Latin America

Argentina

President Arturo U. Illia spent his first year in office trying to gain support for his moderate political and economic program. Although there seemed to be greater political stability in 1964 than in previous years, the government continued to face major unsolved problems and widespread opposition.

Deep divisions in the government and among the various political parties continued to plague Illia and his People's Radical party. Political life remained under the shadow of ex-dictator Juan D. Perón, who still had appreciable influence in the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT; General Labor Confederation) and middle class. During the visit of French President Charles de Gaulle in October, the Peronists organized frenzied demonstrations for their leader's return, which Perón had promised would be in 1964. Perón sought to identify French foreign policy with his own doctrine of a “third position” between capitalism and Communism.

The greatest opposition to Illia’s government came from CGT, which conducted a plan de lucha (“plan of combat”) against government policies. The wave of protests included a slowdown on the railways, directed against economy measures taken by the government; a go-slow strike by 45,000 postal workers, which held up some 12 million pieces of mail; a 48-hour walkout by Ministry of Health doctors protesting the government’s failure to pay promised salary increases and against hospital conditions in general; a weeklong butchers’ strike directed against price controls, and a nationwide strike by administrative employees in state universities, which was joined by university students. The students protested because less than 10 per cent of the proposed 1965 budget was for education, compared with more than 40 per cent for defense. Although the universities were not officially closed, students supported the strike with public protest meetings and marches and held classes in coffee shops.

The serious economic problems inherited by the Illia government were no nearer to solution in 1964 than in previous years. The printing of currency to cover public expenditures resulted in a tremendous inflation.
1963 to October 1964 the cost of living rose 40 per cent. When the government stepped in to fix prices, the articles affected disappeared from the market. Thus some cuts of meat rose 85 per cent in the period mentioned, and found their way to the black market. Argentina, once the greatest meat-consuming and exporting country in the world, began a period of meatless Mondays and Tuesdays.

In December 1963 Illia signed a bill annulling the contracts signed by former President Arturo Frondizi with foreign oil companies. The 13 companies involved fought the abrogation in the Argentine courts, and it was still not known how the government would find the funds to pay indemnification.

The economic crisis and the conflict over the political role of the Peronists created the danger that military and other conservative forces might again seek to impose their own political and economic solutions by force.

In August a delegation of eight members of the American Jewish Committee, headed by its president, Morris B. Abram, visited Buenos Aires and other South American capitals on a good-will tour. They discussed the Arab League's anti-Zionist campaign with the Argentinian president, vice president, and other leading national figures. They also conferred with Jewish leaders on problems of Jewish identity, intergroup relations, the preservation of Jewish values, and possible areas of further collaboration.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Almost 80 per cent of Argentina's estimated Jewish population of 450,000 lived in Buenos Aires, and the rest were scattered throughout 500 different cities and towns. One hundred twenty communities were members of the Wa'ad Ha-kehilot (Federacion de Comunidades Israelitas), the national organization of Jewish communities which dealt with educational, cultural, religious, and social problems. Seventy of these communities were quite ineffective, especially in education and religion.

About 20 per cent of the population was of Sephardi origin. In October the first Sephardi Argentine convention, meeting in Buenos Aires, proposed the unification of and mutual assistance between all Sephardi communities. This convention also took the first step towards bringing the Sephardi groups into the Wa'ad Ha-kehilot as a single body. The Wa'ad previously consisted principally of Ashkenazim.

Internal Jewish affairs were primarily organized according to Israeli party allegiances. Thus the official spokesmen for the Jewish community were members of Mapai. At the annual convention of the Po'ale Zion-Hitahadut Mapai in October, the problem of internal unity of the community was stressed. Gregorio Fainguersh, president of AMIA (Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina; AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 178) and a leading Mapai member, spoke of two "dangers" that threatened community unity: the formation and organization of the Sephardi communities as an entity apart from the Ashkenazi AMIA, and the emergence of the Reform and Conservative movements which "seek to root themselves artificially in our midst." He added that
the "anti-Zionists" in the Conservative movement presented the greatest dan-
ger to the preservation of the community's identity. The charge of anti-Zion-
ism was emphatically denied by those attacked. Other observers saw greater
danger to the community in the facts that most Jews took no part in any type
of Jewish life whatsoever, that the majority of Jewish university students were
members of leftist political parties, and that there was a noticeable lag in
Jewish education.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of Jewish colonization in Argentina was cele-
brated by the entire community in August. In 1889, 836 Russian Jewish im-
migrants founded the first Jewish agricultural settlement in the Province of
Santa Fé, later called Moisesville. Baron Maurice de Hirsch responded to the
suffering and poverty of these first settlers by establishing the Jewish Coloni-
zation Association. In the intervening 75 years, 20 colonies were founded,
and some 650,000 hectares (over 1.6 million acres) were cultivated. This
represented two per cent of the land under cultivation in Argentina; Jews
were also two per cent of the entire population of the republic. The Jewish
colonies played a major role in the formation of the Argentine cooperative
movement.

