Latin America

Introduction

The year beginning in July 1961 was notable for the formal initiation of the Alliance for Progress. The first loan under it was made by the Inter-American Development Bank in August 1961, and in the same month plans for cooperation under it were discussed at an inter-American economic and social conference in Puenta del Este, Uruguay. At this meeting Cuba, still a part of the Organization of American States, was represented by Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, who took an active part in the discussions and let it be known that his country was willing to participate in the program. This suggestion found no echo in the United States delegation, but it did play a part in causing the absence from the final declaration of the conference of any strong anti-Cuban statement.

"Alliance for Progress"

In November Teodoro Moscoso of Puerto Rico was named as administrator for the Alliance for Progress within the United States Agency for International Development. In December the program was dramatized by President John F. Kennedy’s visit to Venezuela and Colombia, the two countries which were regarded as having gone furthest toward implementing the Alliance’s program of economic planning and domestic reform.

Nevertheless, the achievements of the Alliance for Progress during its first year were less than had been hoped. Only a few countries made any substantial progress toward land reform, fairer and more effective systems of taxation, the reduction of illiteracy, or improvement in the standards of living of the large groups who still existed on the verge of starvation. The obstruction of reforms by entrenched beneficiaries of the existing inequities caused President Kennedy to warn in March 1962 that "those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." But the United States, despite its eagerness to see essential internal reforms in the countries of Latin America and the clear implication that aid under the Alliance would be tied to the introduction of such reforms, hesitated to put this principle into prac-
tice. Aid was continued to countries that were doing little to make it effective, for fear that its withdrawal might cause economic and political chaos. And motives of political expediency were sometimes a determining factor, as in the case of the aid which the Haitian dictatorship received when it changed its vote so as to make possible Cuba’s expulsion from the Organization of American States in January 1962. Critics of the program in the United States saw these developments as indications of its failure, and called for an application of more rigorous standards in the distribution of aid; thus in March 1963 a leading Republican expert on international affairs, Representative Walter Judd of Minnesota, suggested that the United States withdraw aid from countries which did not put their own houses in order even if some of them were to go Communist as a result. Despite his own dissatisfaction with the internal policies of many Latin American countries, however, President Kennedy emphasized the importance of patience.

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

In one important respect the year was marked not merely by lack of progress, but by retrogression; the state of political democracy in Latin America deteriorated. Only in the Dominican Republic, where political freedom was restored and preparations were made for free elections, was real progress made. The remnants of the Trujillo dictatorship were eliminated with the exiling of the Trujillo family, the seizure of their properties, the suppression of an attempted military coup, and the passage of power from Trujillo’s hand-picked President Ramón Balaguer to a junta headed by a long-time Trujillo opponent, Rafael F. Bonnelly. The United States played an important part in these developments, joining with other American countries in exerting economic pressure for the establishment of a democratic regime and making clear its unwillingness to see a restoration of the power of the Trujillo family or those who had been associated with it.

But in Argentina a sweeping Peronist victory in the provincial and congressional elections of March 1962 precipitated a military coup (p. 275). Although, under pressure from the armed forces, President Arturo Frondizi nullified several provincial elections, this was not enough to satisfy them. Asserting that Peronism represented a threat to Argentine democracy, they demanded that the Peronists be outlawed and their congressional seats vacated. When Frondizi did not yield to their ultimatum, they deposed and arrested him, installing in his place Vice President José Maria Guido. The Intransigent Radical Party, to which both Frondizi and Guido belonged, continued to insist that Frondizi was the only legitimate president and expelled Guido for taking office under the circumstances. The other major parties also protested against the coup, and faced with their insistence on seating the elected Peronists in congress, President Guido recessed that body indefinitely. At the end of June, Interior Minister Jorge Walter Perkins resigned in protest against what he described as the police-state methods used by the military against the opposition.
President Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela promptly announced that his country would not recognize the new regime because it was the result of a military overthrow of a legitimately elected government. The United States, however, accepted the Guido government as legitimate because power had formally passed in accordance with the constitutional order of succession. This undoubtedly encouraged those military men in other countries who were contemplating intervention in political affairs. One such country was Peru. There the People’s Party, better known by its former name of Apra (from the initials of American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), was running a presidential candidate for the first time since its legalization after decades during which it had been outlawed. This party, which had the overwhelming support of the country’s Indian majority, was bitterly hated by the military, and there were rumors that if its leader Victor Raul Haya de la Torre were to win the election, the military would refuse to let him take office. Immediately after the elections, which took place in June 1962, Peruvian military leaders and Fernando Belaunde Terry, whom they supported for the presidency, charged fraud in the areas in which the Apra was strongest. These charges were rejected by the electoral tribunal and outgoing President Manuel Prado, who declared that the elections were the cleanest in Peruvian history. When the count was completed it showed Haya de la Torre in the lead, but with just under the one-third of the vote required for election. (A majority of Apra’s Indian supporters were disfranchised by literacy requirements.) Congress was therefore supposed to choose the president from among the three highest candidates—Haya de la Torre, Belaunde Terry (who despite his military backing had campaigned as an admirer of Fidel Castro), and the former military dictator Manuel Odria. But on July 18, before Congress could act, a military junta seized power. It nullified the elections and imprisoned President Prado until the end of his term, July 31. At first the United States refused to recognize the new regime and cut off aid, President Kennedy calling the coup a serious setback. Nevertheless, the United States resumed diplomatic relations and economic aid in the middle of August, after the junta had promised to hold free elections within a year, and to restore civil liberties meanwhile. United States Ambassador James Loeb, whose opposition to the coup had rendered him persona non grata to the junta, was withdrawn.

Democracy was weakened in one way or another in several other countries too. Brazil narrowly escaped civil war as a result of military attempts to prevent Vice President João Goulart from taking over the presidency following the sudden resignation of President Janio Quadros in August 1961. Goulart was permitted to assume office only after the constitution had been amended to strip the presidency of most of its powers, substituting a parliamentary form of government. The result of this compromise was that Brazil’s administration was largely paralyzed during the year under review, prices skyrocketed, and necessary reforms were blocked. In Ecuador President José Maria Velásquez Ibarra was ousted by a military coup in November 1962, after he had imposed an unpopular tax on consumer goods. In this case,
however, the armed forces did not take power; Vice President Carlos Julio Arosemena Monroy took over the presidency and continued to govern constitutionally with the aid of a functioning congress, in spite of some sporadic subsequent revolts. Bolivia and Guatemala also had to suppress revolts during the year. In the latter country congressional elections in December 1961 brought an unexpected increase in strength to the followers of President Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, and rightist and leftist opposition groups charged fraud. Both engaged in insurrectionary activities during the year.

UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH CUBA

The United States devoted a good deal of effort during the year to weakening and isolating the Castro regime in Cuba. Some successes were achieved in this. United States restrictions on trade with Cuba were extended to include additional commodities. Cuba was expelled from the Organization of American States in January 1962. Additional countries broke relations with Cuba during the year, until at the end of the period under review only five recognized the Castro regime. These five, however, included two of the most important countries in Latin America, Brazil and Mexico. Internally, the Cuban regime faced serious economic problems, and found itself forced to retreat on some fronts. Politically, however, it still seemed firmly in control. Veteran Communists increased their role in the regime. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, editor of the Communist organ Hoy, was named head of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, which controlled much of the economy, and the long-time Communist leader (and former Batista cabinet member) Juan Marinello was made rector of the University of Havana. And as Cuba's economic isolation increased, her dependence on the Communist countries rose. Negotiations for the release of the prisoners taken in the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 continued between the Cuban government and a committee representing the families of the prisoners. President Castro raised his price from the $28,000,000 in cash or tractors he had originally been willing to accept to $62,000,000, but agreed to take the increased sum in medicines and baby foods. At the end of June a committee was formed by such leading personalities as Richard Cardinal Cushing, General Lucius D. Clay, and President Kennedy's sister-in-law Princess Lee Radziwill, to raise the necessary funds.

On the whole, the Alliance for Progress faced even greater problems at the end of its first year than it had at the beginning. It was doubtful whether there was any significant economic improvement in the state of the hemisphere, taken as a whole. And the political situation was, on balance, definitely worse.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM
During the year under review (July 1, 1961, to June 30, 1962), Argentina faced its most critical moments—politically, economically, and socially—since the overthrow of Juan Perón in 1955. The country was convulsed by the ouster of President Arturo Frondizi; shaken by the devaluation of the peso, tremendous inflation and near bankruptcy, and beset by strikes, government scandals, and general uneasiness.

A continuous threat to the stability of the Argentine government came from the Peronist movement, based mainly on the workers and in control of major labor unions. Permitting to take part in elections for the first time since 1955, the Peronists won over 35 per cent of the popular vote in March 1962. (In previous elections they had cast blank ballots or had thrown their support to other parties; Peronist votes were believed to have supplied Frondizi's own margin of victory when he was elected president in May 1958.) When the returns showed that they had won the gubernatorial race in ten of 22 provinces, defeating Frondizi's candidate in Buenos Aires, the military intervened. In March 1962 they annulled all elections by Federal decree, forced the ouster of Frondizi, himself, and after some desperate shuffling, installed Vice President José Maria Guido as president. The following weeks were devoted to frenetic attempts to fill the ministerial posts with men satisfactory to all three military services. When, in April, the elected Peronist deputies sought to enter Congress, they were barred from doing so by Guido, and subsequently Congress was dissolved. The resultant economic crisis further complicated the government's difficulties. Because of the fall of Frondizi, the value of the peso dropped quickly and inflation soared. The cost-of-living index rose some 32 per cent from July 1961 to June 1962, while the national import-export deficit grew to $49.7 million during the first five months of the year.

The government's inability to pay salaries, the manufacturers' dollar shortage and production cutback, the shopkeepers' tremendous drop in sales, the insufficiency of the workmen's take-home pay in the face of rising prices, widespread unemployment, and many strikes—all these brought about a lack of confidence and a creeping pessimism in the whole republic.

It is against this backdrop of turmoil, instability, and general unrest, that the plight of the Jewish community—economically and socially an important part of the Argentine structure—must be considered. Outbursts of antisemitism could be attributed to the general situation and to such contributing factors as a nationalistic hypersensitivity to the Eichmann execution and the

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 433.
involvement of prominent Jewish firms in financial irregularities, as in the Banco de la Nación.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Argentina had the largest Jewish community in the Diaspora after the United States and the Soviet Union, and Buenos Aires was the fifth largest Jewish city outside of Israel. The estimated Jewish population of the country was 450,000, of whom about 350,000 lived in the capital. The other Jews were to be found throughout the interior, with the majority in big cities such as Rosario and Córdoba. Approximately 70,000 were Sephardim from Aleppo, Damascus, Morocco, and Turkey, while the rest were Ashkenazim, mainly of East European background. During the period under review, Jewish immigration to Argentina was less than 100.

Despite its highly organized Kehillah (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina [AMIA]), Argentine Jewry remained a regimented community. AMIA represented only the Ashkenazic community. There were community-of-origin cemeteries, social-welfare organizations, and even Israel appeals, let alone synagogues. The same kind of division also prevails in private clubs, social organizations, and most youth groups.

The community as a whole was urban, secularist, and strongly Zionist.

Among the Ashkenazim, Yiddish was the predominant language. It was the official language of the AMIA and was employed for most public lectures. There were two Yiddish dailies. A quarter of the 17,000 books sold through the AMIA-sponsored annual Jewish Book Month were in Yiddish. In many of the Jewish schools, Yiddish was the primary language of instruction and in most of them, it was at least taught as a second language. The old-country orientation and Yiddishism of the Jewish community were declining, however, because the youth, mostly second- and third-generation Argentinians, no longer had direct cultural ties with Europe or the Near East. The study of Hebrew was increasing and the breakdown of the landsmanshaft division between Ashkenazim and Sephardim could be readily seen among the youth.

Despite the activism and complexity of Jewish life, and the numerous organizations, clubs, Zionist activities, official foreign visitors, schools, etc., there was a shortage of trained personnel, and modern methods of administration were largely lacking. In an attempt to cope with this problem, AMIA joined with the Institute of Contemporary Judaism of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in sponsoring a two-day Judeo-Argentine investigation and research conference in October 1961 in Buenos Aires. Under the direction of Moshe Davis and Saul Esh of the institute, the conference sought to survey the economic, social, and cultural aspects of Jewish life in Argentina and to lay the groundwork for further socio-historic study. Local scholars were invited to give papers, and Bezalel Sherman of New York lectured on research methodology.

The Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, the largest community center in Latin
America, with 25,000 members, initiated the first institute for the training of Jewish community workers. At the time of writing there were 30 students enrolled.

Education

The main characteristics of the community as a whole—secularism, Zionism, and Yiddishism—were also present in the educational system. Some 14,000 children attended 121 Jewish schools, half of them in the capital. Almost all Jewish elementary schools in Buenos Aires were under the supervision of the Wa'ad ha-Hinnukh ha-Rashi, the educational arm of AMIA. The Kehillah paid 70 per cent of all teachers' salaries and 50 per cent of the cost of new buildings. In the year under review, CJMCAG, in addition, contributed to the cost of building one school and the maintenance of the Teachers' Seminary (Midrashah). Only 20 to 23 per cent of school-age Jewish children attended Jewish schools and there was a 20-to-25-per-cent dropout rate. Others either received private instruction (almost exclusively in preparation for bar mitzvah) or had no Jewish education at all.

