Central Europe

WESTERN GERMANY

THE EFFORT to turn the Federal Republic of Germany (Western Germany) into an armed partner of the United States and her allies continued to dominate West German developments during the greater part of the period under review (July 1952 through June 1953). But the trend was temporarily checked by Stalin's death and the subsequent efforts to bring about an international détente. As a result, the treaty establishing the European Defense Community (EDC) and the Bonn conventions defining Western Germany's new status as a partner of the West were still awaiting final ratification by both Germany and France.

The political and economic consolidation of the Federal Republic was not interrupted, and it continued to enjoy a prosperity unburdened by armaments.

European Defense Community

The Paris Treaty establishing the European Defense Community (EDC), signed on May 27, 1952, received its third reading in the Bonn Bundestag on March 19, 1953, and was passed by a vote of 224 to 165 with two abstentions. The Bundesrat, representing the state governments, decided on May 15, 1953, by a vote of 23 to 15, that the two major laws empowering the President to ratify the treaties did not require its approval, and approved the two minor implementing laws affecting states' rights. Nevertheless, President Theodor Heuss was not yet able to sign the instrument of ratification, as a Socialist suit claiming that the treaties were constitution-changing and therefore required a two-thirds vote was still pending before the Constitutional Court.

Failing valid ratification by both Germany and France, no practical steps towards German rearmament and the creation of EDC were possible. Meanwhile however, the Western occupying powers began to apply the spirit of the Bonn conventions in their relations with the Federal Republic. The power to veto Federal laws under the occupation statute was no longer used, and the Federal government was regularly consulted on every Western move in the note exchange with the Soviet Union concerning German unification and a peace treaty. With the support of the overwhelming majority of
the Bundestag, affirmed in its resolutions of June 10 and July 2, 1953, the government insisted on free all-German elections as the first step towards unification, and on the participation of an all-German government based on such elections as a free partner in any peace conference.

After the visit of Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to the United States in April 1953, the chiefs of the German diplomatic missions in Washington, London, and Paris and the Allied High Commissioners in Bonn were raised to the personal rank of Ambassadors.

An international agreement on German debts was signed in London on February 21, 1953, and approved by the Bundestag on July 3, 1953. It came into force on September 16.

**Economic Situation**

The expansion of West German industry came to a temporary halt at the end of 1952. However, unemployment dropped below the million mark for the first time in the middle of August, despite a record influx of refugees from the Soviet zone (335,000 between July 1, 1952, and June 30, 1953), owing chiefly to the steady growth of building activity. The favorable development of the West German balance of payments continued, swelling the foreign currency reserves of the Bank Deutscher Länder (the Federal Bank) and turning the Deutsche Mark into one of the hardest currencies in Europe.

**Federal Elections**

At least from the end of 1952 West German domestic policies were dominated by the approach of the Bundestag elections. Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and his coalition partners, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the German Party (DP) stood throughout the campaign for the policy of Western integration embodied in the Bonn and Paris Treaties, and argued that national unity, too, could best be brought about by a policy of strength relying on the combined potential of the West. His principal opponents, the Social Democratic Party (SPD)—somewhat weakened by the death of its leader Kurt Schumacher on August 20, 1952—demanded priority for a four-power conference as a means of achieving national unity by negotiation, and warned that integration of a divided Germany with the West might permanently close the door to unity. The government coalition stressed the success of its economic policy, while the SPD demanded that the lower income groups should be given a greater share of the fruits of prosperity. An important secondary issue was the demand of the trade unions for greater influence on the shaping of national policy, which led them to attack Adenauer's right-wing coalition partners as antidemocratic and hostile to labor and to call for a new majority which would be composed of the CDU and SPD without the parties of the right.

The election result was an unprecedented victory for the policy and personality of the chancellor, who increased the vote of the CDU to 12,500,000, or more than 45 per cent of the total poll, and obtained an absolute majority in the Bundestag. The SPD opposition increased its vote to just under eight million, approximately in proportion to the increase in the total electorate,
but was unable to profit from the total collapse of the Communist Party. The FDP and the DP, which had campaigned on strongly nationalist lines, lost both absolutely and relatively, and the Refugee Party (BHE), which had not existed in 1949, also lost by comparison with the state elections in which it made its first appearance. The neo-Nazi groups proved even weaker than in 1949, retaining no trace of their gains in the intermediate years, and failed to obtain any representation. The Communists and several sectional parties disappeared as well.

**Neo-Nazism**

Neo-Nazi parties and groups in open opposition to the democratic state had now definitely declined to the proportions of a police problem thanks largely to the dissolution of the most successful among them, the Socialist Reich Party (SRP), by the Karlsruhe Constitutional Court (October 23, 1952), and to the vigorous administrative action taken against would-be successor organizations.

By contrast, the infiltration of some of the democratic right-wing parties by unrepentant former Nazi officials and the effort of these parties to attract Nazi votes by the glorification of some aspects of the tradition of the Third Reich had become a major feature of West German politics. The British action against the circle of Werner Naumann, who had been permanent secretary of state in Goebbels' propaganda ministry, and the subsequent disclosure of the aims and methods of the infiltration strategy pursued by that circle led to some reaction inside these parties, though by no means to a real clean-up of Nazi elements.

**Extremist Groups**

The SRP, which at its peak in May 1951 had obtained 367,000 votes or 11 per cent of the total in Lower Saxony, announced its "voluntary" dissolution on September 12, 1952, so as to forestall action by the Federal Constitutional Court. But the court's judgment also quashed the party's mandates in the Federal and state parliaments and authorized the ministers of the interior of the states to ban any successor organizations administratively without further reference to the court. Attempts were made to disguise local SRP groups in Lower Saxony. Though some sixty such groups were dissolved on October 29, 1952, about eighty former SRP officials were elected to local office on lists of other parties or blocs.

Another unsuccessful attempt to organize the Lower Saxony SRP followers was made in March 1953, by the Deutsche Gemeinschaft (German Community) of August Hausleiter, which was dissolved by the ministry of the interior on March 20, 1953.

In still a third attempt at disguising itself, the SRP joined other extremist groups to form the German National Rally (DNS) at a congress in Mannheim on July 19, 1953. At the Bundestag elections, lists of the party were admitted only in Schleswig-Holstein, Bavaria, and Baden-Wuerttemberg. It obtained a total of 71,032 votes or 0.3 per cent of the electorate; more than
half the votes—38,018—came from Baden-Wuerttemberg, where the German Reich Party (DRP) list was not admitted and the DNS, having the monopoly of neo-Nazism, polled 1.1 per cent of the state vote. Its top local result was 3.4 per cent in the Sinsheim-Mosbach area of North Baden, where the SRP had achieved more than 10 per cent in March 1952.

Still another attempt to revive the SRP was made by its remaining leader, former Bundestag member Fritz Doris, in July 1953. ("General" Remer had fled the country in March to avoid serving a prison sentence for slander.) This attempt collapsed in mid-August 1953 when most of the candidates withdrew in favor of the DRP.

The DRP itself was the oldest German neo-Nazi party. At the Bundestag elections of 1949, it had polled 273,000 votes in Lower Saxony and together with allied groups, 429,000 in the whole of Western Germany; but owing to the rise of the SRP it had fallen to a mere 74,000 votes in the Lower Saxony state elections of May 1951. In the spring of 1953 the DRP was reinforced by splinters from other neo-Nazi groups. At the beginning of August 1953, a few days after his release from prison, Naumann announced that he was willing to be a DRP candidate, and the party obtained great publicity. However, a fortnight before the elections Naumann was declared ineligible by the Government of North Rhine-Westphalia, acting as a denazification tribunal. On the eve of the poll, the Federal Government announced (September 1) its intention to ask the Federal Constitutional Court to ban the DRP as anticonstitutional, in effect warning potential DRP voters that their votes might be wasted.

DRP lists were admitted in all states except North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, and Baden-Wuerttemberg. The party obtained no seats and only 295,618 votes or 1.1 per cent of the total poll—less than in 1949. In Lower Saxony, its main stronghold, it polled 132,372 or 3.5 per cent—less than half its own vote of 1949, and less than a third of the combined SRP and DRP vote of the 1951 state elections, when both parties together had obtained 440,000 votes or 13 per cent.

