

Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

THE YEAR under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953) saw a major crisis in the Soviet empire. The expansion of the Communist world was stopped in Korea by the resistance of the free world. The immense expansion of heavy industry without regard to the most elementary needs of the population produced widespread disorganization of the economies both of the Soviet Union and its satellites. In the latter it led to passive and later active resistance, threatening the stability and the very existence of Communist rule. Both before and after the death of Joseph V. Stalin on March 7, 1953, there was a ferocious struggle among the would-be inheritors of his power.

After three years of bitter fighting in Korea, the leaders of world Communism had to acknowledge that they could not reach their objectives in East Asia by military force. The rearmament of the free world left no doubt that another military attack would be met by all-out resistance. Although still fanning the fires of civil war in Indo-China and Malaya, and fomenting disorders in other countries, the Communist powers could not risk open intervention in Asia without provoking a major clash. In Europe they were aware that, whatever the inner stresses of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an open attack would weld it into a solid front, backed by all the resources of the United States.

At the same time, the sovietization of the already conquered territories in Europe hit serious snags. Forced collectivization ruined agricultural production; passive and later active resistance of the workers against the depression of their standards of living to the Soviet level undermined ambitious plans of economic exploitation. The increasing disorganization was intensified by successive purges of native Communist leaders. Neither these purges nor ferocious police terror measures could prevent outbreaks of despair which finally led to strikes and uprising in Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

The fight for Stalin's succession had probably been raging beneath the surface for years. The great purge in the satellite countries, which reached its climax in the trial of Rudolf Slánský in Prague in November 1952, was one of its manifestations. Its victims were not native Communists with an inclination to independence, as in some previous purges. Rather, they were obedient party officials connected with Moscow's apparatuses, men who had conducted Soviet espionage and infiltration in Western countries, the members of the so-called "Spanish aristocracy" (i.e., agents who had served the

Soviet cause in Spain). These were charged with "Titoist" and "Zionist" conspiracies, "imperialist espionage," and "economic sabotage," and executed as "traitors." It was the Soviet secret police apparatus whose periphery was here liquidated before the attack on its center began in the Soviet Union proper. When in February 1953 Moscow "discovered" a "doctors' plot" and accused a group of physicians, most of them Jews, of having killed prominent Soviet statesmen and prepared attempts on the life of several Red Army marshals and generals, this accusation was accompanied by hints that Soviet security organs had not fulfilled their duty. The pattern then emerged clearly: appealing for the support of the army and of the most chauvinist Russian elements, Stalin was preparing the liquidation of the most dangerous pretender to his throne, the head of the secret police, Lavrenti P. Beria.

Anti-Semitism

This operation was accompanied by an unheard-of outbreak of anti-Semitism. Together with the agents of Beria's apparatus, some of whom happened to be of Jewish origin, Jews were to be made scapegoats for all the failures and crimes of the Soviet regime. Even after the complete destruction of their cultural and communal life, after the forcible *Gleichschaltung* ("levelling") of all those who had been ready to cooperate with the regime, the Jews remained an "alien" and "suspect" minority in the Soviet bureaucracy's eyes. Now, a world-wide "Jewish conspiracy" was invented in order to divert the hatred of the population from the Communist rulers to an isolated and leaderless minority.

The trial of Rudolf Slánský in Czechoslovakia and the demotion of Ana Pauker in Rumania were followed by the "discovery" of a "Zionist plot" in Eastern Germany and by the arrest of the Communist-imposed leader of the Jewish community, Lajos Stoeckler, in Hungary. The "doctors' plot" started a veritable orgy of denunciations, demotions, and arrests of Jewish citizens in all parts of the Soviet Union. Everywhere, trials were prepared against prominent persons of Jewish origin. At the same time, large numbers of Jews were defamed, demoted, thrown out of jobs, arrested, jailed, or sent to concentration camps. The mass deportation of "alien and unproductive elements" from the cities of Hungary and Rumania condemned thousands of Jews to slow starvation. All this was accompanied by a barrage of propaganda designed to show that Jews were apt to be traitors, spies, imperialist agents, embezzlers, and outright murderers. In the last days of Stalin's rule the persecution conducted in the Soviet Union as well as in most satellite countries reached the proportions of an immense cold pogrom.

New Tactic

In the meantime, the nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in December 1952 had laid the foundations of a new tactic for the world Communist movement. Unable for the time being to con-

duct an open frontal attack on the free world, the Communist leaders proclaimed the "inevitability" of clashes and wars among capitalist powers and directed the Communist movement to endeavor to create dissension and conflicts among them. German, Japanese, Arab, and other reactionary nationalists had to be wooed along with neutralists and defeatists in all countries. The "peace offensive" was ordered strengthened while Communist leaders from foreign countries swore a solemn oath that their only allegiance was to the Soviet Union and their final aim the sovietization of the world. For inner consumption, a long theoretical article by Stalin and a repetitious address by Georgi M. Malenkov explained that the long-standing promise of a "transition to Communism" and a more cheerful life could not yet be fulfilled because of immutable economic laws which governed "socialist" as well as "capitalist" economy. The moral was that the population had to be patient and to suffer on, in order to strengthen the heavy industry and the military power of the Soviet empire.

Fight for the Succession

After the Congress, which heard Georgi M. Malenkov as the main reporter of the Central Committee and, by implication, Stalin's heir apparent, the fight for succession entered its most dramatic stage. The accusation of a "doctors' plot" prepared the demotion of Beria. But before Beria could be "unmasked" and liquidated, Stalin died on March 7, 1953. The period immediately following was one of uneasy equilibrium among the various pretenders. First, the *status quo* of power distribution was preserved behind a facade of unity. Malenkov, Beria, and Vyacheslav M. Molotov recommended each other for the offices of premier, minister of the interior, and minister of foreign affairs, respectively. A vehement polemic was directed against the "cult of personalities"; even Stalin's name almost completely disappeared from the Soviet press, to reappear later on as that of a minor saint.

Behind the facade of "collective leadership" the fight raged with unprecedented violence. On March 14, 1953, Malenkov was forced to resign from his second high office, that of secretary general of the Communist Party, but succeeded in placing there his close collaborator, Nikita S. Khrushchev. Beria reunited the previously split security apparatus in his hands, purged it of elements planted there by Stalin, and exposed the falseness of the charges against the doctors. Trying to get some outside support, he advanced a policy of political as well as economic concessions to the population, and to the oppressed nationalities in particular. An amnesty was granted in the Soviet Union and followed by similar amnesties in the satellites. Although "traitors" were excluded, a considerable number of minor offenders were probably released from jails and forced labor camps. The government promised to reform the penal code and the court procedure and to protect the rights of citizens against the worst abuses of the authorities. Bloody purges of "bourgeois nationalists" stopped and some of the worst tormentors of national minorities in the Ukraine and in Georgia were dismissed from

office. Some victims of the last purges were released from prison and reinstated. Open anti-Semitic agitation disappeared from the columns of the Soviet press, and the party organs admitted that the "doctors' plot" had been invented in order to foment national hatred.

A new economic policy was introduced in the Soviet Union as well as in the satellites. Concessions were made to individual peasants and to the private economy of the Soviet *kolkhozniki* (collective farmers). The tempo of investments in heavy industry was slowed down, and the economy was re-oriented toward the production of food and other consumers' goods.

Revolt

At that moment, with popular discontent at a high pitch after the excesses of the old policy, and the Communist machine confused and disorganized by the turn to the new one, resistance in satellite countries exploded in great strikes and demonstrations. Riotous strikes in many mines and factories of Czechoslovakia on June 1, 1953, showed that the working class was revolting in the most industrialized of the Peoples' Democracies. The East German revolt of June 17 was the first spontaneous revolt of a whole nation against totalitarian rule. It almost swept away the Communist regime and was suppressed, after several days of general strike and numerous street battles, only by the open intervention of Soviet occupation troops.

The Communist rulers met this threat by a combination of economic relaxation with increased terror, and with a new purge of those Communist leaders who had gone "too far" in meeting popular demands. This was also Malenkov's opportunity to settle accounts with Beria, whose "soft" policy seemed to have contributed to the disastrous results. On July 9 the Soviet government announced that Beria was a traitor and an agent of Western imperialists, and that he was dismissed from office, expelled from the Party and his case transmitted to the Supreme Court for punishment. His appointees in the minority regions of the Soviet Union were removed and arrested, the course against "bourgeois nationalism" was resumed, the talk about political reforms condemned as "a policy of capitulation." Such economic concessions as the reduction of investments in heavy industry, increased production of consumers' goods, and concessions to the peasants remained in force. But there was no relaxation in dictatorship and terror.

The persecution of Jews, interrupted after Stalin's death, was resumed in the summer of 1953. Having learned a lesson from the reaction of the free world to the last anti-Semitic campaign, the Communist leaders now conducted it quietly, without the fanfare of public trials and violent press campaigns. Almost all Jewish officials were dismissed from their jobs in East Germany, and former leaders of Jewish communities were sentenced to long forced labor terms in secret trials conducted in Czechoslovakia and Rumania in August 1953.

EASTERN GERMANY

THE THIRD congress of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei-SED (Socialist Unity Party) met in East Berlin from July 10-15, 1952. It proclaimed the slogan of "building socialism" in Germany, calling for accelerated development of heavy industry, measures to liquidate the remnants of the middle classes, and the strengthening of the "national armed forces." Soon after the Soviets temporarily broke off the exchange of notes on German unity by not replying to the last Western note of September 23, 1952, the chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet paid a state visit to the East German government. The presence of the commanders of the various arms of the military People's Police at the reception for him received special publicity.

The sudden diversion of resources to armament and heavy industry and the measures against independent farmers and small traders began to cause economic strains in the autumn of 1952. These increased all through the winter and spring. There was a growing shortage of food, and during the single month of March 1953 more than 57,000 refugees, including thousands of farmers, registered in West Berlin. Meanwhile the struggle in the international Communist hierarchy, exemplified in the Slansky trial in Prague in November 1952 and the charges against the Kremlin doctors in January 1953, produced a serious crisis in the government and the SED. The search for scapegoats in the administration among the remnants of the "bourgeois" parties and measures against leading Communists with a "Western" past were accompanied by a purge of "Zionists" and "Jewish-bourgeois nationalists," i.e., of Jews, from all important positions. Non-Jewish victims of the purge included the former Communist Politburo member Paul Merker, expelled from the Party in 1950 and arrested a few days after his name had been mentioned in the Slansky trial as an "accomplice" of the "American agent" Noel H. Field; the Liberal Minister of Internal Trade, Karl Hamann, arrested in mid-December 1952 on the charge of tolerating "sabotage" in his ministry; and the Christian Democratic Foreign Minister Georg Dertinger, arrested on January 15, 1953, as a "Western agent." None of them had been tried.

The purge subsided after the death of Stalin and the Moscow announcement in April 1953 that the plot of the Kremlin doctors had been a police fabrication. The former political adviser of the Soviet military commander, Ambassador Vladimir Semyonovich Semyonov, returned at the end of May 1953 with new powers as Soviet High Commissioner for Germany. On June 9, 1953, the Politburo admitted that it had made serious mistakes and announced a "new course" intended to relax the economic pressure on the population. The government acted to slow the pace of heavy industrial development, armament, and collectivization, and to reverse some of the action taken against independent farmers and traders. It offered an amnesty to refugees willing to return. The lowering of wages, however, was not reversed as quickly. This, together with the symptoms of uncertainty at the top, led to strikes and demonstrations in East Berlin on June 16 and to a mass

rising of the workers throughout Eastern Germany on June 17 which could only be subdued when the Soviet army intervened and proclaimed martial law.

