Latin America

Argentina

Domestic Affairs

A ny review of 1972 events in Argentina must begin with one of history’s most peculiar political resurrections. After 17 years of exile, General Juan Domingo Perón arrived at Ezeiza International Airport on November 17. Only 300 of his followers and the press were permitted to be present at his arrival. A large military force encircled the airport, barring entrance to hundreds of thousands of people. After remaining at the airport hotel for one night, Perón and his wife moved to a house bought for them by the Partido Justicialista (Peronist) a short distance from the official presidential residence.

Reaction to Perón’s return was very mixed. Some said that he had lost his charismatic and dynamic control over the millions of Argentines. Others felt his return accomplished what 17 years of exile could not achieve—the destruction of his undiminished influence over Argentine politics. These theoreticians believed that Perón’s retorno was anything but triumphant and that, once and for all, the Argentines, even the majority of Peronists, finally realized that Perón was not the miracle-worker who would revitalize a crippled and stalemate d Argentina.

Perón left the country in December with the promise to return. Regardless of whether or not he returned, a law requiring all candidates for the presidential election scheduled for March 1973 to be Argentine residents as of August 25, 1972, made Perón ineligible. It was apparent that he was not interested in being a candidate. The Peronist party was completely disunited and the pre-election scene was so confused that any structured approach to right the Argentine situation seemed a very dim prospect. The Peronists themselves predicted a complete victory in the elections.

It was a year of violence. On April 10 both Oberdan Sallustro, general director of Fiat Concord in Argentina who had been kidnapped by members of the Trotzkyite Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP; Revolutionary Army of the People) and General Juan Carlos Sanchez, commander of the Second Army stationed in Rosario, were assassinated by ERP. The demands made by ERP to Fiat in return for Sallustro’s life were: 1) the release of union activists
jailed for participating in labor conflicts against Fiat; 2) the reemployment of workers fired following disturbances last October at the company's Córdoba installations; 3) the withdrawal of police units from these plants; 4) the distribution among needy students in various schools throughout Argentina of school supplies and clothing valued at 10 million pesos; 5) the release of 50 guerrillas currently in prison and their transport to Algeria or another suitable country; 6) the publication in full of ERP communications regarding this kidnapping; 7) the negotiation of ransom to be paid by Fiat to ERP. While Fiat expressed willingness to meet all conditions within its control, the government continued to hold firm to its long-standing position of not negotiating with such revolutionary forces.

Mendoza, a traditionally peaceful city in the foothills of the Andes, was the scene in April of violent demonstrations ordered by the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) in protest against an unprecedented hike in electricity rates. Federal troops were called in, and when the fighting stopped there were three dead, over 40 wounded, and millions of pesos in material damage. The federal government declared an emergency and immediately ousted the governor of the province. It also blocked for two days all CGT funds. On April 7 President Alejandro Agustin Lanusse announced on TV that no electricity bills would be collected. Tension between the federal government and CGT continued to rise, and in July Lanusse again temporarily blocked union funds. The outcome was a reduction in the rate increase.

One of the bloodiest terrorist episodes in modern Argentine history began in mid-August at the army-run maximum security prison at Rawson in southern Argentina, when 25 armed leftist extremists freed a number of political prisoners in a shootout in which two guards were killed. The raiders timed the jailbreak to coincide with the landing of a commercial airliner at Trelew airport close to the prison. Ten of them hijacked the plane and flew at least six of the escapees to Chile. The question of their extradition to Argentina was pending. Nineteen were recaptured and imprisoned in the nearby naval airforce prison. A week later, 16 of them were killed in an alleged second attempt at escape.

For the past 70 years, the most celebrated image of Argentine sophistication has been the opulent and deservedly famous Teatro Colon. During the past few years its first-night audiences, dressed in tail and white tie, seemed impervious to what was happening in the country: the decline of the economy and the alarming increase in terrorist activities and political murders. For the first time in 1972, the official Colon season was cut by four operas for budgetary reasons. Thus the severe economic crisis had even reached the hithertofofore untouchable Teatro Colon.

According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Censos (INDEC; National Institute of Statistics and the Census), unemployment in the Greater
Buenos Aires area reached 7.4 per cent in 1972, the highest since July 1964; it was 14.2 per cent in Tucuman, 7.2 per cent in Córdoba, and 6.2 per cent in Rosario. The cost of living index rose by more than 60 per cent. The gross national product rose 4.4 per cent in the first half of the year. Financial assistance from foreign sources reached $810 million, of which approximately $345 million was received from private banks in the United States, Europe, Japan and Canada; $363 million from the International Monetary Fund, and $100 million from EXIM (Export Import) Bank. Argentina showed an unfavorable balance of payments of some $294 million; its international reserves diminished by $47 million at the end of the year. All in all, at the close of 1972, the constant increase of bankruptcies and the unending inflation made the Argentine businessman very wary of making long-term business plans.

These economic difficulties, as well as the confused political situation before the first elections in almost a decade and the strong conviction on the part of many Argentines that there was no candidate worthy of their vote, combined with the more than shaky political and economic conditions of neighboring Chile and Uruguay, all contributed to make Argentina a very uneasy, demoralized country.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography**

In view of the fact that no new Jewish population study was conducted in 1972, there was no basis for updating published statistics. Thus the number of Jews in Argentina continued to be estimated at 500,000. According to the 1970 national census, Argentina's population was close to 23.4 million, of whom about 30 per cent lived in the Greater Buenos Aires area. A far greater proportion of Argentine Jews lived in that area: some 350,000, or 70 per cent of the total. Of this number, some 65,000 were Sephardim.

Other principal centers of Jewish population in the provinces, in order of importance, were: Rosario, Córdoba, Santa Fé, La Plata, Tucumán, Mendoza and Bahía Blanca. The original agricultural settlements founded by the Baron de Hirsch Jewish Colonization Association in 1890 still counted some 6,000 Jews. Their principal center was Moisés Ville, with some 2,000 Jewish families. Jews were also scattered in small numbers throughout the provinces in hundreds of small towns. According to Argentine professor Jose Itzigsohn, the economic structure of the Jewish community was as follows: 10 per cent belonged to the upper-middle class, 80 per cent were white-collar workers, and 10 per cent the working class.
Communal Organizations

The April 1, 1972, issue of Mundo Israelita, the official Mapai organ of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA), reported that the Argentine Jewish community, like all other Latin American Jewish communities, was increasingly affected by the volatile revolutionary climate of the entire continent. It stated:

Jews, as such cannot be indifferent to the revolutionary climate which surrounds them because, whether they want it or not, it already knocks at their door and exercises a powerful influence on them.

Whereas in the past cognizance of, and participation in, revolutionary tendencies was limited to leftist youth groups, there now were clear signs that the Jewish establishment and conservative forces within the community were quickly becoming aware of the existing explosive climate. There was no doubt that more and more young Jews were involved in leftist movements and that the Jewish leadership had to face up to the situation and take a position.

There also was a decline in interest in Jewish communal affairs, as AMIA president Jaime Rajchenberg indicated after the last elections for the AMIA Board of Representatives in May:

The existence of a visible apathy, a growing indifference and passivity which is becoming increasingly acute and the virtual absence of the younger generations among the voters cannot be denied.

In these elections only 7,360 ballots were cast, most of them by older members, out of a total of 43,680 paying family members—less than 5 per cent. Votes were cast for eight party lists; the Bloque Democratico Unido (Mapai and Ahдут ha-'Avodah) won. Revolutionary involvements, a worsening economic situation, growing indifference of the Jews towards Jewish communal organizations of all natures, and accentuated assimilationist tendencies spelled out clearly the critical situation of Argentine Jewry.

The division in Jewish life continued. Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews generally did not unite, but rather maintained separate clubs, synagogues, philanthropic agencies, cemeteries, and campaigns for Israel. AMIA, the central Ashkenazi organization, controlled all four Ashkenazi cemeteries; subsidized old age homes, orphanages, underprivileged families, and made its principal budget allocation for Jewish education. Under its aegis was the Orthodox Ashkenazi rabbinate, the Jewish Board of Education (Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh), and the Federación de Comunidades Israelitas (Wa'ad Ha-kehilot).

The 1972 budget of AMIA was 3,279 million pesos (about $3 million). Due to the enormous devaluation, the peso budget was doubled, but its dollar
value dropped some 40 per cent. The allocations were as follows: 1,340 million pesos for education; 340 million for social services; 39 million for cultural work; 20 million for publications; 57 million for youth work, 10 million for young married groups, and 1,309 million for administrative costs. Monies received were: 200 million pesos from membership dues, 1,820 million from funeral services, and 550 million from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. This was the second year AMIA had to appeal to foreign sources of income to maintain its educational budget. (In 1971 it received a large sum from Israel.)

The Federación de Comunidades Israelitas (Federation of Jewish Communities) united 145 Argentine Jewish communal bodies, including AMIA. These communities were divided into eight regions and met several times yearly on this level to deal with the common problems of Jewish education, cultural life, and the need for trained leadership, especially in the smaller communities.

DAIA (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas), the second of the community central organizations, was composed of representatives of the leading Jewish institutions in Greater Buenos Aires and the provinces. Its main function was to represent the Jewish community before the federal and local governments. DAIA sponsored many bulletins and publications having specific emphasis on defense against antisemitism. It continued to sponsor the Centro de Estudios Sociales (Center for Social Studies). In May DAIA received an important visitor, the French scholar, Cardinal Jean Danielou.

The Organización Sionista Argentina (OSA), the third central organization, was the umbrella organization for all Zionist groups. Its main function was to stimulate aliyah and strengthen ties between Israel and the Argentine Jewish community. In April 90 delegates across the country elected Dr. Lazaro Rubinson its new president. OSA launched a special membership campaign to increase interest in the Zionist movement and to rally forces for representation in the World Zionist Organization.

The Jewish community maintained many other important institutions, among them the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, a sports and cultural center with over 20,000 members; Hospital Israelita Ezrah, which served many more Christian than Jewish patients and continued to be one of the teaching hospitals of the Buenos Aires University medical school; Comedores Populares Israelitas Argentinas, which in April celebrated its 50th anniversary of service for indigent Jews and fed 200 people daily; HaCoaj, another of the leading Jewish sports centers with over 15,000 members; the Confederación Juvenil, in which the leading youth groups of Buenos Aires were united; the Latin American section of the World Jewish Congress; B'nai B'rith; OSFA (the local WIZO), and the Instituto Judeo Argentina de Cultura e Información.

The Sephardi community was organized on the basis of country of origin.
Jews of Turkish and Balkan origin, and from the Island of Rhodes, formed the Asociación Comunidad Israelita Sefaradi de Buenos Aires (ACIS) which claimed some 3,000 member families. It sponsored, for the fifth consecutive year, a Sephardi book fair in August. The Moroccan Jews maintained the Congregación Israelita Latina; the Jews of Syrian-Lebanese origin had the Asociación Israelita Sefaradi Argentina. The Sephardi Israel campaign continued its independent existence under the name DESA (Delegación de Entidades Sefaraditas Argentinas). The Argentine Sephardi leadership approved the establishment of a Federación Sefaradi Latinoamericana, proposed at the convention of the Latin American Jewish Communities, in Lima, Peru, in September.

Communal Activities

The convention having perhaps the most far-reaching effects was the one sponsored by the World Zionist Organization and the Latin American sections of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Lima. Representatives from across the continent, including a large delegation from Argentina, met to deliberate on the critical situation of Jewish life in Latin America. In May, AMIA, DAIA, OSA, and the Sherit Hapleita organization (survivors of concentration camps) sponsored a large public meeting commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. In the same month a reduced executive of the Latin American section of WJC met in Buenos Aires, with representatives from Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Isaac Goldenberg was elected president.

Argentine Jewry was deeply shocked by Arab acts of terrorism. Jewish organizations throughout Buenos Aires organized mass protests in June, after the Lod massacre, as well as in September after the Munich tragedy. Jewish factories and offices and stores were closed as an expression of solidarity. President Lanusse stated the official position of the government:

Words cannot adequately express the indignation of the Argentine people and government over the assassination of the young Israeli athletes in Munich. But as president of the republic who is secure in the knowledge of faithfully interpreting the sentiments of all men and women who live in this land of peace, I feel the indisputable obligation to repudiate this newest manifestation of irrational and indiscriminate violence.

President Lanusse sent to DAIA’s president the traditional Rosh Ha-shanah message to the Jewish citizens of the country.

In September AMIA sponsored the 25th annual Jewish Book Fair at which 12,000 Yiddish, Hebrew, and Spanish books were sold at reduced prices. This was a 30 per cent reduction in sales, as compared with 1971. In the same month the Jewish Museum of Buenos Aires, under the auspices of the Congregación Israelita Argentina, presented the internationally known writer Jorge Luis Borges with a diploma and honorary membership.
An exciting night of the musical season was the debut in the Teatro Colon of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Zubin Mehta. Since the performance took place a few days after the Munich disaster, the enormous hall was charged with emotion as more than 4,000 persons stood in silence in memory of the victims. The Argentine Jewish music lovers thrilled to the sounds of the *Hatikvah* played for the first time in this theater.

Rallies, pamphlets, and protest meetings continued periodically in defense of Soviet Jewry. On September 14 a group of young people went on a hunger strike on the stairs of the Orthodox Paso synagogue as a mark of solidarity with the Soviet Jewish scientists and intellectuals who were refused exit visas because they could not pay the exorbitant education tax.

Jewish communal life suffered from the economic crisis. As a result of inflation and the devaluation of the Argentine peso, all organizations had difficulties meeting their budgets. One of the main sources of economic backing for Jewish philanthropic and educational institutions was the credit cooperative movement. A certain percentile of profits earned by the Jewish cooperatives was donated to cover a sizable portion of the budgets of Jewish schools and many other institutions. In the past six years, Argentina's credit cooperative movement has been reduced alarmingly. Only 450 out of 974 remained in existence. In 1966 deposits in the cooperatives represented 10 per cent of all deposits made; in 1972 it was less than 2.5 per cent. Many Jewish cooperatives went into bankruptcy because of mishandling or misappropriation of funds. In May the Central Bank cancelled authorization to operate the Caja Popular de Belgrano, one of the largest Jewish cooperatives, which had been the backbone of one of the leading day schools in Buenos Aires. Thousands of Christian and Jewish depositors lost their money.

**Education**

The general economic crisis and the failure of the cooperatives to maintain their subsidies resulted in a reduction of students in the Jewish day schools. A parallel situation existed in the Jewish summer camps; many of them were sold, others were not able to open. According to Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh statistics, the 1972-73 school year began with 400 students less than the previous year in kindergartens and primary day schools, a drop from 15,500 to 15,100. In the 1971-72 school year 87 per cent of the total number of students in Jewish schools were enrolled in day schools and 13 per cent in supplementary schools. A year later, the percentage for day schools was 78, and 22 for supplementary schools. In 1972-73, a total of 4,300 pupils attended kindergartens; 10,800, primary schools; 2,270, secondary schools. Since 1966, some 2,600 fewer students received a Jewish education.

