INTRODUCTION

During the period under review (July 1959 to June 1960) Latin America had an increasingly prominent part in world politics. Cuba challenged the Monroe Doctrine, and Castro's reliance on Soviet support against the United States extended the cold war to the Western Hemisphere. This, however, was only one aspect of the problem.

President-elect John F. Kennedy noted some of its other facets when he said that in the underdeveloped areas, including most of Latin America, "our enemy is not Soviet aid and trade, our enemy is poverty, despair, stagnation, and the fear that only totalitarian methods can lift a poor agrarian society into sustained growth. Our task is to demonstrate in this generation that economic growth and human liberty can evolve hand in hand."

Many Latin Americans felt that this had not yet been demonstrated. The United States offer of half a billion dollars in new economic aid, made at the Costa Rica conference of sponsoring organizations in August and the Bogotá conference of sponsoring organizations in September 1960, left them unsatisfied. They resented United States economic sanctions against Cuba, including the cutting of the Cuban sugar quota, without prior consultation with the Organization of American States (OAS). Regarding United States offers of aid as "too little and too late," they pressed for a long-range plan to stabilize the prices of Latin American primary products in the world market, as well as to promote agrarian reform and industrialization in the various countries. The Act of Bogotá, adopted in September 1960, called for "measures for social improvement and economic development." But the vague terms of the Act of Bogotá did not constitute a long-range plan capable of solving Latin America's crucial problems.

Latin American Jews, concentrated in the middle class, on the whole were prosperous, benefiting from the dominant industrialization and urbanization. Their problem was how to achieve integration in their environment while preserving their identity.

The efforts of the Jewish communities were directed to promoting Jewish education, conserving Yiddish, introducing Hebrew alongside of Spanish or Portuguese, developing contacts with the State of Israel, and struggling against antisemitism. In dealing with these issues the various Jewish groups adopted each other's methods. Thus, the success of the Kehillah in Argentina led the Jews of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay to attempt to organize in a similar fashion. The flourishing activity of the sports center in Mexico induced

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 391.
Chilean Jews to try the same technique for keeping Jewish youth within the fold.

Almost all the representative organizations planned to participate in the Zionist Congress in Jerusalem, scheduled for December 1960.

ARGENTINA

The year under review was characterized by sharp political struggle. In May 1960 Admiral Isaac F. Rojas, supported by the navy, demanded President Arturo Frondizi’s resignation, charging him with yielding to the Peronist forces. Since the navy did not have the support of the army and air force in this political maneuver, it was possible to reach a compromise agreement whereby Rogelio Frigerio, economic adviser to the president and reputedly his contact man with the Peronists, was removed from the cabinet.

Then the press published documents which seemed to indicate a pre-electoral pact between Frondizi and former President Juan D. Perón, allegedly negotiated by Frigerio, as well as other documents concerning Communist offers to support Peronist efforts to overthrow the government. Frondizi nevertheless succeeded in outmaneuvering several attempts by army and navy officers to overthrow his government. When in September 1959 the Peronist and Communist labor leaders combined to call a 48-hour general strike, the president persuaded parliament to eliminate from the union-organization law certain provisions which had helped perpetuate the power of union leaders who had gained their influence under Perón. Such unpopular measures caused a severe defeat for Frondizi’s Intransigent Radical party in the partial congressional elections of March 1960, but his large majority in the holdover half of congress permitted him to keep control.

The Frondizi regime continued its policy of fighting inflation by restricting the money supply, imposing strict import controls, and allowing wages to lag behind prices. In September 1960 the reserves in gold and foreign currency stood at over $5 billion, twice what they had been at the same time the year before. The trade balance continued to be favorable. The cost-of-living index rose only 8 per cent during the first 7 months of 1960, compared with 80 per cent during the same period in the previous year.

