Soviet Union

Domestic Affairs

Yuri Andropov, who had succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as head of both the Communist party and the state, fell gravely ill during the first half of 1983 and died on February 9, 1984. Andropov, who was 69 years old at the time of his death, had been in power for some 15 months. He was replaced by Konstantin Chernenko, a 72-year-old Kremlin veteran.

During his period in power, party chief Andropov had initiated important changes in the ruling structure of the Soviet Union by advancing the careers of somewhat younger men. Thus, Vitaly Vorotnikov was appointed to the Politburo; Igor Ligachev became one of the secretaries of the Communist party; and Mikhail Gorbachev, the youngest member of the Politburo, was given new responsibilities. It was reported that more than a quarter of all regional party heads were replaced.

Party chief Andropov had sought to counter the apathy that was evident throughout the Soviet bureaucracy and to restore discipline to the workplace. He was not afraid to apply strong measures in the fight against corruption. Thus, Iurii Shmeliov and V. Petrov, chairman and director, respectively, of a technical export agency in Moscow, were sentenced to death for gross corruption. A death sentence was also imposed on the director of a Moscow food store supplying the Soviet elite. About 100 individuals in high posts in Latvia were dismissed from the Communist party because of alleged illegal actions.

There were reports of plans to introduce some experimentation into the management of the industrial structure, even permitting a degree of decentralization. At present, Soviet industry was unable to keep up with demand. This was equally true in the agricultural sector. In 1983 there was another disappointing harvest, and the Kremlin was forced to conclude a new five-year agreement with Washington, whereby the United States would supply the Soviet Union with at least nine million tons of grain annually.

Party chief Andropov had attempted to improve the Soviet railroad system. He also initiated reforms in education, particularly with regard to vocational training for children unsuited for university work.
Dissidence

In 1983 the authorities reinforced the policy of rigid control, seeking to eliminate all forms of independent expression. In September Soviet prison camp administrators were given the power to extend by three to five years the completed terms of inmates who engaged in "bad behavior." Roy Medvedev, the dissident Marxist historian, was warned by officials to halt his anti-party writings. Georgii Vladimov, well-known author of Faithful Ruslan, was forced to leave the Soviet Union for Cologne, West Germany. Valerii Senderov, founder of the Free International Organization of Labor, was sentenced to 12 years in a labor camp. Oleg Radzinski was sentenced to a year in prison for trying to promote better relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

A number of Soviet Pentecostals, who had spent several years in the American embassy in Moscow, returned to their homes in Siberia; some of them eventually went abroad. In Lvov, two Catholic priests of the eastern rite, Vasilii Katziv and Roman Esip, received five-year prison sentences for "illegal religious activities." The Soviet press continued its campaign against the Hare Krishna movement.

Sergei Khodorovich, a representative of the Solzhenitsyn Fund that aided political prisoners, was rearrested in April and sentenced to three years in prison. This occurred after Valerii Repin, another representative of the Solzhenitsyn Fund, and his wife Elena appeared on Leningrad television in a staged KGB broadcast and "confessed" their ties to the American CIA.

Nobel prize-winning scientist Andreii Sakharov remained in exile in Gorky, isolated from friends and family. There were reports that he and his wife Elena Bonner were sick and were being denied specialized medical care. In the summer, Sakharov was denounced by four of his colleagues in the Academy of Science as a person "who does not belong to our country." At the same time, the Soviet authorities refused to allow Sakharov to go abroad. The human rights group that he had founded was no longer functioning.

Amnesty International reported that at least 300 individuals, arrested for political activities since 1969, had been forcibly treated with drugs in Soviet mental hospitals. In response to sharp criticism of the Kremlin's use of psychiatry as a weapon of punishment, the Soviet Union withdrew from the World Psychiatric Association.

Pravda repeatedly complained about an "exaggerated use" of Western materials in Soviet plays and movies. The well-known Taganka Theater in Moscow, directed by Iurii Lubimov, was forced to halt performances of Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" that were being presented in an experimental manner. Lubimov, abroad at the time, refused to return to the Soviet Union.

Alfred Shnitke, a composer in the modern mode, had great difficulty in arranging performances of his work. Abstract art was regarded as anti-Soviet and could only be shown in private homes or, on occasion, in the basements of official institutions.

While strong measures by the KGB sharply curtailed open dissent, some protests did occur. In Narva, a small city in Estonia, transportation workers went on strike.
In factories in Voronezh, worker-activists spread an appeal for a half-hour silent protest. In Moscow the authorities discovered a flyer calling on workers to abstain from special "voluntary" jobs they were expected to carry out during free time.

Oleg Bitov, an editor of Literaturnaia Gazeta, refused to return to the Soviet Union after completing an official trip abroad.

