PART TWO

Review of the Year
IT IS RATHER VENTURESOME to undertake a brief historic appraisal of a year just passed while the historic perspective is still lacking. No doubt many events which appear extremely important today will be minimized by future historians, and many obscure happenings to which we, the contemporaries, pay little heed, may well prove in the long run of vital significance. And yet such an appraisal itself may not be devoid of value, inasmuch as it points up the thinking of a generation on its own problems.

The year 5707 was filled with dramatic developments in the political sphere. The Palestine situation, in particular, has focused the world’s attention. The spread or contraction of anti-Semitic movements has also been a matter of deep concern to the Jewish community and liberal forces everywhere. The peace treaties concluded with several Axis nations, preliminary discussions on the future of Germany and Austria, and deliberations of various United Nations bodies concerning the implementation of the Charter provisions for human rights were other landmarks in the year’s political evolution which were likely permanently to affect the destinies of the Jewish people.

The Palestine Problem

The most significant dénouements in the Palestinian drama have been the progressive deterioration in British-Zionist relations and the ensuing submission of the whole problem of the Palestine Mandate to the United Nations. The Mandatory Power long refused to budge from the policy laid down by the White Paper of 1939 and effectively sabotaged the recommendations of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry. Under the combined pressure of world opinion and President Truman, however, the British Government succes-
sively devised the so-called Morrison-Grady federalization plan and Foreign Secretary Bevin's cantonization plan. The latter plan marked not only a considerable relaxation of Britain's intransigence, but also extended to the Jewish leaders the bait of admission of 100,000 immigrants every two years during an experimental five-year period. The Jewish Agency and even non-Zionist Jewish bodies felt, nevertheless, that, apart from representing a new phase in the British Government's delaying tactics, these plans would impose unbearable shackles on the permanent growth of the Jewish National Home and seriously impede large-scale immigration. In fact, the opening of Palestine's gates to the entry of countless thousands of Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution was considered an urgent humanitarian necessity by Jews and liberal non-Jews alike. That is why the two London conferences of September 1946 and January-February 1947 were attended only by Arab delegates but were boycotted by the Jewish Agency. Long at loggerheads with the Agency, the British Government hoped to attract to these conferences representatives of other Jewish organizations. But this attempt at dividing the Jewish people and discrediting the Agency failed utterly.

The British Government finally decided to submit the Palestine problem to the "nations of the world in council," to use an old Herzlian phrase. Although the risk of wholly adverse decisions was mitigated by the British Commonwealth's great influence in the United Nations and a possible ultimate recourse to a British veto in the Security Council, governmental spokesmen informed Parliament that Britain would not necessarily be bound by the United Nations' ruling. To offset British fears, real or pretended, at having to enforce a United Nations decision, the UN may have to consider the establishment of an international trusteeship, the development of a new executive machinery to replace the mandatory administration and the establishment of an international police force to impose its will upon all recalcitrant parties. It is small wonder that the UN found this task thrust upon it rather embarrassing. With the existing sharp conflicts between member states and, especially, the overshadowing division between the Soviets and the Anglo-American alliance,
which recently induced the Soviet Union to use the desperate expedient of a veto seven times in one week, the United Nations organization itself was fighting a bitter struggle for survival. It certainly had to proceed gingerly in asserting its authority against any major power and, especially, one of the Big Three.

Nevertheless, the UN Secretariat and Assembly courageously and with considerable dispatch tackled the British proposal. To avoid the usual delays between the annual meetings of the Assembly, a special session was convoked for April-May 1947. Sensing the unfairness of having the Arab case presented by several member states while the Jewish people, devoid of state sovereignty, could not be formally represented, the Assembly secured a hearing for the Jewish Agency before its Political Commission which, composed of delegates of all member nations, was but nominally different from the Assembly itself. This was a truly historic occasion. Not only was a representative Jewish body accorded a sort of semi-sovereign status, but for the first time in history did organized humanity convene in a special two-week session to survey the problems of the National Home in relation to the general status of world Jewry. This session, to be sure, gave Arab delegates the opportunity to vent their extreme nationalist opposition to any further Jewish immigration and to indulge in occasional overt or implied Jew-baiting. But it also enabled many forward-looking statesmen to voice their genuine humanitarian concern for the fate of uprooted millions and their realization of the Assembly's own responsibility for the new moral order in international affairs. The address delivered at its conclusion by Andrei Gromyko, the chief Russian delegate, created a major sensation. By recognizing the right of the Jewish people in Palestine and suggesting the establishment of a bi-national state or, if that were impossible, partition into Arab and Jewish states, this speech marked, despite its obvious tactical implications, a basic departure from the traditionally anti-Zionist Soviet policy.