The regime tried to combine economic concessions to the workers with arrests of ringleaders and a propaganda campaign to restore its authority. But local strikes for the release of arrested workers continued with partial success, while violent conflict broke out among the Communist leaders. Only in mid-July 1953 did repressions start in full earnest. Minister of Justice Max Fechner—a former Social Democrat—was arrested for having tolerated the release of strike leaders; Minister of State Security Wilhelm Zaisser, and the editor of the party newspaper, Rudolf Herrstadt, were deposed and reduced to the ranks for attacking party leader Walther Ulbricht and “advocating a policy of surrender”; the policy of the previous year was upheld as correct in principle and only exaggerated in its pace; and terror against all opposition elements, particularly in the factories, was greatly increased.

A new Western note on July 15 invited the Soviet government to resume four-power negotiations on Germany and Austria. The Soviet reply of August 6 and a further Soviet note on Germany, dated August 17, showed that nothing had changed in Russia's German policy during the year.

On August 22, 1953, the Soviet government promised a delegation of the East German government to end reparations as of 1954, to reduce occupation costs, and to return all remaining Soviet-owned plants except for the uranium mines to the East German government. Trade between the two countries was to be extended and new Soviet credits granted to relieve East Germany's acute economic difficulties.

The Anti-Jewish Purge

A wave of anti-Jewish measures swept the Soviet zone between the end of November 1952 and the end of March 1953. It led to the flight of 500 Jews, including all the old community leaders, of a previous estimated total of 1,700 to 1,800 members in East Berlin and 900 in the Soviet zone proper.

The campaign was primarily directed against Jewish solidarity as a possible source of dangerous links with the West. It was aimed chiefly at Jewish officials in the Communist Party and the Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Nazi Regimes—VVN (Association of Victims of Nazism) and at community leaders. It had two starting points—the issue of reparations and restitution of Jewish property and the Slansky trial of November 1952 with its subsequent “anti-Zionist” campaign.

RESTITUTION

In August 1952 the restitution laws based on the Allied legislation of 1945 were abolished in the German Democratic Republic. They had never had much practical importance; identified “aryanzed” property had generally been taken over by custodians and where possible nationalized, but not handed back to the former Jewish owners.

The West German reparations agreement with Israel in September 1952

led the international press to ask whether Eastern Germany would follow suit. The Socialist Unity Party reacted by denouncing the agreement as a trick of the "American imperialists" to subsidize their Israel "agents" at the expense of the German people, and called on Jewish community leaders to sign declarations to that effect. Their hesitation was noted and later held against them.

REACTION TO SLANSKY TRIAL

The Slansky trial in Prague in November 1952 was the signal for the Jewish purge in Eastern Germany, too. In mid-December 1952 the central committee of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei—SED (Socialist Unity Party) issued a sixty-page circular on the lessons of the Slansky trial, an extract from which was published in the party paper *Neues Deutschland* on January 4, 1953. It pointed out the importance of Zionism and international Jewish organizations, such as the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) as "agencies of American imperialism" trying to misuse the sympathy of the working people for Jewish victims of fascist persecution to organize espionage and sabotage in the peoples' democracies. As a warning, the former Politburo member Paul Merker, who had been expelled from the Party in 1950 for entirely different reasons, was now stated to have first been corrupted by American Jewish capitalists during his wartime emigration to Mexico in 1942. Articles Merker had published between 1942 and 1945 in the emigré paper *Freies Deutschland* were quoted as proof. In accordance with the Party line at the time, Merker had recognized the restitution of Jewish property as a priority obligation of the German people, expressed sympathy with the Jewish national movement, and promised state aid for the postwar emigration of surviving Jews. This was now interpreted as a promise to "Jewish capitalists" to "rob the German people." Similarly, Merker's advice to Jewish Communists in the emigration and during the first postwar years in Germany to join Jewish organizations for the sake of welfare benefits was quoted as proof that he had aided Jewish organizations in infiltrating the Party.

Even before the publication of this document, a general check-up on the Jews had begun. The VVN asked everywhere for membership lists of the Jewish communities, and it turned out that lists had secretly been kept of all those who until 1950 had received parcels from the JDC. Jewish Party members were called before the Control Commission and interrogated about their past and their connections with Jewish organizations or with relatives in the West. Finally, all community leaders were told to prove their loyalty by signing a declaration that Zionism was a fascist movement, Premier David Ben Gurion of Israel an agent of United States imperialism, the JDC an espionage organization, and reparations to Israel a device for exploiting the German people to finance America's Zionist tools.

FLIGHT TO THE WEST

The first prominent Jew to flee to the West was Leo Zuckermann, former head of President Wilhelm Pieck's chancellery, who had been an associate

of Merker in Mexico and had taken part with him in official discussions on restitution with Jewish representatives in 1947. He arrived in West Berlin on January 7, 1953. On January 15 he was followed by the chairman of the Federation of East Zone Jewish Communities, Julius Meyer, who had been an executive member of the Association of Victims of Nazism and a Communist member of the People's Chamber. With Meyer came the chairmen of the Erfurt, Dresden, Leipzig, and one week later, of the Magdeburg and Eisenach communities. The East German Government's adviser on Jewish affairs, Albert Hirsch, also fled. None of them had signed the required declaration.

The VVN promptly expelled the refugees as "Zionist agents who had worked under Western orders," but had to cancel a projected congress and found itself unable to continue its existence on the old basis. It was dissolved and replaced by an appointed Komitee der antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer (Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters), with only one Jewish member among twenty.

Communists of Jewish origin who took no interest in Jewish affairs, had no Jewish friends and did not hesitate to support the anti-Zionist and anti-restitution line had not been publicly attacked. The fact that some of them had lost their former prominent positions may or may not have been connected with the Jewish purge. Gerhard Eisler's Information Office was dissolved and he was not given another equally prominent post; but his deputy Albert Norden, also of Jewish origin, turned up again as secretary of the "permanent German committee for the peaceful solution of the German question." Arnold Zweig was granted a long leave from his post as president of the German Academy of Arts "at his own request" in December 1952, and was replaced in this position in April 1953 by Johannes R. Becher.

SUPERVISION

From the refugees' reports it was clear that special measures to supervise the Jewish population had been taken on Soviet orders long before the question became acute. In the view of the former community leaders, the first symptoms were the steady decline in the number of Russian officers of Jewish origin who occasionally came to attend their services, and the replacement of a Jew by a non-Jew as Soviet liaison officer to the Jewish communities in 1951. About the same time, the Soviet secret police authorities had begun efforts to recruit Hebrew-speaking informers "to report whether any anti-Soviet statements were made in the synagogues under the cover of religious service." The East German state security service had given orders to examine the mail of a number of well-known Jews and to check on their Western contacts; at the beginning of 1952 it had extended these orders to Jews in general and begun attempts to obtain complete lists.

The Jews who fled to West Berlin during the purge were recognized as political refugees by the West German authorities. An assistance program was organized and a special camp supported by the JDC set up. The Jewish

Agency opened an office in Berlin to speed up emigration to Israel; in April 1953 the first group of five left Munich for that destination. By the end of June about half the refugees had been flown out of Berlin to Western Germany.

Community Life

A new separate East Berlin community was set up after the purge under a provisional committee consisting of Georg Heilbrunn, Bernhard Jacobus, and Israel Rothmann. As its first act it condemned the escaped leaders for having played a double game, misusing the trust placed in them by the Jewish population and allying themselves with the enemies of peace and mankind who were protecting the fascist criminals. In the same resolution the committee recalled that anti-Semitism was a punishable offense in Eastern Germany.

By the end of January 1953 the East German government showed signs of being embarrassed by the exodus and the attendant publicity. Articles were now published stressing the difference between meritorious anti-Zionism and reprehensible anti-Semitism, and East German courts pronounced several sentences of one and two years' imprisonment for anti-Semitic insults.

Consecrations of synagogues took place in Erfurt in August and in Schwerin in September 1952. The dedication of a synagogue in Halle in July 1953—the first after the purge—was given great publicity and attended by the minister of religious affairs, the Christian Democratic Deputy Premier Otto Nuschke. (The Halle Jewish community had about forty-five members, most of them living in mixed marriage and caring little about Judaism. No Sabbath or festival services had been held in Halle for many years; on the High Holy Days the two or three people sufficiently interested journeyed to Leipzig to pray. Leon Zamojre, the community's president who had been responsible for the renovation of the old chapel, had fled to West Berlin early in 1953.) In August 1953, the East Berlin synagogue in the Rykestrasse, destroyed in the 1938 pogrom, was rededicated; with 1,200 seats it was now the largest in Germany.

There was no rabbi in the Eastern zone, only a lay preacher.

SOVIET UNION

NO DEPENDABLE demographic data were available on the Jews of the Soviet Union. There were roughly 1,800,000 persons of Jewish origin. There was no way of judging how many of them considered themselves Jews and to what degree, because all manifestations of Jewish cultural or communal life had been suppressed for many years, and religious services were tolerated only in a few places and for a small fraction of the Jewish population.

The few synagogues still open in Moscow, Odessa, Tiflis, and perhaps a few other places were usually frequented only by several hundred believers,

and on High Holy Days by several thousand in all. There were no Jewish schools, Jewish theaters, Jewish publishing houses. No Jewish periodicals or Jewish books appeared. There were no Jewish welfare or charity organizations. Nothing had been heard for years about Jewish life in the Jewish Autonomous Province of Birobidjan in Eastern Siberia; there were rumors that the territory had been transformed into a district of slave labor camps.

Salisbury Report

After many years during which foreigners were barred from Central Asia, where many Soviet Jews had been living since World War II, *The New York Times* correspondent Harrison E. Salisbury was allowed to visit the Soviet Central Asiatic Republics in September 1953. His report, published in *The New York Times* on October 1, 1953, did not deal with the majority of the Jewish inhabitants of Central Asia who had settled there during and after the war, but with the small Jewish community of Bokhara that had lived in that city for centuries. According to Salisbury, these Jews were still living in the same quarter and practicing their religion in their ancient way. There was a synagogue, which Salisbury visited, and a rabbi, whom he met. There had been a great reduction in private trade, although individual artisans were still working in their ancient specialties; and young people were breaking away from Jewish Orthodoxy.

Anti-Semitic Campaign

If there was no organized Jewish life in the Soviet Union, there were still individual Jews. During the period under review they were the target of the greatest and most vicious state-organized anti-Semitic campaign in the history of Soviet Russia.

The campaign against "Jewish" influence in Soviet public life had for several years taken the form of a struggle against "cosmopolitan" tendencies. Many Jews had been purged from professions as "Jewish nationalists," or "cosmopolitans," or both. Invidious Jewish stereotypes had appeared in the press and literature (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1952 [Vol. 53], and 1953 [Vol. 54]). At the end of 1952 this campaign, anti-Semitic by implication, was transformed into an open anti-Jewish drive by the "discovery" of a world-wide "Jewish conspiracy," allegedly headed by the leaders of American and Israel Jewry.

The attack was first launched in the satellite countries. Reports about the Slansky trial in Prague (see p. 288), about the fall of Ana Pauker in Rumania (see p. 288), about the "Zionist conspiracies" among Hungarian and Rumanian Jews (see p. 297 and p. 300), and about the "intrigues" of the Israel government prepared the Soviet public for things to come. Then the storm broke in the Soviet Union itself.

The "Doctors' Plot"

On January 13, 1953, Moscow *Pravda* published an official communique, announcing:

Some time ago agencies of state security discovered a terrorist group of doctors who had made it their aim to cut short the lives of active public figures of the Soviet Union through the sabotage of medical treatment . . . Among the participants in this terrorist group there proved to be: Prof. M. S. Vovsi, therapist; Prof. V. N. Vinogradov, therapist; Prof. M. B. Kogan, therapist; Prof. B. B. Kogan, therapist; Prof. P. I. Yegorov, therapist; Prof. A. I. Feldman, otolaryngologist; Prof. Ya. G. Etinger, therapist; Prof. A. M. Grinshtein, neuropathologist; G. I. Maiorov, therapist.

