in the middle of June 1958, of Imre Nagy, General Pal Maleter, and three of their companions in misfortune, after a secret trial at which heavy sentences were imposed on a number of other Communist participants in the November revolt.

Two of the Hungarian Communists executed with Nagy and Maleter were intellectuals of middle-class Jewish origin—Miklós Gimes and József Szilágyi, journalists. Both were caught while leaving the Yugoslav embassy with Nagy. Both left wives and children; Gimes’s family succeeded in escaping from Hungary. Two Jews were also sentenced to prison terms at the same time: Ferenc Donath, an economic expert, 12 years, and Miklos Vásárhelyi, a journalist, 5 years. All of these intellectuals had far smaller roles in inspiring the revolt than such better-known writers of Jewish descent as Gyula Háy and Tibor Déry. In the face of the international protests against the persecutions that followed the suppression of the revolt, Háy and Déry received relatively mild prison sentences.

The wave of repression also affected religious life in Hungary. In November 1958 Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, the Catholic primate of Hungary, was still in asylum in the United States legation in Budapest. In August 1957 a number of members of his entourage were charged with aiding the 1956 revolt. Many Catholic and Protestant clergymen were arrested throughout the country. Two Catholic bishops were interned. Under the impact of these persecutions, the Catholic hierarchy, now headed by Archbishop Josef Groesz, formed a new organization called Opus Pacis (Work of Peace), in the hope of reaching an accommodation with the regime. But on March 10, 1958, the Vatican found it necessary to excommunicate three Hungarian Catholic priests for remaining members of the Communist parliament despite a church ban on political activity by the clergy.

The Protestant churches were compelled to oust leaders who had been sympathetic to the revolution, and to reinstate collaborators with the regime like Lutheran Bishop Lajos Vető and Calvinist Bishop Albert Bereczky. Pressure was applied both by the arrest of clergymen and by reduction or cancellation of state subsidies to the churches, including the Jewish community. These reductions were withdrawn in December 1957 when the church authorities signed an agreement that “the church as a whole will support the government with sincere readiness to aid in its efforts for peace . . . and is taking part in realizing the aims of the People’s Front.” Late in June 1958, Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass, who had earlier spent years in jail but was reinstated in his post during the revolt, was again forced out of office and threatened with charges of counter-revolutionary activities.
Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitic popular feelings persisted in Hungary. The Kádár regime, through its office of religious affairs, repeatedly denounced anti-Semitism as a product of the “mistakes” of the Rákosi regime. In June 1957, it sentenced to death an aged “White Terror” pogromist of post-World War I vintage, an old peasant who through 12 years of Communist rule in Hungary had remained unharmed. But there was a definite cleavage and “distribution of roles” within the regime, with the anti-Jewish role assumed by Minister of State György Marosán. In June 1957, Marosán, the same man who in the winter of 1956–57 declared that the Hungarian uprising was a “Jewish cabal,” publicly stated that the “new” Communist party would not allow the Jewish bourgeois spirit to spoil the party’s “concept of socialism” (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, June 9, 1957). On another occasion he said that it was intolerable to see the Budapest opera house filled, not with workers, but “with Levys and Cohens” (“L‘Air de Budapest,” Evidences, April-May 1958). Kádár himself is quoted in the same article to the effect that most past mistakes of the party resulted from the fact that under Rákosi it was not directed by “real workers” like himself but by “petty bourgeois Jews” (Rákosi, Gcrö, Farkas, Révai, etc.).

Jewish Community

In the spring of 1957, Lajos Heves was dropped from the presidency of the unified Central Board of Hungarian Jews. Under his presidency the revolution had been acclaimed in a formal resolution. He was succeeded by Endre Sós, a journalist whose chief past activity consisted in writing articles in the Jewish weekly Uj Élet (New Life) denouncing the West in general and the United States in particular for fascism and anti-Semitism. Under his presidency the Hungarian Jewish community, with official permission, affiliated with the World Jewish Congress (WJC). In July 1958 a delegation attended a meeting of the executive of the WJC in Geneva.

