



Western Europe

INTRODUCTION

FOR THE purposes of this volume, the present survey treats Western Europe as a geopolitical conception, and includes within its purview France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian group of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

Political and Economic Background

While in some respects there were profound differences in the political and economic climate in these countries, their evolution and essential objectives during the year from July, 1949, to July, 1950, presented striking similarities. Striving to insure the economic gains made since World War II, and under constant pressure from the Soviet Union, all the Western states were preoccupied with two essential problems: resistance to Communist penetration, and the achievement of the economic and political unification of Western Europe.

UNITED STATES AID

Substantial United States economic and military assistance through the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact was available to those countries which felt that they were in need of and might accept this aid. There were of course a number of complications: Sweden felt that her geographic and strategic position made her participation in the North Atlantic Pact impossible, and Switzerland stayed out of the Pact on the basis of her traditional neutrality. Both Sweden and Switzerland, however, joined the Marshall Plan, although the European Recovery Program was conceived primarily as an instrument for the defense of the West.

MILITARY PLANS

As the "cold war" between the West and the Soviet Union continued unabated, the Western European powers were forced to turn to speedy remilitarization and the increase of their defensive capacity. Thus, in France, far-reaching plans for rearming were announced by the Minister of Defense, Jules Moch. In Belgium projects which would increase the rearmament budget were started on August 9, 1950. Denmark and Norway made similar decisions, and even neutral Switzerland was reported on August 12, 1950, to be rearming. Both Belgium and France had, in addition, decided to lengthen the term of conscript service.

The degree to which efforts toward assuring peace colored the political climate of Europe during 1949–50 may be gauged from the discussions held on August 11, 1950, and subsequently, at the meeting of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. At this gathering the problem of a unified European army, which had previously been discussed by all the participating states, was brought to a head by Winston Churchill's proposal that a united European defense force be created. Whatever the concrete and immediate results of this move initiated by the advisory European body, it certainly reflected the anxiety felt in the Western European countries.

STOCKHOLM APPEAL

If the deliberations and concerns of the responsible statesmen represented the feelings of great masses of the population, there could also be detected the existence of a mood of popular weariness which opposed military preparedness. This mood was exploited by the Communists through the Stockholm Peace Appeal, which was circulated throughout the world subsequent to the Stockholm Peace Congress held in Sweden in March, 1950.

ECONOMIC UNIFICATION

Hard-pressed by Soviet demonstrations of force, the Western European powers were looking for some means of unifying the continent not only by political co-ordination but also by the pooling of economic resources and capacities. Far-reaching proposals were made in this direction which aimed to overcome century-old animosities and change the accepted pattern of the sovereignty of the separate states. The Schuman Plan for pooling the steel and coal resources of Western Europe is particularly deserving of mention. According to this plan, a supernational independent authority would be created to manage the European coal and steel industries. The participating powers—France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Western Germany, Italy, and Luxembourg—were to cede some of their sovereignty to this authority. The Schuman plan received varied reactions from the countries interested, some of whom, particularly Great Britain, strongly objected to an independent administration of the project as unacceptable to sovereign states.

In July, 1950, all of the various plans and efforts toward unification were in the foreground of Western European politics. The admission of Western Germany as an associate member of the Council in August, 1950, at the second meeting of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, held at Strassbourg, was an indication of how seriously the Western European countries viewed the necessity for unification, notwithstanding their internal conflicts.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The economic record of Europe for 1949 was in many ways encouraging. According to estimates of the Economic Survey of Europe,¹ the production of commodities in Western Europe had been restored to the pre-war level.

¹ Prepared by the Research and Planning Division of the Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, 1950.

Taking the average 1934-38 production as 100, the level for 1949 in various countries was as follows: Belgium, 111; France, 111; Italy, 101; the Netherlands, 123; Norway, 127; Sweden, 132; Denmark, 128.

Industrial production outside Germany was 25 per cent higher than it had been before the war. Most Western European countries had achieved a measure of internal stability, and the pace of price increases was slower than it had been during preceding years. Crop conditions were good and there was a slow but steady improvement in the standards of living.

However, Western Europe was facing grave economic problems, as practically all the countries were increasing their expenditures for military defense, and in some places substantial quantities of necessary manpower had to be diverted from industry and agriculture.

JEWISH SITUATION

The general trend of events undoubtedly had repercussions in the life of the Jewish communities of Western Europe. The amelioration of economic conditions permitted the substantial curtailment of the relief and assistance made available to Western European communities during 1949-50 by American Jewish organizations, particularly by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC); in Belgium and Holland the JDC offices were closed and administration of limited JDC relief grants was left to local organizations. Local communities increased their own participation in social welfare expenditures and in such countries as France, Italy, and Holland, fund-raising drives were launched for Jewish local needs and for Israel.

As the Jews in Europe were naturally more sensitive to the changing political climate in view of their recent history, a general uneasiness and fear of war were perceptible, particularly among the refugee and transient groups. It was reported that increasing numbers of newcomers and recently established Jewish residents in France, Italy, and Sweden were applying to Jewish agencies for help in emigrating overseas, particularly to Israel. This uneasiness also affected the settled Jewish communities in Europe to a certain extent, and the policy of increasing "rapprochement" with Germany was viewed with alarm. Though the pressing and immediate political realities were apparent, the Jewish memories of World War II and German occupation and policy of extermination of Jews could not be easily forgotten. Two years after the creation of Israel in May, 1948, the ideological struggles against Zionism had largely ceased, and the development of Israel continued to be among the foremost preoccupations of the various Jewish communities. As the official Jewish bodies and the rabbinate had given their wholehearted sympathy to the Jewish state, the re-animation of the local community in France through constant intercourse with Israel and concern with Israeli problems was particularly noticeable. The only opposition to this conjunction was voiced by Jewish Communists, in accordance with the latest general line of the Communist party. As the Soviet Iron Curtain fell on large Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, the Jews in the West, increased by refugees from Poland, Hungary, and Rumania, came closer to the realization of kinship and solidarity with their co-religionists in Israel and in communities all over the world.

FRANCE

DURING 1949–50 important changes took place in the French government. In February, 1950, the Third Force Ministry headed by Georges Bidault lost its Socialist members due to a disagreement over the cost-of-living bonus for civil servants proposed by the administration. The Socialist SFIO continued, however, to support the government until June 24, 1950, when the Socialist defection caused the government to fall. A more moderate *équipe*, with Henri Queuille as prime minister, succeeded the Bidault ministry, but was in its turn soon overthrown. On July 15, 1950, René Pleven, representing the younger generation of French political personalities, took over the government and succeeded in regaining not only the support of the Socialists but also their participation in the government coalition. The well-known Socialist leader, Jules Moch, who was the object of savage Communist attack, was appointed to the key ministry of defense. René Mayer headed the ministry of justice.

The Communist party, with some 180 seats out of 620 in the French parliament, was still a formidable force, although it was said that its membership had been greatly reduced. The strength of Charles De Gaulle and his movement was difficult to assess, although it appeared that the *mystique* of the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (“Rally of the French People”) was still a powerful force among large groups of the middle class—its political appeal would be measured in future elections. Notwithstanding the substantial improvement in economic conditions, there was much social discontent in France, due particularly to the high cost of living. Most of the labor unions were pressing for wage increases. In July, 1950, the unions were asking for a minimum 17,500-franc (\$50) monthly wage.

Jewish Population

Precise statistics on Jewish population in France were not and never had been available. Estimates varied considerably. *L'Annuaire du Judaïsme* (published in Paris in 1950) indicated a total Jewish population of 205,000. Local observers, however, particularly those from the immigrant sector, referred to a much higher figure—from 235,000 to 250,000. There was no way of ascertaining the correctness of these figures. In view of the continuous influx of postwar refugees, some 50,000 of whom had settled in France, the figure of approximately 235,000 would appear to be more accurate. (This figure refers only to metropolitan France and does not include the Jews of Algeria.) Only about 100,000 of this number were autochthonous; the rest were of foreign origin, naturalized, or still foreigners. This heterogeneous composition of French Jewry had an important bearing on the whole social and cultural structure of the Jewish community of France, since the foreign element, not always integrated, not only introduced its own institutions and ways, but also to a great extent influenced the communal activities and thinking of the older established French Jewish community.