Nationalities

While the Soviet constitution formally recognized the equality of the various peoples comprising the Soviet Union, the Kremlin authorities were busy imposing a policy of russification on many small nationality groups. Russian cultural imperialism was greatly resented in many areas, especially Armenia, Georgia, the Baltic states, and among Moslem peoples. National sentiment was voiced by writers in Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, and the Ukraine. Underground appeals for the liberation of Estonia were put forward in the name of the Estonian government-in-exile. In Tbilisi underground leaflets were distributed, calling on Georgians to demonstrate against the annexation of their land by Russia; three Georgians, Zakharii Lashkarashvili, Tariel Gvimashvili, and Guram Gogopaidze, were sent to prison for protest actions. A Crimean Tatar leader, Mustafa Dzhemilev, was imprisoned for the sixth time for his part in the struggle to establish a Tatar republic.

Foreign Affairs

There was no thaw in Soviet-American relations in 1983. Likewise, Sino-Soviet ties did not improve. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan continued, but the superior Russian forces, despite the use of brutal tactics, were unable to put an end to local resistance.

The Kremlin continued to dominate the countries of Eastern Europe, but it was clear that the Soviet bloc was becoming more variegated.

The destruction of a South Korean airliner by a Soviet fighter plane—resulting in the death of 269 passengers—created a storm of protest in the West.

The Madrid meeting, convened to review the Helsinki accords, became hopelessly deadlocked.

Relations with Israel

The Soviet Union unleashed a propaganda barrage against the multinational force that was attempting to separate the warring factions in Lebanon. Izvestiia claimed that United States troops had been sent to Lebanon to help the Israelis control it, Lebanon being the latest victim of "the Camp David conspiracy." The Kremlin insisted on a complete withdrawal of both Israeli and multinational troops. At the time, Moscow wanted the Syrian army and the Palestinian fighters to remain in place, since they had come to "protect Lebanon's sovereignty."
Moscow was greatly troubled by the split between Syria and PLO chief Yasir Arafat, and sought to bring the two sides together. Foreign Minister Andreii Gromyko, in a meeting with visiting Syrian foreign minister Abdel Halim Khaddam, stressed the importance of the unity of all Palestinian factions for a successful struggle against Israel. To aid in the struggle, the Kremlin sent Syria massive supplies of weapons, including advanced missiles.

Notwithstanding vitriolic anti-Israel propaganda, the Soviet authorities did not object to so-called “private contacts” between Israelis and authorized Soviet organizations. Thus, an Israeli delegation visited Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee; delegation members included Shulamit Aloni and Mattityahu Peled. In the spring a Soviet delegation, headed by Iurii Barabach, editor of Sovetskaya Kultura, went to Israel. The visiting Soviets stated that Moscow would reestablish diplomatic ties with Israel if the latter changed its policies, including withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The 1979 Soviet census put the Jewish population of the Soviet Union at about 1,810,000. Of late some sources had cited a figure of 1,700,000. As a way of dealing with the relative decrease of the Slavic population and the growth of the Moslem element, Soviet authorities were encouraging Jews to “pass” into the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian nationality groups. A more accurate estimate of the actual Jewish population, therefore, would be about 2,620,000. (See the discussion in AJYB, Vol. 82, 1982, p. 233.)

Emigration

The emigration of Soviet Jews came to a near halt in 1983, with only 1,314 leaving the country. The authorities placed ever-increasing obstacles in the way of those wishing to depart. Thus, not only parents and former spouses, but also brothers and sisters had to give written consent to individuals seeking to leave the Soviet Union; additionally, persons giving such consent had to state that they themselves would never express a desire to leave the USSR. It was clear that the Kremlin had decided, at least for the moment, to halt all departures of Jews, Volga-Germans, Armenians, etc.—groups that had been leaving the Soviet Union in substantial numbers in recent years.

The current attitude of the authorities created a sense of hopelessness among “refuseniks.” In a Samizdat statement, 28 of them, including several who had been waiting for well over a decade to leave the Soviet Union, appealed to world Jewry for help. In June Soviet officials stated that family reunification had “substantially
been completed," thus rationalizing the continuing decrease in departures. Western sources indicated that substantial numbers of Soviet Jews still wished to leave.

**Communal and Religious Life**

There had been no Jewish communal or social organizations in the Soviet Union for decades. It was thus surprising that the Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee was established in April. This organization, intended as a vehicle for propaganda against Zionism, was headed by well-known “official Jews”: General David Dragunskii, chairman; Professor Samuil Zivs, first vice-chairman; and Mark Krupskii, Igor Beliaev, and Iurii Kolesnikov, vice-chairmen. The Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee viewed Zionism as synonymous with “extreme nationalism, racial intolerance, and perfidy.”

The authorities would not allow the establishment of a central Jewish religious body, although this was permitted to other religious groups, e.g., the Russian Orthodox church, Moslems, and Baptists. It was estimated that some 50 synagogues were open, organized by local congregations (dvadtsatkas). There were very few rabbis in the Soviet Union; it was thus significant that a small number of Russian students were training for the rabbinate in the neological (Conservative) seminary in Budapest. Formal religious education did not exist, leaving the current generation without any knowledge of Jewish tradition. Small wonder, then, that a good many Jews, particularly among the intelligentsia, were attracted to the Russian Orthodox church.