Elementary schools offered a six-year course, and most children left at the age of 12. The curriculum generally called for a heavy stress on fluency in Hebrew or Yiddish. The Sholem Aleichem, Nahum Gezang, and Bialik schools were the most successful elementary schools from the point of view of administration, pedagogy, and attendance. In 1960 a group of private individuals organized the first Jewish day school, Tarbut, to have a tri-lingual basis—Hebrew, Spanish, and English. In addition to the AMIA-sponsored schools, there were about ten Sephardi schools, administered by synagogues and private groups.

On the secondary level there were approximately 1,000 students, attending, for the most part, two main institutions: Bet ha-Midrash le-Morim ("Teachers' College") conducted by AMIA, and Makhon le-Limude ha-Yahadut ("Institute for Jewish Studies") under the sponsorship of the Congregación Israelita de la Republica Argentina (CIRA). The secular Bet ha-Midrash offered a six-year course, with two preparatory classes for younger students between the ages of 10 and 11. The 60 to 70 students who graduated each year were eligible for AMIA primary-school teaching licenses. The Makhon at one time attracted students from the interior, but after the Wa'ad ha-Hinnukh established a teachers' training school and dormitory in Moisesville, with branches in Córdoba and Rosario, the Makhon drew its students exclusively from Buenos Aires. Students were accepted between the ages of 11 and 12 and the total registration was 185. This school had a religious orientation. Each year some of the graduates of both schools were sent to Israel for a year's study. Here again, as in the elementary schools, there was a high dropout rate. Only about seven per cent of the entire high-school registration was in the upper three or four years.

Both elementary- and secondary-school students attended classes some 15 hours weekly besides attending the state schools. Fourth- and fifth-grade students spoke fluent Hebrew or Yiddish.
Beyond the high-school level, the Midrashah trained instructors for secondary education. It had about 40 students with five or six graduates a year. The Makhon le-Tarbut Israel ("Institute for Israeli Culture") conducted by the Israeli embassy, had approximately 1,200 teenage and adult students in its Hebrew courses and served as a Hebrew and cultural center for the city. Popular Bible courses, classes in Israeli folk dancing, married couples' study groups, lectures, and exhibitions, all drew much public interest and support.

Both primary and secondary schools suffered from some major defects. Firstly, there was a great dearth of teachers having modern training. The Jewish teachers' schools graduated students at the ages of 16 and 17 without university training. Moreover, because of the very low salary rates, the great majority of the boys never entered the teaching profession, while the girls left the field after a few years. Of the approximately 40 Makhon graduates in the year under review, only seven or eight planned to enter the teaching profession. Finally, effective coordination of activities, planning, and resources was hindered by the fact that almost all the schools were run and supported by local counterparts of Israeli political parties. Thus, Mapai conducted the Bialik schools, Mapam and Ahдут ha-'Avodah the Sholem Aleichem schools, and the General Zionists the Tel-Aviv school.

In an effort to overcome some of these difficulties, the Wa'ad ha-Hinnukh of Argentina and the Jewish Agency sponsored a Jewish educational conference in July 1961. Delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay met in Buenos Aires to devise ways and means of strengthening and coordinating Jewish educational activities in South America. They discussed the problem of textbooks supplies and teachers. The final resolutions spoke of coordination of activities but had to take account of the prevailing ideological and methodological differences.

Zionism

Zionism and the State of Israel were the strongest unifying forces in the Argentine Jewish community. Just as most Jewish schools were sponsored by Zionist parties, and were therefore Zionist-oriented, so it was in almost all of organized Jewish life. In the AMIA elections, over ten lists were presented, each sponsored by a different Zionist party (Mapai, Mapam, General Zionists, etc.). In August 1961, one of the most important Spanish-Jewish weeklies, El Mundo Israelita, was purchased by the Mapai party. The members of the Wa'ad ha-Hinnukh represented different political parties, and the youth groups, too, were splintered by diverse party affiliations. The various parties encouraged immigration to Israel, though they did not give this ideological priority, and their activities and policies were guided by the ideas of their parent organizations in Israel. The largest and most active women's group was WIZO, with some 38,000 members throughout the republic.

Besides its educational functions, the Makhon le-Tarbut Israel organized tours to Israel and sponsored two weekly radio programs, one teaching Hebrew and the other devoted to Israeli music. An Israeli government tourist
office was opened in Buenos Aires in April 1962. Visitors from Israel on official and unofficial missions received wide press coverage and impressive receptions. In general, fund raising for Israel was much more successful than collections for local institutions.

Immigration to Israel from Argentina was 50 per cent higher in 1961 than in the previous year. In June 1962 there was a sharp increase in the number of people registering for emigration. This was obviously due to the bad general economic and political situation, the antisemitic outbursts, and the resultant unrest among the Jewish community. Only a small percentage of those going to Israel were from the aliyah youth groups. The majority were middle-class merchants and white-collar workers and their families, together with young people going under special programs for technical and professional training. There is a minimal number of those who return from Israel to Argentina.

Zionism was the main bulwark against a growing assimilationism. It appeared to offer the only kind of Jewish identification attractive to young idealistic intellectuals. Of the 12,000 Jewish students in Buenos Aires university, few were actively interested in Jewish life. The largest group of politically active Jewish students tended to take a pro-Communist position. The only Jewish campus organization, the Centro Universitario Sionista, had a membership of less than 150 and its leaders felt that migration to Israel was the only solution to the "Jewish problem."

**Religious Activities**

The synagogue was practically nonexistent as a force in the community. For a Jewish population of almost half a million, there were 12 rabbis in Argentina, none of them native South Americans and most of them over 50. In general, synagogue life adhered to the pattern of the countries of origin. Thus the Sephardi communities maintained the structure of North Africa and the Middle East. The German synagogues in Argentina and throughout the continent were united by CENTRA (Asociacion de Comunidades y Organizaciones Israelitas en Latinoamerica) and in most of them the sermon was still delivered in German. The youth of CENTRA, of the Congregación Israelita, and of Bnei Akiva (altogether a very small number) were the only religiously oriented groups. Attendance at services was sparse except on the High Holy Days, and was almost exclusively confined to the older generation. The main contact most people had with the synagogue was for weddings (although the religious ceremony was not recognized by the state) and bar mitzvahs.

In the period under review, the major events in the religious life of the community were the celebration of the centenary of the (Conservative) Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina, the completion of the first year of the Yeshivah Gevohah of AMIA, in Buenos Aires, and the inauguration of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano.

The Congregación, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Guillermo Schlesinger, was instrumental in the founding, and contributed to the prog-
ress of, many of the foremost institutions in the community. Among them were the Hevrah Qaddisha (the forerunner of AMIA), the Makhon, and the Girls' Orphan Asylum. It was the most important nonpolitical institution in the community, recognized as such both by the Jews and by the Argentine government. Its three-year-old youth group, Ramah, had a membership of some 800, ranging from elementary-school to university students. Ramah was one of the first successful attempts to establish a synagogue-centered movement with an integrated program. It conducted religious services on Friday nights and Saturday mornings and had an active drama group, a choir, a quarterly magazine, an annual dance and music festival, a book fair, and a summer camp with an intensive educational program.