Anti-Semitism

Expressions of anti-Semitic feelings and anti-Semitic incidents in France presented no serious and immediate danger to the Jewish community. Nevertheless, though they were met with traditional French skepticism, attacks against Jews in the anti-Semitic press increased in volume during 1949-50. Particularly vicious were the periodicals *Indépendance Française* and *Aspects de la France*. On October 13, 1949, *Aspects de la France* published a special issue devoted to the trial of Charles Maurras, well-known French writer and theoretician of the French royalist movement, who was in prison for collaboration with the Nazis. The publication was connected with the campaign for the liberation of Maurras, whose theory of the "anti-Semitism of the state" still exercised a certain attraction to intellectuals, and was responsible for a number of anti-Jewish pronouncements, including some by literary persons.

COMMUNIST DEFAMATION

The anti-Semitic propaganda of the French Communist party, potentially dangerous because of its appeal to the masses, is worthy of note. In its ruthless campaign against the government and the leading personalities of the Fourth Republic during 1949-50, the Communist newspaper, *L'Humanité*, and Communist-inspired posters repeatedly used such slogans as "Republic of Rothschilds," and *sale metecque* ("dirty foreigner"), which in France had clearly anti-Semitic connotations. The Rothschilds were called "blood suckers," an epithet employed in the propaganda of the anti-Semitic bands of Doriot during the period of Nazi occupation. During the debates in the Chamber of Deputies on June 2, 1950, the Communist leader, Jacques Duclos, in criticizing René Mayer, the minister of justice, used the phrase "Rothschild" justice. The Communist party constantly emphasized the Jewishness of Jules Moch, René Mayer, and the late Léon Blum, in their savage attacks on the Fourth Republic.

STUDENT AGITATION

In the spring of 1950 there were also anti-Semitic manifestations in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where the *Rénovation Economique et Sociale Française* and similar groups were active. Anti-Jewish posters were displayed in the student center of the capital.

DEFENSE

The representative Jewish organizations and some special agencies for defense and vigilance took various steps to combat this anti-Semitic propaganda and activity. Attempts, not always coordinated, were made to enlighten public opinion. Some of the agencies also intervened with the authorities to stop particularly vicious anti-Semitic manifestations.

The activities of the Centre Israelite d'Information, particularly its collection of reliable data on French anti-Semitism, must be recorded. Also of interest was the bulletin published by the Conseil Représentatif des Juifs

de France (CRIF). In addition to data on anti-Semitism, the bulletin discussed broader problems of a more general interest, such as that of human rights and the United Nations.

In connection with the campaign to amnesty the well-known collaborationist writer, Henri Beraud, (freed in April, 1950), a booklet was published in 1949 by the Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France which analyzed the role and writings of Beraud both before and during the Nazi occupation. Similarly, following the trial of Louis Ferdinand Céline which ended with the famous anti-Semitic writer's receipt of a light sentence on February 22, 1950, the activities and writings of Céline were exposed in a special pamphlet.

However, to obtain a balanced picture of the French sentiment, note must be taken of the fact that in both Protestant and Catholic churches voices were heard pleading for mutual respect and understanding between Jews and non-Jews. The activities of *L'Amitié Judeo-Chretienne* must be mentioned in this connection.

Community Organization

The year 1949-50 saw the accentuation of the centrifugal tendencies in the Jewish community. The various elements of the French Jewish community (and this was true for both the ethnic divisions and political differentiations), continued to move within the limits of their own circles, and were unable to unite to achieve common ends. CRIF, the central Jewish organization formed in the underground in 1943, had gradually lost its importance, and during 1949-50 its activities failed to attract community interest. With CRIF gradually receding from active participation in communal affairs, there was a gradual reversal to the situation that existed before the war. Both the Consistoire Central and the Consistoire de Paris, under the leadership of Baron Guy de Rothschild and Georges Wormser, respectively, were unofficially recognized as the representative bodies of the autochthonous Jews. The Alliance Israélite Universelle (Alliance), with René Cassin as president, continued its traditional activity of the protection of Jewish interests in foreign countries, in addition to its activities on the local scene.² The Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France (created in 1923), the largest and oldest organization of emigrant Jews, was the most representative of the newly established groups, under the leadership of the noted Zionist leader, Marc Jarblum. The Communists continued to work through the Union des Sociétés Juives de France (created in 1938), which although organizationally strong, had lost members and support. This loss was said to be the result of the Communist party attitude toward Israel. The unexplained disappearance of Soviet Yiddish writers was said also to have had an adverse effect on the attitude of the Jewish masses to the Union des Sociétés Juives.

² For references to the activities of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, see Index.

Jewish Education

It was reported that in 1949-50 only about 4,000 Jewish children of an estimated 40,000 of school age were receiving some type of Jewish education. In addition to three French Jewish lycées in Paris attended by approximately 400 children and young people, there were a number of "supplementary schools" in which Jewish children received a rudimentary knowledge of Yiddish and Hebrew a few hours once or twice a week.

TEACHER TRAINING

The problem of training teaching personnel was of great importance to the French and Yiddish-speaking circles. The Ecole Normale Israélite, which prepared teachers for the schools of the Alliance, the Ecole des Cadres, and the Séminaire Israélite de Paris, offered degrees in education. The Lehrer Seminar of the Fédération de Sociétés Juives de France was training teachers for the Yiddish schools.

CO-ORDINATION

The responsible organizations were aware of the seriousness of the educational situation. There were differences in approach—nationalist-Yiddish or Zionist-Hebrew on the one hand, and French-centered on the other; and the religious approach versus the secular. But notwithstanding these divergencies, all groups interested in Jewish education agreed on the necessity for action. Independent efforts were made by the Fédération de Sociétés Juives de France and the Colonie Scolaire.

In July, 1950, the Zionist Organization of France decided on a special educational campaign. In March, 1950, a conference of Yiddish educators discussed the possibility of opening a day school in Paris with Yiddish as the language of instruction. The Conseil pour l'Éducation et la Culture Juive de France attempted to co-ordinate these independent moves.

TRAINING FOR SOCIAL WORK

On October 11, 1949, Ecole Baerwald, the first American school of social work in Europe, was opened in Versailles, near Paris. Sponsored by the JDC, the school bearing the name of Paul Baerwald, noted philanthropist and banker long associated with the JDC, was to train Jewish social workers for the various European communities and North Africa.

Religious Life

Organized on a purely voluntary basis, French religious activities during 1949-50 continued to center around the *associations cultuelles* united under the Consistoire Central des Israélites de France et d'Algérie. These congregations were composed largely of native-born Jews. In addition, there were a number of congregations created by the Sephardic elements and by Eastern-European emigrants: the Sephardic Association Cultuelle Sepharadite de

Paris, the Eastern-European Agoudath Ha-Kehiloth, and independent groups. There was also a small reform congregation—the Union Libérale Israélite.

RELIGIOUS INTERESTS

Although the religious activities of the French community centered primarily around the synagogue and did not extend to large social endeavors, a certain interest in religious problems, particularly among intellectual circles, must be recorded. An indication of this interest was the initiation during 1949–50 of the publication of the excellent *Revue de la pensée juive*, under the direction of Robert Aron and Rabbi Andre Zaoui of the Union Libérale Israélite. The *Revue's* scholarly standards and high level of presentation were apparent. Another publication, *L'Amandier Fleuri*, represented the viewpoint of traditional Judaism, and was published under the direction of Grand Rabbi Maurice Liber, the head of the Séminaire Israélite.

Considerable efforts in the religious field were made by Eastern-European immigrants, among whom traditionalist elements were numerically strong and energetic. An interesting new project was undertaken by the Hasidic Lubavitcher Habad group, which organized three traditional *hedarim* in Paris where Jewish children received religious instruction gratis. The Lubavitcher group did not wait for pupils to come to their schools, but sent out a group of twenty teachers who visited Jewish homes and urged parents to bring their children to the religious schools. These individual efforts must be taken into consideration for an objective picture of religious activities in the French Jewish community.

PROBLEMS

The religious problems of French Jewry were earnestly discussed at the national conference of the congregations held in Paris from June 25 to 27, 1950. Rabbi Isaie Schwartz, chief rabbi of France, deplored the weakening of the religious spirit in the community; other speakers dwelt on the melancholy state of religious education. The lack of religious leaders was said to be a particularly serious problem in the small provincial communities, where intermarriage was a frequent phenomenon.

Zionism

As the large mass of French Jewry seemed to give its sympathetic support to Zionist aspirations, Zionist demonstrations and activities were a daily occurrence in Paris during 1949–50 and a frequent one in provincial cities. The inclusion of Israeli needs in the 1950 unified fund-raising campaign gave a special impetus to Zionist activities. Zionist influence in the community may be gauged by the fact that 63,248 shekels for the Zionist Congress were sold in France during 1950 (*The Jewish Morning Journal*, August 30, 1950). This figure indicated an overwhelming popular identification with Zionist aspirations.