The Central Board submitted resolutions to the WJC demanding that the State of Israel declare its neutrality and that all Jewish communities of the West join the Kremlin’s peace campaign, against their own “war-mongering fascist-imperialist” governments. During the year, a number of Jewish intellectuals prominent in education, science, the arts, and the medical profession joined the organized Jewish community. By 1958 there were about 100,000 Jews in Hungary.

During 1957–58 the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (CJMCAG) made an allocation of $36,000 to Hungarian Jewry, Hungary thus becoming the first country behind the Iron Curtain to receive such an allocation. The representatives of the Hungarian Jewish community agreed to the usual condition that the CJMCAG would have the right to inspect the manner in which the funds would be spent. The allocation was for the collection of documents and for research on the fate of Hungarian Jewry under the Nazi occupation.

In Budapest the Jewish community maintained two orphanages, a home for the aged, and a Jewish hospital with 100 beds. A Jewish cafeteria served about
3,000 meals daily to the poor. Another home for the aged in the provinces had a kosher kitchen and was maintained by the government.

**Jewish Education and Religious Life**

In Budapest there were two Jewish secondary schools, with an enrolment of 200 Orthodox boys and girls, and a yeshivah, with 12 students. The government paid the salaries of the rabbis and teachers. The language of instruction in the secondary schools was Hungarian, with special Hebrew and religious classes. Budapest also had 16 synagogues with a total seating accommodation of over 3,000, and 10 rabbis. Prayer books and religious objects were allowed to be imported, and the government also made a grant during 1957–58 for repairing the main synagogue in Budapest, which celebrated the centenary of its foundation in 1958, and for the rebuilding of the famous medieval synagogue in Sapron. The Jewish community in the city of Debrecen consecrated a new synagogue, and a new foundation stone for the monument to the Jews of that city who were killed by the Germans was also laid. In December 1957 Chief Rabbi Benjamin Schwartz celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination.

**Cultural Activities**

During 1957–58 the Association of Hungarian Jews organized about 100 cultural meetings in Budapest and about 150 in the provinces. It also published a weekly, *Uj Elet* (New Life). Jewish scholars prepared the following books for publication: *Almanac of Hungarian Jewry*, *History of the Ghetto in Budapest*, Vol. 5 (the last) of *Monumenta Judaica*, and *Jewish Lexicon*. The Jewish museum in Budapest contained a valuable collection of religious treasures and documents on the Nazi occupation. The Budapest Jewish community maintained a library of about 60,000 volumes.

**Emigration**

The Jews of Hungary, living under more uncertain and disheartening conditions than at any time since the end of Nazism, desired increasingly to emigrate. Early in 1957, Hungary unexpectedly permitted a limited number of elderly Jews to go to Israel. In April 1957 the movement was suddenly stopped, and at the time of writing had not been resumed.

For relations with Israel, see p. 233.

**RUMANIA**

The last Jewish member of the Communist leadership in Rumania, Liuba Kishinevski, was purged in June 1958, a year after her husband Josef Kishinevski was removed as secretary of the Party’s central committee. At the time of his dismissal, the central committee had charged Kishinevski with
anti-party activities and intrigues with Ana Pauker (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 340). No reason was announced for the removal of Liuba Kishinevski as deputy chairman of the Party's control commission. It was reported from Vienna on June 14, 1958, that Radio Bucharest had simply announced her replacement by two deputy chairmen.

Ana Pauker, purged in 1952, remained in disgrace, while her non-Jewish deputy, Avram Bunaciu, who had long been rehabilitated, in January 1958 succeeded Foreign Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer, who became president after the death of Petru Groza.

**Jewish Population**

The situation of the Jews in Rumania, whose number was estimated at 225,000, seemed to be deteriorating. In September 1958 Jewish emigrants from Rumania reported an increase in suicides among Rumanian Jews as a consequence of fear and hopelessness.