Police and judicial action also hit a number of smaller neo-Nazi groups: the Federal Government banned the Freikorps Deutschland in Hamburg and Bremen on February 10, 1953; seven leading members of a Nazi underground group of forty to fifty members were given prison sentences on June 5, 1953; five members of a self-styled Adolf Hitler Gruppe were sentenced to short prison terms in November 1952; a tiny neo-Nazi group in Berlin (and two "successor groups") were dissolved in January 1953.

**Nazi Infiltration**

Former leading Nazis appeared during the year in prominent positions in state organizations of the FDP and DP. In North Rhine-Westphalia Wolfgang Diewerge, former propaganda ministry official and author of anti-Semitic pamphlets, was personal assistant to FDP state chairman Friedrich Middelhauwe until March 1953. Ernst Achenbach, as political counselor at Otto Abetz' Paris Embassy during the occupation, had according to the documents collected by the Allied prosecution at Nuremberg taken an active part in the recruiting of French forced labor and the deportation of French
In Lower Saxony the FDP's state manager was the former Hitler Youth leader and member of the Nazi Reichstag, Horst Huisgen. The organizing secretary was a former Silesian Nazi district leader and later SRP official, Werner Bänsch.

The DP of Hesse was represented in the party's Federal executive from October 1952 until July 1953 by Albert Derichsweiler, the former Nazi Reichs student leader. Since December 1952 the state chairman of the Hesse organization had been Helmut Schranz, the former Nazi mayor of Offenbach, now elected to the Bundestag. Numerous minor Nazi officials were active in both these parties and the BHE, and many former SRP functionaries were employed by these parties as organizers or candidates after the SRP's dissolution.

**Nationalist Concentration**

Politically, these parties' bid for the support of Nazi elements and the influence of the unregenerate Nazis they employed in important positions resulted in the idea of a nationalist concentration—one large nationalist party uniting all forces to the right of the CDU, enjoying the support of the veterans' leagues, and offering a political home to the former supporters of the Nazi regime. This conception first became the subject of public discussion when a state conference of the North Rhine-Westphalian FDP, called by Friedrich Middelhauwe, adopted a deliberately unexceptionable statement of principles known as the German Program, explicitly intended as a platform for such a concentration.

The program found support from the Hesse and Lower Saxony state organizations of the FDP. Leaders of the FDP and DP from North Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse privately discussed the prospects of a right-wing concentration on October 13, 1952.

At the DP's Federal congress at Goslar on October 17 the party leader, Heinrich Hellwege, after having opposed a nationalist concentration in the name of conservative federalism, was finally reinstated; but the statement of principles adopted was closer to the ideas of a nationalist concentration than to his.

An open clash developed at the Federal congress of the FDP, held from November 20-22, 1952, in Bad Ems, between the nationalist wing supporting the German Program and the traditional liberal wing. The decision between the two policy documents was adjourned, but Middelhauwe was elected joint deputy chairman of the party and obtained more votes than the liberal officers.

**The Naumann Circle**

On January 15, 1953, British security officials under orders from British High Commissioner Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick arrested Werner Naumann, the
former permanent secretary of state and designated successor in Goebbels' propaganda ministry, and six of his political associates. Among these were the former Nazi Reich student leader and Gauleiter of Salzburg, Gustav Adolf Scheel; the former Gauleiter of Hamburg, Karl Kaufmann; and the former SS Brigadier and present adviser to the German Iron and Steel Federation, Paul Zimmermann. An eighth wanted man, Friedrich Karl Bornemann, former Gau propaganda official and now editor of a newsletter, escaped arrest.

The British acted under their reserved powers under the Occupation Statute, alleging that Naumann and his circle were engaged in a "plot" which endangered the security of the occupying forces. They subsequently explained that the plot consisted not in preparations for violent action, but in an organized Nazi attempt to win power "legally" by infiltrating the right-wing democratic parties—notably the FDP, DP, and BHE.

At first the German government was inclined to resent the apparent lack of confidence implied in the direct British action, believing that Naumann's small group was well under control. The German press was almost unanimously critical and speculated about ulterior British motives. But when the documentary evidence seized during the arrest was shown to Adenauer and members of his government, they became convinced that the danger had been real and the action necessary. The chancellor then requested the British High Commissioner to hand the prisoners over to the German authorities to be tried under German law, if not for attempted high treason, at least for conspiracy, i.e., for forming an association directed against the democratic constitution. The prisoners passed into German custody on April 1, and the Federal Court at Karlsruhe opened the investigation on April 3.

During the following weeks all the participants were gradually released, last to be freed (on July 28) being Naumann and Bornemann (who had given himself up in April). The court stated that investigation of the conspiracy charge would continue, but that the danger that the accused might escape or destroy evidence was no longer serious enough to justify further detention.

Evidence

The most important documents found were the manuscripts of two speeches that Naumann had made to his circle of intimates at Duesseldorf and Hamburg during November, 1952; a diary going back to 1950; notebooks with appointments; and correspondence. These documents showed that Naumann, aware of the extent to which former National Socialists were coming back into important positions in society and political life, had set himself the task of forming the strong authority which alone could turn them once again into a unified force. His circle was to organize itself as a "power in the background" working to place a few hundred trusted men in key positions in the soldiers' leagues; in the organizations of farmers, small traders, refugees, and taxpayers; and in local administrations, until the day would come when they could step forward as spokesmen of the true, independent Germany against the "licensed parties." Many old comrades had, however, also acquired important positions in some of these parties and were
confident they could conquer them from within; and though it was difficult to imagine the use of a traditionally liberal party like the FDP or a federalist one like the DP for Nazi aims, the attempt should be made.

Naumann's inner circle included six former Gauleiters. Beside Scheel and Kaufmann these were Karl Florian of Dusseldorf, Josef Grohe of Cologne, Paul Wegener of Weser-Ems, and Albert Frauenfeld of Vienna. The former Reich leader of the Hitler Youth, Artur Axmann, and Inge Doenitz, wife of the admiral whom Hitler appointed his successor, also belonged to it; so did the former Nazi Reichstag member and Hitler Youth leader Horst Huisgen.

Naumann's correspondence showed that he had influenced some of the leading protagonists of the creation of an over-all alliance of the veterans' leagues (the Verband Deutscher Soldaten [VDS]). These included former Col. General Johannes Friessner, who became the VDS's first president, former Field Marshal Heinz Guderian, and Waffen SS Generals Paul Hauser and Felix Steiner. Only when Friessner lost control at the end of 1953 and the movement disintegrated to Naumann's intense disappointment into a number of nonpolitical tradition leagues, did he concentrate his attention on the political parties of the moderate right.

In the FDP Naumann worked through his former subordinate at the propaganda ministry, Diewerge, who had become personal assistant to Friedrich Middelhauwe, FDP chairman for North Rhine-Westphalia, on Achenbach's recommendation; Horst Huisgen, the state manager of the FDP in Lower Saxony, from May 1952 on; and Artur Stegner, the FDP chairman for Lower Saxony. A large number of former leading Nazi officials on the staff of the FDP in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony thus began to receive, directly or indirectly, instructions from a single center and to work for a single aim.

In the leadership of the DP Derichsweiler remained Naumann's only important contact until finally in December 1952 he met Waldemar Kraft, the leader of the Refugee Party (BHE), and deputy premier of Schleswig Holstein.

Naumann had also kept far-reaching international connections: with the French anti-Semite Maurice Bardèche; with the British fascist leader, Sir Oswald Mosley; with Spain and the Middle East through Otto Skorzeny; with two of the German military advisers of the Egyptian government, Major General Oskar Muenzel and Wilhelm Voss; and with the former Mufti of Jerusalem since his wartime stay in Germany. The delegation of the Arab League which came to Germany in October 1952 to try and prevent the reparations agreement with Israel visited Naumann; his friend Bornemann subsequently took an active part in organizing the right-wing press campaign against the agreement.