The AMIA yeshivah, under the leadership of Rabbi Jacobo Fink, was an Orthodox institution with about 20 students. Classes were held in the home of Rabbi Fink. In March 1962, the (Conservative) Consejo Mundial de Sinagogas (World Council of Synagogues), CENTRA, and the Congregación Israelita joined in organizing the first modern rabbinical seminary in South America. The seminary was supported by these three groups and by private sources, and was recognized by CJMCAG. The first class had four students and there were ten candidates for the next year. A corequisite for admission to the seminary was attendance at the university. After receiving their secular degrees, the students were to go to the rabbinical school of their choice in the United States or Israel to complete their studies. It was hoped that eventually the Seminario would be able to offer a complete rabbinical course of studies. In 1962, Professor Seymour Siegal of JTS was guest lecturer in Talmud and theology.

During the year under review, the World Council of Synagogues, whose Latin American director is Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, launched a Spanish quarterly, Maj'shavot (Mahashavot ["Thoughts"]), dedicated to modern religious and theological issues.

The year also saw the opening of a new German synagogue in Córdoba and the ordination by JTS of the first Argentine-born rabbi, Manuel Kaminetsky, who accepted a position in Chile.

Jewish religious life in Argentina was influenced by the general religious situation in the country. Although predominantly Catholic, the people were generally nonobservant. The power of the church was political rather than spiritual. Its Catholicism was pre-Reformation in the sense that it had never been confronted with the Protestant movements that so profoundly affected most of Western society.

**Antisemitism**

After the execution of Adolf Eichmann, Argentine Minister of Foreign Relations Carlos Muniz made the following statement to the press:

... the Chancellor regrets that the Israeli tribunals of justice did not take into account the express attitude of the Argentine law, which would have imposed a lesser sentence on the accused. ...
He went on to condemn Eichmann’s crimes, saying that the memory of those crimes would never be erased, but that “neither will they be erased by the atonement of one human life, which is not provided in our penal code.” This attitude was expressed by many official and unofficial sources. There was much more emphasis in the press on the supposed illegality of the proceedings than on the moral aspects of the event.

Attacks against Jewish organizations, synagogues, and Jewish places of business occurred throughout the year, but were very much intensified after Eichmann’s execution. Swastikas were scribbled on walls throughout the country and in the first week of June 1962 alone, there were ten serious antisemitic attacks. These included the use of Molotov cocktails against the Paso synagogue and the machine-gunning of the Zim Israel Navigation company, the *Diario Israelita*, and an Israeli canteen. On June 21, 1962, the most serious of these attacks, commonly referred to as the Sirota case, occurred when a Jewish university student Graciela Narcisa Sirota was kidnapped off the street and driven to an isolated place, where swastikas were carved on her body.

In the early morning hours of August 14, 1961, there was a commando-type attack against a *hakhsharah* training camp in a Buenos Aires suburb. Several of the young people were seriously injured and there was extensive property damage. On Rosh ha-Shanah a knife-wielding gang attacked a teenager leaving a synagogue. The following day, a young man was caught placing a bomb in the entrance of a synagogue; he was released by the police before any charges or investigation could be made. A band shouting antisemitic slogans tried to cause a riot and disrupt ceremonies in Mar del Plata, a seaside resort, where the Israeli ambassador was presiding at a meeting honoring the State of Israel. Throughout the whole period under review, there were many anonymous threats, provocations, and personal attacks—most of which never reached the press. Particularly after the Sirota case, hundreds of institutions, private homes, and businesses were subjected to threats and to antisemitic propaganda by telephone, mail, and anonymous messages. Printed messages were posted on billboards all over the capital, calling attention to Jewish embezzlers, smugglers, and other allegedly “anti-Argentine” Jewish elements. The messages were signed, “League for the Protection of the Rights of Non-Jews.”

These acts were organized and carried out by Tacuara—a fascist, antisemitic, ultranationalist organization. Among its supporters and leaders were ranking military men and some Catholic priests. One of the most violent antisemites, the Jesuit Father Julio Meinvielle, published a book in 1959 entitled *El Judío en el Misterio de la Historia* (“The Jew in the Mystery of History”), accusing the Jews of advancing the cause of Communism behind the cloak of capitalism. At the end of the period under review, it was in its third printing.

Through the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), the official representative of the Jewish community to the government, protests were made to police and government officials after each attack. Despite
many statements and promises, there was no government action and not a single arrest was made during the year. The only protection given the Jewish community was an around-the-clock armed military guard for all Jewish institutions, furnished at the request of DAIA. The attitude of the government towards antisemitism could be termed one of “indulgence.” At the time of writing, there had been no statement from any church official condemning antisemitism. However, some leading priests including Father J. Arduriz, S.J., who conducts one of the most popular TV programs, strongly condemned the antisemitic outbreaks. On June 28, following the Sirota case, DAIA organized a 12-hour stoppage by all Jewish storekeepers, factory workers, professionals, and students. In the window of every closed store was the sign, “Closed as a protest against Nazi aggression in Argentina.” Many non-Jews joined this protest and its effect was felt throughout the country.

During the year under review, the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información played an active role in advising the Argentine public on the dangers of antisemitism. The Instituto also conducted a series of scientific surveys on prejudice and antisemitism, particularly in Buenos Aires, and maintained close relations with the intellectuals.

There was a great deal of unrest and even panic in the Jewish community, especially among the young people and those who had already suffered Nazi persecution in Europe. This led to an increased interest in Jewish affairs, lectures, etc., on the part of many who previously had been quite alienated from Jewish life.

NAOMI MEYER

Brazil *

POLITICAL INSTABILITY and the division of authority between president and congress, under the administration of João Goulart (AJYB, 1962 [Vol. 63], p. 477), prevented any decisive action on Brazil’s major problems during the period under review (July 1, 1961, to June 30, 1962).

With almost 70 million people—half the population of South America—Brazil faced critical problems on many fronts. Half the population suffered from malnutrition and there was a housing deficit of two million family units. Half the children never got to school, only 18 per cent of them completed the third grade, and only a little more than 10 per cent reached high school.

The Northeast, a 680,000-square-mile area of eroded and drought-ridden country, had a population of 26 million. Its backward economy, mostly rural,

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 433.
was based on one or two soil-killing crops and the land-tenure system in many areas was essentially feudal. The power of the great landowners was challenged by the Peasant Leagues led by Francisco Julião, a Socialist deputy and admirer of Fidel Castro. To improve the economic conditions of the area and prevent a revolutionary situation from developing, the Brazilian government created the SUDENE corporation, headed by the young economist Celso Furtado. While Furtado's plans for the reform and development of the area met violent resistance from many local magnates, they had the active support of the United States within the framework of the Alliance for Progress.

