The past year in Latin America witnessed the further buttressing of the “Good Neighbor policy,” that has been so sedulously fostered by the proponents of Pan-American unity. This manifested itself not merely in the official disapproval and banning of Axis propaganda and influence within domestic boundaries, but also in the international area where important events took place. Mere declarations of sympathy with the aims of the United Nations gave way to concrete actions.

Thus on August 23, 1942, the anti-Hitler front was strengthened with Brazil’s formal declaration of war on Germany and Italy, following the sinking of five Brazilian ships. On April 7, 1943, the Bolivian Cabinet and President Enrique Penaranda promulgated a decree putting Bolivia into the war as a partner of the United Nations.

Equally important, though not as dramatic as these declarations of war, was the successful weaning away of Chile from her long standing policy of neutrality, culminating, on January 20, in Chile’s rupture of diplomatic and commercial relations with the Axis. This move leaves Argentina the sole proponent of narrow insularity since it is the only nation in the Western Hemisphere still maintaining normal relations with Germany, Italy and Japan.

Domestically, Axis followers and their propaganda did not fare too well in most South American countries where measures were instituted to curb all activity that might be construed as harmful to both national preservation and the cause of the United Nations. Argentina in this respect proved to be a favorite stamping ground for anti-democratic agitators.

Well on its way to becoming a new cause célèbre was the Waldo Frank incident which occurred in August 1942. The well-known American Jewish writer had been declared persona non grata by the Argentine Government on August 1,
and the following day he was set upon by six assailants, one of whom was identified as a member of the pro-Fascist Nationalist Youth Alliance. It was generally felt in many circles that the attack was invited by the government's action. A similar attack on May 21, 1943, was made on Julius Strupp, a naturalized American citizen, who engaged actively in helping German Jewish refugees, and has been known for his outspoken hostility against Nazism.

Most upsetting to Argentine officials was the address made by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles on October 8, 1942, in which he charged that the Argentine Government's benevolence toward the Nazis permitted the operation of a large spy network. As if in defiant answer to Welles and as partial corroboration came, only four days later, a pro-Axis and anti-United States demonstration on the part of the Nationalist Youth Alliance at an enormous mass meeting. The concern of the United States with Nazi activities in Argentina was further evidenced when U. S. Ambassador Norman Armour (on November 3, 4, and 10) delivered to the Argentine Government three confidential memoranda from Washington on Nazi activities in Argentina; this action led to the roundup of alleged Nazi agents who were, however, later released. These memoranda were not entirely ignored, for the Argentine Government limited the length of code messages that Axis representatives might wireless daily to their respective governments.

The presence and official toleration of pro-Axis activities were naturally accompanied by their anti-democratic ally, anti-Semitism. On August 25, not long after the Waldo Frank affaire, three armed men invaded the Jewish Cultural Association headquarters, wounded three members, overpowered the woman caretaker and made off with the records and membership files.

The May 1943 issue of Clarinada (Bugle Call), the violently anti-Jewish, anti-American and pro-Nazi Argentine magazine, reveals that it is again receiving support from the government through the advertisements of several government controlled national and municipal banks. This number contains vicious anti-Jewish articles, editorials and cartoons.
It had been noticed, too, that Henry Ford's *The International Jew* was apparently enjoying increased popularity in Buenos Aires. It was common to see persons with a copy of Ford's book in one hand and *El Pampero*, the pro-Axis newspaper, in the other.

In striking contrast to the liberality displayed toward the circulation of *The International Jew*, was the banning of the anti-Nazi book *Campo Minado*, a 150-page study of Nazi infiltration into Argentine, by Adolfo Lanus of the staff of *La Prensa*, the liberal Buenos Aires newspaper.

The extent of Axis propaganda in Argentina may best be deduced from a survey conducted by the Overseas News Agency which revealed that 46 pro-Nazi newspapers subsidized by German or other Axis diplomatic missions, are being printed in foreign languages in Argentina.

There are, however, several items that may be recorded on the right side of the Argentine ledger. On September 28, 1942, the Chamber of Deputies approved a motion calling upon the government to break relations immediately with Germany, Italy and Japan. The opposition of the administration under President Ramon Castillo prevented the motion from gaining any further headway. A decree was issued by the Minister of Interior, September 13, 1942, which ordered the immediate dissolution of the Federation of German Welfare and Cultural Clubs, under cover of which the German National Socialist party was operating in Argentina. As the climax to six weeks of student disorders provoked by pro-Axis elements, the board of trustees of the University of Buenos Aires on January 29, 1943, ordered the dismissal of all pro-Axis faculty members to purge the universities of anti-democratic elements.