No evidence had become known to substantiate the charge that the group was politically supported from the East or that it disposed of large funds.

When the evidence of Naumann's infiltration policy became known to the representatives of the FDP and the DP in the government, the movement for a nationalist concentration was stopped for the time being and both parties made some efforts to clean out compromised elements, but with rather limited success. It took the FDP leaders three months to remove
Achenbach from the chairmanship of their foreign policy committee, and their efforts to have him expelled from the party failed altogether owing to the resistance of the North Rhine-Westphalian state organization; he was even nominated for the Bundestag, and Vice Chancellor Bluecher had to threaten to withdraw his own candidature from the state list in order to force Achenbach to withdraw. An investigation by a special committee, headed by Federal Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler, only resulted in the dismissal of Diewerge and two minor officials who had been in direct personal contact with Naumann. Otherwise, the solid phalanx of Nazi officials remained intact. In Lower Saxony the Federal leaders did not even try to take action against Huisgen, and his liberal opponents found themselves quickly deprived of their positions in the organization and left it on the eve of the elections.

In the DP the North Rhine-Westphalian organization was dissolved on the charge of having conspired with Middelhauwe in favor of fusion. But a group in Hesse which demanded the removal of the organizing secretary Fuchs, proving with documents that he was systematically recruiting Nazi personnel, was given no support by the Federal leaders and left the party.

In the election campaign the FDP in Northern Germany and Hesse and the DP almost everywhere thus presented themselves broadly on the platform to which they had tended before the Naumann disclosures—that of the rehabilitation of the Nazi past. The BHE kept its party literature fairly free of this tendency, but its speakers presented themselves here as moderate democratic-social reformers and there as upholders of Nazi traditions.

On the other hand, these parties were now at pains to deny that they had been infiltrated by any antidemocratic elements, and even to attack Naumann's machinations.

When Naumann was released from prison, at the beginning of August 1953, he announced his intention to run on the DRP ticket himself; with him came Col. Hans Ulrich Rudel, the former air ace, who since 1945 had assisted President Peron in building up the Argentine air force, and whom he had repeatedly warned against his inclination to associate with extremist groups. His hopes were cut short when a gap in British zone legislation, which had enabled him to escape the normal denazification procedure, was hurriedly filled, and he was subsequently declared ineligible and barred from all political activity for five years.

**Civil Service Renazification**

The reinstatement of Nazi officials under the law restoring the rights of permanent civil servants continued. Of the total number entitled to reinstatement or allowances under this law, an estimated 50 per cent were displaced officials from the Eastern provinces, 40 per cent former professional soldiers, and 10 per cent Nazi party members dismissed after 1945. Thus, out of 150,000 persons reinstated as of September 30, 1952, according to official figures, some 15,000 were former “victims of denazification,” not counting the Nazi elements in the other categories.

In June 1953 the Federal court extended to the United States zone the ruling which had been applied in the British zone since 1952 that Nazi offi-
cials dismissed by the occupation authorities were to be regarded as merely suspended unless their dismissal had been confirmed by a German denazification tribunal.

In July 1953, when the Bundestag adopted the compensation law for victims of Nazism, it simultaneously increased the transitional payments for officials waiting for reinstatement. The annual cost of these was thereby increased from DM 1,000,000,000 ($240,000,000) to DM 1,200,000,000 ($285,000,000).

A proposal by the city-state of Hamburg to stop payments of pensions to former Nazi ministers, Reich Commissars, and Gauleiters was rejected in the Bundesrat on May 8, 1953. By decision of the Insurance Court, even the widow of Reinhard Heydrich, who had directed the Gestapo under Himmler and later became known as “the hangman of Prague” was accorded a pension corresponding to Heydrich’s rank as general of the SS, on the grounds that his death from the bullet of resistance fighters had made him a war victim. By contrast, the widow of Lt. General Wagner, who had taken part in the July 20, 1944 conspiracy against Hitler, was refused both a widow's pension and the compensation for victims of Nazism because her husband had taken his own life.

The recommendations of the Bundestag Committee which investigated Nazi influence in the Foreign Office were in part rejected by Chancellor Adenauer in his statement to the Bundestag on October 22, 1952. He strongly criticized both the press reports, which had given rise to the investigation, and the working of the committee itself. While admitting that two-thirds of the higher posts of the Foreign Office were held by former members of the Nazi Party, he expressed the view that Germany's prestige abroad had suffered not because of the personnel policy of the Foreign Office but because of the attacks made against it. The chancellor welcomed the committee's findings where they exonerated officials, but charged that its criticism of others was based on the material of the American prosecution at Nuremberg which, under American law, had not been bound to collect favorable evidence at all. Moreover, he claimed that the committee had exceeded its powers and infringed on the rights of the executive in making precise recommendations concerning the future employment of some officials with a Nazi past; Adenauer reserved the right to make his own decisions, based, where necessary, on disciplinary proceedings.

In fact, Adenauer flouted one of the principal recommendations of the committee by appointing the former personnel chief, Herbert Dittmann, as consul general in Hong Kong on August 5, 1953. The committee had regarded Dittmann as largely responsible for a personnel policy harmful to democracy, had caught him trying to mislead it on important points, and had therefore unanimously recommended that he should no longer be employed in the Foreign Service. However, a disciplinary court afterwards declared that his untruthful statements were merely “negligent.”

**Nazi Revival in Literature**

Apart from numerous articles in the illustrated papers glorifying Nazi

**War Crimes and Nazi Trials**

On September 1, 1953, the Allied High Commission set up mixed Allied-German review boards for each of the Western zones, to reexamine the cases of war criminals still held in Germany with a view to reprieve or parole. In the United States and British zones the boards were to consist of five members, three of them Germans. The zonal boards were created as an interim measure pending the coming into force of the Bonn conventions, which provided for a single review board with wider powers.

Even before these boards were set up, 2,880 convicted war criminals had been released in the West since April 1, 1950. The last prominent military leaders were freed during the year under review, including Eberhard von Mackensen, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein and General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst. Kesselring at once accepted the presidency of the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet) Veterans' League, the only such league not confined to veterans of a particular unit or to professional soldiers; it aimed to preserve the soldierly spirit and had built up a uniformed youth group for the purpose. Both Kesselring and Manstein had been received by Chancellor Adenauer.

The large majority of the war criminals still held were former police and concentration camp personnel sentenced for acts of inhuman cruelty and mass murder, or soldiers and policemen convicted for having killed Allied prisoners. Nevertheless, the fiction that the bulk of the prisoners were honorable soldiers condemned by vengeful victors for ordinary acts of war continued to dominate almost all German comment. Former paratroop General Hermann Ramcke was widely applauded when he said, at a rally of four thousand former soldiers of the Waffen SS at Verden in October 1952, that the blacklists of war criminals would one day become lists of honor and that the true war criminals had been on the Allied side. This speech was even disavowed by the SS generals who had organized the meeting.

The public belief in the innocence of the war criminals—always preceded by "so-called" or put into quotation marks—also determined the attitude of the German authorities. In June 1953 Adenauer visited the British prison at Werl and talked to some of the inmates, expressing the hope of further releases. When a war criminal, escaped from that prison, was reported to
the police by a German Social Democrat in Aurich, Lower Saxony, the police allowed the criminal to escape, the population forced the "informer" to leave the area, and his own party branch expelled him. The Federal Minister of the Interior, Robert Lehr, gave instructions that the police should not look for the prisoner. Two former SD (Security Service) officials convicted for murder in Norway, who had escaped from prison and reached Germany, were granted asylum and the Norwegian government's extradition request in December 1952 was rejected.

The same sympathy was also shown to war criminals of other nations. When seven former Dutch SS men, convicted for killing and torturing Dutch patriots, escaped from the prison at Breda and crossed into Germany on December 26, 1952, the German courts held that they were political refugees who had asked for asylum. When the British authorities finally extradited one of the fugitives in January 1953 there was a public outcry and the Federal government made a formal protest to the Allied High Commission.