According to the communique, documentary evidence, investigations, the conclusions of medical experts, and confessions by the accused doctors had "established" the fact that the criminal doctors had sabotaged the treatment of their patients and undermined their health. They had killed Soviet leaders A. A. Zhdanov and A. S. Shcherbakov; they had also tried to destroy the health of Marshals A. M. Vasilevsky, L. A. Govorov, and I. S. Konev, of General S. M. Shtemenko, Admiral G. I. Levchenko, and other military leaders. According to the announcement, "all these murderer-doctors, who had become monsters in human form, trampling the sacred banner of science and desecrating the honor of scientists, were enrolled by foreign intelligence services as hired agents." Most of the participants (Vovsi, B. B. Kogan, Feldman, Grinshtein, Etinger, and others) were alleged to have been connected with the "international Jewish bourgeois nationalist organization Joint [the American Joint Distribution Committee—JDC], established by American intelligence." Dr. Vovsi had told the investigators that he had received orders "to wipe out the leading cadres of the Soviet Union" from the United States through the JDC, via a Moscow doctor, Shimeliovich, and the "well-known Jewish bourgeois nationalist" Mikhoels. According to the communique, other participants in the plot (Vinogradov, M. B. Kogan, Yegorov), were old agents of British intelligence. The last sentence of the communique stated that "the investigation will soon be concluded."

Of the nine doctors mentioned in the communique, six were Jews. One of the alleged victims of the plot, A. A. Zhdanov, had died at the end of August 1948. *Pravda* had published the medical certificate of his death on September 1, 1948—it had been signed by five doctors, none of whom was a Jew. Three of these five (Yegorov, Vinogradov, and Mayorov) were among those arrested. Six Jewish doctors who had not been mentioned in connection with Zhdanov's death had been now added to the list—obviously for anti-Semitic reasons. [Solomon] Mikhoels, accused of transmitting orders to the murderers, had been a Communist and a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee established in Moscow during World War II to win support and collect money for the Soviet Union among the Jews of Western countries. In this capacity, he had traveled in the United States together with Itzik Pfeffer in 1943. After the war, Mikhoels had died suddenly under

suspicious circumstances during a trip to the liberated city of Minsk in Byelorussia. There were rumors that he had either been murdered by anti-Semites or liquidated by the secret police. Itzik Pfeffer had been arrested and deported, together with all the other leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and several prominent Yiddish writers, when the committee was suddenly dissolved and its press organ *Aynikeit* closed in November 1948 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, [vol. 51], p. 337). Mikhoels' real name was Vovsi, and he was a relative of Dr. M. S. Vovsi, one of the "murderer-doctors."

During the ensuing weeks of the campaign, no more details were given about the plot, except that on January 21, Dr. Lydia F. Timaschuk was awarded the order of Lenin "for assistance rendered to the government in exposing the murderer-doctors." According to Soviet refugees, Lydia Timaschuk was the wife of one of the accused, Dr. M. B. Kogan. She may have "collaborated" in order to save herself or her children. In any case, she became a Soviet heroine overnight. All the newspapers wrote long articles celebrating her vigilance and printed thousands of letters addressed to her from all parts of the country.

Attacks on Jewish Organizations

A campaign with clear anti-Semitic overtones filled the Soviet press immediately after the publication of the charges. Thus, *Pravda* declared on January 13, 1953:

Most of the members of the terrorist group . . . were bought by the American intelligence service. They were recruited by a branch of American intelligence, the international Jewish bourgeois nationalist organization Joint. The dirty face of this Zionist espionage organization, concealing its foul work under a mask of charity, has been completely exposed. Relying on a group of depraved Jewish bourgeois nationalists, the professional spies and terrorists of the Joint spread their subversive activity to the territory of the Soviet Union. . . . Exposure of the band of poisoner-doctors is a blow at the international Jewish Zionist organizations. Now all can see what "charitable friends of peace" are hiding behind the Joint letterhead.

These accusations were repeated in *Izvestiya*, the official organ of the Soviet government; *Trud*, the newspaper of the labor unions; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the organ of the Red Army; *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the magazine for the intellectuals, and in the entire provincial press. Beside the JDC, other Jewish organizations abroad, like the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Socialist Bund [of Russia and Poland before World Wars I and II], and all Zionist organizations were described as hotbeds of espionage, sabotage, and counterrevolutionary plots. The impression was intentionally created that all Jews who were active communally were "enemies of socialism" and "hirelings of imperialism." Some examples from Soviet publications illustrate to what incredible lengths the campaign went.

On January 21, *New Times*, the official organ of the Soviet Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, published an article by V. Minayev on "The Zionists, Agents of American Espionage." The article charged that Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, and political adviser Reuven Shiloh of the Israel Government, had executed the orders of the United States State Department, while Ambassador Abba Eban was a "British agent." Minayev repeated the canard, first invented in the Slansky trial, about the "Morgenthau-Acheson plan" of espionage and sabotage, allegedly adopted in a secret conference of these American statesmen with Ben Gurion in Washington in 1947. Zionist leaders and Israel statesmen, Minayev wrote, were waging a defamatory campaign against the Soviet Union. By supporting the American imperialists, the Zionists were in effect supporting the policy of reviving the Nazi regime and of re-establishing "bloody fascist systems, permeated with the spirit of racist bestiality."

The main supporters of Zionism were the American capitalist families Straus, Lehman, Rockefeller, and Morgenthau. The American diplomat Benjamin Cohen was named as the liaison man between the State Department and Zionist organizations. In Palestine, the article stressed, armed Zionist bands were waging a war of extermination against the Arab population, seizing the land of poor Arab peasants and driving them into the desert.

On February 13 *Trud*, the organ of Soviet labor unions, replied to a reader who wanted to be told more about the subversive and espionage activities of the Zionists and of the JDC.

Trud "explained" that the JDC had been set up by American imperialists during World War I. Its first "subversive action" had been its participation in the Herbert Hoover mission to Russia in the early Twenties. When famine was stifling the young Soviet republic, Herbert Hoover's Agricultural Research Administration (ARA) and JDC had come to the Soviet Union, "ostensibly to give the aid to the hungry," but in reality "to strive for the overthrow of the Soviet regime." "Irrefutable facts testify," the article went on, "that Joint is one of the most important branches of the American intelligence service. Murderers, spies, and saboteurs, who are members of this organization, carry out the vilest assignments of Wall Street, not disdaining any, even the most inhuman means."

The article cited the case of Israel Jacobson, head of the JDC in Hungary, who had been "caught in espionage," the revelations of the Slansky trial, and the case of the "Moscow terrorist doctors" who allegedly "had received a directive from the United States via the Zionist organization Joint to wipe out the leading cadres of the Soviet Union."

The history of Zionism was treated in a similar way. The Zionists "oriented themselves originally toward German imperialism," the article said; after World War I, they "went over completely to the service of British monopoly capital," and after the Morgenthau-Acheson conference, into the service of American imperialism. *Trud* described many "Zionist crimes." Thus, the Israel labor union federation Histadruth had joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, another organization "carrying out espionage-sabotage assignments of the imperialists."

On February 24, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in a lengthy article, *What Is Joint?*,

added the "subversive work" of the Agro-Joint, an organization which had tried to help Russian Jews to settle in agriculture. Then it accused the leaders of the JDC of having worked, during World War II, for the Gestapo! After thus describing the JDC's "subversive activities," the article added:

The ringleaders of Joint are also the leaders of the American Jewish Committee. They belong to the richest families in the United States. . . . The Rockefellers, the Kuhn, Loeb & Co., the Warburgs, Lehmans, and Fords rule the roost in Joint. . . . It remains only to add that the house of Morgan is no less interested in Joint.

The provincial press repeated the charges. On February 6, the *Sovetskoye Zakarpatye*, appearing in the former Czechoslovak province of Carpatho-Ukraine "ceded" to the Soviet Union in 1945, printed N. Klimpotyuk's article "Zionists are Accursed Foes of Working People." This was reprinted in the *Pravda Ukrainy* of Kiev on February 13.

After repeating the usual charges of terrorism, Klimpotyuk reviewed "criminal" Zionist activities in his own country. The first crime listed was that in the Twenties the JDC had spent 16,000,000 Czechoslovak crowns in the Carpatho-Ukraine, there supporting such "subversive organizations" as the Jewish Colonization Association and the Jewish gymnasium (high school) in Mukačevo, which was "a recruitment center for spies and saboteurs." The chief rabbis of that city, it turned out, had been "active accomplices" in Zionist criminal activities, and had been supported with dollars through the Bratislava lawyer Tomashoff Baruch, a relative "of the well-known American atom-monger [Bernard] Baruch." All this had been done in order "to transform Transcarpathia into a military springboard against the Soviet Union."

Zionists or alleged Zionists were not the only victims. On January 14 *Kommunist*, the central theoretical organ of the Communist Party, printed a long article about a purge in Leningrad, written by F. Kozlov, the regional party secretary in that city. Among the "alien and foreign elements" expelled, Kozlov cited persons "connected with such bourgeois nationalist counterrevolutionary organizations as the Bund." Other men expelled were accused of being former Nepmen, i. e., private businessmen tolerated in the Soviet Union in the years 1921-28. Many of the Nepmen were Jews and the term Nepman was often used almost as a synonym for Jew. The anti-Semitic overtones of the Leningrad purge and of the article, published immediately after the discovery of the "doctors' plot," were unmistakable.

Break Off of Relations with Israel

The charges against Jewish doctors and the vicious anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attacks in the Soviet press provoked a wave of indignation and protest throughout the world. It had its most violent repercussions in Israel. When extremists belonging to a secret and illegal organization exploded a bomb on the premises of the Soviet legation in Israel on February 9, 1953, the Israel government immediately apologized for the incident and prom-

ised to punish the perpetrators. But the Soviet government refused to accept the apology and, without further negotiations, broke diplomatic relations with Israel. A note dated February 11, 1953, officially repeated, in the name of the Soviet Government, the charge of an Israel-led conspiracy and "campaign of hate" against the Soviet Union.

Persecution of Individual Jews

A new wave of Soviet hate propaganda followed. The new campaign was not aimed only at Jewish organizations and their former or alleged members. As there were only a few such persons in the Soviet Union (mostly in recently annexed territories like the Baltic states, Eastern Galicia, the Carpatho-Ukraine, Moldavia), the persecution was extended to people whose only tie with Judaism was their Jewish name or origin.

Jewish doctors throughout the Soviet Union were charged with professional crimes, criminal neglect, and fraudulent acquisition of degrees and medical positions. Jewish officials were removed and punished for misuse of official power, graft, and nepotism. Jewish managers, accountants, and engineers were tried and sentenced for thievery, embezzlement, economic sabotage. Other Jews were accused of spying, "economic wrecking," and exploiting innocent orphans.

Most of the cases were reported in the local press, especially in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldavia. An overwhelming number of criminals of every description with Jewish names were discovered. When the family name of the offender was not unmistakably Jewish, personal names and patronymics were added. This centrally organized and directed campaign lasted until April 1953.

INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC MEDICINE

The purge of Jewish doctors did not remain limited to the group directly connected with the "murder plot." It was soon extended to hundreds of other Jewish doctors all over the Soviet Union. At the end of January 1953 *Meditsinsky Rabotnik*, the official organ of the Moscow Ministry of Health, charged that the members of the Institute of Forensic Medicine had allegedly made the murder plot possible by their "blindness" and by propagating "alien and bourgeois ideas about basic pathology and psychiatry." The main target was the former director of the Institute, P. M. Feinberg, who had allegedly filled all the jobs with his "old friends from Odessa." An accumulation of Jewish names and a reference to their having hailed from Odessa, a center of Jewish population, were intended to create the impression of "Jewish infiltration"—the "alien ideas" were attributed to foreign Jewish scholars like Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson.

UKRAINE AND BYELORUSSIA

On February 15, 1953, *Pravda Ukrainy* of Kiev attacked the Ukrainian ministry of health for tolerating doctors—mostly Jews—who were guilty of accepting bribes from patients. Other instances of the venality, nepotism,

and unprofessional conduct of Jewish physicians were reported as taking place in a village near Zhitomir, in Kamenetz-Podolsk, in Kiev, and in Minsk.

