During the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963) Frol Koslov, second secretary of the party presidium and Nikita S. Khrushchev's heir-apparent, suffered a stroke which made it impossible for him to participate in the work of the presidium, although he remained a nominal member.

Khrushchev continued his policy, which for want of a better term many observers called liberalization. Victims of Stalin's purges were rehabilitated, among them Solomon Lozovsky, General Ian Gamarnik, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, General Vassily K. Blucher, and General Jonah Yakyr. Some of these early Bolsheviks were shown in a new film, Lives of Great Men. Against sharp opposition from the Stalinists, Khrushchev authorized the publication of Alexander Solzhenitzyn's novel, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch, describing the horrors of Stalin's labor camps.

But Khrushchev also repeatedly upbraided writers and artists who, encouraged by the new climate of tolerance, apparently exceeded the limits of permitted freedom. In March 1963 in a speech to about 500 writers, artists and other intellectuals, Khrushchev singled out among others Ilya Ehrenburg, Evgeny Evtushenko, Victor Nekrasov, and the sculptor Ernest Neizvestny, all prominently connected with the liberal wing. The Soviet leader spoke scornfully about "intellectuals who forget their duty to the people and their Socialist fatherland . . ." and become "lovers of decadent Western abstractionism . . . and formalism. . . ." Ehrenburg was also attacked with particular severity by the chief ideologist of the party, Leonid Ilyichev, for asserting that the Russians knew of Stalin's crimes but kept silent out of fear for their lives.

In fact Khrushchev's policy vacillated between liberalization and the Stalinist tradition of total conformity.
Foreign Policy

The Soviet leaders persisted in their refusal to divert their own resources to help Mao Tse-tung, and the conflict between Russia and China took on graver proportions, shattering the Communist bloc and encouraging factionalism in almost every Communist party in the world. The Soviet government was careful to avoid a direct confrontation with United States forces, and Khrushchev continued to preach international agreement in the spirit of "peaceful coexistence." There was relative quiet in Berlin, but from time to time the Soviet Union threatened to cut off the Western links with West Berlin and demanded a settlement of the Berlin issue on a basis involving Western recognition of the East German regime. In July 1963 a Soviet-United States agreement was concluded providing for a ban on nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in space, and under water. Later a "hot line" was established linking the White House and the Kremlin in a direct line of communication.

Economic Policy

In 1963 the Soviet Union faced major shortages of grain. To increase farm production, Khrushchev planned a seven-year investment of some 42 billion rubles ($46 billion) in the chemical industry, including fertilizer production, but to deal with the immediate situation, Russia purchased several hundred million dollars worth of wheat from Canada and the United States. Nevertheless, the economic plan for 1964, adopted in December 1963, provided for a more rapid rate of growth for heavy industry than for consumer goods.

Nationalities Policy

While the Soviet nationalities policy was still officially based on the principle of "national in form and socialist in content," there were signs of a new policy of gradual russification of the many small Soviet peoples, particularly those near the borders. This trend was also manifested in the reevaluation of the Tsarist policy of colonization, which was now considered to have been in many cases an "objectively progressive step" (Voprosi Istorii, Moscow, August 1963).

Jewish Population

At the end of 1962 there were probably about 2,420,000 Jews living in the Soviet Union. This estimate was based on the assumption that the Jewish population, which was 2,268,000 according to the 1959 census, had the same rate of natural increase as the general Soviet population—17 per 1,000 in 1959, 1960, and 1961, and 15 per 1,000 in 1962. The total Soviet population, 208,827,000 in 1959, was estimated to be 223,112,000 in July 1963.
Recently published material on the 1959 Soviet census made available fuller data on the Jewish demographic structure. According to the 1959 census, Jews were geographically distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR)</td>
<td>875,307</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian SSR</td>
<td>840,311</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byelorussian SSR</td>
<td>150,084</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldavian SSR</td>
<td>95,107</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbek SSR</td>
<td>94,344</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian SSR</td>
<td>51,582</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani SSR</td>
<td>40,204</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian SSR</td>
<td>36,592</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh SSR</td>
<td>28,048</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanian SSR</td>
<td>24,672</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadjik SSR</td>
<td>12,415</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirghiz SSR</td>
<td>8,610</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian SSR</td>
<td>5,436</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenian SSR</td>
<td>4,078</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian SSR</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,267,814</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 1,030,629 males and 1,237,185 females; 2,161,702 lived in cities and 106,112 in villages (AJYB, 1961 [Vol. 62], pp. 284–85). Of the total, 1,780,028, or 78 per cent of Russian Jews, indicated their mother tongue to be as follows:

- Russian: 1,733,183
- Ukrainian: 24,275
- Other: 22,570

The remaining 487,786, or 22 per cent, said that their mother tongue, which they also considered their national language, was as follows:

- Yiddish: 405,936
- Georgian: 35,673
- Tadjik: 20,763
- Tate: 25,225
- Crimean-Tatar: 189

The 1959 census provided a definitive demographic picture of the “Jewish autonomous region of Birobidjan”; the total population of 162,856 included 127,821 Russians, 14,425 Ukrainians, 1,578 Byelorussians, 1,446 Mordvins, and 14,269 Jews. Thus Jews were only 8.8 per cent of the population of the region. (Figures are based on *Itogi Vsesoyusnoi Perepisi Naselenia 1959 Goda*, Moscow, 1962.)

**Communal and Religious Life**

There was no change in the general situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders continued to promote assimilation of the Jewish group, looking with disfavor on any type of organized Jewish activity. Jew-
ish communal and religious life was deteriorating, and there were no Jewish communal organizations. The Yiddish magazine *Sovetish Heymland* provided the only central Jewish address, its editor Aaron Vergelis being to some extent an officially recognized spokesman of Soviet Jews. The number of Jewish religious congregations (*Dvatzatkas*) had dwindled, according to some reports, to fewer than 100 in 1964. The rate of intermarriage was high.

Soviet authorities continued their campaign against the Jewish religion, rabbis, and synagogues. A special guide on how to combat the Jewish religion, prepared by Gregori Ziskin, was issued by the Soviet State Publishing House. In 1963 the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev published a book on the Jewish religion, *Judaism bes Prikrass* ("Judaism Without Embellishment"), by Trofim Klichko, illustrated with Nazi-like cartoons attacking Jews and Judaism. Jewish houses of worship were under constant attack by local authorities, the police, and newspapers.

There was no reliable information on the number of synagogues functioning in the Soviet Union or the number closed in the last four or five years. Rabbi Judah Leib Levin of Moscow was quoted in the April 1963 issue of the monthly *USSR* as saying that there were 96. Data from both Soviet and foreign sources were uncertain and contradictory, however (AJYB, 1961 [Vol. 62], pp. 286–87). In any event, despite repeated Soviet denials of discrimination against the Jewish religion, the government was in fact engaged in the systematic liquidation of Jewish synagogues.

In December 1962 the Great Synagogue of Lvov (Western Ukraine) was closed, leaving the Jewish population of that city without a single house of worship. According to the local Communist press, the synagogue was closed because "the time has come finally to close . . . a shelter for idlers, speculators, parasites, and money grabbers" (JTA, December 30, 1962). Soviet authorities also ordered the closing of synagogues in Sverdlovsk (Siberia), Pyatigorsk and Grozny (Caucasus), Zhmerinka, Zhitomir, and Chernovtsy (Ukraine), Kazan (Russia), Kaunas (Lithuania), Kalarash (Moldavia), and Minsk (Byelorussia). The synagogue in Minsk was ordered closed in June 1963 to make way for a new apartment house.

Jewish cemeteries in many cities, among them Minsk, were reportedly closed by the authorities. On the pretense that the Jewish cemetery was filled, Jewish traditional burials were no longer permitted in Moscow. Since no other arrangements had been made for consecrated Jewish burial ground, some Jewish dead were being cremated. This was often against the wishes of the families, since cremation was forbidden by Jewish religious law.

The government ban on the baking of matzot by state bakeries remained in force in 1963, and the authorities forcibly discouraged the few small private efforts to produce matzot for observant Jews. Gift parcels of matzot from abroad were also banned.

In July 1963 four Jews, Emil Katz, shohet Wolf Bogomolny, Mrs. Klavdia Bliakhman, and Mrs. Malka Brío, were brought to trial in Moscow for
illegal matzot baking and for speculation and profiteering.” Rabbi Levin, who appeared as a witness at the trial, stated that this was the first such trial since the establishment of the Soviet regime. One of the defense lawyers, Mikhail Lozinsky, argued that the trial was a direct result of the Soviet ban on matzot baking, which forced some religious Jews to undertake private baking and to share their supplies with other religious Jews. Another, Matvey Sokolovitch, pointed out that Christian churches in Moscow sold candles and wafers, but nobody accused them of speculation. The four accused acknowledged that they had distributed their surplus matzot, but said that they did this in strict accordance with their religious precepts and did not accept money. Two defendants were sentenced to six months in prison and one to a year. The fourth, an 82-year-old invalid, was freed.

The Moscow Yeshiva Kol Jacob, the only one in the Soviet Union, in November 1963 had five registered students and three instructors. Its physical plant was deteriorating, but Moscow municipal authorities refused to allow funds collected for a new building to be applied to urgently needed repairs of the existing building (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 210). When Archbishop Nicodemus, leader of a Soviet church delegation visiting the United States, was asked why there was only one yeshivah in the Soviet Union, he replied, “Perhaps it is simply that Jewish youth in the Soviet Union do not go in for being rabbis” (Jewish Daily Forward, March 20, 1963). The yeshivah experienced difficulties both in recruiting teaching personnel and in obtaining the necessary papers for housing arrangements for its students. It was obviously unable to supply qualified rabbis to the many Jewish communities without competent clergy.