Trials for Nazi crimes, including mass murders and deportations of Jews, acts of cruelty in concentration camps, and pogroms, continued before German courts. The lack of a common practice based on a generally accepted yardstick, as well as the increasing reluctance of witnesses to testify against their neighbors, was noticeable here. The general tendency of the courts was to be comparatively severe where arbitrary individual action could be proved, but lenient where crimes were committed by officials on duty, even when very large numbers of victims were involved. The Federal Court repeatedly had to quash sentences which showed an obvious bias in favor of the Nazi criminals; an outstanding scandal was the practice of the Nuremberg courts.

In June 1953 a Nuremberg jury, despite the interventions by the Federal Court, again acquitted the former Nuremberg police chief, Benno Martin, who had organized the deportation to Riga of 1,000 Jews, of whom only ten returned. The jury's ground was that Martin could not be proved to have known what the fate of the deportees would be.

A Cologne jury sentenced Emanuel Schaefer, wartime chief of the security service in occupied Serbia, to six and a half years penal servitude as accessory to murder and manslaughter in June 1953. Schaefer was proved to have carried out the shooting of 6,000 Jewish women and children as "hostages." But the court found that this was permissible under the laws of war; only in two cases where he had ordered immediate execution of captured Yugoslavs was he found guilty.

In sharp contrast, on October 30, 1952, in West Berlin, sentences of life imprisonment were passed against Heinrich Schwind, one of the most brutal supervisors of the Lodz ghetto, and against a man who had murdered a Jewish doctor in Kassel; two sentences of ten years' jail each against two Nazis who had beaten a Jew to death on the day after the July 20, 1943 attempt on Hitler's life, also were meted out in Berlin; one sentence of nine years against a concentration camp guard who had shot twenty-one Jewish prisoners on November 9, 1939, was pronounced by a court in Waldshut; a sentence of eight years against Fritz Hildebrand, who as the commander of the Drohobycz and Boryslav camps in Poland had been responsible for the
killing of thousands of Jews, was pronounced by a Bremen court; a police
captain who had assisted in the murder of more than a thousand Jews in
Southern Galicia, was given six years, in Hamburg; a Buchenwald camp
doctor, who had caused the death of Jewish patients by evicting them from
a camp hospital and had sterilized prisoners, was given a four-and one-half
year prison term by a Munich court.

The Offenbach Gestapo chief Johann Schmitz and one of his subordi-
nates, who had arrested partners of mixed marriages under threadbare pre-
texts and handed them over to their Darmstadt headquarters whence they
were sent to Auschwitz, were acquitted on July 31, 1953, by a Frankfurt jury
on the plea that if they had acted otherwise these men would have been sent
to the front.

**Jewish Population**

The size of the Jewish community remained fairly stable around a figure
of 20,000 members, about equally divided between German Jews and Dis-
placed Persons (DP's). Beside West Berlin, which had a Jewish population
of close to 4,000, only three communities of the eighty-four existing in West-
ern Germany had more than 1,000 members: Munich, with 2,500, and Ham-
burg and Frankfurt with just over 1,000 each. The number of Jews who
had survived or returned without registering in the Jewish communities was
not known. An estimate which put the figure at 5,000 seemed to have been
accepted by the Federal government, which gave the total number of Jews
as 25,000.

According to the official publication *Deutschland Heute*, there were about
140 Jewish civil servants and 300 Jewish lawyers. There were also some
Jewish judges, including one on the Federal Court in Karlsruhe. West
Germany had only about thirty Jewish doctors and another twenty to thirty
writers and journalists.

Emigration had dried up to a trickle. Not more than 700 people were
able to emigrate during the period under review, the majority of them dur-
ing the first six months. As the result of the expiration of the United States
Displaced Persons Act on December 31, 1951, only 130 German Jews were
admitted to the United States. With emigration to Canada and Australia
practically at a standstill and hardly any new movement to Israel, the
South American countries had assumed a relatively greater importance as
countries of destination.

**DISPLACED PERSONS**

Most of the remaining DP's had by now been integrated into German
economic life, apart from a hard core who would like to leave but were too
ill or unable to get visas. About 1,400 of them lived in the one remaining
DP camp at Föhrenwald in Bavaria. The Bavarian government, which since
the liquidation of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) at the
end of January 1952 had been in charge of the camp, had repeatedly ex-
pressed its intention to dissolve it; up to the time of writing (September
1953) the Jewish organizations had succeeded in persuading the authorities to postpone this step. Samuel Haber, director of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in Germany, argued that the camp should not be closed until the people living there had either been helped to emigrate or had obtained suitable employment and housing in Germany.

The largest group in the camp were tuberculosis or post-tuberculosis cases and their families. Apart from Israel, only Norway and Sweden had been prepared to accept some of them. These DP's were reluctant to leave the camp, not only because of their small chance of getting work and housing, but also because of anti-Semitism and language difficulties.

**Returnees**

Beginning in January 1953, there was a sudden increase in the number of returnees from Israel. About 200 came from France, where they had tried in vain to obtain visas for Canada. Others came illegally by other routes. By the middle of August 1953, about 650 returnees had entered Föhrenwald and occupied houses vacated by emigrants, thus bringing the camp population up to more than 2,000 again.

At this point the Bavarian government grew alarmed. It decided that the returnees would have to leave Föhrenwald and go to another camp under strict control, and that the admission of newcomers must be stopped. The returnees, some of whom expected their families to follow, refused to move. When the Bavarian government issued expulsion orders in August 1953, 200 returnees went to Munich and occupied the office of the JDC in protest. After negotiations between the Jewish organizations and the German authorities, the expulsion orders were temporarily withdrawn, pending further discussion on the future of the returnees, most of whom were trying to emigrate.

**Religious and Communal Life**

Six official rabbis were serving West Germany's communities, apart from some private rabbis for East European prayer quorums. Berlin had been without a rabbi since Rabbi Peter N. Levinson had returned to the United States in April 1952.

The fourth conference of German rabbis, which took place in Bad Nauheim in July 1953, expressed anxiety about the general lack of religious and cultural interest. This fact had also been acknowledged by the Zentralkomitee der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council). But with the passage of the Federal Law on Indemnification, which had been one of the most important preoccupations of the Jewish organizations, it was planned to devote more energy to cultural matters.

During the fourth conference of the Central Council, which took place in Bremen from October 11 to 13, 1953, a special committee for cultural affairs was set up for this purpose.

The conference also elected a new directorate consisting of five members and five deputies. H. G. van Dam was newly confirmed in his post as general secretary to the Council.
Welfare

The Council and the communities would still have to concern themselves with the improvement and implementation of the laws on restitution and indemnification, as well as with the welfare of the old and needy. Jewish social work was coordinated by the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland (Central Welfare Board). On May 10, 1953, the Jüdischer Frauenbund (Jewish Women’s League) was founded, incorporating sixteen local groups with a total of 1,500 members, who were chiefly concerned with welfare work.

There were some ten Jewish homes for the aged in Western Germany and one in Berlin.

The JDC assisted several thousand people with cash allowances, mainly in the American zone, beside organizing and financing emigration. The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Munich also helped people to emigrate. The Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) ran five training schools for prospective emigrants, attended by 350 trainees at the end of June, 1953.

Owing to the age and social structure of the Jewish communities their financial position was very weak, with only a small part of their budget covered by members’ contributions. The communities now received part of the proceeds of restituted heirless Jewish property, the other part going to the Jewish Agency and to refugee organizations. In the British zone the successor organization collecting the restituted property, the Jewish Trust Fund, cooperated closely with the communities in the distribution of the funds. In the American zone, the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) transferred one-third of its revenue to the JDC, which, in turn, distributed it to the Jewish communities or used it directly for its welfare activities. In some states the communities also received public subsidies, either in the form of grants or as payments on account of the future restitution of Jewish communal property; but these amounts were small.

Anti-Semitism

Chancellor Adenauer’s 1951 promise of legislation to make anti-Semitic propaganda a criminal offense was not implemented during the first Bundestag. Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler told the Hamburg Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation that a bill had been drafted by his department, but the Bundestag had not found time to discuss it (reported July 31, 1953). This failure to legislate had been strongly criticized by sections of German opinion, notably by Karl Gerold, editor of the independent Frankfurter Rundschau.