The Federation of Jewish Communities stated that there was no decrease in enrollment in the provinces. In the year under review, 1,115 children attended kindergarten, 2,880, primary schools, and 1,000 students were registered in
special courses and secondary schools. In all, there were 41 schools with 300 teachers in the provinces. Rosario, with a Jewish population of 3,000 families, had a day school with 800 students. AMIA made several efforts to solve the over-all decline in Jewish education. Besides the economic problems, another important factor was the conversion during the past few years of many supplementary schools into day schools, leaving many schools with few pupils and some without directors. AMIA decided it would attempt to combine several high schools and to reestablish various supplementary schools. At the beginning of the school year AMIA announced a program of giving a subsidy to every child attending a Jewish school and putting a limit on tuition fees charged by each school. Schools participating in the program had to have a minimum of 20 children in each classroom and could not reject any student on economic grounds. All but two schools joined the program, and four secondary schools joined as one entity.

Since the 800 million pesos subsidy previously given by the credit cooperatives to support the school system was now cut off, AMIA created in August the Fondo de la Educación (Education Fund), which attempted to unite all community forces for educational fund-raising purposes. The Federación de Clubes de Padres de las Escuelas Hebreas (Parent Teacher Association), OSA, AMIA, Wa‘ad Ha-hinnukh, and a representative from the JDC in the United States launched the fund-raising campaign, as well as a campaign for publicity and early registration. It met with little success.

One of the most important educational institutions was the Escuela Superior de Ciencias Judaicas (Ha-midrasha Ha-ivrit), the training center for teachers with 300 students from across the country, of whom 40 spent the year in the Makhon Greenberg in Israel. The director was Rabbi Marcos Edery. Of its graduates, 150 served as teachers in Jewish secondary schools and others as principals in Jewish schools in Argentina and other South American countries. The Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Argentino Israeli, sponsored by the Israeli embassy, offered special adult Hebrew courses to some 800 students. The Casa del Estudiante “Moshe Sharett,” sponsored and subsidized by AMIA, provided full board for Jewish students from the provinces studying in Buenos Aires. Lack of funds moved AMIA to consider closing and selling the building.

In July the Shalom Aleichem school, founded in 1934, celebrated the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of its building, the first Jewish school building constructed in Argentina. Its kindergarten, primary, and secondary departments had a total of 2,000 pupils.

The Sephardi school system was not affiliated with the Wa‘ad Ha-hinnukh. It had a dozen schools, all in Greater Buenos Aires, with about 3,000 students. In May AMIA decided to give a substantial allocation to Sephardi day schools that had 60 per cent non-Sephardi students. The amount would equal 75 per cent of that received by Ashkenazi schools. In June ACIS created a
Departmento Comunitario de Educación for their affiliated schools and institutions. They also organized a school for leadership training for group and community directors.

Religion

Religious life in Argentina generally continued to be marked by apathy and disinterest, as well as a lack of modern, dynamic religious leadership. The majority of the 50 Buenos Aires synagogues remained relatively empty; it was estimated that fewer than 8 per cent of the Jewish residents attended High Holy Day services. Encouraging was the groundbreaking for two new synagogue buildings by the two youngest Buenos Aires congregations: one for the 85-family Temple Emanu-el (Reform), by its Rabbi Leon Klenicki, in August; the other, in November, for the 600-family Comunidad Bet El (Conservative), by its Rabbis Marshall T. Meyer and Marcos Edery, for a new synagogue and school complex.

The ordination in August of two young third-generation Argentines, Rabbis Ruben Nisenbom and Angel K. Brill, by the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano (Conservative) headed by Rabbis Meyer and Edery at Comunidad Bet El was an event that drew an audience of over 1,000. Brill was appointed rabbi in Chile, the only one serving the country’s approximately 25,000 Jews. Rabbi Nisenbom was appointed to a teaching post in the Seminario and, at the same time, became rabbi of the Leo Baeck synagogue in Buenos Aires. Seminario student Marcelo Rittner was acting rabbi of Lamroth Hakol synagogue during the illness of its Rabbi Paul Hirsch. Orthodox Rabbi David Tabachnik, ordained at the Makhon Harry Fischel in Jerusalem, occupied the pulpit in the city of Rosario. Argentine born Rabbi Shmuel Arie Levin was appointed director of the AMIA Seminario Rabínico in June. AMIA’s chief rabbinate was headed by Israeli Rabbi David Kahane (Orthodox). The rabbinical department of AMIA registered marriages, granted divorces, performed conversions, and controlled kashrut.

Various social scientists noted a steady decline of circumcisions. This subject was the theme of many round-table discussions, especially after the publication in August of the book La circuncisión by Moises Tractenberg, an Argentine Jewish doctor who severely criticized this custom. The Jewish community continued to suffer from rapidly accelerating assimilationist tendencies and a marked increase in intermarriage.

Press and Publications

The year 1972 was rather a lean one for new books of Jewish interest. Mundo Israelita commented editorially that the Jewish publishing houses were not fulfilling their responsibility of maintaining a sufficient number of
publications. The editorial lamented the disappearance of many local institutional periodicals and bulletins. Asher Milbashan, Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent and owner of Editorial Candelabro, replied that it was virtually impossible to continue publishing books with Jewish content because the buying public was not interested. He said that, unless a book received some sort of subsidy, its publication was economically not feasible.

Argentina's Jewish newspapers, too, had serious financial difficulties. Di Yidishe Tsaytung, founded in 1914, had to appeal to foreign sources for funds to balance its budget. There was another Yiddish daily, Di Presse, besides the Spanish language weekly Mundo Israelita, founded in 1923, and the German language weekly Jüdisches Wochenblatt. Among Jewish periodicals were the well known Yiddish Davka; the Spanish fortnightly La Luz; the quarterly Majshavot, the publication of the World Council of Synagogues and the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano which was devoted to modern religious thought; the Mapam fortnightly Nueva Sión, and the monthly Raices published by the Organización Sionista Argentina. The Biblioteca Popular Judía, sponsored by the Latin American section of the World Jewish Congress, continued to publish its pamphlet series on leading Jewish figures and events. Comentario, the publication of the Instituto Argentino Judío; Indice, the quarterly of the DAIA's Center for Social Studies, and Davar, a literary magazine published for the last quarter of a century by the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, no longer appeared.

The more important books of Jewish interest published during the year were: La Honda de David ("David's Sling: The Arising of Israel"), by Shimon Peres (Editorial Paidós); Sionismo y Humanismo ("Zionism and Humanism") by Itzjac Bokser (Editorial Sifrut); De la Legión Judía a Medinat Israel ("From the Jewish Legion to the Jewish State"), by Melej Morgenstern; La Rebelión Judía ("La revolte juive"), by Jacob Tsur (Editorial Paidós).

Zionism and Relations With Israel

Although the Argentine Jewish community strongly identified with Israel and Zionist causes, this sentiment was not expressed in formal affiliation with Zionist parties. Indeed, one might say that this feeling of identification was not even expressed in financial support of the State of Israel. According to reports, only some 5 per cent of Argentine Jews had bought an Israel bond. Approximately 30,000 Jews contributed to the United Jewish Appeal. It could be argued that the devaluation of the peso in recent years did not favor sizable contributions; but many wealthy Jews with large fortunes did not give according to ability either. Many of the people who went on aliyah did so because they suffered economic reverses. It was also noted that, as in other countries, Jewish leftist youth was becoming more and more critical of Israel's stance in the Middle East conflict.
Many leading Israelis visited Argentina during the year. In April Labor Minister Yosef Almogi spoke at the 23rd annual Keren Ha-yesod assembly. In May Knesset member Mordechai ben Porat visited various organizations in Buenos Aires. The Argentine Friends of the Hebrew University had a reception for Dr. Jacob Katz, rector of the Hebrew University; in October Avraham Harman was the main speaker at the third Latin American congress of the Friends of the Hebrew University. In August Pinhas Sapir met with the Argentine ministers of finance, economy, and foreign commerce in an effort to increase trade relations between the two countries. In October Arieh Pincus, president of the Jewish Agency, was the main speaker at the national convention of T’nuat Ha-aliyah (Movement for Aliyah). The organization sponsored a seminar for educators in Córdoba in December.

In 1971 Israel bought $13 million worth of Argentine goods; its exports to Argentina totaled $2 million. Comparable figures for 1972 were $15 million and about $2 million.

In October the Asociación Casa Argentina in Israel sponsored “Argentine Month in Israel” for the many Argentine settlers in Israel and other guests. It featured various lectures and important artistic events in which leading Argentine artists participated.

Antisemitism

There can be no doubt that antisemitism remained an important problem for Argentine Jewry. In March the Argentine economist Beveraggi Allende repeated his accusation that Argentine Jewry had a secret plan to establish the Jewish state of Andinia in Patagonia (AJYB, 1972 [Vol.73], p. 439), which he called “the machinations of world Zionists to invade national territory.” This canard, elaborated in a piece entitled “Plan Andinia,” was widely distributed throughout the country, particularly in the trade unions, the armed forces, and Church circles, and in the provinces of Rio Negro and Neuquén. Students of antisemitism in Argentina insisted that the Arab League and its propaganda offices were behind the increased virulence of antisemitic publications and actions.

A new note was struck in a widely circulated pamphlet which directly attacked the Sephardi community, warning the public of “the danger of the presence of 60,000 Sephardim in this country.” In May the Syrian ambassador to Chile made statements to the press attacking Israel and the Argentine Jewish community. Again in December, Israel and the Argentine Jewish community were attacked by the head of the Arab League office in Chile and Argentina, Yousouf el-Bandake, in a paid newspaper advertisement. DAIA made a formal protest to the Chilean ambassador to Argentina.

In an interview with the Argentine Minister of Interior Arturo Mor Roig, in April, DAIA strongly protested against these antisemitic outbursts. The Argentine press strongly supported this protest, and the Partido Socialista
Democratico (Socialist Democratic party) categorically denounced the antisemitic campaign and pledged solidarity with the Jews and Israel.

The number of antisemitic publications greatly increased. Among them were *Inédito*, *Vísperas*, and *Propósitos*. In July a statement in pamphlet form, entitled *The Jews, Israeli Citizens* and signed by the "Sisters of the Sacred Heart," was widely circulated. When DAIA contacted the order to protest, the Sisters denied having had anything to do with it and said that their name had been used maliciously.

In September five letter-bombs mailed in Holland arrived at the Israel embassy, but did no damage. During the same month bombs were thrown at the Paso and Camargo synagogues in the center of Buenos Aires. No one was hurt, but considerable damage was done. There were many other antisemitic actions throughout the country.

In an interview with Chief of Police, General Alberto Cáceres, the president and secretary of DAIA expressed their deep concern over the wave of antisemitism. General Cáceres assured them that he would take all necessary measures to put a stop to it. At a meeting with Argentina’s minister of education in December, DAIA asked him to remove an antisemitic novel *La Bolsa* ("The Money Market") by Julian Martel, from the required reading lists of second-year high school students. He promised to study the matter.

Aside from these incidents, there were countless telephone threats, kidnappings of prominent Jewish merchants for ransom, as well as an apparent threat by the Black September organization to kidnap 200 Jewish students on October 12, which created panic in Jewish homes.

But if Argentine Jews were kidnapped and held for ransom, so were Argentine Christians, and in far greater proportion. If two synagogues were bombed, so were attacks made on many Catholic churches and schools. Certainly, the Arab League was more active than ever before. However, antisemitic elements were becoming more active also in the Partido Justicialista (Peronists). Given Argentina’s revolutionary climate and the intensive pre-election agitation, as well as Peron’s return and the economic crisis, the recrudescence of virulent antisemitism was no surprise to any social scientist. Despite all this, it appears that antisemitism by far was not the primary problem facing Argentine Jewry. It was rather apathy and indifference, assimilation, intermarriage, and financial problems within the Jewish community.

*Naomi F. Meyer*


Brazil

Independence Celebration

The year 1972 had special significance for Brazil: it was dedicated to an uninterrupted series of ceremonies marking 150 years of the country’s independence. The festivities ended only on September 7—the day Dom Pedro I proclaimed the independent Brazilian empire in 1822. A feature film in technicolor and a special play (written and directed by Helio Bloch, a Jew) were produced for the occasion, and all Brazilian magazines, including the American Jewish Committee sponsored Comentário, published special issues devoted to the event. Concerts by the Israeli Symphony Orchestra in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre were included in the official program of the festivities.

Government-sponsored television and radio spot programs emphasized the racial and religious equality of all groups in Brazilian society, including the Jews, presenting the country as an outstanding example of intergroup harmony in the world. The former president of the Rio de Janeiro Jewish Federation, Samuel Malamud, wrote a Festschrift reviewing the contributions of the Jews to Brazil’s development.

The patriotic character of the year did not change general trends in the country. The upsurge of the economy, under the strong direction of Finance Minister Delfim Netto, continued. The young Minister of Planning Joao Paulo Reis Velloso (whose executive secretary, Henrique Flanzer, was a Jew) introduced changes in other areas of national life, as well.

Education

One of the most extensive and radical reforms underway in Brazil was instituted by Minister of Education Jarbas Passarinho in the structure of the school system, with a view to creating a hitherto nonexistent skilled middle class and more able professionals. New educational facilities have been created for what used to be the marginal masses, including nationwide educational radio and educational TV stations in various urban centers. Among the planners of these programs was Professor Arnaldo Niskier, former secretary of technology of the Guanabara state government and representative in Brazil of the Weizmann Institute.

In keeping with the general education policy, a simplification of the Portuguese language was undertaken by the Brazilian Academy. It designated
Polish-born Marcos Margulies as editorial director of the orthographic Vocabulary of the Portuguese Language, to be published by Bloch Editores in Rio de Janeiro under the direction of encyclopedist and academician Antonio Houaiss.

Innovations in education were not limited to primary and secondary schools. They extended also to the university. In fact, new universities were being created all over the country, with preference given to the smaller cities. Access to the university was facilitated, even for those who did not complete secondary school but were able to pass special concentrated preparatory courses.

**Illiteracy**

Illiteracy was being eradicated very quickly through “Mobral,” a nationwide, officially sponsored campaign, with the effective participation of university students. Terezinha Saraiva, a director of the campaign, received special training in Israel. In São Paulo, the project was aided by Mrs. Susannah Frank, the city’s secretary of social welfare and president of the local Council of Jewish Women. “Projeto Rondon,” a program entrusted only to the students, has been bringing civilization to the distant parts of the country. Thus the students were participating directly in the practical and positive solutions of problems affecting the underprivileged sectors of Brazilian society, while receiving formal training in their chosen professions.

**Construction and Reclamation**

The economic and social restructuring of Brazil—the first attempt of its kind in the history—affected also the peasants who, until now, had lived under almost semifeudal conditions. Social laws were being extended to them; land reform was beginning; some kibbutz-style agricultural settlements were being founded in the state of Espirito Santo. Unexplored territories were being reclaimed in the regions of the Amazon, and, along the Transamazon highway, agrovilas, new agricultural settlements, were springing up as work progressed. The government encouraged landless peasants to move to these settlements. In the course of the highway construction new Indian tribes were discovered; they were being given all possible aid by one of the best specialists in the field of Indian sanitation and pathology problems, Odessa-born Dr. Noel Nutels of the National Service for the Protection of the Indians.