The Special Committee appointed by the Assembly to prepare a comprehensive report for its annual meeting in September had many strengths and weaknesses. It was quite reasonable to entrust the report to representatives of smaller,
more or less neutral states. If the great powers were represented on this Committee, as they are on most other committees of the United Nations and as was indeed suggested by the Soviet delegate, Britain would have had to act, in the words of its chief spokesman, in the double capacity of judge and party. More significantly, the Committee would have been encumbered by all the basic antagonisms and imperialist clashes which have marred the recent negotiations of the Big Three and so seriously interfered with the general progress of the United Nations. On the other hand, by entrusting the task to representatives of lesser powers, the Assembly has, from the outset, given their deliberations a certain appearance of uncertainty and made their anticipated report far more tentative in its effects than it might otherwise have been. At this writing the Committee report has just been submitted to the UN Secretariat and the world is anxiously awaiting the forthcoming deliberations at the Assembly’s regular September session.

**British-Zionist Conflict**

In the meantime the British-Zionist conflict—some extremists began calling it an Anglo-Jewish war—has led to increasingly harsh anti-Zionist measures on the part of the British administration and, in turn, to increasing “terrorism” on the part of some Palestine extremists. The Palestine administration cast aside all restraints in dealing with individual “terrorists” when apprehended (for the first time in years it executed such idealistic political “criminals” as Dov Gruner, despite world-wide Jewish and non-Jewish pleas for mercy), in retaliating against the Jewish Agency and the Jewish community at large, and in violently combatting the so-called illegal Jewish immigration. The blowing up of the King David Hotel, the Acre Prison break and, more recently, the execution of two British sergeants by an underground extremist court; the imprisonment of four members of the Jewish Agency, an endless series of searches, forcible evictions of landlords and tenants, curfews and martial law enactments, the establishment of large prison-like camps on Cyprus and, most recently, the tragedy of the *Exodus*—have all highlighted the untenable political situation in the country.
The reaction of the Jewish public at large to these events revealed differences of opinion in regard to both ultimate aims and immediate tactical approaches. Such differences of opinion came very strongly to the fore even in the deliberations of the historic Zionist Congress which met in Basle after a war-imposed break of seven years. But almost all the numerous Jewish factions, in and outside the Zionist movement, agreed wholeheartedly that the 100,000 Displaced Persons should gain immediate admission to Palestine, as recommended by the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry, to be followed by further waves of Jewish migrants whose elemental drive toward the land of their forefathers has shown few signs of weakening in the face of protracted delays and frequent disappointments. Since, in view of Arab intransigence, bi-nationalism held out little promise of a workable solution, more and more Jews, even among the non-Zionists, became convinced that the creation of some sort of Jewish state in Palestine had become a historic necessity.