Jewish Community

At the end of August 1960 an extraordinary congress of the Jewish communities, Wa’ad ha-Kehillot, in celebration of the first centenary of Argentine Jewry, was attended by 240 delegates from communities throughout the country and by observers from Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, and Mexico. Many delegates expressed their deep concern about assimilationist tendencies among the young generation of Argentine Jews, mixed marriages, and the lack of rabbis in the smaller communities. Resolutions were adopted for the consolidation of communal life, the strengthening of Jewish education through
the creation of more all-day schools, and the improvement of relations between Ashkenazim and Sephardim.

**Community Organization**

The central Jewish community organization, the Kehillah of Buenos Aires, was founded in 1894 with only 85 families as a Hevrah Kaddisha. In 1960 it had a membership of 50,000 families. All the Jewish institutions in the capital were affiliated with the Kehillah and some received supplementary financial assistance from it. Its budget was 120 million pesos, or $1.45 million, more than half of which went to education.

**Education**

In mid-1960 there were 129 elementary and secondary Jewish schools, with 629 teachers and 16,340 pupils, something like 25 per cent of all Jewish children of school age.

In April 1960 the cornerstone was laid for a $1.5-million building for the Teachers' Seminary of the Buenos Aires Kehillah. The seminary, founded by the Kehillah about 20 years previously with an initial enrollment of 40 students, had a student body of 620. Several hundred graduates served as teachers in the Jewish schools of Argentina and neighboring countries. Some continued their studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and became teachers in Israeli schools.

Through a Jewish book month the Kehillah sought to stimulate the sale of books of Jewish content. In 1959 a total of 13,140 books were sold for 1,220,000 pesos. Of these, 37 per cent were in Yiddish, 13 per cent in Hebrew, and 50 per cent in Spanish. Most were sold at lectures and concerts especially arranged during Jewish book month.

**Intergroup Relations**

There were two conspicuous events during the year. The first was the local incidence of the worldwide swastika epidemic (see pp. 209-13) which started late in December 1959. The second was the Israeli capture of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina (see pp. 199-208) in May 1960. Both events were followed by anti-Jewish demonstrations throughout Argentina. The most violent incident took place in August 1960 at the Sarmiento high school in Buenos Aires, where a 15-year-old Jewish student was shot and seriously wounded and other Jewish students were injured by a nationalist, antisemitic gang of university students.

In these and similar instances, the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) protested vigorously to the Argentine authorities who, in most cases, tried to correct the situation. As the tension between the Argentine and Israeli governments heightened because of the Eichmann case, it became increasingly difficult for government officials to resist influential pressure in an antisemitic direction, but DAIA persisted. After the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between Argentina and Israel, it became evident that the firm stand of the Jewish community had achieved a wider appreciation
of the Jewish tragedy during the Hitler period and drawn public attention to official tolerance of the many Nazi war criminals resident in Argentina.

PERSONALIA

In January 1960 the governor of the province of Formosa, Luis Gutnitsky, was killed in an airplane accident. He received a state funeral and Jewish services were held in the Casa Rosada, the official residence of the president. Abraham Mibashan, president of DAIA and a noted Zionist leader, died in March 1960, at the age of 70. A native of Rumania, he had emigrated to Argentina in 1936.

BRAZIL

POLITICAL life in Brazil was dominated by two major events: the inauguration of the new capital Brasilia in April 1960 and the general election in October 1960.

Juscelino Kubitschek’s candidate to succeed himself in the presidency, General Henrique Texeira Lott, was defeated by Janio da Silva Quadros, former mayor of São Paulo and governor of the state of São Paulo. The vice presidency, however, was retained by João Goulart, Texeira Lott’s running-mate, who had held the same office under Kubitschek. Texeira Lott and Goulart had the support of the strong though nominally illegal Communist party, as well as of Kubitschek’s Social Democratic party and Goulart’s Labor party. The election was orderly and democratic.

The cost of living, which had risen 365 per cent between 1948 and 1958, rose another 50 per cent in 1959, and 28 per cent during the first half of 1960. The export of coffee and cacao decreased, while government spending rose, with consequent inflation. Brazil found it difficult to secure needed foreign loans, but the economy continued to expand rapidly. There was a continued flow of rural workers to the industrial regions and the index of industrial production rose 11 per cent in 1959.