According to reliable sources the rabbinate in the Soviet Union included Rabbis Levin of Moscow, Abraham Panitch of Kiev, Hayyim Klebanov of Leningrad, Israel Schwartzblatt of Odessa, Immanuel Davidtashvili of Tbilisi, and Nuta Ulevsky of Marina Roshtsha, near Moscow. Also in Moscow were Elisha Witz, shohet and mohel, and Joseph Kremenchuguer, a shohet.

There was a continuing shortage of prayer shawls, phylacteries, and prayer books. Soviet newspapers sharply attacked American Jewish tourists for “disseminating religious articles among Russian Jews.” Thus Izvestia denounced an American rabbi who allegedly brought into Russia and distributed 800 prayer books and various religious articles (August 11, 1963).

The treatment of the Jewish religion differed greatly from that of most other religious groups. The Orthodox and most Protestant Christian denominations had their central organizations and were permitted contacts with their coreligionists abroad. Four Moslem central groups served the Moslem populations of the European areas of the USSR and Siberia, Middle Asia, Kazakhstan in the north Caucasus, and the area beyond the Caucasus (Izvestia, August 11, 1963). Catholicus Vazgen, supreme patriarch of the Armenian church, visited Jerusalem (New York Times, October 15, 1962), and a large group of Moslem pilgrims from the USSR, headed by the Mufti Ziautdin Babachanov, visited Mecca and Medina in May 1963.
Jews, on the other hand, were not permitted to establish a central administrative, rabbinical, or congregational body. Soviet Jews, including rabbis, were not permitted to travel abroad for religious purposes or to have organized contact with foreign coreligionists. Meetings of Soviet rabbis with rabbis from other countries were not permitted either at home or abroad. When the Synagogue Council of America officially invited Rabbi Levin to visit the United States, the Moscow rabbi declined the invitation, pleading "sickness and old age" (Day-Jewish Journal, New York, September 27, 1963).

Despite these pressures and obstacles, many Jews, both of the older and younger generations, showed a very strong attachment to Jewish tradition. Exchange students in the Soviet Union reported that their Russian Jewish colleagues spoke frankly of their interest in their Jewishness, even when they had only an elementary idea of Jewish religion and knew little of Jewish practices. In Moscow 2,500 Jews worshiped on Rosh ha-Shanah 1963, 1,500 of them at the Central Synagogue. Several thousand worshipers spilled over onto the streets near the Central Synagogue during Kol Nidre services (New York Times, September 29, 1963). During Simhat Torah services 15,000 Jews, mostly young people, sang and danced in front of the Moscow synagogue. In Leningrad, 10,000 persons crowded into the synagogue and the surrounding streets. Local police tried to disperse the crowd, but no one was arrested. The correspondent of the Paris Le Monde reported that the Jewish crowd in Moscow was more enthusiastic than ever before and sang Jewish songs (JTA, October 18, 1963). Large attendances were also reported at High Holy Day services in Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, and other cities in the Soviet Union.

**Antisemitic Campaign in the Press**

Not since the Stalinist campaigns against "cosmopolitans" in the late 40s had the Soviet press devoted as much attention to the Jews as it did during 1962–63. The newspapers did not report the general aspects of Jewish life, or indicate the Jewish origins of a Soviet Nobel prize-winning physicist and a well-known Soviet mathematician, but they did devote increasing space to, and were very precise about, the Jewishness of all sorts of violators of Soviet law. The Jewish religion was represented as alien, corrupt, and conspiratorial. Sovetskaya Moldavia (Kishinev, July 18, 1962) wrote about "David, son of Simcha Krenitz," allegedly engaged in illicit speculation and profiteering. Sovetskaya Rossia (Moscow, August 8, 1962), reporting about a sentence of five years in prison, took pains to indicate that although the culprit had used the names Novikov and Timofeev, his real name was Himmelfarb. Lvovskaya Pravda (Lvov, November 1, 1962) reported a brawl in the Lvov synagogue, which it said "had the well-known reputation of places of scandalous speculation and underworld deals. . . ." After the Oleg Penkovsky spy trial in 1963, when the press campaigned against associating with foreigners, Boris Umansky and Ginsberg—Jews again—were exposed as

**Blood Libel**

There were also other indications of popular anti-Jewish attitudes. In Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan, the Jewish community was terrorized in May 1962 by mobs incited by revivals of the blood libel. Jews were assaulted following a rumor that Abigai Bengieva, a Jewess, had taken blood from the ear of a Moslem girl for use during Passover. Later, the Soviet issued a denial of this report, but made no reference to the blood libel as the cause of the riots. The denial dealt only with the strife that, according to the official statement, had taken place between “Moslem Uzbeks and their Jewish neighbors.” There were also reports of a blood-libel case in the Georgian town of Tskhaltubo before Passover 1962.

**“Economic” Trials**

The so-called “economic trials” of persons charged with various illegal transactions, speculation, and black-marketeering continued unabated. According to one estimate, at least 140 persons were condemned to death for economic crimes from July 1, 1961, to July 1, 1963, and more than 80 of them, or about 60 per cent, were Jews (JTA, September 15, 1963). While it was difficult to obtain precise statistics on these trials, accounts in the Soviet press indicated that Jews, representing one per cent of the population, had provided a hugely disproportionate percentage of both accused and condemned, and that in many cases the sentences meted out to accused Jews were especially severe.

In August 1963, in Pyatigorsk (Caucasus), three persons, including Benjamin Gavrilov, a rabbi, received death sentences for speculation in gold and foreign currency. While rabbis had figured in some previous trials, Gavrilov was the first known to be sentenced to death (*New York Times*, August 31, 1963).¹

Soviet authorities were sensitive to the concern that the economic trials provoked in the West. *Izvestia* announced on October 20, 1963, that the Soviet police were preparing a conspicuous trial of a group charged with conducting an illicit knitgoods operation. In reporting on this affair, the newspaper emphasized the Jewish names of the alleged ringleaders (Boris Roifman and Shaya Shakerman), but explained that it did so “because we do not pay attention to the malicious slanders of the Western press. . . . It will be not Jews, Russians, Tatars, or Ukrainians who will be tried, but

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¹ An official Soviet news agency, Novosty, reported in January 1964 that the sentence had been commuted to 15 years’ imprisonment.
criminals. . . .” A Moscow radio commentator named Adamov admitted that there was a large percentage of Jews among those sentenced for economic crimes but argued that this was not characteristic of the general treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union.

_Sovetish Heymland_ devoted a large part of an open meeting in October 1963 to a discussion of Western accusations of antisemitism in the Soviet Union. Genadyi Terechov, a member of the council of the Supreme Soviet attorney general’s office in charge of the division dealing with “economic crimes,” denied that Jews were receiving harsher sentences than members of other nationalities, but he did not substantiate his statement (_Sovetish Heymland_, November-December, 1963).

_Discrimination_

There were few Jews among party and government leaders. Benjamin E. Dimchitz and M. B. Mitin appeared to be the only Jewish members of the central committee of the party. Only 13 Jews were among the 5,769 members of the soviets of the 15 constituent republics of the Soviet Union. Among the 2,842 members of the soviets of autonomous republics there were 11 Jews; among the 1,958,566 members of local soviets of cities and counties of the USSR there were 7,514 Jews.

Jews were as a rule absent from sensitive policy- and decision-making. General Jacob Kreizer was reportedly removed from his post as commander of Soviet forces in the Far East. There were few Jews in the high diplomatic corps, and Jews had little chance of being admitted to foreign-service schools. Jewish students reported difficulty in trying to enter the best universities, in cities like Moscow, Kiev, Kharkov, and Leningrad. They spoke frankly about their problems in conversations with exchange students from abroad.

_Khrushchev and the Jews_

For the first time in many decades top Soviet leaders participated in an open debate on the Jewish situation in the Soviet Union. The debate started early in 1963, when Bertrand Russell wrote to Khrushchev expressing his dismay at the death sentences given Jews for alleged economic crimes. Lord Russell alluded also to the “official encouragement of antisemitism. . . .” After some delay, Khrushchev replied to Russell’s communication, and the exchange of letters was published in both _Pravda_ and _Izvestia_ on February 28, 1963. Khrushchev angrily denied anti-Jewish feelings on the part of Soviet authorities and branded such accusations “a vicious slander on the Soviet people. . . .” Russell was not satisfied with this reply. Other letters followed, with Russell, François Mauriac, Linus Pauling, Albert Schweitzer, the Dowager Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, and many others pinpointing various evidences of hostility against Jews in the Soviet Union.

Addressing a gathering of Soviet writers and intellectuals on March 8, 1963, Khrushchev unexpectedly reverted to the Jewish question:
As you know from the exchange of letters between the British philosopher and myself, the bourgeois press is conducting a campaign of slander against us. . . . We already touched on this question at our meeting last December in connection with Evtushenko's poem *Babi-Yar* . . . which was criticized because the author was unable truthfully to . . . condemn . . . the fascist criminals for the mass slaughter perpetrated by them at Babi-Yar. The poem presents things as if only Jews were the victims . . . whereas of course many Russians, Ukrainians, and Soviet people of other nationalities were murdered by the Hitlerite butchers. . . . For whom and for what purpose has it been necessary to present things as if someone is discriminating against the Jews in our country? It is not true. Since the October revolution Jews have enjoyed equal rights with the other peoples of the Soviet Union. . . . There is no Jewish question in our country, and those who invent it are slavishly repeating what other people say. . . .