There was a chronic lack of Jewish prayerbooks and ritual objects, these being available only on the black market. However, sufficient matzot were prepared for distribution; some 140 tons were baked in Moscow in 1983. There were a number of communally organized sedorim as well.

Adolf Shaevich, rabbi of the Moscow synagogue, who visited New York as part of an official Soviet interfaith delegation, stated that he “had not experienced any governmental interference in synagogue affairs.” In fact, however, the authorities controlled all religious activities through the Council for Religious Affairs. Thus, Rabbi Iaakov Fishman of Moscow—who died in 1983 after a long sickness—was hardly acting on his own when he sent a letter to the United States embassy in Moscow, objecting to weekly visits to his synagogue by an American diplomat, James Glenn. The American ambassador rejected Fishman’s protest.

Soviet Jews seeking to relate to their religio-cultural roots developed various forms of Jewish identification. For years young Jews had been gathering in large numbers outside synagogues in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities during the high holy days, Simchat Torah, and Passover. In addition, there were seminars dealing with Jewish subjects, Hebrew lessons, and lectures on Jewish history and thought. While most of the participants in these activities were would-be emigrants and “refuseniks,” others took part who were simply interested in obtaining a Jewish education.
When the authorities in Vilno withdrew permission to open a mikvah, a group of Jewish women, including non-believers, organized a campaign in support of the effort.

**Antisemitism and Discrimination**

Antisemitism was endemic to Soviet society. While in theory Jews enjoyed the same rights as others, in reality they encountered discrimination and quotas in education and certain areas of employment. Soviet publications dealt with Jews in an increasingly hostile manner; negative Jewish stereotypes frequently surfaced in popular novels and movies.

In mid-1983 a Soviet scholar in Leningrad, Ivan Martynov, and his wife, Varvara Solovieva, wrote to the procurator general of the USSR, asking that a well-known antisemitic writer, Lev Korneev, be brought to justice for “destroying confidence in citizens of Jewish nationality.” Included in the letter of complaint were copies of Korneev’s writings, in which he asserted that Jews represented a fifth column in every country, and that they had only themselves to blame for both the tsarist pogroms and the Holocaust. In September, Martynov and his wife received an official reply, indicating that there was “no basis for criminal proceedings against Korneev.”

In April *Sovetskaia Kultura* carried an article by Boris Burkov in which he equated Zionism and Nazism. In July *Krasnaia Zvezda* assailed Israel’s “genocide” in Lebanon. In August *Trud* noted that “hate of humans is the essence of international Zionism.”

In response to growing criticism of Soviet antisemitism in the West European press, including Communist party newspapers in France and Italy, the authorities arranged for the publication of an open letter by 53 Jews that was carried by the Novosti Press Agency in Russian, Yiddish, and English. (It also appeared in *Sovetish Heimland.*) The letter denied the existence of antisemitism in the Soviet Union, claiming that assertions to the contrary were nothing more than anti-Soviet propaganda. Among the signers of the open letter were A. Bluger, provost of the Medical Institute in Riga, Latvia; A. Braunstein, B. Vainstein, S. Zivs, M. Kabachnik, I. Mints, and T. Oizerman—all members of the Academy of the USSR; generals Dragunskii, E. Dyskin, and B. Lifshits; and I. Ravich, vice-minister of communications of the USSR.

An established quota for Jews was maintained in the top Soviet institutions. There were only eight Jews among some 1,550 members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; two of the eight represented Birobidzhan, the Jewish autonomous region, leaving six for the remainder of the country. Among Jews in the Supreme Soviet were Veniamin Dymshits, deputy premier of the USSR; Iulii Khariton, member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences; and Iakov Plitman, head of a kolkhoz in the Ukraine. Among Jews in the Soviet of Nationalities were Lev Shapiro, head of the Communist party in Birobidzhan; Rachel Geler, a worker from Birobidzhan; Lev
Volodarskii, head of the Central Statistical Office of the USSR; Aleksandr Chakovskii, an editor of Literaturnaia Gazeta; and Meyer Katz, head of a kolkhoz in Belorusussia.

Quotas for Jews existed in universities, particularly those in the capitals of the various regions and other great cities. Applications for admission in the fields of mathematics, journalism, and foreign affairs were discouraged; in most instances, Jews were denied entry in these areas. Jewish students seeking candidate degrees (the European doctorate) faced nearly insurmountable barriers.