When completed, the 1,300-mile highway will connect isolated settlements
on the Peruvian border with the stark northeastern regions, where an Israeli team has been directing an irrigation project. At the same time, financial and tax benefits were being offered to entrepreneurs as an inducement to build new factories and fishing and mining centers in the Amazon region and in the Northeast. These changes affected also the Jewish community of Manaus, the capital of the Amazonas state, where membership increased from 300 to almost 500. While the first settlers were mainly Sephardim, most of the newcomers were Ashkenazi businessmen from Southern Brazil (AJYB, 1972 [Vol. 73], p. 441).

**The Economy**

The government's financial and economic policies have been pushing for a concentration of efforts: the unification of banks and of smaller, and even larger, business enterprises, a development requiring the elimination of technological obsolescence. The rate of inflation has been reduced to less than 20 per cent annually, from 180 per cent a decade earlier.

**Jewish Community**

**Communal Organizations**

The Jews of Brazil, who were concentrated in the major cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre, have benefited from the improved economic conditions. Most of them belonged to the middle class, and many prospered. The prevailing climate of change, too, strongly influenced the entire structure of Jewish community institutions. Leadership passed into the hands of the younger generation, the 35-to-45-year-old Brazilian-born or -educated Jews. The process began in São Paulo, undoubtedly the economic capital of the country, and spread to Rio de Janeiro, the cultural capital, and to Curitiba. There were quite a few innovations, though the prevailing prosperity had not cured the chronic financial difficulties of the communal organizations.

Marcos Firer, president of the São Paulo Federation, who was aided by a newly appointed small staff of skilled professional communal workers, coordinated almost all federation institutions in his region.

The activities of the various São Paulo welfare institutions, such as Ciam, Ofidas, EZRA, and the home for the aged, were centralized. The only exception was the modern Albert Einstein Hospital in São Paulo, an independent institution serving all residents. There has been some resistance
to the reorganization from different groups in the São Paulo community, but the process continued, and services were expected to improve.

The São Paulo Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP), originally founded by German Jews, now embraced some 2,500 families of all backgrounds, with the majority still Ashkenazi. Under the religious leadership of Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss, it maintained, in addition to its synagogues, a home for children, a home for the aged, a Hevra Kaddisha, and two summer vacation camps. The Sephardi Jews maintained a separate congregational organization, Monte Sinai. They also had a new synagogue, whose rabbi was Menahem Diesendruck.

The luxurious and modern Hebraica Club continued to be the center of social life. It maintained a theater, cinema, library, all kinds of sport facilities, dance halls, and published a monthly edited by José Knoplich. São Paulo had another social club, Círculo Israelita, as well as the Maccabi sports association.

With the election of Eliezer Burlá as president of the Rio de Janeiro Federation, communal changes similar to those in São Paulo were instituted. The city's main congregational body, the Associação Religiosa Israelita (ARI), whose membership was almost entirely Ashkenazi, was headed by Rabbi Henrique Lemle; its president was Hermann Zuckerman. Its activities paralleled those of CIP in São Paulo. The Centro Israelita Brasileiro, the organization of Sephardi Jews, worked closely with ARI. One of the main activities of the Centro was its program of lectures on Judaism for parents, organized by Rabbi Lemle, and on the history of the Jews in Brazil, given by Professor Lauriston Guerra of the National Historical Museum. The most powerful organization remained the Hevra Kaddisha, which was independent of all other communal bodies.

Among Rio's social and cultural organizations were Monte Sinai and Hebraica Club. The latter, under the presidency of Marcos Halfin, arranged exhibits of the works of Jewish artists and of Israeli books, and a hasidic music festival which was widely discussed in the local press. At the time, the main Rio newspaper, Jornal do Brasil, published a long study of Hasidism as a philosophical and historical phenomenon.

The Confederação Israelita do Brasil (CIB; Jewish Confederation of Brazil), the Jewish coordinating and representative agency with headquarters in São Paulo, has been directed, during the long illness of its president, Moysés Kauffmann, by acting vice president Benno Milnitzky, a successful young attorney.

Sherit ha-Pleta, a new organization established in São Paulo was envisaged as a national organization. Under its president, Joseph Krys, it has begun organizing branches in Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, and other cities. Its main
purpose was to sponsor the publication of information that would keep alive among the young generation the memory of the Holocaust, and to make available material which would help prevent the recurrence of genocide of any kind.

Under the presidency of Emilio Mila, the Brazilian branch of B’nai B’rith established contact with many small, isolated communities. Special representatives visited the south of Brazil, and found many “lost” Jewish families in communities like Pelotas, Erechim, and Santa Maria. Lodges were founded in the first two cities; these helped keep the families in touch with the more important Jewish centers.

A large Brazilian delegation participated in the meeting convened by the South American branch of the World Jewish Congress in Lima, Peru.

**Jewish Education**

One of the first tasks of Firer in São Paulo was to introduce changes into the educational system. This situation had been deteriorating. There were not enough Jewish teachers or teaching materials for the Jewish schools. Many Jewish schools provided little more than Hebrew language courses, with practically no religious education.

The elementary schools, in which about 50 per cent of eligible Jewish children were enrolled, followed the curriculum of the secular schools, but included also courses in Hebrew, Jewish history, and religion. Secondary schools were attended by only about 30 per cent of Jewish high-school students.

Competition among the Jewish schools was eliminated by the merger of some schools. The consolidation was undertaken to improve finances and to provide a more skilled professional staff, which clearly would make for higher enrollment. Jayme Pinsky, professor at the São Paulo University and former head of the Hillel Foundation, was appointed director of Renascença, the largest Jewish school in the city, which had an enrollment of over 2000. Its president was Aaron Sahm, a well-known São Paulo engineer.

The Jewish schools in Rio were very well organized; almost 60 per cent of all eligible Jewish children attended. The Yeshivah high school in Petropolis, near Rio, had a particularly good reputation. All but the Yiddish Sholem Aleichem school concentrated on the Hebrew language. The common effort of all schools resulted in the publication of the first Brazilian-produced textbook, a Jewish history written by Isaac Izecksohn.

Rio’s ORT vocational school, directed by Dan Shabat, achieved a high degree of development in 1972. Almost 50 per cent of its student body was non-Jewish.
Jewish Scholarship and Culture

There were two university centers for Jewish studies in Rio: the Center of the Hebrew Language and Studies at the Federal University, under the direction of Rabbi Lemle, and the recently organized Hebrew Cultural Center established at the state University of Guanabara by Professor Niskier. Rabbi Lemle also founded the Centro Maimonides for the purpose of improving the quality of teachers in Jewish schools.

There were three Jewish libraries in Rio: the Bialik, Theodor Herzl, and the Sholem Aleichem (Yiddishist) libraries. The Bialik library concentrated on the immigrant generation of the 1920s, but currently provided a four-month course on Jewish culture for the Jewish secondary-school student.

At São Paulo University, the Center of Jewish Studies, directed by Professor Nachman Falbel and cosponsored by the Jewish Memorial Foundation, the American Jewish Committee, and the local community, offered courses in Jewish history, philosophy, literature, and sociology to a student body that was nearly 80 per cent non-Jewish. An important project of the Center was a Jewish demographic study under the supervision of Professor Henrique Rattner, published jointly with Editora Perspectiva.

In 1972 São Paulo University accepted four doctoral dissertations submitted by Jewish professors at the Center: Nachman Falbel and Anita Novinsky, in history; Walter Rehfeld in philosophy, and Rivka Berezin in philology—an indication of the university’s importance for Jewish culture in Brazil. Anita Novinsky’s work on the New Christians in the State of Bahia during the 17th century was published by the Editora Perspectiva.

Publications

Besides the works by Jewish scholar at the universities, there were several other noteworthy publications. B’nai B’rith publishing house, headed by Paulo Bekin, brought out a new Passover Haggadah and was preparing the first Portuguese translation of selections from the Mishna in cooperation with Editora Documentario in Rio de Janeiro. The first Portuguese translation of a modern Hebrew novel, Moshe Shamir’s Melekh basar wa-dam (“King of Flesh and Blood”), was sponsored by Pioneer Women, and published by Editora Perspectiva in São Paulo. The translation, by Jacó Guinzburg and Abram Guzik, was highly praised by the Brazilian press. Gershom Scholem’s Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism also appeared in translation (Editora Perspectiva).

The Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgação in Rio, working closely with the American Jewish Committee, continued to publish the quarterly *Comentário*. Considered one of the leading intellectual magazines in Brazil, it now appeared in new format under the editorial direction of Marcos Margulies. The B'nai B'rith monthly *Herança Judaica (Jewish Heritage)*, the Portuguese edition of *Jewish Heritage*, also appeared regularly.


**Youth and the Community**

At the same time, the younger Jews, and particularly the university students, moved farther away from the older, Brazilian-minded and rather pro-Israel Establishment. Their ties to the community had become considerably weaker and their solidarity with Israel generally more doubtful. Two sets of data seemed to bear this out. One was demographic: While the population of Brazil increased by some 40 per cent between 1960 (65,000,000) and 1970 (92,000,000), the Jewish population remained unchanged. The 1960 official census put the number of Jews at 120,000; the unofficial community estimates were between 140,000 and 150,000. In 1972, when the population of Brazil passed the hundred-million mark, the Jewish population remained at an estimated 150,000 to 155,000. This discrepancy cannot be adequately explained by the generally lower Jewish birthrate, which was balanced by the higher life expectancy of the Jews. It must therefore be assumed that there has been a loss to the community, which could have involved only younger Jews, who were not joining communal organizations and were rejecting Judaism as a value basis.

The second factor to be considered was the small membership in Jewish youth organizations, regardless of their character or ideology (Zionist organizations like Dror, Hashomer, and others). The closing of the Hillel
Foundation in Brazil at year’s end in some sense demonstrated a lack of confidence on the part of the young Jewish generation in the Jewish Establishment.

Worried by this problem, São Paulo’s CIP and ARI in Rio engaged two young rabbis—Henry Sobel for São Paulo and Roberto Graetz for Rio—to attract the young and bring them back into the community. Both rabbis, who have been very well accepted by the congregations, have been concentrating on youth-centered religious services and other activities. Similarly, B’nai B’rith has been successful in establishing new youth chapters in São Paulo and in organizing a nationwide student symposium in São Lourenço, under the direction of Jayme Pinsky.

Communal Relations

The young Jewish generation made its mark in noncommunal fields as well. For example, Professor Helena Lewin was appointed head of the sociology department at the Catholic Pontifical University in Rio de Janeiro; Professor Isaac Kerstenetzky has been president of the economically vital National Institute of Statistics; Henrique Merelenbaum became a conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra, working closely with Maestro Isaac Karabtchevski; Curitiba’s (State of Parana) Mayor Jaime Lerner was given recognition as the most efficient Brazilian mayor of the year; engineer José Meiches was put in charge of urban renewal in São Paulo. This list could be extended indefinitely to include recently appointed Jewish judges, prosecutors, state secretaries, and even high army and navy officials, among them General Isaac Nahon, a member of the Army High Command.

In general, there appeared to be growing public curiosity about the Jews. This was most evident in television programming. An-Ski’s “Dybbuk” was produced by the Rio’s TV-Globo over its nationwide network and rebroadcast to meet public demand. The most popular one-man program, that of Flávio Cavalcanti, dedicated three weeks to a discussion of Hitler and Nazism. The panel, chaired by Judge Eliezer Rosa, consisted of four Jews and four non-Jews. A survey indicated that the weekly Sunday program produced by Francisco Gotthilf on São Paulo’s TV-Gazeta, the only specifically Jewish TV program in Brazil, was being viewed by a large number of non-Jews. There were, in addition, two Jewish radio programs in São Paulo and two in Rio. This curiosity about Jewish affairs also was apparent from the growing number of non-Jewish readers of Comentario and Resenha Judaica.
Antisemitism and Arab Propaganda

There were no racial or religious problems in Brazil because the Jews, like all other ethnic or religious groups, had become an integral part of Brazilian society. However, some Brazilian publications, especially the so-called liberal ones, have been strongly anti-Israeli and, consequently, somewhat anti-Jewish. After the Munich massacre, the liberal weekly *Pasquim* ("Lampoon") likened Golda Meir to Hitler, since both, according to the periodical, were responsible for the massacre of Jews: Hitler through organized genocide, Mrs. Meir because of her intransigent stand on the Munich affair. The Rio daily, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, attacked Israel and, by association, the Jews. In fact, the anti-Israeli attitude in intellectual circles was stronger than in former years.

There has been a resurgence of Arab activities. The Arab League office in Rio de Janeiro published, besides its monthly *Oriente Arabe*, anti-Israeli pamphlets and apparently also sponsored books by Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Moshe Menuhim and other anti-Zionists, as well as a strongly anti-Jewish version of Karl Marx's *Zur Judenfrage*. An antisemitic book published in Portugal, *The Plot Against the Church*, has been distributed, mainly in the cities of the interior. In Rio, the Arabs organized a very successful exposition on the theme, "The Arab Contribution to Civilization," and awarded prizes to Brazilian scholars and students for the best essays on the topic. They presented a valuable medieval Baghdad tapestry to the Brazilian Academy for its new building.

The distribution of Arab League material to the Brazilian press, principally in the smaller cities, seemed to have become more efficient. Because of its internal reorganization, the Jewish community was not ready to counteract this propaganda, but plans to do so have now been completed.

Relations with Israel and Zionism

Arab propaganda in no way affected the friendly relations between Brazil and Israel. A "House of Brazil" was being established in Israel and was scheduled to open in 1973. As mentioned earlier, the Israeli technical missions continued to work on reclamation projects in Brazil. Israel, on its part, began to import Brazilian meat certified by Israeli rabbis who supervised the slaughtering. The well-known Rio de Janeiro publisher Adolpho Bloch sponsored an Astrophysical Center in Israel, which was named for him.
The Zionist organizations in Brazil, including WIZO, under its president Mrs. Antonieta Feffer, and the Labor Zionist Pioneer Women, continued their work. The Organização Sionista Unificada (United Zionist Organization), under the leadership of Boris Blinder, had about 11,000 active supporters.

The Brazilian Friends of the Hebrew University carried on its work under the leadership of Professor Bella Jozef, a specialist in Spanish-American literature, who has been invited to teach at the University in Jerusalem. Representatives of the Friends of the Hebrew University throughout South America met in Guarujá, near São Paulo.

Soviet Jewry

The Brazilian press carried much news about the fate of Soviet Jewry, all of it sympathetic to their plight. A number of important intellectuals and academics signed a public statement condemning the attitude of the Kremlin, among them Austrogéisio de Athayde, president of the Brazilian Academy; Professor Josué Montello, rector of São Luiz University; Professor Pedro Calmon, president of the National Historical Institute and former minister of education, and the well-known poet, Odylo Costa Fillio. In this context, mention must be made of the publication of The Tragedy of Jewish Communism, an important book written by Isaias Golgher, a member of the Historical Institute of the State of Minas Gerais. It is a historical study of the Yevsektsiya, the Jewish section of the propaganda department of the Soviet Communist party in the 1920s which officially sponsored anti-Zionism in Soviet Russia and was liquidated in the 1930s. In Rio de Janeiro, Michael Bruckner published two books of fiction, Sh'ma Israel and Legião dos Mutilados ("The Legion of Hunted"), which were based on personal experience. They described the fate of the Polish Jews in the USSR in World War II.