AMIA, with about 50,000 families, was the largest organized Jewish com-

Cultural Activities

The Center of Jewish Documentation began to function in conjunction
with the School of Institutional Leadership, under the joint sponsorship of the
American Jewish Committee and the Sociedad Hebraica (a cultural and sports
center with 20,000 members). The center gathered printed materials on
Jewish themes for use by community leaders and researchers. The American
Jewish Committee also organized a graphic display of its work on human rela-
tions, antisemitism, and civil rights. A Hebrew center for biblical studies was
organized in the capital in connection with the visit of Hayyim Gevaryahu
of the Center for Biblical Studies in Jerusalem.

Editorial Paidós, the leading publishing house in sociology and psychology,
began publication of a new series in Spanish entitled the "Library of the His-
tory and Science of Religion," under the direction of Rabbi Marshall T.
Meyer. Its first titles were Leo Baeck's The Essence of Judaism and Leo
Schwarz's Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People. The Instituto Judío
Argentino de Cultura e Información published several pamphlets about the
Jewish religion, Nazi genocide, and the Ecumenical Council and the Jews.
The annual book fair sponsored by AMIA sold some 20,000 volumes, of which 70 per cent were in Spanish. AMIA also sponsored a weekly television program, and the Israeli embassy and the Makhon le-tarbut Israel produced several weekly radio programs with Israeli music, news, and Hebrew lessons.

Although the number of Yiddish publications and Yiddish-speaking people declined, Buenos Aires remained one of the most important centers of Yiddish culture. The *Diario Israelita*, a Yiddish daily, celebrated its 50th anniversary. This newspaper was in the vanguard of Jewish life and Yiddish culture, not only in Argentina but throughout all South America. *Davar*, a cultural bimonthly journal in Spanish under the auspices of the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina, published its 100th issue since its inception in July 1945. *Comentario*, the 12-years-old quarterly of the Instituto Judío de Cultura e Información, reached a significant number of intellectuals in Latin America. Other publications included *Maj'shavot (Mahashavot)*, a Spanish quarterly dedicated to Jewish thought, edited by the Latin American office of the World Council of Synagogues.

**Education**

The Central Organization for Hebrew Education (Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh) reported 8,400 students in the primary grades (up to the 6th grade) in 60 schools in Buenos Aires. There were 2,200 students in the lower grades (1st and 2nd) but only 400 in the sixth grade, indicating a high drop-out rate. Of the total number of students, "3,000 studied on a good educational level, 3,000 on an adequate level, while 2,400 students attended classes on a deplorable educational level," according to Mordejai Onik, president of the Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh.

In the interior of the country some 4,800 pupils attended 53 primary schools. A total of 1,050 students were enrolled in Jewish secondary schools throughout the country. Thus only a small fraction of the school-age Jewish population received Jewish education, and most of these did not advance beyond the third grade. In past years, Jewish kindergarten enrolment had increased by about 1,000 pupils per year. Between 1963 and 1964 it remained static. In general, Jewish education suffered the lack of proper teachers' education, coordination between schools, and modern pedagogical methods. Improvement of the situation depended upon greater cooperation among day schools, despite conflicting ideologies, and between Ashkenazi and Sephardi schools; the merger of small schools, and the establishment of new and modern schools.

There were plans to expand existing nursery schools and increase their enrolment to 10,000 pupils. This would require special training for more teachers. It was urged that by thus increasing the kindergarten enrolment, adding another hour to all sessions, and developing a more intensive program for the five-year-olds, increased primary-school enrolment would be assured. Other plans included one to establish a central psychopedagogic board for consultation by all schools and another to offer graduate courses for all teachers. At the time of writing, only graduates of the Midrasha Ha-'Ivrit were
eligible to teach in the secondary schools. This AMIA-sponsored teacher’s seminary had an enrolment of 130.

There were several encouraging developments. One was the organization of Horim, a federation of Hebrew-school parents’ groups, in March. Horim was nonpolitical; it sought to increase enrolment, aid in the financing of the schools, and further interest in Jewish culture among parents. Another was the addition in the same month of a high-school department to Tarbut, the youngest and most modern of the day schools, where English was among the subjects taught.

