

Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION *

THE 21st congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in January and February 1959 confirmed Nikita Khrushchev as undisputed ruler of the country, the successor of Lenin and Stalin. He too, like them, was acknowledged as the authoritative interpreter of the doctrine of Marx. At the party congress and after, Khrushchev was credited with every Soviet achievement. Any organized Soviet opposition was totally humiliated and destroyed. At the same time Khrushchev continued the "liberal" reforms he had initiated after Stalin's death. While foreign visitors differed as to the extent and character of those reforms, all agreed that the situation in the Soviet Union was changing. The new criminal code, enacted before the 21st congress, prohibited the persecution of entire "dangerous" categories of people without regard to individual action or guilt. Former New York Governor Averell Harriman, visiting Russia in June 1959, reported that fear of foreigners had largely disappeared and that Soviet citizens appeared freer in their discussions of problems and difficulties. But there was no substantial change in the Soviet Union's power structure, and it remained to be seen whether the "rule of law" and "limited freedom" could survive under an essentially autocratic regime.

Economic Policy

The Soviet Union intensified its competition with the West, proclaiming the goal of overtaking America's output and standard of living. The seven-year plan (1959-1965) called for an 80-per cent increase in industrial production and a 70-per cent increase in agriculture. The post-Stalin concessions to the peasants (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 207) were said to be only the initial stage in a plan to replace the traditional villages by the agrogorods (farming towns) proposed by Khrushchev a few years before Stalin's death.

Foreign Policy

Khrushchev continued his visits abroad. In Moscow itself, talking with foreign officials and other important visitors, he tried to convince the West that the Soviet moves for "total disarmament" and "peace" offered a realistic basis for the liquidation of the cold war. At the same time, he sought to

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

persuade the uncommitted nations that their interests were identical with the policies pursued by the Communist nations.

The Soviet leaders found psychological weapons in their sputniks and rockets. They also increased exports and challenged the West with low prices, and credits at low rates of interest.

Soviet influence was present in Iraq, where the pro-Western regime of King Faisal was overthrown in July 1958. Moscow continued its strong pro-Arab stand, and Khrushchev promised new arms to the UAR and declared that Israel had no right to use the Suez Canal (*New York Times*, November 11, 1959).

During the Berlin crisis in November 1958, Moscow increased its pressure for a summit meeting. In the course of discussions on this question, an exchange of visits between the Soviet premier and President Eisenhower was arranged. On September 15, 1959, Khrushchev arrived in the United States, a day after a Soviet space rocket had hit the moon. Khrushchev's visit to the United States eased the Berlin threat and produced tentative agreement on a summit conference in the near future. Immediately after his visit to the United States, Khrushchev went to Peking and lectured his Chinese allies on the "need for peace" and for "abstention from aggressive actions."

Relations with the Satellite Countries

The Soviet satellites continued to enjoy a measure of autonomy in their internal policies and their relations with one another, while recognizing the primacy of the Soviet Union. A Moscow-directed program of economic integration sought to coordinate the separate national economies of the satellites into one organization based on mutual cooperation and division of labor. This effort was entrusted to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which included all the European Communist states except Yugoslavia.

An all-out fight against "revisionism" continued in practically all the countries of the Soviet bloc. Toward the end of 1958 there was a general drive to raise production norms, and the Chinese Communist example was publicized both in the press and on the radio. Especially in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania the call for a "leap forward" was coupled with ambitious plans for the "voluntary" participation of "young brigade workers."

Poland was in the throes of a growing shortage of consumer goods, and its Communist government was gradually shifting away from the relatively liberal spirit of October 1956 and looking to a more rigid economy and a more centralized system to solve its difficulties. Wladislaw Gomulka was still unwilling to impose an orthodox Communist policy by force, but the danger of such a change existed.

Jewish Situation

The Soviet Union continued to hinder Jewish religious, communal, and cultural life. In the satellite countries Jewish life of various degrees of intensity was maintained, notwithstanding difficult conditions, and Yiddish schools and some publishing activities benefited from state support, at least for the time being.

SOVIET UNION *

Jewish Population

THESE were still no official data on the number of Jews in the Soviet Union. (But see p. 351, n. 1.) Some foreign visitors and journalists repeated the estimates of visitors after Stalin's death, while others gave modified figures. Pesah Novik, editor of the Communist New York *Morning Freiheit*, reported that he had been told by city officials in the Soviet Union that Moscow had 400,000 Jews; Kiev, 200,000; Odessa, 200,000; Minsk, 130,000; Bobruisk, 60,000; Kishinev, 30,000, and Vitebsk, 20,000. He also said that some local Jews estimated the Jewish population of Leningrad at 300,000, but that the actual number might be higher (*Morning Freiheit*, March 22, 1959). It was reported that Georgia had 100,000 Jews; Baku, in Azerbaidjan, 100,000, and Riga, in Latvia, 35,000. David Matis, who visited Lithuania, estimated the number of its Jews at 27,000, of whom Vilna had 16,000; Kaunas (Kovno), 5,000; Memel, 4,000, and Sabeli (Shavel), 2,000 (*Morning Freiheit*, August 28, 1959). Recent estimates put the number of Jews in Birobidjan at about 35,000. Thus there was a total of over 1,600,000 Jews in the parts of the Soviet Union covered. Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev told a delegation of American veterans that the Soviet census of January 1959 indicated that there were some 2,000,000 Jews in the Soviet Union (JTA, *Daily News Bulletin*, May 13, 1959). While there was no way of checking the various estimates, available data tended to corroborate Khrushchev's figure.

Communal and Religious Life

The "liberal" reforms introduced by Khrushchev did not appear to affect substantially the status of Soviet Jews as a group. Individual Jews, like other Soviet citizens, benefited from the abolition of terror, labor camps, and the secret police, but the Jewish community as a whole continued to suffer discrimination. Foreign visitors reported that Soviet Jews no longer feared for their lives, as under Stalin, but were seriously concerned about the disintegration of their group life and the destruction of their religion and national identity. There were reports from Communists in Poland and France that the reestablishment of Jewish institutions was discussed at the time of the 20th party congress, in February 1956, but that after some initial hesitation, the Kremlin decided to work toward liquidation of Jewish group life in the Soviet Union. Ilya Ehrenburg, often an official Soviet spokesman, said in Paris that he considered himself a Jew only because there was still anti-semitism in the Soviet Union; once anti-Jewish feeling disappeared there he would see no reason to call himself a Jew (JTA, May 13, 1959).

During the period under review, therefore, Soviet Jews were not permitted to reestablish Yiddish newspapers, Yiddish schools, or a Yiddish theater. (The only Yiddish newspaper was the *Birobidjaner Shtern*.) They lacked any cen-

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

tral communal institution to care for specifically Jewish needs. Even the religious corporations dealing with worship and burial were beset by difficulties. Communication between Jewish congregations in various Russian cities was virtually impossible.

There was no official contact between Soviet Jews and Jewish communities of the West. WJC invited several Soviet Jewish communities to participate in its world assembly in Stockholm in August 1959, but Soviet Jews did not attend. Rabbi Judah Leib Levin of Moscow stated that the activities of the Jewish communities should be limited to religious affairs and that therefore the Jewish communities could not participate in meetings dealing with non-religious matters (*New York Day-Jewish Journal*, June 18, 1959).