The anti-immigration sentiment which has been prevalent throughout Latin America the past few years, still held sway during the past year except for minor humanitarian gestures on the part of several governments.

Most significant was the permission given by the Argentine Government to admit one thousand refugee children from France up to the age of 14 for the year 1943. This move
is a break with the past attitude of the government toward Jewish immigration. Exit permits have however not been obtainable, for the French authorities acting under German pressure, have refused to permit the children to leave the country. Somewhat encouraging in this connection were the remarks of Senator Dr. Diego M. Arguelli at the opening of a new cooperative in the Baron de Hirsch settlement near Buenos Aires. He said among other things: "The Jewish colonists' achievements are the best arguments for those who have always demanded that our territories be opened to selected foreign immigration."

A further slight breach in the immigration barriers in Latin America was the permission given by Mexico, Ecuador, and Paraguay for admission of 500, 200, and 100 Jewish refugee children, respectively. The HIAS-ICA Emigration Association reported, too, that the President of Chile promised local Jewish organizations that his government would admit refugee children as well as a number of refugee intellectuals. It was also revealed by Rodolfo Rojas, the Venezuelan Minister of Agriculture, that a large-scale post-war immigration program is being planned by the Venezuelan Government through its Institute of Immigration and Colonization. He significantly pointed out that the discouragement of immigration by previous governments had left Venezuela greatly underpopulated.

That anti-Semitism in Bolivia, which had been somewhat dormant since the failure of the Nazi Putsch in July 1941, was still prevalent, became evident when on September 22, 1942, the Chamber of Deputies, by a vote of 41 to 24, adopted a law banning further immigration into Bolivia of "Negroes, Mongols and Jews." The law would have had little effect on Jews, because, since 1940, very few Jews, unable to secure individual permission, have been admitted. But the debate on the measure was an occasion for anti-Jewish attacks by clerical representatives and by Deputy D. Silles who quoted The International Jew and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The Bolivian liberal newspapers La Razon, Ultima Hora and La Noce sharply protested against the measure, citing some of the benefits which have accrued to Bolivia in partic-
ular, and to the world at large from Jews. The measure was disavowed by the Administration, and was not approved by the Senate. As further evidence of its repudiation of such discriminatory legislation the Bolivian Government announced, March 10, 1943, that it had instructed its consulates in Europe to grant immigration visas to one hundred refugee Jewish children.

The debate on the exclusion bill, however, encouraged anti-Jewish agitators who circulated leaflets stating that there are "30,000 Jews in Bolivia who are taking everything from us and they will increase in a few years and drive us out of the country." Nazi agents and supporters of the Spanish Falange also made political capital of the strikes in the tin mines of Bolivia. Disaffected employees were easy prey to the preachments of Axis propagandists who attributed the ills of the workers to Jewish mine operators. To combat this growing anti-Semitism, an exhibition displaying what Jews have achieved in Bolivia in the short time they have been in the country, was being projected by HICEM (HIAS-ICA Emigration Association) under the supervision of Mauricio Hochschild, the Jewish industrialist.

The subject of immigration provided a springboard for anti-Semitic utterances also in the Mexican Congress on October 6, 1942. Deputy Felix Diaz Escobar introduced a bill to the effect that Jewish refugees from Germany and Italy should not be subject to the same restrictions as non-Jewish Germans and Italians. Attacks against the Jews were thereupon made by the Deputies Zincunegui Tercero, and Marquez Ricona who made references to "machinations of international Jewry" and "Jewish exploiters." An illiberal attitude toward aliens was displayed by the Federation of the Mexican Farmers, affiliated with the Party of the Mexican Revolution, at its annual congress in April 1943. The government was urged to be very strict with aliens because, "almost all of them came in under false pretenses, and did not engage in work as they had promised; they have all become merchants and gangsters."

An accusation of a similar nature led the Chilean Government to issue a decree in February 1943, ordering thirty-five
hundred refugees to move, within sixty days, from urban to agricultural districts. It was contended that the Jews had promised to settle in the sparsely populated southern regions of Chile as agricultural workers but had instead settled in Santiago and established themselves in small shops and industries. The harshness of the decree was later relaxed when a new decree was issued giving the Ministry of the Interior power to decide each individual’s case. Special attention was to be paid to those individuals whose removal from Santiago would be harmful to the interests of Chile because they had established new industries producing commodities formerly imported.