Zionist activities were countered by a campaign of vilification in the Yiddish Communist press. Anti-Zionist pronouncements were also made by a small group of the Jewish Socialist Bund. But there was some change of

heart among some members of this traditionally anti-Zionist Socialist movement.

FUND RAISING

The agreement for a unified campaign entered into by the Fonds Social Juif Unifié and the L'Aide à Israël, the organizations raising funds for local communal needs and for Israel, respectively, was an important step in the field of co-ordinated communal activities. The sum of 600,000,000 francs (\$1,715,000) was said to be the goal of the campaign. The united drive of L'Appel Unifié, 1950, was inaugurated on February 18, 1950, at a solemn assembly in the Parisian Palais de Chaillot. Baron Guy de Rothschild and Isaac Gruenbaum, former member of the Israeli government, were among the principal speakers, and support of the drive was voiced by almost all the Jewish groups and the leading personalities of the community, from the Grand Rabbi of France to the late Socialist leader, Léon Blum. The only discordant note was that of the Jewish Communists, who continued their opposition to Israel and used every means and stratagem to sabotage the collection of funds. The Communists did not hesitate to send organized groups to break up meetings and gatherings for the L'Appel Unifié, 1950.

The Appel Unifié was directed by Dr. Richard Lichtheim, delegate of *Magbit Meuhedet* ("Central Aid to Israel") of Jerusalem, and by Harry Rosen, American technical adviser of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié. Baron Guy de Rothschild, president of the Consistoire Central, was elected chairman of the board of directors, which consisted of eighteen members representing an equal number of constituent bodies.

Social Services

The result of the Appel Unifié was to be of the utmost importance to the Jewish community, as the future of various local welfare activities depended to a large extent on its achievements. During 1949, 282,000,000 francs (approximately \$805,000) were spent in the French Jewish community for child care, 44,000,000 francs (approximately \$125,000) for the care of the aged, 86,000,000 francs (approximately \$245,000) for medical aid, 26,500,000 francs (approximately \$75,000) for cultural work, 97,000,000 (approximately \$275,500) for economic reconstruction, and 173,000,000 (approximately \$500,000) for other welfare activities. All told, 708,500,000 francs (approximately \$2,025,000) were spent for local needs, exclusive of the program for transients and a few other communal endeavors (*La Tribune*, Paris, April 15, 1950). The largest part of this money came from abroad through the JDC. With the serious reduction of JDC resources, the existence of all local welfare institutions depended to a large extent upon the results of the united drive.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES

With the betterment of economic conditions, local relief, although still important, decreased in scope. In 1945 the JDC had supported some fifty social welfare agencies; in March, 1950, the number was sixteen. Some of

the relief was done through the centralized local welfare organization, Comité Juif d'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction (COJASOR); other activities were conducted by the multi-functional organizations, such as the Fédération de Sociétés Juives. Co-ordination of the medical program was in the hands of OZE, and the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) was handling certain types of immigration work. ORT was active in the field of vocational training. In the field of child care, a major element in the French welfare program, 1,250 children, most of whom were orphans, were cared for in 1950 by the Organisation pour la Protection des Enfants Juifs (OPEJ), the Colonie Scolaire, OZE, and other smaller organizations. Economic loan activities were promoted by four loan funds, three located in Paris and one in Strassbourg. A short-term retraining shop was conducted by HEFUD. It was reported that several thousand persons were retrained by HEFUD, which in 1950 had 110 apprentices. To co-ordinate activities on behalf of the tuberculars, a tuberculosis commission was set up during 1949 with a special allocation from the JDC.

The situation of some 4,000 persons who were on cash relief in 1950 continued to be of great concern to local welfare groups, as more than half of these were over fifty-five years of age and it was believed that four-fifths of them would require long-term care because of mental and physical disturbances.

As the emergency situation gradually eased, there was a growing awareness among Jewish welfare agencies of the need for greater co-ordination and efficiency in the social service program. Some of the small institutions created in the aftermath of the war had ceased being active; the community was trying hard to maintain the older and more experienced ones, such as the Colonie Scolaire, a child-care agency, which celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in the spring of 1950.

TRANSIENT PROBLEM

The transient problem continued to be a major responsibility of the JDC. Although there was a considerable reduction in the number of transients, in the spring of 1950 some 5,000 transients were awaiting departure to their countries of destination. In addition to three housing installations in which some of them were sheltered, 1,000 *halutzim* (pioneers) destined for Israel were receiving agricultural training in seventeen hakhsharot (agricultural training farms).

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Zionist groups, which in 1949 comprised eight out of the fifteen youth organizations affiliated with the Conseil de la Jeunesse Juive (CJJ), were the most active among the Jewish youth movements in France. The Eclaireurs Israélites (scouts), numbering about 2,000 in metropolitan France, conducted youth and children's programs. The Service Social des Jeunes, which previously had functioned as a part of the Eclaireurs, had become an independent community service which serviced some 350 young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three during 1949 with maintenance, medical care, and job placement.

The Union des Etudiants Juifs de France had a membership of about 2,500 Jewish university students, distributed in thirty-four branches in various French university towns. In co-operation with a special faculty committee, the Union des Etudiants Juifs was instrumental in the administration and distribution of scholarships to needy students. The Jewish students' publication, *Kadimah*, continued to appear during 1949-50.

Cultural Activities

Interest in Jewish culture continued among various groups in the community. The specific attitude varied in the different sectors of French Jewry, but interest was as apparent and as strong among the long-established native elements as it was among the Yiddishists of the emigrant group.

PERIODICALS

Toward the end of 1949 the press of the Jewish community consisted chiefly of five French and seven Yiddish periodicals. Among these mention should be made of *La Terre Retrouvee* (published by the Jewish National Fund), *Les Cahiers de l'Alliance*, and the General Zionist weekly, *La Voix Sioniste*. There were also four Yiddish newspapers: *Unzer Wort* (right Poale Zion), *Unzer Stimme* (Jewish Socialist Bund), *Die Naye Presse* (Communist), and the *Arbeiter Wort* (Left Poale Zion Mapam). Le Centre de la Documentation Juive continued its research and publication activities; its volume on the Jews in Algeria, published in 1950, deserves special mention.³ The magazine *Evidences* was published under the sponsorship of the American Jewish Committee.

Efforts were made during 1950 to publish a Yiddish children's periodical, *Far Unzere Kinder* ("For Our Children").

Particularly worthy of note was *Kiyoum* ("Existence"), a Yiddish monthly published by the Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France, under the editorship of Israel Jefroykim. This magazine, which devoted its pages to the problems of continuity and creativity in Jewish life, had become one of the best of the serious magazines in Yiddish. The need for self-expression and interest in Jewish cultural problems was also manifest in *Kultur-Idies*, the bulletin of the European branch of the World Congress for Jewish Culture. The description in *Kultur-Idies* of the various efforts undertaken in Paris and the provincial cities of France showed an unprecedented cultural revival within the Jewish community in France.

The thirty-fifth anniversary of the death of the Yiddish author, I. L. Peretz, was the occasion of a number of meetings; of particular interest being the symposium organized by the Federation on April 8, 1950, at which well-known Polish-Yiddish writers resident in Paris took part. These writers, organized around the cultural center of the Union de Juifs Polonais, played an important role in the cultural undertakings within the Yiddish-speaking community.

³ *Les Juifs d'Algerie du decret Cremieux a la liberation*, par Michel Ansky, Paris, 1950.

YIDDISH LITERATURE

As in the Yiddish literature of other countries, memoirs predominated in Yiddish literature in France during the past few years. Noteworthy were: Yehiel Granatstein's volume *Ikh Hob Gevolt Leb'n* ("I Wanted Life"), Abraham Zak's *Yoren in Vander* ("Wandering through the Years"), and Leib Rachman's *In Dayn Blut Zolstu Leb'n* ("In Thy Blood Shalt Thou Live"). A volume of genuine literary merit was Moshe Grossman's *In Farkisheften Land fun Legendarishen Dzugashvili* ("In the Enchanted Land of Legendary Dzugashvili"), in which the author recounted with trenchant humor his experiences in the Soviet Union.

Other interesting works in Yiddish that appeared were the second volume of a readable history of Zionism, *Di Geshikhte fun Tzionism*, by Yaakov Zineman, and M. Gebirtik's book of poems, published by the cultural center of the Union de Juifs Polonais.

A Yiddish marionette theatre, which performed under the direction of Simcha Schwartz, was certainly the most interesting addition to Jewish cultural life in Paris. It was hailed as outstanding in its field by French critics.

