Here was only one change in the top Soviet leadership during the period under review (1977–78). In 1977 Nikolaii Podgorny was ousted from his position as chairman of the Supreme Soviet and from his membership in the ruling Politburo. Since then the 76-year-old former leader has been relegated to the status of a non-person; his name has gradually disappeared from books and encyclopedias, and cities named for him have been renamed. Leonid Brezhnev, now head of both party and state (chairman of the Supreme Soviet), was the undisputed leader of the USSR. At 73, and obviously ill, he was not always up to the demands of his job. Brezhnev continued to be the object of a cult of personality, receiving countless honors, medals, and even a literary prize for his memoirs.

The question of a successor to Brezhnev was, of course, not discussed in the Soviet press. In October 1977 two of Brezhnev’s close collaborators, Konstantin Chernenko and Vasily Kuznetzov, were elected candidate members of the Politburo. Feodor Kulakov, one of the youngest members of the Politburo, and considered a possible successor to Brezhnev, passed away in July 1978, at the age of 60.

The problem of succession was complicated by deep differences in the top ruling circle between leaders (Kosygin, Kirilenko, Ustinov) in charge of the day-to-day management of state affairs and ideologists (Suslov, Ponomarev) who followed the dogmatic principles of Stalinism. Both groups were aware that the Soviet Union’s economic base was limited and that additional resources, including imports from abroad, were needed to implement successive five-year plans. They were split, however, over the methods to be applied to obtain these resources. More generally, they differed over how to deal with the internal situation, and over the conduct of foreign affairs.

While Brezhnev adhered to a policy of internal “moderation,” holding police repression to certain limits, rigid controls and censorship were maintained in all areas of Soviet life. The Soviet Union remained a conservative society unwilling to tolerate dissent. Nevertheless, fear of the police and other state authorities
substantially decreased, and in some sectors of Soviet society persons not seeking emigration or otherwise joining dissident groups openly disagreed with the official line. In 1978 a group of writers prepared an uncensored volume of literary essays and submitted it for publication. Although the authorities refused to publish the volume, one of its authors, the poet Andrei Voznesenski, was permitted to go to the United States for a lecture tour.

According to reliable reports, the ruling body of the Communist party rejected pleas for the rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin, the erstwhile party theoretician executed by Stalin in 1938. This was a significant decision, indicating the considerable power held in the party by the Stalinist wing. At the same time, there was evident a growing trend, reflected in Soviet literary and journalistic writings (see Molodaia Gvardiia, No. 11, 1977), toward a return to “national” or “historic” Russia. Current poetry was replete with references to the old Russian holy places, monasteries, and the like, and it became fashionable among sophisticates to use crosses as decorations. There was also an interest in Russian Christian philosophy; books by Berdiaev, Fedotov, Frank, and Bulgakov were much sought after on the black market. The mood was also reflected in some of the writings appearing in Samizdat. Sixty-two years after the October revolution, it appeared that the era of revolutionary dreamers was at an end in Russia, which was gradually returning to its historical past.

The new constitution adopted in 1977 replaced the one promulgated under Stalin in 1936; while acknowledging all manner of “rights” and “freedoms,” it did not fundamentally change the established totalitarian regime. Three thousand copies of a Yiddish text of the new constitution appeared in Khabarovsk, and were made available to the inhabitants of Birobidzhan.

**Dissidence**

While the Soviet Union was a party to the Helsinki agreement on human rights signed by 35 countries in 1975, it viewed the accord in a way very different from that of the Western nations. At the follow-up conference to Helsinki in Belgrade in June 1977, the Soviet delegate Iulii Vorontsev made it clear that the Soviets would not accept criticism of their behavior or permit case-by-case examination of complaints.