The general conditions of Soviet life and the special treatment to which the Jewish group was subjected made Jewish religious life extremely difficult. Reports from the Soviet Union indicated not only increasing disintegration of Jewish religious observance but also discriminatory and oppressive practices, including the closing of synagogues, banning of private prayer meetings, desecration of burial grounds, and bans on baking *matzot*. In June 1959 Soviet authorities closed the great synagogue of Chernovtsy (formerly Czernowitz) in the Ukraine, on the ground that it was "promoting alcoholism." Rabbi Birnbaum of Chernovtsy went to Moscow and asked in vain for the reopening of his synagogue. It was also reported that the Irkutsk synagogue had been converted into housing facilities for medical students and the Baranovici synagogue confiscated for the use of the police. There were also reports of synagogue closings in Chernigov, Korosten, Voronezh, Kremenchug, Tula, Orenburg, and Bobruisk (*New York Times*, May 21, June 19, 1959; *London Jewish Post*, August 14, 1959; *Bulletin international d'information*, Paris, September 1, 15, 1959). Authorities in Kharkov, Odessa, and Vitebsk forbade prayer meetings (*minyanim*) in private apartments, and in some cases religious articles and Torah scrolls were confiscated by the police. Israeli sources charged desecration of Jewish burial grounds and official interference with the baking of *matzot* in Odessa, Rostov, Kharkov, and other cities.

David Miller, a JTA correspondent who visited the Soviet Union in 1959, reported that religious ceremonies at marriages were virtually unknown, and religious rites were only occasionally performed at funerals. *Bar mitzvah* ceremonies were infrequent, and few Jewish youths knew the meaning of or were familiar with phylacteries. Circumcision was rare, parents being reported as fearful that it would endanger their livelihoods or careers. There was a lack of *siddurim*, *mahazorim* (daily, Sabbath, and festival prayer books), religious calendars, prayer shawls, phylacteries, etc. Although synagogues, especially those visited by tourists, were in tolerable condition, many Jewish religious corporations were refused permission to build new synagogues or repair old ones.

Soviet authorities repeatedly denied discrimination against Jews. The Soviet embassy in Washington distributed a statement by a Moscow Jew, A. S. Rabinovitch, purportedly written to dispel "untruths" about anti-Jewish persecution in the Soviet Union. According to Rabinovitch, there were 40 functioning synagogues in the Ukraine alone. He said that the

absence of synagogues in some towns was due to the fact that "our people now believe in sputniks and not in religion" (*New York Times*, August 16, 1959).

In June 1959 B. Z. Goldberg of the *Day-Jewish Journal* reported on his visit to the Moscow yeshivah. In 1959 the yeshivah had 16 students, half of them from Bokhara and Georgia, in Asia. Students and their families (most of them were married) were assured free lodgings and kosher meals and in addition received from the yeshivah 1,000 to 1,500 rubles monthly, which, by Soviet standards (official rate of exchange, \$1 = 4 rubles), represented a considerable stipend. Despite its short existence, the Moscow yeshivah, opened in 1957, had already graduated several students, who then joined the very depleted rabbinical personnel of the Soviet Union.

There was no precise information on the number of Jewish religious corporations in the Soviet Union or their membership, nor were there available accurate lists of rabbis active in the Soviet Union. Rabbi Judah Leib Levin was rabbi of Moscow, head of the Moscow yeshivah, and leading rabbi of the Soviet Union. Rabbis Krebanov and Panich were the rabbis of Leningrad and Kiev, respectively. Among the Oriental Jewish communities in the Soviet Union, the names of Hakham Emanuel of Tbilisi (Tiflis) and Hakham Mishuel of Kularz, both in Georgia, were known. In a statement to Tass, Rabbi Levin said that Moscow had four synagogues open for daily prayer. He also indicated that the Jewish community of Moscow had 600,000 rubles in the official state bank (*Jewish Post*, August 14, 1959). It was reported from Jerusalem that in 1959 no Rosh ha-Shanah greetings were received by the chief rabbinate from the rabbis of the Soviet Union. Apparently Soviet rabbis felt that even purely religious contact with rabbinical authorities in Israel would be viewed with suspicion by Soviet authorities. Soviet postal authorities returned to the Israeli chief rabbinate 185 parcels of *etrogim* (citrons) and *lulavim* (palm branches) addressed to various Jewish communities in the Soviet Union for use on Sukkot. The parcels were marked "forbidden for import."

Neglect of Mass Graves

Soviet authorities tried to obliterate the memory of the mass exterminations of Jews by the Germans in towns and villages of the Soviet Union. Jewish mass graves were uncared for, and not only did Soviet authorities do nothing to honor the memories of the victims, but they did not even permit the Jews themselves to make the necessary arrangements according to religious customs covering burial grounds. The *Yad wa-Shem Bulletin* (Jerusalem, July 19, 1958) reported that the suburb of Babi-Yar, near Kiev, where some 80,000 Jews were slaughtered and thrown into prepared pits by the Nazis, had become a pasture for cattle. The same neglect was noted at Bald Mountain in Berdichev, where 30,000 Jews were murdered in the Bagonine quarter, in Zhitomir, and in many other places.

Cultural Situation

Soviet leaders frequently repeated that Russian Jews preferred to assimilate. According to the official line, Jewish culture in the Soviet Union died a natural and unlamented death. At a press conference in the United States on January 15, 1959, First Deputy Premier Anastas I. Mikoyan declared:

In my country all peoples enjoy freedom for the development of their culture. They can have their theaters and their literature, and that includes the Jews. However, the Jewish population has merged with Russians in Russian culture so fully that Jews participate in general culture and literature on the Russian stage and in Russian literature. There are many Jewish writers who consider themselves Russians and prefer to write Russian. We cannot interfere in that matter. . . .

Another explanation for the absence of Yiddish cultural activities was advanced by Vyacheslav P. Yelyutin, the minister of higher and secondary education of the Soviet Union, who came to the United States as a member of Khrushchev's party in September 1959. Yelyutin stated that there was no point in reviving Yiddish-language schools because Jews were widely dispersed among Russian, Ukrainian, and other non-Jewish peoples. He argued that if Jews were to be taught in Yiddish they would not be able to work effectively with their non-Jewish fellow citizens (*New York Times*, September 19, 1959).

While the Jewish nationality was recognized by the basic laws of the land, the situation of the Jewish group thus differed from that of other nationalities of the Soviet Union. Yet recent reports indicated that contrary to the official assertion, certain segments of Russian Jewry retained great interest in Jewish values and a profound desire for Jewish knowledge and self-expression. Hayyim Sloves, a staunch Communist from France, returned from the Soviet Union, where he had met with many Jews from all walks of life dissatisfied with the official line on Jews and Jewish culture. In *Yiddishe Kultur* (New York, February 1959), he stated:

Many Moscow Jews . . . acknowledged . . . that, judging by their children as well as by the children of their friends, a profound spiritual change has taken place in certain groups of the Soviet Jewish youth in the course of the last years. . . . This youth, in whom the identification with Jewishness had begun to be almost atrophied, suddenly awakened . . . to an extraordinary interest in all things Jewish.

Also, according to Sloves, Soviet Yiddish writers said that there was a great demand and market for Yiddish literature in the Soviet Union, equal to that for books issued by other national minorities. Although Sloves remained a devoted Communist, he nevertheless concluded that "the official integration theory is in absolute and categorical opposition to Soviet Jewish reality."