There were also efforts at self-expression in the native sector of the French community. The *Revue de la Pensée Juive* mentioned above was an example of this intellectual ferment. In addition, a Groupe d'Etudes de la Pensée Juive was particularly active in organizing meetings and symposiums on various aspects of Judaism and Christian-Jewish relationships. The Archives et Musée d'Art Populaire Juif, organized in 1948, was also characteristic and active. On December 18, 1949, the museum held an exhibit on the subject of the holiday of Hanukkah—*La Lampe de Chanuka et le luminaire juif*. On this occasion, André Blum, administrator of the Louvre, delivered a speech on the meaning of Hanukkah and the cultural aspects of the Jewish tradition.

Personalia

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of the French Jewish poet, Edmond Fleg, was the occasion of important celebrations and was noted in the general press in 1949. The author of *Ecoute Israel* and *Anthologie Juive* was hailed as the man who had helped to reveal the spiritual meaning of Judaism to the French public and interpreted the Jewish world to French intellectuals.

During 1949-50 the French community lost some of its eminent leaders. Julien Weill, grand rabbi of Paris, passed away on April 25, 1950. The late rabbi, who had remained in Paris throughout the Nazi occupation, had been considered one of the most outstanding representatives of the French rabbinate.

Baron Eduard de Rothschild, former president of the Central Consistory, died on June 30, 1949. Together with the late Baron Robert de Rothschild, who passed away on December 25, 1946, he had headed French Judaism during the pre-war period.

Jacques Mosseri, president of the Sephardic community, died on July 25, 1950.

On March 30, 1950, Léon Blum, former Socialist prime minister of France and one of the most brilliant intellectuals of Europe, died. A writer of broad interests, he was equally at home in the study of Stendhal and in the most complicated subtleties of law and finance. Although Léon Blum had never participated actively in Jewish communal affairs, he had always given his support to all Jewish causes. He had accepted membership in the Jewish Agency, and his general sympathy toward the state of Israel was well known.

BELGIUM

BELGIUM continued during 1949-50 to be one of the socially most stable countries in Europe. There was, however, an economic recession with unemployment rising from 68,000 in 1947 to 309,000 in January, 1950. But the greatest danger that threatened Belgium was political strife without precedent in the history of the country.

The strife which brought Belgium to the verge of civil war centered around the return to the throne of King Leopold, whose conduct during World War II and under the Nazi occupation had been criticized by large masses of the Belgian population, particularly in French-speaking Wallonia. In June, 1950, after protracted negotiations and four general elections, the Social Christian party, which championed the King, received 46.74 per cent of the popular vote, and gained an absolute majority in the parliament. Actually, Belgian opinion was divided almost equally on the question of Leopold's return, and the decision of the one-party Catholic government to bring back the King provoked strong protests in Wallonia and parts of Flanders. The King landed on Belgian soil on July 22, 1950, to the accompaniment of a general strike proclaimed by Socialist workers and violent popular manifestations. On July 31, 1950, he was forced to abdicate, and on August 11, 1950, his son, Prince Badouin, assumed the responsibilities of the crown. A new government, presided over by Joseph Pholien, took over the administration of Belgium on August 15, 1950.

Jewish Population

There were approximately 42,000 Jews in Belgium in 1949. Most of the Jewish population was of foreign origin; very few families had been established in the country for as long as three or four generations. There were also about 4,000 transitory emigrants who were awaiting the completion of formalities for their departure to Israel, the United States, and other countries. During 1949, according to figures supplied by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), 2,317 emigrants left the country, most of whom were destined for Israel. As some 90 per cent of the Belgian Jews were not citizens, they were subject to the rather severe restrictions applied to aliens, particularly in the economic field. During the course of 1949-50 the economic status of the Jews deteriorated due to unemployment in the "Jewish

trades." But as the year progressed the situation improved somewhat, particularly in the diamond trade, which played an important part in Jewish business endeavors in Antwerp and other places.

Communal Organization and Religion

There was no state religion in Belgium, and all religious sects were recognized and enjoyed equal status. The government allocated funds for the construction and maintenance of temples and paid part of the salaries of the religious personnel. Jewish religious life was regulated and co-ordinated by the Consistoire Central de Belgique, which, although very limited in membership, enjoyed many prerogatives. The spiritual chief of the community was Rabbi S. Ullmann, Grand Rabbin de Belgique. Although its activities were limited by law, the Consistoire Central was the principal Jewish representative organization and was so looked upon by the government. As a large number of Belgian Jews observed Eastern-European religious customs, independent congregations were created by Polish, Hungarian, and other Jewish groups. Since these groups did not belong to the Consistoire, they did not possess the official status enjoyed by the affiliated congregations.

The city of Antwerp continued to be the center of traditional Judaism, largely represented by well-to-do diamond merchants. There were six synagogues in Antwerp and a very active group of the Orthodox Agudath Israel and the Orthodox youth organization, Bne Akiba.

Educational Activities

During 1949-50 a number of Jewish schools were functioning in Belgium, some of which were recognized by the state. The largest of them was the sixth-grade Ecole Israélites de Bruxelles Beth Sefer Klali, which had 180 pupils and was partly subsidized by the government. The Ecole Tachkemoni in Antwerp had 300 pupils; in addition to religious instruction, it included in its curriculum the study of modern Hebrew, history, and the geography of Israel. The Ecole de Religion (Yessode Hatorah) in Brussels held classes twice a week for 500 pupils. In addition, there were a few supplementary Yiddish schools, such as the Ecoles I. L. Peretz and Les Amis des Enfants. Over 1,200 students were reported as having been registered in the Jewish schools during 1949-50. There were also approximately 190 students in two yeshivot—Yeshiva Etz Hayim in Antwerp, and another in Brussels. Some Jewish instruction was also given in the six children's homes in Brussels and Antwerp.

Communal Divisions

According to local reports, Israel and Zionism were at the center of Jewish activities, and the Zionist following was said to represent some 75 per cent of the community. Most active were Labor-Zionist groups of both right and left, although the General Zionists and Orthodox Mizrachi were equally well represented. In Antwerp, the Orthodox stronghold, the Agudath

Israel was most active. The leftist Solidarité, a well-organized group having its own system of welfare units and children's schools which after the establishment of Israel had affected a pro-Israel attitude, changed its line during 1949-50 and became strongly anti-Zionist. There was also a small group of members of the Jewish Socialist Bund in Brussels organized in the Cercle Amicol (Workmen's Circle). This group was engaged in cultural as well as political activities, and had its own library and a dramatic unit.

Social Services

Notwithstanding the small size of the Belgian community, a number of organizations were active in extending assistance to the needy and in caring for refugees and transients. The most important of these institutions during 1949-50 was Aide aux Israelites Victimes de la Guerre, which was located in Brussels. The JDC, the main source of financing for social activities in Belgium, reported that 320 children were supported in children's homes, 80 persons in homes for the aged, and 2,500 persons were receiving cash relief during 1949. On May 1, 1950, the JDC closed its offices in Belgium, leaving the administration of its curtailed subsidies to local groups.

Cultural Life

Local reports indicated the weakening of Jewish cultural activities, due to the constant departure of recent immigrants to Israel. Thus, a report dated August 22, 1950, indicated the cessation of the weekly, *Unzer Wort*, published for several years by a Labor-Zionist group. This was due to the fact that the majority of the leaders and supporters of the weekly had left for Israel.

LUXEMBOURG

MOST of the 800 Jews of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg lived in the city of Luxembourg. There were small scattered Jewish settlements in other cities, and a Jewish community was in formation in Ettelbruck. Religious and communal activities were under the direction of the Consistoire, of which Edmond Marx was president. Welfare activities were promoted by the Société de Bienfaisance "Esra," and youth activities were conducted by the Union des Jeunes Gens Israelites.

NETHERLANDS

THE POLITICAL situation in the Netherlands remained stable and unchanged. (See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Volume 50, p. 331.) However, the small Jewish community, impoverished materially and numerically during the war, was gradually losing its influence and its place in the country. Out of the approximately 30,000 Jews in Holland after the liberation

from the Nazis in 1945, some 10 per cent had emigrated, leaving a total Jewish population of approximately 27,000, or less than .03 per cent of the total Dutch population. It was reported that several thousand Jews had intermarried. The general European political conditions and the strategic geographic position of the Netherlands created some uneasiness, particularly among the newer Jewish immigrants, and there was marked interest in emigration overseas among the Jewish as well as the non-Jewish population.