In the same speech Khrushchev felt it necessary to state that "it is absurd to blame the Russian people for the dirty provocations of the Black Hundreds, and it is equally absurd to place on the whole Jewish people the responsibility . . . [for the] various Jewish organizations associated in their day with the 'Zubatovites' and the Tsarist secret political police." He was alluding to the efforts of secret police chief Sergei Zubatov, in the early 1900s, to create a police-controlled "legal" workers' organization to counteract the nascent revolutionary labor movement. This identification of Jewish organizations with the secret police had no basis in known historical events, and was a calumny. It was significant, however, as another instance of the obsessive preoccupation with mysterious Jewish dealings, so characteristic of all anti-Jewish pronouncements.

Khrushchev's speech was followed by publication in the Soviet press of extracts of letters from many Soviet Jewish citizens expressing agreement with his position. He did not know, when he made the address, that the poet Evtushenko, in a series of candid articles in the Paris *Express* (February-March 1963), had stated that anti-Jewish prejudices were part and parcel of present Soviet society. Guy Mollet, general secretary of the French Socialist party, who headed a French Socialist delegation to Moscow in October 1963, discussed the Jewish situation with Khrushchev. He later reported that "nothing was accomplished" (*Forward*, November 23, 1963).

Throughout the period under review, there were unceasing protests by a very large number of European and American Jewish organizations against Soviet antisemitism.

**Commemoration of the Catastrophe**

*Izvestia* marked the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt with an article entitled "Ashes Remind the Heart." The writer, A. Panfilov, called the Jewish fight a "contribution to the struggle against Hitlerism." He coupled his account of the battle with strong denunciations of West Germany, and added that "the reactionary forces are trying to reactivate the Zionist elements . . .," (April 19, 1963). *Komsomolskaya Pravda* of April 19, 1963, carried a piece on the Warsaw Ghetto by a popular Polish
journalist, Jerzy Rakowski. This was prefaced by an attack on Bonn, with whom the "reactionary leaders of Zionism are flirting." **Sovetish Heymland** devoted a large part of its March-April 1963 issue to the anniversary, publishing an account of the revolt and a reproduction of the Warsaw Ghetto monument. The magazine also organized a commemorative meeting, which was addressed by Aaron Vergelis, Joseph Rabin, Jacob Sternberg, and others (*Sovetish Heymland*, No. 3, May-June, 1963). A French film portraying Jewish suffering in the Warsaw Ghetto was reportedly shown at the Soviet premier's residence to a group of Soviet officials.

The state publishing organization of Latvia issued a volume of documents dealing with Nazi persecution of Jews and other national groups during World War II. A volume of documents on Nazi occupation of Soviet territory (*Criminal Ends, Criminal Means*), issued by the war-history department of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, was so edited as to draw scant attention to the massive annihilation of Soviet Jews.

**Jews in the Second World War**

The Warsaw *Folks-shtimme* of April 18, 1963, reported on military distinctions awarded to Jews in the Soviet army during World War II. The material was compiled by J. Kantor of Moscow and was based on data from the Soviet army museum prepared in April 1947. Kantor estimated that more than 500,000 Jews served in the Soviet army, and that during the war, 160,772 Jews, 1.74 per cent of all persons so honored, received various medals and orders of distinction. This put Jews in fifth place among Soviet nationalities in the number of military awards, with Russians (6,172,976) in first place, followed by Ukrainians (1,710,706), Byelorussians (311,105), and Tatars (174,886). Special distinction as Hero of the Soviet Union was conferred on 108 Jews, .94 per cent of the total number receiving this honor.

Kantor said that the data demanded public attention because "there are some among the non-Jews who think that we did not contribute sufficiently to the army. . . ."

**Cultural Situation**

There was no centrally organized Jewish cultural or educational activity in the Soviet Union. Despite promises, no book in Yiddish was published in 1963, although many books by Yiddish writers were issued in Russian, Ukrainian, and other translations. During his visit to the United States in 1963, **Sovetish Heymland** editor Vergelis, in acknowledging this, said that Soviet Jews had been sufficiently integrated into Russian culture to make separate Jewish schools, theaters, and daily newspapers unnecessary (*Day-Jewish Journal*, November 17, 1963). (While he was in the United States, the major Jewish organizations declined to meet with him; p. 77).

Nevertheless, Yiddish cultural efforts were undertaken by many individuals and groups. In May 1963, at the Central House of Writers in Moscow, the
staff of *Sovetish Heymland* held a meeting with its readers, where an overflow audience of more than 700 was told that the magazine had thus far presented the works of only some of the 100 writers currently working in Yiddish (*Sovetish Heymland*, No. 4, July-August, 1963). In December 1962 a new Moscow Yiddish drama and concert group, headed by the distinguished actor Vladimir Schwarger, gave its first performance. Other participating artists were Sonia Binik, Aaron Kogan, Leah Kolin, and the singer Zinovyi Shulman. After the Moscow performance the group went on a tour of Ukrainian cities, including Kirovgrad, Poltava, Zhitomir, Berditschev, and Tsherkassy, and later visited Uzbekistan. The ensemble was sponsored by the All-Russian Concert Tour Union.

Following appearances in 25 Ukrainian cities, Nehamah Lifshitz gave a series of concerts in Moscow in June 1963, in the great Tchaikovsky Hall. It was estimated that some 2,000 persons, including many young people, came to hear her Yiddish songs. The concerts were broadcast over Moscow radio.

The Yiddish Drama Circle of Vilna, with a membership of 40, under the chairmanship of Motl Kanovitch, continued its activities. Its artistic director was Sarah Baker. There were also a choir of 55 under the direction of Alissa Blecherovitch, a dance group of 25, and an amateur orchestra of 20 under the direction of Solomon Meervitch. The Vilna ensemble sought the status of a full-scale Yiddish folk theater. This required special recognition on the part of the Lithuanian authorities, which at the time of writing had not been received. Amateur Yiddish ensembles in Kaunas (Lithuania) and Riga (Latvia) continued their activities.

A new collection of Yiddish songs was in preparation in Moscow. It was to include *Freylakhs*, by Leyb Pulver and *Mayn mame hot gevolt zayn oif mayn khasene*, by Samuel Sendelrey, both with lyrics by David Bromberg, *A shuster*, by Vladimir Shainsky, and many others.

A Hebrew-Russian dictionary, compiled by Felix L. Shapiro and edited by Professor B. M. Grande with the assistance of A. J. Rubinstein, was published in Moscow in 1963. The 765-page volume was issued in 25,000 copies by the State Publishing Agency for Foreign and National Dictionaries.

A museum in memory of Peretz Markish, the Yiddish writer killed during the Stalin purge of Jewish intellectuals, was established in Polonne, the city of his birth.

At a special conference of Russian and Jewish writers in Moscow on December 17, 1962, a woman writer, Galina Serebriakova, accused Ilya Ehrenburg of being responsible for the liquidation of prominent Yiddish writers and members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Ehrenburg did not reply, but Evtushenko, speaking in Paris in February 1963, said that he did “not like Serebriakova’s accusations.”
Relations with Israel

The Soviet Union resumed direct relations with Israel, which had been severed during the Sinai campaign in 1956. At the same time, however, it continued anti-Israel propaganda and support of the Arab states. It blocked a UN Security Council resolution blaming the Syrians for the murder of two Israelis in August 1963 (p. 304). The Moscow press expressed support of the Arab opposition to the Israeli plan to use Jordan River water for irrigation. In February 1963 Moscow Radio accused the Israelis of organizing aggressive operations against 80 million Arabs in the surrounding lands. The Soviet leaders also charged Israel with active economic, technical, and cultural penetration of the newly-emerging African countries.

Following the official line, and apparently under duress, the chief rabbi of Moscow protested to the chief rabbi of Israel against the “unruly behavior” of Israeli embassy personnel during religious services. Rabbi Levin objected particularly to the alleged distribution by some Israeli personnel of prayer books, prayer shawls, and the like.

Judah Kogan, an Israeli, was reportedly sentenced to ten years at hard labor while touring in the Soviet Union. In September 1963 Kogan was convicted of desertion, the specific accusation being that he “betrayed his homeland while on duty in Germany in 1945 and went over to the British occupation zone and from there to Palestine. . . .”

During the 1963 Moscow International Film Festival, an Israeli film delegation visited the Soviet Union and the Israeli motion picture Ha-kibbutz was shown in the Central Moscow Kino House.

Personalia

One of the highest honors in the nuclear field—the Atoms for Peace Award, sponsored by the Ford Motor Company fund—was awarded jointly to Vladimir L. Veksler of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Moscow and an American physicist, Edwin M. McMillan. The 80th birthday of the composer Leyb Pulver was celebrated in Moscow.

The writer Immanuel Kasakevitch, well known for his work both in Yiddish and Russian, died in Moscow in September 1962 at the age of 49. Sholem Gordon, Soviet writer and literary critic, and Sophia Leschinskaya, a well-known Yiddish actress, died in August 1963. The remains of Dov Ber Borokhov, one of the founders of Socialist Zionism, were brought to Israel for reinterment. He had been buried in the Kiev cemetery in 1917.

Leon Shapiro
Poland*

DURING the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963) there were repeated reports about an increasing influence in the Polish government of the so-called partisans. These men were said to have belonged to the wartime partisan groups, most of them were identified with the Stalinist wing of PPZR (Communist party), and they were associated in the public mind with antisemitic attitudes of the Stalin era. Among their leaders were Grzegorz Korczynski and Mieczyslaw Moczar, both members of the central committee of PPZR. The resignation early in 1963 of Roman Zambrowski, the only Jew in the ruling Politiburo, was attributed by some to pressure from the partisans, but other reports indicated that the real reason for his resignation was cancer. In August 1963 Adam Schaff, a PPZR central-committee member and a Jew, became a member of the important ideological commission, which had jurisdiction over party doctrinal matters.