During the period under review individual insults to Jews, if they came before a court at all, were usually punished by several months’ imprisonment, but authors or distributors of anti-Semitic leaflets were sometimes acquitted on the plea that a collectivity could not be libelled.

On the whole, the role of open anti-Semitism in neo-Nazi propaganda had been comparatively small. Anti-Semitic leaflets from Sweden, South Africa,
and the United States were discovered in searches of the offices of the German Community in Lower Saxony in March 1953. Anti-Semitic pamphlets had also been produced by a Russian emigré group in Munich calling itself St. George’s Brotherhood for National and Patriotic Enlightenment (Ronnd). Desecration of cemeteries occurred in a number of places. In Worms the Jewish cemetery had to be put under police guard.

**Interfaith Activities**

The Peace with Israel campaign, initiated in the autumn of 1951 by Erich Lueth, press officer of the city of Hamburg, concluded its activity in March 1953 with the ratification of the reparations agreement with Israel. Its last action was the distribution of a leaflet *Through Truth to Peace* urging the speeding up of the ratification. It also had collected funds for the planting of 60,000 olive trees in Israel. In April 1953 Lueth paid a visit to Israel.

District Dean Maass of Heidelberg, who also took a leading part in interfaith work, was invited to visit Israel for the second time by the Israel government. Thomas Harlan had produced a documentary in Israel "to atone for the former National Socialist attitude of my father" (Veit Harlan—see *AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK*, 1953 [Vol. 54], pp. 314-15).

As in preceding years, a Brotherhood Week, organized by the Council of Christians and Jews, was held in Western Germany the first week of March 1953, under the patronage of President Theodor Heuss. The Berlin opening ceremony, including an address by Mayor Ernst Reuter, was broadcast over all German radio stations. Societies for Christian-Jewish cooperation existed in sixteen towns.

President Heuss also spoke on November 30, 1952, at Bergen-Belsen, at the dedication of an obelisk in memory of the concentration camp victims. He appealed to Germans never to forget what members of their nation had done during those shameful years.

In April 1953 Mayor Reuter addressed a celebration, organized by the Berlin district of Neukölln, of the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The rising was also commemorated by the German Social Democratic Party (SDP) in a telegram to the Jewish Socialist Bund in New York.

The Protestant Committee for Service to Israel, under the chairmanship of Professor Karl Heinrich Rengsdorf, organized a fifth meeting of clergymen of both confessions, held in Wuppertal from March 2 to 6, 1953. The Berlin Evangelical Academy sponsored a discussion between Christian and Jewish university teachers on Israel, Old and New, in December 1952.

The Catholic publication *Rundbrief zur Förderung der Freundschaft zwischen dem alten und dem neuen Gottesvolk* ("Letters for Promoting Friendship Between the Old and the New People of God") continued to propagate understanding between the two religions. This work had grown out of the assistance for persecutees under the Nazis that Gertrud Luckner had performed on behalf of the Archbishop of Freiburg until she herself was sent to a concentration camp.
Reparations and Indemnification

On September 10, 1952, a reparations agreement with Israel was signed in Luxembourg (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], pp. 471-85). Germany undertook to pay DM 3,000,000,000 ($715,000,000) to Israel in commodities and services, and an additional DM 400,000,000 ($107,000,000) for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (CJMCAG).

Ratification, originally promised for January 1952, had been delayed by the pressure of German industrial groups anxious to avoid repercussions in the Arab countries, which had threatened to boycott German goods. The German government gave assurances that no war material would be delivered to Israel, and sent a trade delegation to Cairo in January 1953 with offers of generous trade and credit concessions. But the Egyptians made exorbitant demands and attempted to put pressure on the West Germans by inviting a trade delegation from Eastern Germany at the same time. This led to an interruption of the talks on February 12.

On February 13, the Federal government submitted the agreement to the Bundestag, which adopted it unanimously on February 20, on condition that the ban of German vessels from Israel ports be removed. This was subsequently agreed to by the Israel government.

On March 18, 1953, the Bundesrat ratified the agreement by 239 votes to 35, with 86 abstentions; 44 deputies were absent, including 30 who had been present earlier in the day.

The votes for the agreement came from all 125 Social Democrats, 84 Christian Democrats, 17 FDP and 5 DP members (including Minister of Transport Hans Christian Seebohm) and 7 other deputies. Of the 86 who abstained, 39 were Christian Democrats, chiefly Bavarians (including Finance Minister Fritz Schaeffer), 19 Free Democrats, and 10 DP (including Minister Heinrich Hellwege), 13 members of the Federalist Union, and 5 others mostly elected for the DRP. All the Communists, 6 Christian Democrats, 5 FDP, 5 DP, and 7 nonparty deputies voted against.

Chancellor Adenauer opened the debate by recalling the pledge he had given with the general support of the House on September 27, 1951. He expressed the hope that the agreement would be regarded as a German contribution towards the promotion of human and religious freedom. For the SPD Carlo Schmid stressed that moral obligations must be fulfilled to the utmost limits of Germany’s economic capacity. He also insisted that the agreement with Israel did not reduce Germany’s obligations towards the individual victims of Nazi persecution. For the Free Democrats Walter Hasemann, a former member of the Nazi party, demanded legislation to protect from hardship those who had acquired Jewish property. Hans Joachim Merkatz, floor leader of the DP, expressed regret that no similar reparations had been offered by the Allies for the injustices inflicted on German expellees.

The threatened Arab boycott did not materialize after the ratification. Negotiations with Egypt were resumed, and German participation in development projects in Arab countries were under discussion.
Indemnification

The Federal Law for the Indemnification of Nazi Victims was finally enacted in the very last session of the Bundestag on July 29, 1953, after settlement of a dispute with the Bundesrat on the distribution of the costs between the Federal treasury and the states.

The law indemnified individuals who had suffered persecution for race, religion, or political beliefs. They or their dependents would be compensated for loss of life and limb, for damage to health and to business opportunities and career, for deprivation of liberty, interruption of vocational training, loss of pension, and insurance rights. The law also covered loss of property, but with some important exceptions (see below).

Priority was given to claims by old and sick people, by those whose earning power had been reduced by more than half, and by the needy in general. All claims were to be settled by the end of 1962.

Total payments under this law were estimated at DM 4,000,000,000 ($955,000,000). Under the old laws the states had paid out DM 600,000,000, as of April 1953.

The law was based on the compensation legislation of the United States zone, improved in a number of respects. Clauses of previous laws more favorable to the victim remained in force—e. g., the Berlin provisions recognizing the claims of East sector residents.

Improvements

The most important improvements on the old state legislation were:

1. New groups of victims were recognized, among them emigrants from the British zone, victims whose last residence was in the territories East of the Oder-Neisse now administered by Poland, and certain groups of DP's.
2. Hitherto, claims had only been recognized if based on measures directed expressly against the individual persecutee; now it was assumed that any measure against a group whose liquidation was intended by the Nazi regime was directed against each member of that group.
3. Victims from the British zone of Germany would now also receive compensation for damage to their properties and careers.
4. Compensation for interruption of vocational training was newly introduced.
5. The position of employees of private firms was improved.
6. The upper limit for claims by religious bodies and their legal successors was abolished.

The government bill superseded two earlier drafts—one by the SPD group of the Bundestag and one by the Bundesrat. Both had taken the initiative when the government did not produce a bill. The government only started work on a draft after it had undertaken to enact Federal legislation on indemnification in the agreement with the CJMCAG on September 10, 1952. The bill was approved by the cabinet on May 29, in the absence of two ministers belonging to the DP. Minister Seebohm told his party's congress in Hamburg on May 31: "So long as Germans are not given their rights we are not interested in satisfying the rights of others."
Since less than a month remained before the dissolution of parliament, the Bundestag decided on the unusual course of adopting the government draft unchanged. But it was made clear, particularly by the Social Democrats, that the law had grave shortcomings and the hope was expressed that the next Bundestag would enact the necessary improvements.