Personalia

Among Jewish personalities who died in 1972 were Grigori Warchawchik, creator of modern Brazilian architecture; Henrique Mindlin, one of the top modern Brazilian architects; Aron Neuman, editor of the weekly, Aonde Vamos and Gregorio Biller, who initiated the exportation of meat from Brazil to Israel.
Uruguay

The period between 1968 and 1972 was one of dramatic events. Uruguay, once called the Switzerland of the Americas, experienced an unprecedented outburst of violence by the leftist National Liberation Movement, or "Tupamaros," the best-organized guerrilla group on the continent. When Vice President Jorge Pacheco Araco became president after the sudden death of General Oscar Gestido in November 1967, the country was plagued by serious inflation and increasing social unrest. Energetic measures by Pacheco helped curb inflation and restrain the wave of strikes, but brought only temporary relief and did not basically change what seemed a general prerevolutionary atmosphere. In a widespread student riot in 1968, a number of young people were killed by the police. Though some books were written to explain the psychological reasons for the students' revolt and its connection with similar riots in many other parts of the world, there could be no doubt that the rioting in Uruguay had been organized by the Tupamaro guerrillas, who had thoroughly infiltrated the student movement.

The first action of the guerrillas occurred in 1963, when they stole arms from Colonia Suiza, a Swiss rifle club. In 1965 they carried on Robin Hood activities, sharing stolen goods and food with the poor in some outlying districts of Montevideo. But they became a force and a threat to internal order only during Pacheco's government. In 1970-1971 the Tupamaros organized many spectacular criminal acts, such as kidnapping foreign and Uruguayan personalities, robbing the Casino in Punta del Este, and many escapes from the Punta Carreta prison, which outraged people everywhere.

The issue of the "internal war" strongly affected the elections in November 1971. When Pacheco's group failed in its campaign for a constitutional amendment that would have authorized a second term for the president, the president, who favored a "hard line" position against the Tupamaros and conducted a clear-cut but oversimplified campaign of "law and order" against subversion, successfully worked for the election of his hand-picked candidate, Minister of Agriculture Juan María Bordaberry Arocena. But the victory was far from complete. Bordaberry defeated, by a margin of 10,000, the candidate of the rival National party, Senator Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, who had fiercely attacked both the government and the Tupamaros. The two parties together polled nearly 80 per cent of the vote with the remaining 20 per cent going to a new and quite important force in Uruguayan politics: the Broad Front (Frente Amplio), a coalition of the various leftist groups including the Communist, Christian-Democrat, and
Socialist parties, splinter groups from the traditional parties, and some smaller groups, among them the almost openly pro-Tupamaro "26th of March."

The huge and impressive campaign of the Broad Front aroused fear of a possible Communist government takeover among many groups of Uruguay's large and quite conservative middle class. Surprisingly, most of the working class voted for the traditional parties and against the left. This was interpreted by the newspapers of the right and center groups as an indication that the workers had had enough of Communist and leftist pressure in their unions. Nevertheless, for the first time in Uruguayan history, a united leftist force was able to get substantial representation in the parliament. At the same time, the gains of the Broad Front fell short of the expectations of their leaders and the predictions of political observers that the party would at least gain control of the Montevideo municipal government. The large vote cast for the traditional parties was in fact a popular reaction against the Broad Front's tolerance of, and even sympathy with, the Tupamaro movement. By November 1971, it had lost its "Robin Hood" image and become quite unpopular after several kidnappings and murders.

President Bordaberry, who took office on March 1, 1972, failed to create a government of national unity because the National party refused its support for programmatic reasons. He then formed a coalition with the right wing of the National party and the liberal "Number 15" Colorado group of Jorge Batlle to implement a cautious "centrist" policy. What helped was that the army, which had taken over the fight against the Tupamaros in September 1971, put an end to their activities a year later in a bloody fight, after the murder of their top leader, Raúl Sendic.

Once the guerrillas were defeated, a new political situation developed. The army had discovered that many Tupamaro complaints about corruption and economic delinquency were true, and it now opened a "second front." Its action against "economic crimes" met with resistance from various political groups which feared the growing power of the military leaders. These fears were justified as clashes between the civil and military authorities became more and more frequent, and finally led to military control of the government in 1973.

Relations With Israel

Uruguay has been one of the staunchest friends of Israel since its inception, and its supporter in the United Nations. But there have been some disturbing signs of a change. In recent years, the country's mass media have been less outspoken in their sympathy for Israel and the leftist press (three important daily newspapers, two weeklies, and other publications) has taken a clear-cut anti-Israel position. Neither has the extreme right, represented by the weekly
Azul y Blanco, which strongly influenced certain army groups, been hiding its anti-Israel position. Changes in the country’s political life, therefore, gave rise to concern in the Jewish community about the future of relations between the two countries.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

The estimated Jewish population of Uruguay was about 50,000 in a total population of 2.8 millions. Almost all Jews, 48,000, lived in Montevideo, with communities of some 65 families in Paysandú and 15 in Rocha.

The Jews of Uruguay continued to be largely middle-class. There was a small group of wealthy Jews and a relatively small number of poor. Within the middle-class sector there had been upward mobility until 1967-68, when the process reversed. Thus, while older Jews in the liberal professions prospered, young professionals were now embarking on their careers in a country of few opportunities. Still, a large part of Uruguay’s small industry (furniture, wool, and clothing) was in the hands of Jews, who also played a considerable role in commerce.

**Jews in Public Life**

A number of Jews held important government and other public posts. Moisés Cohen, close collaborator of President Bordaberry when he had been minister of agriculture, was appointed minister of finance in October 1972. He was the first Jew in Uruguay’s history to become a minister. Simultaneously, another Jew, Alberto BENSION, became deputy to the secretary of development, a very important job. Two weeks later, Samuel Lichtenstein, a young economist, was elected rector of Uruguay University with strong support from the left and even the extreme left. Though Jews had been in high positions before (a senator and later director of a government bank, an undersecretary of health, and a director of the central tax-collection office), this was the first time Jews were chosen for difficult and sensitive key jobs.

The Jewish community was less than happy about the appointments. Although these men were far removed from Judaism and Jewish life, it feared that their Jewishness might be exploited as a political weapon. The fears were justified, as events were soon to demonstrate. When a conflict arose between the organization of taxi owners and Finance Minister Cohen, their cars displayed placards attacking him as a Jew. An apology followed strong reaction by the press. The extreme-right weeklies sharply attacked Lichtenstein, made fun of his name, and asked how "a foreigner" (he was born in Uruguay) could be rector of a Uruguayan university.
Community Organizations and Communal Affairs

Three communal elections brought new vitality into Jewish life in 1971-72: elections of delegates to the 28th World Zionist Congress and of officers of the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities. The merit of the Zionist election, held in October 1971, was that it drew some new, young faces. Tnuat Avodah Hatzionit received the largest number of votes, but was defeated by an electoral agreement between Herut and the General Zionists, who were in second and third places. The Sephardi community election in May 1972 was of no political significance. It was important, however, because of the two lists of candidates, one of traditional leadership and elderly people, the other of younger people, the latter won by a small majority. Indeed, the new, younger leadership brought a new style and new dynamics into community life. On the other hand, in the Ashkenazi community election of August 1972, the old leadership retained power. The three leading parties (Herut, General Zionists, and Avodah) formed a coalition whose main tasks were to carry the heavy financial burden of the kehillah; to abandon the construction of a new, expensive synagogue building (which was begun in a more prosperous time four years earlier); to assure the survival of the community’s paper Haint, and to increase the already overburdened social services.

There has been much talk about uniting the existing four communities (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Hungarian, German), but very little has been accomplished. There have also been unsuccessful attempts to reorganize the Jewish Central Committee, the representative body of Uruguayan Jewry, whose structure admittedly was outdated and cumbersome. Some people felt that the problem was lack of able leadership rather than the structure.

Religious Life

The community has always been a traditional one, but never really religious. For many years there had been no kosher restaurant in Montevideo, although some of the Jewish schools had kosher kitchens. And while on Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur makeshift arrangements had to be made to accommodate the large crowds of worshippers, it usually was difficult to get a minyan on the Sabbath.

At the end of 1972, the Ashkenazi community, which was the largest, engaged a new Orthodox rabbi from Buenos Aires, Nehemia Berman. The rabbi of the Sephardi community, Haham Schalom Edery, was Orthodox; Rabbi Fritz Winter of the German community was Conservative.

Practically isolated from the general Jewish community in Montevideo lived some 45 or 50 hasidic families about whom very little was known. They had their own synagogue and school, and generally kept aloof from Uruguayan Jewish life.
Jewish Education

Enrollment in Jewish schools in 1972 was as follows: 898 students in the Hebrew-Uruguayan day school and lyceum; 848 in the Religious Yavne Institute; 439 in the Ivriah supplementary school and lyceum; 315 in the Sholem Aleichem school and lyceum; 126 in the Mahazikei Ha-dat; 60 in the school of the Paysandú community; 352 in the school of the Rocha community. This made a total of 2,606 students, or about 20 per cent of all Jewish school-age children in the country. The two largest schools were day schools with full secular and Jewish curricula. The others were supplementary schools offering daily three hours of Jewish instruction. Ivriah and Yavne had classes for first and second-year high-school students; Sholem Aleichem instituted first-year high-school courses in 1972.

Jewish education has been in great financial difficulties, especially since its excellence depended entirely on the importation of good Israeli teachers, and the income for salaries (from matriculation fees, fund-raising campaigns, and subsidies by community organizations) was not enough to cover the high expenses. Although, of late, the schools were aided by international Jewish organizations like the Jewish Agency, the problem was far from solved.

The quality of education was very high, both in Jewish and general studies. All schools (except for the ultra-Orthodox, which was outside the jurisdiction of the community) were Israel-oriented. A representative of the Jewish Agency's Department of Education for the Diaspora took over the supervision of Jewish education in 1971. Since then, there has been great improvement in the coordination of the schools and the quality of education.

The student body of the ORT school in Montevideo was 40 per cent non-Jewish. The school's program has become much more extensive since it moved to its own building in the center of the city in 1970. It included electronics, bookkeeping, secretarial skills, and languages, and state-approved high-school courses. A survey course on Jewish culture was added to the regular curriculum in 1971.

Youth

Despite the growing involvement of Jewish youth in politics, the two organizations with the largest youth memberships were the pro-Israel and pro-Zionist, but apolitical, Hebraica-Maccabi Club and N.C.I. (Nueva Congregación Israelita of the German Jewish community, where youngsters of other backgrounds also were accepted). N.C.I. used funds received from abroad to build a fine youth home, the only one in Montevideo.

The halutz movements, Hanoar Hatzioni, Ihud Habonim, Hashomer Hatzair, Dror, Bnei Akiva, and Betar, were very active. Nonpolitical organizations like Ateneo Judaico and the Center of Jewish Studies, which
once attracted most young people between the ages of 20 and 30, have been declining. Their place was being taken by groups having a definite ideological purpose. Besides the always active Hativah Mordechai Anilevich, a Mapam-oriented group (which at times criticized Mapam for not being leftist enough) there were two new groups: Lamifneh, a left Hapoel Hamizrachi group with a religious Zionist-Socialist approach, and Hativah Rehovot affiliated with Avodah.

**Support of Soviet Jews**

The Uruguayan Committee for the Defense of Human Rights sponsored a Latin-American Symposium on Behalf of Soviet Jewry in October 1972 in Montevideo. The conference drew some distinguished Latin American intellectuals, among them the noted Argentine writer and educator Frida Schultz de Mantovani; the Venezuelan Marxist philosopher Juan Nuño, who wrote on Marxism and the Jewish question; the Colombian psychiatrist and president of the Committee for Peace, José Socarrás; the Bolivian writers, Yolanda Bedregal and Oscar Cerruto; the Mexican poets, Andrés Henestrosa (president of the Writers Union of Mexico) and León Solano Pacheco; the Argentine economist Alfredo Concepción, and Dr. Carlos Monge Alfaro, former rector of the University of Costa Rica. The president of the Uruguayan committee was Dr. José Claudio Williman, a renown university professor and political adviser to National party leader Ferreira Aldunate; the secretary was the historian Washington Reyes Abadie, whose works on Uruguay have become classics. Abraham Guillén, the much-discussed Spanish Republican political writer, author of *Urban Guerrilla* and many other books, integrated the Uruguayan delegation. Yosef Kerler, the Soviet poet, came from Israel to present his personal testimony. The press in Uruguay and abroad gave wide coverage to the event, which was severely criticized in the Communist press.

In the Jewish community, the Jewish Central Committee, with the active help of the Zionist Youth Federation, played a major role in support of the Soviet Jews. Among its activities were a demonstration protesting the Leningrad trials; condemnation of the exorbitant education tax imposed on Soviet Jews wanting to emigrate, and sponsoring visits by Soviet Jews like Dov Shperling and Mordechai Sholem.

**Publications and Radio**

Montevideo had two Yiddish newspapers, *Haint* and *Unzer Fraint*. *Haint*, the organ of the Ashkenazi community, was reorganized in August 1971 and now carried six pages in Yiddish and two in Spanish. The Yiddish section was edited by Shamay Grünberg, a veteran Jewish journalist, and the Spanish section by this writer. *Unzer Fraint*, a Communist-Stalinist paper, has been appearing without interruption for 35 years with the backing of the strong Communist party.
The most widely read Jewish paper was the weekly Semanario Hebreo, edited by José Jeresolimsky. He also directed the Voice of Zion radio program, which for two hours daily broadcast news of the Jewish world as well as Jewish and Israeli music.

Several months before the November 1971 national elections, a new Communist-Jewish publication, Presencia (Presence), appeared, first as a monthly and now twice a month. In the hands of hard-core Communists it became a Jewish weapon against the Jews and Israel, and was strongly condemned by Uruguayan Jewry. The regularly published bulletin of the German Jewish community, La voz semanal (Weekly Voice), carried very little original material and was read only by the older members of the community.

There were several other publications, but these did not appear regularly: Crisol (Crucible), house organ of the Sephardi community; Desafío (Challenge), the ideological organ of Hativa Anilevich, and Tzait Fragn (Topical Questions), the Bund’s Yiddish publication.

Ana Vinocur, a writer and survivor of Nazism, told her story of martyrdom in A Book Without a Title (July 1972). It was well received by public and critics.

The veteran writer and teacher Itzchak Vainsencher published a Spanish translation of his Yiddish book, Urugworzln ("Uruguayan Roots"), a study of several ethnic groups in Uruguay, including the Jews, Armenians, and Negroes.

**Personalia**

Dr. Moisés Mizrachi was appointed by the government in October 1969 to head the National Services for Rheumatic Diseases. At his suggestion and under his direction, Uruguay built the most modern hospital for rheumatic diseases in Latin America; it was opened in January 1972. Dr. Victor Soriano was elected a member of the Royal Society of Medicine of Barcelona, Spain, in September 1972. The organization of Uruguayan theater critics designated Jaime Yavitz one of the best actors of 1972 for his performance in Sartre’s play The Devil and the Good Lord. At the Festival of Guanabara, Brazil, in May 1970, composer and conductor Leon Biriotti won a second prize in chamber music for his composition, "Espectros."