Soviet authorities were unable to liquidate dissidence. Indeed, for the first time in the Soviet Union since the early 1920's, there was, unacknowledged by the government, open and vocal opposition. There were many instances of repression by the authorities, including trials and commitments to mental institutions (psik-hushka). Andrei Sakharov, the prominent academician and leader of the human rights movement, not only openly protested illegal acts of the authorities, but attended trials of arrested dissidents to monitor the proceedings. This was a significant development, perhaps indicating reluctance, or even weakness, on the part of the authorities in their fight against dissent. Among the prominent dissenters arrested by the authorities were Iurii Orlov, a scientist and a leader of the Moscow
Helsinki Watch Committee, who was charged in June 1977 with anti-Soviet activity and later sentenced to seven years of prison, and five years of exile; Aleksandr Ginzburg, a representative of the Fund for Assistance of Political Prisoners, an organization created abroad by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who was sentenced to eight years of labor camp and three years of exile; and Anatoly Shcharansky, an activist in both general and Jewish dissidence, who was accused of being a foreign spy, and received an unusually harsh sentence of 13 years imprisonment.

As of mid-1978 some 20 members of various groups monitoring the Helsinki agreement had been arrested, but this did not put a stop to their activities. In their fight against dissent, Soviet authorities tried to neutralize the activities of known oppositionists by imposing additional camp or prison terms on them when they completed earlier terms. Thus, Anatolii Marchenko, one of the founders of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Committee, went on trial for additional criminal acts just before he completed 11 years of prison and exile in September 1978. Lev Lukianenko, a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Watch Committee, who had served 15 years in labor camps, was sentenced, in June 1978, to an additional 10-year term. Reports from Moscow indicated that Georgii Vodimov, Lev Kopelev, and Vladimir Kornilov, all well-known writers, were threatened with arrest for their participation in the human rights movement.

While general dissidence in the Soviet Union mainly involved intellectuals and scientists, factory workers also joined in the effort. In December 1977 a small group of workers complained to American correspondents that the authorities were dealing harshly with workers protesting poor labor conditions and corrupt acts; such workers were placed under arrest or confined in mental institutions (New York Times, Dec. 2, 1977). The press conference was organized by a miner, Vladimir Klebanov. Andreii Amalrik, the dissident writer, who was granted an exit visa, stated in Paris that resistance among Soviet workers had reached significant proportions, and that there were cases of strikes directed by underground workers’ committees (Novoye Russkoye Slovo. New York, January 5, 1978).

In March 1978 Soviet authorities revoked the citizenship of the well-known cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, the singer Galina Vishnevskaiia. They took up residence in the United States.

Nationalities

There was growing unrest among various national minorities. National committees monitoring compliance with the Helsinki agreement insisted not only on respect for individual rights, but also on guarantees relating to specific national concerns. Ethnic movements in the Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, and among the Crimean Tatars presented demands relating to language, education, and other matters. While

---

1 In 1979 two Soviet spies held in the United States were exchanged for Ginzburg and Valentin Moroz, a Ukrainian oppositionist.
it was difficult to gauge the present status of these demands, it appeared that the Soviet Union had not remained immune to the global phenomenon of increased ethnic affirmation.

At the beginning of 1978, students and workers took to the streets of Tbilisi in Georgia to protest a plan to drop Georgian as the official language of the republic. Soviet authorities, seeking to further a policy of unification, had tried to downgrade the use of the language, hoping that this would prove acceptable to the population. Following the protests, the plan was withdrawn, as were similar plans for neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan. All three Soviet Republics are in the border region adjoining Iran and Turkey, and the language issue there has been a very sensitive problem.

According to official figures, there were 200 mosques in Central Asia, which had a population of some 20,000,000 Moslems. Soviet authorities maintained their refusal to permit the Crimean Tatars to return to their native Crimea, from which they had been expelled in May 1944. Mustapha Dzemilev, the fighter for Tatar national rights, was again exiled for four years to Yakut ASSR, and his parents and his sister's family were expelled from the Crimea. A large number of Crimean Tatars were being absorbed into Uzbekistan in Central Asia, where Soviet authorities were encouraging them to intermarry with the Moslem Uzbeks. The Tatars were discouraged from preserving their national heritage through song, dance, or folklore.

There was unrest in the Baltic countries, where the Soviet policy of assimilation ran into opposition from those seeking to preserve local languages and religious traditions.