In sharp contrast to the Northeast, southern Brazil, especially São Paulo, was experiencing a spectacular industrial boom. With an annual production increase of 6.3 per cent, Brazil's economy was one of the fastest growing in the world. But this rapid economic expansion was accompanied by severe inflation. The cost of living rose 43.1 per cent in 1961, as compared with 23.7 per cent in 1960. This brought demands for higher pay, and minimum wages were raised 60 per cent in October 1961.

The seizure by Governor Leonel Brizola of the state of Rio Grande do Sul of a telephone company owned by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation of New York in March 1962, helped to produce a sharp decrease in foreign investments.

The Brazilian economy continued to suffer from the depressed prices and limited markets of major Brazilian exports, especially coffee.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were no reliable figures for the number of Jews in Brazil. The best available estimates put the Jewish population at about 150,000, mainly located in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, with minor centers in Pôrto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Salvador, Belém, Fortaleza, and Manaus. Most of the community had arrived between the two world wars. It was therefore still an immigrant community in terms of leadership; only in very recent years had the first native generation, mostly college graduates, started to assume community responsibilities.

Immigration

The liberal immigration policy of former President Juscelino Kubitschek was reaffirmed by the succeeding governments. In 1961, 679 Jewish immigrants arrived under the auspices of UHS. São Paulo attracted 542 of them, while the remaining 137 settled in Rio de Janeiro. There were 247 arrivals in the first half of 1962. All told, UHS, in cooperation with local welfare agencies such as the Jewish Federation of São Paulo, assisted 1,250 Jewish immigrants. Most of the immigrants came from Eastern Europe, Egypt and Middle Eastern countries, Morocco, Israel, and Hungary. The number of immigrants from Israel decreased from 41 per cent of all Jewish immigrants settling in São Paulo in 1959 to 20 per cent in 1960 and 7 per cent in 1961.
Welfare Activities

During the period under review the Jewish welfare and philanthropic agencies struggled with economic difficulties as a result of their expanding needs, their large building projects, and the failure of their fund-raising efforts to keep pace with skyrocketing inflation. The Albert Einstein Medical Center of São Paulo, a 400-bed research hospital, had to slow down its building program because of these difficulties despite a 50-million-cruzeiro \(^1\) credit from the Federal government.

The Jewish children’s home of Rio de Janeiro, caring for 130 youngsters, was raising a 20-million-cruzeiro fund to purchase a summer camp.

Religious Activities

The Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP-Jewish Congregation of São Paulo) celebrated its 25th anniversary in September 1961. Founded by German Jewish refugees with the assistance of JDC, it became the largest congregation in the country, with more than two thousand affiliated families. In its modern synagogue and community-center facilities, an active and varied program was conducted by Chief Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss and his assistant, Rabbi Menahem Diesendruck.

In July 1961 the Jewish community of Curitiba inaugurated its new synagogue and community center. The small Jewish community of remote Manaus, on the left bank of the Amazon river, inaugurated its new synagogue in January 1962. The community, numbering 40 families, consisted mostly of Moroccans who came to Brazil about the turn of the century.

The number of rabbis serving Brazil’s 150,000 Jews still did not exceed a dozen; the only addition during the year was Rabbi Elie Barzilay, originally from Greece, who was engaged by the Sephardi community of São Paulo.

Kashrut, matzot, religious courts, rabbinical education, and similar questions were a permanent concern of the observing community. A Council of Congregations (Wa‘ad ha-Kehillot) was established in São Paulo in March 1962 to cope with these problems. It included the six main congregations of that city, with about five thousand affiliated families. The Wa‘ad ha-Kehillot was still in a formative state and no specific steps had yet been taken to implement its goals.

Community Centers

The community-center movement was a rapidly developing feature of the Brazilian Jewish community. Centers were being established in new localities, and the older ones steadily expanded their facilities. The Maccabi of São Paulo launched a building program for a new sports stadium. The Circulo Israelita, also of São Paulo, offered its membership an additional center for water sports. The Hebraica of Rio de Janeiro inaugurated new facilities and the Mount Sinai community center was also engaged in an intensive

\(^1\) $1.00 = 200-300 cruzeiros in the free market.
building program. Nevertheless the community centers lacked Jewish programs. They were busy with sports and games, dances, and dramatic performances, but specific Jewish activity was only incidental and sparse. This was due to the paucity of lecturers, professional community workers, and educational materials, etc. To fill the void, the Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgação assisted the Centro Israelita Brasileiro—the Copacabana community center—to organize adult-education courses on Jewish history and culture. This first experiment, for which there were 120 registrants, showed that there was wide interest in regular and systematic Jewish programs.

**Education**

Thirty-six Jewish day schools devoted half of each day to the official curriculum, which was determined by the Brazilian ministry of education and culture, and an additional average of 15 hours a week to Jewish subjects. The total enrolment was estimated at 8,500.

There were 17 Jewish schools in São Paulo and its suburbs, 13 in the Rio de Janeiro area, 2 in Belo Horizonte, and 1 each in Curitiba, Recife, Salvador, and Porto Alegre.

Twenty-five of the schools were under the guidance and supervision of the department of education and culture of the United Zionist Federation of Brazil and WZO. The superintendent and the assistant superintendent of this system were usually Israelis sent to Brazil for about three years. Five schools were administered by the department of religious education of WZO and the United Zionist Federation of Brazil. Four so-called “progressive” schools had a leftist and Yiddishist orientation.

The first two systems were financed by the United Jewish Appeal and by tuition fees. The Jewish curriculum usually included ten hours a week of Hebrew and five of Yiddish, although a few schools, like the religious Bar-Ilan, eliminated Yiddish altogether. The Progressive schools devoted ten hours a week to Yiddish and only two to Hebrew. In some of them there was developing a parents’ movement for a rapprochement with the “national” (Zionist) schools. The two weekly hours of Hebrew were a recent concession to their demands.

Also concerned with educational matters were the board of Jewish education in Rio de Janeiro and the department of education of the Jewish Federation of São Paulo, which were supposed to deal with organizational, budgetary, and personnel problems. The division of functions was not clearly defined, so that there were frequent conflicts.

There was a serious shortage of teachers. Fifteen teachers were recruited in Israel but their presence caused difficulties with the local Jewish teachers, particularly since the Israelis were better paid.

Two teacher-training seminars were functioning in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but they were only on a high-school level. The one in São Paulo, with 85 students, offered a five-year program of Hebrew, history, and related subjects, but no religious or pedagogical training. In 1961 only four of its
fourteen graduates went into teaching. (Five went to college, two took other jobs, and three went to Israel.)

The Rio seminary, which was only two years old, provided 12 hours a week of evening training for 30 students who attended Brazilian normal schools and high schools during the day. The program called for three years of study in Brazil followed by an additional year in Israel at the Chaim Greenberg Institute for Jewish Teachers.