**Jewish Resistance**

Despite harsh measures, including lengthy sentences meted out to dissidents, Soviet Jews continued the struggle for emigration and national Jewish identity. When Zachar Zunshine of Riga was denied an exit visa, he, together with Tatiana Zunshine and Aleksandr Balter, traveled to Moscow to stage a public demonstration; Zachar was arrested for “anti-Soviet slander” and placed in a prison hospital. Rabbi Moshe Abramov of Samarkand, a former student at the Moscow yeshivah, was sentenced to three years in prison for participating in a Jewish studies program; also arrested were Yuri and Olga Medvedkov of Moscow and Nadezhda Fradkova of Leningrad. Another Leningrad Jew who was arrested was the well-known linguist and translator Mikhail Meilach. Lev Elbert of Kiev was sentenced to a year in prison for refusing to report to military duty.

Eleven “refuseniks” celebrating Israel Independence Day in a forest near Leningrad were seized by the police.

French Communist leader Georges Marchais reported in January that he had received a letter from Soviet party chief Andropov, assuring him that the health of Anatoly Shcharansky was satisfactory and that Shcharansky had ended his protest fast. Shcharansky confirmed these facts in a letter to his mother. Another well-known activist, Josif Begun, was sentenced to seven years in prison and five years in exile for anti-Soviet propaganda. Prior to his arrest Begun had been teaching Hebrew.

**Jewish Culture**

Sovetish Heimland, the Yiddish-language magazine of the Soviet Union of Writers, carefully followed the Communist party line on most matters. At the same time, it broadened the scope of its contents, devoting additional space to Jewish research, national questions, and even Hebrew literature. The magazine also continued to issue 12 small booklets annually, in an attempt to compensate for the lack of Yiddish books appearing under other auspices. New Yiddish books included Erdishe Vegn (“Earthly Ways”) by Hirsh Dobin; In Kraiz fun Lebn (“Circle of Life”) by Tevie Gen; Dos Gute Wort (“The Good Word”) by A. Katzev; In Unzere Teg (“Our Days”), an anthology of documentary pieces from Sovetish Heimland; and Iorn fun
Geviter ("Years of Bad Weather") by Motl Gruvman. Between 1948 and 1983 a total of 96 books in Yiddish were made available in the Soviet Union.

Novyi Mir, the Soviet literary magazine, published an important essay on Anatolii Rybakov, author of Heavy Sand; the essay stressed Rybakov's Jewish theme—the annihilation of the Jews by the Nazis in occupied Russia. A book on the Sobibor death camp by Mikhail Lev was issued in a Russian translation; it was heavily censored, however, to eliminate reference to the complicity of local peoples in Nazi crimes.

The authorities barred 49 books of Jewish content that were included in a shipment sent by American exhibitors to the fourth International Moscow Book Fair. The AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK and Cecil Roth's History of the Jews were among the volumes deemed unacceptable.

Research on Jewish subjects continued to expand. Sovetish Heimland published Leib Wilsker's article on Yehuda Halevi, providing references to Geniza materials contained in Moscow's Lenin Library and in the Leningrad State Library. In its new department on Jewish ethnography, the magazine carried Velvl Chernin's essay on the Krymchaks and their dialect. A new volume, Questions of the Culture of the Old Orient, published in Daugavpils, included five studies dealing with Jewish themes. Iurii Murzakhanov, a student in the history department at Cabardine-Balkarich State University, presented a paper on "The Question of the Ethnic Belonging of the Mountain Jews"; he also prepared a study focusing on "Family and the Family Life-Style of the Mountain Jews." The Academy of Sciences of Georgia continued its project of collecting Hebrew inscriptions from the Chufut-Kale Karaite cemetery in the Crimea; the project was directed by Nissan Bobalikashvili. The Leningrad Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism had a large Judaica collection that attracted interested scholars.

The Vilno Yiddish Folk Theater and the Kovno Yiddish Folk Theater presented special programs to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The only legitimate Yiddish theater in the USSR, the Birobidzhan Yiddish Musical Chamber Theater, directed by Iurii Sherling, offered a Soviet version of "Fiddler on the Roof." The Birobidzhan Theater Ensemble was a folk group directed by Ilia Lerner. The Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble, directed by Iakov Gubenko, presented "A Jewish Anecdot" by Aron Vergelis.

A number of Jewish composers created works with Jewish themes. Thus, Josif Bardanashvili's symphonic poem "The Fate" had a text taken from Ibn Ezra. Sergeii Berinski composed a cantata "The Stones of Treblinka." The Moscow Russian Musical Chamber Theater presented a new opera by Moiseii Veinberg, based on the text of Sholem Aleichem's play "Mazel Tov."

Paintings dealing with Jewish subjects were exhibited in a number of state museums. The state gallery in Orel, for example, displayed graphic works by the late Mendl Gorshman, including portraits of Yiddish writers and Jewish painters. An inset of works by Leonid Pasternak, father of poet Boris Pasternak, appeared in Sovetish Heimland.
After years of delay, a Russian-Yiddish dictionary—prepared by, among others, Eli Spivak, a writer murdered by Stalin in 1952—was scheduled for publication in 1984.

A number of state prizes went to Jews: Aleksandr Chakovskii and Georgii Fridlender in literature; Pavel Nirenberg, Oskar Khavin, and Evgenii Iashunsky in architecture; and Iulii Raizman and Mikhail Shatrov in films.

In commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the birth of the late Yiddish and Russian writer Emil Kazakevich, the Ministry of Communications of the USSR issued a postage stamp with his portrait.

**Birobidzhan**

The Soviet authorities were engaged in preparations for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Birobidzhan as the Jewish autonomous region. Some 10,000 Jews lived in the area, comprising about five per cent of the total population. The *Birobidzhaner Stern*, the only Yiddish newspaper published in the Soviet Union, continued to appear. There were also a Sholem Aleichem Library and a Yiddish radio station. Lev Shapiro headed the regional Communist party.

Despite some Jewish manifestations in Birobidzhan, it was clear that the small Jewish remnant there was rapidly losing its Jewish character.

**Holocaust**

While there was no official commemoration of the Holocaust, Jewish groups—sometimes aided by local officials—organized memorial events. In Vilno, which was part of Poland before World War II, there was a memorial gathering on the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. In many places, including Babi Yar in Kiev, individuals and small groups held private ceremonies.

**Personalia**

Iurii Levitan, celebrated Moscow radio announcer during World War II, died, aged 69. Mendel Lifshits, Yiddish writer, died, aged 76. Sidi Tal, Yiddish actress, died in August, aged 71; she had been awarded the title “Deserving Artist of the Ukrainian SSR.” Aleksandr Shulrichter, painter, died, aged 92; he had worked for Habima, the Hebrew theater in Moscow, during the 1920's. Mikhail Lifshits, member of the Academy of Sciences, died, aged 78.
Soviet Bloc Nations

Introduction

While the Soviet Union sought to maintain tight control over its satellite empire in 1983, a gradual process of differentiation was clearly taking place. Yugoslavia had long been outside the Soviet orbit; Rumania conducted an independent foreign policy; while Hungary allowed free-market elements in the economy. In Poland the government’s compromises with the Catholic church and its cautious policy with regard to the political opposition pointed in the direction of important changes in the structure of society.

Unlike Soviet Jewry, most of the East European Jewish communities had escaped isolation and were developing ties with Jews around the world. However, the isolation of the Bulgarian and Czechoslovakian Jewish communities remained quite pronounced.

Poland

Martial law in Poland was suspended on December 31, 1982, more than a year after General Wojciech Jaruzelski assumed power and imposed a dictatorship. In January new government-sanctioned unions began to function, replacing the banned Solidarity. At the same time, a law went into effect enabling the authorities to muster for work all able-bodied adults not employed or in school. The Jaruzelski regime dissolved the prestigious Writers Union, the hub of the Polish intelligentsia; it also dissolved the Association of Polish Journalists, replacing it with a government-sponsored union.

Lech Walesa continued to play an important role on the political scene, endorsing underground appeals for demonstrations protesting government policy. On May Day there were numerous unauthorized rallies by pro-Solidarity elements.

The Catholic church, while unhappy about street demonstrations, associated itself with demands for a full restoration of civilian rights. Pope John Paul II made a second pilgrimage to his native land in 1983, and met privately with Lech Walesa.

In mid-July the authorities began to release some political prisoners, making it clear that those who wished to go abroad could easily obtain exit visas. Late in the year, the government granted unconditional amnesty to a number of Solidarity leaders who gave themselves up. However, four members of the Workers’ Defense Committee—Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski, and Henryk Wujec—still faced a possible death penalty.
The government proceeded with a thorough purge of the administrative sector, dismissing some 200 mayors and 650 managers of state enterprises. Among those who lost their positions was General Mieczyslaw Moczar, one of the initiators of the anti-Jewish campaign of the late 1960's.

The Soviet leadership carefully monitored events in Poland, criticizing the Jaruzelski regime's tolerance of political opposition and street demonstrations. For its part, the Reagan administration took only limited steps to ease the economic sanctions that had been imposed on Poland after the establishment of martial law.

In December Walesa was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The small community of about 6,000 identified Jews continued to function in a fairly normal manner, despite the political turmoil in the country. In December 1982 the secular Jewish Cultural and Social Union was able to hold a countrywide plenary meeting involving representatives from Warsaw, Lublin, Bielsko-Biała, Lodz, Katowice, Walbrzych, Częstochowa, Gliwice, Szczecin, Sosnowiec, Wrocław, and Zary; government observers at the meeting were Wojciech Klimek of the Communist party and Stanislaw Demianuk of the ministry of the interior. The Jewish Cultural and Social Union decided to affiliate with the so-called Patriotic Movement of National Renewal, an officially sponsored forum for dialogue between the authorities and various elements of Polish society.

Due to poor health, Edward Reiber resigned as president of the Jewish Cultural and Social Union. Abraham Kwaterko, who celebrated his seventieth birthday in February, continued to serve as secretary and de facto leader of the organization. Kwaterko was also appointed chief editor of Folks-sztyme, replacing the deceased Shmuel Tenenblat.