Anti-Semitism

One of the by-products of the British-Zionist conflict was an increase in anti-Jewish feeling in the United Kingdom and other parts of the British Empire. The tension created by the news from Palestine about "terrorist" attacks on British soldiers and civilians played into the hands of Fascist groups, which had practically lost their following during Britain's hour of trial. Apart from Bevin's verbal indiscretions, however, the British and Dominion Governments have tried to suppress the occasional local outbursts of anti-Jewish feeling. Enlightened exponents of public opinion, too, and the leadership of British and Dominion churches (with minor exceptions) have been more keenly aware than ever before of the dangerous implications of anti-Semitism for their own world outlook. The resolutions adopted by the International Conference of Jews and Christians which met in Oxford in 1946, and the programs devised by the resuscitated World Council of Churches, were some of the numerous manifestations of the concerted will of enlightened Christian leadership to prevent the spread of racial and religious prejudice.
Keen observers have indeed noted a marked decline in overt anti-Semitic propaganda in the United States and other lands. According to a well-informed Jewish leader, it no longer pays to be a professional anti-Semite in America. Both the numerical strength and readiness to financial sacrifice of the following of such well-known rabblerousers as Gerald L. K. Smith have greatly dwindled. Some Jew-baiting periodicals have suspended publication; others have sustained serious reverses in both circulation and effectiveness. Acts of vandalism in synagogues and other Jewish institutions have diminished in frequency and intensity. At the same time the public at large has become growingly aware of the need of both short- and long-range programs to combat this menace to democratic society. Several states and cities in the United States passed laws prohibiting discrimination in employment. Measures designed to outlaw discrimination in public resorts and restrictive real estate covenants, as well as extend protection to groups by allowing them to sue for group libel without unduly curtailing freedom of expression, also were widely debated. Realizing the limited efficacy of legislation alone, educators, acting in unison with political and ecclesiastical leaders, initiated a variety of educational programs intended to combat prejudice among the masses and particularly among school children during their formative age. Variations of the Springfield Plan were adopted in many cities all over the country, textbooks were revised with a view toward eliminating objectionable passages and Brotherhood Week was widely and solemnly observed. Scholarly research into the psychological, historical and sociological factors promoting anti-Semitism has penetrated somewhat more deeply into its basic causes and thereby begun opening new vistas on effective counteraction. As against these solid gains, the partial revival of the Ku Klux Klan and the much-publicized agitation of the Columbians were merely warnings against excessive complacency. Despite recurrent manifestations of the survival of anti-Jewish feeling in most countries overrun by Hitler (some informed observers spoke even of a certain post-war recrudescence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union which had long pioneered in outlawing it), it is quite possible, though it can never be statistically ascertained, that, on the balance sheet, world
anti-Semitism has lost ground during the year. But the crucial test might come only if and when the present wave of prosperity and full employment, especially in the United States, were to give way to another world-wide depression.

**Peace Treaties**

While the Jews contributed greatly to the struggle against anti-Semitism, the main advances were made by organizations and individuals representing progressive groups in the non-Jewish world. Otherwise the political weakness of the Jewish people, which had just emerged from the greatest tragedy of ages, came clearly to the fore on many occasions. It was most conspicuous during the peace conferences which led to the conclusion of peace treaties with Rumania, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria and Finland. Although achieving an unprecedented degree of mutual forbearance and collaboration, the representatives of the various Jewish organizations secured but few realistic concessions. Their relative failure, which so sharply contrasted with the spectacular achievements of the far more divided Jewish delegations at the Peace Conferences of 1918–1919, was not due to any lack of well-thought-out programs, or skillful negotiators. It resulted from the simple circumstance that in the harsh game of power politics which characterized most of these proceedings, the feeble voice of Jewry could hardly make itself heard over the din of controversy. Central European Jewry was in shambles. Russian Jewry, the second largest in the world, exerted no influence, direct or indirect, on these negotiations. American and West European Jewish leadership, on the other hand, still living under the impact of the Nazi nightmare, concentrated its best efforts on the solution of the Palestine problem and the securing of some fundamental human rights for each individual.

Owing to the peculiar European situation, the insistence of many countries on extreme national homogeneity which they sharply demonstrated by expelling their German and other unwanted minorities, the deepening crisis between East and West, and the new approaches initiated by the Charter of the United Nations, the minority rights, that much-heralded achievement of the last Peace Conference, were hardly men-
tioned at all in the deliberations of 1946–47. The new peace treaties with the five Axis states provide for certain safeguards for equality of all citizens and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, language or nationality. But at their best these provisions accentuated the general retrogression from what some of the same countries had signed on the dotted line back in 1919.