**Economic Condition**

Leon Crystal, a member of the editorial staff of the New York *Jewish Daily Forward* who visited Rumania in the summer of 1958, reported in that paper in August and September of that year that he had found the Jewish community as a whole impoverished, despite statements to the contrary by Israel Bacal, the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities, and Bercu Feldman, the deputy from Jassy. Even those who enjoyed some material comfort and were reconciled to the regime lived in fear of persecution and denunciation and suffered from a profound sense of insecurity.

In the May 1958 issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, the Rumanian economist Ghitza Jonescu, currently living in the United States, reported that during and after the first five-year plan (1950-55) it was found that an excess of administrative personnel ("almost one clerk for every four workers") was chiefly responsible for lowering Rumanian productivity. There were many Jews in administrative posts, and the reforms instituted to improve industrial efficiency (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 340) led to the dismissal of exceptionally large numbers of them, the more so since the government apparatus was heavily infiltrated by former members of the fascist and anti-Semitic Iron Guard.

**Religious Life**

At the state funeral of President Petru Groza, who died on January 7, 1958, the Jewish religion received the same recognition as other religions. The funeral was conducted according to the Rumanian Orthodox rites but prayers were also recited by Lutheran, Calvinist, Unitarian, Catholic, Jewish, and Moslem clergymen. A dispatch from Bucharest in *The New York Times* of March 4, 1958, characterized this as a "church-state accommodation that imposes certain clear obligations in exchange on each religious community."

The Jewish community fulfilled these obligations faithfully. Chief Rabbi
Moses Rosen, like the Rumanian Orthodox patriarch, the Lutheran bishop, and the head of the Unitarian church, held a seat in parliament and was a staunch supporter of the Communist regime at home and abroad. Rosen told *The New York Times* correspondent of the untroubled functioning of all existing Jewish religious institutions: the Jewish community supported 500 synagogues, a seminary in Arad, a great number of Talmud Torahs, a matzah bakery, and other institutions. The *Times* correspondent mentioned that one of Rosen's sermons contained a party-line attack on the West about Germany. This example could be multiplied many times from the pronouncements of Jewish community leaders and from articles appearing in the official publication of Rumanian Jewry's *Revista cultului mosis* (Review of the Mosaic Religion), which appeared bi-monthly in Rumanian, Hebrew, and Yiddish.

In the *Jewish Daily Forward* of August 8, 1958, Leon Crystal told of an encounter in Bucharest with a Hassidic rabbi, formerly the rabbi of Sculeni, a little town in the province of Moldova. The rabbi, well educated and fully qualified, did not serve in any official position and was therefore independent of the Communist-controlled Jewish community. He did not receive any salary but had to live on the voluntary contributions of his congregation. The American visitor, after a well-attended session at the rabbi's synagogue during which there was a lesson from the Talmud and a sermon, joined a large crowd of worshipers who accompanied the rabbi to his home. The correspondent was particularly impressed by the fact that the marchers displayed no uneasiness and seemed to take this demonstration of Jewish religious faith for granted. Apparently, governmental tolerance in matters of religion extended to activities not under the control of the official Jewish community.

Synagogues and other buildings belonging to the Jewish communities were well cared for. The secretary of the Federation of Jewish Communities, Isaac Friedman, reported in *Revista cultului mosis* (September 15, 1957), that during 1957 major repairs had been carried out on synagogues and other community buildings in the cities of Timișoara, Satu-Mare, Botoșani, Dorohoi, and Suceava. He described a fine vacation resort opened at Borsec, in the Carpathian mountains, for Jewish employees, and wrote that *etrogim* (citrons) had been imported for Sukkot "with the help of the government," but did not identify the source of the money for these and other expenses of the Jewish community.

Two synagogues, one in Jassy and one in Bucharest, were declared historical monuments by the government.

**Cultural Life**

During 1958 news of noteworthy Jewish cultural events in Rumania appeared from time to time in the Jewish press of other countries, but the *Revista cultului mosis*, the official and only publication of Rumanian Jewry, remained consistently silent on the subject. It limited itself to matters of religion, whether by necessity or design, and seemed reluctant to open its pages to any secular content. Contributions to it by Rumanian Jewish literary figures were remarkably rare.