In the Kiev Medical Institute, professors with names like "Olshanetsky, Erlikhman, and Kogan" were admitting only relatives of institute officials to postgraduate work, with the result that five doctor's and eleven master's degrees had to be annulled. In a dispatch on this purge, *The New York Times* commented that "the emphasis on Jewish names would seem to fit the Soviet anti-Semitic campaign."

On January 27, *Meditsinsky Rabotnik* discovered that M. Z. Izrailit practiced as a specialist in venereal diseases without being a doctor. Still more serious was the case of Mrs. Chernyakova (having adopted a non-Jewish-sounding name, she was referred to as Myra Izrailovna Chernyakova [Blokh]). She was accused of having tossed specimens of living tissues into an ashan instead of carrying out biopsies, and of having deliberately reported malignant tumors as nonmalignant, thus threatening the lives of cancer patients.

JEWISH "ECONOMIC SABOTEURS"

At the same time, the Soviet press discovered thieves, embezzlers, and "economic wreckers" with Jewish names everywhere. Thus on January 15, the Red Fleet newspaper *Krasnyi Flot* reported a criminal named Greenberg who had carried out depredations in government warehouses. The same day, *Pravda Ukrainy* in Kiev reported the discovery of a gang of criminals with names like Khain and Yaroshetsky in a textile concern in Kiev, as well as thieving and venality in many other Soviet economic organizations in Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Voroshilovgrad, and Cernovitsy. Characterizing these thieves as the "contemptible dregs of our society," *Pravda Ukrainy* announced that they had already been or would be severely punished. Khain and Yaroshetsky were executed by a firing squad.

On January 20, *Pravda Ukrainy* announced that E. J. Chernina, a protégé of deputy chief prosecutor Gluck of the Ukraine, had obtained a high post in the prosecutor's office by fraud and blackmail, and used it to protect criminals named Nodelman and Gormansky in the Voroshilovgrad coal supply concern, and Feiderman in Moscow. On the same day, *Sovietskaya Litva* in Kaunas denounced "bourgeois nationalist" embezzlers in the Lithuanian State Bank and the local milk and meat industry, while *Sovietskaya Latvija* in Riga denounced one Abram Natanovich Khaitin, head of the production shop of the Latvian Theatrical Society, who had allegedly embezzled state property.

On January 23, *Pravda Ukrainy* attacked Yakov Davydovich Meilman, director of a glass factory who "filled all executive offices with his people"—all persons with Jewish-sounding names, who had lived a life of ease, buying each other gifts from factory funds and squandering government money, until some "honorable, principled Communists" had denounced them. Party secretaries were attacked for having punished them too leniently.

On January 25, *Trud* reported the trial of L. Lumer and L. Levitas, who had turned a booth in a Moscow cooperative market into a private shop. For this minor offense Levitas was sentenced to fifteen years in jail and confiscation of all his property; Lumer was awaiting trial.

On January 29, *Moskovskaya Pravda* reported that citizens called Kershner, Levin, and Khanin had been sentenced to six, four, and three years in jail for falsifying statistics in a shoe factory.

"BRIBERY"

On February 1, *Pravda Ukrainy* reported an investigation in Vinnitsa that had revealed that workers Bachillo, Felfuks, and Taube had stolen 1,500 meters of fabrics from a textile factory and disposed of them with the aid of speculators Kagan and Livshits. Tried before a court, some of the accused had been acquitted. They were defended by a lawyer named Shain. But later it was discovered that the thieves had given a "bribe" of 50,000 rubles to their counsel. Shain was disbarred but nothing else happened to him, and the newspaper attacked the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice for lack of vigilance. On February 20 the minister of justice informed the newspaper that Shain had been arrested, and three other lawyers with Jewish names, Khazins, Nisenson, and Krymsky had been disbarred "for shielding the obvious criminals Livshits, Taube, and others in a court trial."

On February 25, *Trud* reported that one Lev Rotenbergsky had worked as a senior foreman of a building administration in Maikop, North Caucasus. After his arrest, it was proved that Rotenbergsky "had conducted subversive work" and "systematically embezzled large state funds."

New Espionage Plot

While secret police organs were prosecuting "criminal doctors" and "economic saboteurs" in the provinces, Moscow *Pravda* of February 6 reported the discovery of a new espionage plot. The main culprit was one S. D. Gurevich, who had "established friendship with Trotskyites while in America in the years 1914-17 [sic]." In 1927, the story continued, Gurevich had renounced Trotskyism, but had remained a "hidden and inveterate enemy of the state"; in 1939 he had established ties with "a foreign intelligence service." Gurevich had recruited for espionage work T. A. Sas, K. E. Romanov, and E. A. Taratuta, a woman formerly employed by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Then Mrs. Taratuta had allegedly provided Gurevich with secret scientific documents. *Pravda* cautioned against "remnants of the beaten, exploiting classes," "Trotskyites," and "bourgeois nationalists." All these people, the newspaper added, were in the same category as the "terrorist doctors," who had also "aspired to the bourgeois way of life in their hearts."

A SOVIET FAGIN

But perhaps the most vicious of the anti-Jewish stereotypes fostered in the Soviet press was that of a Jew who had misused and exploited innocent children. The story appeared in the Moscow *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, central organ of the Communist Youth, on January 23, 1953. It described how a "small, fair-haired boy," the orphan of patriots who had given their lives for the Fatherland, had been exploited by an old, blind man, with whose family

he lived, and whom he had been assigned by the authorities to guide. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* did not deny that the old man was blind—but “his history was unclear.” The old man asserted that he had lost his eyesight during the war. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* did not give this statement the lie; it merely declared that there were no documents attesting to its truth.

The blind man's name was Alexander Lazarevich Kogan. There was no evidence that he had really mishandled the boy, but “Yura was a stranger in the family.” He did not receive any education. Late at night, in bad weather, although dead tired, the boy was sent out to buy feed—for the family bullfinch! “What will [Kogan] implant in the boy's soul?” the Communist paper asked. The story bore all the hallmarks of a popular anti-Semitic legend.

The Reversal

This campaign of anti-Jewish propaganda continued everywhere in the Soviet territory, up to Josef Stalin's death on March 7, 1953. During the next few weeks, the behind-the-scenes fight to succeed him reached its climax. For a short period one of the contenders for supreme power, Lavrenti P. Beria, succeeded in consolidating the apparatus of interior security and secret police under his leadership. Born a Georgian and hence a member of a national minority, Beria had reason to fear that the fostering of prejudices against non-Russian groups under the pretext of fighting against “bourgeois nationalism” would hurt him, especially as some of his lieutenants in the Caucasus had already been removed on this charge. But he had a still more compelling reason for exploding the charges against the Jewish doctors and so removing the main prop of the anti-Jewish and anti-minority campaign. The case against the doctors had been prepared by Semyon D. Ignatiev and his aide, one Ryumin, who had been appointed to the Ministry of State Security to build an anti-Beria faction there. The charges against the “murderer-doctors” were accompanied by accusations that organs of state security had neglected their duties and allowed the plot to mature. This repeated the pattern of charges used against another boss of the secret police, Henryk Yagoda, in 1938. At that time another “doctor's plot” had ended in Yagoda's arrest and the doctors' confession to a series of medical murders and a treasonable plot in the services of foreign imperialists. As long as the fight for power was on, and the doctors were in jail as conspirators, Beria could not be sure that the same charges would not be used against him. As he had not achieved complete power, he could not change the direction of the explosion by making the doctors “confess” that another pretender had hired them for the murders. The only possible defense for him was to denounce the charges as fraudulent.

On April 3, 1953, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* published a communique of Beria's Ministry of the Interior that it had carried out a thorough investigation of the doctors' case. It turned out that the accused had been arrested by Ignatiev's ministry of state security “incorrectly, without any lawful basis.” The accusations against them were “false” and the documentary sources “without

foundation." The confessions had been "obtained by the officials of the former ministry of state security through the use of impermissible means of investigation"; in other words they had been extorted. The communique announced that the doctors had been completely exonerated and released from prison, and persons accused of incorrect conduct of the investigation had been arrested and held criminally responsible.

On April 7, *Pravda* announced that Semyon D. Ignatiev, Minister of State Security until Stalin's death, and afterward for a short time a member of the Communist Party secretariat, had been "released from his duties as a secretary of the party." His aide Ryumin, former head of the investigating department of the ministry, had been arrested.

This new communique enumerated fifteen accused doctors, while the statement of January 13 had listed only nine, six of them Jews. All the additional six names were non-Jewish, which proved that the news release of January 13 had been artificially "weighted" with Jews.

The communique listed only thirteen of the fifteen innocent doctors as released. The names of M. B. Kogan, who had been a personal physician to Stalin, and of Ya. G. Etinger were missing, and there was no explanation of what had happened to them.

Articles in the Soviet press after the release also declared Solomon Mikhoels to have been an "honorable Soviet figure" smeared by the investigators. And by a special decree of the government, the Order of Lenin was taken away from Lydia Timaschuk, who was now condemned as an informer.

ADMISSION OF ANTI-SEMITISM

On April 6, *Pravda* admitted that one of the motives of the fabrication of charges against the doctors had been an attempt to "inflame . . . feelings of national enmity;" *Izvestia* spoke in the same context of instigation to "racial hatred." As it was clear to everybody that the world-wide campaign of anti-Jewish hatred could not have been conducted without orders from the highest organs of the Communist Party and Soviet Government, this was an admission of an official instigation to anti-Semitism.

During the next few months, public attacks on Jews stopped. The press preached the solidarity and friendship of Soviet nationalities. Accusations of "bourgeois nationalism" disappeared from its columns. Beria's aides in some minority republics, previously purged, were now reinstated, with the explanation that they had been removed on the trumped-up charges of bourgeois nationalism. The secretary general of the Communist Party in the Soviet Ukraine, Leonid Melnikov, was removed on the charge that he had tried to Russify the newly acquired territories in the West.

THE PERIOD OF SILENCE

But while the Moscow doctors were released, nothing was published about relief granted or amends made to the thousands of other innocent victims of the anti-Jewish drive, and there were no reports of any attempts to repair the harm done to the Jewish population as a whole by the creation of anti-Jewish stereotypes.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were resumed in July 1953. But Soviet

anti-Jewish propoganda among the Arabs did not stop.

In the meantime, on July 9, 1953, it was announced that Lavrenti P. Beria has been "unmasked" as a "traitor and agent of foreign imperialists," removed from office, and expelled from the party. After his fall, the accusations of "bourgeois nationalism" reappeared in the Soviet press and a new purge was conducted in the minority republics, especially in the Caucasus, where Beria's appointees were again removed. But the problems of the Jewish minority were not treated publicly in Soviet press and literature, and the fate of the Jewish population was shrouded in official silence. New secret trials against long-imprisoned leaders of Jewish communities were conducted in Czechoslovakia and Rumania in August 1953. But no reports about new developments affecting Jewish affairs penetrated the double Iron Curtain which separated the Jews in the Soviet Union from the outside world.

No emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union was allowed throughout the period reviewed.

JOSEPH GORDON

POLAND

ON JULY 22, 1952, the Polish Sejm (parliament) adopted a new Soviet-patterned constitution. The first Sejm elected under the new basic law was chosen on October 26, 1952, from a single list consisting of 425 candidates and 194 alternates presented by the National Front.

Following the elections, Boleslaw Bierut stepped down from the presidency of Poland and, again according to Soviet practice, became its prime minister. In fact, the new constitution had abolished the position of presidency, and the highest formal organ of the country had become the Council of the State of Poland, which was similar to the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Soviets in the Soviet Union. Alexander Zawadski was elected to the chairmanship of this Council.