Economic Status

The economic condition of the majority of the Jewish population was satisfactory. During 1949-50 the Dutch Jews were mainly in middle-class merchant and in white-collar occupations. The Jewish working population, which had occupied such an important place in Holland, had been almost completely destroyed during World War II.

RESTITUTION

In the field of restitution, there was a gradual return to the former owners of their houses and other property during 1949-50. Restitution was a slow process, a fact particularly true of the liquidation of the assets of the former Lippmann, Rosenthal Company Bank, which held Jewish funds sequestered by the Nazis during the occupation. (*See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK*, volume 49, p. 336.)

Discrimination and Anti-Semitism

There was no problem of acute anti-Semitism in the Netherlands. Some bad feeling existed as a result of the unsympathetic attitude taken by some Roman Catholic papers against the state of Israel in connection with the internationalization of Jerusalem, but this was not too significant in view of the sympathetic support given to Israel by large masses of the population and the Dutch government.

JEWISH WAR ORPHANS

The situation of Jewish war orphans continued to arouse strong feelings in the Netherlands. Reports that some of the children who, according to the judgment handed down by the courts, had remained with the non-Jewish families that had sheltered them during World War II had been baptized, provoked violent protest in Jewish circles. The child-care organization, *Le Esvath Hayered*, which dealt with this situation, could not prevail upon the administration to accept the Jewish point of view. During 1949-50, seven to eight years after the Jewish children involved were placed among non-Jews, the prospect of a favorable solution decreased. A special committee was set up in May, 1949, to co-ordinate activities in behalf of Jewish war orphans. According to a report by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (February 8, 1950), out of 800 Jewish war orphans still in non-Jewish homes in May, 1949, 200 had been returned, 400 were left in non-Jewish foster homes, and the rest of the cases were still pending in February, 1950. Jewish orphans residing

in Jewish children's homes were reported to be receiving adequate care and a well-rounded Jewish education. (See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, volume 49, p. 340-43.)

Communal Organization and Problems

There was a gradual return to normality in Jewish communal organization in the Netherlands during 1949-50. The enmity inherited from the period of the Nazi occupation among various groups and against certain leaders was slowly giving place to a concern with more immediate problems. One such problem was the future of the Jewish community in the Netherlands, about which Dutch Jewry, particularly its Zionist leadership, was unclear. (See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, volume 49, p. 333-34.)

Religious Life

Religious life was co-ordinated by the Central Organization of Congregations, of which E. Spier was president. The chief rabbi was I. Tal. The small Sephardic community had its own spiritual leader in the person of S. A. Rodriguez Pereira. In July, 1950, the Portuguese community observed the two hundred seventy-fifth anniversary of the completion of its synagogue. On this occasion a historical exhibit was arranged at the synagogue.

Social Services

For some years the Jewish community had largely supported local welfare activities. The stable economic conditions permitted withdrawal of foreign aid, and whatever limited subvention the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) had allocated for Holland was administered by the local Stichting Joods Maatschappelijk Werk (Foundation for Jewish Social Work).

Cefina, a special agency composed of various interested organizations, was in charge of fund raising for local needs, the collection for Israel being conducted by United Jewish Appeal for 1949. The Stichting Joods Maatschappelijk Werk took over the work of co-ordinating the various social welfare activities on June 1, 1949. It worked in close collaboration with Cefina, and endeavored to assure the continuance of a welfare program. Jewish social service activities were also supported by the government, which in 1949 allocated 100,000 guilders (\$26,315) to that purpose.

Culture and Zionism

As the Dutch Jews were overwhelmingly Zionist, all cultural activities were centered around Israel. Particularly active in the field were the Labor-Zionist Hechalutz and the Orthodox Bachad groups. The Commissie het Joodsh Boek, under the leadership of Dr. I. L. Seeligmann, continued its educational activities. The weekly *Nieuwisraelietisch Weekblad* continued to be the largest Jewish periodical in the country. Among the small Yiddish-speaking groups the Anski Cultural Union in Amsterdam is worthy of note. Recon-

stituted after the liberation from the Nazi occupation, it was engaged in various cultural activities, including a library and music circle.

During 1949-50, there was a lessening of cultural activities among the youth organizations. This was due, according to local observers, to the continuing emigration of active youth elements and to the lack of leadership.

Personalia

Abraham Aascher, well-known Jewish leader, passed away in Amsterdam on May 3, 1950. One of the leaders of the Jewish Council established by the Germans during the occupation, he was in the center of the violent controversy in the Dutch community after the liberation.

SWITZERLAND

THERE were no political and economic changes in Switzerland during 1949-50. This small neutral country managed to stay out of the powerful currents that were dividing Europe in two. The Jewish community of 21,000 also continued without any obvious alteration in status or condition.

Anti-Semitism and Defense

During 1949-50 the Jewish community had to defend itself against anti-Semitic propaganda disseminated in various cities in the Suisse Confederation, specifically against a pamphlet entitled *Reflections sur le memoire de Goebbels*, which justified the National Socialist propaganda. The work of defense was in the hands of a special commission nominated by the Federation Suisse des Communautés Israelites. Efforts during the period under review (July, 1949, to July, 1950) to include in the Swiss penal code a clause against anti-Semitism were not successful. A significant endeavor was the projected publication of studies on the history of the Jews in Switzerland. It was felt in responsible Jewish circles that these studies, if and when completed, would make a considerable contribution in the struggle against anti-Semitism.

The press office of the Federation Suisse *Juna* was also instrumental in supplying reliable information on Jews and Jewish problems to the Jewish and general press. When efforts were made to disseminate the Nazi publications of the Volks-Brokhhaus publishing house in Switzerland the press office in *Juna* intervened and succeeded in stopping the distribution of this material.

Community Organization and Activities

There were 3,805 members in the twenty-seven religious communities of Switzerland during 1949, a slight increase over the 3,741 in 1948. The largest communities in 1949 were located in Zurich, where the Israelitische Cultus-gemeinde had 1,262 members, the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft 214

members, and Agudas Achim 134. The Jewish community of Basle numbered 743, Geneva 262, Lausanne 211, and Berne 189. There was a feeling in leading Jewish circles that an excessively large number of Jews still remained outside of organized communal life, and efforts were undertaken to attract the unidentified elements to the various Jewish activities.

The Federation Suisse des Communautés Israelites, whose president was Dr. George Braunschwig, co-ordinated the work of the twenty-seven affiliated communities. During 1949-50, the Federation Suisse was active in the field of assistance to Jewish refugees. It also took steps to protect Jewish interests and inform public opinion on various questions arising in the community.

COMMUNAL PROBLEMS

At the forty-fourth conference of the Federation Suisse, which took place in Zurich on May 25 and 26, 1949, and again at the forty-fifth conference held in Lucerne in May, 1950, the communal leaders expressed their particular concern with the status of religious education and the problem of mixed marriages. It was said that the number of mixed marriages had increased to a point where it represented a real danger to the community. Some local observers attributed this increase to the fact that despite a strong religious tradition, the Swiss Jewish community was assimilated culturally and linguistically to the extent that it could not withstand the appeal of the surrounding milieu. The disproportionately small number of Jewish males of marriageable age was another factor contributing to intermarriage.

The Federation Suisse held several conferences with the Union des Rabbins de Suisse, a rabbinical body headed by Robert S. Brom, in order further to study the religious and social aspects of mixed marriages, the problem of the conversion of non-Jews to the Jewish faith wherever it might arise, and the question of the religious education of youth. The problem of conversion was the basis of heated discussions among religious and lay leaders, as there were differences in approach and interpretation of Jewish doctrine. These discussions were evidence of the strength of the trend to intermarriage.

RESTITUTION

The Swiss-Polish agreement concerning heirless Jewish assets, publicised in the summer of 1949, by which the Swiss Confederation had obligated itself to repatriate such assets to Poland, continued to be followed by the commission of experts established by the Federation Suisse. As this agreement had created a precedent, the Jewish organization continued to press the authorities to prevent a repetition of this action with respect to the heirless property of Jews of other countries. The position of the Jewish organization was that such assets should be used for Jewish relief and assistance.

Social Services and Fund Raising

The number of Jewish refugees residing in Switzerland continued to dwindle; 808 refugees, including 134 trans-migrants, left Switzerland for

other countries during the course of 1949. As of December, 1949, 2,100 out of the total of 3,000 Jewish refugees in Switzerland had been assisted by the Verband Schweizerischer Juedischer Fluechtlingshilfen, an affiliate of the Federation.

During 1949-50, 5,000,000 Swiss francs (\$1,162,790) were spent for Jewish social work by the Verband. During 1949 the traditional fund-raising appeal of the Federation Suisse yielded 407,714.05 Swiss francs (\$94,817.22) and substantial contributions were received from the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). In addition to the assistance extended to the aged and the sick, the Verband was helping the youth and refugee children, almost all of whom had been removed from the non-Jewish homes and institutions.