His statement seemed to be confirmed by the apparent survival of Yiddish despite all the measures taken by the Soviet authorities. Young actors and singers brought Yiddish readings and concerts to considerable audiences in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Kherson, and other cities. In 1958 the Leningrad Jewish Musical and Dramatic Ensemble presented a program

of songs and dances based on both a traditional Jewish repertoire and modern works of Soviet Yiddish writers. Among the participating artists were Esther Roitman and Nadia Zatorova, in dramatic numbers; Nata Kron, Nahum Agronov, and David Stiskin, singers, and Nahum Zloff, Halia Lebed, Miriam Kachkovskaia, and Elena Ganelina, dancers (*Folks-shtimme*, Warsaw, June 25, 1958). Again in Moscow, on March 4 to 8, 1959, Nehamah Lifshitz presented on the concert stage *Di blondzhendike shtern* ("The Wandering Stars"), before leaving for a tour through the provincial cities of the Soviet Union. *Folks-shtimme* also reported Yiddish artistic efforts in Vilna, Kaunas (Kovno), Riga, and many other cities. It was also reported that a book of Yiddish folk songs by Zinovyi Kompanietz was scheduled for publication in the near future.

In 1958 the Leningrad division of the Soviet Union Art Fund issued an album of illustrations with Yiddish text for Sholem Aleichem's tale, *Der farkishefter shnayderl* ("The Bewitched Tailor"), by the well-known Jewish painter Tanhum Kaplan. The same organization was preparing for publication two other albums, one of the text of *Tevya der milkhiger* ("Tevya the Milkman"), and another of *Di hoipt personazhn in Sholem Aleichems shafung* ("The Principal Characters in Sholem Aleichem's Work"). The exhibition of painters and etchers of Leningrad, organized by Soviet artists in the spring of 1959, included many works by Jewish painters on Jewish themes. Among them were Solomon Gershov, Tanhum Kaplan, S. Steinberg, S. Kaufman, Shor, and Charshak.

During the American exhibit in Moscow in the summer of 1959, Soviet authorities requested the removal of a number of books from the exhibit, among them "controversial" books dealing with Jewish subjects. Energetic protest resulted in restoring the volumes on Jewish history (*Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, edited by Leo M. Schwartz, and *History of the Jewish Khazars*, by D. M. Dunlop), but not the books on Israel (*Israel and Its Glory*, edited by Abraham Harman, and *The Politics of Israel*, by Marver H. Bernstein).

The 1959 recipients of the Lenin prize included a number of scholars who were Jewish: V. Weksler, A. Mintz, N. Monosson, Samuel Ruptschinsky, M. Rabinovitch, Abram Koltun, Zalman Gamce, M. Berman, and Moses Bass (*Sovetskaya Kultura*, Moscow, April 22, 1959). There may have been other Jewish winners as well.

SHOLEM ALEICHEM CENTENNIAL

The 100th anniversary of the birth of Sholem Aleichem was noted in both *Pravda* (March 2, 1959) and *Izvestia* (March 1, 1959) as well as in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Ogonek*. The state issued a special 40-kopek stamp bearing a portrait of Sholem Aleichem; but while the other stamps in the same series identified the person honored by nationality and achievement (e.g., "Ilya Chavchavadze, famous Georgian writer"), Sholem Aleichem's stamp, uniquely, bore only his name, with no explanatory legend. For the first time since the anti-Jewish persecution began under Stalin, a slim volume of Sholem Aleichem's tales, in Yiddish, was published by the State Belles Lettres publishers in Moscow. It was prepared by Arn Vergelis and was issued in an edi-

tion of 30,000 copies under the title *Oisgeveilte verk* ("Selected Works"). The Foreign Language Publishing House in Moscow distributed an English translation of Sholem Aleichem's *The Bewitched Tailor*.

According to reports from Moscow, a group of translators was assigned to prepare a new six-volume edition of Sholem Aleichem's works in Russian, of which 150,000 copies were to be published. Soviet sources claimed that Sholem Aleichem had been translated into 15 Soviet languages and had a sale of nearly six million copies. Other projects in connection with the Sholem Aleichem anniversary included a monograph by G. Reminik, a volume by Shatz-Anin, another volume by Israel Serebriany, and a novel based on Sholem Aleichem's life by Abraham Kahan.

Antisemitism

All recent visitors to the Soviet Union reported widespread antisemitic feeling among both the population and the Soviet elite. Ilya Ehrenburg frankly admitted the existence of antisemitic feeling in the Soviet Union. Just before the Soviet Writers' Congress in 1959 he returned to the problem of antisemitism in an article on Anton Chekhov. Among other things, he emphasized Chekhov's distaste for antisemitism and racial prejudice. "On Rereading Chekhov," published in *Novy Mir* (May-June 1959), created a stir among Moscow's literati.

Harrison E. Salisbury of the *New York Times* reported that "antisemitic tendencies are still alive and powerful" (September 12, 1959). In hiring personnel, consideration was given not only to ability but also to national origin. Jewish candidates for important jobs in the Ukraine, White Russia, etc., were disqualified on national grounds. While the Soviet minister of higher and secondary education stated that there were no quotas limiting the admission of Jews to educational institutions (*New York Times*, September 29, 1959), it was nevertheless reported that Jewish students experienced difficulties in entering certain schools. There were also persistent reports of surprisingly small Jewish enrollments even in places with a substantial Jewish population.

Anti-Jewish stereotypes appeared with increasing frequency in the provincial press. One article, *Zreci Boga Yagve* ("Priests of the God Jehovah"), by Panas Efremenko, appeared in the Ukrainian *Prikarpataska Pravda* (Stanislav, September 24, 1958). With its blatant attack on the Jewish religion and its association of Jewishness with filth, treachery, etc., it could easily be mistaken for the invention of some Nazi paper. Less virulent but equally revealing was a piece in *Sovetskaya Moldavia* (July 23, 1959) in which the author accused the rabbis of ignorance and reactionary thinking and insinuated that religious Jews despised honest work.

Despite denials by Moscow, signs of anti-Jewish campaigns multiplied. There were reports of the arrest of eight Jewish students in Minsk "for having organized a Zionist cell." There was also a report of the imprisonment of elderly Jews in Moldavia for "insobriety"; the accused were drinking wine in observance of the ancient *havdalah* rite at the end of the Sabbath (*New York*

Times, June 19, 1959; JTA, August 18, 1959). In October 1959 it was reported from Kiev that the name of Sholem Aleichem Street in that city had been changed to Konstantinovskaya Street. There were also cases of violent anti-semitism, engineered, apparently, by habitual criminals, delinquent youths, etc. The *New York Times* (October 13, 1959) reported attempts at arson in the synagogue of Malakhovka, near Moscow. Leaflets posted in Malakhovka invited the citizens to "kill the Jews and save the revolution." (Another version was ". . . save Russia": *Sotzialisticheski Vestnik*, New York, December 1959.)

Relations with Israel and the Middle East

There was no change in the hostile Soviet attitude towards Israel. Radio Moscow attacked Israel as the 51st state of the United States and insisted that United States aid to Israel was being used mainly for military expenditures. That "the aggressive militaristic policies" of Israel had little support from the "Israeli masses" was a thesis of *Gosudarstvo Israels, Evo Polozhenie e Politika* ("The State of Israel: Its Situation and its Politics"), by K. Ivanov and Z. Sheinis, published by Gospolitisdats in 1958. Intended for internal propaganda, it was full of vitriolic attacks on Zionism—e.g., that it was a species of racism.

The Kremlin leaders continued to court the Arab states. In May 1959 an agreement to strengthen Soviet-Iraqi friendship was signed, and various moves were under way to increase cultural exchanges between the Soviet Union and Iraq. At the same time, Soviet advisers were working on the Aswan dam in Egypt, and Soviet aid was warmly praised by the Egyptian press.