Unlike their predecessors of the last generation, moreover, the European Jews now faced perplexing problems of restitution of property and rudimentary economic rehabilitation of thousands of Jewish communities which had been ruined by the sharply discriminatory Nazi and Nazi-modelled legislations. Although some of the peace treaties included safeguards for such restitution and many Continental members of the victorious alliance enacted restitution laws of their own, the process of restoration was painfully slow, and there is little expectation that the Jews will ever regain more than a tiny fraction of their losses. It is estimated, for example, that the value of all property held by German Jewry at the end of 1932, at the then prevailing depression prices, approximated ten billion marks, or some 2,500,000,000 dollars at the old gold standard. To expect the ultimate recovery of even ten per cent of that amount, notwithstanding the present depreciated purchasing power of the dollar, would seem utterly unrealistic. Apart from the resistance of the new owners, the reluctance of governments, in part backed only by determined minorities, to enforce such unpopular decisions, and their general fear that by sponsoring pro-Jewish measures they would play into the hands of their reactionary opponents, deter even intrinsically liberal regimes from attempting to secure justice for Jewish claims. In Eastern Europe there are further complications arising from the general Leftist opposition to private ownership, the enormous difficulty of rebuilding the shattered national economies and the overwhelming need of reparations on the part of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, some little progress has been made in this direction during the past year. Further progress may be expected, especially if the anticipated Restitution Law should be enacted by the bizonal Anglo-American administration of western Germany before the
conclusion of a formal peace treaty, which has run up against formidable obstacles.

Equally slow was the advance toward the world-wide adoption of safeguards for human rights. The Commission on Human Rights appointed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations has, through a sub-committee, made some progress in drafting an International Bill of Rights. But the general deterioration in international relations counteracted whatever readiness some nations might previously have displayed to allow the curtailment of their national sovereignty. It seems too rash to expect, therefore, that out of the present deliberations will emerge an effective and enforceable compromise between the sovereign control of every state over its domestic affairs and the protection by a supranational body of certain minimum rights of each individual and group. The earlier hopes cherished by Jewish leadership (particularly the American Jewish Committee) which at San Francisco, had proved so effective in securing the inclusion of provisions for human rights in the United Nations Charter, must necessarily be toned down now in the prevailing inclement atmosphere of national and imperial conflicts.

**Biological Recovery**

These dramatic events on the political scene have distracted the Jewish people's attention from other, equally fundamental factors of their existence. Much has happened in the biological, socio-economic, communal and cultural spheres which, though less spectacular, may in the long run prove of even greater significance. As a rule not underscored by extraordinary events or incidents, these developments are not always easily datable. One year is normally but a tiny link in a very long chain of evolution.

Biologically, the Jewish people seems to have reversed its long-range pre-war trend towards the retardation of growth and ultimate decline of its population. In the 1930's, year after year, statistical computations, though beset by great uncertainties in regard to the large Jewish communities in the United States, Latin America, parts of the British Empire,
and elsewhere, unmistakably showed an ever-diminishing surplus of births over deaths. All the available evidence pointed to the fact that American Jewry, for example, had already become stationary and was on the road to slow natural diminution, only partially mitigated by continued immigration of Jews from other lands. This biological retardation was, of course, deeply aggravated by the mass murder of European Jewry during the war, which caused the decline of the world Jewish population from some 17,000,000 in 1939 to less than 12,000,000 at the end of 1945.

In 1946-47, however, there undoubtedly was a substantial excess of Jewish natality over mortality, although detailed figures are available only for a few areas of Jewish settlement. In Palestine the Jewish birthrate, stimulated by the people’s conviction that this was a type of “internal migration” which no White Paper could outlaw, may have lagged behind the enormous natality of the Arab population, but was nonetheless unusually large for a modern, emancipated Jewish community. In the United States, too, the Jews, paralleling the trends in the general population, seem to have had a far greater ratio of both marriages and births than in the last pre-war years. Even European Jewry has begun retrieving its biological strength. The displaced-persons camps, in particular, have witnessed an astounding acceleration of Jewish population growth. The fact that the 139,000 Jews living in German assembly centers on February 1, 1947 included 42,041 women aged 18 to 44 and, more significantly, 6,600 infants under one year of age, revealed a reproductive power unparalleled since the heyday of the ghetto community. Our information about the Soviet Union is fragmentary (even the Jewish data assembled during the census of 1939 have thus far been but partially analyzed), but there is little room for doubt that the Jews, too, have participated to some extent in the large population increase of the country as a whole, which had been greatly encouraged by the government.