The legislation was passed on July 2 by 300 votes. Only the Communists voted solidly against it. The DP, except for its floor leader Hans-Joachim Merkatz, who voted in favor, left the session before the vote.

**Criticisms**

The chief criticisms of the law raised by Jewish groups were:

1. The exclusion of claims covered by restitution legislation meant that many claims were indefinitely delayed or were not recognized at all. Thus, property claims against the former Reich for confiscated trucks had to await future Federal restitution legislation, while in Berlin most restitution claims for confiscated valuables and bank deposits had been rejected altogether on the grounds that the head offices of the banks and the public pawnshop, to which the valuables had been transferred, were situated in what was now the Soviet sector.

2. The limitation of inheritance claims was too drastic.

3. Many victims in the low priority groups had to wait for a long time before they could receive any payments.

4. Pensions were too low and their calculation by analogy to pensions for comparable civil servants was too complicated and socially unfair.

5. Emigrants from Eastern Germany remained excluded from indemnification.

6. Tax exemption had not been granted for compensation payments, nor could claims be set off against tax liabilities.

**Claims Against I. G. Farben**

On June 10, 1953, a German court at Frankfurt ordered the I. G. Farben chemical combine to pay DM 10,000 damages and compensation to a former Jewish slave laborer. The plaintiff Norbert Wollheim, now living in New York, when an inmate of Auschwitz concentration camp had been forced to work in 1943 at the company's synthetic rubber plant at Monowitz, like thousands of his fellow prisoners. The court was convinced by the evidence that working conditions had been such as to drive many prisoners to their death, and that the firm's executives had shared in responsibility for this by their "terrible callousness." It rejected their plea that they had not known the conditions.

The trial was regarded as a test case; 1,800 similar cases had been registered with Wollheim's lawyer, Henry Ormond. I. G. Farben had appealed.

The action was based exclusively on German civil law without any reference to Allied war crimes trials. This had not prevented leading organs of German industry from starting a press campaign about a "third wave of reparations" which might impose "a burden of thousands of millions" on the German economy.

The campaign had increased since a new suit was brought against the company, this time before a United States military court, by Rudolf Wachsmann,
now a soldier with the United States Army in Germany. Wachsmann, who at the age of fourteen had been brought to Auschwitz where his parents and brother had been killed, demanded DM 50,000 ($13,000) for wages and DM 500,000 ($130,000) compensation for physical and mental torture. The jurisdiction of an American court had been contested by the defendant. The wisdom of taking this approach had also been questioned by H. G. van Dam, secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

**Cultural Life**

Many books by well-known Jewish authors were reprinted or published in Germany for the first time during the period under review. These included works by Leon Feuchtwanger, Alfred and Robert Neumann, Joseph Roth, Max Brod, and Hermann Kesten, letters by Franz Kafka, and extracts from Walter Rathenau's diaries. Among the translations were books by Sholem Asch and M. Y. Ben Gavriel; Serge Goussard's *Pogrom* was published under the title of *Schreckensnacht* ("Night of Horror"). The ghetto of sixteenth-century Prague formed the background of Leo Perutz's book *Nachts unter der steinernen Brücke* ("Under the Stone Bridge by Night"). The Spemann publishers in Stuttgart, in their series on world religions, published Friedrich Thieberger's *Glaubensstufen des Judentums* ("Stages of Judaic Belief").

Outstanding among books by non-Jewish authors was Luise Rinser's *Jan Lobel aus Warschau*, telling the story of an escaped Polish Jewish prisoner who was given refuge by a German family.

An appreciation of the role Jews played in German cultural life was given in the collection entitled *Den Unvergessenen* ("To the Unforgotten"), edited by District Dean Herman Maass and the late Professor Gustav Radbruch, and published by Lambert Schneider in Heidelberg.

**Personalia**

Berlin's former chief rabbi, Leo Baeck, who had insisted on staying with his flock under the Nazis and had been deported to Theresienstadt, received numerous honors at his eightieth birthday, which he celebrated in London on May 23, 1953. President Theodor Heuss sent Ambassador Hans Schlange-Schöningen to decorate Baeck with the Grand Cross of Merit with Star. Rabbi Baeck was also made *doctor honoris causae* of Berlin University.

Others decorated with the Federal Cross of Merit were: the art historian Max Friedländer, who was living in Amsterdam; the economist Moritz Julius Bonn; the Nestor of the German cabaret, Rudolf Nelson; and the editor of the *Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland*, Karl Marx, for his contribution to German-Jewish understanding. His paper, which appeared in Duesseldorf, had a circulation of 58,000 and was widely read by non-Jews and abroad.
Martin Buber accepted the Goethe Prize of Hamburg University at a ceremony on June 24, 1953. He was also awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade during the Frankfurt Book Fair on September 27, 1953.

The scientists James Franck (at the University of Chicago, United States) and Max Born (University of Edinburgh, Scotland) were made honorary citizens of Goettingen, where they had been university professors until Hitler came to power.

Recent deaths included Martin Wolf, former professor of law at the University of Berlin, who died in London a few months after his eightieth birthday; Alfred Philippson, former professor of geography at Bonn, and Erich Simon, chairman of the Berlin Jewish Representatives’ Assembly, both survivors of Theresienstadt; and Reinhold Nussbaum, chief of the legal department of the Israel Purchasing Mission.

**AUSTRIA**

During the year under review (July 1952 through fall 1953) Austria's Staatsvertrag (state treaty) that would establish her independence and to achieve the withdrawal of all four foreign armies of occupation. In neither respect was any definite progress registered.

In September 1952 the Western Allies had made an offer to include in the so-called “Skeleton State Treaty” for Austria certain clauses, whose omission from the original draft had caused Soviet complaints. On July 12, 1953, the Western Powers again called upon Russia to resume the treaty negotiations with a view to restoring Austrian independence. The new Malenkov line adopted by Soviet Russia after Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, had temporarily created a slightly more favorable atmosphere for a state treaty. But hopes fell again with the Soviet Union's refusal to attend the proposed conferences in London in September and in Lucerne in October 1953.

On June 6, 1953, the Soviets for the first time appointed a civilian High Commissioner for Austria, Ivan Ivanovitch Iljitschev, to succeed General Sviridov (who remained as Soviet Commander-in-Chief). Iljitschev took up his duties on June 10. This replacement of a soldier by a diplomat as supreme representative brought Russia into line with the Western Powers, which had taken the same step several years earlier. It was welcomed in official circles as a belated but courteous gesture, and was a prestige success.

On February 22, 1953, there were general elections in Austria due to the disagreement on the budget in the autumn between the Volkspartei (People's Party) and Socialists. For the first time on record, the Socialists polled a plurality of the votes, gaining some 200,000, while the People's Party lost 65,000. Under the electoral system, however, the Popular Party received seventy-four and the Socialists seventy-three mandates. The neo-Nazi League of Independents (VDU) lost two of its sixteen mandates, despite the general expectation that it would increase its representation to eighteen or twenty. The Communists lost one of their five mandates. On March 22 the senior
partner in the coalition government, the People's Party, caused the fall of
the cabinet of Leopold Figl (himself a member of that party), under whose
seven-year guidance Austria had emerged successfully from the collapse and
chaos of 1945. The party took this action on the initiative of its chairman,
Julius Raab, representative of business and industrial interests, who in the
1930's had been prominent in the fascist Heimwehr and an opponent of
democracy and parliamentary government. (These business interests
charged Figl with having been too conciliatory towards the Socialists). Pres-
ident Theodore Körner entrusted Raab with the formation of a new govern-
ment. Raab first tried to form a right-wing coalition against the Socialists
with the VDU. President Körner refused to accept a cabinet which would
include the neo-Nazis on the ground that it would be contrary to the verdict
of the electors. On April 1 the People's Party-Socialist coalition was re-
formed under Raab, the Socialists securing by virtue of their electoral suc-
cess two new undersecretaryships in the ministries of commerce and foreign
affairs.