The Jewish school year was increased from 120 to 180 days and Hebrew was recognized by the Brazilian ministry of education as an optional foreign language.

Jewish adult education was available at the Makhon le-Tarbut Ivrit (Institute for Hebrew Culture) in Rio and São Paulo, with a combined enrollment of about 400 students; they offered, for the most part, evening Hebrew courses. Attempts by these institutes to introduce regular Hebrew classes in the Jewish community centers met with lukewarm success.

By a special decree the Brazilian government created a department of Hebrew language at the University of São Paulo, with a three-year curriculum.

Cultural Activities

The major cultural event of the year was the first Jewish book exhibit in Brazil, organized by the Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgação in Rio de Janeiro in June 1962. The exhibit, comprising several hundred books in nine languages as well as 16th- and 17th-century editions, was shown also in Belo Horizonte.

The public-relations committee of the Jewish Federation of São Paulo offered an exhibit by 20 Israeli artists, which was also shown in the cities of Bahia and Manaus. The fifth convention of the Brazilian B'nai B'rith lodges, held in São Paulo in June 1962, passed a resolution to create a Jewish book club to publish basic Jewish resource material.

Community Relations

The new Conselho de Fraternidade Judeo-Cristã (Council for Jewish-Christian Brotherhood) held its first meeting in April 1962 at the (Protestant) Mackenzie University in São Paulo, with the participation of leading Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish personalities. Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss, Father Calixto Vendrame, and the Rev. Walter A. Ermel were elected presidents of the council. The archbishop of São Paulo, Carmelo Cardinal Mota, sent his blessing to the meeting.

Mayor Prestes Maia of São Paulo named the children’s public library of the Itaim neighborhood in honor of Anne Frank.

Former President Juscelino Kubitschek spoke at the memorial meeting for the victims of the Warsaw ghetto in Rio de Janeiro.

In the city of Porto Alegre, Mayor Loureiro da Silva dedicated a Theodor Herzl square.

Governor Carlos Lacerda of the state of Guanabara dedicated a Ben-
Gurion square, as a tribute to the Israeli prime minister on his 75th birthday. The public-relations committee of the Jewish Federation of São Paulo assisted with special materials in the organization of a Bible week at the Catholic church of the Calvary, São Paulo.

**Zionism and Relations With Israel**

Although the community was Israel-centered, Zionism seemed to be fading as a driving force and organized movement. The United Zionist Organization of Rio de Janeiro was unable to attract young cadres. A special questionnaire sent to 250 selected young community members, inquiring about their interest in participating in Zionist work, was answered by only five. WIZO was the most active Zionist organization, with 13,000 registered members in about 70 communities.

Israel and Brazil signed an agreement in March 1962 providing for Israel's technical assistance in the irrigation and agricultural development of the drought-stricken Brazilian Northeast. Isaac Levy, director general of the Israeli ministry of agriculture, came to Brazil for this purpose. An experimental kibbutz-type settlement of Brazilian farmers in Rio Grande do Norte was projected under the plan.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Santiago Dantas visited Israel in April 1962. At Kibbutz Bror Hayyil, populated mostly by Brazilian young pioneers, Santiago Dantas inaugurated the Oswaldo Aranha House of Brazilian Culture, named for the late Brazilian foreign minister.

**Youth**

The Grupo Universitário Hebraico (GUH), with branches in Rio and São Paulo, was the only organization of Jewish college students; it had about 800 members, out of an estimated 1,700 to 2,000 Jewish students in the universities. Its Rio headquarters published the group's official organ, *Shofar*. In October 1961 the group held its first leadership-training seminar, under the sponsorship of the Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgação, with an attendance of almost 30 members from both branches.

The youth departments of the Associação Religiosa Israelita of São Paulo took part in the South American seminar of the CENTRA held in Terezópolis, near Rio de Janeiro, in February 1962.

**Antisemitism**

On the night of October 27, 1961, the Jewish cemetery of Água Verde, in the city of Curitiba, was desecrated by vandals who destroyed 41 tombstones. Shortly afterwards the Jewish cemetery of Pôrto Alegre was smeared with swastikas. Both incidents, the worst antisemitic offenses ever experienced by the Brazilian Jewish community, shocked public opinion and the Federal and state authorities. Despite the efforts of the police, however, no trace was ever found of the culprits. Leading newspapers stressed that cemetery desecration was entirely alien to the Portuguese-Brazilian tradition,
and expressed the suspicion that the criminals might be from the German or Polish communities which were quite numerous in South Brazil.

The "integralistas"—a remnant of the fascist Integralist party of the 1930s—were also suspected of having a hand in the desecrations, but the leadership of the Partido da Representação Popular, composed of former integralists, strongly denied any connection with the incidents and condemned the antisemitic outrages. Minister of Justice Candido de Oliveira Neto banned circulation of a new Portuguese reprint of Hitler's Mein Kampf and ordered its confiscation by the police in accordance with a law forbidding the circulation of subversive material and incitement to racial or religious persecution. Later the German embassy sued the publisher on the ground that he did not have publication rights to the book.

**Personalia**

For the first time in the history of Brazil three Jewish army officers were promoted to general—Isaac Nahon, Aaron Benchimol, and Rafael Zippin. Professor Leopold Nachbin, a distinguished mathematician, won the Moinho Santista Prize, the highest scientific award in Brazil. The chemist Otto Gotlieb was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. José Goldenberg, a physicist of the University of São Paulo, was invited to lecture at Stanford University and at the Atomic Commission of Great Britain.

Isaac Albagli, a leader of the Sephardi community of Rio de Janeiro, president of the Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgação and former president of the Lions' Club and the Centro Israelita Brasileiro, died on July 30, 1961.

**Abraham Monk**

**Uruguay**

In the national elections scheduled for November 1962 the nationalist (Blanco) party, in power since 1958, faced its traditional rivals of the liberal Colorado party, who had ruled Uruguay for almost a century before that. The general elections served also as a sort of primary, under the unique Uruguayan system; each faction of a party nominated its own candidates, and the total vote of all factional candidates was counted for the one with the highest vote. While the Blancos and Colorados were the only groups with any chance of national victory, other parties also participated in the elections. They included the Christian Democratic party, the Socialist-led Popular Union, and the FIDEL (Liberation Front) organized by the Communist party and other movements united by their support for Castro.

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 493.
Popular Union also took a pro-Castro line, but did not support international Communism.

The Jewish community as such took no part in the campaign, as was made clear in a declaration by the major representative group, the Comité Central Israelita. Individual Jews, of course, supported one or another group.

**Jewish Community**

Exact figures on the Jewish population were not available, but the number was probably about 45,000. The great majority lived in Montevideo, the capital, which also accounted for a third of the country's total population of three million. About one or two thousand Jews were scattered throughout the rest of the country. The largest group outside Montevideo was in Paysandú, with more than 300 Jews. The Jewish Society there was the only Jewish institution outside of Montevideo.