Jewish Community

The Jewish population of Brazil was probably between 120,000 and 140,000. The Brazilian national census in mid-September 1960 was to include a question on religious affiliation, and the Federation of Jewish Communities urged all Jews, whether affiliated with a synagogue or not, to register as Brazilians of Jewish faith. It was hoped that for the first time reliable figures for the Jews in Brazil would thus become available.

The continuing industrialization of the country required an enterprising middle class. The Jewish communities in the large industrial cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Curitiba, and Belo Horizonte continued to expand.
IMMIGRATION

The Brazilian government, under President Kubitschek's administration and with the moral support of the Roman Catholic church, pursued a consistently liberal immigration policy. More than 1,000 Jewish immigrants were admitted in 1959-60, the majority of whom were Egyptian refugees; many others came from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. UHS, in close cooperation with the Brazilian government and the local Jewish community, played a leading part in their immigration and integration. Most of the Egyptian Jews had managerial skills or experience and facility in learning foreign languages. In the presidential campaign Quadros repeatedly promised to maintain a liberal immigration policy.

EDUCATION

There was much less uniformity in Jewish education in Brazil than in Argentina. In Rio de Janeiro the Council for Jewish Education and Culture of the Zionist organization dominated the field, whereas in São Paulo it was the Jewish Board of Education of the Federation of Jewish Societies. The 45 Jewish schools in Brazil included two teachers' seminaries, one in Rio and one in São Paulo, and three secondary schools. Some primary schools had kindergartens. The total enrollment was about 5,200 pupils, or less than 25 per cent of Jewish children of school age. General subjects were taught in accordance with the officially approved curriculum, in Portuguese and by Brazilian teachers. Hebrew was an integral part of the curriculum but Yiddish was barely tolerated.

As the direction and supervision of the Jewish schools was not centralized, various experiments were tried. Thus, about ten years earlier Agudat Israel set up a school called Bet Hinnukh in São Paulo. In 1960 it had an enrollment of 600 pupils and a staff of 23 teachers, mostly from Israel. The Jewish part of the curriculum was set up along Israeli religious lines and the school atmosphere was far more religious than in the homes. In Porto Alegre, another type of school, which recently moved into its own building, had an enrollment of 600 and a staff of 60 teachers, half of them Jewish. It accommodated 40 per cent of the Jewish children of school age in the city, and was building an annex for 300 additional children.

In most of the primary Jewish schools, however, Jewish subjects were increasingly neglected and there was little coordination between general education in Portuguese and Jewish education in Hebrew or Yiddish.

CHILE

When President Jorge Alessandri took office in November 1958, his austerity program faced the opposition of both of Chile's labor confederations (CUTCH and CNT), the Socialist-Communist popular-action front (FRAP), and two centrist parties, the Christian Democrats and the National Popular party. With the support of the Conservative, Liberal, and Radical
parties, the president was voted special powers to reorganize the public services without parliamentary interference. An economic-consolidation law went into effect in April 1959. The devaluation of the Chilean escudo attracted foreign capital and improved the trade balance. The economic gain, started in 1959, was continuing in 1960 when, in May, one of the worst earthquakes in history struck an area of 51,000 square miles in southern Chile. Entire villages were wiped out, ten thousand people were reported dead or missing, and close to two million were made homeless. The damage to property alone was estimated at between $480 million and $520 million, a significant portion of the productive wealth of the country.

The government immediately started a reconstruction program in close cooperation with the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the United States International Cooperation Administration. The Chilean congress passed an emergency law raising taxes on incomes, property, and luxury goods. The United States contributed $20 million from Mutual Security Act funds, and the new United States aid program for Latin America earmarked $100 million for Chilean reconstruction. The Export-Import Bank granted a loan of $10 million and the United Nations Children's Fund allocated $250,000 for the restoration of Chile's health services. Other aid came from the International Red Cross and voluntary agencies the world over.