**Economic Affairs**

Toward the end of 1977, Kremlin leaders announced a reduction in the production goals of the five-year plan. It was obvious that the Soviet Union was experiencing a declining rate of economic growth. Available statistics indicated that the output of coal, steel, cement, and meat would fall below the levels anticipated for the end of the 1976–1980 plan. Although grain output was somewhat better in 1978, purchases abroad continued. At the same time, Nikolaii Baibakov, the chief economic planner, announced a substantial increase in consumer goods for 1979. Soviet planners were clearly worried not only about reduced industrial output, but also about the lack of improvement in labor productivity.

Work continued on a 2,000-mile railroad across Siberia to the Pacific. The completion of the railroad would facilitate the settlement of European population groups in an area containing rich deposits of minerals and timber.
Foreign Affairs

The rift with China continued. An improvement in Chinese-U.S. relations did not please the Soviets, and the Moscow press attacked the Chinese "revisionists" who had discarded the "correct" Marxist line in favor of good relations with capitalist countries. In June 1978 Brezhnev accused the Carter administration of playing "the Chinese card." While there was no significant change in conditions at the Chinese-Soviet frontier, there were occasional reports of border clashes, illegal crossings, and the like. Leonid Ilichev, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, went to Peking in April 1978 to discuss border disputes. The disputed areas, it should be noted, included territory in the area of the Ussuri and Amur rivers, where the Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan was located. Chinese sources reported that one million Soviet soldiers were stationed along the 4,000-mile frontier.

Kremlin leaders went out of their way to assure the countries of Western Europe of their dedication to peace. In June 1977 Brezhnev visited Paris, where he met with French President Giscard d'Estaing. At the beginning of 1978 Brezhnev sent letters to the NATO countries warning them against the introduction of neutron bombs. Soviet-U.S. talks continued on an arms limitation treaty (SALT II) with the expectation that a treaty might be concluded in 1979.

Kremlin authorities refused to permit Santiago Carillo, the Spanish Communist leader, to deliver a speech at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the October revolution in Moscow in November 1977. Carillo was ostracized because of the Spanish party's stand rejecting the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Official Soviet publications repeatedly attacked "Euro-Communists" for adopting an anti-Soviet line.

Relations with Israel

Throughout the period under review the Kremlin maintained its rigid pro-Arab policy and engaged in anti-Israel and anti-Zionist propaganda. It supported the idea of a Middle East peace conference to be held in Geneva. When, in 1977, Egypt invited the Soviet Union to participate in a preliminary meeting in Cairo, it refused, viewing the proposal as a cover for a separate deal between Egypt and Israel. Following a meeting between Brezhnev and Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khadaam, Moscow called for an overall settlement of the Middle East conflict. The Soviets were unhappy about President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. They repeatedly expressed their support of the PLO. Several Arab states received large supplies of Soviet arms. At the same time, frankly anti-Jewish films were included in indoctrination courses of the Red Army.

An Israeli parliamentary delegation visited the Soviet Union in November 1978. The invited delegates, Yossi Sarid (Labor), Naftali Feder (Mapam), Avraham Melamed (National Religious party), Toufik Toubi (Rakah CP), Z. Burshtein (CP) and A. Zakhiruni (Shell) were criticized by the Israeli press for accepting the Soviet
invitation. Upon their return, the delegates stated that they believed that the Kremlin leaders were beginning to rethink their harshly negative policy toward Israel.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

A national census, which might shed new light on the Jewish population of the Soviet Union, was expected to be taken in January 1979. The best current estimate, taking into account the continued emigration of Jews, was 2,666,000. *Sovetish Heimland* (No. 10, Oct. 1978) carried an item from the 1977 AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK on world Jewish population which gave figures for the larger Jewish communities. In contrast to previous practice, the figure for the USSR was altered to conform to the official Soviet Jewish population estimate of 2,150,000.

Communal and Religious Life

There were no Jewish communal organizations in the USSR. Jewish religious life was represented by a small number of Jewish congregations (*dvadtsatkas*) and synagogues. The exact number of synagogues was not known, but Soviet authorities spoke in terms of dozens of synagogues and hundreds of *minyonim*. Synagogues were functioning in a state of isolation, since any kind of coordination of Jewish activities was discouraged.