The political and economic difficulties confronting the Jewries in Arabic-speaking lands seem thus far not to have seriously interfered with the natural growth of their population, which has registered a sharp decline in mortality resulting from vastly improved hygienic conditions without any equiva-
lent drop in birthrate. This is particularly true of North African Jewry living under the French flag. The Jews of that region have emerged fairly intact from the oppression of the Vichy regime and are now marching in the van of the Sephardic and Oriental Jewries. On the other hand, the return of thousands of Jewish children, hidden away by charitable Christian foster parents, during the Nazi occupation, has been extremely slow. Fraught with numerous psychological complications and at times quite explosive, this problem had to be handled with much tact and forbearance.

Migrations

The Jewish migratory movements have been resumed during the past year at an accelerated pace. True, the total of only 15,000 to 20,000 Jewish arrivals in the United States (no exact figures for Jewish immigration are available ever since the U. S. immigration authorities discontinued using “Hebrew” as a racial qualification) and of not very many more in Palestine and the rest of the overseas lands, compares unfavorably with the large years of Jewish migration in the past and falls far short of the minimum needs of the Jewish people. Nevertheless, an overseas migration of some 50,000 Jews constitutes a significant fraction of decimated Continental Jewry living west of the Soviet Union. Many European countries themselves (Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy) have admitted many more Jews than have left their shores. France, in particular, has begun repeating its performance after the First World War when it had become one of the major countries of immigration for Jews and non-Jews alike. The tremendous influx into the displaced-persons camps of Polish Jews after their resettlement from the Soviet Union and the Kielce pogrom, and later of Rumanian and Hungarian Jews had all the earmarks of a large-scale flight sui generis.

It is still too early to assess the full meaning of these migratory movements. Nor do we know enough about the inner migrations of Jews within the vast areas of the Soviet Union or, for that matter, of the United States, where, for instance, Los Angeles has forged ahead to become the fourth or fifth largest Jewish community in the country. But there are some
factors in the situation that give ground for hope of further acceleration in Jewish migrations. These are the greatly increased shipping facilities; the expected activities of the newly formed International Refugee Organization (IRO); the growing realization of such underdeveloped countries as Australia, South Africa and Brazil that they would greatly benefit from a multitude of new European settlers (despite the obvious possibilities for an anti-Jewish administrative "selectivity"); and the possibly liberalized administration of existing quota laws in the United States such as is envisaged in the Stratton Bill and other bills pending before Congress. Most decisive, of course, would be the permanent solution of the Palestine problem by the United Nations and the ensuing opening of Palestine's frontiers to new Jewish arrivals.

The outcome of the Palestine issue will determine not only the size, but also the quality of Jewish migrations, for there seem at present few prospects of close mass settlements of Jews in any other area. Leaving aside Birobidjan, about which our information is both scanty and irreconcilably contradictory, the year under review has only served to emphasize the failure of other Jewish colonization schemes. Despite the Dominican Government's reiterated readiness to admit more Jews to the Sosua colony, there have been unmistakable signs of the latter's progressive disintegration. Australia, which has evinced a new friendliness toward Jewish immigration (its admission of 781 refugees from Shanghai was a particularly fine gesture), persisted in its refusal to set aside an area for Jewish colonization, long advocated by the Freeland League. The League's more recent proposal to establish a Jewish colony in Dutch Guiana is still in its incipient exploratory stages.

_Economic Rehabilitation_

Economically, too, world Jewry taken as a whole has made substantial progress. Even the Palestinian community has made signal advances in the upbuilding of its homeland, notwithstanding the prevailing political uncertainties, the damage to life and property caused by the armed clashes, and the growing interference with trade and industry by curfews and martial law. The increase of Palestine's foreign trade in
1946 to a figure five times that of the last pre-war year, the founding of over thirty new Jewish settlements and the expansion of the previously existing 300 communities, the acquisition of considerable tracts of land by the Jewish National Fund, the establishment of new factories—have all been achieved in the face of staggering difficulties.

In other countries, of course, the Jews were but an integral part of the larger economic structures. They thus participated in the general increase in prosperity and full employment throughout the Western Hemisphere. In the United States alone they could venture to undertake a campaign to raise $170,000,000 for the United Jewish Appeal. This undertaking, unprecedented even in the glorious annals of Jewish communal welfare, was superimposed upon many national and local campaigns, for schools of higher learning, local federations, etc., the total of which cannot be fully estimated, and upon innumerable private donations, gift parcels and the like, sent by individuals, relatives and friends, which are even less subject to precise statistical computation. Nor was there any evidence that these tremendous charitable and educational expenditures entailed any serious personal hardships to the majority of contributors.