There were no changes in the leadership of the Union of Religious Congregations; Moses Finkelstejn served as president, Czeslaw Jakubowicz as secretary, and Jerzy Kornacki as administrator.

The Jewish Cultural and Social Union and the Union of Religious Congregations developed a close working relationship. All relief work, including the distribution of funds provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, was carried out under the supervision of a special commission made up of representatives of the two organizations. The Jewish Cultural and Social Union and the Union of Religious Congregations also worked together to establish a new kosher kitchen in Katowice. Some 5,500 people were beneficiaries of relief aid.

The Jewish Cultural and Social Union resumed small-scale cultural activities in Warsaw and the provincial cities. Special events were organized by local clubs, including study evenings dealing with the life and work of Chaim Nachman Bialik, Artur Zygelboim, and Janusz Korczak. Material on Jewish subjects was available
on cassette tapes. The Jewish Historical Institute, directed by Mauricy Horn, continued its activities; volumes of Judaica were displayed at the Institute’s museum. A seminar devoted to Polish Jewish history was organized by the Polish Academy of Sciences. Professor Witold Tyloch added to his series of articles on the Hebrew language that had been appearing in Folks-sztyme.

A number of books of Jewish interest were published: Fun Ash Aroisgekumen (“Arisen from the Ashes”) by Daniel Katz; Dos Togbuch fun Adam Tcherniachov (“The Diary of Adam Tcherniachov”); a Polish-language version of the writings of Emmanuel Ringelblum; and Polish Jewry: History and Culture, edited by Marian Fuks, Zygmunt Hoffman, Mauricy Horn, and Jerzy Tomaszewski. Several works by Nobel Prize-winning Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer became available in Polish translation.

The State Yiddish Theater, directed by Szymon Szurmiej, performed before audiences that, for the most part, did not understand Yiddish. Special earphones were made available providing a translation into Polish.

An important event was the reopening of the restored Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw, which had been blown up by the Nazis in 1943. At the dedication ceremony, five Torah scrolls were carried into the sanctuary and “El Mole Rachamim” was chanted. Speakers at the event included Rumanian chief rabbi Moses Rosen, Rabbi Itshak Frenkel of Tel Aviv, Bishop Majdanski, and Poland’s minister of religious affairs Adam Lopatka.

The Polish government and an interested group of Orthodox rabbis from Israel, the United States, and other countries concluded an agreement to establish a permanent committee to care for the hundreds of abandoned Jewish cemeteries in Poland. In a related matter, the authorities turned over important pieces of Judaica, belonging to the pre-war Jewish community, to the Reform movement in the United States.

In connection with the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the Jewish Cultural and Social Union issued an invitation to Jews around the world to participate in a series of commemorative events in Poland. Among those who responded affirmatively, out of a sense of obligation to honor the memory of the martyrs and fighters of the ghetto, were Edgar Bronfman, chairman of the World Jewish Congress; Stefan Grayek, chairman of the World Federation of Jewish Fighters, Partisans, and Camp Inmates; Anshel Reiss, chairman of the World Federation of Polish Jews; and Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the Reform movement in the United States. The New York-based Jewish Labor Committee and Jewish Workmen’s Circle refused to participate, citing the current situation in Poland, as well as the Polish government’s anti-Jewish campaign of the late 1960’s. Another dissenter was Marek Edelman, the only surviving leader of the Jewish Fighting Organization in the ghetto, and a supporter of Solidarity; he called for a complete boycott of the various memorial activities.

In the end, hundreds of delegates from Israel and the Diaspora participated in ceremonies at the Warsaw ghetto monument and in the Warsaw opera house. There was a special religious service in the church of St. Augustin that was attended by
Cardinal Josef Glemp. Speakers from 20 countries took part in a symposium on "Nazi Murders in Poland and Europe."

Controversy erupted when a PLO representative placed a wreath at the Warsaw ghetto monument. Many Jewish delegates protested, and a number left for home. General Wlodzimierz Sokorski, a government spokesman, stated that "the PLO was not invited. Nevertheless, they laid a wreath. For this I express my deepest regrets."

Supporters of Solidarity held their own ceremony at the Warsaw ghetto monument. When Pope John Paul II visited Poland in June, he also laid a wreath there.

The Jewish Cultural and Social Union maintained ties with world Jewry through participation in the meetings of such groups as the World Jewish Congress, the World Congress for Yiddish, and the European Council for Jewish Community Service. Delegates to the World Jewish Congress gathering included Finkelsztejn, Kwaterko, and Mauricy Keiler.

Rumania

Rumania continued on its course of independent "national Communism." While rigid political control was maintained at home, the regime of President Nicolae Ceausescu strongly opposed Moscow's foreign policy. Rumania had diplomatic relations with the State of Israel and fostered close ties with the United States. In June the U.S. Congress extended for another year Rumania's "most favored" trade status. This decision came after Foreign Minister Stefan Andrei visited Washington and gave assurances that the so-called education tax on emigrants would be dropped. In September, U.S. vice-president George Bush visited Bucharest.