As of June 30, 1949, 1,063 requests for permanent asylum had been presented to the authorities, and during the course of 1949 the last of the homes for refugees conducted by federal authorities was closed. The Jewish refugees residing in those institutions were taken over by the Verband in Vevey.

Cultural Activities

Various Jewish cultural and youth activities were promoted with the help of the Federation of the communities. The Zionist and various youth groups and clubs were particularly active. The Union des Etudiants Juifs de Suisse played an important role in initiating cultural undertakings in the university cities. The creation of a center for Jewish historical and art archives in Zurich was begun. Among the important Swiss Jewish publications were the *Israelitische Wochenblatt* and *Das neue Israel*. A number of bulletins were issued by the different Jewish political groups and organizations.

A literary award amounting to 1,000 Swiss francs (\$233) was set up in Geneva under the auspices of the World Congress for Jewish Culture.

Personalia

On July 31, 1950, Saly Mayer, well-known Swiss welfare leader and JDC representative in that country, passed away. He was connected with one of the daring rescue projects to save 200,000 Hungarian Jews from deportation during World War II.

ITALY

THE COALITION Third Force government, under Alcide de Gasperi, with the Christian Democrats as the major element in the coalition, continued in power in Italy during 1949-50. The Labor Socialist group of Giuseppe Saragat which had left the coalition on October 31, 1949, returned to the government on January 28, 1950. The Communist party was said to have lost ground, but was still a powerful opposition force in Italy. Despite some

improvement in economic conditions, unemployment continued to be Italy's outstanding problem, though it decreased from 2,400,000 in June, 1948, to approximately 1,750,000 in February, 1950 (*The New York Times*, February 9, 1950).

Jewish Population

There was a total of some 35,000 Jews in Italy, including approximately 3,000 Jewish displaced persons (DP's). Estimates of geographic distribution of Italian Jews in 1949 yield the following figures:

TABLE I

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN JEWS IN ITALY, 1949

<i>City</i>	<i>Number</i>
Rome	12,000
Milan	6,000
Turin	2,700
Florence	1,500
Trieste	1,500
Leghorn	1,100
Venice	1,100
Genoa	1,000
Naples	600
Bologna	500
Other	4,000
	32,000 ^a

^a American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) report July 7, 1949.

In addition, about 1,000 Jewish DP's were living in the cities, and 2,000 were in camps awaiting departure, the majority to Israel and the United States. The previously flourishing social and cultural activities of the DP's were a thing of the past. All the institutions and publications of the DP's had disappeared with the exception of their newspaper *Tzum Zig*, which continued to be issued periodically.

Anti-Semitism and Intergroup Relations

No open anti-Jewish attacks occurred in Italy during 1949-50, and the Jewish community continued to entertain excellent relations with its non-Jewish neighbors. Some uneasiness was felt, however, among leading Jewish personalities in connection with the stand taken by the Vatican on the issue of the internationalization of Jerusalem.⁴ It was felt that repercussions were inevitable, as the Catholic Church exercised a powerful influence over the social and political life of Italy.

Father Lombardo, a well-known priest from Turin, who during previous years had preached several anti-Semitic sermons, ceased his attacks during 1949-50. After his return from the United States, which he had visited during

⁴ See Israel, Section "Internationalization of Jerusalem."

September, 1949, he made a number of broadcasts, but avoided any reference to the Jews.

The traditional Italian interest in Judaism manifested itself when the University of Padua decided to establish a chair in Hebrew during the academic year of 1950-51. Rabbi Paul Nissim of the Padua Jewish community was to occupy this chair. It is noteworthy that the well-known Jewish scholar and mathematician, Guido Castelnuovo, was appointed to the Italian senate on December 14, 1949.

Community Organization and Activities

The activities of the Italian Jews centered around the Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane. On February 26, 1950, a national fund-raising campaign was launched in Rome. Of the total funds raised, 20 per cent was to be set aside for such local organizations as the rabbinical college and the Unione delle Comunità, and 80 per cent was to go to Israel. The goal of the campaign was reported as 200,000,000 lire (\$320,000). In addition to the national fund-raising appeal, there was a separate campaign for local needs in Rome whose goal was 30,000,000 lire (\$48,000). The Roman appeal, called *Raccolta Unita Permanente per le Istituzioni Ebraiche di Rome*, was to benefit, among others, the following local social and welfare agencies: a children's asylum, a maternity clinic, an orphanage, a hospital, the local ORT and OZE branches, and a social service agency. To activate communal life, plans were being made to provide social work training, as the community was badly in need of trained social workers.

With the liquidation of the major DP operations, the JDC gradually reduced its activities, and contributed on a limited scale to the support of some local institutions during 1949-50.

Jewish Education

There was little to report in the field of Jewish education in Italy. There were Jewish schools and talmud torahs in some eighteen Jewish communities, but a lack of teachers and of purposeful direction was hampering the progress of the work. The peculiar state of mind of the community was characterized by the coexistence of powerful sympathy for Israel and Zionism alongside of assimilationary trends so strong that in some small communities the religious and cultural boundaries between the Jewish and the Catholic populations were said to be disappearing.

Religious Life

On April 1, 1950, a national rabbinical assembly was held in Rome. Twenty-two rabbis participated in the assembly, which was devoted to discussion of the religious and communal status of Italian Jewry. Most of the participating rabbis stressed the deterioration of religious life in the Italian community. They emphasized not only the lack of interest among their parishioners but also the fact that even the practicing Jews had difficulty in keeping the

traditional observances because of a dearth of ritual objects. The rabbis dwelt, too, on the difficult financial position of the congregations which could not provide adequate pay for their religious personnel. As a result of this situation a number of rabbis had left Italy and others had left the pulpit completely.

The Collegio Rabbinico of Rome, re-organized after the liberation from the Nazis by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. David Prato, in 1949, presented rabbinical diplomas to three graduates who took posts as rabbis in Italy. During 1949-50, some twenty-five boys between the ages of seventeen and twenty were studying in the Jewish high school in preparation for the rabbinical college. This school offered a three-year course, at whose completion the candidates for religious training passed into the first grade of the rabbinical college. The activities of the college were of the utmost importance, as the religious endeavors of the community depended for a large extent on their continuation. As the Rome community has the right to tax its members, part of the revenue from the communal taxes was used to support the synagogues, the cemetery, and other religious institutions in the community.

SCANDINAVIA

THERE were approximately 19,200 Jews in the Scandinavian countries, of whom 12,500 resided in Sweden, 5,500 in Denmark, and 1,200 in Norway. In all these Scandinavian countries the Jewish communities enjoyed not only the friendliest relations with their neighbors, but the benefits of a traditionally liberal policy as well.

Among the important Jewish intercommunal efforts in Scandinavia was the projected conference for Jewish youth of the Scandinavian countries. The conference was to be held in Stockholm on August 13, 1950, and was to be attended by visitors including Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie of England.

SWEDEN

THE SWEDISH JEWISH community was composed of three different groups. The first group consisted of approximately 7,000 native Jews whose families had lived in Sweden for generations. The second group included some 3,000 Jewish immigrants who had come to Sweden during the period between World Wars I and II, had adjusted themselves to the Swedish environment, and were almost indistinguishable from the native Jews. Since Sweden accorded naturalization to all foreigners after a seven-years' residence, many of the immigrant group became citizens and created an enviable position for themselves in business and commerce. The third group consisted of approximately 2,500 from the original group of 11,000 to 12,000 refugees from Nazi Europe during World War II, who had been hospitably received by the government and the people of Sweden. These recent arrivals, unlike their coreligionists in other countries of Western Europe, enjoyed the right to work as a result of the humanitarian attitude shared by both government and labor in Sweden.

The situation of the Jewish refugee girls who had been brought to Sweden from Germany after the liberation from Nazi domination continued to be of concern to responsible Jewish circles. Some of the girls intermarried, as did members of the native Swedish Jewish community.

Anti-Semitism and Intergroup Relations

Apparently the activities of Einar Aberg, well-known anti-Semitic editor, continued during 1949-50 notwithstanding his conviction in 1948. In the spring of 1950, propaganda tracts entitled *Derriere le Communisme il ya le Juif—Pour la Patrie, Contre le Judaïsme* ("Behind Communism Stands the Jew—For the Fatherland, against Judaism"), were distributed in Paris. The address of the printer was given as "Tryckizi ab Grunläggaren, Stockholm, 1949, Editeur Einar Aberg, Norwiken, Suede." Aberg's propaganda, however, was considered of no importance within Sweden.