In general, Argentine Jewish education had an almost totally secularist approach.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

AMIA President Fainguersh stated at the Wa’ad Ha-kehilot convention in July that “we constitute a community based on the Zionist ideal and our orientation is towards the State of Israel.” Although there was a sharp decline in the rate of ‘aliyah as compared with the previous year, Zionist activity and allegiance continued to be very strong.

The Israeli office of tourism sponsored a promotion week called “Learn about Israel.” The intensive program included a city-wide Israeli folk-song and dance festival, radio broadcasts, issuance of special publications, and special meetings. Among the long list of important Israelis to visit Argentina were Arieh Kubovy, chairman of Yad Washem (Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority); Katriel Katz, Israeli Consul General in New York, and Finance Minister Phinehas Sappir. Friends of the Hebrew University, of the Weizmann Institute, and of Technion were active in sponsoring cultural events throughout the capital. The Instituto Argentino de Cultura Hebrea (Argentine Institute of Hebrew Culture) sponsored a pilgrimage to Israel to further its aim of promoting the Hebrew language and Israeli culture. There were many Hebrew-speaking circles throughout the city, and the Hebrew language was stressed in most Jewish day schools. Argentina’s two Hebrew weeklies, Darom and Ha-tzohar, merged in May. The publication, now called Tzohar Ha-darom has, however, not appeared since November.

In most Jewish institutions, Zionism and the State of Israel were the key factors in programing, and furnished their basic ideologies. Those who did not adhere to an active Zionist program were singled out for sharp criticism. The Jewish community fought against any attempt to distinguish Zionism from Judaism.

**Religion**

The growing inroads made by the Conservative movement marked a new stage in Argentine Jewish religious life. Although looked upon with distrust and openly denounced by several community leaders, the movement had some far-reaching effects. By far the most significant event in religion, for example, was the official inauguration in August of the (Conservative) Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, the first modern rabbinical seminary on the continent,
which was founded in 1962 by the World Council of Synagogues and CENTRA (Asociación de Comunidades y Organizaciones Israelitas en Latinoamerica). Its 22 students included young men from Perú, Uruguay, and Paraguay, all of whom were concurrently enrolled at the University of Buenos Aires. The inauguration had wide press and television coverage and was attended by the vice-president of the republic, other high government and church officials, and representatives of Jewish communities from all over the continent. Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer was rector, and Professor Seymour Siegel of the Jewish Theological Seminary continued as guest lecturer for a third year. All of the students served as rabbis for the High Holy Days in congregations throughout the country and continent. Seven upperclass students left for an intensive three-month study course in Israel, under the direction of Vice-Rector Marcos Edery. The World Council of Synagogues and the Seminario conducted other activities, as well, which reached previously unreached elements in the community. In July Rabbi Gerald Zelizer, a graduate of JTS, accepted the position of co-rabbi with Rabbi Meyer in the Bet El synagogue in Buenos Aires.

The first two students to be graduated from the AMIA-sponsored (Orthodox) Escuela Superior Teológica Seminario Rabínico were sent to Israel to complete their rabbinical studies.

In December Rabbi Haim Asa, director of the Argentine office of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, inaugurated a Reform synagogue in a suburb of Buenos Aires.

Argentina's 450,000 Jews had only about 15 trained rabbis in 1964.

**Antisemitism**

Both DAIA (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas), under the presidency of Isaac Goldenberg, and responsible government leaders held that antisemitism in Argentina was not the problem of the Jews, but rather a national problem. Minister of Defense Leopoldo Suárez said in a speech in March:

> Once and for all the line must be drawn between those in this country who want to continue living in freedom under democratic and republican institutions, and those who will confess that they want to change the system in order to enter into a new phase of fascism, which has brought so much pain, anguish, and mourning into the world.

But on the whole the nation remained indifferent to the problem. During President Illía’s first year in office, there were over 300 antisemitic attacks. At the height of this campaign, Foreign Minister Zavala Ortiz stated in Washington that antisemitism in Argentina was highly exaggerated.

Along with the well-known Tacuara and Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista fascist-type movements (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 183), the Arab League intensified its activities against the State of Israel and against the local Jewish community. Headed by Hussein Triki, an admitted Nazi sympathizer, the Arab League had connections with many influential circles. Its voice was the
**Nación Arabe**, a magazine that stressed the bogey of Jewish “dual allegiance” and asserted that “rich Jewish capitalists” sent all their money to Israel. It urged an economic and political boycott of Israel, acknowledged contact with illegal Nazi groups in Argentina, and, under the guise of anti-Zionism, conducted an intense anti-Jewish campaign. To combat these activities, DAIA made continuous representations to all high government officials and all political parties. In Rosario an Arab-Jewish League was organized to improve relations between the two groups. In September Triki was recalled to Egypt and was replaced by General Esam Helmy El Masry. In August **Nación Arabe** ceased publication. It was replaced in September by another magazine, **Patria Bárbara**, which closed down three months later.