Concurrently with its adoption of the Soviet constitutional patterns, the government maintained its policy of systematically integrating Polish economic and social life into the over-all Soviet structure. During the period under review (July 1952 through September 1953) the government of Poland continued to invest substantially in heavy industry with war potentials, and did little to ameliorate the growing plight of the peasantry and workers. It carried on its previous policy of repressing all the segments of the population which were considered a present or a future danger to the Communist regime. In a predominantly Catholic country, Catholic clergy was under heavy and systematic attack. Thus, in September 1953 the government suspended and later interned the Roman Catholic primate of Poland, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski. The same month Czeslaw Kaczmarek, the bishop of Kielce, was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment; before his trial, members of the clergy in the archdiocese of Krakow were brought to court and received severe sentences. In accordance with classic Communist strategy,

the government replaced these "untrustworthy" elements with a new organization of "patriotic" priests and laymen, the "National Front Committee of Catholics." Under the leadership of the priest Jan Czuj, this front committee was to be affiliated with the Communist-directed National Front Organization.

Jewish Population

The small Jewish community of Poland was unable to withstand the unremitting state drive for conformity. Available reports and publications showed a steady decline and disappearance of those remnants of Polish Jewry that had somehow managed to survive during the difficult postwar years and to preserve some of their communal institutions and something of their distinct way of life.

There was no way of establishing with any accuracy the exact number of Jews in Poland. No substantial changes had taken place since July 1952, when emigration was forbidden; only a few dozen Jews had succeeded in leaving Poland toward the end of 1952. On the basis of previous data the number of Jews in Poland during the period under review was approximately 45,000. This figure includes those Jews who continued to live in Poland under assumed names after World War II, and probably some small groups of converts, as well. Available data on geographical distribution of Jews indicated that thirty-three cities contained Jewish communities of varying sizes, and that the majority of the Jewish population was concentrated in the western regions of the country.

Communal Problems

As in previous years Jewish communal activities centered around the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews. At the beginning of 1953, the Union was invited (apparently by its Communist leadership) to abolish its regional (*Wojewodztwo*) and county (*Powiat*) committees, thus leaving no intermediary connecting links between the local organizations and the central directorate in Warsaw. Since the local Communist party cells were by now in firm control of all Jewish committees throughout Poland, there was no longer any need for the old three-level organizational pattern. The Union's national congress held in Warsaw on March 21-22, 1953, duly accepted this proposal, thus taking another step in the gradual liquidation of organized Jewish communal activities in Poland. In fact the congress went even further; in an apparent move to forestall accusations similar to those made against Jewish Communists in the course of the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia in November 1952, the congress also redefined the aims and the character of the Union. In special amendments to its by-laws, these new aims were formulated as follows:

to educate the Jewish population in the spirit of Polish popular patriotism and proletarian internationalism, the spirit of merciless warfare against every expression of Jewish bourgeois nationalism: Zionism, Bundism; and to fight against the penetration of foreign enemy agencies into Poland (*Folksztyme*, April 1, 1953).

The leadership of the Union, whose presidium consisted of forty-seven members representing local Jewish committees and so-called Jewish mass organizations, remained the same. Hersz Smoliar and David Sfarid continued in the posts of president and secretary general, respectively. The reported membership of the Union stood at 10,000 (*Folksztyme*, March 24, 1953).

Religious Life

Little if any information was available on the Jewish religious activities in Poland. The Union of Congregations of the Mosaic Faith continued to exist, but its work was hampered not only by the general antireligious attitudes in the Communist party, but also by the ever-present fear of religious Jews of being identified with the aspiration of Jewish people abroad. There was also a lack of qualified rabbis and other religious functionaries. The rare statements that emanated from religious bodies and were reported in the press followed the official Communist line, and dealt for the most part with "Korean intervention," "American germ warfare," etc. Julius Datner continued as president of the Union of Congregations of the Mosaic Faith, and Rabbi Ber Percowicz served as chief rabbi (*Folksztyme*, July 25, 1952).

Jewish Education

After four years of state control, the Jewish school system in Poland seemed to be at a low ebb. Judging by the desperate appeals made by Jewish teachers, neither Jewish youth nor their parents seemed to be very much interested in "Jewish" schools which were neither Jewish nor Polish. Those who were looking for Jewish content in the education were apparently deeply disappointed by the results of four years of experimentation; this disappointment found indirect expression in some of the problems that the Jewish school directors discussed at their conference in Wroclaw in the summer of 1953. Since Jewish schools had to be "Socialist in character and Jewish in form," some of the teachers apparently realized the futility of their efforts, at the sight of their pupils' ignorance of Jewish history and literature. Since the dilemma could not be faced squarely, the directors found a scapegoat in the "lack of proper relationships between the children and their parents," and in the Jewish agencies' misunderstanding of the "real aims and the progressive character of the school." Nevertheless, the Communist paper *Folksztyme* on December 18, 1952, and again on July 18, 1953, appealed to both parents and teachers to redouble their efforts and to make sure that Jewish pupils did receive some idea of the Jewish past and some feelings for the Jewish present—of course, as appropriately interpreted in terms of the Communist doctrine.

Newspaper reports indicated that there were Jewish schools functioning

in Lodz, Szczecin, Dzerzjonow, Lignice, Wroclaw, Warsaw, and Krakow, *et al.* Some of the schools were rumored to have been recently closed or "consolidated," but there was no way of ascertaining the real situation.

Cultural Activities

According to official sources, varied Jewish cultural activities were maintained throughout Poland, and designed as part of a general propaganda action. Thus, the report presented to the national congress of the Union mentioned above listed the existence of thirty-six Jewish cultural centers, thirteen clubs, and twenty-six dramatic ensembles, choirs, and dance groups in 1953. As in previous years, a country-wide festival of Jewish art was held in Wroclaw on January 31 and February 1, 1953, to which Jewish art groups in different cities sent their performers.

The directors of the Jewish state theater complained bitterly of the lack of interest shown in some of the cities the troupe had visited. The theater had not been able to meet its "norms" according to the "plan," and had visited only twenty-three cities with Jewish populations.

PUBLICATIONS

The Yiddish Buch publishing house issued thirty-one items in 1952. Characteristic of its publishing activities were biographies of Lenin and Stalin, a volume on Boleslav Bierut, and volumes of Stalin's latest works. It also published a few volumes by contemporary Jewish Communist writers, including Hersz Smoliar, M. Szkliar, and Chaim Kac. Its publishing plans for 1953 called for the increased production of Marxist-Leninist literature and for a number of translations from contemporary Polish writers.

The only Yiddish newspaper which continued to appear was the Communist *Folksztyme*, which was a mere Yiddish translation of the daily Communist Polish press.

HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

In connection with the tenth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the Jewish Historical Institute had issued a number of publications of its own as well as some in cooperation with the Yiddish Buch. Most of these works apparently attempted to divest the ghetto struggle of its Jewish character and significance. Thus, according to press comments, Ber Mark had written a book to prove that the uprising had been "well-thought-out and prepared under the direction of the PPR [Communist Party]." *Bleter Far Geshichte*, a quarterly published by the Institute, and a number of writers who had appeared in print with belated reminiscences, took the same line. This odd interpretation was part of a widely organized, systematic propaganda which translated events of Jewish importance into "Socialist

popular patriotism." Thus, the *Tribuna Ludu*, central organ of the PPK, explained in detail in an article published April 19, 1953, how "the Communists had directed the ghetto fight as part of the general struggle for the freedom of Poland."

Effect of Anti-Jewish Policies in the Soviet Satellites

The interclique fight in Soviet Russia and the subsequent upheavals in the satellite countries had not yet affected Poland as deeply as it had some of the other countries under Soviet domination. In contrast with neighboring Czechoslovakia, where the purges and the executions of Slansky, Clementis, and others had taken place against a brutal background of overt anti-Semitism, in Poland Wladislaw Gomulka, the former secretary general of the Communist Party, who had been charged with "nationalist deviation" as long ago as 1948 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950 [Vol. 51], p. 341), was still alive and no purge trial had taken place.¹ In the light of the increasingly anti-Jewish policies emanating from Moscow in 1952, it was reported that a number of leading Polish Communist militants of Jewish origin were in disgrace, and that some kind of a purge was in the making. Those reports were not confirmed by facts. In October 1952 elections to the new Polish Sejm, the National Front list of candidates included the well-known Communist leader of Jewish origin Jacob Berman, listed third, after Bierut and Rokossowsky, as well as Hilary Minc, who was listed tenth. The new cabinet established in November 1952 included Hilary Minc, economic dictator of Poland, as one of the vice premiers. Again, the All-Polish Election Committee of the National Front included a number of persons with Jewish names, e.g., Hersz Smoliar, the chairman of the Union.

While there did not seem to have been any special purge of Communist leaders of Jewish origin, the Slansky trial held in Prague in November 1952 had introduced a new political climate in Poland and undoubtedly had gravely affected the Jewish community. It had given the starting signal to a virulent campaign in which it was practically impossible to distinguish between outright anti-Zionism and covert anti-Semitism. The Israel legation was accused of all kinds of espionage activities; on December 8 and 19, 1952, the Polish government declared L. Kubovi, the Israel ambassador extraordinary, *persona non grata* and demanded his recall. Kubovi left Poland and the Israel legation there was put under a *chargé d'affaires*.² Later news dispatches indicated that Jews had been arrested for alleged Zionist activities in Warsaw, Krakow, and Wroclaw; there were also reports that Jewish schools had been closed and sixty Jewish educators put under arrest. No information was available as to whether Jewish governmental employees had been dismissed or otherwise affected by the anti-Jewish trend. Reliable

¹Apparently this was a reflection of the differences between Poland and other Soviet satellite countries in the application of the anti-Jewish Communist line.

²Commenting on the demand for Kubovi's recall, *Tribuna Ludu* did not hesitate to state that "Zionism has become an open agency of American Imperialism, the mortal enemy of humanity and . . . of the Polish people."

reports indicated that the number of Jews in responsible positions in government had been small for some time.

In January 1953 the Polish press gave wide coverage to the "doctors' plot" charges of the Moscow government. There was a startling reappearance of such phrases as an "international conspiracy" organized by renowned world Jewish organizations, "plotters without fatherland and honor," "band of doctor-poisoners"—phrases all-too-familiar from the pre-war anti-Semitic Polish press. It was difficult to ascertain to what degree the popular Polish hatred of Russia cancelled out the anti-Jewish propaganda; but it may be fairly assumed however that the propaganda certainly did the Jewish community no good.

LEON SHAPIRO

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THERE were still almost 15,000 persons of Jewish origin in Czechoslovakia. Legal emigration had stopped after 1949, and the illegal crossing of borders now fortified in depth and watched by thousands of frontier guards had become almost impossible. There was undoubtedly some natural decrease in the Jewish population, since its age composition was rather unfavorable, and many children born to mixed marriages had lost all contact with the Jewish community; but exact data about the number of remaining Jews were not available.

Jewish communal activities were reduced to religious services in a few synagogues attended by small groups of mostly elderly people. The remaining "Jewish religious communities" had been consolidated into nine district units in Bohemia and Moravia; the number of communities in Slovakia remained unknown. Beside maintaining the synagogues and rabbis, the communities' activities were confined to compulsory participation in Communist "peace campaigns." The only Jewish periodical, *Věstník* in Prague, continued publication as a small monthly; it was filled with articles in support of government propaganda campaigns, sermons about religious topics, and personal news—mostly obituaries. Since 1948-49 Zionist organizations had been dissolved, Jewish welfare institutions nationalized, and representatives of foreign Jewish charitable organizations banned from Czechoslovakia; many of their former local representatives were in jail.

Most of the remaining Jews had severed their ties with organized Jewish life, considered themselves completely assimilated to the Czech and Slovak ethnic groups, and were voluntary or involuntary supporters of the Communist regime. This did not save them from becoming, as members of an "alien" and "suspect" group, victims of a violent persecution.

The great purge of 1951-52 had removed almost all persons of Jewish origin from prominent positions in the Communist Party and state admin-

istration. Most of them had been arrested and kept in jail, awaiting their fate. Throughout 1952 the press had openly attacked "Zionist conspirators," "Jewish nationalists," "Jewish capitalists," and "their agents" as traitors and instruments of foreign imperialism. (See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 345-49.)