Iechiel Lescht, former president of the Zionist Federation and vice president of the Latin American Federation of General Zionists, died in Montevideo on August 24, 1972, at the age of 70. Dr. Salomón Fabius, chargé d’affaires of Honduras in Uruguay and adjunct professor for children’s diseases in Montevideo’s faculty of medicine, died in Montevideo on November 30, 1972, at the age of 48.
Mexico

Under the presidency of Luis Echeverría Alvarez, who took office in December 1970, Mexico adopted a development strategy reflecting the prudent nationalism of the new leadership. Indicative of the direction the president intended to follow was the makeup of his cabinet: men in their thirties, forties, and fifties, most of them academicians and only a few professionals and career politicians. The country’s development had been spurred by a revolution that started in 1910 as an uprising for land, bread, and political freedom, but involved every social stratum of society. In the intervening years Mexico has pushed ahead with economic and social reform and development, as it met some of the increasing demands of its population.

The miraculous economic upsurge and stability brought the average annual growth rate to 6.5 per cent; it fell, for the first time, to 4 per cent in 1971. The yearly per capita income was $765. Of a total population of over 48.3 million in 1970, almost 16 million were in the labor force: 49.1 per cent in farming, hunting, and fishing; 22.6 per cent in manufacturing, mining, and the building industries; and 28.3 per cent in trade and services. Mexico continued to be the leading silver-producing country.

The country’s imports increased from $2.2 billion in 1971 to $2.6 billion in 1972. Exports reached a level of $1.3 billion in 1972, as compared to $1.6 billion in 1971. This left a trade deficit of close to $800 million. The nation’s budget for 1972 amounted to $9.8 billion.

Foreign Policy

New prospects for Mexico’s development determined a complete change in foreign policy. Through personal diplomacy, Echeverría sought acknowledgment of the formal and material equality of nations that would guarantee and strengthen the political and economic independence of all nations. In an effort to gain support for his ideas, he traveled through three continents, visiting Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, France, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China. Previous trips took him to the United States, Peru, and Chile.

Terrorism

A major problem has been the spate of bank robberies and pharmacy and gas station holdups that began in 1970. They led to the arrest in March 1971
of a group of 20 men and women who were connected with an organization called MAR (Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria) and the subsequent disclosure that a subversive plot allegedly was at the bottom of the thefts. The suspects, former students at the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University in Moscow, which had been established for students from non-Communist developing countries, confessed that they also had been in North Korea, where they had been provided with North Korean passports and trained in urban guerrilla warfare. It was widely believed that these men and women, who were well armed, were members of a much larger organization. Shortly after the arrests, five senior officials of the Soviet embassy were asked to leave Mexico as quickly as possible, and although no official reason was given for their ouster, the connection between it and the facts emerging from the inquiry was clear.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of Mexico was estimated at 40,000 to 50,000. This figure was based on membership lists of the various Jewish organizations and institutions throughout the country. No Jewish community census or demographic survey has ever been undertaken. Plans for a broad socio-demographic survey were set up on the initiative of the American Jewish Committee office in Mexico, the Comité Central Israelita, the Kehilá Ashkenazi Nidhe Israel, in cooperation with other Jewish institutions. In 1971 the American Jewish Committee, in cooperation with the local communal organization, conducted a pilot study of the Jews in Guadalajara.

According to estimates, the composition of the Jewish community was as follows: 55 per cent Ashkenazim from East European countries; 40 per cent Sephardim from the Near East, North Africa, and Balkan countries. Since there has been no substantial Jewish immigration to Mexico in the last 25 years, most of the Jewish community members were either native or naturalized Mexicans. Besides the Mexico City Jewish community, estimated at nearly 40,000, there were three other smaller communities: Monterrey, with 120 families; Guadalajara, with 140 families; and Tijuana, with 75 families.

Communal Organization

The main representative body of Mexican Jewry was the Comité Central Israelita de Mexico (Jewish Central Committee). Founded in 1938, the organization embraced the entire community and was its spokesman in relations with the Mexican government. In May 1972 the Comité Central Israelita elected a new board of directors, most of whose members were
second-generation Mexicans; Fernando Jeno was chairman of the board. The Central Committee worked in cooperation with the Latin-American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee; the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, and other international Jewish organizations.

More than most Latin American countries, Mexico had a great diversity of Jewish groups coming from various European, Near East, North African and other countries. The organization of the dominant Ashkenazi group was the Nidhe Israel kehillah. The Union Sefaradi de Mexico represented the Sephardi Spanish-speaking segment. There were also two Arabic-speaking groups, both of Syrian origin—one from Damascus, the other from Aleppo—which were organized in the Alianza Monte Sinai and Beneficencia Tzedaka Umarpe. A small group of Jews of German origin had established Hatikva Menorah. Some 140 families of English origin were members of the Beth Israel community center. About 30 years ago, a group originally from Hungary and other parts of the old Austro-Hungarian empire had founded the Emuna association, which was dissolved at the end of 1972.

A decade ago, a group of young couples, most of them second-generation Mexicans, established Congregacion Bet El (Conservative), whose membership now numbered over 800 families totaling 4,000 members.

Throughout the years, the differences between the various groups have disappeared as a result of integration, mutual rapprochement, and better understanding. Supported by second- and third-generation Mexican Jews, this process was moving ahead inexorably and should make for a more united and homogeneous community. One of the leading organizations cooperating in efforts to erase group differences was the Centro Deportivo Israelita (Jewish Sports Center) whose 20,000 members from the various communities could meet, become acquainted, and work together with no thought to origin or language. A similar process was taking place in Guadalajara, where Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Arab Jews lived together harmoniously, especially the younger people who were not interested in the origin of their parents or grandparents. What continued to trouble the community were differences between the younger native-born Jews and their immigrant parents, as well as the remarkable indifference of the young to organized Jewish life.

Jewish Education

There were in Mexico City six Jewish day schools and two yeshivot, besides the Beth Israel community center Sunday school and Bet El Congregation Talmud Torah. There was also a Jewish day school in Guadalajara and another in Monterrey.

The Jewish educational system was set to meet the needs of the younger generation. The day schools offered courses prescribed by the ministry of public education curriculum, as well as Jewish studies. Unfortunately, lack of time prevented the full development of Jewish studies, which were far from
meeting present needs. As a result enrollment in these schools dropped from 85 per cent of all Jewish children to a current 65 per cent.

Enrollment in the various schools was as follows: Colegio Israelita de Mexico, founded in 1924, had 1,403 students; Colegio Hebreo Tarbut, founded in 1942, had 1,200; Colegio Yavne, founded in 1942, had 550; Colegio Hebreo Sefaradí, founded in 1944, had 800; Colegio I.L. Peretz, founded in 1950, had 450; Colegio Monte Sinaí, founded in 1940, had 820; Yeshivah de Mexico, founded in 1960, had 70; Yeshivah Keter Torah, founded in 1962, had 150; and the Teachers Seminary, founded in 1947, had 60, making a total of 5,503 students.

The first three schools listed here were run by the Ashkenazi community and partially supported by grants from the Nidhe Israel kehillah. These, as well as the Yeshivah de Mexico and the Teachers Seminary, were members of the Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh. Scores of Sephardi students attended the Yeshivah de Mexico. By contrast, all 50 female students at the Seminary were of Ashkenazi origin. The main schools, such as Colegio Israelita, Colegio Tarbut, and Colegio Yavne, offered kindergarten, elementary, junior high school and senior high school education. Graduates of the senior high schools were eligible for college and university admission. Keter Torah Yeshivah, whose students were mostly from Arabic-speaking homes, had a vocational high school.

The Colegio Sefaradí and the Colegio Monte Sinaí were the only non-Ashkenazi educational institutions offering senior high-school courses. A new building for the Sephardi school was under construction.

The Yiddish and Hebrew Teachers Seminary, sponsored by the Ashkenazi community, was very successful in training Jewish teachers. Generally, its students, who were Mexican-born, made excellent teachers because of their thorough training and their understanding of their pupils and their needs.

Of the 160 Jewish teachers working in the Jewish schools of Mexico, about half were young married or single women who had graduated from the Teachers Seminary. During the last 16 years, the Seminary graduated 170 students; more than 70 of them were now teaching in Jewish schools.

There were also Jewish day schools offering elementary and secondary education in Guadalajara and Monterrey.

Jewish education, specially for adults, has been substantially supplemented since 1970 by the Centro de Estudios Judios Contemporaneos (Center of Jewish Contemporary Studies), established and conducted by the American Jewish Committee with the support of the Mexican Jewish community. It offered a full schedule of lectures, study courses, and seminars aimed at increasing knowledge of Judaism. Cooperating in this project were professors, lecturers, and experts, both Mexican and from overseas countries. The Centro’s outstanding accomplishment was that the Jesuit Universidad Iberoamericana, one of the main institutions of higher education in Mexico City, has incorporated into its curriculum some of the Centro’s courses.
Communal Activities

The Comité Central Israelita (CCIM) sent ten delegates, seven of them young people, to the fourth Latin-American Convention of Jewish Communities, which was convened by the Latin-American Jewish Congress in Lima, Peru, in November 1972. CCIM representatives also went to a conference of UN Non-Governmental Organizations in Buenos Aires, Argentina; others attended the World Jewish Congress Executive meeting in Israel.

To commemorate the 24th anniversary of the Universal Charter of Human Rights, CCIM, in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee, organized a meeting in which many prominent Mexican jurists, intellectuals, and writers participated. At the end of December 1972, a B’nai B’rith youth congress took place in Mexico; it was attended by young Jews from several Latin American countries.

The Consejo Mexicano de Mujeres Israelitas (Mexican Council of Jewish Women), which has done much in the area of social work, particularly in cooperation with several welfare agencies in Mexico, gave its annual dinner honoring Mexican newspaperwomen. Mrs. Estela Comarofsky was the Council’s president. Mrs. Esther Zuno de Echeverría, the wife of Mexico’s president, opened the annual bazaar of the Damas Pioneras (Hadassah).

The annual Festival de Musica Judía (Festival of Jewish Music) was sponsored by the cultural committee of the Ashkenazi community in cooperation with the National Conservatory of Music and National Institute of Fine Arts. The committee’s president was Tuvia Maizel.

Two lectures in a series on the history, theology, liturgy, and ecumenical position of the various religions, organized by the Center of Ecumenical Studies, were devoted to Judaism: Rabbi Dr. Yekutiel Klein spoke on “Essence of the Jewish Religion” and Sergio Nudelstejer on “Judaism in Modern Society.”

The American Jewish Committee and B’nai B’rith cosponsored an exhibition of Jewish art at the San Carlos Museum, which was directed by the National Institute of Fine Arts and the Ministry of Public Education. The University of Mexico National Library lent the museum a set of ancient Bibles, among them incunabula. The exhibition, viewed by more than 20,000 visitors, was shown at other Mexican cultural institutions and later toured several states.

Religion

The prevailing religious trend, particularly in the Ashkenazi synagogues, was Orthodox, as practiced in Eastern Europe. The Sephardim, who belonged to the Rabbi Yehuda Halevy synagogue, were moving from Orthodoxy to
Conservatism. The Arab-speaking Jews of Damascen origin (Monte Sinaï) were more liberal, while the Aleppo Jews (Tzedaka Umarpe) were stricter in observance and Orthodox. The German Jews, the smallest segment in the community, had no synagogue of their own. Mexico City had 14 houses of worship, ten of them more or less Orthodox. Reform Judaism has found no adherents despite organizational efforts. The synagogues were served by 11 rabbis, six of them holding pulpits in Ashkenazi congregations, including the Bet El (Conservative), Beth Israel Community Center (Conservative) and Bet Itjak (Orthodox).

The Jewish communities in Guadalajara and Monterrey had their own synagogues and rabbis who also performed all other required religious functions. The Jewish community in Tijuana had a synagogue but no rabbi; the cantor conducted services during the High Holy Days. The absence of a rabbinical association often led to difficulties and conflicts in communal affairs.

Press and Publications

The Jewish press played a significant role in the community's educational and organizational work. There were two Yiddish biweeklies: Der Weg (El Camino), the oldest Jewish paper in Mexico founded in 1930, and Di Shitme (La Voz Israelita), which has been published for 30 years. A weekly Spanish-language paper, Prensa Israelita, was founded in 1945, and Alef, a weekly Yiddish-Spanish magazine, in 1972.

There were also two monthlies, one in Spanish and one in Yiddish. Tribuna Israelita, published for the last 29 years by the Comité Unido de Tribuna Israelita, the antidefamation committee of the Central Jewish Committee, has become one of the most important Jewish cultural publications in Latin America. Forois ("Forward"), organ of the Mexican Bund, has appeared for the last 30 years. Another Spanish monthly was Revista Israelita de México. Among other publications issued by organizations was a series of booklets under the general title, "Biblioteca de Nuestro Tiempo" of the American Jewish Committee and the annual Tribuna Femenina of the Mexican Council of Jewish Women. Indicative of the extent of Jewish journalism and publications was the existence of a Jewish Writers and Journalists Association, chaired by the poet Jacobo Glantz.

Several Jewish books have appeared in the period under review: Los judios en México y América Central: Fe, Llamas e Inquisicion ("The Jews in Mexico and Central America: Faith, Flames and Inquisition"), by Seymour B. Liebman (Siglo XXI Editores); La Rebelión del Silencio ("The Rebellion of Silence"), by Sergio Nudelstejer, which has had two editions (Editorial Novaro); De los Cuatro Confines de la Tierra ("From the Four Corners of the Earth"), by Helena Fabian (B. Costa Amic Editor); El Libro Eterno ("The Eternal Book"), by Rabbi Dr. Yekutiel Klein (B. Costa Amic Editor).
Among Spanish translations of books of Jewish interest were: *Renovación en el Sionismo y en el Liberalismo* (“Renewal in Zionism and in Liberalism”), by Moshe Kol (Comité para la Publicación de Obras Sionistas); *Arabes y Judíos en Israel* (“Arabs and Jews in Israel”), by Harry N. Rosen (Tribuna Israelita); *La Actitud Soviética frente a la Minoría Judía—Un Análisis del Antisemitismo Ruso* (“The Soviet Attitude Toward the Jewish Minority: An Analysis of Russian Antisemitism”; B’nai B’rith).

There were also several noteworthy books by Jewish authors on non-Jewish subjects: *La Odontología en el México Prehispánico* (“The Odontology in Prehispanic Mexico”), by Dr. Samuel Fastlich, published by the author; *Morada Interior* (“Inner Spirit”), by Angelica Muñoz (Joaquín Mortiz); *La Destrucción del Medio Ambiente* (“The Destruction of the Atmosphere”), by Dr. Fernando Cesarman (“Cuadernos” series published by Joaquín Mortiz). *Moctecuhzoma II Eocoyotzin y la Conquista de México* (“Moctecuhzoma II Eocoyotzin and the Conquest of Mexico”), by Eva Uchmany (National Institute of the Mexican Youth).

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

Relations between Mexico and Israel have been very friendly. There were a number of agreements on technical and scientific cooperation, as well as on the exchange of college and university professors. Israeli technical assistance to Mexico has been particularly important in irrigation and the establishment of cooperatives.