Antisemitic manifestations included synagogue bombings, tar-bomb explosions at Jewish institutions in Buenos Aires and the interior, the murder of a young Jew in the capital, hundreds of telephone and mail threats, and smears on walls all over the country. In June the Federal police arrested two minors responsible for 148 antisemitic acts in three months. On Argentine Flag Day, an army colonel addressed a Nazi-uniformed audience of youths and adults in the Santa Maria church in Buenos Aires. In July, during a session of the House of Representatives, Deputy Cornejo Linares of the Unión Popular party demanded an official investigation into the “anti-Argentine activities of Zionism.” At a press conference Linares stated that there was “a dangerous conspiracy of an international-type organism, that was acting against the very principles of our nation.” Anti-Jewish manifestations were attributed to the governor of the province of Catamarca, who publicly denied them later. Retired Air Force Brigadier Oliva sent a letter to the general press and DAIA in June containing antisemitic attacks.

DAIA played a major role in bringing these facts before the general public and high government officials. By letters to the press, paid advertisements, the publication and distribution of pamphlets and bulletins, periodic meetings with the president, ministers, police and army officers, and leading intellectuals, DAIA helped to contain what might possibly have been a very explosive situation.

The Instituto Judío de Cultura e Información also played a vital role in the development of public relations and intergroup relations to strengthen civic harmony and curb bigotry. One of its techniques was the use of a special press service, SICU, that supplied accurate information on the Jewish community to more than 300 newspapers throughout the country.

**Personalía**

The Jewish community mourned the loss of Jacobo Botosansky, a noted Yiddish writer and journalist, and of Rabbi Michael Molho, who in 1950 immigrated from Salonika and was active among the Sephardim circles as spiritual leader and scholar.

*Naomi F. Meyer*
Brazil

The crisis which started with the resignation of President Jânio da Silva Quadros in August 1961 (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 184) culminated on March 31, 1964, with the ousting of President João ("Jango") Goulart by combined military and civilian forces.

In his New Year's message for 1964, Goulart said that "within the existing structure" it was no longer possible to check the inflationary avalanche. He sought increasingly to concentrate power in his own hands, on the ground that only thus could essential reforms be put into effect. Although the economic situation continued to deteriorate, Goulart's position remained strong as long as he retained the support of the armed forces. Large sections of these had originally opposed his accession to the presidency after the resignation of Quadros, but he had used his powers of appointment and promotion to strengthen his influence over the military services. A poll taken among the officers he had promoted to higher commands showed that about 90 per cent of them agreed with his ideas of land reform. But the efforts of Goulart's followers to organize political support among the noncommissioned officers and rank and file of the armed forces created increasing resentment among the military leaders. This came to a head when Goulart refused to support the navy command in suppressing a strike of marines in March 1964 thus undermining the foundation of military authority and discipline. The final impetus to the revolt came from mass demonstrations, known as "marches with God for family and freedom," first organized in São Paulo on March 19 and later in other cities, in response to a mass meeting in Rio de Janeiro called by Goulart on March 13, which marked his break with constitutional government.

The military leaders, including both those who had always wanted to bar Goulart from the presidency and some who had previously supported the preservation of normal constitutional processes, then joined forces with such anti-Goulart politicians as Governors Carlos Lacerda of Guanabara, Adhemar de Barros of São Paulo, and Magalhães Pinto of Minas Gerais.

April 1 was set for a revolt which began on March 31 in Juiz de Fora, an industrial city in Minas Gerais. Officers loyal to Goulart were imprisoned or fled. Short and sporadic resistance broke down, and on April 2 Congress declared the presidency vacant. As provided by the constitution, Congress President Ranieri Mazilli took over. On April 4 Goulart sought asylum in Uruguay.

The "high command of the revolution" suspended a number of constitutional rights and assumed the authority to deprive individuals of political rights for 10 years, under an "institutional act" (a decree giving the high command special powers and setting aside normal constitutional procedures). Under this decree the political rights of hundreds of Brazilians were sus-
pended, chief among them Goulart and former Presidents Juscelino Kubitschek and Quadros. Some sought asylum, some were imprisoned, and special military political investigations were initiated.

On April 9 Congress elected Marshal Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco to the presidency for nine months and in July his term of office was extended to January 1967.