Jewish Community

The Jewish community of Rumania numbered around 30,000, with nearly half the total being over the age of 65. Jewish activities were coordinated by the Federation of Jewish Communities, headed by Rabbi Moses Rosen. Emil Sechter was general secretary of the Federation; Sami Edelstein was in charge of social work and medical facilities. Professor Chaim Reimer served as editor of the semi-monthly Revista Culturui Mosaic, published in Yiddish, Rumanian, and Hebrew. In addition to rabbinic material, the Revista carried information about Jewish life around the world.

Theodor Blumenfeld was president of the Bucharest Jewish community, which numbered around 11,000. Senior rabbis in Rumania included Ernest Neiman in Timisoara and Itschak Marilus in Bucharest; Rabbi Benzion Beniaminovich died, aged 95. The Federation encompassed 68 local communities, with 120 synagogues and 27 talmud torahs; some 15 synagogues had choirs. Rabbi Rosen indicated, however, that only a small percentage of Jews attended religious services and that Jewish school enrollment had declined.
Passover food supplies were readily available, and some 6,000 Jews participated in public sedorim. The Federation also made available kosher meat, as well as etrogim and lulovim for Sukkot. Following established custom, elaborate Hanukkah programs were staged throughout the country; the programs, presided over by Rabbi Rosen, benefitted from the participation of a number of guests from Israel. On Purim there was a special celebration in the Grand Synagogue in Bucharest that was attended by the Israeli ambassador.

As part of its welfare program, the Federation provided medical help to invalids and the elderly; it also operated a number of homes for the aged. Part of the Federation budget was covered by the state.

With the approval of the authorities, the Federation maintained close ties with international Jewish organizations and various Jewish communities abroad. Israeli visitors during the year included Shimon Peres, Efraim Katzir, Victor Shemtov, and Yitzhak Korn. Yitzhak Shamir, who at the time was Israel’s foreign minister, paid an official visit to Rumania in August. There was lively social and economic exchange with the Jewish state, and tourism was encouraged. In 1983, 305 Torah scrolls and some 9,000 rabbinic works were sent to Israel.

The Rumanian government supported an active secular Yiddish sector, which included Yiddish-language publications and the State Yiddish Theater. The state publishing house, Criterion, issued a periodical series, Bukaresther Shriftn ("Bucharest Writings"), under the editorship of Wolf Tambur, Haim Goldstein, and I. Karo.

There was no anti-Jewish discrimination in Rumania, with Jews being substantially represented in, among other areas, academic life. Speaking at a Communist party meeting in December 1982, President Ceausescu stressed the importance of combating antisemitism. Still, despite official condemnation, there were manifestations of hostility toward Jews. Corneliu Vadim Tudor published a volume of poetry replete with antisemitism. When Rabbi Rosen complained to President Ceausescu about the matter, the book was withdrawn from circulation.

On January 6, Rumanian Jews commemorated the forty-second anniversary of the Bucharest pogrom, which took the lives of 128 Jews.

Hungary

Janos Kadar, leader of the Hungarian Communist party, succeeded in maintaining a variant of “national Communism” that not only permitted free market elements, but also a general loosening of social controls. Profit incentives and the absence of bureaucratic interference led to a situation in which Hungarians had available abundant food and a broad variety of Western consumer goods. All in all, Hungary enjoyed a state of economic well-being unique in the Soviet satellite empire.

Party chief Kadar was careful not to take any steps in internal matters or foreign affairs that the Kremlin might construe as outright liberalization—this in fear of
Soviet retaliation. There was internal dissent—the so-called "democratic opposition"—but it was not yet a major phenomenon. Terence Kulin was dismissed as editor of Mozgo Vilag after the magazine came under fire for promoting unorthodox ideas. Sandor Csoori, an eminent poet, was forbidden to publish any new writings.

U.S. vice-president Bush visited Budapest and called for improved relations between the United States and Hungary.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population of Hungary stood at about 80,000, including Jews who were not involved in organized Jewish life. There was no Jewish emigration, and it was clear that Jews were generally satisfied with their lot in the country. Antisemitism was considered a criminal offense. Jews were integrated into the surrounding society and intermarriage was an accepted social fact. Those Jews who were interested in Jewish communal life took part in the activities sponsored by the Central Board of Jewish Communities, which included both Neolog (Conservative) and Orthodox trends. Interest in things Jewish was declining, particularly among the young, who were educated in state schools and worked in various state enterprises.

The Central Board coordinated efforts in some 70 communities. Budapest, the largest, had 29 synagogues staffed by rabbis and other religious functionaries. There was a beth din, a mikvah, and a burial society. There were 12 kosher butcher shops, as well as a slaughterhouse that supplied kosher meat to other countries of Eastern Europe. A new kosher kitchen provided 1,000 meals daily. There were also two homes for the aged and a 200-bed hospital. A bakery for matzot assured an adequate supply before Passover. Imre Heber, president of the Central Board, was awarded a state medal for his activities on behalf of the Jewish community. Laszlo Slago was chief rabbi.