The work of Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Argov in the areas of diplomacy, culture, science, and art has found much appreciation. In recent years, many prominent Mexicans visited Israel as guests of the government. Many Mexican students have attended various courses and seminars in Israel. At the same time, prominent Israeli visitors to Mexico have done much to further friendship and the exchange of ideas.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of Israel’s independence, a Mexican-Israeli scientific symposium was held in Mexico City with the participation of several outstanding technical and scientific institutions of both countries. Mexico was represented by delegates from the National University, Polytechnic Institute, and National Council of Sciences and Technology. Israeli representatives came from the Hebrew University, Weizmann Institute, Haifa Technion, and Tel Aviv, Bar-Ilan, and Negev Universities, as well as from the Israel National Council for Development and Research.

A 1972 agreement between Mexico and Israel provided for 50 Mexican students to receive training at agricultural and technical colleges in Israel, and for an equal number of Israeli students to attend similar courses in Mexico. The duration of training was to be ten months, to be extended in special cases.

In September 1972 the Mexican-Israeli scientific cooperation agreement
was extended to make available scientific advice in such fields as reclamation of desert and semi-arid areas, measurement and use of water resources, water desalination, production of energy, and others.

Trade between both countries was $2.16 million in 1970, compared to $1.44 million in 1965 and $560,000 in 1967.

The former president of Mexico and currently chairman of the National Tourist Council, Miguel Aleman, was guest of honor at the ground-breaking ceremony of the Casa Mexico on the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University, as was Mexican Ambassador to Israel, Mrs. Rosario Castellanos. The structure will house the Institute of Latin American Studies. Ambassador Castellanos, an outstanding author and for many years professor at the National University of Mexico, personally promoted various projects for cultural and art exchange between her country and Israel. Recently, a Mexican film and an exhibition of Mexican books were shown in Israel. She also gave courses in Mexican and Latin American literature at the Hebrew University.

The Mexican-Israeli Cultural Institute in Mexico, directed by Benjamin Backal, developed projects to advance understanding and rapprochement between the two countries through lectures, art exhibits, seminars, films, and the like. Mexican students who had studied in Israel were members of the Shalom Club, whose major purpose was to establish and maintain friendly relations with each other and to promote the use in Mexico of experience gained in Israel.

Higher education in Israel was aided by the Friends of the Hebrew University, directed by Horacio Jinich; the Friends of the Weizmann Institute, chaired by Fernando Katz, and by a similar group for the Haifa Technion, headed by Jaime Serur.

The Zionist Federation in Mexico was the major representative body of organized Zionism. All parties within the movement—Poale Zion, General Zionist, Liberal party, Herut, Mapam, and Mizrachi, as well as WIZO and Hadassah, were members of the Federation. The Sephardi Zionist Organization did not belong to the Federation. There were also a number of very active Zionist youth groups.

The old-established Keren Ha-yesod and Keren Kayyemet were supported by broad segments of the community. Aliyah to Israel has been estimated at 2,000 in the last years.

**Antisemitism**

Although no official or organized antisemitism existed in Mexico, there was anti-Jewish sentiment that was peculiar to the country. Rooted in certain sectors of the masses, it has been nurtured for many decades by the Catholic Church, as well as by various hate-mongering, racist groups.
In recent years the Arab League in Mexico has been promoting anti-Israel and anti-Jewish propaganda. The conflict in the Middle East has given new strength to the campaign through the publication of books and pamphlets attacking both Israel and the Mexican Jewish community. The Soviet Union has of late begun a similar campaign. And, with Mexico’s establishment of diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, pro-Arab and anti-Israeli propaganda material written in Spanish and produced in China began arriving in Mexico.

All this, however, constituted no real threat to the Jewish community. In accordance with the Mexican constitution, the government has been following a policy of democracy and social justice, which opposed any type of discrimination.

In Defense of Soviet and Arab Jews

A demonstration in front of the Soviet embassy, called in September 1972 by the Central Jewish Committee in protest against the new exit tax levied by Moscow on Jews wishing to go to Israel, drew more than 2,000 community members, particularly the young. Mexican public opinion and the mass media commented favorably.

A delegation from the Central Jewish Committee met Mexican Foreign Secretary Emilio O. Rabasa to inform him about the plight of Soviet Jews. Rabasa promised to transmit to the president the contents of the official memorandum submitted by the delegation.

An important conference on Soviet Jewry, sponsored by the Mexican Committee to Aid the Jews in the Soviet Union, was attended by prominent intellectuals, scientists, writers, and journalists, among them the world renowned Mexican poet Octavio Paz. The conferees adopted a resolution condemning the Soviet Union’s discriminatory policies against its Jewish minority.

An open letter from more than 100 prominent Mexican scientists to the chairman of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and to Soviet Minister for Internal Affairs Nikolai A. Shchelokov protested discrimination against Jewish scientists in the USSR and the tax levied on those wishing to leave the country. The letter was published in Mexico City newspapers on December 7, 1972.

The Central Jewish Committee also adopted a resolution calling for an urgent appeal to all Mexicans to protest against the persecution of Jews in Arab countries. It also appointed a special committee of solidarity with the Jews in Arab countries, which immediately sent telegrams of protest to UN General Secretary Kurt Waldheim and to the Syrian ambassador in Washington. This was followed by a campaign in the Mexican and Jewish
press to disseminate information on the persecution, arrests, and other
discriminatory treatment suffered by the Jews in almost all Arab countries of
the Middle East and North Africa.

The murder of 11 Israeli athletes by Arab terrorists in Munich, which was
strongly condemned by Mexicans of all walks of life, moved the Central
Jewish Committee to designate September 7, 1972, a day of mourning for the
victims. On that day, all Jewish merchants and businessmen closed their
establishments, as did thousands of non-Jews who wished to show their
support of the Jewish demonstrators and their abhorrence of the act of
terrorism.

The Committee of Friends for Peace in the Middle East in Mexico was an
organization of outstanding non-Jews who have been seriously concerned
about the conflict in that region. Among the committee's activities was the
regular distribution of reprints of editorials and articles on the Middle East
from important Mexican and foreign newspapers. It also published two
pamphlets, *Jerusalén, Ciudad de Paz Universal* ("Jerusalem, City of
Universal Peace"), by the French priest, François Delpech, and *El
Socialismo de Los Tontos* ("The Socialism of Fools"), by Seymour Martin
Lipset.

**Intergroup Relations**

In recent years, friendly relations were established between Catholics and
Jews in various fields. Mexican Cardinal Monsignor Miguel Dario Miranda
sent a letter strongly condemning antisemitism to the Central Jewish
Committee. At the suggestion of the Metropolitan archdiocese, rabbis have
been invited to attend a number of ecumenical meetings. There was also
dialogue between Jews and Protestant and other Christian denominations. The
Center of Ecumenical Studies in Mexico, whose executive director was Rolf
Lahusen, a Protestant minister of German origin, organized interfaith youth
meetings, lectures, and seminars for both clergy and laity.

**Personalia**

Jacobo Zabludowsky, one of the top newscasters and commentators on
Mexican television, received the Arts and Letters award from the French
ambassador to Mexico. Professor Tuvia Maizel was elected to the Mexican
Institute of Culture. On this occasion, he spoke to the Institute about the
cultural contributions of Mexican Jews to their country. President Echeverría
personally awarded the Academy of Scientific Investigation’s annual science
prize to Dr. Marcos Rojkid.
Dr. Samuel Zacarias, outstanding cardiologist and member of the Mexican Academy of Medicine, died in Mexico City on January 26, 1973, at the age of 53. Israel Moshinsky, one of the founders of the Ashkenazi Nidhe Israel community and supporter of the Colegio Israelita Yavne, died in Mexico City on April 1, 1973, at the age of 73.

Sergio Nudelstejer
Chile

In the years just preceding the September 4, 1970, elections, Chile had been a liberal democracy. With the support of the center and left-wing political groups, Dr. Salvador Allende, the Unidad Popular leader, was elected president in 1970. The Congress ratified this election, and two months later Dr. Allende took office.

The new government followed the Marxist program on which the political campaign had focused. It was based on a so-called “Chilean way toward Socialism”: banks and the main industries were nationalized and the agrarian reform process, begun by the Frei government, was speeded up. Copper, saltpeter, and iron mines were also nationalized. These steps were but the beginning of a series of major transformations tending to change the country’s character, a process that left an indelible mark on Chilean Jewish community life.

Jewish Community

All these structural changes have been felt by Jews largely at the economic level, although the social and cultural development of the Jewish community has also been hampered. By no means have freedom of action and freedom of speech been restricted; but the deterioration of economic conditions have indirectly affected many Chilean citizens, some of them Jewish, particularly those connected with industry and commerce. This was precisely the group which, faced with the uncertainty of what lay ahead once the Communist administration was fully established, decided to leave Chile. About 15 percent of the Jews were believed to have done so, most of them either survivors of the Nazi experience or immigrants from Socialist European countries.

On the other hand, some 150 Jews were in the present administration, occupying different posts with varying degrees of responsibility. They were executing their duties on a personal level, not as representatives of the Jewish community. As for the community itself, it has never dealt with national politics, as indicated in a “Statement of Principles of the Representative Committee of the Jewish Community of Chile.”

The increasing polarization of Chilean political ideology led to an anti-Marxist coalition of the center and right-wing groups. Some of their most extremist members have on a few occasions publicly repudiated the Jews because of the latter’s participation in the national government. This attitude, though not demonstrated by the whole bloc, has caused concern in some
segments of the community. It was feared that these antisemitic manifestations might eventually lead to a much more serious campaign.

In its views on Chilean politics, the Jewish community was heterogeneous and highly diversified in its preferences. One could not say that all Jews were for Allende, or that all Jews were against him. Some citizens were for Allende’s administration and others against it, and Jews were among both.

Jews began to come to Chile in the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1930s thousands came from Hungary and Germany, and immigration continued until 1939. Today, the estimated Jewish population was 26,000, of whom 90 per cent lived in Santiago (AJYB, 1968 [Vol.69], p. 419).

Community Organization and Activities

The first community organization, the Sociedad Unión Israelita de Chile, was founded in 1909. The Israelite Congregation Talmud Torá, established in 1916, constructed the first synagogue and the first Jewish school in Santiago. In 1917 Bikhur Holim ("Visiting the Sick") began its activities of aiding the poor in the community. The Circulo Israelita, established in 1920 by East European Jews, attempted to centralize the activities of these organizations, an indication of active community life.

In 1932 a group of more religious European immigrants founded a Hevra Kaddisha and bought land for a Jewish cemetery in Conchalí county. Two years earlier, a group of Sephardim coming from Teumuco had founded the Comunidad Israelita Sefaradí. German-speaking Jews, who had settled in Chile before World War II, formed the B’nei Israel cultural society, whose building was beautifully remodeled in 1950. Its members also founded a temple, where many important religious and cultural events have been taking place.

Other important institutions were a Jewish home for the aged (Hogar Israelita de Ancianos), built in 1951, and the Club Social y Deportivo Estadio Israelita (Jewish Stadium Social and Sports Club), founded in 1952. The club had the largest membership of any organization: 2,000 families totaling about 8,000. It merged with Maccabi at the beginning of 1971.

In 1940 the various segments of the community formed a central body, the Comité Representativo de la Colectividad Israelita de Chile (Representative Committee of the Israelite Community of Chile). Its main purpose was to speak for the community in its relations with the general population. Dr. Gil Sinay has been the Comité’s president for a number of years. He also headed the Ashkenazi kehilla.

Most Jewish institutions in Chile maintained relations with international Jewish agencies. The Comité Representativo held membership in the World Jewish Congress; the Community Council of Rabbis in the World Council of
Synagogues, and the Sephardi community in the Federación de Entidades Sefaradies Latinoamericanas (Federation of Latin American Sephardi Agencies).

**Jewish Education**

There were two Jewish schools in Chile: the Chaim Weizmann, Chaim Nachman Bialik, and Ben Yehuda school complex in Santiago, which included kindergarten and elementary and high school, and the Viña del Mar Hebrew school. They were all-day schools offering both Jewish and secular education, the latter fulfilling the requirements of the school system in Chile. The schools were directed and maintained by the Wa‘ad Ha-hinnukh (Board of Jewish Education) on which all communal agencies and the Zionist Federation were represented.

Some 25 per cent of all Jewish children attended the Santiago school whose total 1973 enrollment was 1,058 students. Of these, 190 were in kindergarten, 400 in elementary school, and 468 in high school. This was a decline in total enrollment from 1,135 in 1972; 1,119 in 1971, and 1,362 in 1970. The school was financed by community organizations, students’ fees, the Zionist Federation, and the Jewish Agency.

In 1969 the University of Chile board of directors established the Centro de Estudios Judaicos (Center for Jewish Studies), offering a four-year curriculum as part of the university’s school of philosophy and education. The school’s dean, anthropologist Bernardo Berdichevsky, also directed the Center. The American Jewish Committee sponsored the establishment of the Center, which was financed by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Its 1973 enrollment was 60 students, of whom 80 per cent were non-Jews; its faculty consisted of 12 professors. The Center also had a library of more than 1,000 books and periodical publications of all sorts. Graduates of the Center were eligible for a master’s degree from the University of Chile after a year of advanced studies.

Through its office in Buenos Aires, the American Jewish Committee has been cooperating with Jewish educational institutions in Chile. Among them was the Valparaíso “Summer School” project, a one-week workshop or seminar, generally held in January, at which both Jewish and non-Jewish lecturers from all over the continent spoke on various subjects related to Jewish culture. The 1973 workshop, attended by an enthusiastic audience of more than 300, discussed such topics as “Social Changes in Latin America and the Future of Judaism” and “Judaism in a Changing Era.” Another lecture series, held in August 1972 in cooperation with the University of Chile’s culture extension department, was devoted to Jewish philosophy.
Religious Life

Rabbi Manfredo Lubliner and Egon Loewenstein of Santiago, who had come to Chile before World War II, left the country in 1971 and 1970, respectively. Rabbi Günter Friedländer, director of the community's religious affairs, also left in 1970.

In the absence of spiritual leadership, a special commission was established, which, with the cooperation of the Rothschild Foundation and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, engaged Angel Kreiman Bril, a young Conservative rabbi, for the Ashkenazi community in July 1972. Rabbi Bril had studied at the Buenos Aires Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano and was ordained in Israel. Another young Argentinian, Mauricio Pichon, who also had been a student of the Seminario, became spiritual counselor of the Sephardi group in 1972. Both have done much to revitalize the communities, with the result that many young people became interested in religion. They share supervision of the communities' religious life.

Cultural Affairs

The Instituto Chileno Israelí de Cultura and the Instituto de Estudios Judaicos directed most of the Jewish cultural activities. These have been greatly reduced in the last two years because socio-economic conditions hampered new endeavors and the community's interest in them. Despite these difficulties, important work was done by Dr. Carlos Vergara Bravo, who had been president of the Instituto Chileno Israelí de Cultura until his death in January 1973. He was succeeded by the writer Olga Arratía.

The Estadio Israelita Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Stephen Terz, continued to give concerts. The historian Günther Böhm arranged exhibitions of Jewish art in Chile and abroad.