**Jewish Community**

The Jewish community, more than half a century old, numbered approximately 30,000, mostly in the capital, Santiago, and to a lesser extent in the port of Valparaiso. There were few elsewhere, and almost none in the south. Hence there were no Jewish casualties during the earthquake, and only about 200 families suffered property losses. The Santiago Jewish community set up an emergency committee to raise funds and gather supplies for the benefit of the victims. At the time of writing, close to $100,000 in cash, clothing, food, and medicine had been turned over to the government for distribution among the sufferers in the disaster areas. JDC and UHS also contributed funds to the Chilean government.

**Antisemitism**

The worldwide swastika epidemic (see pp. 209-13) produced some outbursts of anti-Jewish feelings and sporadic demonstrations. The local Arab organizations did their best to exploit the situation, but the government and public opinion were steadfast in their support of democracy.

**Relations with Israel**

The Chilean government was well-disposed toward Israel and used the services of Haifa Institute of Technology experts in preparing plans for rebuilding the cities of Valdivia and Puerto Montt after the earthquake.

**Education**

The Jewish community completed a four-story building for the central Jewish school, an all-day elementary and high school that was the largest of
the three day schools maintained by the Board of Jewish Education. Some 1,200 Jewish children (out of a total of 6,000 of school age) attended these schools. All general subjects were taught in Spanish and in accordance with the official curriculum. Yiddish was taught only on the request of parents. Hebrew was part of the curriculum.

Linguistically the Chilean Jews were more acculturated than any other Jewish community in Latin America. Chile had customarily been a country of second asylum within the South American continent. Jewish immigrants from Argentina and other South American countries had already acquired a knowledge of Spanish, so that even the first generation of immigrants used it as their daily language. Moreover, the Sephardi and German Jews usually sent their children to general schools, using Sunday schools for religious education. It was mainly the East European Jews who used the Jewish day schools. This group, which was endeavoring to transform the Hevrah Kaddisha into a Kehillah, followed the example of Buenos Aires. In 1959 it established a teachers' seminary to provide Chilean-born teachers for the local Jewish schools. The employment of foreign teachers, mostly from Israel, had not worked out to everyone's satisfaction. The budget of the seminary was met by the Hevrah Kaddisha.

MEXICO

In September 1959 President Adolfo López Mateos announced the restoration of diplomatic relations with Guatemala, which had been broken off earlier that year when Guatemalan planes strafed Mexican boats allegedly fishing in Guatemalan waters.

In October López Mateos repaid the courtesy of United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower's visit to Mexico in February. The Mexican president continued to insist, as in his address to the Organization of American States in Washington, on the need for greater economic help throughout Latin America. In a speech before the United Nations, López Mateos said that the rapid growth of the Mexican population (according to the 1960 census, nearly 35,000,000) made investment capital urgently necessary. At the same time, however, the traditional suspicion of foreign investments and investors persisted.

In September 1960 the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain was a good occasion for surveying the progress made. Since the liberation, and especially since the last revolution in the 1920's, Mexico had become, politically and economically, probably the most stable country in Latin America. Inflation had been stopped through monetary and fiscal restraint, and the Mexican balance of payments in 1960 was more favorable than in any other year since 1945. In April gold and foreign-exchange reserves stood at $415 million, 10 per cent higher than a year before, and confidence in the peso had been restored. The cost-of-living index rose only 2 per cent from the beginning of 1959 to March 1960—according to the
MEXICO

Chase Manhattan Bank, “about as good a record as that of the United States of America.”

But there were shadows as well as lights. Forty-five per cent of the Mexican population remained illiterate. Four of every five peasants had less than 15 acres of land each, while one per cent of all landholders owned 50 per cent of the land, in spite of the much-publicized land reforms. The average daily income of a farm laborer was still between $.50 and $.75. There was chronic unemployment in the rural areas during much of the year, and the problem of the migrant laborer had not appreciably lessened.