BERNADOTTE INCIDENT

In Sweden, the assassination in September, 1948, of Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations mediator in Palestine, had created a popular resentment which may have reflected also on local Jews. In the course of time, however, this resentment had been dispelled, and on February 15, 1949, the Swedish government established relations with the state of Israel. On July 5, 1950, the Swedish government announced that it noted with satisfaction: "that the government of Israel admit without circumlocution, and regret the shortcomings of the Israeli police inquiry into the case of [Count Bernadotte] which have been pointed out by the Swedish authorities . . ." The government announced that it considered the exchange of notes with Israel over the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte in Jerusalem as closed (JTA, July 7, 1950).

Community Organization and Activities

Jewish communal activities in Sweden during 1949-50 were conducted by the central communal organization, Mosaiska Församlingen. There was no discrimination, official or unofficial, and the attitude of the government and the people of Sweden toward Jews was always friendly. It is noteworthy that the Swedish relief organization, Europahjelpen, decided to contribute \$150,000 to Youth Aliyah toward the establishment of a hospital in Israel for orphaned emigrant children suffering from chronic diseases (JTA, August 3, 1950).

DENMARK AND NORWAY

THERE was very little activity to report in the small Jewish communities in Denmark and Norway. Denmark gave *de facto* recognition to Israel on February 2, 1949, and Norway's *de jure* recognition of the Jewish state was given on July 1, 1950.

During 1949-50 a volume of stories in Danish devoted to anti-Jewish persecution during the occupation was published. The author was Pinhas Welner, a Polish-Jewish emigrant who had resided in Denmark for many years. Simonaida, the Jewish department of the Royal Library in Copenhagen created in memory of Dr. David Simonsen, former Chief Rabbi of Denmark, continued to be one of the important centers of Jewish documentation.

Jewish displaced persons (DP's) residing in Norway were given every opportunity to secure employment and citizenship. The approximately 300 who remained in the country were slowly adjusting themselves to the conditions of their new environment.

Two hundred Jewish children from North Africa who had been invited for a stay of eight months in a home maintained by the organization, Norwegian Relief for Europe, left for Israel in November, 1949. A second group of twenty-nine children who were transported by plane to Norway, crashed on November 25, 1949, sixty miles from Oslo, and all the children but one were killed.

LEON SHAPIRO

TURKEY

THE PERIOD IN Turkish history extending from 1945 to the elections of May, 1950, was of especial importance both from the point of view of general political developments and the position of minority groups. It was during this period that the first serious and effectual attempts were made to establish real democratic institutions in Turkey.

Period of Dictatorship

Previous to this period, with the exception of an attempted establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1908, Turkey had known only monarchical absolutism and one-party dictatorship. Though the constitution of the republic which Mustafa Kemal Ataturk proclaimed in 1923 called for a genuine democratic state, Turkey's political institutions never acquired such a character.

The chamber of deputies, presumably the sole repository of sovereignty, was reduced to a passive organ charged merely with approving and giving legal validity to decisions arrived at by the Popular Republican party (PRP), the only party in Turkey. Created by Ataturk, PRP represented the three real forces in the country: the army, the big landowners, and the new bureaucracy. The PRP was established on a highly rigid and hierarchical basis, and was dominated by a narrow clique at the head of which stood Kemal.

Because of this system, despite the basic rights and liberties guaranteed to the citizen by the constitution, Turkey found itself in the grip of an authoritarian and quasi-dictatorial regime whose rulers were free to act with the utmost arbitrariness.

After World War II

The end of World War II, which marked the beginning of the period under review (1945–May, 1950), saw an abrupt change in Turkish policy. The impression prevailed in leading circles that the victory of the Allies would be followed by a democratic alignment of all the countries wishing to collaborate with the Allied victors. It was therefore necessary to make at least some formal political concessions and to give the administrative machine a more democratic appearance. On the other hand, the economic difficulties following in the train of the war—rising prices, a black market, disorganization of the public services—had caused discontent to increase not only in the rural areas (where the misery of the small peasant, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population, had always been very great), but in the cities as well. To permit an articulate opposition to come into existence under these circumstances represented a real danger to the party in power.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

In 1946 a real opposition made itself heard in the press for the first time in Turkish history, most of the newspapers taking a critical, and at times even hostile, attitude to the government of the PRP. On December 1, 1946, several deputies, among whom were C. Bayar (in July, 1950, the president of the Republic) and Adnan Menderès (the president of the Council), resigned from the PRP and announced the formation of the Democratic party, Turkey's first political opposition. At the time of its formation, the Democratic party was a completely heterogeneous assemblage of all those, of both the left and the right, who were dissatisfied with the regime of the PRP. In the course of time the Democratic party was becoming more and more the party of the new commercial middle class, which resented the intervention of the state in economic and commercial affairs.

The first demand put forward by the Democrats was for a reform of governmental and administrative procedures, rather than for a positive program of action; they wished to create a solid legal framework which could serve as a kind of guarantee against that arbitrary rule still practiced in every sphere of government in Turkey. By means of these reforms it was hoped that the different political institutions would have their original constitutional significance restored to them. In addition, the new party demanded that the Chamber be elected by the direct vote of the people.

DEMOCRATIC VICTORY

The elections that were held in 1946 gave the Democratic party only approximately sixty seats in the Chamber. But the new party, supported by public opinion and by a press increasingly discontented with the government's policy, was able in the four succeeding years to obtain certain important concessions which go a long way toward explaining the crushing victory of the Democrats in the elections of May, 1950. Among these

were the passage of a law finally ensuring the impartial conduct of elections, and a modification of the law regulating the press so that the latter was able to assert itself with more independence.

At the same time that these liberal reforms were taking place legally, the government followed a policy of intimidation of the progressive elements on the one hand, and extreme indulgence toward all reactionary tendencies, on the other. The result was the formation of opposition groups of a markedly reactionary character alongside the democratic ones. These reactionary groups advanced an ultra-chauvinistic program that even tried to exploit the religious prejudices and bigotry of a part of the Turkish population. A third, Radical National, party arose as champion of these reactionary tendencies.

On May 14, 1950, elections to the new chamber of deputies took place. The Democratic party obtained a surprising victory, achieving a majority of 417 over the PRP's 69.

NEW PROGRAM

The program that the new government presented to the people contained four essential points: 1. economic and commercial decentralization through the progressive transfer of state enterprises to private ownership; 2. modification of the law regulating the press so as to make it impossible for the organs of the state to intimidate or coerce newspapers and other publications; 3. extension of the rights of unions and recognition of the right to strike, previously forbidden and even punishable by imprisonment; 4. concession of certain formal privileges to religious groups. Thus, the right to read the *ezan* (the Koranic call to prayer) in Arabic was granted, to the great indignation of those progressives who saw in this measure a dangerous concession to the bigoted elements of the population.

CONSEQUENCES

Whatever practical results the new government would be able to obtain, it was impossible to minimize the importance of the Democratic victory of May 14, 1950. The simple fact of an election impartially conducted and respected by the authorities was of the first importance in the normalization of the political life of the country.

These considerable changes that took place on the political scene between 1945 and May, 1950, had favorable consequences for minorities in general and for the Jews in particular. This period was particularly important for the Jews of Turkey, who witnessed a great wave of emigration that reduced the Jewish population to almost half of its former size.

Jewish Population

According to the last official statistics, in 1935 the Jews of Turkey numbered 78,730 out of a total population of 18,000,000. Since there had been scarcely any emigration before the establishment of the state of Israel in May, 1948, it can be assumed that on the eve of the large emigration to

Israel the Jewish population of Turkey was much the same as it had been in 1935. The distribution of the population in May, 1948, was approximately as follows:

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH POPULATION IN TURKEY, MAY, 1948

<i>Community</i>	<i>Number</i>
Istanbul.....	53,000
Izmir.....	12,000
Edirne.....	2,000
Broussa.....	2,000
Ankara.....	1,000
*Other communities.....	5,000
TOTAL.....	75,000

* Including Tchanakala, Tekirdag, Milas, Mersina, Adana, Urfa, Gazi, Antep, and other small communities.

EMIGRATION

After the founding of the state of Israel in May, 1948, there was an unprecedented Jewish emigration from Turkey, and the Jewish population declined by more than 30,000. Istanbul and Izmir were the communities chiefly affected, the Jewish population of Izmir being reduced to a half of what it was in 1935—from 12,000 to 6,000. The Jewish communities of such small villages as Babaeski (near Kırklareli, in Thrace), Adana, Marash, Mersina, and Alexandrette also lost many of their members and were on the way to complete depletion.