The Comité Central Israelita, founded in 1940, was composed of the four Jewish communities. These were the Jewish community of Montevideo (Ashkenazi) with 5,000 members, the Sephardi Jewish community of Uruguay with 1,759 members, the New Jewish Congregation (German Jews) with 1,470 members, and the Jewish Hungarian community of Uruguay with 266 members. In most cases, the individual members were heads of families.

The Comité Central Israelita was a federated body, controlled by delegates named by its affiliates. Its functions included representing the Uruguayan Jewish community, fighting antisemitism, and strengthening friendly ties with the non-Jewish population.

Uruguayan Jews were engaged mainly in industry, commerce, and the professions, and included a substantial number of manual workers. The ORT school trained more than 100 students annually for office work. There were also a number of Jews in agriculture, especially in the interior. In the second decade of this century, an attempt had been made to established a Jewish agricultural community but after a few years it failed, as did other similar experiments.

In recent years there was little Jewish immigration. Most of the approximately 7,000 Sephardim came from Turkey, but there were also some hundreds from Arab countries.

The Jews of Uruguay suffered no discrimination of any sort, and had the same rights and obligations as everyone else. The Jewish community had the complete protection of the law for its activities. While few Jews were active in politics, many were civil servants, teachers, professors, or university students.

**Antisemitism**

Antisemitism had no deep roots in Uruguay, but during the period under review (July 1, 1961, to June 30, 1962), there were antisemitic incidents—threats, tattooing people with swastikas, burning Israeli flags, and bombing
Jewish organizations and the street sign in Montevideo bearing the name "State of Israel."

This campaign, whose origin could be traced back a few years, may have originated with neo-Nazi student organizations and publications. The authorities, as well as the press and leaders of public opinion, publicly condemned them as not only injurious to the Jews but also damaging to the prestige and dignity of the nation. Numerous organizations, individuals, and newspapers, as well as the National Executive Council itself, expressed their solidarity with the Jews. At the height of the terrorist campaign, leading intellectuals and church figures met in the assembly hall of the national library—symbol of Uruguayan culture—to study the roots and dangers of anti-semitism. The press and television publicized this discussion generously, so that it reached an audience of thousands. At the time of writing, the anti-semitic campaign had been brought to a halt.

Jewish Education

The Wa'ad ha-Hinnukh (department of education) of the Jewish community of Montevideo sponsored nine Jewish schools in the capital (with morning and evening sessions) and two in the interior of the republic, with a total of 1,417 pupils and 45 teachers. These schools provided Jewish education and represented various tendencies. During the period under review, an independent school, aided by the National Council of Primary and Secondary Education and the first serious attempt to create an educational center for both Jewish and general instruction, began to function. At the time of writing it had 87 students and five teachers. Fifty-five additional pupils were enrolled for the next year. The school was financed primarily by tuition fees and small subsidies. Scholarships were available for children unable to pay tuition.

The great mass of Jewish children and young people did not receive any Jewish education. Efforts were being made to remedy this situation.

Various organizations and institutions offered Hebrew instruction to hundreds of people of all ages. In 1962 three courses in Jewish culture—Judeo-Spanish literature, literary problems of the Bible, and Hebrew for beginners—were established in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Republic. An Association of Jewish University Students had more than 500 members.

Jewish Press

Three daily Yiddish newspapers were published in Montevideo: Folksblat (more than 30 years old), Haynt, and Unzer Fraynd. The last was pro-Communist.

There were several weeklies: Gemeindeblatt, in German, was the organ of the New Jewish congregation; Der Moment, in Yiddish, was Orthodox, and Semanario Hebreo, in Spanish, was Zionist but not affiliated with any party.

There were also various radio programs. Yiddish programs included the
“Jewish Cultural Hour” which was broadcast daily for two hours and the “Polish Jewish Hour” and the “Voice of Zion in Uruguay,” which were also broadcast daily. There was a weekly one-hour Sephardi program, “The Voice of Israel,” and a weekly program in Hungarian. The German Jewish community had a radio spot, as did the Zionist parties. A Communist group also had a radio program.

In 1962 a Jewish television series, “Uruguay-Israel T.V.,” was launched; it was presented for a half hour each Sunday.

The Uruguayan daily and weekly press, radio, and television always contained a great deal of news about Israel, the Jewish community, and Judaism in general.

**Religious Life**

Each of the communities had at least one synagogue. Agudat Israel, which remained outside the organized Jewish community, had its own synagogue and school.

The younger generation was, on the whole, not integrated into religious life, except for its participation in certain basic ceremonies and rites. The High Holy Days brought increased synagogue attendance. There were several *yeshivot* and some of the Jewish schools gave religious instruction. The Mizrahi party had several hundred adherents.

While no figures were available, it was certain that the number of mixed marriages was large.

The Judeo-Christian Brotherhood, in existence for some years, included Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. It was highly respected and did valuable work in interfaith cooperation and the fight against antisemitism.

There were no Jewish religious publications in Spanish which could reach the youth in a language suited to their needs.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

There were two Zionist central organizations, the Territorial Zionist Organization and the Zionist Youth Federation of Uruguay. The first was a federation of Zionist parties, and the second included *halutzim* and other youth groups. The three largest Zionist parties were the Po’ale Zion-Hitahud, the Revisionists, and the General Zionists. The Sephardi, German, and Hungarian communities were nonpartisan supporters of Zionism. Zionism was the backbone of Uruguayan Jewish life. No important anti-Zionist or assimilationist Jewish groups existed with the exception of the Communists.

The Zionist Youth Federation included Ha-shomer Ha-tza’ir, Deror ha-Kibbutz ha-me’uhad, Ihud ha-bonim, Ha-no’ar Ha-tziyoni, Bene ‘Akiva, and Betar *halutz* movements; the Hebraic Association; the youth of the New Jewish Congregation; the Sephardi youth group; the youth group of B’nai Brith, and other groups as well.

Ha-shomer Ha-tza’ir and Ha-no’ar Ha-tziyoni each conducted a *hakhsharah*. 


In 1961 there were 145 emigrants to Israel, including 22 who had been halutzim. Another 157 people emigrated, including 18 halutzim, in the first half of 1962.

The Uruguayan people in general had great sympathy and admiration for Israel. Uruguay's representatives in the UN had played an important part in the creation of the Jewish state.

A Uruguay-Israel Cultural Institute was headed by Professor Oscar Secco Ellauri, a former minister of foreign relations and public education. Zionist and pro-Israel literature was widely distributed throughout the country; there were books, magazines, lectures, films, public meetings, and expositions. Leading Uruguayans were constantly visiting Israel and returning to praise its accomplishments.

Social Services

Assistance to those in need was administered by the individual communities and B'nai B'rith. There was also a Jewish medical center. The Home for the Jewish Aged and Orphans occupied a modern and spacious building.