According to reports in the London *Financial Times* (August 30, 1959), shipping links between Israel and the Soviet Union, cut off during the Sinai campaign in 1956, were quietly resumed. Despite Khrushchev's hints that at some unspecified future date Russian Jews would be permitted to go to Israel, Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union was prohibited, with very rare exceptions.

Birobidjan

The Jewish population of Birobidjan was estimated at 35,000. Though Soviet Jews preferred to think of Birobidjan as a dead issue, there were recurring rumors of the projected forced removal of Jews to the autonomous region.

In January 1959, during Mikoyan's visit to the United States, he told American Jewish Committee leaders that "the reported plans for the recreation of a Jewish state in Birobidjan and the transfer of the Jewish population in Russia to that area is without foundation." The only Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union, the *Birobidjaner Shtern*, with a circulation of 1,000, continued to appear three times weekly, but Jewish cultural life in the territory had disintegrated. There were no Yiddish schools or Yiddish movies, and the Yiddish language was heard infrequently in the city. Jewish religious life was very limited. Religious services were conducted in a make-

shift building, without a rabbi, and attended chiefly by old men and women. According to the *Day-Jewish Journal* (August 24, 1959), *Soviet News* of the Russian embassy in London reported that a volume entitled *Jewish Autonomous Region*, containing stories, poems, and articles, recently appeared, with contributions by Yiddish writers translated into Russian.

LEON SHAPIRO

POLAND *

DURING the year under review (July 1, 1958, through June 30, 1959) much of Wladislaw Gomulka's energy was devoted to fighting both the remaining Stalinist die-hards and the liberal elements that had spearheaded his return to power.

In December 1958 Poland commemorated the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Polish Communist party. It was also celebrated in the Soviet Union, where in 1938 Stalin had liquidated the Polish Communist leadership and dissolved the party itself. Anastas Mikoyan represented the Soviet Union at the celebrations in Poland and praised Gomulka for "leading the party forward in an earnest and Bolshevik way."

At the third congress of the Polish United Workers (Communist) party in Warsaw in March 1959, Gomulka made it clear that he fully accepted Marxist-Leninist doctrine as currently interpreted by Nikita Khrushchev, and that "revisionists" faced expulsion from both party and government jobs. Nevertheless, the regime continued its tolerant attitude toward scholarship, literature, and the arts, and the Polish intelligentsia still enjoyed considerable freedom.

After much soul-searching, the Gomulka regime recognized "the leading position" of the Soviet Union among "socialist" countries and of the Soviet Communist party among the "equal" parties of those countries. While there was no break in the friendly relations with Tito's Yugoslavia, Gomulka censured the League of Yugoslav Communists for its isolationism and lack of confidence in the world Communist movement.

There was no substantial change in relations between the state and the Roman Catholic church. The press continued to denounce the "political intervention" of the church in the secular domain, and some priests were arrested and jailed for "black marketing," use of the church for "nonreligious purposes," etc. However, the basic state-church agreement remained in effect.

While respect for "the will of the peasants" continued to be the official policy, the importance of agricultural collectives was increasingly stressed and the peasants were apparently being prepared for a possible policy change.

Jewish Situation

Jewish repatriates from Russia continued to arrive, and Jews continued to leave Poland for Israel and other countries. But the year under review saw

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

a certain stabilization of Jewish life in Poland. A division was still felt between the old settlers and the repatriated Jews, but the feeling of panic and helplessness, particularly among the repatriates, had substantially disappeared. In November 1958 the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews condemned the emigration trend as a survival of "bourgeois ideology" and invited all Jews "to think twice before taking the decision to emigrate" (*Folks-shtimme*, Warsaw, November 20, 1958).

The central government and the party took energetic measures to combat antisemitism, but anti-Jewish prejudices remained widespread. Anti-Jewish incidents and acts of vandalism took place in various localities. It was also reported that before the Communist congress in Warsaw in March 1959, an antisemitic leaflet was circulated among party members by Polish Stalinists as a means of fighting Gomulka and the new regime. However, the Communists in charge of Polish Jewish affairs strongly denied any serious danger of antisemitism in the party or the government. They cited, among other things, the fact that Roman Zambrowski, a Jew, was on the party politburo. Szymon Zachariasz, a leader of the Cultural and Social Union, was on the party's Central Control Commission.

Jewish Population

Accurate data on the Jewish population of Poland were not available. According to the best estimates, in June 1959 there was a total of 41,000 Jews, including 12,000 repatriates from the Soviet Union, in a total Polish population of 28,783,000.

Repatriation and Emigration

The 1957 Russo-Polish agreement on repatriation of Polish citizens, which was to expire on December 31, 1958, was continued, first through March and then through June 1959. As a result, Polish citizens registered before March 31, 1959, but unable to leave within the agreed period, could do so. It was estimated that from the beginning of the repatriation in 1957 through June 1959, over 18,000 Jews returned to Poland from the Soviet Union. About 6,000 of them left for Israel, France, and other countries and 12,000 stayed in Poland, joined by 500 more in July and August 1959. Only a few Jews left Poland during the summer of 1959.

Communal Life

The Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, the central organization of Polish Jewry, had 21 local committees serving a membership of 5,000, including 700 "activists." It was reported in the spring of 1959 that the Cultural and Social Union was suffering from a shortage of funds because the government subsidy had been reduced and income from membership was inadequate. There were no new elections during the period under review, and Hersh Smoliar and David Sfarid continued as president and secretary general, respectively.

Many Jewish leaders from Israel, Europe, and America visited Poland.

Jacob Blaustein, honorary president of the American Jewish Committee, spent two weeks in Poland at the invitation of the Polish government, visiting many Jewish communities and meeting with Jewish leaders.

The Cultural Union was still discussing with WJC whether and on what terms it should affiliate with that body. Three representatives of the union—Michael Mirsky, Hersh Smoliar, and David Sfar—attended the plenary assembly of WJC in Stockholm in August 1959 as observers and criticized Israel and WJC.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Jewish visitors from abroad reported a considerable increase in religious interest among Polish Jews. Interest in religious identification was also seen among the Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union, some of whom had for a number of years been totally cut off from Jewish life. The Jewish Religious Congregations (Wa'ad ha-Kehillot) ministered to Jewish religious needs in 26 localities. During the summer of 1959 a special rabbinical meeting in Warsaw discussed the situation of religious Jewry in Poland. It was reported that there were 17 small schools of the Talmud Torah type, where Jewish children received some rudimentary religious education. The Wa'ad also took care of the cemeteries, most of which were in dire need of repair. In addition to its purely religious activities, Wa'ad ha-Kehillot, with the help of JDC, provided for the special needs of repatriates by kosher kitchens and summer camps for children. Toward the end of 1958, 15 kosher kitchens in Dzierzow, Lignice, Swidnica, Wroclaw (Breslau), Cracow, Warsaw, Lodz, and other places distributed 50,000 kosher meals a month to 2,000 persons, 90 per cent of them repatriated Jews. The Communist activists in Jewish affairs vehemently denounced Jews eating in skull caps in the Lignice kosher kitchen (*Folks-shtimme*, June 5, 1958).

Isaac Frankel was president of the Wa'ad, and David Percowitch was rabbi of Warsaw. During the summer of 1959, Rabbi A. Zibes was appointed deputy to old Rabbi Percowitch. Rabbis Perlow and Kivelevitch, who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union, reportedly returned to Poland. A serious lack of religious personnel continued.