Slánský Trial

After long preparation of the prospective defendants in jail and of public opinion outside, the great anti-Semitic trial began on November 20, 1952.¹ On that day the Czechoslovak Press Bureau (CTK) announced that the State Court in Prague was opening a trial "against the leaders of the subversive conspiratorial center whose head was Rudolf Slánský," and published the indictment.

INDICTMENT

There were fourteen defendants: Rudolf Slánský, former Secretary General of the Communist Party and immediately before his arrest a vice premier; Bedřich Geminder, former head of the Communist Party's foreign affairs department; Ludvík Frejka, the author of the Czechoslovak Five-Year Plan; Josef Frank, former Deputy Secretary General of the Party; Vladimír Clementis, former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Bedřich Reicin, former Deputy Minister of National Defense; Karel Šváb, former Deputy Minister of State Security; Artur London and Vavro Hajdú, former Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs; Evžen Löbl and Rudolf Margolius, former Deputy Ministers of Foreign Trade; Otto Fischl, former Deputy Minister of Finance; Otto Šling, former District Secretary of the Party in Brno, the capital of Moravia; and André Simone, former foreign editor of the central party newspaper *Rudé Právo*.

Of these fourteen persons, eleven were Jews; only Clementis, Frank, and Šváb were not Jewish. After the name of each Jewish defendant, the indictment added the words *židovského původu* ("of Jewish origin")—while the three non-Jews were described simply as "Czech" or "Slovak." The defendants could not be described as of "Jewish religion" because all of them had renounced that religion many years before; they could not be identified as of Jewish "ethnic nationality" because they considered themselves members of the Czech, Slovak, and in some cases the German, ethnic group. The words "of Jewish origin" could mean only what the Nazis used to call "racial origin"; the division of defendants into Czechs and Slovaks on the one hand, and persons "of Jewish origin" on the other hand, implied that a Jew could

¹The Slánský trial was reported in *Rudé Právo*, Prague, on November 20-28, 1952, and comments appeared on those and the following days; Czechoslovak broadcasts about the trial were monitored and translated by American listening posts; finally, an official record of the trial was published by the Prague Ministry of Justice in 1953. For a detailed description of the background, proceedings, and impact of the trial, see Chapter XI and XII of Peter Meyer's study on Czechoslovakia in *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*, Syracuse University Press, 1953, p. 153-191.

not be a Czech or a Slovak. The anti-Semitic intent of this designation was unmistakable.

To reinforce the Jewishness of the defendants, in another context the indictment mentioned that Ludvík Frejka's original name had been Ludwig Freund, and André Simone's Otto Katz. Throughout the trial, whenever reference was made either to the defendants or to their numerous "accomplices" and "co-conspirators" who were not on trial, the trial proceedings used the same method of identification: where an adopted name did not sound Jewish, the original (Jewish) name was added in parentheses.

Few of the persons thus mentioned had been Zionists. Two or three defendants had been members of pro-Zionist youth or boy scout groups thirty years previous, when they were ten or fifteen years old, and some had Zionist relatives. But all were violent opponents of Zionism and all Jewish nationalism throughout their adult life. Calling them "Zionists" was a palpable lie that served only one purpose: to brand them as participants in a world-wide "Jewish conspiracy." The larger implication was that every Jew, however anti-Zionist and assimilated he might appear, was a secret partner in a "Zionist plot."

This implication continued throughout the indictment. It was a Jewish conspiracy that the prosecutor was trying to prove. This conspiracy was world-wide, was led by American Jewish leaders and the statesmen of Israel, and operated through the Israel diplomatic service, Jewish relief organizations, and a widespread net of Jewish agents throughout the world. The defendants were called "Trotskyite-Titoist Zionists," and "bourgeois nationalist traitors." They were accused of having worked for imperialist sabotage and espionage services for many years before World War II; every one of them had been recruited for these services by Jewish agents. The defendant André Simone (Otto Katz) "confessed" that the man who originally hired him was the French minister Georges Mandel, later killed by the Nazis. The indictment quoted an "outstanding American spy" and "representative of international Zionism," one Geiringer-Granville, as saying that "Slánský . . . is our most solid asset because he is the most intelligent Jew I know." Another witness testified that he had heard another agent speak of Slánský as "the great hope of the Jews in the Communist Party." The indictment asserted that Western intelligence services had, during the Nazi occupation, helped Czechoslovak Jews flee to the West in order to have reliable agents in the postwar world. Then the indictment went on to describe how Slánský had placed "his men" in every important position; Jewish names predominated among those named in this connection, as they did among the defendants, e. g.:

Leading secretaries and workers in the Party apparatus [were] people like Vítězslav Fuchs, Mikuláš Landa (Landau), Hanuš Lomský, whose real name was Gabriel Lieben, Ervin Polák, Koloman Moško, whose real name was Moškovič, and similar Zionists and adventurous elements.

Again, none of those listed was really a Zionist—but all were of Jewish origin. And wherever the indictment spoke of non-Jews as participants in the "conspiracy," it described them as agents assigned their roles by the Jewish

ringleaders; some non-Jews, e.g., Frank and Šváb, Slánský was accused of having blackmailed into obedience by threatening to reveal their criminal

Another section of the indictment charged the defendants with conducting sabotage "in order to undermine the Socialist order and to restore capitalism" by intentional errors in planning, wilful neglect of heavy industry, creation of artificial shortages of raw materials, export of food in times of famine, and by the gift of billions of Czechoslovak crowns to foreign, and especially Jewish, capitalists on the pretext of restitution.

A special section of the indictment dealt with Zionist and other Jewish organizations, described as "reliable agencies of American imperialism." It was alleged that a secret conference had taken place in Washington in 1947 between President Harry S. Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and the Israel statesmen David Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett. American support was supposed to have been promised to Israel in exchange for the use of Zionist organizations for espionage and subversion in the Peoples' Democracies. Israel was called "the staging area for an attack against the Soviet Union." The Israel diplomats were described as organizers of sabotage and espionage. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was charged with organizing "espionage, sabotage, shady currency deals, blackmarket operations, and smuggling." Here for the first time the organizers of the trials brought up the name of the JDC, which was accused two months later in Moscow of having hired Jewish doctors to murder Soviet leaders. Even the charge of medical assassination appeared in the Prague trial; Slánský was made to confess trying to "shorten the life" of President Klement Gottwald by hiring a doctor who was supposed to kill him by medical malpractice. The doctor himself was a non-Jew, a Dr. Haškovec. But he was a Freemason, supposedly working under orders from the Jew Slánský. The authors of the Prague trial, who modeled their tale of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, followed the old stereotypes even to charging a conspiracy of the Jews with the Freemasons.

PROCEEDINGS

The trial itself was conducted in the spirit of the indictment. The defendants, who had been held incommunicado for months and years, competed in confessing the most heinous crimes according to the prosecutor's specifications. They described themselves as abject criminals, and did not even plead mitigating circumstances. But these "confessions" and the testimony of "co-conspirators" brought to the court from jail were almost the only evidence. A few "voluntary" witnesses could say only that they had always suspected the defendants; the documents submitted related to details which were in themselves meaningless and had sinister significance only in terms of the defendants' confessions. The evidence was never disputed, and the defense lawyers, appointed by the court, did not ask a single question.

The "trial" was "public," but no correspondents from countries outside the Iron Curtain were admitted. The proceedings were broadcast, but not directly from the courtroom. Selected parts were transcribed and later

reproduced over the radio, while other parts were "summarized" by the announcer. The galleries were packed with reliable "workers' delegations" and security agents. If anything "went wrong" during the trial and a defendant "got out of hand," the world never learned about it.

Every defendant attributed his crimes to his "bourgeois" and Jewish background. Thus, Slánský explained that he was of bourgeois origin, that his father had been a wealthy village merchant, and that this milieu had influenced his character. Slánský described himself as a careerist, opportunist, and hypocrite, a coward who had betrayed his comrades to the police, and, finally, as a traitor, murderer, and spy. Bedřich Geminder, who had grown up in a German-speaking family, was forced to declare that he not only did not know Czech well but that his German was faulty as well—which was a patent untruth, but gave the prosecutor the opportunity to comment: "That means that you speak no language correctly. A typical cosmopolitan!" Geminder also had to confess that he came from a Jewish bourgeois merchant family and had a brother who was a dentist in Chile. Geminder had joined a Zionist organization in 1912 (when he was ten years old) and although he had left it before he was sixteen, he had been tainted for his whole life. He was made to say: "I never identified myself with the interests of the Czechoslovak people. Their national interests remained alien to me. . . ." Similarly, André Simone (Otto Katz) testified that, as the son of a manufacturer, and educated in the spirit of bourgeois ideology, he had always been alien to the working class; that he considered a worker an inferior being; and that he moved in circles "close to his heart," among traitors to the working people, Trotskyites, Social Democrats, and Jewish bourgeois nationalists. Otto Šling and Bedřich Reicin stressed that they had grown up in a bourgeois Jewish milieu, been educated "in a bourgeois and religious spirit," and although severing all connection with Jewish life at the age of about fifteen, had remained imbued with Jewish bourgeois nationalism all their lives. This included a period when, according to Reicin, he had worked for the Gestapo.

The confessions were full of patent absurdities, but it did not seem to matter. When the Jewish defendants built up light industry in Czechoslovakia, it was to make the Republic dependent on the West. When they bought capital goods for heavy industry, it was to dissipate foreign currency reserves. When they tried to earn foreign currency by export, they wanted to enrich Jewish importers abroad. They exported food—to starve the population. They imported food—to increase Czechoslovak indebtedness to the West. If planned economy resulted in chaos—it was their fault. If rationing had to be reintroduced—it was the consequence of their sabotage.

The defendants were supposed to have acted on orders from the heads of the international Jewish conspiracy in the United States and Israel. The Israel citizens Mordecai Oren and Shimon Ohrenstein, who had been arrested in Prague at the end of 1951 and held incommunicado since, testified about the Morgenthau-Acheson conference and added details about espionage instructions from Premier Ben Gurion to Israel diplomats and Zionist leaders abroad.

SUMMATION AND SENTENCE

In his summation on November 26, 1952, prosecutor Josef Urválek devoted a special section to the Zionist movement.

I must deal in detail with the so-called Zionist movement. That's because the defendants include eleven alumni of Zionist organizations who entered the service of American imperialism. And also because the trial shows all Communist and workers' parties the danger of Zionism as an agency of American imperialism. . . . The Zionist movement is not a system of ideas, it is not even a fallacious ideology. The Zionist movement consists of the Zionist organizations in America, plus the ruling clique of the State of Israel, plus the Zionist capitalists all over the world, linked by the intimate ties of their factories, companies, and business deals with American imperialists. . . . It is self-evident that Slánský put only Zionists into high positions . . . , that he received the diplomatic representatives of the State of Israel, that he protected their criminal activities. . . . That was because Slánský himself was, by his very nature, a Zionist. . . . Slánský, himself a Zionist-Trotskyite . . . gathered around him people of the same ilk. . . . He found such people . . . among Zionists, Trotskyites, bourgeois nationalists, collaborators, and other enemies of the Czechoslovak people. For whom else could he rely on?

The only "nature" by which Slánský, an anti-Zionist and Communist throughout his adult life, could be connected with Zionism, was the fact that he had been born a Jew. The prosecutor's speech revealed once more that one of the purposes of the trial was to begin, not only in Czechoslovakia but in other countries as well, an anti-Jewish campaign slightly masked as an international campaign against "Zionism."

On November 27, the State Court sentenced eleven defendants to death by hanging. Artur London, Vavro Hajdů, and Evžen Löbl were sentenced to prison for life; the fact that they had confessed long before, and "considerably contributed to the unmasking of other participants" was considered a mitigating circumstance. All the defendants renounced their right to appeal or to ask for clemency. Those condemned to death were hanged on December 3, 1952.