There was a Jewish gymnasium and an elementary yeshivah in Budapest. Budapest's neological Rabbinical Seminary continued its training program, supplying rabbis not only to Hungary, but to other countries of the Soviet bloc as well. The Seminary's library held more than 250,000 volumes, some quite rare. The school was headed by Aleksander Scheiber, a rabbi and well-known Judaica scholar. On occasion, rabbinical students visited provincial communities, where they conducted religious services.

The Central Board administered a Jewish research program that was unique in Eastern Europe. Aspects of the program included a continuation of the encyclopedic Monumenta Hungariae Judaica and the compilation of materials on the Holocaust. The Jewish Museum, which contained a rich collection, was undergoing repairs. Plans were also being made to restore the 125-year-old Dohany Synagogue in Budapest, with the help of a matching grant provided by the Hungarian government.
The Central Board organized a three-day observance of the fortieth anniversary of the Nazi massacre of Hungarian Jews. Ceremonies took place at the Kosma Utca cemetery in the presence of government officials and delegations from abroad, including Israel and the United States. The Soviet participants were Boris Gram and Arkadii Levitan, chairmen, respectively, of the Moscow and Odessa synagogues.

With the approval of the authorities, the Hungarian Jewish community maintained close ties with Jewish organizations abroad. The Central Board's budget was covered in part by the state, which also paid the salaries of religious personnel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee participated in the costs of social programs; the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, based in New York, provided a grant in the cultural field.

**Yugoslavia**

Conflicting nationalisms constituted a major problem in Yugoslavia, a country containing many ethnic groups and four major religions. While the various groups were attempting to live in peace, traditional suspicions remained, e.g., Catholic Croats vs. Greek Orthodox Serbs. Adding to the unrest was Albanian propaganda directed to the Albanian population in Yugoslavia's Kosovo province. Intellectual dissent in Yugoslavia centered around the universities in Belgrade and Zagreb, but was hindered by a state monopoly of the printed word.

Yugoslavia's "self-management" principle called for workers to participate directly in the administration of political and economic affairs. The current economic program emphasized austerity, efficiency, and self-reliance; 85 per cent of all farmland was in private hands. Despite many difficulties, the Yugoslav leadership continued to implement a gradual decentralization of the power structure. About ten per cent of the population held membership in the Communist party.


**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

There were about 6,000 Jews in Yugoslavia; in the absence of emigration, the community was stable. Jewish activities were coordinated by the secular Federation of Jewish Communities, which had a special commission to deal with issues of interest to religious Jews. It was clear that religious life was dwindling. In some places synagogues had ceased to function, while in others Sabbath and holiday services were conducted exclusively by older people. Intermarriage was widespread.

Religious services on the high holy days and Sukkot were conducted in Belgrade by Rabbi Cadik Danon and in the old synagogue in Sarajevo by Rabbi Avram Haj of Jerusalem. Services were also held in, among other places, Novi Sad, Rijeka, Osijek, and the Lavoslav Svarc Home for the Aged in Zagreb. *Etrogim* and *lulavim*
were received from abroad; *matzot* were distributed before Passover. The Federation continued to issue an annual *luach*, which included memorial prayers transliterated in Serbo-Croatian.

Laroslav Kadelburg was the veteran president of the Federation. Rabbi Danon supervised religious activities.

Despite declining interest on the part of younger people, the Federation maintained a broad array of cultural and social programs. There were youth clubs, summer camps, adult education courses, and Hebrew classes. On occasion the Federation used advisors and instructors from abroad, including special experts from Israel. Some 320 young people attended the Federation summer camp in Pirovac; a lecturer at the camp was Oded Eldad of the European Council for Jewish Community Service. The popular Baruh Brothers Choir was invited to participate in the International Festival of Choirs in Barcelona, Spain.

The Federation maintained a varied research and publication program. It issued *Zbornik*, a periodical; *Jevrejski Pregled*, a news magazine; *Kadima*, a youth journal; as well as occasional books. A project was under way to collect archival material from around the country and establish a central archive in Belgrade. The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture funded the Federation’s cultural activities, while the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee helped cover the costs of social programs.

David Albahari, a young writer from Belgrade who was active in Jewish affairs, was awarded the coveted Andric Prize for 1983.

While Yugoslavia and Israel did not have diplomatic relations, the Federation maintained close ties with the Jewish state. Federation representatives participated in meetings in Israel, and Israeli guests held discussions with Federation officials in Belgrade. The Federation was affiliated with the World Jewish Congress and the European Council for Jewish Community Service.

Antisemitic material occasionally surfaced in the controlled press. Thus, *Illustrovana Politica* carried excerpts from Mihailo Popovski’s *The Mysterious World of Freemasons*, in which the author quoted from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Federation, in line with its activist policy, issued a strong protest.

Leon Shapiro