JEWISH EDUCATION

In the 1958-59 school year a difficult situation arose from the influx of new pupils from repatriated families and the lack of qualified teachers. The schools used every inducement to attract teachers. Thus, in *Folks-shtimme* of November 29, 1958, an advertisement promised teachers immediate employment and housing in Lignice and Dzierzow.

A special conference was held in June in Warsaw on problems of teaching Jewish history and Yiddish, at which L. Lozowski represented the ministry of education.

At the end of the 1958-59 school year, Jewish state schools had a total enrollment of some 3,000 pupils. These included Yiddish schools in Lignice (800), Wroclaw (500), Lodz (400), Szczecin (Stettin) (300), Walbrzych (300), Dzierzow, and Bielawa.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The welfare program of JDC reached about 20,000 individuals in 1959. Operating through local Jewish welfare committees, it included assistance in home furnishing (2,300 individuals), cash relief (4,000), feeding of school children (2,500), grants to families of ORT trainees (6,000), etc. JDC also supported a home for the aged in Lodz and various projects of the religious congregations, and contributed to capital investment for producers' cooperatives. Initiated in 1957 especially for repatriated Jews, the JDC program now largely also covered the needs of the local Jewish population. An estimated 50 per cent of the Jews in Poland received JDC help in one form or another.

ORT provided technical training for 4,000 persons in a large variety of trades. In March 1958 ORT was active in 21 localities, besides teaching trades in the Jewish schools. Local Jewish leaders stressed the need to expand constructive aid programs, emphasizing vocational training and the so-called "productivization" of individuals without technical trades (*Folks-shtimme*, February 5, 1959).

ECONOMIC STATUS AND PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVES

In September 1958 a special conference was held on the economic status of the Jewish population and questions connected with the producers' cooperatives. While the Communist leadership contended that Jews should become fully integrated into Polish society, Jewish workers and artisans still suffered from discrimination in factories and shops. The producers' cooperatives aided not only the repatriated Jews, for whom they were initially reestablished in 1957, but also the longer-settled Jewish artisans and workers, giving productive employment to many Jews who otherwise would have had difficulty finding suitable jobs. On January 1, 1959, there were 11 Jewish cooperatives producing clothing, shoes, hats, cotton and leather goods, etc. They employed 723 workers, compared with 517 on June 30, 1958 (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 218). Plans for 1959 called for a further increase to 1,170 by the year's end. Nine of the 11 cooperatives were working at a profit, and the total product of all 11 in 1958 was zł.30,243,000 (*Folks-shtimme*, March 5, 1958). At the official rate the dollar was worth 24 zloty.

A law passed in July 1958 regulated the issuance of permits to artisans, permits for opening private commercial enterprises, etc. It established a scale of payments for the issuance of artisan licenses ranging from 500 to 10,000 zł., but exempted from payment those who had worked for more than 20 years as artisans.

Since an estimated 12 per cent of the gainfully employed Jews in Poland were artisans, the new law could have important repercussions on the economic status of the Jews.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Cultural and Social Union made strenuous efforts to reestablish Yiddish cultural activities, which had been undermined by Jewish emigration from Poland. It was officially reported that in October 1958 there were six dramatic

groups, six choruses, eight youth clubs, and a puppet theater for children. A special seminar for cultural workers in October 1958 was designed to improve local standards and to replace experienced men and women who had left Poland.

A countrywide conference of supporters of the Yiddish Bukh publication society was held in Wroclaw in January 1959, and was attended by 90 delegates from local unions, the press, etc. In 1958 Yiddish Bukh, under the direction of Leyb Domb, published Raphael Mahler's *Yiden in amoliken Poilen in likht fun tzifern* ("Jews in Early Poland in the Light of Numbers").

The Jewish Historical Institute continued research as well as issuing its publications, *Bletter far geshikhhte* in Yiddish and a bulletin in Polish. In 1958 the institute published, in Polish, a study of the extermination of Jews in occupied Poland.

The 100th anniversary of the birth of Sholem Aleichem was celebrated at a meeting on March 2, 1959, in Warsaw, organized by the Cultural and Social Union in cooperation with non-Jewish organizations. Similar assemblies were held in many other Polish towns.

On August 13, 1958, the 20th anniversary of the death of A. M. Wajsenberg, one of the creators of modern Yiddish literature, was observed. The Yiddish State Theater continued its activities, and on October 5, 1958, left for a tour of France and Belgium.

Toward the end of 1958 the Yiddish press, particularly *Folks-shtimme*, devoted many issues to commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Polish Communist party and Jewish participation in the Polish workers' movement.

LEON SHAPIRO

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

FROM mid-1958 to mid-1959 the "peace campaign" of the Soviet bloc was the main theme of the political pronouncements of the central bodies of Czechoslovak Jewry which appeared in the unsigned editorials of *Věstník* ("Gazette"), monthly publication of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities. Warnings against the idealization of Masaryk and Beneš by "some of our correligionists" figured as a minor motif.

At the same time, however, the 40th anniversary of October 28, 1918, founding day of the first Czechoslovak republic, was officially celebrated. On that occasion the Jewish Council of Prague received congratulatory communications from the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, the so-called Jewish Community of Greater Berlin, the Jewish Consistory of the Bulgarian People's Republic, and the Jewish community of Hungary.

Věstník's silence on Zionism and Israel was broken only once, in August 1959, when it ran an article entitled "Israeli Arms for West Germany's Army" that reported the protest of the Jewish Council of Prague and the Central Jewish Association of Slovakia against Israel's delivery of grenade launchers to the Federal Republic of Germany. The same issue of *Věstník* published a

message from Chief Rabbi Gustav Sicher to the World Youth Congress in Vienna.

The reply of President Isaac Ben-Zvi of Israel to the Czechoslovak protest, made public on August 30, pointed out that Czechoslovakia was the main supplier of arms to Israel's Arab neighbors, and that German guilt was distributed equally between West and East Germany.

Jewish Political Prisoners

The appeal of 27 Zionist leaders, sentenced to prison between 1952 and 1954, was denied by the judicial authorities of Prague. They were reported serving their sentences in the uranium mines of Jáchymov, the older prisoners assigned to surface duties, the younger to work underground. Socialist spokesmen in Great Britain interceded unsuccessfully for this group with Mikhail A. Suslov, a leading Soviet Communist, when he visited England in March 1959. It was reported that the Czech authorities had promised that the cases of the imprisoned Jews would be reconsidered individually.

Mordecai Oren unsuccessfully petitioned the Supreme Court of Czechoslovakia for a review of his case. Oren, sentenced in 1953 to 15 years in connection with the Slánský case, was released from prison in 1956 (AJYB, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 323) and expelled from Czechoslovakia. In 1958 he published an account of these events, *Reshimot Asir Perag* ("Notes of a Prisoner in Prague"), in Israel. In 1959 Oren's party, Mapam, launched a campaign for his rehabilitation and for the release of the jailed Zionists in Czechoslovakia.

The May 1959 issue of *Mezinárodní Politika* ("International Politics") included an article on the German question by Vavro Hajdů, a former deputy foreign minister and one of the three defendants in the Slánský case who were not executed. The two other survivors of the trial, Evžen Loebl and Artur London, had been freed in 1956 (*New York Times*, May 27, 1959). All three were of Jewish origin. They had received life sentences as "Trotskyite-Titoist-Zionist bourgeois nationalist traitors and enemies of the Czechoslovak people." The release of Bernard Farkaš, regional rabbi of Northern Bohemia who had been arrested in March 1957, was indirectly announced when the October 1958 *Věstník* stated that Rabbi Farkaš had resumed his office on September 1, 1958.