Jewish Community

In 1960 the Jewish population in Mexico was estimated between 26,000 and 28,000, with about 25,000 in Mexico City.

Jewish businessmen complained that with imports falling 11 per cent from 1959, because of the government’s anti-inflation measures, and exports rising only 2 per cent, their incomes had declined. As a whole, however, the community remained prosperous. The two main representative bodies, the Comité Central Israelita de México and the Kehillah, consolidated their positions. However, the construction of the ambitious Kehillah building, Bet ‘Am, had to be postponed.

The Jewish sports center, very popular with the younger generation, had a stadium, pools, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and other facilities, not only for sports but for all kinds of cultural activities. It joined the Comité Central as the eighth constituent member.

The Jewish Chamber of Commerce was the recognized arbiter in almost all business disputes between Jews. Jewish businessmen rarely applied to the general courts for a settlement of their differences.

Education

The Jewish school system continued to grow. In May 1960 a new school, named after Anne Frank and with a capacity of 300, was opened by the women’s division of the Central Committee. About 4,500 Jewish children were enrolled in Jewish schools. They were 80 to 85 per cent of all Jewish children of school age, the highest ratio in Latin America. Hebrew and Yiddish languages and literature were an important part of the curriculum. Yet the Jewish press was constantly lamenting the growing assimilation among the younger generation. There was also a bitter polemic between Sephardim and Ashkenazim about the continued use of Yiddish in communal affairs and in the schools. For the time being the adversaries of Yiddish were in the minority, but the Ashkenazi leaders were not optimistic about the future.

Community Relations

There were various manifestations of friendly relations and mutual understanding between the Jewish community and the Mexican government and people. In February 1960 a group of school buildings (including an extension
of the Albert Einstein School), costing more than a million pesos, was presented to the Mexican government by the Jewish community at a ceremony attended by the wife of the Mexican president, then absent from the country, and Hans A. Einstein, son of the late Albert Einstein.

**ISRAEL**

Relations with Israel were excellent. In the summer of 1960 each state sent an ambassador to the other. Earlier in the year the Mexican-Israeli cultural agreement, negotiated by Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir in 1959, was signed. Israel was represented at the 150th anniversary celebration of Mexico's independence by Finance Minister Levi Eshkol, who was received by López Mateos in a special audience. In Jerusalem a street was named in honor of Mexico's 150th Independence Day with the participation of Mexican Ambassador Jorge Daessle Segura and Mrs. Meir.

**ILYA DIJOUR**

**CUBA**

During the year under review (July 1959 to June 1960) the development of Fidel Castro's policies brought him into increasingly sharp conflict with the United States, as well as with persons and groups in Cuba who had been among his original supporters. At the same time, he appeared to be relying more and more on the assistance of the Communists (organized as the Popular Socialist party) at home and of the nations of the Communist bloc internationally.

In July 1959 President Carlos Manuel Urrutia Lleo, who had denounced the Cuban Communists, was forced out of office by Premier Castro and his life was endangered by mob action. Urrutia was succeeded by Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado on July 17.

Agrarian reform, under the law of May 18, 1959, proceeded rapidly. The major part of the sugar and cattle land in the country was seized. Compensation was to be in the form of long-term bonds, at government valuation; at the time of writing, payment, for the most part, had not yet been made. In most instances the land was not divided among the peasants, but was given to cooperatives whose members were largely drawn from those who had formerly worked it. The law and the cooperatives it fostered were administered by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, which also controlled many confiscated nonagricultural properties.

At first, industrial and commercial property was confiscated chiefly from persons associated with the Batista regime and those considered to have acquired it dishonestly. Soon, however, large-scale seizures of other—especially foreign-owned—properties took place. In some instances, properties were not formally confiscated, but their operation was taken over by the state. In January 1960 United States Ambassador Philip Bonsal delivered a note to the

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Cuba government, protesting the seizure without legal process or compensation of substantial properties owned by United States citizens. The Cuban government rejected the protest, and on January 19, in a televised address, Premier Castro denounced United States policy.