Some observers suggested that Władysław Gomułka, leader of the Communist party, had retreated from his former “liberal” position and was trying through concessions to win over the Stalinist elements in the party. They pointed particularly to the closing in February 1962 of the Warsaw Krzywe Kolo ("Crooked Circle"), a leading club of liberal intellectuals. The Crooked Circle was accused by the government of “nationalist rightist deviation” and “anti-party sentiments.” Nevertheless, no substantial change had occurred in the general line pursued by the party since 1956. Gomułka continued his pragmatic policy of an independent Polish “road to socialism.” By East European standards, the Polish people continued to enjoy relative freedom in the arts, in letters, and in day-to-day life. Gomułka acknowledged economic difficulties that compelled the government to reduce the pace of industrial expansion for 1963. He stressed the problems facing agriculture, and the necessity of increasing grain imports. Toward the end of 1962 Poland was experiencing food shortages. At the same time the number of “agricultural circles,” voluntary peasant groups expressing the Polish form of collectivization, had increased to 30,000, with a membership of 1,150,000.

Problems of education received considerable attention from the central committee in December 1962. The Communist ideologists emphasized the necessity for studying Marxism and Leninism.

In a pastoral letter read in all churches on April 21, 1963, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, primate of Poland, complained of government interference with the teaching of religion on parish premises. A fine of several thousand zlotys¹ was levied against persons who disobeyed a 1961 regulation restrict-

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¹ For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 361.
1 zloty = $.04.
ing religious instruction in public schools; the authorities were apparently also interfering with religious instruction outside the schools. There were reports that the closing of a school for church organists in Przemysl resulted in riots in October 1963 and that religious schools had been seized in Nova Miasto and Warsaw. In November the government ordered four Roman Catholic seminary students, previously exempted from the armed services, to report for military duty.

Both sides in the religious dispute were apparently trying to refrain from making irrevocable moves. Cardinal Wyszynski was permitted to participate in the 1962 and 1963 sessions of the Second Ecumenical Council in Rome, and the Polish government was officially represented at the funeral of Pope John XXIII; Jerzy Zawieyski, a member of the Council of State and deputy to the Sejm of the Catholic Znak group (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 359) was the delegate. Toward the end of 1963 church-state relations suffered new stress when, quite suddenly, Pope Paul VI was subjected to sharp criticism, perhaps in reaction to his anti-Communist stance, which was more pronounced than Pope John's.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

There were no substantial changes in the status of the small Jewish community. The Gomulka government continued friendly. There was no way of checking on the accuracy of reports that during recent purges in the Polish Communist party a relatively large number of Jews had been dismissed from their posts in the sensitive ministries of defense and internal affairs, or that some Jewish senior officers in the army, particularly so-called liberals, had been pensioned off before reaching retirement age. Local observers reported that the government was continuing a systematic campaign against antisemitic attitudes, still widespread among all classes of the Polish population. Significantly, many writers and teachers participated in this campaign, and radio and television programs described the role of the Jews in Polish history.

The Polish press reported the case of Waclaw Zadrojni who, according to the police, attacked two Jews, Solomon Foigelman and Hersh Musicant, in Legnica in April 1962. Zadrojni was sentenced to two years in prison after the district attorney and the judge had denounced antisemitic hooliganism.

**Jewish Population**

Official sources did not provide data on the Jewish community, but reliable observers estimated its size in mid-1963 at about 30,000. Although the government offered no hindrance, Jewish emigration was reported to have dropped from 100 a month in 1962 to about 80 a month in 1963. Many aged Jews receiving social security benefits were reportedly reluctant to leave the country for an uncertain future in new surroundings, and most of those Jews who wanted to leave Poland had already departed. Departures did not substantially affect the size of the Jewish community, since they were
balanced by immigration from other East European countries and by the return to the Jewish fold of many who for years had lived like Marranos.

Communal Life

The Union of Jewish Religious Congregations (Wa‘ad ha-Kehillot) continued to minister to the religious needs of Polish Jews. The Communist-dominated Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews administered the numerous other activities of the Jewish community. According to the Communist Folks-shtrimme of September 19, 1962, the number of Jews officially associated with the union was unknown, as were their social and demographic characteristics. In the June 15, 1963, issue of the same newspaper, however, the union estimated its 1963 membership to be about 8,000, of whom 45 per cent were women. The union reported the existence of 27 local organizations in 1963, more than 20 local circles in places with small Jewish populations, and 23 Jewish youth clubs with a membership of 2,000. Its widespread activities were largely dependent on governmental subsidies, whose status was somewhat precarious. Aware of the difficulties facing the small, if more or less stable, Jewish group in trying to preserve its cultural and linguistic heritage, the union leadership called for intensification of adult-education programs and work among women and families. Problems of Jewish education and, especially, the place of Yiddish in youth education figured prominently in the union’s deliberations. On the other hand, the Communist leaders repeatedly stressed the necessity for continuous and close cooperation between Jewish and other Polish youth organizations to forestall Jewish isolation from general life in Poland.

There were no changes in the leadership of the Cultural and Social Union. Leyb Domb was president, and Edward Reiber was secretary general.

Religious Life

Although the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations claimed 21 local congregations in 1963, Jewish religious life in Poland showed signs of gradual deterioration. There were no qualified rabbis and very few religious teachers, and under prevailing circumstances it was impossible to train religious personnel. According to unconfirmed news reports in April 1963, Rabbi Salitan, the shohet of Vilna in the Lithuanian Soviet Republic, was to assume the rabbinate of Warsaw, but at the end of 1963 nothing further had been heard about this matter. In many local congregations religious rites were performed by laymen of older generations. It was increasingly difficult to maintain religious study for children and, according to reports of local observers, the number of bar-mitzvah celebrations was steadily decreasing. The religious union continued to maintain 15 kosher kitchens where meals were

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2 According to a religious calendar for 1963–64 these were in the following cities: Bielsko Biala, Bytom, Czestochowa, Dzierzoniow, Gliwice, Katowice, Krakow, Legnica, Lodz, Lublin, Sosnowiec, Swidnica, Szczecin, Tarnow, Walbrzych, Warsaw, Wroclaw (2), Wloclowek, Zgorzelec, Zary.
distributed to some 1,000 people. Ritual slaughter for the needs of religious Jews was completely unrestricted, which made it possible for the kitchens to obtain kosher meat from state-operated slaughter houses.

The Union of Religious Congregations was represented in the aid committees dealing with welfare programs and was active in the upkeep and rehabilitation of Jewish cemeteries. There were reports of plans for the completion of work on the Jewish cemetery of Chełm, a city familiar to many through Jewish folklore, but now without a Jewish religious community. Some of the work had been done immediately following the liberation, but was never completed (Folks-shtimme, June 5, 1963).

Isaak Frenkel continued as president of the Union of Religious Congregations.

**Jewish Education**

As in the past, the state-supported Yiddish day schools continued to face many difficulties in teaching the Yiddish language, Yiddish literature, and Jewish history. The most serious problem was the continuing absence of necessary textbooks. A. Goldstein, director of the Wroclaw school, told the correspondent of Folks-shtimme that "[textbooks] are available only for pupils beginning with the second and ending with the seventh grade" (August 25, 1962). To alleviate the lack of qualified teachers in Jewish studies, the State Pedagogical Institute of Wroclaw continued to offer courses in Yiddish language and Jewish history, but apparently there was difficulty in finding qualified candidates.

During the academic year 1962–63, state-supported Yiddish day schools functioned in Bielawa, Dzierzgonów, Legnica, Łódz, Szczecin, Walbrzych, and Wroclaw. Programs on the secondary level were given in the Janusz Korczak lyceum in Legnica, the Sholem Aleichem lyceum in Łódz, and the Peretz lyceum in Wroclaw. There was no precise information on the total enrolment in Yiddish schools, but it was estimated at about 1,700. The Łódz lyceum graduated eight pupils in the 1962–63 school year, their diplomas qualifying them to apply for entrance to universities. This was the seventh year that the school had graduated students eligible for university admission.

In the 1962–63 school year almost 3,000 students were enrolled in ORT schools—about a tenth of the estimated total Jewish population of Poland.

**Social Welfare**

With the help of JDC more than 3,000 Jewish children spent their vacations in 13 specially organized summer camps in 1963. The Jewish community devoted special attention to the summer-camp program, and in November 1962 called a conference in Wroclaw of camp directors and educational personnel to discuss organization, education, medical supervision, and the like.

JDC continued its welfare program in Poland, operating through local aid committees consisting of representatives of the Cultural and Social Union
and the Union of Religious Congregations. In mid-1963 JDC help was reaching about 12,000 persons, including 6,100 on cash relief, 2,015 beneficiaries of feeding programs, 725 on medical aid, and 195 students. A new home for the aged was dedicated in Warsaw in November 1963, financed by JDC and the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation. It was to have a capacity of 75 able-bodied and 25 bedridden residents.

**Producer Cooperatives**

Excessive inventories made it necessary for some of the Jewish producer cooperatives to close down during the period under review. At the time of writing, however, the cooperatives were developing smoothly and had a definite place in the economic life of the country. Their payments to the Social and Cultural Union were extremely helpful in financing the union's cultural endeavors; in 1962, out of their net profits of Z13.193 million, Z1.5 million was expected to go to the union.