National Anti-Jewish Campaign

From the very first day of the trial, resolutions condemning the "traitors" and asking for their punishment were adopted in factories, offices, and public meetings, and published in the newspapers. Reports from the courtroom described Slánský as a "Judas," and evoked the most hateful anti-Semitic stereotypes. On November 24 an editorial in the *Rudé Právo* especially devoted to the "Zionist" aspect of the trial, abounded in such expressions as "huckstering," "profiteering," "blood-sucking," "alien," "scum with a dark past." On November 28, the newspapers printed an article signed by the Czech Communist writer Ivan Olbracht, whose tone is well illustrated by the following quotation:

The State Court is trying eleven typical cosmopolitans, men without honor, without character, without fatherland, without any friendly ties to the Czech and Slovak nation and their people, predatory, merciless individuals who care only for power, for their career, for business, and of course, for money, money, money. We hear the awful Czech they speak and the majority of them, even when they talk Czech, betray that it is not their mother tongue. . . . No, these are not human beings.

There was some doubt whether Olbracht, of half-Jewish origin himself, who had been ill for years and died soon afterward, really wrote these lines. But there was no doubt that they represented the Party line. The atmosphere was such that the nearest relatives of some defendants wrote letters to the court, asking for the execution of their husbands and parents. Such letters were obtained from the wife of the defendant Artur London and from the eighteen-year-old son of the defendant Ludvík Frejka. The boy committed suicide soon afterward.

A wave of suicides swept the Jewish community. E. Kohn, the secretary of the Jewish community in Prague, and his wife were among its first victims. The official explanation was that Kohn had discovered he had cancer; reports about other suicides were met with official silence.

During the first days of the trial, Jewish homes in Bratislava were smeared with such inscriptions as "Down With the Capitalist Jews," "Jews Live Here," or simply "Jews." Jewish pedestrians were reported as having been attacked in the streets in the western part of Czechoslovakia, and Jewish women as having been chased from the queues in front of stores. Anti-Semitic incidents also occurred in Děčín, near the German border; anti-Semitic inscriptions appeared in the streets. However, in general it seemed that the government and Communist Party-inspired anti-Semitic campaign did not find much popular approval.

ATTEMPT AT DEFENSE

On December 16 President Klement Gottwald, who had kept silent during the trial, spoke at a Communist Party conference. He repeated all the standard accusations against Zionism; aware of the revulsion the trial had created in the free world, Gottwald tried to stress the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. But as he had to uphold the absurd assertion that all the Jews condemned in the trial had been "Zionists," his distinction could not hold water. Indeed, he strengthened anti-Semitic prejudice by saying:

The Zionist organizations and their American bosses disgracefully abused the suffering of the Jews under Hitler and other fascists. It can even be said that they tried to make capital out of the ashes of Oswiecim and Majdanek. . . . Normally, a former banker, industrialist, estate owner, or *kulak* would find it difficult to become a member of the Communist Party and he would never reach a leading position. Yet with people of Jewish origin and Zionist coloration the class origin was often overlooked. . . . Before the war the danger was not so great, but after the war, when the Zionist organizations and the Zionists became agents of American imperi-

alism, the situation changed fundamentally. Today Zionism is a dangerous and cunning enemy.

Continuation After the Moscow Reversal

The campaign went on and reached its climax after the "discovery" of the "doctors' plot" in Moscow in February 1953. But it did not stop with the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953, and of President Klement Gottwald on March 19. On April 4, the Soviet government officially admitted that the charges against the doctors were a fabrication; but no such admission was ever made about the Slánský "conspiracy." On the contrary, on April 16 the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Václav David, told the Political Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York that Slánský and other Jewish defendants had been executed because they were traitors and spies, and that Zionism was a tool of American imperialism. On April 21 *Pravda*, the Slovak Communist newspaper in Bratislava, repeated the charges made at the Prague trial. Even after the revocation of the Moscow charges, the anti-Semitic campaign in Czechoslovakia continued without interruption.

The Second Slánský Trial

On May 26, 1953 a second Slánský trial was conducted in Prague. The defendants were Richard Slánský, a brother of Rudolf and a former Czechoslovak diplomat; Eduard Goldstücker, former Czechoslovak Minister to Israel; Pavel Kavan, former Secretary of the Czechoslovak embassy in London; and Karel Dufek, former Minister in Turkey. The first three were Jews. They had all been mentioned as Rudolf Slánský's henchmen in the first Prague trial. Some of them had appeared as witnesses, and Goldstücker had "confessed" to acting as a liaison man between Rudolf Slánský and his Israel bosses. Now, Richard Slánský and Eduard Goldstücker were sentenced to prison for life, Pavel Kavan and Karel Dufek to twenty-five years in jail each. The charges were the same as in the December 1952 trial; but this time the proceedings were secret and the result was announced in a brief communique.

The Israel citizens Shimon Ohrenstein, a Tel Aviv businessman, and Mordecai Oren, member of the Knesseth and leader of the pro-Soviet wing of the Mapam Party, were held incommunicado in jail for many months after the Rudolf Slánský trial in which they had "confessed" participation in the treasonable "Zionist conspiracy." Thirteen Israel notes, protesting their arrest and requesting permission for Israeli diplomatic officers to visit them in prison, were unanswered. On August 21, 1953, Shlomo Kadar, the Israel *chargé d'affaires* in Prague, was told by Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Václav David that there had been no change in the status of the prisoners. But at the end of October 1953 the Israel government was informed by Czecho-

slovak authorities that Ohrenstein had been convicted on August 7, two weeks before Kadar's intervention, and Oren on October 9. Ohrenstein was sentenced to prison for life, Oren to fifteen years in jail. Both were convicted in secret trials for "espionage" and "treason," on charges which the Israel government declared completely baseless.

In the meantime, the last persons of Jewish origin were purged from important positions. The most prominent was Štefan Rais, the Minister of Justice. In June 1953, Rais was dropped from the presidium of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party; in the reconstruction of the cabinet on September 15 his name disappeared from the list. While other members of the cabinet dismissed on that occasion received other government positions, Rais was dropped without explanation and replaced by an obscure lawyer.

A Secret Trial Against Former Jewish Leaders

For some time, in certain cases as long as five years, the former leaders of the Jewish communities, including some real Zionists, had been in jail. In the summer of 1953 reports reached Vienna that about sixty of these Jewish communal leaders were being concentrated in one prison in Bratislava, evidently awaiting trial. On August 7 nine of the Jewish leaders were secretly tried in Prague. The defendants were charged with such "economic crimes" as cooperating in the restitution of Jewish properties during the first postwar years. One of them was condemned to death, and his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Another defendant received twenty-three years, still another sixteen years, and the rest were sentenced to three years each. The trial was not publicized in the Czechoslovak press. Heedful of the repercussions of the Slánský trial, and probably acting on new orders from Moscow, the Communist rulers of Czechoslovakia were now trying to hide the persecution of the Jewish minority behind a wall of secrecy.

JOSEPH GORDON

HUNGARY

VIRTUALLY NO statistics were available concerning the Jews living behind the Hungarian Iron Curtain. Not even the population figures were known precisely, well-informed estimates varying between 130,000 and 150,000. Figures roughly compiled by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in 1947 showed that it was an aging community, more than half of its members being over thirty-four, and nearly 20 per cent over sixty. The majority lived in Budapest, and the proportion of workers and handicraftsmen was low. In 1947, of the 70,000 persons capable of gainful employment, some 25,000-35,000 were engaged in trade and 10,000 in nationalized undertakings. The remainder managed somehow to sustain a hand-to-mouth existence. The ruthless extermination of private trading after 1947 must have made the situa-

tion significantly worse. Emigration was rigidly barred, and the closing down of the JDC in January 1953, with its various schemes for helping Jews to find new methods of gaining a livelihood within the framework of a state which would not let them go, had rendered the position of the Jews more desperate than ever during the year under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953). When the system of deportations from Budapest and other cities was at its height, Jews formed a very high proportion of the victims (*see* AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 350-53).¹

A considerable number of persons of Jewish descent held or had held more or less important positions in government service, including that of the political police. Hence many anti-Communists in a population where anti-Semitism was always rife blamed the Jews for their sufferings under the Communist dictatorship. At the same time this dictatorship had steadily increased its persecution of the Jews as a whole. This persecution reached its height at the time of the Slánský trial in Czechoslovakia in November 1952 (*see* p.—). The Jews were hated by the regime as traders, as Zionists, and as "cosmopolites." From the outset, the anti-Jewish campaign was carried on with special zeal by Communist leaders of Jewish descent, such as ex-Premier Mathias Rakosi and the ministers Ernoe Geroe and Jozsef Revai. Neither Party membership nor efforts to curry favor with the regime had been able to modify official hostility to the Jews as a group. For Rakosi and his associates, the Jews, with the exception of a constantly dwindling minority of active Communists, were "bourgeois" of the worst possible sort, incurable "Westerners," and as such, liable to commit every sort of crime against Communism.

Like the clergy of the Catholic, Calvinist, and Lutheran churches, the rabbis had been forced to sign repeated declarations of loyalty to Communism and denials of persecution (*see* AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 350-51).

General Amnesty

Jews benefited by the general amnesty issued on July 26, 1953, to the same limited extent as other sections of the population. A number of short-term prisoners were released from prison, and others from internment camps, as "nondangerous to the state"; still other prisoners, however, were retained. There were no figures available of the numbers released and retained. There had been no confirmed reports of further deportations since July 26, but, in the case of Jews as of non-Jews, nothing had been done to restore the confiscated houses of those deported from the cities before that date. Nor was it likely that anything would be done, and the majority of deportees had no alternative but to remain "voluntarily" in the areas to which they were already confined.

¹ In July 1953 a Jewish lawyer, Geza Kapus, who had escaped with his wife and child to Vienna gave the following details about the deportations of 1951:

From 60,000 to 100,000 Budapest families had been deported during the spring and summer of 1951. Nearly 90 per cent of the deported families consisted of elderly couples and almost half of all the deportees were Jewish. The high percentage of Jewish deportees at that time was due more to class than racial discrimination.

Community Organization

In October 1952 the Budapest community as such was dissolved by state decree and re-formed as a "voluntary association." The chief object of this reorganization was to make the Jewish community just another subdepartment of the state—which was also the aim of official policy toward the various Christian churches. Only Jews who could be trusted as Communists were to be allowed to occupy positions of authority, and through them the state was to take over the administration of all community property and funds. Three hundred, subsequently reduced to 180, delegates were summoned by the government to work out a new constitution for this association. Louis Stoeckler, the chief Communist Jewish leader, had explained at a general meeting on September 14, 1953, that this constitution was necessary "in order to adapt the life of the community to new surroundings and new requirements." He further announced that all Jewish institutions in the city were to be grouped together under one roof, and the higher schools for boys and girls combined with the world-famous Budapest training college for rabbis. The significance of the latter statement was demonstrated by the fact that by that time no Jewish schools other than the Seminary itself existed in Hungary.

A month later, in November 1952, the inhabitants of the large home for the aged on the Budapest "Ring," numbering 300-400 persons, many over eighty years of age, were evicted and deported to the village of Balassagyarmat in North Hungary and lodged in a dilapidated office building without any water supply. The Budapest almshouse, which had shortly before been completely modernized by the JDC, was handed over to picked cadres of officer-cadets of the Peoples' Army. A Jewish orphans' home in Gorki Utca, Budapest, was handed over to the Soviet Army and the children evacuated to another part of the city.

Anti-Semitism

In January 1953 a new wave of anti-Semitism was launched in Hungary in connection with the charges of a Jewish doctors' plot in Moscow (*see* p. 273). Declared the central Communist organ, *Szabad Nep*:

To the American imperialists science has become a means for the subjugation of other peoples. We must pay close attention to the role played in the plans of the imperialists by the Joint, the Zionists, and the Jewish bourgeois nationalists. Jacobson, the director of the Joint for Hungary, had to be arrested in December 1949 and subsequently expelled for espionage. The recent Slánský trial showed what dangerous imperialist agencies the Joint and the Zionist bodies had been in the conspiracies against the Peoples' Democracies. . . . The Joint deceives the gullible by its mask of providing aid to Jews living outside the United States. . . . It has been unmasked as an espionage organization of American imperialists. The role played by Joint in the instruction of the murderous gangs sounds a special warning that we must deal sternly with all the influences and attempts of bourgeois nationalism and Zionism because they are hotbeds of hostile activities.