Compensation Legislation

On July 18, 1952, the Austrian parliament passed the long-delayed seventh
amendment to the Opferfürsorgegesetz ("Law for the Rehabilitation of Vic-
tims") and the Beamtenentschädigungsgesetz ("Law for the Compensation
of Officials"). The former amendment simply provided for compensation
for periods spent in prisons and concentration camps in the Nazi (and Doll-
fuss-fascist) eras. Contrary to Jewish demands, it limited compensation pay-
ments to present-day Austrian citizens. Thus it excluded from any recom-
pense for their sufferings all those who, forced by persecution to emigrate
or to escape abroad, had subsequently abandoned or otherwise lost Austrian
citizenship. Austrian Jewry, however, was told that this limitation would
be reconsidered in the next amendment to the law. On July 8, 1953, parlia-
ment accepted a motion by the Socialist deputies Rosa Jochmann and Karl
Mark calling for a ninth amendment to be passed in the fall 1953 parliamen-
tary session, to meet Jewish demands. On July 28, 1953, an Austrian gov-
ernment communique announced acceptance of the principle that, in com-
pensating victims of the Nazis, "no difference should be made between Aus-
trian citizens and other persons, regardless of whether they are domiciled in
Austria or abroad."

In August 1952 the struggle of Austrian and world Jewry against three new
Nazi amnesty laws and the Wiederverwerbgesetz (Reacquisition Law) was
crowned with success. All efforts (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953
[Vol. 54] p. 326) to prevent the passage through parliament of these pro-Nazi
measures failed. In their eagerness to secure the ex-Nazi and neo-Nazi vote,
all parties voted for them. On the coming into force of the Wiederverwerb-
gesetz were centered the hopes of the Ariseure ("Aryanizers" who had
enriched themselves by the acquisition of stolen Jewish property) of recover-
ning their ill-gotten gains.

In July 1952 the American Jewish Committee and the World Jewish Con-
AUSTRIA

gress sent delegates to Vienna to fight the government's intention to give ear to the "grievances" of the Nazis while their victims were still asking in vain for satisfaction of their just claims. Despite conferences with the People's Party and the Socialists, the measures became law. Meanwhile, the protests of world Jewry in the capitals of the occupying powers had their effects. Almost for the first time in the history of the seven-year occupation, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union unanimously agreed in the Allied Council in August 1952 to refuse the necessary sanction to the Reacquisition Law. The council declined to consider the Nazi amnesty laws. These, being measures affecting the Austrian constitution, became in consequence automatically null and void.

Restitution

A great step forward in the Jewish efforts to obtain satisfaction of restitution claims was taken when it was decided in the summer of 1952 to form a new representative body to press these claims. One of the grounds put forward by the Austrian government for the long delays had been that it could not deal with three or four separate Austrian Jewish bodies, and in addition with various organizations of world Jewry. It was therefore decided in Paris in 1952 to form one single ad hoc body to coordinate Jewish action in respect both to compensation claims and the question of heirless Jewish property. The Jews, who had expected that compensation for lost property would begin in 1945, had had to wait until 1947 for the first Victims' Welfare Law. At first this benefited only those who had played an active political part against the Nazis; later it was altered. The Third Restitution Law of 1947 affecting identifiable stolen property was satisfactory in principle, although later it was not properly applied. There followed a succession of such laws, all of which left a great many just claims unsatisfied. Meanwhile, many of the wronged claimants lived in great poverty and misery, although the 60,000 houses that Jews had owned in Vienna before the war should alone have provided more than enough to house and care for every claimant in the small Austrian Jewish community, even allowing for war destruction and postwar requisitioning. Instead of this, the former Nazis began to pick up heart after a couple of years and started their partly successful campaign to recover or retain their ill-gotten gains. Austrian efforts to restrict all claims to Jews still in possession of Austrian citizenship made a bad impression. Many of the 120,000 who succeeded in getting out of reach of the Nazis between 1938 and 1939 were in great need, and had justifiable claims to compensation for loss, regardless of their present citizenship.

The first step was the formation in Salzburg in September 1952 of the Landesverband, a central organization of all Austrian Jews, to include the separate communities of Vienna and the provincial capitals. In April 1953 the Committee of Claims on Austria was formed in New York. It embraced eighteen Jewish world organizations. After negotiations in Paris, Linz, and New York, it joined with the Vienna community in setting up an executive committee to negotiate with the Austrian government (May 9, 1953). Dis-
cussions among experts took place from June 10 to June 15 in Paris. On June 14 the executive committee was formally constituted in Paris at a meeting attended by Nahum Goldmann of the Jewish Agency, Jacob Blaustein of the American Jewish Committee, Israel Goldstein of the American Jewish Congress, and other representatives of world Jewry. Goldmann was elected chairman and Emil Maurer of Vienna, president of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities, vice chairman.

A delegation of this executive committee was received by a delegation of the Austrian cabinet headed by Chancellor Raab on June 17.

After the formal visit to the chancellor and to President Körner, the delegation met the chancellor again on June 18 and at his request handed him a memorandum embodying the Jewish claims. These centered on amendments to the existing restitution and reparation laws, and the fixing of a round sum as compensation for heirless and unclaimed property of all kinds. The memorandum estimated the material losses of Austrian Jews through the Nazis at 30,000,000 schillings ($7,800,000). This, it was later explained, was not the figure claimed in compensation, which was only a fraction of the total loss. This claim, the memorandum concluded, could be satisfied by annual payments over a period of years. On June 24, technical negotiations were opened between the Austrian committee of officials and the Jewish committee of experts. A number of technical subcommittees were formed and got to work on practical questions.

On July 13, Goldmann returned to Vienna and was received by Chancellor Raab, Foreign Minister Karl Gruber, and Minister of Finance Reinhard Kamitz. It was agreed that negotiations should be adjourned for the summer holidays and resumed in the middle of September 1953.

Jewish Population

There was a very slight decline in the small remaining Jewish population of Austria. As of June 30, 1953, the total population in Jewish communities and Displaced Persons' camps was 10,953. (See Table 1 below for breakdown.)

This figure included some 1,200 DP's living outside camps. The slight decline from 1951-52 was attributable not only to emigration and deaths, but to resignations from the Jewish community of some 200 during the period under review, as well. The resignations followed the decision of the Jewish community to associate itself with Communist protests about the Rosenberg case only if the Communists should themselves join in protests against the Slansky trial and other anti-Semitic actions behind the Iron Curtain.

It is noteworthy that the proportion of the aged in the community remained unduly high and that of children and young people so low that it was estimated that in twenty-five years the population would have shrunk 10 per cent from this cause alone. Of the 7,000-8,000 Viennese Jews, 800 or 10 per cent were under 17 (the normal percentage would be 40), while 40 per
cent were over 55 years of age. Occupationally, the Jewish community was largely made up of people living on their pensions, with a number of shopkeepers, merchants, and industrialists. There were very few working class Jews. The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was giving direct cash assistance to 810 individuals as of June 1953. It was servicing 1,466 persons in the Jewish community and camps, at an expenditure of more than 92,000 schillings ($24,000).

TABLE 1

JEWISH POPULATION IN COMMUNITIES AND CAMPS IN AUSTRIA
JUNE 30, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vienna Community</td>
<td>9,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Rothschild</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. S. Zone Community</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asten</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallein</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Zone Community</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Zone Community</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL COMMUNITIES</td>
<td>10,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CAMPS</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>10,953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Displaced Persons, Emigration, and Immigration

The Jewish DP camps continued to be administered by the Austrian government, with supplementary assistance from the JDC. A number of inmates came under the United States President's Escapee Program (PEP) for the assistance of refugees from behind the Iron Curtain arriving subsequent to 1948. To some extent this replaced International Refugee Organization (IRO) assistance. Despite the decrease in the resettlement potential of the Jewish DP's, the JDC had intensified its resettlement program, particularly in respect to South America and Canada. In the efforts to resettle some of the "hard core" of unwanted emigrants, a small number of arrested tuberculosis cases were accepted by Norway, and some active tuberculosis cases were to be taken by Sweden.