There were 17 cooperatives in 1963. The value of their production in 1962 was over Z156 million, compared with Z125 million in 1961. Their total membership was about 1,800, of whom 54 per cent were women and more than half were between 40 and 65 years old. The total number of Jews related to the cooperatives, including families, was 5,000 to 6,000, or about 20 per cent of the total Jewish population. A commission of the Cultural and Social Union, headed by W. Hakel, supervised the producer cooperatives.

**Cultural Activities**

The leaders of the Cultural and Social Union continued to make strenuous efforts to revitalize Jewish cultural activities, adversely affected by the emigration of persons interested in Jewish culture. During the period under review there were six Jewish drama circles and seven Jewish choral groups. Many special cultural events took place in Wroclaw in May 1963, including a performance by an all-Jewish drama ensemble, a musical competition, and a conference on Yiddish writing and publishing.

Yiddish Bukh continued its publishing activities. In 1962 it offered to its subscribers the following books: *The Diary of Anne Frank; Shaydvegn* ("Crossroads"), by Kalman Segal; *Der veg tsum himl* ("The Way to Heaven"), by A. Rudnicki; *Lider fun getto un lagern* ("Ghetto and Concentration Camp Songs"), Ruth Pups; *Die Sheydim-ozere* ("Devils' Lake"), by M. M. Tempel; *Poshete verier* ("Simple Words"), by Moses Shklar, and *Eseyen vegn shrayber un verk* ("Essays on Writers and their Work"), by Lili Berger. The second volume of the new edition of Emmanuel Ringelblum's *Writings from the Ghetto* was published under the imprint of the Jewish Historical Institute (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 363).

The regular 1962–63 theatrical season opened in August 1962 in Jary, with the play *Experiment*, by the Yugoslav Jewish writer Jack Confino. The State Yiddish Theater introduced a subscription system for the 1962–63
season for advance assurance of a minimal audience and to help attract Jewish youth and workers to the theater. The ministry of culture approved construction plans for a new building in the center of Warsaw for the State Yiddish Theater, which was to have a capacity of 1,000 seats and modern equipment, and was to house other Jewish cultural activities and serve as a sort of Jewish center in Warsaw.

The Polish press devoted much space to the 20th anniversary of the death of the folk poet and composer Mordecai Gebirtig, murdered by the Nazis in Cracow in June 1942. In November 1962 the State Yiddish Theater presented a special performance, *Dos lid iz geblibn* ("The Song Has Remained"), dedicated to his memory.

In August 1962 *Folks-shtimme* devoted a special page to the Yiddish writers executed in Russia under Stalin ten years earlier, with pictures of Peretz Markish, David Hofstein, Itzik Feffer, David Bergelson, and Leyb Kvitko, and an editorial note about the terror during the period of the "cult of personality." *Folks-shtimme* was still not permitted to circulate in the USSR.

Commemoration of the Catastrophe

The 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was commemorated with great solemnity. The government, the Politburo of PPZR, many Polish and Jewish organizations, and delegations from abroad participated. Among the foreign delegates were Gideon Hausner and Rabbi Isaac Frenkel of Israel, Alex Easterman and Gerhardt Rignier of WJC, and Sir Barnett Janner, M. P., president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Many other Jewish delegates from abroad were not able to participate because they were not granted the necessary visas (p. 220). Entry permits were also denied to British reporters who wanted to cover the ceremonies, on account of "pressure of hotel accommodations" (JTA, April 16, 1963). The press throughout the country gave much space to the event, and *Nova Kultura*, the intellectual organ of the PPZR central committee, devoted its entire April 21, 1963, issue to the revolt. The government issued special postage stamps honoring the victims of the camps at Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek.

Edward Ochab, president of the State Council, spoke in the name of the Communist party and the state at a solemn assembly held in Warsaw on April 18, 1963. Rabbi Saul Emias of London recited memorial prayers at the mass grave of Jewish partisans.

The Polish Council for the Protection of Monuments of Struggle and Martyrdom invited trade unions, party organizations, and youth groups to promote the erection of monuments to mark the scenes of the Nazi mass murders. It was estimated that some 14,000 such places were to be found in Poland, and it was expected that the Jews would take part in this effort at remembrance, especially with respect to the scenes of Jewish martyrdom. Monuments to victims of Nazism were unveiled in Piotrków and Zaslaw.
At the time of writing the Treblinka monument to the memory of 800,000 Jews murdered in that camp, designed by Adam Haupt and Franszysek Dushenko, was still under construction. The costs were in the main covered by the Polish government, but there were nongovernmental contributions as well, including some from Jewish organizations abroad.

Aaron Eisenbach, a member of the Historical Institute of Warsaw was awarded one of the Politica prizes for his book *The Hitlerite Extermination of the Jews*. This prize was greatly valued by Polish writers.

**Relations with Israel**

Israel and Poland elevated their diplomatic missions from legations to embassies in November 1962.

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**Czechoslovakia**

Faced with a series of economic setbacks, the Czechoslovak regime's resistance to de-Stalinization began to crumble in 1963, and a sharp political crisis threatened the administration of Antonín Novotný, president of the republic and first secretary of the Communist party.

The drive for de-Stalinization started as a literary effort in the organ of the Union of the Slovak Writers *Kulturný život*, dominated the Congress of Slovak Writers in Bratislava in April, and found a somewhat muted echo at the congress of the Czechoslovak Writers’ Union in Prague in May. President Novotný counterattacked in a speech in Košice in June, after having yielded to pressure from Slovakia to remove two old-time Stalinists, Karol Bacílek and Pavel David, from the party presidium. By that time economic and political dissatisfaction had become overt.

In September 1963 Novotný made a new retreat when, in the face of opposition fire on Premier Viliam Široký, he replaced him with Jozef Lenart. In the same month three other prewar party leaders, Jaromír Dolanský, Julius Duríš, and Jan Krosnař, were relieved of their ministerial functions. The significance of the personnel changes was underscored in the summer of 1963 by the expulsion from the Communist party of former Justice Minister Alexej Čepička, son-in-law of the late president and Communist party boss Klement Gottwald, and former State Security Minister Ladislav Kopřiva, both being charged with infractions of “socialist legality.” In another conciliatory move, the government amnestied and released from prison Arch-

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* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 361.
bishop Josef Beran and Bishops Karel Skoupý, Van Vojtašak, Stanislav Zela, and Ladislav Hlad, and so informed the Vatican in October.

As 1963 drew to an end, there appeared to be a stalemate between President Novotný and the opposition group, whose spokesmen were mostly young people who had been too young to occupy important posts during the Stalin-Gottwald period. Both sides professed loyalty to the leadership of the Soviet Communist party.

In August 1963 the Communist party organ Rudé Právo published an official report on the review of the political trials of 1949–54. The 1952 purge of Rudolf Slánský and his co-defendants resulted from the most notorious of these trials (AJYB, 1954 [Vol. 55], p. 288; 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 365). Of the 14 high party and government officials implicated in the Slánský affair ten had been executed and three sentenced to life imprisonment. All but three were Jews.

According to Rudé Právo, the supreme court, to which the review of the trials had been referred, exonerated the defendants on all counts of the original indictment. The three surviving defendants, Evžen Löebl, Artur London, and Vávro Hajdů, were subsequently reinstated in the party; Bedřich Geminder, Ludvík Frejka, Vladimír Clementis, Rudolf Margolius, and André Simone-Katz were reinstated posthumously, and the expulsion of Rudolf Slánský, Otto Šling, Bedřich Reicin, Otto Fischl, and Karel Šváb was confirmed on the basis of anti-party activities or misconduct in office. But the rehabilitation order made no reference to the original charges of a Zionist-Titoist-imperialist conspiracy, nor to the blatantly antisemitic character of the purge.

Of the Jewish party officials implicated in other trials, Hanuš Lomský, Ervín Polák, Vítězslav Fuchs, Mikuláš Landa, Bedřich Hájek, Rudolf Slánský’s brother Richard, Koloman Moškovič, Rudolf Feigl, Josef Goldmann, and others were rehabilitated.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

The decrease in the number of worshipers and the dearth of religious functionaries brought about a reduction in the number of Czech Jewish religious communities from nine to five: Prague, Plzeň (Pilsen) and Ústí (Aussig) in Bohemia, and Brno (Brünn) and Ostrava (Ostrau) in Moravia. By 1963 Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), Liberec (Reichenberg), Olomouc (Olomütz), and Hodonín (Göding) had ceased to function as religious communities. On the basis of reports on elections to the boards of the religious communities, the five remaining communities appeared to include 45 congregational congregations, most with very small memberships.

The Jewish Religious Community of Prague comprised nine congregational congregations in central and northeastern Bohemia: Hradec Králové, Kladno, Kolín, Náchod, Pardubice, Poděbrady, Prague, Příbram, and Trutnov. The Religious Community of Plzeň consisted of congregations in western and
southern Bohemia: České Budějovice, Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně, Písek, Plzeň, and Tábor. Ústí, the religious community for northern Bohemia, listed 12 active synagogal congregations: Chomutov, Česká Lípa, Děčín, Jablonec, Liberec, Litoměřice, Louny, Most, Teplice, Ústí, Varnsdorf, and Žatec.

The Religious Community of Brno had 11 synagogal congregations in southern and central Moravia: Boskovice, Brno, Hodonín, Holešov, Jihlava, Kroměříž, Kyjov, Mikulov, Prostějov, Uherský Brod, and Znojmo. Ostrava in northern Moravia comprised seven congregations: Bohumín, Krnov, Olomouc, Opava, Orlová, Ostrava, and Těšín.