Iakov Fishman and Iakov Mikelberg were rabbi and president, respectively, of the Moscow Jewish congregation. The Moscow Yeshiva Kol Iakov continued to function, but it had few students and was not able to train desperately needed rabbinical personnel. The production of religious articles (e.g., prayer shawls, prayerbooks, phylacteries, *mezuzot*) was discouraged, and importation from abroad was forbidden. (Rabbi Pinhas Teitz of Elizabeth, New Jersey did succeed in shipping *esrogim* and *lulavim* to the Soviet Union.) In 1978 a sufficient quantity of flour (some 264 tons) for Passover *matzot* was allocated in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, and Tbilisi. The situation in the provincial towns was less satisfactory, with Jews being dependent on the good will of local officials to obtain *matzot*. In an interesting development, Rosh Ha-shanah greetings from the rabbi and president of the Moscow congregation and Ilya Zhidovetski of the Kiev congregation were received by Rabbi Teitz and Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson. (Jackson had visited the Kiev synagogue.)

While there were no *chedorim*, and steps were taken against religious instruction, there were increasing signs of interest in Jewish religious observance. This was probably related to the heightened national consciousness among Jews, and the increased religiosity of the Russian Greek Orthodox population. (*Molodezh Molдавий* [Oct. 17, 1978], a Moldavian newspaper, reported that many members of the...
Komsomol [Communist youth organization] in both the cities and villages were secretly baptizing their newborn babies in the Greek Orthodox Church.) As had been the case for a number of years, during Simhat Torah large numbers of Jews, mostly youths, came to the Moscow synagogue on Archipova Street in an expression of Jewish solidarity. At the same time, it was noted that among recent Soviet emigres to the West were a number of individuals who had converted to Greek Orthodoxy, and who, in their life abroad, took no interest in the problems connected with Jewish life.

**Antisemitism and Discrimination**

Anti-Jewish sentiments pervaded Soviet society. To a significant degree, the spread of such feelings was related to the increasingly militant nationalistic mood of the Russian population. The Soviet pro-Arab stand provided an additional channel for anti-Jewish bias, creating a situation in which it was difficult to determine where anti-Zionism ended and antisemitism began.

The press, cinema, radio, and television were all involved in the anti-Jewish campaign. On March 12, 1977 the widely-read Soviet magazine *Ogonek* lauded T.S. Solodar's *Wild Wormwood*, a book containing a crude attack on the Jewish religion and pointing to the spiritual kinship between the "followers of Hitler and Herzl." On November 16, 1977 *Krasnaia Zvezda*, a Red Army newspaper, informed its readers that of 165 "death corporations" (meaning the arms industry), 158 were controlled by pro-Zionist capitalists. The same paper claimed on May 11, 1978 that the aim of the Israeli government was the "physical destruction of the Arab people of Palestine." In attacking Jews and Zionists indiscriminately, the Soviet Jew-baiter L. Korneev ominously referred to them as "cosmopolitans," a contemptuous term used during the anti-Jewish campaign conducted by Stalin during the 1940's. On September 18, 1978, *Komsomolskaia Pravda* published a piece by V. Polezhaev repeating the familiar antisemitic charge of a Jewish Masonic conspiracy.

De facto anti-Jewish quotas had been re-established in the Soviet Union. Jewish applicants experienced great difficulties in gaining admission to the major universities in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. In addition, they were not eligible for admission to some specialized schools, such as foreign service, journalism, and others. The authoritative Soviet statistical annual of education, science, and culture (*Narodnoe Obrazovanie, Nauka i Kultura V.S.S.S.R. 1977*) indicated that in 1976 the number of Jewish students attending universities was 66,900 (1.3 per cent of the total university population). In 1972 the figure had stood at 88,500 (1.9 per cent). (For further comparisons, see AJYB, 1979, Vol. 79, p. 94). Nevertheless, in 1975 there were 385,000 Soviet Jewish functionaries with specialized higher education, and 180,000 with specialized secondary degrees. The number of Jewish scientific workers rose from 64,393 in 1970 to 69,374 in 1975, but the percentage of Jews among all scientific workers fell from 6.9 to 6.1 per cent. The academic councils of Soviet universities placed all manner of obstacles in the way of Jews seeking candidate
degrees (the equivalent of the European doctorate); dissertations were either re-
jected, or it took an inordinately long time to defend them.