Jewish Press

Chile's two Jewish weeklies—Mundo Judío, the Spanish-language organ of the Zionist Federation, and La Palabra (Dos yidishe vort), the Yiddish-Spanish paper of the Círculo Israelita and the Ashkenazi kehillah—continued publication. Mundo Judío, established in 1935, had a circulation of 5,000. Its editor was Andrés Adler. La Palabra, founded in 1937, had a circulation of 2,000. Both weeklies printed special editions on the occasion of Jewish festivals and on Rosh Ha-shanah.

The B'nei Israel Cultural Society's Boletín Informativo, a high-quality monthly bulletin in Spanish and German, was edited by Egon Rosenfeld.

Santiago's Jewish radio program "Hora Hebrea," which has been
broadcast since 1943, was now carried also by the Viña del Mar local radio station.

**Antisemitism**

The Arab League, which in January 1972 received government permission to be active in Chile, has been the source of antisemitic propaganda. This was despite assurances of a foreign ministry official to the Comité Representativo that such permission granted was with the proviso that the League would not attempt to interfere in domestic political affairs.

The Lod airport massacre (p. 499) and the murder of Israeli athletes in Munich (p. 451) were repudiated as acts of terrorism by both the government and private organizations in Chile. The Jewish community’s appeal for condemnation of the persecution of Jews abroad found wide support among the general population. President Allende, himself, asked for justice in the Leningrad trials and for humane treatment of the Jews in Syria and Iraq. At the same time, Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez intervened on their behalf with the Vatican.

**Interreligious Affairs**

The Jewish community’s relations with the Catholic Church and the Protestant groups continued to be very good. Much has been done in this respect by the Jewish-Christian Confederation, under the presidency of former ambassador to Israel Manuel Francisco Sánchez. Robert Levy succeeded Sánchez as president.

Ever since Dr. Allende became president, the government has been trying to reinforce interreligious understanding. Christian and Jewish religious leaders participated in an ecumenical ceremony in the Santiago Cathedral on the occasion of Allende’s installation. An ecumenical celebration also marked the anniversary of Chile’s independence and the inauguration of UNCTAD III (UN Commission for Trade and Development).

The Jewish community has been most appreciative of efforts to strengthen interfaith ties. The Latin American Jewish Congress presented its human rights award to Cardinal Henríquez at a function attended by important personalities in Chile, among them the president of the Supreme Court and several Cabinet ministers.

The political dissension and general discontent engendered by the general strike that paralyzed Chile in October 1972 aroused fears of a possible civil war. In an effort to restore order, Allende summoned the highest representatives of the different religious groups—Rabbi Bril among them—to ask their cooperation in pacifying the country. Part of their effort was a
religious ceremony in a Santiago church, attended by representatives of Chile’s Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

**Zionism and Relations With Israel**

The membership of the Zionist Federation of Chile, founded in 1919, was representative of the four political Zionist groups existing in Chile: Poale Zion, General Zionists, Revisionists, and Mapam, all ideologically dependent on Israeli political parties.

The Zionist Federation supported the work of the Comité Representativo. Elections of delegates to the 28th Zionist Congress held in Israel in 1972 took place in Santiago in November 1971. Of the five delegates elected, one represented the General Zionists, one Mapam, and two the Independent Zionists.

Relations between Chile and Israel were cordial on all levels. President Allende expressed his country’s friendship for the state on several occasions. And the Jewish community was solid in its support for Israel.

Moshé Tov, who was appointed Israeli ambassador to Chile in 1972, was born in Argentina and widely known throughout the continent for his contribution to the establishment of the State of Israel.

**Personalia**

Two distinguished Jewish lawyers held important posts in Allende’s government. Jacob Chausson, former president of the Chamber of Deputies, headed a commission for reconciling any differences of opinions between the executive and judiciary. He also represented the Jewish community at the World Conference of Jewish Communities on Soviet Jewry, held in Brussels in February 1971. Enrique Testa, former president of the Sephardi community and former vice president of the Comité Representativo, was appointed by Dr. Allende as president of the State Defense Council, a body responsible for the defense of the state’s legal interests.

Several Jewish personalities died in 1971-72: Isaac Novik Minzky, vice president of the Círculo Israelita and of the Comité Representativo; Dr. Hans Raich, president of the Sociedad Cultural Israelita B’néi Israel and vice president of the Comité Representativo; Leon Gomberoff Itscovich, former president of the Zionist Federation and of Círculo Israelita.
Venezuela

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The first Jewish community of Venezuela was founded by José Curiel in Coro (Falcón State) on the Northwestern coast of the country in the middle of the 19th century. It held its first religious services in 1863 in a private home. The first Sefer Torah and a chair for circumcision were brought to Coro in 1910. The city's Jewish cemetery, probably the oldest in South America, was founded in 1858. Restoration work was done in 1970 on the initiative of B'nai B'rith Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg and under the auspices of the Asociación Israelita de Venezuela, the Sephardi kehillah and Minister of Public Works José Curiel, a great-grandson of the community's founder. The reform movement, that split the Coro community, spread to other Jewish settlements which lacked the possibility of leading an Orthodox Jewish life. Coro's Jews soon became completely integrated into the country's national life. Many of its members intermarried and were baptized.

Coro Jews distinguished themselves in culture, science, commerce, and public affairs. The poets José López Fonseca and Elías David Curiel founded the Armonía literary society. Curiel's brother, José David Curiel, became president of the Supreme Court. The public library in present-day Coro was named for him.

Many Jewish families settled in the eastern part of Venezuela, among them Jacobo Baiz (1843–1899), a diplomat, and Gabriel Salas, general in the Venezuelan army.

Population and Status

The Jewish population of Venezuela was estimated at 15,000 to 17,000; some 80 per cent lived in Caracas and most of the others in Maracaibo. A few families settled in Valencia, Maracay, Puerto La Cruz, and San Cristóbal. Jews have never settled in the rural areas.

There has been no emigration of Jews from Venezuela. On the contrary, the country has continued to absorb Jews from different parts of the world. Many families have come from Morocco and elsewhere in North Africa, as well as from Cuba, in an effort to escape political conditions. There has been a large migration of Jews from the provinces to the capital, Caracas, mainly because of the lack of Jewish schools and youth centers in smaller cities. This reduced the communities of Maracaibo, Valencia, San Cristóbal, and other cities.

For the last 30 years, the Jewish community of Venezuela has developed
normally. The absence of discrimination has enabled Jews to advance professionally and economically. Most Jews under 40 years of age were first-generation Venezuelans. Although most were professionals and some academics, not many have participated in politics because, as the children of refugees from persecution, they had been imbued with fear of full integration into the non-Jewish society. However, a number of them played important roles in the country's cultural and intellectual life as writers, journalists, motion-picture producers, actors, artists, singers, art critics. Some severed all ties with the community, but others actively participated in community life. It should be stressed that nationally prominent Jews who left the community have done so of their own free will, not because conditions in the country made this necessary.

Community Organizations

The modern community was founded by Sephardim who came from Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, at the beginning of the 20th century. They established an organization which, since 1930, was called the Asociación Israelita de Venezuela. They built the first synagogue in Caracas in 1944.

A large immigration of Ashkenazi Jews took place only during World War II and in the post-war period. They were refugees from Nazi persecution in Central and Eastern Europe. After a first attempt in 1929, the Ashkenazim founded their own kehillah which later became known as the Unión Israelita de Caracas. By that time, Jews had settled in the main cities of Maracaibo, Puerto Cabello, Valencia, Maracay, and Barquisimeto.

Together, the two communities had some 2,500 member families: 1,500 in the Ashkenazi Unión Israelita de Caracas and some 1,000 in the Sephardi Asociación Israelita de Venezuela. The Unión's president was Leon Wiesenfeld. Jacob Carciente headed the Asociación.

Most Caracas Jews belonged to one of the two kehillot. The Maracaibo community, the second largest in Venezuela, made no distinction between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Both belonged to the Sociedad Israelita de Maracaibo. There was a Centro Israelita in Valencia, capital of Carabobo state, as well as in Maracay and Puerto La Cruz (Anzoátegui State).

Venezuelan Jews established several other important organizations. The central Confederación de Asociaciones Israelitas de Venezuela (CAIV), founded more than 15 years ago, coordinated domestic and interinstitutional problems and represented the community abroad. Its president was Ruben Merenfeld. In 1970 it established an important department, the Oficina de Derechos Humanos (Bureau of Human Rights), which dealt with human relations, disseminated information, and took action against any anti-Jewish discrimination or manifestations. It was headed by Juan Plaut, with Paulina G. Almosny as executive director.
In CAIV were represented the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communal organizations, the Federación Sionista de Venezuela, and Fraternidad Hebrea B'nai B'rith. Both communities were also represented in the Zionist Federation, whose president was Walter Czentochowsky. The national council of Fraternidad Hebrea B'nai B'rith, headed by Peter Mayer, had several lodges (Manorah, Caracas, Simón Bolívar). Its branch in Maracaibo was directed by Isaac Hochman. B'nai B'rith also had several youth groups: the Hillel university group, Shalom, and Ahava for girls. B'nai B'rith offered many cultural programs including lectures, debates, concerts, movies, and workshops. It sponsored an annual literary contest, which was open to both Jews and non-Jews. Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg, the senior rabbi of B'nai B'rith, was in charge of most cultural and religious activities.

A Comité para la Educación Comunitaria (CEPEC) was established in 1973 to deal with all aspects of Jewish education. It organized a fund-raising campaign for the construction of a new Jewish high school in Caracas for 1,200 students.

**Community Activities**

There were also several cultural organizations which were Israel-oriented, all open to members of both kehillot. These were Keren Ha-yesod, Keren Kayyemeth le-Yisrael, WIZO, WIZO-Aviv (a youth group), Hatikvah, Tormei-Or, Association of Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Friends of Haifa Technion, Friends of Tel Aviv University, Friends of Bar Ilan University, Asociación de Damas Israelitas Pro-Canastillas, Grupo Idischista Sholem Aleichem, and others. The umbrella organization of all women's groups was the Unión de Damas Hebreas, under the presidency of Mrs. Clara Sznajderman. Youth organizations in this category included Movimiento Universitario Sionista (MUS), Dror, Hashomer Hatzair, and Grupo Maimónides.

Several important events took place in recent years. The second convention of the Jewish communities in the northern part of South America and the Caribbean area, sponsored by the Latin-American Jewish Congress, was held October 28 to November 2, 1971. Attended also by delegates from Colombia, Peru, and Curacao, the convention reached important decisions on how to improve community life in the countries represented.

A forum to discuss the legal position of Soviet Jewry was held in Caracas in January 1972. The three-day meeting, organized by a committee of distinguished jurists and intellectuals, was attended by famous Latin American lawyers. It was widely publicized in the press, on radio, and on television.

A convention of the Venezuela Jewish community was held in July 1972 in preparation for the Conference of Latin American Jewish Communities, which met in Lima, Peru, in October. The main points on the agenda were the
Education

The first Jewish school, founded in Venezuela in 1947, was the Moral y Luces Herzl Bialik in Caracas, which had an enrollment of 250. Its present huge building offered elementary and high-school education to some 1,500 pupils. In 1969 the school opened a branch, the Hebraica-Moral y Luces, on the east side of the city, for about 450 elementary-school children. It was built on land purchased by Hebraica, an organization that was founded about the same time. Currently, a Sports and Culture Center (Complejo Deportivo-Cultural HEBRAICA) was under construction on the same site, on which the new CEPEC-sponsored high school also will be located.

The other Jewish schools in Caracas were the Yavne yeshivah, which was established in 1970 and had about 150 students, and Rambam, which was not affiliated with any community organization. In the provinces, only Maracaibo had a Jewish school—the Bilu, which had an enrollment of 400 students and was housed in the Jewish community center.

It was estimated that about 90 per cent of all Jewish children and youths attended Jewish schools. This unusually large enrollment percentage was due mainly to the high level of instruction and to the fact that the schools offered the state-required secular curriculum in addition to Jewish education.

Hebrew language, Torah, and Jewish history were compulsory subjects in both elementary and high schools. Yiddish, which had been compulsory until a few years ago, was made optional at the insistence of the parents who no longer spoke the language.

Moral y Luces Herzl Bialik and Hebraica-Moral y Luces also had psycho-pedagogic and orientation departments. Students of Moral y Luces Herzl Bialik published their own magazine, Nuestro Mundo.

Most teachers of Jewish subjects were Israelis. But regular teacher-training courses have now been set up at Moral y Luces Herzl Bialik by Professor Ephraim Ben David, the new director of its Hebrew department. Young
Venezuelan Jews have not been particularly inclined to choose teaching as a profession, and the resultant shortage of Jewish teachers for general subjects made it necessary to hire non-Jews to teach such courses in Jewish schools. However, efforts were made, with some success, to stimulate interest in teaching among Jewish students by offering training courses in Israel.

Religion

There were several synagogues in Venezuela. In the provinces, the community centers of the various cities had synagogues. In Caracas, the two main synagogues were Tiferet Israel Temple of the Asociación Israelita and the Gran Sinagoga of the Unión Israelita. Egyptian Jews, who came to the country in 1956, founded the Keter Torá organization and built their own synagogue. The Gran Rabinato de Venezuela, a dissident group, also had its own synagogue. Israeli and Eastern Jews, who were an autonomous group but affiliated with the Asociación Israelita, built Bet-El Temple. The Orthodox Shomré Shabbat also had their own synagogue, though most of its members belonged to the Unión Israelita de Caracas.

Rabbi Pynchas Brener was the senior rabbi of the Ashkenazi Unión Israelita, and Rabbi Amram Amselem of the Sephardi Asociación Israelita. Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg conducted services in a hall set aside for this purpose in the B'nai B'rith building. The Consejo de Rabinos de Venezuela, headed by Rabbi Brener, was a federation of all rabbis in the country.

Venezuela's community was largely conservative. The Sephardim tended more toward Orthodoxy, and their synagogues (Tiferet-Israel and Bet-El) were crowded on the Sabbath as well as on Jewish holidays; many of their congregants attended daily services. The Unión Israelita, too, had daily services. The younger generation, although not very religious, has been raised in the Jewish tradition and preferred to be married by a rabbi. Intermarriage has increased in the last few years, but has not yet become a serious problem.

There usually were huge sedorim on Passover. Jewish stores were generally open on the Sabbath, but not on the High Holy Days. Kosher meat has been available in several shops in Caracas. Food served in community centers and at communal luncheons or dinners was strictly kosher.

Publications, Scholarship, and Culture

A number of Jewish newspapers and magazines appeared regularly in Caracas: El Mundo Israelita, an independent weekly owned by Moisés Sananes; Unión, the monthly of the Unión Israelita de Caracas, edited by Rabbi Pynchas Brener; Maguen, the monthly of the Asociación Israelita de Venezuela, edited by Moisés Garzón, and Menorah, the B'nai B'rith
magazine edited by Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg. The Federación Sionista's *Haguesher* was an annual publication. *Nuevo Mundo Israelita*, a weekly founded in February 1973 to fill the need for a modern, dynamic publication, was sponsored by the entire community. The writer José Salzberg headed its editorial board; Moisés Sananes was honorary editor. In addition, there were the bulletins put out by the various organizations to inform their members of activities.