A precise listing was not available for Slovakia, where the local congregations continued to operate under the direct control of the Central Association of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia. The Assembly of Delegates of the religious communities, which met in July 1962, was attended by 33 representatives of local congregations (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 365).

The rabbinate of Czechoslovakia consisted of five rabbis, two in Bohemia-Moravia (the 88-year-old Chief Rabbi Richard Feder and District Rabbi Bernard Farkaš) and three in Slovakia (Chief Rabbi Eliáš Katz and Rabbis Solomon Steiner and Gustav Wald). In most congregations religious functions were discharged by cantors and laymen.

An access of deaths over births further reduced the number of Jews from the estimated 18,000 in 1960 (AJYB, 1961 [Vol. 62], p. 383).

The board of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia and Moravia met in September 1963 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Richard Feder’s induction into the rabbinate. The triennial Assembly of Delegates of the council met in November and elected new officers.

Religious services for approximately 5,000 Jews were held regularly in the famous Altneuschul of Prague, a Gothic structure dating to the 13th century, and in the Jerusalem Street synagogue.

Cultural Activities

Five synagogues served as exhibition halls under the administration of the Jewish State Museum. The Pinkas synagogue was converted into a memorial to the victims of Nazi persecution. The baroque Klaus synagogue housed an exhibition devoted to Jewish life in Bohemia from the 10th century to 1848. The High synagogue displayed an exhibition on Jewish learning in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Spanish synagogue exhibited materials on the annual cycle of Jewish rituals and the most precious of the museum’s huge collection of ceremonial textiles. The Maisl synagogue was closed for repairs. The Jewish collections and exhibitions were among Prague’s major tourist attractions, the annual number of visitors being estimated at 300,000.

Židovská Ročenka (“Jewish Year Book”) for the year 5724 (1963–64) was published in August 1963. It had articles by Rabbis Feder, Katz, and Farkaš; literary criticism by František Kafka, František Marek, and Lev
Brod, and contributions by Rudolf Iltis, the *Year Book* editor, and by F. R. Kraus, Ladislav Grosman, Arnošt Lustig, Erich Kulka, František Gottlieb, and others.

With its January 1963 issue, *Věstník* ("Gazette"), the official organ of the Jewish Religious Communities in Czechoslovakia, entered its 25th year of publication. Founded in 1933, it served the Jewish congregation of Prague until 1939, when it was suspended by the Nazis. The first post-liberation issue appeared in September 1945 as the only Jewish periodical in the country. Rudolf Iltis continued as its editor.

The literary "thaw," which came to Czechoslovakia later than to any other East European country, made possible a revived interest in Franz Kafka, whose books had been banned for most of the Communist era. An international conference on the life and work of the great Prague writer was convened in May 1963, and some lecturers attempted to relate the significance of Kafka to contemporary problems of a Communist society. Professor Edward Goldstücker of the Charles University of Prague, a victim of the antisemitic purge of 1952, was the main speaker. He had initiated the topical interest in Kafka in an article in *Literární Noviny* in February 1963, regretting that Kafka, "whom the whole world credits to us, became in our country a victim of what is called the consequences of the personality cult. . . ."

It was necessary, he said, "that even the weirdest imagination should not be able to apply any of Kafka's visions of bureaucratic chicaneries and cruelties to our public affairs."

Plays on Jewish subjects were shown in Prague (Erwin Sylvanus' *Korcsak and the Children*, and in Brno (Max Frisch's *Andorra*). The opera houses of Prague and Brno produced F. J. Fischer's opera *Romeo, Julia, and the Dark*, based on Jan Otčenášek's love story of a Jewish girl and a Christian boy during the Nazi time. The book had also been made into a motion picture.

New books on Jewish themes included a collection of four stories by Arnošt Lustig under the title *Nikoho neponížíš* ("You Shall Not Humiliate") and a short novel by the poet František Gottlieb *Volání na časy* ("Calling for Ages"), set in the small-town Jewish milieu before World War I. The leading Jewish writer and playwright in the Czech language, František Langer, published a collection of reminiscences entitled *Byli a bylo* ("They Were and There Was"). The 1963 prize for the best book issued by the Publishing House of the Association of Czech Writers went to Ladislav Fuks for his first novel *Mr. Theodor Mundstock*, whose hero was a simple Jew "from the street" at the time of the Nazi occupation.
Hungary*

The political climate in Hungary became considerably more liberal during the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963). The central committee of the Communist party, meeting in Budapest in August 1962, decided to rehabilitate the victims of the "cult of personality" and to expel from the party the veteran Stalinists Mátyás Rákosi and Ernő Gerö. (Rákosi died in August 1963 in a Moscow hospital.) János Kádár’s government proclaimed an amnesty which freed thousands of people imprisoned after the uprising in 1956. In April 1963 it was officially announced that the works of the well-known Marxist literary critic György Lukács would again appear in print. Lukács had served as minister of culture in the 1956 cabinet of Imre Nagy and was in prison briefly for participation in the 1956 revolt (AJYB, 1958 [Vol. 59], p. 338). Other reports hinted that factory councils, set up by the Kádár regime after the 1956 revolt to replace the revolutionary workers’ councils, would be reorganized as elective rather than appointive bodies.

Industrial reorganization was reported near completion. In July 1963, 648 industrial enterprises were merged into 202 units. The difficulties encountered by collectivized agriculture led to the introduction of an incentive policy, which was hailed as an important “socialist measure.” In 1963 it was necessary to import some 400,000 tons of grain, part of it from the United States.

There were increasing signs that the Budapest regime was looking for some sort of rapprochement with the Vatican. The Hungarian church was represented at the coronation of Pope Paul VI by Bishop Endre Hanvas and Msgr. Pal Brezanoczy. The Hungarian press showed a striking tolerance in matters of religion, particularly with respect to persons practicing religious rites. In a 1962 Christmas Eve broadcast First Deputy Premier Gyula Kallai, in keeping with the new mood, emphasized that throughout the centuries Christmas had become a symbol of peace and love. Apparently, religion was to be considered a private affair, provided it did not interfere with the performance of civic duties. It was reported that Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, still in asylum in the United States embassy in Budapest, had refused to leave the country. According to some reports, the cardinal opposed some of the candidates for new bishoprics in Hungary accepted by the Vatican.

Kádár visited Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito in September 1963. The two leaders issued a communique stressing the "harmful effects" on world peace of attempts to "disrupt the unity of international workers’

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 361.
movements." This transparent attack on Red China was reinforced by reminders to party members of the necessity of following the Moscow line. Soviet troops were still encamped outside Budapest and elsewhere in the country.

JEWSH COMMUNITY

Estimates of the number of Jews in Hungary varied from 70,000 to 90,000; about 80,000 would appear to be a conservative estimate. Some 60,000 to 65,000, or 75 to 80 per cent of them, resided in Budapest.

There was no overt antisemitism but anti-Jewish feeling was reportedly still widespread. Nevertheless there were many Jews in the professions, some of them occupying leading positions in research, law, and medicine.

Jewish communal activities centered around the Central Board of Jewish Communities (Magyar Izraelitá Képviselete), which was recognized by the authorities and received governmental subsidies, as did all churches. The majority of Hungarian Jews belonged to the so-called Neolog synagogue, corresponding roughly to Conservative Judaism in the United States, but there were also Orthodox groups, both in Budapest and the provinces. In 1963 there were reportedly 15 Neolog and 14 Orthodox rabbis officiating in Budapest and provincial cities (Debrecen, Szeged, Szolnok, etc.), among them Imre Benoschofsky and Gyorgy Berger (Neolog) and Jeno Schuck and Marton Weisz (Orthodox). For the time being rabbinical personnel were sufficient, but it seemed likely that there would be a replacement problem since candidates for positions of religious responsibility were decreasing.

Endre Sos was president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, and Tibor Pener was general secretary.

Communal and Cultural Activities

The Jewish communities conducted a many-sided program of activities, including the operation of a Jewish hospital, a kosher canteen, a Jewish center, a Jewish museum, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in Budapest. Founded in 1878, the seminary was the only institution of its kind in Eastern Europe. It was headed by a renowned scholar, Rabbi Alexander (Sandor) Scheiber, who in 1963 visited the United States and other Western countries on a scholarly mission. In the academic year 1962-63 the seminary had 10 students and six professors; its library contained 60,000 books in Jewish fields and 500 manuscripts of great scholarly value. The Budapest community also operated a Jewish secondary school with 150 students and a yeshivah with 35 students. In addition, there were 30 Talmud Torahs attached to synagogues in Budapest and the provinces.

The Central Board of Jewish Communities applied a CJMCAG subsidy, for Jewish education, research, and publication, to the theological seminary, the secondary school, and the yeshivah. CJMCAG funds also supported the
preparation and publication of a multi-volume work on the period of the Jewish catastrophe in Hungary; *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*, a continuation of a well-known series begun long before World War I; the *Encyclopedic History of the Jewish Communities until World War I*, and other volumes. The central board continued publication of its weekly, *Uj Élét* ("New Life"), under the editorship of Roóz Rezső.

There were a sufficient number of *shohatim*, and *kashrut* for those who wanted it was well-organized. *Matzot* for Passover were baked freely, and citrons for Sukkot came in sufficient quantities from Israel.

The Central Board of Jewish Communities did not cooperate with world Jewish organizations or maintain systematic contacts with world Jewry. In the period under review, however, an increasing number of Israelis and Western Jews visited Hungary. In January 1963 an official Hungarian Jewish delegation visiting England was welcomed at a meeting of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The delegation consisted of Central Board President Endre Sos and Vice President Geza Seifert, and Rabbi Benoschofsky.

There was no large-scale emigration, but in some cases the government permitted the departure of Jews who wished to join relatives in Israel.