Unfortunately, the available data are much too fragmentary and our scholarly approaches to the basic trends in Jewish economic life in the largest countries of Jewish settlement are still, in many respects, much too primitive for anyone to dare assess the present economic status of world Jewry and to compare it with its status a decade or two ago. But it may not be too rash to assert that the Jewries of the Western Hemisphere and the British Empire countries other than the United Kingdom, along with the general population, have emerged from the crucible of the Second World War in a far stronger economic position. The distribution of wealth may be much wider than it was in the 1920's, that expansive decade after the First World War. There may be fewer multi-millionaires in the United States, Great Britain, France or South Africa. But there no doubt exists a much larger and economically stronger middle class, while the masses of workers and employees seem to be enjoying far greater economic security and a somewhat better standard of life.
This summary evaluation, of course, does not hold true of European Jewry, including its British and Soviet segments. However, even in these areas, there has been a constant gradual improvement during 1946-47. Long-range economic rehabilitation has decidedly been under way in many countries. Holland, for example, is no longer the object of the Joint Distribution Committee’s nutritional and medical charities, even though it still requires some long-range assistance. The recuperative powers of the Jewish communities in Italy and France have also been quite astounding. While the economic readjustments of the Jews in East-Central Europe have been far more painful and slow, the Jews of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, along with the general population, have made at least a partial recovery. Only in Rumania has there been an actual deterioration in the economic status of the Jews as well as of the country as a whole. Of course, such relative economic improvement as we have noted must be considered against the background of post-war European devastation and the present critical impasse which the Marshall Plan attempts to solve.

The outline here sketchily drawn is not altogether reassuring. Advocates of a balanced Jewish economic structure will easily point out that, with the recent destruction of the large masses of Jewish workers and farmers in East-Central Europe, the world Jewish occupational maldistribution has been greatly aggravated. Even setting aside such ideologically debatable judgments, one may readily admit that a large percentage of gainfully employed Jews occupies exposed economic positions which may be shattered by another worldwide economic crisis. But so far, at least, the often predicted “recession” in the United States, with its consequent international repercussions, has failed to materialize. Certainly, for one looking backward rather than forward the year just past has been one of slow economic progress and rehabilitation for suffering Jewry as well as for humanity at large.

Communal Consolidation

The Nazi ravages in the East-Central European communities have greatly reduced the area of the traditional Jewish
community. Only in Italy, where the new regime, somewhat surprisingly, adhered to the policies inaugurated by the Lateran Treaties of 1929, have the local community and the central Union of Communities been restored to their former status. In Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, the existing community laws have so far not been formally abrogated. But the powerful trends towards separation of state and church, and the strongly secularist bias among large sections of the reconstituted Jewish communities, have greatly weakened the authority of the traditional religious community. They promoted instead the formation of a variety of new free associations, cultural, political and economic (e.g., Jewish producers’ cooperatives) which, in constant free interplay, make up the variegated new pattern of Jewish communal life. No one can tell what ultimate forms may emerge from the present fermentation and how they may become permanently institutionalized. Nor can one quite predict the kind of compromise which may be achieved between the influence of the Soviet structure of minority rights, now strongly followed by Yugoslavia, and the opposite trend toward national exclusiveness characteristic of the other nations in the Soviet zone. But one may definitely assert that already during the year under review, the second after liberation, the resurrected Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, despite their future uncertainties, have revealed an amazing vitality and recuperative power.

The same observation is essentially true also with respect to most West European communities. Those located in countries not overrun by the Nazis (United Kingdom, Irish Free State, Sweden, Switzerland and Portugal) have emerged from the war without a serious break in their historic continuity, indeed in a numerically and culturally stronger position. (To a lesser extent the same may be said, at least on a comparative basis, about such Axis countries as Italy and Bulgaria.) In France the decline of the consistorial system, begun with the separation of state and church over forty years ago, has been hastened by the war-time persecutions and the more recent powerful secularist trends within and without the Jewish community. But here, too, emerged numerous new communal associations, partly formed during the period of underground resistance, as
well as new federated forms of communal activity which have enabled French Jewry to act in unison on major issues. The same trends can also be observed in the far smaller communities of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg.