This migratory movement, which began in September, 1948, and reached its culmination in April, 1949, was remarkable because it occurred during a period when the political situation in Turkey was favorable to the Jews. There seemed little reason to doubt that ideological reasons, above all the hope and enthusiasm raised by the establishment of the state of Israel, were a decisive factor in the emigration.

However, economic factors also exercised a crucial influence. The majority of the emigrants belonged to the poorer sector of the population, and consisted of unemployed persons, paupers, and persons earning very low wages

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH POPULATION IN TURKEY, JULY, 1950

<i>Community</i>	<i>Number</i>
Istanbul.....	32,500
Izmir.....	6,000
Edirne.....	1,300
Broussa.....	1,000
Ankara.....	700
Other communities.....	2,000
TOTAL.....	43,500 ^a

^a The total Jewish population of Turkey is estimated at 50,000 by other sources [*Editor's note*].

In July, 1950, Jewish emigration from Turkey had practically ceased. The Jewish population of Turkey in July, 1950, according to figures and estimates published in the press, was approximately as set forth in Table 2.

Civic and Political Status

Relations between the Jewish community and the authorities took a marked turn for the better during the period 1945–1950. Theoretically, the problem of the minorities had been settled on the legal plane by the republican and secular régime instituted by Kemal Atatürk which recognized the complete equality of all citizens before the law regardless of race, religion, or origin. In practice, however, this régime had adopted a series of measures that discriminated against and were even openly hostile to the non-Mohammedan minorities. In times of crisis these measures often took a very harsh form. *Varlik*, the wartime property tax (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Volume 49, p. 437), was a case in point.

CHANGE IN STATUS

But after the end of the World War II in 1945, and particularly during 1949–50 the authorities took an increasingly liberal and understanding attitude toward minorities and the Jewish community. In 1946 Jews and members of other minorities were granted the legal right and were actually capable of becoming reserve officers in the Turkish army. There were a few instances of Jews being appointed government officials, an unheard-of thing in the past. Academic careers were opened to Jews; in July, 1950, there were one Jewish docent and several assistants teaching at the University of Istanbul.

In June, 1949, the National Assembly passed a law modifying *Evkaf*, the old statute governing religious institutions. For the first time the right of minority communities to administer their own property was recognized; directors were elected by the members of the community, rather than appointed by the government.

JEWISH RELATIONS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

The attitude toward the Jews prevailing in government circles and in the official press of the PRP was generally a friendly one. Relations between the Jews of Turkey and the new Democratic party were likewise amicable, especially during 1949–50. During the electoral campaign of spring, 1950, the Democratic party addressed itself to those minority elements which openly criticized the PRP government for its hostile policy toward them during its twenty-five years of rule. It should be noted, however, that each of the three principal parties participating in the elections was careful to run a few candidates from the minority groups. This was a normal and understandable procedure on the part of the Democratic party and even of the PRP, but a surprising one in the case of the Radical National party, which since its formation had stood for a policy of extreme nationalism and for an Islamic Union.

All these minority group candidates, including the Jewish, stood for office in the Department of Istanbul. The Democrats won in this department, and

in July, 1950, there was one Jewish deputy, Salomon Adato, a lawyer, who had been elected to the preceding Assembly on the Democratic ticket.

Anti-Semitism

Though the authorities took an increasingly liberal attitude toward the Jewish minority during 1945-50, this was not always the case with the Turkish population.

A militant and popular anti-Semitic movement had never existed in Turkey; anti-Semitism had been rather a latent tendency which became active only when provoked by the authorities (as happened in the Thracian affair in 1934). Nevertheless, though the attitude of the authorities had become a friendly one, anti-Semitism had not completely disappeared. During 1949-50 several anti-Semitic publications made their appearance in Istanbul and Izmir. Noteworthy was the newspaper *Bomba Salamon*, which repeated the classic anti-Jewish defamations.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AGITATION

Far more dangerous, however, were the attacks made in the Istanbul review *Büyük Doğu*, an organ of Mohammedan fanaticism. These attacks had a political tinge, and were part of a complete program of social and political reaction.

Finally, it should be remarked that the Radical National party, the second opposition party, attacked the Jews, whom it accused of collaborating with the Free Masons to ruin the country. However, these attacks soon ceased, and during the electoral campaign of 1950, the Radical National party ran three minority candidates, one of whom was Jewish.

Communal Organization and Activities

The statutes regulating the Jewish community of Turkey were drawn up and promulgated in 1856, and were far from satisfactory in the light of present needs. Such as they were, however, they at least recognized the Jewish community as a juridical person. With the advent of the régime of the PRP in 1923 the organization of the Jewish community entered into a critical period. Without officially annulling the old statutes, the authorities refused to extend the Jewish community legal recognition. For a long time this caused great difficulties for the community, especially in matters involving its real property and the collection of its revenues. During 1945-50 the Turkish government showed a more complaisant attitude in this respect, and officially recognized the Jewish community as an organized body with an identity of its own.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The old statutes in effect in July, 1950, provided for the annual convocation of a general assembly of the community in order to elect a lay council to deal with administrative and cultural questions, as well as a rabbinical council to preside over religious activities. During the period 1936-49 no

meeting of the Assemblée Générale de la Communauté Juive had taken place, because of the vacillating attitude of the authorities. Toward the end of 1949, however, the authorities having given their consent, elections were held in the Jewish communities of Istanbul and Izmir, in an attempt to revive the Assemblée Générale. But the Jewish population had been deprived for so many years of the opportunity to exercise its communal vote that it did not respond, and only a handful of voters went to the polls. The leaders of the community were also criticized for not having adequately instructed the Jewish population in advance of the elections, which thus lost much of their democratic value.

Nevertheless, the new Assemblée Générale de la Communauté d'Istanbul, composed of sixty members, was convoked on April 30, 1950, and proceeded to elect a new lay council consisting of nine members. Dr. Abrevaya, a well-known physician from Istanbul, was elected president of the council, and thus became the president of the entire Jewish community. The Assemblée Générale likewise elected a Conseil Rabbinique, which by law was supposed to consist of twenty members but actually consisted of eight.

INNOVATIONS

The new lay council appointed a commission of several jurists charged with drafting a new set of statutes to regulate the activities of the community, one that would better answer to the needs of the times and that could serve as the basis for a new law to govern the organization of the Jewish community. It was hoped that such a law would be enacted during 1951.

During 1949 the authorities made two important decisions affecting communal life. First, religious instruction, forbidden for almost twenty-five years, was made optional in all schools. Second, the government decided to help defray the expenses of all non-Mohammedan communal schools by itself paying the salaries of teachers of the Turkish language and culture. This measure helped to ameliorate the financial situation of these schools.

Zionism and Relations with Israel

The deep sympathy that the Jewish population of Turkey felt for Israel, and the wave of enthusiasm and hope called forth by the establishment of the new state, were among the basic causes of the emigration of Turkish Jews to Israel (*see above*). Zionist sentiments were especially strong among the youth. However, all Zionist activity was officially proscribed in Turkey. The Jews of Turkey were not permitted to take part in Zionist congresses, or even in the World Jewish Congress.

ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT

However, the attitude of the government to the new state of Israel was one of increasing friendliness. Turkey was the forty-fifth country to extend *de facto* recognition to Israel (on April 1, 1949). At first, when the tide of emigration set in, for fear of offending the Arab states (Turkey had never completely given up the plan of heading a movement that would bring together the Islamic states), the Turkish government had created difficul-

ties for Jews who wished to quit Turkey for Israel. But this attitude soon changed. In March, 1949, the Turkish government authorized Victor Elyachar to open an office in Istanbul, and on July 23, 1949, he was authorized to come to Turkey to deal with all questions relative to the emigration of Turkish Jews to Israel. On October 16, 1949, Mr. Elyachar was appointed Israel's Consul General in Turkey. *De jure* recognition was extended to Israel in January, 1950, and diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. Israel appointed Eliahu Sasson as its minister to Turkey. Uriel Hayd, councillor to the legation, and Mr. Tuviah Arazi, press and commercial attaché, were appointed members of the diplomatic mission. Thus, cordial relations were maintained between Turkey and Israel.

COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE

It should also be mentioned that Palestine had long been one of the major importers of Turkish products. It was hoped that the trade agreement between Turkey and Israel signed on July 5, 1950, would promote an even greater exchange of goods. This in turn was bound to strengthen the satisfactory relations already existing between the two countries.

EMILE HAIM FRANCO