**LEON SHAPIRO**

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**Rumania**

Rumania's industrial production, which grew rapidly in 1961 and 1962 (*AJYB*, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 368), continued to progress during the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963). This led to serious complications in the nation's relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist-bloc countries.

**ECONOMICS AND POLITICS**

The July 1963 issue of the official monthly journal, *Probleme Economice*, carried an article by its editor, I. Rachmuth, who is also the director of the Government Institute of Economic Research and one of the very few Jews left in high office. It reported that in 1962 the industrial sector accounted for almost half the national income (48.8 per cent), as compared with 1938, when it provided less than a third (30.5 per cent).

Rumania was faced with the alternatives of continuing to accelerate industrialization or maintaining the place of agriculture and raw-material production in the economy. Further industrialization would require equipment
from the West, and bring Rumanian economic interests into conflict with those of the Soviet Union and other countries of the Communist bloc.

A long wrangle between Rumania and the Soviet Union about Rumania's role in the joint production plan of Comecon, the so-called council for mutual economic assistance of the Communist countries in Eastern Europe, ended with a strong assertion of Rumanian economic independence.

In June 1963, the central organ of the Rumanian Communist party, Scânteia, published a lengthy summary of the famous June 14, 1963, letter of the Chinese Communist party to the Russian Communist party. The letter was sharply critical of Soviet foreign and nuclear policies and of the Kremlin's de-Stalinization campaign. It was published in Rumania at the height of the ideological conflict between Moscow and Peking and just two days after Moscow had barred its publication in the Soviet press. In another demonstration of Rumanian displeasure, later in June, the Rumanian chief of state and Communist party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and his party left a "little Communist summit" meeting in East Berlin during 70th-birthday honors for the boss of East Germany, Walter Ulbricht, leaving Rumania unrepresented at the celebration.

After weeks of secret negotiations in Bucharest with special emissaries from Moscow, in which these tried to substitute "socialist division of labor" for "economic nationalism" as Rumanian goals, the position of the Rumanian leaders was explained in an editorial in Scânteia and in a specially-prepared pamphlet. According to New York Times correspondent David Binder, reporting from Belgrade on July 14, 1963, the pamphlet emphasized that far from being in sympathy with China (as publication of the June 14 letter might have made it appear), Rumania rejected as absurd the notion of "exporting revolution" and fully supported the Soviet point of view on peaceful coexistence. Thus it appeared that Rumania was taking advantage of the ideological conflict between the two Communist giants in order to assert its own independence from the Soviet Union. Self-confidence, national pride, and desire for greater independence manifested themselves in non-economic ways, as well.

A dispatch to the New York Times of September 13, 1963, by Max Frankel reported rumors that compulsory Russian instruction might be discontinued in elementary and secondary schools. Less speculative was a Rumanian vote against the Soviet Union in the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1963 (on the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Latin America).

The 1963 observance of national-liberation day, on August 23, furnished another example of Rumanian self-assertion. The day commemorates the overthrow of the fascist regime in 1944, when Marshal Michael Antonescu, the conducător (Führer) of Rumania, was arrested and an armistice was concluded with the Allies. Dispatches from Bucharest (in the Bad Godesberg Vorwärts of August 28, 1963, for instance) reported a strong national note in the proceedings. In contrast to previous years, the coup d'État was hailed
as the victory of the Rumanian Communist uprising, rather than as a feat of the "glorious Red Army" (which had broken through the front at Yassy at that time but was still several hundred miles from Bucharest). This manifestation of a new nationalism clearly showed the direction in which the history of the Rumanian Communist party was being rewritten (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 369).

Population

The central statistical office put the population of Rumania at 18,630,000, of whom 32.5 per cent were urban. According to La Nation roumaine, the publication of the Rumanian refugees in Paris and the source of the figures here cited, population increase fell from 29.5 per thousand in 1938 to 17.5 in 1961.

The Rumanian Communist party, which in 1961 opened its ranks to former members of the suppressed political parties (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 368), increased its membership by 22 per cent in 1962 to 1,100,000.

Political Situation

There was little reason to believe that Rumania's new attitude toward the Soviet Union had concomitant effects on the internal life of the country. New York Times correspondent Max Frankel reported from Bucharest (September 13, 1963) that police and party controls remained far more rigid than in Poland and Hungary.

Reports of armed resistance and sabotage in industrial towns and villages appeared from time to time in the foreign press. Thus, the Rome Il Tempo reported (November 21, 1962) clashes of militia with bands of armed "partisans" in the highly industrialized Prahova district. In the city of Bushteni, Communist party headquarters are said to have been destroyed by arson, and in the tractor plant in Brashov great damage is said to have been caused by bomb explosions.

A book entitled Prisoner of Red Justice, published in London in 1963, by the Rumanian Jewish journalist and former Associated Press correspondent Leonard Kirschen, described the horrors suffered by political prisoners in Rumanian prisons. Convicted in 1950 on a trumped-up charge of espionage, the author had served 10 years of a 25-year prison term before he was released and permitted to emigrate to England. In a book review in East Europe (July 1963), Asra Berkowitz confirmed Kirschen's descriptions from his own experiences during seven years of Rumanian imprisonment. Berkowitz had been for many years on the staff of L'Indépendance roumaine, the French-language organ of the Rumanian National Liberal party.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Since emigration continued at only a slow pace, there was no reason to believe that any considerable change in the Jewish population had taken place.
It was still estimated to be between 170,000 and 180,000 (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 369). Government opposition toward Jewish emigration, especially to Israel, was unchanged. La Nation roumaine (February 1963) reported that all persons employed by the ministries of the interior and of foreign affairs who had relatives in the free world had been dismissed and that this affected many Jews, especially those with relatives who had emigrated to Israel. The New York Jewish Daily Forward reported from Bucharest (November 9, 1963) that a number of Jews were allowed to emigrate to Australia.

There were no reports of government measures against the Jews as such during the period under review, but JTA reported from Jerusalem (October 7, 1963) that travelers from Bucharest brought news of a recent violent antisemitic outbreak. It was said that hooligans entered a large synagogue, tore up Torah scrolls, and ripped up prayer shawls. The Jewish cemetery was reportedly also desecrated.

The Federation of Jewish Communities, which included organized Jewish communities in about 100 cities and towns in Rumania (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 370), showed little activity. Almost its only signs of life came from two announcements in the trilingual (Rumanian, Yiddish, Hebrew) monthly, Revista cultului mosaic, in October 1962 and another in April 1963 at the start of the Passover season. Both were firm and self-confident, and the latter, especially, sounded a challenging note at the peak of the excitement over the prohibition of matzot in the Soviet Union (p. 269). It asserted categorically that no Jew in Rumania would miss his matzot at Passover and that the Federation bakery’s output would supply the need. Special matzot for the rigorously scrupulous was also available, as was kosher wine, prepared by yeshivah students in Arad.

A JTA dispatch from Bucharest (April 9, 1963) reported that Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen had praised the Rumanian government for enabling the Jews to obtain matzot and all the other things needed for the celebration of Passover. He added, “All the persecutors of the Jews shall come to the same end as Pharaoh.”

Revista cultului mosaic (August 1962) welcomed Rabbi Herschel Schachter of New York. During the course of a radio Bucharest interview, the newspaper reported, the guest expressed admiration for the various Jewish institutions he had seen. These were said to have included impressive synagogues, as in Bucharest, Galatz, and Piatra Neamt, where he reportedly found large crowds attending the services, and an employees’ vacation home in Borzek, in the Carpathian mountains, which served kosher food exclusively. In Bucharest, the report said, he saw and admired a Jewish state theater production of “Anne Frank.”

The former practice of holding public memorial services, attended by important government officials, on the anniversaries of the bloody pogroms in Bucharest (January 21–22, 1941) and Yassy (June 28–29, 1941), seemed to have been abandoned in recent years.
William Filderman, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities from its inception in 1923 until 1943, and leading fighter for Jewish rights between the two world wars, died in Paris at the age of 80 at the beginning of 1963.

JOSEPH KISSMAN

Yugoslavia*

In April 1963 the Yugoslav Federal parliament adopted a new constitution and declared the name of the country to be the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The new constitution made some alterations in governmental forms, but did not significantly change the actual functioning of the political system.

Notwithstanding the existence of a considerable degree of personal and intellectual freedom during the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963), the former Communist leader Milovan Djilas was returned to prison in May 1962 for “divulging official secrets” in a book entitled Conversations with Stalin that was to be published abroad. An amnesty proclaimed in late 1963 did not affect Djilas.

As the political conflict between the Soviet Union and Red China developed (p. 267), President Josip Broz Tito’s policy of “independent socialist nonalignment” was in increasingly close harmony with the “peaceful coexistence” line promoted by Moscow. In December 1962 Tito visited the Soviet Union and in August 1963 Premier Nikita Khrushchev returned the visit. Khrushchev emphasized the “traditional friendship of our brotherly peoples” and said that the Soviet Union based its relationship with Yugoslavia on “Leninist principles of socialist internationalism. . . .” While improving relations with Moscow, Tito also sought to reassure the West.

JEWISH POPULATION

According to the Jewish communal register in Belgrade, there were 6,495 Jews in Yugoslavia at the end of 1963. Several hundred others, who for one reason or another did not register, brought the total to an estimated 7,000. Croatia had 2,030 Jews—more than any other of the republics. There were none registered in Montenegro, and only 40 in the autonomous district of Kosovo and Metohija on the Albanian border. Belgrade (Serbia) had 1,550 Jews, Zagreb (Croatia) 1,400, and Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) about 1,100.