Most noteworthy has been the communal revival in France’s North-African possessions, which culminated in the recent formation of a Federation of Jewish Communities in Algeria. This show of vitality, moreover, appears to be but a phase of a general Sephardic renaissance which, begun in the period between the two Wars, has been accelerated in recent years. Numerically and communally the Sephardim have sustained serious losses only in the Balkans. Concomitant with the great tragedy of Ashkenazic Jewry, therefore, the centuries-old trend was sharply reversed: the ratio of the Sephardic and Oriental segments to the world Jewish population has now increased. The Sephardic renaissance is perhaps best illustrated by the large number of North-African teachers and synagogue officials in metropolitan France where they replaced the traditional immigrants from Eastern Europe. While listening to North-African chants and ritualistic peculiarities at many French divine services one could not help musing about this symbolic healing of an ancient breach in the very cradle of Ashkenazic Jewry. To be sure, the majority of Sephardic and Oriental Jews live in Arab lands under the heavy cloud of the Arab-Jewish controversy over Palestine. But the ensuing feeling of insecurity has not yet had any adverse effects on Jewish communal life west of the Libyan border.

In the New World, too, communal consolidation has made constant progress. In the United States, community councils have grown during the year in number, authority and diversity of functions. The formation of new regional federations strengthened the intermediate links between the individual community and the existing central bodies. The reconversion from war work to peace-time tasks was accomplished with a minimum of friction in the area of both relief (transition from city-wide war chests to denominational charities) and religious-cultural effort. The growing realization that the complexities of modern communal life require more detailed information and planning found expression in a considerable number of national, regional and local surveys.
The United Jewish Appeal has increasingly become a major expression of the overall communal will. Its progressive transformation from a fund-raising effort for three organizations only into a comprehensive representation of the community-at-large was highlighted during the year by the election of general communal representatives to its executive and administrative committees and the inclusion of several more agencies, at least in its New York campaign. The American Jewish Conference is planning to become a permanent organization. Good progress was also achieved in Canada, where the Canadian Jewish Congress has enlarged its sphere of authority; in Argentina, where the main two relief agencies were united in a single organization; and in South Africa where the Jewish Board of Deputies gave the impetus to the formation of a new Union of Orthodox synagogues.

On the international scene, the major Jewish organizations effectively collaborated in the negotiations concerning the peace treaties and the solution of the Palestine problem. Several independently collaborating groups in various lands have been accredited by the United Nations as spokesmen for the Jewish people. The most important among them also collaborated in the establishment of the Jewish Restitution Commission and the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., which are about to begin operations in Europe, designed to recapture at least a part of the economic property and cultural treasures of German Jewry. In the area of relief and reconstruction, too, the Joint Distribution Committee entered into a working agreement with similar bodies in Canada and South Africa for the pooling of their resources and personnel, with the Jewish Agency and the ORT, concerning the retraining of displaced persons, and with other relief organizations in regard to their joint efforts. Such collaboration became the more significant as the progressive liquidation of UNRRA and the far more limited scope of operations of its successor the IRO, necessitated ever greater reliance on the resources of these voluntary organizations.

Religious and Cultural Creativity

Jewish cultural and religious efforts have also shown, for the most part, increasing vitality during the past year. Among
American Jews, in particular, the consciousness of having become heir to the great Jewish cultural centers of Poland and Germany has permeated ever wider circles of communal leadership as well as the rank and file. There have been many manifestations of growing concern with Jewish cultural undertakings and the overall community’s responsibility for promoting them. In Palestine, too, every form of Jewish scientific, artistic, literary and educational endeavor received many new stimuli.