In October 1971 the proceedings of the convention of Jewish communities was published under the title, *Revista de la Convención de Comunidades Judías*. The community also sponsored the publication of *Diario de Eduardo Kuznetzov*, the Jewish defendant in the first Leningrad trial whose death sentence was commuted to imprisonment in a Soviet work-camp.

A number of works on non-Jewish subjects by Jewish intellectuals were well received by critics. Dr. Isaac Bendayan Levy's book on labor law, which appeared in 1972, received an important prize. Marisa Kohn de Béker, professor of philosophy at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, was the author of *Tendencias Positivistas en Venezuela*. Isaac Chocrón, a famous dramatist, published several plays. Elisa Lerner has written a number of novels and plays. A book by Dr. Samuel Bronfenmajer, *Ya no creo en los médicos* ("I Do Not Believe in Doctors Anymore"), became a best-seller. *El Nacional*, an influential Caracas newspaper, has been carrying a weekly humoristic column by Pauline G. Almosny. Alicia F. Segal was a recognized literary critic. Dr. Moisés Feldman received a national prize in psychiatry.

Harry Abend, a sculptor and noted designer of jewelry, was awarded a national prize. Some of his works were exhibited in the synagogue and headquarters of the Unión Israelita in Caracas.

German Lejter has received recognition as a theater director, especially for his work in colleges and universities. Manuelita Selver, one of Venezuela's best actresses, was hailed on her tours in Europe as the "new Sarah Bernhardt." Amador Bendayan was a popular television master of ceremonies and comic actor. Gloriá Mirós played comedy on television.

Daniel Bendahan, lawyer and executive in an oil company, was at the same time a famous opera singer known as Danila Vandan, who starred in most opera seasons. Pablo Schneider and Bazil Alexander were recognized interpreters of modern music.

**Intergroup Relations**

Venezuela, a predominantly Catholic country, experienced virtually no religious fanaticism or discrimination against minority groups. The Jewish community's relations with the Catholic clergy have always been good. Cardinal José Humberto Quintero, head of the Catholic Church in Venezuela, was a good friend of the Jews, as were many priests. The Jewish community
has initiated contacts also with representatives of other Christian groups. The Consejo de Rabinos represented the community in the established National Church Council, which, in turn, was represented in the national government.

**Relations With Israel**

Relations between Venezuela and Israel continued to be good. A number of Israeli technicians have been working in Venezuela, particularly in agriculture and technology programs, as provided in agreements of cooperation concluded between the two nations.

Bonds between the Jewish community and Israel have been strengthened by the visits of many Israeli personalities, among them Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon at the end of 1972. Allon came away with a very favorable impression of communal life.

**Anti-Jewish Propaganda**

After the 1967 six-day war, the influence of intense anti-Israel and anti-Zionist propaganda disseminated by the embassies of various Arab states in most Latin American countries was beginning to be felt in Venezuela. This was particularly true with regard to the left-wing parties, mainly the pro-Soviet Communist party, after diplomatic relations had been resumed between Venezuela and Soviet Russia. Anti-Jewish, anti-Israel, and anti-Zionist sentiment has been spread also by means of forums, conventions, conferences, and by posters in the streets, colleges, and universities.

As in other countries, criticism of Israel tended to revive some deep-rooted antisemitic trends. The word “Jewish” was beginning to be substituted for “Zionist” and “Israeli”; “Israeli” and “Israelite” were deliberately interchanged. This prompted the Human Rights Bureau of the Confederación de Asociaciones Israelitas to make representations to the government. At the beginning of 1973, a formal written complaint was presented to the attorney general’s office and the ministry of internal affairs. The authorities have tried to keep peace between the Jewish and Arab communities in Venezuela in order to keep the Middle East conflict out of domestic affairs. The news media, for their part, have always been sympathetic to Israel and the Jews, particularly at the time of the Leningrad trials and the Lod and Munich massacres.

Paulina G. de Almosny
Colombia

JEWISH COMMUNITY

As in many other Latin American countries, the history of the Jews in Colombia has two chapters. Of the first Jewish immigrants, the "secret Jews" who arrived with the Spanish conquerors, nothing remained but their last names, now carried by many of the leading Catholic families of the country. The minutes of the trials of the Inquisition of Cartagena, buried in ancient and mostly inaccessible archives, tell of Jews who had been unable to become part of Christian society.

Although one may hear many fanciful stories about secret Jews who had come to Colombia, especially to Antioquia, there have been only rare attempts at a scientific investigation of their history. J.T. Medina wrote a short history of the Inquisition in Cartagena de las Indias, which appeared in a small edition of 300 copies (Santiago de Chile, 1899) and is accessible only to specialists in the field. It tells of the desperate attempts by Spanish Jews, who had come to this country in roundabout ways through Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, to remain Jews, and the heavy penalties they had to pay for this attempt. This had not deterred a considerable number of Jewish merchants from coming to Colombia at the end of the 18th century, and the Inquisition had been horrified at the apparently widespread sympathy for them. Their history was recorded only recently, by Itic Croitoru, in two extensive volumes (Bogotá 1967 and 1971).

The present Jewish community of Colombia dates back to the wave of Sephardi immigrants of 50 years ago, mostly from Turkey. Russian, Polish, and German Jews came between the two World Wars and, in lesser numbers, after World War II. Native-born Jews automatically were Colombian citizens, and a large number of immigrants have acquired Colombian citizenship through naturalization. Naturalization policies and procedures have undergone various changes under different governments, with a clear tendency toward liberalization.

Demography

The size of the Jewish community was estimated in 1972 at some 13,000, in a general population of some 26 million. However, the influence of the Jews in commerce and industry was such that tourist guides usually spoke of 100,000 Jews in Bogotá when pointing out to visitors any of the city's five synagogues.
Actually, only 1,050 families were registered in Bogotá’s communities. And since Colombian society remained largely a closed one, with people usually moving in their own circles, it can be assumed that the number of Jews in the capital city was not much higher than the membership in the Jewish communities.

There were also Jewish communities in Cali (some 300 families), Barranquilla (200) and Medellin (150). In the remaining cities there were so few families that they usually could not even form a minyan and they almost completely lost contact with organized Judaism.

Despite several attempts, it has never been possible to complete a demographic study of Colombia’s Jews. The greater part of the first generation was still in commerce, with a clear tendency to go into industry. Jews were playing an outstanding role in the industrialization of the country, which remained predominantly agricultural.

High school graduates were seeking university education; and 320 Jews were studying at Bogotá universities on whose faculties were about 50 Jews. Smaller groups of Jews were matriculated in the universities of other cities. These numbers, however, presented no clear picture of the true situation. Because of frequent strikes at Colombia’s universities, many Jewish students have gone abroad, above all to Israel, the United States, and Mexico. A large number of them were doing graduate work at foreign universities.

Lack of reliable statistics allowed no clear estimate of Jewish population growth. However, the files of the Jewish school indicated that the younger generation no longer believed in a two-children family; three or four children have become quite customary.

As long as the “old” immigrants were in the majority, mixed marriage and divorce was practically unknown. This has changed radically in the last few years. Although, again, no figures were available, the unabated increase of intermarriage and divorce has had traumatic effects on the Jewish community.

Immigration has come to a complete standstill in the last few years. Emigration was just a trickle, with extremely few individuals going to Israel. Family aliyah has been the exception.

Communal and Religious Life

Bogotá and Cali had Sephardi, Polish-Russian (called Ashkenazi) and German Jewish communities. Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities existed in Barranquilla, and one Ashkenazi community in Medellin. Besides the five synagogues in Bogotá, there were two each in Cali and Barranquilla, and one in Medellin. Bogotá had two community rabbis and one rabbi who served B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundation, working only with students. There were two rabbis in Barranquilla and one each in Cali and Medellin. Three of the rabbis were Sephardim and four were Ashkenazim. Three were Orthodox, the other
four Conservative. Two of the latter were members of the Conservative movement.

Except for the German-Jewish community in Bogotá and the Ashkenazi synagogue in Barranquilla, religious services were Orthodox. Synagogue attendance, especially in Bogotá, has been relatively low. Services were well attended only in Barranquilla. The younger generation, in particular, felt that the communities must find new ways to satisfy existing religious needs. And while kosher meat was available everywhere in the country, the demand for it was relatively low. Conversions to Judaism were made difficult, but were occasionally performed by one of the Orthodox and one of the Conservative rabbis.

Although the Jewish communities of Colombia founded a community association, it did not yet establish a place for itself in the framework of Jewish organizations. As a result, the rabbis have not yet found a way to act as a body in making certain decisions and in carrying them out.

In the last few years, the different communities have been establishing their own youth groups, which have been very successful with the youngsters between the ages of 6 and 14. The German-Jewish community organized a vacation camp offering new opportunities for the education of youth.

Facilities for social gatherings and recreation were privately-owned and -run Jewish country clubs in Bogotá and Cali, and beautiful community centers in Barranquilla and Medellin.

Culture and Publications

Colombian Jewry has had no outstanding achievements in the field of culture, perhaps because the community was just beginning to acquire its own personality. Feliza Burstein, a sculptress, was generally recognized, but her work did not reflect Jewish themes. In the Ashkenazi community, an amateur theater group was recently founded. It has performed with great success, but thus far only for Jewish audiences.

Publications were quite limited. Besides the monthly publications of the Ashkenazi and German-Jewish communities, an independent magazine, *Menora*, was published in Bogotá by Eliezer Celnik. Its circulation was nationwide. However, the number of Jewish journalists in non-Jewish publications was growing. This was also true of Jewish architects, an indication that the young community was beginning to turn to creative activities.

B'nai B'rith

Beth Hillel, maintained by B'nai B'rith, was considered the true center of Jewish cultural activities in Bogotá. It was the meeting place of Jewish
university students, who could participate in daily seminars, lectures, and other activities. Hillel published a newsletter and other publications that were unique in Colombia. Besides cultural programs, Beth Hillel also maintained dorms for students and ran the only kosher restaurant in Bogotá.

B’nai B’rith had members in a number of cities. It established four men’s lodges, two women’s chapters and three youth chapters. B’nai B’rith Women was highly respected for its work in cooperation with voluntary social work agencies. They joined in the current project of Bogotá’s women—the construction of a vocational high school for girls. In Cali they helped finance the Anne Frank Ward in the Children’s Hospital. In Barranquilla, the same kind of work was being carried on by the Jewish Women’s League. Its president, Mrs. Ana Steckel, recently was awarded the city’s medal of merit for distinguished public service.

B’nai B’rith collaborated with the Catholic Women’s Organization in planning an international Christian-Jewish convention, which was to start Christian-Jewish dialogue in Colombia.

**Jewish Education**

The Jewish community has been supporting an extensive school system, but has depended on donations to cover large deficits. The Colegio Colombo Hebreo in Bogotá was a day school with 600 students, from kindergarten through high school. The Jewish schools in Cali, Barranquilla, and Medellin accepted a certain number of non-Jewish students, in one case half of the student body. Jewish education outside these schools was almost nonexistent.

Since the schools offered the complete official secular program, only limited time was left for Jewish studies. Jewish subjects were taught in Spanish.

The problem of finding Jewish teachers for instruction in Hebrew, Jewish history, and religion has so far not been satisfactorily solved. Contrary to the experience in other South American countries, no organizational effort was being made to help improve the staffs.

With one exception, the schools have not been able to maintain Jewish studies curricula on a regular basis and, even less, to obtain the necessary textbooks. While in the other Colombian cities the vast majority of school-age children attended Jewish schools, this was not the case in Bogotá. Jewish students usually attended secular private schools with non-Jewish students of the same social and economic backgrounds. American, English, and French schools were preferred. The feeling in the Bogotá Jewish community was that the problem of Jewish education has not been satisfactorily solved; increasingly, the students themselves have been complaining of difficulties.
Zionism and Relations with Israel

The great majority of Colombia's Jews considered themselves Zionists without belonging to a Zionist organization. A recent new attempt to establish a Colombian Zionist group has not been successful thus far.

Israeli parties, the General Zionists, Herut, and Mapam, had their own organizations, but these had no influence in the Jewish community. They became active only shortly before elections to a Zionist Congress, with the General Zionists usually receiving most votes. Jewish women belonged to WIZO. Hashomer Hatzair in Bogotá had very few members and little influence on the young.

The attitude of the public toward Israel has been highly positive as a result of the excellent work done by Dr. Salvador Rozental. He had acted as consul for Israel before diplomatic relations were established between the two countries, and later collaborated with unusual success with the Israeli diplomats. Victor Eliachar was ambassador to Colombia. Israel also maintained in Colombia a technical mission, whose work was widely recognized.

Rozental was the only Jew to have been awarded the Medalla Cívica Francisco de Paula Santander for outstanding contributions to culture (May 1962) and the Order de San Carlos, with the rank of Caballero, in recognition of his cultural work and efforts to promote friendly relations between Israel and Colombia (August 1970). As secretary general of the Latin American Organization for the Study of the Jews in the Soviet Union, Rozental succeeded in enlisting the interest of Colombian politicians in the problems of Soviet Jewry. The group's membership consisted of politicians and intellectuals of all political convictions, including the left.

Intergroup Relations

The equilibrium of the Jewish community reflected the country's growing prosperity and political stability. Colombia has been considered the most Catholic country in Latin America, the only one on the subcontinent which had a Concordat with the Pope; where civil marriages were prohibited for Catholic citizens, and where divorces were illegal for all. Although religious prejudice existed, there was no overt antisemitism. Discrimination in housing, education, and elsewhere was nonexistent. Even conservative Catholic schools and universities have been accepting Jews without question.

One might accuse the press of occasionally showing some remnant of deep-rooted religious prejudice; but whenever a problem has arisen for the Jews (Israel and its Arab neighbors, the situation of the Soviet Jews), Colombia's press, with rare exceptions, has stood firmly at the side of the
Jews. Young Jewish journalists have had no difficulties finding jobs in the news media, and their number has been growing.

Politics in Colombia continued to be dominated by a group of families that was becoming ever smaller. Jews have not found a place in it, and they may not even have looked for one. But where they did make an attempt to become active, certain doors have been open to them. During the 1970 presidential campaign, for example, Jews fought in the committees of every candidate. One of the authors of Colombia's new Commercial Code was Samuel Finkelstein, one of two recognized Jewish jurists in Bogotá. Jews have also held posts in government offices; and though there were only very few, they seemed to show the younger generation that it was relatively easy to overcome religious prejudice.

There was sporadic Arab propaganda, which was most noticeable in the universities. The Arab cause has been championed, for many years and on a small scale, by leftist groups.

Still, Colombia's Jews felt very strongly that their rights as citizens were not endangered and that they did not need any kind of defense. They have shown strong interest in participating in the social advancement of Colombia. The first Jew to work toward that end was Morris Gutt, founder of the Morris Gutt Foundation and of the Red Cross blood bank. For services to his country throughout his lifetime (he died in 1971) he received Colombia's highest award, the Order of Boyacá, thus far the only Jew to have been so honored. But the most outstanding trend in the community, most of whose members had arrived in the country only during the last 35 years, was the strong drive among Jewish youth to take part in Colombia's national life.

GÜNTER FRIEDLÄNDER