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 361.
Communal and Religious Life

The Jewish community in Yugoslavia, functioning within the political and social framework of the state, enjoyed good relations with the authorities and their support. In December 1962 the central Jewish organization, the Federation of Jewish Communities, listed 36 affiliated local communities.

Many problems confronted the Jewish communities. There was an almost complete lack of religious personnel and Jewish teachers. The small communities were unable to develop the professional staffs of social workers, teachers, youth leaders, and other personnel necessary for the maintenance of normal communal activities. It was increasingly difficult to maintain traditional religious life. Services were held regularly on the Sabbath and holidays only in the larger communities. Yugoslavia had only one qualified rabbi, Menahem Romano of Sarajevo, a man of advanced age. The federation looked for new rabbis, but there were no candidates available. A dispatch from Belgrade in August 1963 indicated that the large synagogue of Sarajevo, destroyed by the Nazis, was being rebuilt as a cultural center, since there was no longer need for a synagogue of its dimensions. The problem of maintaining Jewish cemeteries continued to plague the communities, the federation being unable to obtain the funds to meet the substantial outlays required. It was reported that plans were under way to liquidate some of the old cemeteries in places without Jewish inhabitants and transfer the remains to mass graves in the cemeteries of other, larger communities.

In 1963, Passover sedarim were organized communally in Sarajevo, Subotica, Split, Novi Sad, Zagreb, and Belgrade. Matzot were supplied by JDC, and Israelis sent wine. The Israeli minister to Yugoslavia, Abiezer Chelouche, gave a Passover dinner at his home for representatives of the Jewish community.

Celebrations were organized in all the larger communities in connection with Purim, Hanukkah, the 15th of Shevat, and similar occasions. The Israelis sent palm branches and citrons for Sukkot.

With the approval of the authorities, the Federation of Jewish Communities maintained close contact with WJC, JDC, CJMCAG, organizations in Israel and the United States, and other organizations abroad. Albert Wajs continued as president of the Federation and David Levi was secretary.

Cultural Activities

The federation's cultural and educational program was partly supported by CJMCAG. There was great emphasis on youth activities, including clubs in Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Subotica, Osijet, Novi Sad, Skopljje, Ljubljana, Split, and Rijek. Twenty-six delegates represented Yugoslav Jewish youth at a study seminar in Israel in the summer of 1962. Delegates were also sent to a Jewish youth seminar in Brussels in the spring of 1962 and a youth seminar in Liége in December 1962. Two official observers represented
Yugoslavia's Jewish students and other Jewish youth at the World Conference of Jewish Youth and the World Congress of Jewish Students in Jerusalem in August 1963. Teachers from Israel helped in the organization and management of summer camps and various other youth activities.

The Jewish communities also conducted adult-education programs through special clubs, women's organizations, etc.

The Federation maintained several libraries. Among them were the Schick and one other, in Zagreb; and one each in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Subotica, and Osijek.

The Jewish choirs in Belgrade and Zagreb continued their activities, and the Belgrade group had a highly successful tour in Brussels, Liége, Luxembourg, and Milan. In 1962 steps were taken to organize a new Jewish choir in Sarajevo, which already had two Jewish children's mandolin orchestras.

The Federation of Jewish Communities continued publication of *Jevrejski Pregled* ("Jewish Review") and a youth magazine, *Kadima*, each with a printing of 3,500 copies. The federation also issued annually or biennially *Jevrejski Almanah* ("Jewish Almanac"), a collection of essays, short stories, and poetry by Jews or dealing with Jewish themes. During the period under review a Jewish calendar was published in 1,000 copies. Towards the end of 1962 the federation issued a Serbo-Croatian translation of Simon Dubnow's one-volume *History of the Jewish People*, the first modern Jewish history to be published in Yugoslavia. It also issued *A History of the Jews in Macedonia from Roman Times through the Second World War*, by Alexander Markovski. The Jewish museum in Belgrade maintained important collections of historical material on the Jews in southern Slav countries. Researchers prepared a register of 900 documents related to Jewish life in the 18th and 19th centuries, a collection of old prayer books, and other items. Some museum and archival work was also done in Sarajevo and Dubrovnik. In 1962 the federation organized its eighth annual prize competition for the best work on a Jewish theme. It was expected that some of the works chosen by the jury would appear in *Jevrejski Almanah*.

**Social and Welfare Activities**

Jewish welfare activities in Yugoslavia were supported in part by JDC-CJMCAG. In 1962 this support amounted to some $114,000, in addition to $18,000 contributed for cultural purposes. Through this program about 440 persons, including aged people, invalids, orphans, and students, received cash assistance, medical aid, and other services. At the end of 1962, 110 old people (average age 76) were living in a home in Zagreb. JDC extended special assistance to the victims of the 1963 earthquake in Skoplje.

**Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt**

The Federation of Jewish Communities organized special ceremonies and services to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt.
A n anti-Stalinist purge in November 1962 brought about the downfall of Communist party Secretary Vulko Chervenkov and Premier Anton Yugov. Before the purge Bulgaria, the only state in the Soviet bloc to do so, had talked of a “great leap forward” in the Chinese manner and of a plan to create “people’s communes” on the Chinese model. All this was out under the regime of the new party secretary Todor Zhivkov, who gradually brought the party into line with the policies of Nikita Khrushchev. Many Stalinist practices were nevertheless retained. In December 1963, for example, following the trial of Asen Khristov Georgiev, a Bulgarian diplomat charged with spying for the United States, several thousand Bulgarians besieged the United States embassy in Sofia. In the riots, apparently organized with the approval of the authorities, groups of young men shouted anti-American slogans and stoned the embassy.

While official sources reported fulfilment of the economic plan, the rate of industrial growth dropped substantially during the period under review (July 1, 1962, to December 31, 1963), and in 1963 it was necessary to import 100,000 tons of wheat from Canada.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were about 7,000 Jews in Bulgaria, including 4,000 in Sofia and 1,000 in Plovdiv. Most of the rest were in eight other cities.

Cultural and Religious Life

Reliable foreign observers reported that Jewish religious and communal life continued to deteriorate. What remained centered around the Consistory of Religious Communities and the new Central Jewish Cultural and Educational Organization, established by the Communists in Sofia and several provincial cities. While in the past the consistory’s principal activities had been religious, it now served also as the coordinating center of Jewish life in Bulgaria. During the period under review consistory activities were more and more restricted, and it was not clear how much religious content re-
mained. State financial support of religious communities was discontinued. There were reportedly only five functioning synagogues in the country. Reports that the Great Synagogue of Sofia had been closed were denied by the municipal authorities. Adequate rabbinical personnel were lacking; there were no qualified cantors, and religious services, such as there were, were performed by laymen. The absence of qualified mohalim resulted in a decrease in the number of circumcisions. In March 1962 Jewish newspapers reported that Chief Rabbi Asher Hananel, who was sentenced in 1961 to a three-and-a-half-year prison term for “smuggling money and gold,” and was released in June 1962 (AJYB, 1963 [Vol. 64], p. 349), for reasons of health had been forced to resign earlier, but this could not be confirmed.

There were no Jewish schools in Bulgaria and no organized facilities for the religious education of youth. In 1962 only small Hebrew classes were being maintained by the community in Sofia, and the younger generation was gradually losing all connection with Jewish tradition.

The Jewish Cultural and Education Organization, which, under the direction of Executive Committee Secretary Avraham Kalo engaged in varied cultural and propaganda activities, adhered strictly to the Communist line. The Sholem Aleichem club in Plovdiv was its largest provincial unit. The Jewish choir in Sofia, an old and reputable musical ensemble under the direction of Jules Levi, was still active, as were the state-directed Jewish museum and Jewish library. The library, however, was reorganized to serve as a center of Marxist research. Yevreiski Vesty (“Jewish News”), edited by Israel Mayer and sponsored by the Cultural and Educational Organization, was the only Jewish publication in the Bulgarian language. In November 1962 it celebrated its 30th anniversary.

A recently published History of Bulgarian Journalism, 1885–1905, contained an account of the development of the Jewish press.

**Attitudes toward Jews and Relations with Israel**

The changes in the top personnel of the party and government did not affect the situation of the small Jewish minority. While the parliament elected in 1962 reportedly included a few Jewish deputies, they had little if any connection with Jewish life. The authorities firmly discouraged any attempt by the Jewish communities to establish contacts with Jewish organizations outside the country, even with Jews in Soviet countries.

At the same time government authorities discouraged overt antisemitism—traditionally weak in Bulgaria—and gave recognition to Jewish participation in the life of the country. (A 1947 law had made antisemitism a punishable offense.) In 1962 a Jewish resistance worker, Leo Ben-David Tashar, who fell in underground fighting in 1942, was proclaimed a national hero, and memorial meetings in his honor were organized throughout Bulgaria. In April 1963 Bulgarian officials participated in a meeting, in Blagaev Hall in Sofia, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt.
In July 1963 a meeting in the same city commemorated Jewish and Bulgarian resistance to a Nazi deportation order issued 20 years earlier.

After protracted negotiations Bulgaria agreed to pay Israel $195,000 for the loss of 22 Israelis when an El Al plane was shot down by the Bulgarians in 1955 (AJYB, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 379). Bulgaria had earlier paid non-Israeli claims.

**Personalia**

Two popular Jewish actresses, Louna Davidova and Julia Viner, were awarded the title of Distinguished Artist of the Republic, and Stela Astruskova, a Sofia physician, and Leon Sabitaj Surozon, a well-known violinist, received the Order of Cyril and Methodius (Jevrejski Pregled, Belgrade, July–August 1963).

Leon Shapiro