In the summer of 1952 there was a considerable influx of fugitives from behind the Iron Curtain, but their number dwindled rapidly after October 1952 and very few Jews or others were able to escape. A very few aged and dying Jews were allowed to get out legally. During the period under review only about 100 refugees escaped to Austria from the east.
Some of the Jewish DP’s had inflated hopes of securing mass visas to the United States under the new immigration bill (see p. 67 and f.). DP’s still had the utmost difficulty in securing Austrian citizenship, to which they were only theoretically entitled; it was also extremely hard to get labor permits. Of about 1,200 DP’s living outside the camps, in the community, 200 heads of families received JDC assistance. In June 1953, 27 emigrants left Austria (15 for the United States); 1,791 cases were pending. During the period under review, of a total Austrian Jewish emigration of 679, 333 emigrated to the United States, 146 to Canada, 109 to Brazil, 58 to Australia. (The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society [HIAS] settled 128 Austrian Jewish immigrants during the same period.)

There were some 200 Jewish students in Austria: 100 of them at the University of Vienna, others in Innsbruck and Graz. Many came from abroad —e.g. from the United States, Britain, and Israel—owing to the lower cost of Austrian education, especially in medicine.

**Neo-Nazism and Anti-Semitism**

In October 1952 the VDU held a mass meeting in Salzburg with German speakers and pro-Anschluss tendencies. This gathering was notably defended in articles by the militant neo-Nazi, Victor Reimann, editor of the VDU’s *Die Neue Front*. Apart from VDU organs, two little-read Vienna boulevard weeklies, the *Wiener Montag* and the *Wiener Samstag* (printed by the publishers of the People’s Party press) kept up a series of slyly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi articles and news. There were several attacks during the year under review—in which a part of the People’s Party press joined—on former Austrian Jews who were alleged to have returned to Austria as United States civilian officials and army officers, and to have used their influence in the United States against Austrian interests. In June 1952 Chancellor Raab joined in attacking “certain Austrian emigrés among the Americans.” The Socialist *Arbeiterzeitung* sharply condemned these anti-Semitic tendencies in an editorial.

In August 1952 the balance of the sentences of imprisonment passed in 1948 on a group of neo-Nazi conspirators headed by one Theodor Soucek was remitted. In June 1952 Adolf Slavik, head of the neo-Nazi National League, was arrested on charges of trying to revive Nazism.

In May and June 1953 the Social Democrats raised a storm against the well-devised schemes of persons in the ministry of education to confer the chair of theatrical science at the University of Vienna on the notorious former Nazi ideologist, Professor Kindermann, despite his published works justifying the murderers of Chancellor Dollfuss, and other Nazi criminals.

On May 28, 1953, Victor Reimann of the VDU created a scene in parliament by accusing the Socialist deputy Heinrich Widmayer (who had been imprisoned and tortured in Theresienstadt for the part he had played in the Austrian underground) of having described the VDU as a “neo-Nazi” Party. The *Salzburger Nachrichten*, one of the more important Austrian newspapers and notoriously reactionary, on several occasions indulged in more or less camouflaged neo-Nazi propaganda—notably in June 1953, when it
launched into an uncalled-for defense of the majority of "our former German Volksgenossen (national comrades)." The occasion was the closing in Germany of the exhibition of instruments of torture in the Dachau crematorium. The Salzburger Nachrichten was severely attacked by the Vienna Neues Oesterreich, a democratic, interparty organ, for labeling this exhibition "intolerant" and for its gratuitous assertion that the Germans as a whole had no knowledge of the barbarism practised in the concentration camps.

Apart from the Salzburger Nachrichten, anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi press manifestations were all of a minor character, and confined to the party organs of the VDU and two or three little-read gutter journals. Usually they were duly dealt with by the more responsible part of the press. One incident more worthy of notice was the action taken in December 1952 by the Archbishop of Salzburg, Andreas Rohracher, and the governor of Salzburg province, Josef Klaus, in presenting an appeal to President Körner to pardon the war criminals still serving sentences passed by the Austrian courts. The appeal used such curious language as the following:

... [They] are persons who under circumstances of great peril committed murder under orders [which must be regarded as] ensuing from the dangers confronting the population. [They only] tried to protect their fellow-countrymen from criminal foreign elements, and wished only to do their part in the defense of the country.

This amazing appeal, which was privately presented, was at once made public by the President. The organ of the Jewish community commented:

All victims of the Nazis must ask the Archbishop why he made no such appeal to Adolf Hitler... Had he made such an appeal for humanity (as did Cardinal Faulhaber) while he held his high churchly office in the Nazi era, he would have the right to ask today for mercy to be shown.

Other clergymen sharply condemned the attempt of the Archbishop (which the Salzburger Nachrichten defended). Cooperator Josef Egger of Golling circulated an open letter attacking in the name of the lower clergy the action of Rohracher, saying that it had aroused "indignation in every right-thinking person and showed a malicious ignorantia crassa in a prince of the church." The appeal was rejected by the Federal President.

GENERAL SITUATION

It cannot be said that the Austrians in general discriminated against Jews. Those officials who privately nourished anti-Semitic prejudices were careful to conceal them. A number of Jewish teachers had been reinstated. But Austrian Jews were under no illusions. Their consensus was that there was far more heartful repentance for the bestialities perpetrated by the Nazis in Germany than in Austria, where the feeling that it was politic to stand well with world Jewry was the main factor. Jews also contrasted the conduct of war criminal trials in Germany and in Austria strongly to Austria's disfavor; Austrian courts seemed mainly concerned in securing acquittals. Typical was the trial in Innsbruck in July 1952 of an SS officer charged with mass extermination crimes against Jews. The man was acquitted in the face of a mass of sworn affidavits from Jews behind the Iron Curtain, the judge saying
openly that he preferred to accept the evidence of the SS man's former colleagues. Official relations between the Jewish community and the Austrian government were friendly, and steadily improving. In fact there was a tendency in People's Party circles to complain that the Jewish community, with its Socialist majority, had relations with the Austrian Socialist Party that were too close. However, in the course of the interrupted negotiations on the Jewish claims, both parties displayed a much less satisfactory attitude than could have been expected.

**Jewish Education and Religious Life**

There was one synagogue in Vienna, in the Seitenstättengasse, whose rabbi was Akiba Eisenberg. The other synagogues destroyed by the Nazis had not been rebuilt. Apart from this one synagogue there were two Bethäuser ("Houses of Prayer") in Vienna, one belonging to Mizrachi, the Zionist religious wing, the other to the Agudath Israel. There were several prayer meeting houses in the provincial capitals, as well.

There was only one all-day Jewish school in Austria. This had been established in the building of the Rothschild Hospital, and was attended by forty children. The financial position of the school was insecure.

In Vienna 300 children, educated at various Austrian schools, received supplementary religious teaching at six instructional centers. On every religious holiday there was a Jewish hour on the Red-White-Red radio network. Important festivals were celebrated in the Grosser Musikvereinssaal, as the synagogue was too small.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

All Israel parties were represented in the Vienna community, but only as very small nuclei. Thus, there were two Zionist youth movements, with a combined membership of 150, the Labor Socialist Gordoniah and the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair. Yet the interest in Israel was intense. On Israel's Independence Day, 3,000 members—30 per cent—of the small Viennese Jewish community assembled in Israel's honor, although active Zionists were in a minority. The only actual anti-Zionists were the Communists. There were no hachshara training farms. Great interest was taken in Israel affairs, and there was a considerable sale of Hebrew books and newspapers.

The Austrian press showed little interest in spot news from Israel, but great interest in the Israel way of life; many features were published dealing with it. Most newspapers had regular correspondents in Israel. Arab influences were always at work and were slightly on the increase. Normal diplomatic relations between Israel and Austria had not yet been established, owing to Israel's reluctance to accept the general Austrian thesis that Nazism was thrust upon the population by the German invaders. The Israel consulate discharged many of the functions of a legation, and it seemed probable that full diplomatic relations might be established between the two countries in the near future.

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