At a Communist conference in Warsaw the Rumanian Jewish writer Israel
Bercovici reported on Jewish cultural life in Rumania. His report, published in the Warsaw Folks-shtimme on May 14, 1958, mentioned eight books published recently, including a volume of verse each by the poets Yudl Weidenfeld, Simoele Schneider, and Relly and Ephraim Blei; a novel (A Shtetl in Moldova) by Benjamin Wilner; two plays by I. L. Brukstein; a book of translations from the Rumanian classics into Yiddish, and an illustrated album commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Abraham Goldfaden, the father of the Jewish theater. The 80th anniversary of the creation of the Yiddish theater in Jassy was celebrated during 1958. In addition, new reprints were issued of the collected works of Mendele Mocher Sforim, I. L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, and the Rumanian Yiddish poet Eliezer Steinbarg. The state publishing house for pedagogic literature was planning the publication of ten Yiddish textbooks, including second-, third-, and fourth-grade readers, a book on mathematics, and one on science.

Bercovici also reported that in the eight years of their existence the Yiddish theaters in Jassy and Bucharest had played a total of 540 performances to audiences estimated at 500,000 and toured the country 18 times, visiting 40 towns. No details were given on the Yiddish school system, which 10 years ago was reputed to consist of 69 elementary and 63 high schools (see American Jewish Year Book, 1956 [Vol. 57], p. 446). The report merely stated that the Yiddish schools and Yiddish “chairs” were doing well—“chairs” being classes of instruction in the Yiddish language in Rumanian public schools. Schools where Yiddish was the language of instruction were reported to have been reduced to four.

Leon Crystal, the Jewish Daily Forward correspondent, was much impressed by the Jewish theater in Jassy and Bucharest. Both theaters were under strict Communist-party supervision and their chief supervisor seemed to be Bercu Feldman, member of parliament from Jassy.

About half of their repertory was made up of inferior propaganda plays (including one called Ethel and Julius, about the Rosenbergs, executed by the United States as Soviet spies), but the other half were plays of artistic merit, skillfully presented. Particularly noteworthy were dramatizations from the works of Sholem Asch, Sholom Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz. (The repertory in Bercovici’s report in Folks-shtimme also included works by the American Jewish authors Leon Kobrin, Jacob Gordin, and Peretz Hirschbein.) Crystal had high praise for a number of Jewish actors, as well as for the Yiddish school of drama in Bucharest, created in 1957, which enjoyed the full support and cooperation of Rumanian artistic institutions, including the conservatory of music. The Bucharest and Jassy troupes made frequent tours, visiting almost all towns of any consequence. Artistic and technical personnel were combined in a “collective.”

Emigration to Israel

The newspaper of the Rumanian Jews in Israel, Viata Noastra, published a series of letters in the summer of 1958 detailing individual cases of distress and heartbreak among ten thousand Jewish families separated when emigration was suddenly suspended in 1951. In 1957 fewer than 800 Jews were per-
mitted to leave for Israel, and during most of 1958 exit permits were granted at the rate of only about 50 a month. But during October 1958, a considerable number of Jews reached Vienna in transit from Rumania to Israel. The New York Times reported on October 26, 1958, that "without announcement, Rumania apparently has eased her ban on migration to Israel to let some Jews rejoin their families." [Emigration thereafter grew very rapidly. It will be covered in the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1960 [Vol. 61]—ED.]

It was significant that a synagogue in Bucharest was named "A. Zissu," in honor of the well-known Zionist leader who was among the first to be arrested and convicted in the course of the anti-Zionist drive of 1949–50 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 330). After years of severe suffering in Rumanian prisons, in 1956 he was finally released and permitted to leave for Israel, where he died shortly after his arrival. But the memorial to his name could not be interpreted as a change in the Rumanian government's vigorously hostile policy toward Zionism.

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