The community also assisted non-Jewish groups and institutions. Thus, the Montevideo public school named "State of Israel" received frequent contributions from the community.

Cultural Activity

In 1962 the country's highest artistic award was given to a Jew, Zoma Baitler. Many Jews were prominent in musical, theatrical, and university life. However, Uruguayan Jewry contributed little to specifically Jewish culture.

NELSON PILOSOF

Mexico*

During the year under review (July 1, 1961, to June 30, 1962), there were no significant changes in Mexican Jewish life.

The country experienced some political restlessness, but continued to enjoy political stability. The economic situation was tolerable.

Jewish Population

To everyone's astonishment, the Mexican census of June 1960 revealed that 100,000 persons had reported themselves to be Jews.

There had never been any official statistics on the number of Jews in Mexico. The usual estimate had been 28,000 or 29,000 for all Mexican Jews,

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 483.
Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim, Spanish-speaking Sephardim, and Jews from Arabic and other countries.

The difference was probably due in large part to carelessness in the census. True, several thousand Indians claimed to be adherents of the Jewish religion, but at most they numbered 10,000. The other thousands were probably Buddhists and Shintoists (Chinese, Japanese, and others from the Far East) transferred to the Jewish column. There were still only 28,000 or 29,000 Jews in Mexico.

Of these, about 55 per cent were Ashkenazim of East European descent; 15 per cent were Sephardim of South American or North African descent, and 10 per cent were of Middle Eastern origin. The rest came from Germany, Hungary, the United States, France, and other countries.

About 95 per cent lived in the capital. Monterrey had more than 100 Jewish families, Guadalajara had 85, and small groups lived in Puebla, Veracruz, Jalapa, Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana, Torreón, and other provincial towns. There was a small increase in the Jewish population of the towns near the United States border.

About 85 per cent were engaged in trade and industry. Some had established large enterprises and new, flourishing branches of industry. Over 10 per cent were professionals, including physicians, engineers, architects, and chemists. There were few Jewish lawyers. A decrease in the number of Jewish engineering and architectural students followed a recent sharp decline in construction, and some Jewish engineers and architects sought employment in other fields. A number of graduate professionals settled in Israel.

Jewish merchants and industrialists continued to face serious economic problems, with business slow, profits down, and debts hard to collect. This was reflected in social and cultural activities, and particularly in the fundraising campaign sponsored by the Ashkenazi community for domestic causes, as well as in the Keren ha-Yesod campaign.

Communal Activities

The Jewish Central Committee (Comité Central Israelita de México) officially represented the community in both internal and external affairs and helped arrange the first Central American conference of the World Jewish Congress in Mexico City in March 1962, with delegates from many Jewish communities in Central America and the Caribbean region.

The Ashkenazi community Nidhe Israel was preparing elections for a new leadership. It was also planning a large Bet 'Am—a center for social and cultural activities, to be erected in the heart of the Jewish section in Mexico City.

The philanthropic organizations were also active. OSE celebrated the 20th anniversary of its existence in Mexico. The Jewish aid organization Beneficencia Israelita and the Jewish women's organization Comité de Damas aided needy Jewish families. There were numerous impoverished Jewish
families needing communal assistance, as well as many ailing persons, who depended on OSE for free medical aid, surgery, etc.

The Alianza Monte Sinai of Mexico, the central organization of Arabic Jews from Damascus, celebrated the 50th anniversary of its establishment in Mexico in June 1962. It was the oldest Jewish institution in the community. Its founders included Ashkenazi Jews from Russia and Poland, but its members were now all Arabic Jews.

**Jewish Education**

Over 85 per cent of Jewish school-age children attended seven Jewish schools—four sponsored by the Ashkenazim and three by the Sephardi and Arabic Jews. In all, 4,800 Jewish children attended classes from kindergarten through high school. There were also three yeshivot. One, Or Israel, was supported by a city committee headed by Rabbi D. S. Rafalin. The yeshivah Etz Hayyim was part of the synagogue of the same name. The third, founded by Rabbi Abraham M. Hershberg, formerly of Chicago, served students from Central America as well as from Mexico. This yeshivah was supported by friends from Central America and local contributions.

All of the Jewish schools were struggling with financial difficulties. The Ashkenazi schools had the greatest deficits. Although they were subsidized by Nidhe Israel, funds were insufficient and debts were constantly increasing.

Three of the four Ashkenazi Jewish schools taught both Yiddish and Hebrew, while in the fourth, Tarbut, only Hebrew was taught. This was in addition to the general government curriculum in Spanish.

**Cultural and Religious Activities**

The Jewish Cultural Center (Centro Cultural Israelita) was one of the oldest Jewish institutions. The central committee had its own cultural commission which coordinated cultural activity in Spanish among the non-Yiddish speaking sectors. The cultural commission also administered the Kessel Award for Yiddish Literature, established in 1947 by the Jewish philanthropist Gregorio Kessel. Each of the three annual awards consisted of $400.

The cultural department of Nidhe Israel engaged in systematic activities on a broad scale. In March 1962 it invited the Yiddish poet Hayyim Grade, of the United States, for a visit. It supported the Ha-zamir choir, which made frequent successful appearances before Jewish and non-Jewish audiences. The Jewish Sport Center, too, had a cultural committee, which presented a serious program every Sunday morning, published Spanish periodicals, and organized movie and theater parties.

Jewish newspapers appeared regularly in Yiddish and Spanish. Der Veg—El Camino appeared three times weekly, Di Shtimme twice weekly in Yiddish, Mexicano Lebn every Saturday, in Yiddish and Spanish, Tribuna Israelita once a month in Spanish, Prensa Israelita every Saturday in Spanish, and Foroys once a month in Yiddish. The Jewish schools published anthologies and yearbooks. The Zionist youth organizations issued occasional publications in Spanish.
From time to time Mexico was visited by Yiddish theater groups from Israel, Argentina, and the United States. The Jewish Sport Center sponsored an amateur theater group which presented plays on Jewish themes once or twice a year, and sustained a permanent exhibit of painting and sculpture, with works by leading Jewish artists of Mexico and other countries. There were also several private Jewish art galleries in Mexico City.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

All the local Zionist parties, as well as their youth organizations and sympathizers, were active on behalf of Israel.

Zionist leaders from Israel visited the community and addressed public gatherings. Many Mexican Jews toured Israel and established business and financial contacts. A substantial number invested in Israeli enterprises. A number of young Jews studied in Israel.

The 14th anniversary of Israel’s independence was celebrated in Mexico on a large scale by Jews and non-Jews alike. The Mexican press devoted special pages and supplements to the State of Israel, and there were commemorative programs on radio and television.

The execution of Adolf Eichmann did not produce any sharp anti-Jewish reaction. Mexican public opinion was generally sympathetic with Israel’s action.

Chaim Lazdeiski