By a series of agreements with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, Cuba disposed of a large part of her sugar crop, much of it at slightly below the world price (in contrast to the two-cent-a-pound premium she received on sugar exported to the United States). A good deal of this sugar was to be paid for in goods, rather than cash. One important item thus exported to Cuba by the Soviet Union was petroleum. The Cuban refineries were owned by major international oil companies, which had their own sources of supply, largely in Venezuela; they had no desire to substitute Soviet oil, even though Cuba's foreign-exchange difficulties had forced them to supply much of Cuba's oil on credit. However, Cuba had long had a law on the books compelling oil refineries to process oil submitted to it by the government; since the law antedated the construction of many of the refineries, adherence to it was interpreted by the government to be obligatory. The oil companies, however, challenged the government's interpretation, claiming that the law properly applied only to oil which might be produced under government auspices in Cuba. Castro threatened confiscation if they refused to refine the Soviet oil and made good his threat at the end of June and the beginning of July 1960. On July 6, without specifying that this was in retaliation for the seizure of the refineries, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered a cut of about 95 per cent in the sugar-import quota from Cuba, declaring that Cuban deals with the Soviet Union made it uncertain whether there would be adequate Cuban sugar available to meet the needs of the United States.

At a trade-union congress in December 1959, the Communists were overwhelmingly defeated, down the line, by supporters of Castro's 26th of July Movement. Even Castro's direct personal intervention failed to persuade the union workers in his movement to accord the Communists a significant role in labor's leadership. In the face of their resistance, a purge committee was set up under pro-Communist control; with government backing it removed leading anti-Communists—all supporters of the 26th of July Movement—from positions of leadership and replaced them with Communists and fellow-travelers. The Communist position was similarly strengthened in other fields. Thus, at first newspapers were required to punctuate news items that displeased the Communists with editorial denunciations. Later, the independent newspapers were one by one liquidated by suppression, confiscation, and other means. The 26th of July Movement was allowed to atrophy, and the Popular Socialist party was the only political organization permitted to carry on any significant legal activity.

Nevertheless, the Cuban revolution continued to attract favorable attention among workers, peasants, and intellectuals in many Latin American countries because of its real attempt to solve the ubiquitous problems of landlordism, foreign control of the economy, and the wide gulf between the standards of living of the different classes. In addition, it produced some very real and
obvious gains for the Cuban workers and peasants. Moreover, because of the almost universal resentment against United States influence in Latin America, Castro’s defiance of the United States was calculated to assure him of a significant following throughout Latin America.

Jewish Community

The Jewish community as such was not subject to any special pressure during the second year of the Castro regime. There were no manifestations of antisemitism.

Nevertheless, the general course of events brought organized Jewish life to the brink of disintegration. As a result of the drastic economic and social changes introduced by the new regime, most prosperous Jews abandoned their businesses and homes and left the country. Between 2,000 and 3,000 are estimated to have left Cuba in the two years following Castro’s seizure of power. Many of those were leaders and principal supporters of the various Jewish institutions. The Patronato, with its synagogue and community center, was a beautiful modern building, but empty and all but abandoned. The old Centro Israelita still supported the only comprehensive Jewish day school in Cuba, the Colegio Hebreo, but attendance dropped from 470 in mid-1959 to 340 in mid-1960.

The Orthodox Comunidad Religiosa Hebrea Adath Israel de Cuba still had 800 members, who had no apparent intention of moving. They were not hindered in their religious and cultural activities, which included a small yeshiva for 60 pupils.

The oldest Sephardi organization, Hevrat Ahim, still maintained the Bikkur Holim Medical Center for tubercular and mentally-ill patients. The Ladies Welfare Society of the Ashkenazi community continued to provide family and child services and operated a free-loan association, whose cash reserves were dwindling as collections became increasingly difficult.

The general atmosphere in the Jewish community was gloomy. The gap between the generations was widening, as a result of the rapid pace of revolutionary change.