There were almost no Jews in top positions of the party, state, or armed forces.
Veniamin Dymshitz, the veteran deputy premier, was still on the job, but his post
was administrative in nature; he was also one of very few Jewish members of the
Central Committee of the party.

Jewish Resistance

Jewish dissidents and “refusniks” openly demonstrated against Soviet anti-Jewish
policy and the obstacles placed in the way of would-be emigrants. In October 1977,
20 Jews were held under house arrest during the session of the Supreme Soviet in
Moscow, in order to keep them from holding a demonstration. In late 1977 more
than 100 Soviet Jewish activists, in an open letter to the delegates attending the
Belgrade Conference, presented a detailed list of Soviet violations of the Helsinki
accord with regard to Jewish culture and Jewish emigration. In December 1978
Soviet police raided the homes of Jewish dissidents in Moscow, Leningrad, and
Riga, confiscating, among other things, Jewish books and publications.

While dissent centered around the problems of emigration, some Jewish groups
and individuals sought to improve the condition of Jewish life in the USSR. In
Moscow there were some 25 underground Hebrew teachers with about 250 students;
in Leningrad, 12 teachers and some 120 students. Jewish *Samizdat* publications
continued to appear despite the repressive measures taken by the authorities.
Among the unofficial publications were *Jews in the Modern World* and *Jewish
Thought*. From time to time, seminars on Jewish and general subjects were held in
private apartments. At the end of 1978 a questionnaire dealing with Jewish identity
and the possibilities of Jewish life in the Soviet Union was distributed by Jewish
activists.

According to available figures, a total 29,000 Jews left the Soviet Union in 1978,
as compared with 16,000 in 1977. The total Jewish emigration figure for the 1968–78
period was 175,000. More than 60 per cent of the emigrants went to countries other
than Israel; only an insignificant number sought to return to Russia. (Maria Davido-
vich, who emigrated to Israel after her husband, Colonel Davidovich, died in Minsk,
later returned to the USSR.) In November 1978, six years after he applied for an
exit visa, Valentin Levich, probably the most prominent scientist among the Jewish
“refusniks,” was granted a visa, and left for Israel.

It was not clear why the Soviets permitted an increased number of Jews to
emigrate in 1978. Some saw the action as connected with the continuing negotiations
on a SALT agreement. Others thought it reflected a Soviet desire to meet the
conditions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and thus open the way for increased
trade with the United States.

Among recent emigrants from the Soviet Union there were a substantial number
of Russians, including many intellectuals and some 40,000 Volga Germans; 1,100
Armenians left in 1978. Some 3,000 members of the Russian Pentacostal Christian sect have appealed to the Belgrade Conference for assistance in their emigration project.

Culture

There were no Jewish schools in the Soviet Union, and the authorities discouraged activities conducted in Yiddish. The only Jewish periodical, the Yiddish-language Sovetish Heimland, carried a page on Yiddish grammar and summary translations in Russian and English. In 1978 the Khabarovsk party school issued a brochure, For Those Who Study Yiddish, intended for individuals preparing for work in the Yiddish press.

Despite the negative attitude of the authorities, certain forms of Jewish cultural life were maintained, particularly the theater and the arts. Theater groups conducted by amateurs with some professional help functioned in many cities of the USSR. The Kaunas Yiddish Folk Theater, with its drama and vocal ensembles, presented many concerts in Lithuania and other parts of the Soviet Union. The Birobidzhaner Folk Theater offered a new version of Tevie der Milchiger under the direction of Berta Shtilman. The Vilna Yiddish Folk Theater, under the direction of Iudl Kaz, presented a number of plays and variety performances. The Moscow Dramatic Ensemble, under a new director, Joseph Rivlin, performed in many cities of the Ukraine and Moldavia. Rivlin replaced Beniamin Schwarzer, the veteran director, who died in February 1978. The various theater groups in Chernovits, Kiev, and Leningrad maintained their activities despite the loss of members through emigration.