Communal Organization

There was no change in the organizational structure of Czechoslovakia's 18,000 Jews (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], pp. 220-21). In Bohemia and Moravia the nine Jewish religious communities, with their local synagogal subdivisions, were represented by the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech Lands. Forty-two Slovak congregations were affiliated with the Central Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia.

With the return of Rabbi Farkaš, there were again four rabbis in Bohemia and Moravia: Chief Rabbi Gustav Sicher and Rabbis Richard Feder, Emil Davidovič, and Farkaš. Slovakia had Chief Rabbi Eliáš Katz and Rabbis

Solomon Steiner and Gustav Wald. Hope was expressed that the contemplated opening of a Jewish seminary in Bratislava would eventually alleviate the shortage of rabbis and religious teachers.

In October 1958 *Věstník* published an appeal to the Jews of Czechoslovakia to fulfill their financial duties to the Jewish communities, complaining that Jewish spokesmen, in their budgetary negotiations with representatives of the national committees of their districts, found it hard to explain why contributions obtained through the voluntary religious tax were so small.

During the first half of 1959 the congregations in the western provinces elected new officers in preparation for the triennial elections to the council, scheduled for December 1959.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The number of books on Jewish themes increased. Several, by both Jewish and non-Jewish writers, were published outside the framework of organized Jewish life. *Pět svátečních svitků* ("Five Holiday Scrolls"), a new Czech translation of the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, was edited by the young semitologist Stanislav Segert, who also wrote introductions for the individual books and contributed the translations of Ecclesiastes and Esther. For the other translations he secured the collaboration of the great Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert and of Vilém Závada and Věra Kubičková.

On the occasion of the Sholem Aleichem centennial, the State Publishing House for Literature, Music, and the Arts issued a selection of his writings translated from the Yiddish by Jakub Markovič. *Tevya the Milkman* was also translated into Slovak by the Slovak Jewish writer Emil Kriezka. In May 1959 a literary evening in Prague's Jewish center was dedicated to Sholem Aleichem. Official commemorative meetings in several cities were announced for November 1959.

An anthology from the work of the Czech Jewish writer Vojtěch Rakous, who died in 1935, appeared under the title *Modche a Rezi a jiné příběhy* ("Modche and Rezi and Other Stories"). Two Polish books on Jewish subjects, Julian Strijkowski's *Hlasy v temnotách* ("Voices in the Darkness") and Adolf Rudnicki's *Žive a mrtvé moře* ("The Living and the Dead Sea"), were translated into Czech and published in the fall of 1958.

Jiří Weil's latest book, *Založpěv na 77297 oběti* ("Lamentation for 77,297 Victims"), was a memorial to the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia who perished in the Nazi holocaust. So was Jan Otčenášek's short novel *Romeo, Julie a tma* ("Romeo, Juliet, and the Dark"), which received critical acclaim and was awarded the Prague literary prize.

H. G. Adler, the historian and sociologist of the Theresienstadt ghetto and concentration camp, author of *Theresienstadt 1941-1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft* and *Die demaskierte Wahrheit*, a collection of 241 documents concerning Theresienstadt, was one of the three Leo Baeck award (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], pp. 198-99) winners for 1958 (see p. 246).

Drawings and paintings of Theresienstadt children were used as background for the film "Butterflies Do Not Live Here," which was televised in Prague in March 1959 and took first prize for documentaries at the Czechoslovak film

festival in Banská Bystrica in February 1959. The film also won a grand prize at the Cannes film festival in May 1959.

The Jewish Almanac for 5720 was published in September 1959. It contained contributions by Rabbis Sicher, Feder, Katz, and Farkaš, as well as articles by František Langer, František Gottlieb, František Kafka, Vladimír Kafka, František R. Kraus, Arnošt Lustig, Otto Muneles, Dagmar Peroutková, Jiří Weil, Rudolf Itlis, and others, and reprints from Sholem Aleichem, Scholem Asch, Pavel Eisner, and Hugo Salus.

For the 14th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia, the Jewish State Museum prepared an exhibition in the Maisl synagogue of Prague, called "We, the Dead, Accuse," depicting the fate of Czechoslovakia's Jews after March 15, 1939, when the Nazis seized Czechoslovakia. The Klaus synagogue and the synagogue in Dušní Street in Prague, which had not been in use, were put at the disposal of the Jewish Museum for permanent exhibitions of materials on the annual cycle of Jewish religious life and of the most valuable pieces of the museum's huge collection of ceremonial textiles.

In August 1959 a memorial plaque was unveiled at the house in Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně) where 25 years earlier the noted Jewish philosopher Theodor Lessing had been murdered by Nazi agents.

HUNGARY *

ON JULY 15, 1958, the United Nations Special Committee on Hungary issued a second report on the reign of terror which followed the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of November 1956. It reported 30 more death sentences, besides the 105 originally reported, and hundreds of long prison terms for such offenses as attempting to cross the frontier, dealing in foreign currency, and "instigation against the democratic order." Towards the end of 1958, 30 member nations of the UN proposed the appointment of a UN agent on the Hungarian question, to report to the General Assembly on Hungary's compliance with the many UN resolutions calling for free elections, the withdrawal of Soviet forces, and respect for human rights. At the same time, other proposals were made for the expulsion of the Hungarian "puppet delegates" from the UN.

None of these proposals was adopted.

After the summer of 1958 the direct terror, climaxed by the execution in June of Premier Imre Nagy and three of his associates, gradually abated. Executions, mass arrests, and deportations were largely replaced by other methods. One of these was the systematic penetration of religious life through collaborating clergymen.

The Kádár regime placed pro-Communist clergy in key positions in the various dioceses, Catholic and Protestant alike. Catholic priests of this sort were organized in Opus Pacis ("Work of Peace"), which was completely subservient to the aims of the party. Members of this group were increasingly appointed by the regime as "coadjutors" to the bishops, in effect taking over

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

most of the functions of the latter. Several resisting church dignitaries were arrested. Calvinist and Lutheran bishops were similarly replaced by collaborators with the regime.

On May 17, 1959, Pope John XXIII protested in a sermon against the Communist attempt "to foment a schism in the Roman Catholic Church" in Hungary. In April 1959 Archbishop Jozsef Groesz, acting head of Hungarian Catholicism in the absence of Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty, and the bishops were compelled to take an oath of loyalty to the Communist constitution. The oath was also required of the Protestant church and the Jewish community leadership.

On June 2 the head of the government's church office, János Horváth, was replaced by Károly Olt, former Stalinist finance minister under Rákosi. The press intensified its campaign against religion. Minister of Education Gyula Kállay was reported to have declared that "peaceful coexistence" with the churches was not enough, but that they must be compelled "actively to cooperate" with the regime. Vacant church offices were filled exclusively on the basis of appointments by the state authorities. It was too early to determine how these developments would affect the position of the Jewish community.

Other methods of stamping out centers of potential resistance included the disbarment of many hundreds of lawyers, at least half of them Jews, and the extension of rigid police controls over all organizations of writers, artists, students, and other groups of intellectuals.

However, the regime did not interfere with the conduct of religious services or even with cultural activities by religious groups. While the properties of churches and religious communities had long since been confiscated and their right to tax their members abolished, they continued to receive government subsidies, which made them all the more dependent on the regime. On October 14, 1958, the London *Jewish Chronicle* reported that the government had decided to continue the previous subsidy to the Jewish community for 1959 and 1960, instead of cutting it to 50 per cent, as had been planned.