Preparations were made during a large part of the year for two international conferences in Jerusalem devoted to Jewish learning and Jewish education. A world conference for Yiddish culture was likewise convoked and another is being planned. A conference held in Paris in September 1946 for the spiritual reconstruction of European Jewry blueprinted a new international organization, the United Jewish Education and Cultural Organization (UJECO) which has since been called into being. The Hebrew University and other Jewish institutions of higher learning have expanded their activities. In the United States a new Jewish university was in its preparatory stage. Yeshiva University, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Institute of Religion, Dropsie College, and the various teacher-training institutions have all embarked upon programs of expansion. The Seminary opened a new museum, which promises to become a major center of Jewish art. A newly formed Jewish Music Council is expected to help popularize Jewish music in the way the Jewish Book Council has been popularizing Jewish letters in recent years. Protracted negotiations between several national organizations laid the ground for a new Training Bureau for Jewish Communal Service, which may lead to a revival, on a higher plane, of the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work, closed in 1940. The rabbinical colleges in Paris and Rome have been re-established, while that in Budapest has resumed its significant position in the educational structure of the Jewish people. In view of the destruction of German and Austrian centers of Jewish learning, Swiss Jewry inaugurated in the German-speaking city of Basle regular courses of instruction for teachers to serve the remaining German-speaking communities in Central Europe.
The newly projected rabbinical seminary in Algiers may become before long an important focus of the Sephardic renaissance.

Significant educational undertakings, based upon scholarly surveys and new pedagogic approaches, have also been inaugurated in the primary and secondary school systems, religious as well as lay, in America and elsewhere. There has been a growing emphasis upon the week-day as against the Sunday School, increasing enrolment in All-Day schools and a general effort to extend the hours of instruction. Under the aegis of the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Jewish center movement was gradually spreading from the North American continent to other lands. A world federation of Jewish centers was created with member institutions scattered over many communities in Europe, Latin America and Australia. Plans for the establishment of a large Y. M. H. A. in Jerusalem await early implementation. There were also other manifestations of cultural vigor in the various Jewish youth movements sponsored by religious, political and social organizations. The Hashomer Hatzair and the Habonim groups among the Zionists, the various Jewish scout movements and the youth groups attached to the larger Jewish organizations have often adopted constructive cultural and educational programs permeated with a truly pioneering spirit. A world conference of Jewish student groups has given expression to the widespread desire of academic youth to contribute its share to the cultural reconstruction of the Jewish people.

In the religious sphere there was a notable growth in congregational membership in the United States. This increase may have been due in part to economic prosperity which enabled members to pay dues, the progressive integration of immigrant groups in the American community and more efficient membership recording, but it also testified to the growing vigor of the national and local religious bodies. Yeshivah and parochial education likewise made significant advances. The recent arrival of nearly a thousand rabbinical students from Shanghai and Europe is also likely to strengthen the religious forces in American Jewish life. Such inter-territorial Jewish organizations as the Agudah, Mizrachi, and Vaad ha-Hatzalah have also reported considerable progress.
All these manifestations of renewed religious vigor are evidently but part and parcel of the general religious revival in the Western world, which has the earmarks of greater permanence than the transitory religious upsurge after the First World War. This religious revival, to be sure, is not completely devoid of dangers to the Jewish people. According to the testimony of informed observers, the recent reconciliation of the Soviet regime with the Greek-Orthodox Church has helped the return of some of the traditional mainsprings of religious prejudice. The conflict between the Polish Church and the new regime, the continual emphasis upon Catholic religious instruction in Italy's public schools and the problems created by the "released time" plan in American public education are but a few of the numerous complications introduced into Jewish life by the newer religious trends in the Christian world. These complications were largely offset, however, by the growing awareness of the Christian religious bodies of the great menace of anti-Semitism to their own religious mission and by the new stimuli given to the constructive forces of religious Judaism.

The Jewish press, whether published in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino or any of the spoken languages in the respective countries, continued to increase in number and circulation. Even in devastated Europe there has been a significant revival of Jewish journalism, which developed in part from the clandestine sheets published by the Jewish underground during the war. One need not mention here specific titles of scholarly and literary journals and magazines or of the more significant scholarly or literary books published during the year. Suffice it to say that this literary output compares favorably in both quantity and quality with similar productions before the war.

Of course, the creative vitality of Polish Jewry and the scholarly discipline and diversification of interests of German Jewry have not yet been replaced in this post-war world. The gradual revitalization of the old centers, however, and the awakening and expansion of the creative abilities of the newer centers are decidedly an auspicious augury for the future. For the first time in many years, therefore, the mood of utter despondency which permeated large sections of world Jewry is beginning to give way to a new feeling of hopeful expectation.