A new professional Yiddish Chamber Theater attached to the Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan began to function in 1978 under the direction of Iuri Sherling. This was the first legitimate Yiddish theater to emerge in Russia since World War II, and its initial presentations in Moscow were attended by overflow audiences.

Since 1972 the official Soviet statistical publication has failed to include a listing of Yiddish books published in the USSR. As far as could be ascertained, the following new books appeared during the period under review: Mendel Lifshitz, A Zun mit a Regn (A Sun and a Rain); Shmuel Halkin, Fir Piesen (Four Plays); Haim Malamed, Varem Ash (Warm Ashes); Note Lurie, Yam un Himl (Sun and Sky); and Ben Halpern, Mein Yiches (My Origins). Between 1946 and 1978 only 65 books in Yiddish appeared in the Soviet Union.

Despite the scarcity of published Yiddish books, Sovetish Heimland reported that there were 100 Yiddish writers in the USSR. A memorial meeting in honor of Leib Kvitko, one of the Yiddish poets killed by Stalin in 1952, was held in Moscow early in 1978. Sophia Saitan, the Yiddish actress, read Kvitko's poetry in the original, and a Russian writer, Lev Ozerov, presented Kvitko's work in Russian translation.

In the summer of 1978 the strongly nationalistic Soviet magazine Oktiabr (October) published, in three successive issues, Tiazhelyi Pesok (Heavy Sand), a novel by
Anatolii Rybakov. Rybakov, a Jew and an accepted Soviet writer, dealt in a sympathetic way with the fate of several generations of a Jewish family. The publication of the novel in Oktiabr reflected a clear attempt by the authorities to counter the persistent anti-Jewish bias in Soviet writing.

**Commemoration of the Holocaust**

While the authorities continued to discourage memorial meetings devoted to the Holocaust, from time to time small gatherings were organized by local groups. The 50-foot-high monument erected at Babi Iar, scene of the German massacre in Kiev, depicted 11 dead and dying victims falling into the Babi Iar ravine. The inscription, however, made no reference to Jews. It read: “Here, in 1941-43, German fascist occupiers murdered more than 100,000 citizens and prisoners of war.”

**Personalia**

Chaim Dobin, a Soviet writer, son of the well-known Jewish writer and scholar Shimon Dobin, died at the age of 76, in Leningrad. Israel Serebrianyi, a Soviet Yiddish literary critic, who also wrote in Russian, died at the age of 78. Gersh Budker, a leading Soviet nuclear physicist and member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, died at the age of 69. Aleksandr Luria, a Moscow University psychologist and a foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, died at the age of 75.
Poland

There were no significant political changes in Poland during 1978. Looking to its powerful neighbor on the east, Poland conformed to Moscow's dictates while trying to enlarge the limited independence it was able to muster in national affairs. Because of the economic difficulties facing the country—insufficient food and consumer goods—the government, in an effort to obtain foreign loans, agreed to permit Western banks to monitor its economic policies.

Dissidence was increasing among both the intelligentsia and the workers. The oldest of the dissident groups was the Workers Defense Committees (KOR), which came to the aid of those punished for participation in demonstrations against the high cost of food (see AJYB, 1978, Vol. 78, p. 457). The Committees published an information bulletin that had a substantial circulation. Another dissident group was the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights, which demanded radical changes in official policy. The Movement's views were presented to the public in a monthly, Opinion. There was also the so-called "Flying University," through which dissident scholars and writers presented unorthodox views to Polish audiences. While they continued their activities, all dissident groups were aware that the geographic position of Poland made it difficult, if not impossible, to effect any revolutionary change in the country without provoking the immediate intervention of the Soviet Union.