Community Organization and Religion

Although religiously divided into the so-called Neolog and Orthodox wings, Hungary's 100,000 Jews were united in their communal activities. In Budapest there were eight synagogues. The 80-year-old Budapest Jewish Theological Seminary, directed by Sandor Scheiber, continued to function with nine students. Most of its former students had fled from Hungary during the 1956 revolution.

The Jewish communities engaged in cultural activities, such as lectures, Bible courses, and some primary religious education of a private character. According to the Warsaw *Folks-shtimme* of June 21, 1958, two secondary schools for children of religious families included Hebrew and the Jewish religion in their curriculum. The same article reported that two orphanages, a home for the aged, a Jewish hospital with a hundred beds, and a Jewish cafeteria serving three thousand persons were maintained. The Hungarian-language Jewish weekly *Uj Élet* ("New Life") continued to appear, reflecting

the party line. In April 1959 a new synagogue and a memorial for Jewish victims of Nazism were inaugurated in the city of Debrecen.

In 1959 preparations were made to exhibit documents on Jewish life and history in Hungary in the Jewish museum in Budapest. Volume V, part 1, of the *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*, covering historical documents from 1096 to 1700, edited by Fulop Grunwald and Sandor Scheiber, appeared in Budapest in 1959.

In September 1958 the Hungarian committee of WJC and the Budapest Jewish Community held a joint meeting in Budapest to hear a report from a delegation which had attended the WJC meeting in Geneva.

Emigration

In the fall of 1958 it was rumored in Jerusalem that Hungary would again permit the emigration of Jews. But during the year under review there was no movement from Hungary to Israel. In May 1959 the Hungarian foreign ministry let it be known that Hungary would favor the reuniting of divided families only by the return of their emigrant members to Hungary. In September 1958 *Uj Élet* printed an article by Rabbi Oedon Singer, who escaped to Israel in 1956 and later returned to Hungary. He asserted that the Israeli authorities were "heartless" to immigrants, who therefore longed to return to their old countries.

Jews emigrating from Rumania to Israel between August 1958 and March 1959 were permitted undisturbed transit through Hungary (see p. 274).

Émigrés

In the second half of 1958 Hungarian Arrow Cross Nazi émigré groups in West Germany stepped up their antidemocratic and antisemitic propaganda, disseminated among Hungarian émigrés throughout Western Europe and the Americas. Banned from Vienna, one of these publications, called *Cél* ("Goal"), the organ of a group called Hungarists and led by the notorious Nazi Arpad Heney, resumed publication in Munich, Bavaria.

At the same time another Nazi periodical, the monthly *Hidverök* ("Bridge Builders"), banned in 1949 by the United States occupation authorities in Germany when the American Jewish Committee complained, resumed publication under the editorship of Gáza Alföldi, a wartime Nazi propagandist.

Following the reappearance of the two Nazi papers in Bavaria in August 1958 (see p. 236), the Association of Jewish Communities in Bavaria filed a complaint with the Bavarian ministry of the interior against the publishers. In March 1959 the Bavarian Social Democratic party and the Association of Socialist Emigrants published a "White Book" exposing the subversive activities of the émigré groups supporting these publications. At the same time the Hungarian Council in Germany, opposed to Nazism and Communism alike, denounced the antidemocratic and antisemitic groups.

The matter was taken up with German political leaders and high officials of the federal and Bavarian administrations by the European office of the

American Jewish Committee in March 1959. Pending the entering into force of an amendment to the federal penal code already adopted by the upper house of the West German parliament which would provide sanctions against group libel, the authorities decided to call on the publishers of the two papers to cease publication and to quit Germany voluntarily.

RUMANIA *

Emigration to Israel

WHEN mass emigration of Jews from Rumania to Israel became possible again in late 1958 and early 1959, after a virtual halt of about seven years, it was reliably reported that 120,000 persons, out of a Jewish population estimated at 220,000, registered for emigration. The number of those who actually emigrated came to over 15,000, the peak of the movement being reached in January 1959, when about 8,000 were reported to have left. Soon afterwards the government again clamped down, and on March 20 the *New York Times* reported from Vienna that the emigration of Rumanian Jews had been stopped entirely on March 9, 1959.

The emigration procedure imposed by the government was very complex. The would-be emigrant had to obtain a large number of documents from different government offices—statements concerning the payment of taxes, irreproachable conduct, etc. He also lost his job and his home and had to sign a formal renunciation of citizenship. Thus everything was done to make his emigration irrevocable. Each document involved a high fee—even the renunciation of citizenship cost 1,000 lei (\$166). Emigrants were allowed to take along only a few things (154 pounds for working people, 88 pounds for others). The luggage had to be packed in wooden boxes supplied by the government, at a price. Hence many Jewish families had to sell all their household goods, within a few days' notice and at sacrifice prices.

The emigrant was not allowed to come in contact with the Israeli consulate. Together with the travel papers he received from the Rumanian government, he also received the Israeli visa and transit visas through Hungary and Austria. (A small number of emigrants left through Yugoslavia.) Once all the papers had been issued the emigrant had to leave the country without delay.

The emigrants were selected from both old and new lists of applicants. Those who had registered in previous years were not asked whether they had changed their minds in the meantime. And occasionally Jews who had never registered for emigration were told to sign up "voluntarily."

Though world Jewish opinion resented this ruthless procedure, no protest was made for fear of reprisals. On the contrary, the emigration was hailed enthusiastically by Jews everywhere. In the United States and in other Jewish communities throughout the free world great efforts were made to raise funds for the emigrants. A special loan was launched in Israel and Israeli Prime

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

Minister David Ben-Gurion said at a rally of subscribers that "factors underlying the emigration from Rumania might lead to the elimination of barriers against the largest concentration of Jews in the Old World" (*New York Times*, January 28, 1959)—i.e., the Soviet Union itself.

Whatever the reasons for the resumption of emigration, its cessation was due to Arab protests. Egyptian Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Saeleh Khalil warned Rumanian Minister to Egypt Constantin Stanescu that Rumanian Jewish emigration to Israel would have a detrimental effect on Arab-Rumanian relations (*New York Herald Tribune*, February 24, 1959). On February 25 the *New York Times* published a statement by the Rumanian government charging leading circles in Israel and world Zionism with falsely trumpeting abroad that a mass migration of Rumanian Jews to Israel was on the way. The same statement announced that the Rumanian news agency Ager-Press accused Israel and "imperialist circles" of using the emigration of Rumanian Jews to Israel to create ill-feeling between the Eastern bloc and the UAR. At the same time an attaché of the Israeli legation in Bucharest, Amnon Keren, was expelled, charged with an attempt to mislead the Rumanian Jews into requesting permission for emigration to Israel. The first secretary of the Rumanian Communist party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, declared that the Rumanian government would do everything in its power to maintain good relations with the Arab nations.

When emigration was stopped abruptly, an estimated 14,000 Jews who had lost their jobs, their homes, and their citizenship were unable to leave. Emigrants on their way to the Hungarian border were stopped and turned back.

The halt in emigration was accompanied by vehement Rumanian Communist internal propaganda against emigration and against Israel. Those in charge of Rumanian Jewish communal affairs joined in the vilification of Israel. The refugee publication *La Nation roumaine* (Paris, May 1959) reported that Bercu Feldman, the member of parliament from Yassy and the Communist boss of Jewish affairs, created an anti-Israel committee in Yassy, and similar committees were set up in other parts of the country.