Jewish refugees in Brazil were elated to learn that the law enacted on March 11, 1942, assessing nationals of the Axis powers for damages caused to Brazilian property by acts of aggression on the part of the mother country, would not be applied to them. Jewish refugees in Colombia and Ecuador were not so fortunate. Following the sinking of a Colombian vessel on June 26, 1942, by an Axis submarine, severe measures were taken against German, Italian and Japanese nationals, from the effect of which Jewish refugees were not excepted. All persons of German, Italian and Japanese nationalities were asked to leave the regions and cities bordering the sea coasts as well as other parts of Colombia. About a thousand Jewish refugees were affected by the order, which allowed them five days to choose new residences. At the same time, the Minister of Finance and Public Credit announced a decree under which all Axis nationals lost the liberty of disposing of their bank accounts, title to securities, and of receiving payments in their favor. Somewhat earlier, all bank accounts of the same nationals in Ecuador were frozen. Jewish refugees were at first included in this order, but following representations to the government, their accounts were “unfrozen” in a few days.

A Survey of the activities of the Jewish communities in Latin America in the past year reveals their sympathetic preoccupation with the fate of their fellow Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. In response to the proclamation of a
world-wide "Day of Fasting and Prayer" on August 12, 1942, by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, the Jews of Argentine, Brazil and Mexico attended special synagogue services. On December 2, 1942, the Jews of Latin America, in concert with the Jews of the United States, held mass demonstrations of protest against the massacre of Jews in occupied Europe.

These manifestations of humanitarian sentiments were supplemented by more concrete contributions. The Jewish community of Argentina excelled in its efforts on behalf of the United Nations. More than $100,000 were contributed by Argentine Jews to the British War Relief according to the annual report by the Council of the Jewish Committees to Aid England, headed by Simon Mirelman. Grants were also made to the Central Yugoslav Committee in Argentina, and to the Fighting French. The Jewish Committee for Aid to Russia, in Montevideo, raised $2,000 for Russian War Relief. Considerable effort was also expended on behalf of Palestine. According to Leib Jaffe, director of the Keren Hayesod in Jerusalem, more than a quarter of a million dollars was contributed by the Jews in the several Latin American countries he visited. This sum greatly surpassed the contributions of previous years. Intensified campaigns in most Latin American countries for other Zionist funds were likewise reported in the local Jewish press.

Putting in a rather justified claim for its share of attention among the Jewish institutions in the past year was the Yiddish press. Of great moment among Argentina's Jews was the celebration on January 1, 1943, of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Yiddish newspaper, Die Presse. A special anniversary number appeared, to which liberal newspapers of Buenos Aires sent congratulatory messages. Der Weg, a Yiddish newspaper published in Mexico City, participated in a book exhibition held in April. Thousands of Mexicans, it is reported, gazed with wonderment at the Yiddish papers that were exhibited, and were particularly impressed by the Yiddish typewriter. Coming in for more considered attention was the display of the Spanish edition of Heinrich Graetz's History of the Jews. Just as Der Weg reflected credit upon the
Jewish community in Mexico, so did the *Volksblatt* add to the status of the Jews of Montevideo, Uruguay. On March 7, 1943, A. Schwartz and M. Orzuchi, publisher and editor, respectively, of this Yiddish paper, were invited to a reception given by Jose Serrata, the foreign minister, in honor of the incoming administration. This invitation was interpreted as a manifestation of the government's sympathy and friendliness to the Jews of the country. The action was deemed particularly significant because, only a year earlier, the Yiddish press was included in an order banning the publication of foreign-language newspapers.

That Jewish communal life in Latin America is developing along wholesome lines is indicated by reports of activities published in the Jewish press, both Yiddish and Spanish. Established organizations flourish, and new ones frequently appear. Thus we read that in Montevideo, a branch of the ultra-orthodox Agudath Israel was organized within the past year, and in Cuba the first ORT school was opened in April, 1943. A more comprehensive knowledge of Jewish communal organization in Argentina will soon be available with the completion of a scientific study being made by S. Shustervitch of the Yiddish Scientific Institute of Argentina. The latter organization has also been quite active in Montevideo where it is assembling archival materials and documents concerning the Jewish community in Uruguay. To facilitate this important work, Moses Milies has given the Yiddish Scientific Institute a library which he has been gathering for the past twenty-five years.

It is possible to conclude from this telescoping of activities of and affecting Jews in Latin America, that the Jewish communities are very much alive and sensitive to their duties and tasks. In the postwar world, the existence of such healthy Jewish organisms should prove of considerable service in the solution of the many problems which will face all Jews.