The Catholic Church maintained its strong position not only in the religious area, but also in calling the attention of the government to such matters as the housing crisis, the rising cost of food, and religious education of the young. The election in 1978 of a Polish Pope, the former Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, further complicated the strained relations between church and state. The Communist leadership of Poland hailed the election, but was not happy about the new Pope's expressed desire to visit his native country.

Edvard Gierrek continued in his post as secretary of the PPZR (Polish Communist party). Piotr Jaroszewicz was prime minister; the head of state (with limited powers) was Henryk Jablonski. Gierrek strictly followed the Soviet line in both the Warsaw Pact and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and adhered to the Soviet's rigid anti-Israel policy.

Boleslaw Piasecki died at the age of 64. A pre-World War II fascist and antisemitic propagandist, he created, after the liberation, a fellow-traveling Catholic group, the Pax. A supporter of the Communist regime, he was a member of the 16-man Council of the State and a deputy in the parliament. His writings had been banned by the Vatican (see AJYB, 1965, Vol. 66. p. 432).
The Jewish population of Poland was approximately 6,000. Some local informants believed that there were, in addition, a considerable number of Jews who had changed their names and been totally integrated into Polish society.

There was a Union of Religious Congregations, but its activities were very limited, due to the total absence of rabbinic personnel and religious education for children. However, it did provide religious burials and matzot for Passover. Religious services were conducted by knowledgeable older men. The well-known Warsaw Nozyk Synagogue had a Hebrew sign indicating its affiliation with the Union. For the high holidays, it invited a cantor from Budapest to lead services which were attended by 100 people. There was a shochet in Warsaw who also served the city of Lodz. In Krakow only two synagogues were functioning. The Union operated a Jewish communal kitchen in Warsaw that provided kosher meals. Moses Findelsztein was chairman of the Religious Union.

The Jewish Cultural and Social Union, the central secular organization of Polish Jews, had a membership of about 1,500, with 17 local affiliates; Ruta Gutkowska was the executive head. The Union was active in, among other cities, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Walbrzych, Lodz, Krakow, Dzierzionow, Szczecin, and Katowice. Its activities, under strict Communist control, were limited to lectures, theatrical productions, and customary party tasks. Its newspaper, Folksztyne, also appeared in a Polish edition, in an effort to reach the younger generation.

The Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw maintained its research activities in accordance with the official line of the party.

The Yiddish State Theater, under the direction of Szymon Szurmej, continued to stage impressive productions. The theater had its own well-equipped building, seating 1,400, in Warsaw, and performed three times weekly. It also performed in Wroclaw, which was the center for experimentation in the theater. Audiences were provided with Polish translations of the plays. Among the performers were non-Jews who had learned Yiddish.

Yiddish as a language was slowly disappearing. All Yiddish schools had been closed in the 1960's, when the government conducted its campaign against "Zionism."

Leon Shapiro
Rumania

RUMANIA, ONE OF THE LARGEST COUNTRIES of the “socialist bloc,” and with vulnerable borders, broke away several years ago from the imposed tutelage of Moscow and maintained its own foreign policy, including correct relations with China. Unlike other Communist countries, it refused to condemn the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt. Nicolae Ceausescu, head of the Party and president of Rumania, was committed to a totally independent “road to socialism.” In 1978 he objected to Soviet demands for an increased military budget, and refused to accept overall Soviet command of the armies of the seven countries of the Warsaw Pact, of which Rumania remained a member. This courageous act of resistance to Soviet supremacy was followed by Rumania’s condemnation of the Soviet-supported Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. While the Ceausescu regime maintained absolute internal control over the population, the independent stance taken by Ceausescu with respect to Moscow could not but affect the climate in the country. Foreign films were permitted, and books by Western writers were readily available.