In Israel data from a survey of some 1,500 heads of families may be assumed to be fairly representative of the new Rumanian immigrants. Occupationally, 58 per cent were artisans and craftsmen, 12 per cent were workers and farmers, and 30 per cent were members of the free professions. By age, 45 per cent were between 20 and 49, 25 per cent were 50 or older, and the rest were under 20 (*Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, February 6, 1959). The organ of the Bukovinian landsmanshaft in Israel, *Di Shtimme* (May 1959), noted that there were 180 physicians among the Rumanian immigrants. Apparently this time the Rumanian government had imposed no restrictions of age or occupation, whereas the previous emigration consisted largely of older people.

A trickle of emigrants left Rumania after March 1959, and there were many rumors about the resumption of emigration. Thus *Ma'ariv*, a leading Tel-Aviv daily (*JTA*, April 5, 1959), quoted "diplomatic sources" as stating that "despite the bad impression created by some irresponsible statements with regard to Jewish emigration, the Rumanian government still intends to abide by the humanitarian principle of reuniting families." On July 9, 1959, the Associated

Press reported from Vienna that a few dozen emigrants had arrived from Rumania on their way to Israel.

There was no direct news from Israel on new arrivals. The Israel government made all information pertaining to immigration a state secret by an order published in the Official Gazette on June 7, 1959.

No word on the fate of the Jews caught by the abrupt halt in emigration while in the midst of their preparations for departure had been received abroad at the time of writing.

Internal Conditions

The Communist leaders of Rumanian Jewry continued to depict Jewish community life in the same glowing colors as in previous years. The only publication of the Rumanian Jews, *Revista cultului mosaic* (with text in Rumanian, Hebrew, and Yiddish), was filled with praise of the Communists and declarations of loyalty to the government. Its editor, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, also rendered homage to the regime in all his holiday messages.

In November 1958 a Jew named Kowler, formerly a businessman in Bucharest, was sentenced to death and executed for a crime allegedly involving exceptional social danger, one of the first victims of a new amendment to the penal code reintroducing capital punishment for grave offenses against the security of the state. The *London Times* (October 13, 1958) and the *Economist* (October 25, 1958) reported that a great wave of terror was sweeping Rumania.

No details about the activities of the executed Kowler were published, but the *London Jewish Chronicle* (November 28, 1958) stated that a non-Jew under whose leadership Kowler claimed to have carried out his activities was only sentenced to prison.

On April 8, 1959, Rabbi Alexander Zissu Purtogal was arrested, together with his son Hillel (JTA, April 19, 1959). This hasidic rabbi, who before the war resided in the Moldavian town of Sculeni and was therefore known as the Sculener Rebbe, was well known as a relatively independent teacher and spiritual leader outside the officially organized Jewish community (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 228). Rabbi Purtogal was in a concentration camp in Transnistria during World War II. His first act at the end of the war was to collect orphans and care for them at his home in Cernauti (Czernowitz), under Russian occupation. His fame spread rapidly and children were brought to him from as far away as Odessa; at one time 40 boys and girls lived in his quarters in Cernauti. Later he was forced to leave for Bucharest, where he continued his care of orphaned children. He was arrested once and was in jail for four months. He traveled about in Rumania, visiting his followers and collecting funds with which to carry on his activities. Rabbi Purtogal was over 65 years old and was said to weigh only 90 pounds, largely because he was unable to obtain kosher food in jail. He and his son were released from jail in the summer of 1959.

Community Organization

There were 150 Jewish communities in 16 provinces, all belonging to the Federation of Jewish Communities (Wa'ad ha-Kehillot). The salaries of the federation's personnel were partly paid by the government. Its principal income came from *matzot*, kosher wine, and the manufacture of prayer shawls.

ECONOMIC LIFE

The full integration of the Jewish population into the economic life of the country was constantly stressed. At a commemorative celebration in Yassy, for instance, publicity was given to the fact that a textile mill in the city, one of the largest in the entire country, employed 200 Jewish workers and was managed by a Jewish director, Naphtali David. The equality of the Jews and their economic and social gains were also emphasized in a Yiddish broadcast over Radio Bucharest (*Jewish Chronicle*, May 22, 1959) and were contrasted with conditions under former regimes, when 196 antisemitic laws excluded Jews from trades and professions, including all branches of the government. Now, it was asserted, 40,000 Jews were productively employed in cooperative factories and state enterprises, many in leading positions, often receiving high awards for their contributions to industry.

But emigrants who reached Israel reported that although the Rumanian government did not openly persecute the Jews, discrimination was practiced on a large scale and in a systematic way by the dominant bureaucracy, drawn largely from ex-members of the antisemitic Iron Guard (AJYB, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 340; 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 227). According to these reports there was widespread chaos and corruption in most government industries; the Jews still in administrative posts were held responsible for any irregularities uncovered, and even when clearly innocent were dismissed from their jobs and often prosecuted in the courts. Not many Jews were left in positions of consequence in industry.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Rumania, one of the most submissive of Soviet Russia's satellites, nevertheless did not completely follow the Moscow pattern in matters relating to Jewish culture. In June 1959, at a ceremony in Yassy commemorating the 11,000 victims of an Iron Guard massacre in 1941, the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Rumania, Israel Bacal, spoke with special pride about the Jewish schools, the two Yiddish state theaters, and the publication of Yiddish literature.

Revista cultului mosaic repeatedly said that Jewish religious institutions were in a good state. The authorities were thanked particularly for generous aid in rebuilding synagogues destroyed during the war, including those of Braila, Craiova, Radautz, and Oradea Mare, whose photographs appeared in the paper. It was estimated that there were over 400 synagogues.

According to the report in *Revista cultului mosaic* on the June 1959 ceremony in Yassy mentioned above, the speakers vied with each other in praising the good life now enjoyed by Rumanian Jewry—equality before the law,

and social, cultural, and economic gains—in contrast to their life under former regimes.

In an address over Radio Bucharest on the tenth anniversary of the Yiddish schools, a representative of the ministry for culture and education paid special tribute to Jewish cultural creativity. He emphasized that the Jews were free to cultivate their own language and culture and enjoyed all the government support needed for this purpose.

According to the *Jewish Chronicle* (June 12, 1959), Chief Rabbi Rosen made an address in Yiddish over Radio Bucharest celebrating the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Statute of the Jewish Communities by the Rumanian parliament.

The tenth anniversary of the founding of the Yiddish state theaters (one each in Bucharest and Yassy) was marked by festivities. An article on this occasion in the Warsaw *Folks-shtimme* by the Rumanian Jewish writer Israel Bercovici credited the government with substantial aid. During the ten years of their existence the Yiddish theaters played 2,000 performances to half a million spectators throughout the country, and 40 Yiddish artists were decorated by the Rumanian government. The celebration of the 100th anniversary of Sholem Aleichem's birth included special performances in the Yiddish theaters.

Revista cultului mosaic (July 1, 1958) attributed laudatory statements about Jewish life and institutions in Rumania to Moises Goldman, chairman of the Buenos Aires Jewish Community, and these were repeated in a broadcast over Radio Bucharest on March 3, 1959. Goldman, however, denied (JTA, March 9, 1959) that he had ever been in Rumania or made any of the statements attributed to him by the Rumanian government.

The Warsaw *Folks-shtimme* (August 23, 1958) reported that two books of short stories had been issued by the government publishing house for use in schools, one by Sholem Asch and the other by the American Yiddish writer, Joseph Opatoshu. A Yiddish translation of the *Diary of Anne Frank* was also published in Bucharest, a copy of which was received by YIVO in New York.

JOSEPH KISSMAN