ATTACKS ON JDC

On January 19, *Szabad Nep* charged the JDC with "organizing espionage and sabotage to overwhelm the People's Democracy. . . . It does not despise currency speculation, black marketeering, and smuggling . . . with the Central Zionist Federation." The article went on to declare that "the president of Joint, the United States capitalist Warburg, is a close friend and business partner of Pferdemenges, one of the wickedest of German war criminals. . . . With one hand Warburg signs charity appeals, while with the other he pockets as chief shareholder in I. G. Farben the dividends resulting from the manufacture of poison gas for Auschwitz."

This preceded a full-scale attack by press and radio on Warburg. Attacks by Derek Kartun in the London *Daily Worker* on the JDC accusing the latter of conspiracy with Josef Cardinal Mindszenty were echoed in *Szabad Nep* and in the youth organ *Szabad Ifjusag*. On February 2, 1953, it was announced that all JDC property had been confiscated and nationalized. The Jewish community was reported to be in "a state of great apprehension."

On February 5, Hungary expelled the cultural attaché of the Israel legation, Josef Walter, on the accusation that he had abused his diplomatic position to carry on espionage. On February 9, 1953, the arrests of a number of prominent Communists of Jewish extraction were rumored to have been carried out secretly. These included the former Minister of Justice, Gyula Decsi-Deutsch; General Sandor Nogradi, the Deputy Minister of War; Colonel Gabor Péter, head of the secret police, and several others. In some few cases the rumors proved inaccurate, but the speed at which they spread and their general acceptance were indications of the prevailing panic.

Mathias Rakosi's departure from the premiership, the abolition of his old office of secretary general of the Party, and the initial speech of the new premier, Imre Nagy, which by implication could be said to have denounced policies for which Rakosi had stood, were generally taken as signs that the constant prophecies that Rakosi would fall out of favor had come true. But a few days after Nagy had spoken, Rakosi made an authoritative speech, whose effect was to modify or cancel many of Nagy's pronouncements. When Rakosi entirely disappeared from public life (without explanation) for two months between July and September 1953, it was again widely believed that he had fallen. But on September 20 he reappeared at a government banquet for employees of collective and tractor stations. Although his position was in many respects unclear, it began to look in October 1953 as though behind the scenes he had retained all his old power, and was slowly erasing most traces of the Malenkov influence from Hungary.

The anti-Zionist campaign reached its height in March 1953, when *Szabad Ifjusag* made public the interesting discovery that "Zionism and anti-Semitism are two sides of the same coin." Little wonder that it concluded that "Zionism is the most dangerous agent of American imperialism."

ARREST OF STOECKLER

All Stoeckler's subservience to Communist demands, and his acquiescence in the slanders against the JDC and Zionists, failed to help him now that the

Communists felt that his usefulness was at an end. In January 1953 he was arrested, described as "the former industrialist, Stoeckler." It was stated that "considerable sums" in dollars and Swiss francs had been found in his home. On February 4, Budapest radio, addressing German Communists, asserted that Stoeckler had been a Gestapo agent, a representative of the Austrian war criminal Ernst Kaltenbrunner (who had been hanged at Nuremberg).

Despite the apparent reversal in the Communist line toward Jews during the period under review, the basic situation had not altered: Stoeckler was still in jail, important Communist officials of Jewish descent who had disappeared had not reappeared, and a number of Jewish physicians who had been arrested in connection with the Moscow doctor's plot were still under arrest.

G. E. R. GEDYE

RUMANIA

THROUGHOUT THE year under review (July 1, 1952 through June 30, 1953) the Rumanian administration, economy, and intelligentsia suffered a series of purges. Many of the victims were Jews, and this fact was often directly or indirectly stressed in the accompanying publicity.

Trials of Jews

At the beginning of September 1952, a military tribunal in Bucharest tried a group of "traitors and saboteurs" who had allegedly sabotaged the construction of the Danube-Black Sea canal. Five of the defendants were sentenced to death, fifteen to long jail terms. One of the executed men, Aurel Rozei, manager of a paint factory, was a Jew. The press called Rozei a "Zionist," although nothing concrete was published about his Zionist activities, and accused him of collaboration with well-known anti-Semites. *Ykuf-Bleter*, the organ of the Communist-dominated Jewish Democratic Committee, castigated Rozei in three editorials and revealed that his former name had been Rozenberg.

In another trial, against the former managers of the oil industry in Ploesti, eight of the twenty-four defendants were Jews. They were convicted of having committed espionage for British and American oil companies, and were sentenced to death or forced labor. Similar trials of other groups of "saboteurs" were conducted, and Jewish names were prominent in most of them.

On April 4, 1953, the Rumanian government followed the Soviet example and announced a general amnesty: Prisoners serving sentences shorter than two years were to be released, those with longer terms, to have their sentences reduced. But crimes "against the State" were exempted, and no data are available on the number of prisoners actually freed. Neither was it known whether the "anti-social elements" deported from the cities without trial were allowed to come back.

Persecution of Jewish Leaders

Several hundred Jewish leaders, arrested in 1949 and 1950, were still held in jail. These included former leaders of all Zionist factions, from the right-wing Revisionist Party to the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair. A. L. Zissu, Leon Itzcar, M. Benvenisti, B. Roehrlich, C. Iancu, I. Rossman, I. Loevenstein, and Leonard Kirschen were some of the more prominent prisoners.

There were repeated rumors that a great public trial, involving Ana Pauker as well as the former leaders of the communities, was being prepared, and that Zalman Rabinsohn, a brother of Ana Pauker and a citizen of Israel, would appear in it as a witness in a role similar to that of Mordecai Oren in the Slánský trial in Prague.

But after the charges against the Moscow doctors were dropped in April 1953 it was evidently decided to give up this plan. In August 1953 a government spokesman told foreign journalists who had been admitted to the International Youth Festival in Bucharest that Ana Pauker, though demoted and condemned by the Party, was free and living in one of the capital's suburbs.

TRIALS

In order to avoid unfavorable publicity abroad, the authentic leaders of the Jewish community were tried in secret. The first of these trials was conducted in Bucharest in August 1953. Nothing was published in the press, but some of the defendants' relatives were admitted to the audience, probably in order to spread terror among the Jewish population by word of mouth.

There were five defendants. One of them, Edgar Kenner, surprised the court by renouncing his "confession," reminding his accusers that he had been persecuted by the Nazis as a "Communist," and proudly defending his Zionist convictions. It was one of the very rare cases where a Communist prisoner had withstood all threats and tortures and defied his tormentors in open court, and it made a great impression on all present. Kenner was sentenced to sixteen years of forced labor, his co-defendant N. Horowitz to fifteen years, and three others, S. Schittnowitzer, Pascu Schechter, and N. Tabakaro, to ten years each.

At the same time it was reported that a trial was being prepared against Jean Cohen, the former president of the Rumanian section of the World Jewish Congress; Jean Littmann, former chairman of its Bucharest branch; and Susanne Benvenisti, wife of the former president of the Rumanian Zionist Organization who was under arrest.

Jewish Population

No current statistical data on the Jews of Rumania were available. Estimates ran between 200,000 and 250,000. A shift from the cities to rural regions resulted from the deportation of "socially unreliable" elements in 1952.

EMIGRATION

Emigration to Israel as well as to other countries outside the Soviet orbit remained forbidden. Diplomatic approaches and appeals from the Association of Rumanian Jews in Israel continued fruitless. The Association estimated that at least 100,000 Rumanian Jews wanted to emigrate; 50,000 of them had parents or other near relatives in Israel.

The attitude of Rumanian Jews towards Israel and emigration found eloquent expression during the International Youth Festival in Bucharest in August 1953. Among the foreign delegations recruited from pro-Soviet groups abroad was a group of members of Israel's leftist Mapam Party. One participant, Aharon Meged, described his experience in his party's newspaper *Al Hamishmar* (quoted in *The American Zionist*, October 5, 1953, p. 24). Everywhere the delegation had gone, it had been encompassed by the salutes, applause, warm greetings, and the tears of joy shed by thousands of Jews. Performances of Israel songs and dances had been overrun by many thousand Jews, who joined, trembling and crying, in the singing of *Hatikvah*. The quarters of the delegation had been beleaguered by hundreds and sometimes thousands of Jewish citizens, and its members had been everywhere surrounded by throngs, "asking about Israel, inquiring about the well-being of relatives, hungry for words of encouragement and promise about their own chances of emigration."

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Rumanian government sources asserted that about 50,000 Jews had become "workers," but it was not clear whether this included technicians and white collar workers, and whether family members were counted among the breadwinners. Nothing was said of the occupations and sources of income of the rest of the Jewish population. Rumanian propaganda organs described the "comfortable life" and "everyday joys" of a Jewish family named Segal in Bucharest in glowing, but vague terms (see *Romanian News*, Washington, D.C., February 18, 1953).

However, the Segal family idyll contrasted strongly with known facts about the deportations of thousands of Jewish families to inhospitable rural parts of Rumania, about Jewish slave laborers working under inhuman conditions on the construction of the Danube-Black Sea canal and in other "corrective labor camps," as well as with reports about the impoverished existence of the expropriated middle-class families.

Religious and Cultural Life

Communist sources asserted that there were 500 synagogues in Rumania, 50 in Bucharest alone. They also mentioned 4 Talmud Torah schools, and 7 ritual slaughterers. Religious services were tolerated in many places; the price was active participation by the religious communities and their rabbis in Communist "peace" drives and other political campaigns. The chief rabbi of Rumania, Mozes Rosen, and other Communist officials forced on

the religious communities by the government, engaged in violent agitation against "Western imperialism," the State of Israel, "Zionist conspiracies," and "Jewish bourgeois nationalism."

Of the 122 Jewish schools which had existed prior to 1948, there remained only 3 elementary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction, located in Bucharest, Jassy, and Timisoara. Some Rumanian schools where there were a large number of Jewish students gave courses in the Yiddish language. There were two Yiddish State Theaters, one in Bucharest and one in Jassy. The cultural society Ykuf, an arm of the Communist-dominated Jewish Democratic Committee, organized "cultural meetings" and "discussions."

No recent over-all reports on the extent of cultural activities were available. But an official report on such activities in the Moldavian capital of Jassy, written by Gedalia Chayim, the secretary of the Jassy district of the Jewish Democratic Committee, was at hand. This report, published in *Ykuf Bleter*, Bucharest, on November 28, 1952, stated that the Yiddish State School in Jassy had 112 students during the current (1952-53) school year. Courses in Yiddish were given in 17 other schools where there were considerable numbers of Jewish children. In three years the Jassy Yiddish Theater had given 499 performances with 119,000 tickets sold in that city, and 147 performances with 46,800 tickets sold during its tours through Rumania. The Ykuf society had organized 120 cultural meetings. The report stressed that the new Yiddish schools had eradicated the "mysticism" that had prevailed in Jewish schools in the old times and was educating the children in the working-class spirit; the activities of the Ykuf were being conducted along the same lines. The theater played Communist propaganda pieces, but had its greatest success with Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman*.

PERIODICALS

As of December 1952 the Jewish Democratic Committee was publishing three small periodicals: *Viata Noua* in Rumania, *Ykuf Bleter* in Yiddish, and *Uj Ut* in Hungarian. These contained general Communist propaganda and specific attacks on Israel, Zionism, and "Jewish bourgeois nationalism"; reports from the Rumanian Jewish communities were scarce and vague.

The issues of December 5, 1952, were the last ones delivered to subscribers in the United States. From that date—a week after the Slánský trial in Prague—the Jewish periodicals from Rumania ceased coming. But apparently *Viata Noua*, at least, continued publication, because its attacks on Zionism were quoted in reports reaching Vienna in March 1953. The broadcasts in Yiddish on the Rumanian state radio were continued in the same spirit.

JOSEPH GORDON