The Ceausescu regime maintained foreign trade with the Soviet Union and the West. Joint corporations with Western partners were created. High U.S. officials visited Rumania at the end of 1978 to confer on issues of interest to both countries. At the same time, Rumania remained a part of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which largely determined the economic relationships among the countries within the Soviet sphere.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population of Rumania was estimated to be about 45,000, including Jews who were not identified with either the religious or secular sector of the community. This figure, which is somewhat lower than previous estimates, might reflect the continued flow of Jewish emigration. The matter of Jewish emigration was important to the Rumanian government because its position as a most-favored nation in terms of trade with the United States depended on the status of human rights and the free flow of emigration. While there were reports that of late it had become difficult to obtain exit visas, Jewish circles were hopeful that there would be no drastic change of policy.

Although Rumanian Jews enjoyed all religious and social rights accorded other national minorities, Jewish life, because of the general restrictions imposed by the regime, continued to decline both in the religious and secular sectors.
Jewish activities were coordinated by the Federation of Jewish Communities, an officially-recognized agency covering some 68 local communities and over 130 synagogues. Some of the synagogues did not have a daily minyan, but all conducted Sabbath and holiday services. Bucharest, the capital city, had a mikva. More than 20 talmud torahs provided Jewish instruction to the young, and special classes in Jewish studies and Hebrew language were functioning in many cities. The Federation's semi-monthly Revista Culturui Mosaic, issued in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Rumanian, with a circulation of about 10,000 and covering matters of general Jewish interest, rabbinic material, and Hebrew and Yiddish literature, was the only such periodical in Eastern Europe. The Federation also published a Jewish calendar (luah) containing information on Jewish life. It maintained a library and a museum. In 1978, in connection with commemoration of the Holocaust, a special exhibit was presented at the museum. The museum also housed a comprehensive exhibit on the history of Rumanian Jewry, prepared with the help of Prof. Alexander Visnu of the University of Bucharest.

The Federation financed its own activities, including supervision of kashrut, but received state funds, as did other religious bodies, for the salaries of rabbinic and administrative personnel. The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture financed some of the cultural activities of the Federation.

Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen continued as president of the Federation and was, in fact, the organizer and promoter of all Jewish religious and cultural activities. He was also a member of the Rumanian parliament, which gave him added status.

In the summer of 1978 the Federation celebrated the 30th anniversary of Rabbi Rosen's service as chief rabbi. Among the guests attending the ceremonies were Shlomo Goren, chief rabbi of Israel; Joseph Burg, Israeli minister of the interior; Jacob Kaplan, chief rabbi of France; Gerhard Rigner of the World Jewish Congress; Rabbi Abraham Shneour of New York; and Laszlo Shalga, the Orthodox chief rabbi of Hungary. The celebration was a memorable Jewish event, particularly important in a country within the Soviet sphere of influence.

With the approval of the authorities, the Federation, in the person of Rabbi Rosen, maintained close contact with Jewish organizations abroad, including the World Jewish Congress, JDC, B'nai B'rith, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and organizations in Israel.

The secular Jewish sector outside the Federation included a highly-regarded, state-supported Yiddish theater with its own 300-seat building. The state also supported the publication of Yiddish books. Among recent titles were Chaim Goldenstein's Zvei Novelen (Two Novels), Bucharester Shriftn (Bucharest Writings), and Israel Bercovici's Hundert Yor Yiddisher Theater in Rumanie, 1876-1976 (A Hundred Years of Yiddish Theater in Rumania).

The Federation conducted a comprehensive welfare program in Bucharest, where the majority of the Jewish population resided, as well as in the provincial cities. It operated 11 kosher restaurants in Bucharest, Arad, Iassy, Dorohoi, Bacau, Galatzi, Cluj-Napoca, Oradei, Timosara, Botosani, and Brazov. About 2,000 meals were
served daily, most of them provided free of charge to persons in need. Kosher meals were delivered to the homes of sick people and invalids. During Passover, the Federation conducted sedorim and distributed matzot in Bucharest and in the provincial cities. Public celebrations were arranged during Purim and Hanukkah. The aged and sick received free medical care through the Federation's clinics. There were nine old-age homes and hostels, and cash grants were made to individuals in need and unable to work. The social welfare activities were subvented by JDC, with some expenses covered by the Federation from its own funds.

In the course of its activities, the Federation expressed full support for the policies enunciated by President Ceausescu.

Leon Shapiro