The leaders declared that the revolution was directed against Communism, corruption, incompetent administration, and inflation and rising prices. On none of these issues, however, was there agreement on interpretation or on effective remedies among the revolutionary authorities.

Inflation continued, although at a somewhat slower pace. The dollar, officially quoted at 620 cruzeiros at the end of 1963 (unofficially 1,225), reached an official price of 1,850 at the end of December 1964 (with about the same price in the black market). The worst drought in 70 years added to the difficulties, especially in electrical energy. Foreign investors showed increased interest after March, but few concrete projects were registered.

Population was growing at a rate of 3.6 per cent a year, while total national income rose only 2 per cent in 1963 and probably less in 1964. Thus the standard of living, already extremely low for most of the population, was falling even further.

In accordance with Brazilian tradition, nothing even slightly pejorative to Jews or Judaism was said or done, even in the midst of upheaval. Some Jews were active in opposing Goulart. Others, including many intellectuals, were among his supporters or were active in leftist groups. There were some 70 Jewish officers in the army, and they took part in the events which led to the change of government. Thus, a certain number of Jews were involved in the purge. However, the word “Jew” was mentioned only in the case of the editor of a leftist Jewish paper in São Paulo, Nossa Voz (“Our Voice”). The paper itself ceased circulation. The Folkshaus (House of the People) in São Paulo, a center of progressive Jewish—or rather Yiddish—activities, was investigated; but when the Jewish Federation of São Paulo assumed responsibility, no further steps were taken.

**American Jewish Committee Delegation**

In August a delegation of the American Jewish Committee headed by its president Morris B. Abram visited Brazil, on the invitation of the Instituto Brasileiro Judáico de Cultura e Divulgação (Brazilian Jewish Institute of Culture and Information; AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 189). The delegation spent August 2 and 3 in Brasília, August 3 to 9 in Rio de Janeiro, and August 9 to 11 in São Paulo.

In Brasília they were received by President Castelo Branco. In reply to a statement by the delegation, President Branco declared: “... I gave special attention to the part in which the speaker condemned totalitarianism. I think we should all, on any occasion, manifest our revulsion, our condemnation to
any type of totalitarianism..." The delegation was also received by the Federal Supreme Court Presiding Justice Alvaro Moutinho Ribeiro da Costa, Senate President Auro de Moura Andrade, Chamber of Deputies President Paschoal Rainieri Mazzini, and Deputy Antonio Cunha Bueno.

The delegation made contact with and offered encouragement to the new Jewish community in Brasília. In Rio de Janeiro the delegation visited Jaime Cardinal de Barros Câmara, who declared that he agreed with the statement made in May by Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, condemning anti-semitism. They also met with United States Ambassador Lincoln Gordon and Israeli Minister Avigdor Shoham.

In São Paulo Archbishop Antonio de Siqueira received members of the delegation and, in answer to a memorandum handed to him, made a declaration similar to that of the Rio cardinal. At the same time other members of the delegation visited the São Paulo University faculty of philosophy, science, and letters and made a donation of books to the department of oriental languages.

In Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo the delegation met with authors and intellectual friends of the Portuguese-language quarterly *Comentário* and attended official receptions by the community leadership. In São Paulo the president of the Jewish Confederation of Brazil, Moysés Kauffmann, greeted the guests warmly. They also met Israeli Consul-General Leon Feffer and former Brazilian Foreign Minister Horácio Lafer.

Everywhere the delegation gave collective and individual interviews which were widely covered by newspapers, radio, and television.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Brazil's population reached 80 million at the end of 1964. Official figures for the Jewish population, estimated at 130,000, were not available. Most lived in the three largest cities: about 50,000 in Rio de Janeiro, 55,000 in São Paulo, and 12,000 in Porto Alegre. A private study in four small communities yielded the following near-exact figures: Belém (Pará) 1,200 (300 families), Curitiba (Paraná) 2,300 (250 families), Recife (Pernambuco) 1,200 (350 families), and Salvador (Bahia) 1,000 (225 families). The remaining 7,300 lived mainly in the South. Jews were represented in practically all branches of state and city administration and taught at the institutions of higher education. Thus a leader of the Belém do Pará Jewish community reported: "As an old community with several generations of native-born Brazilians, we take an active part in the general community—as vice-mayor, secretary of state, deputies, etc. All our people are highly respected in the most varied sectors. The intellectual level is high."

In the great cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro it was impossible to know the number of Jews in public life, especially in administrative and educational functions, but their participation was unquestionably substantial.
Immigration

Political and economic uncertainties diminished Brazil's attractiveness to newcomers. Immigration was practically nonexistent in spite of the government's unaltered liberal policy. Of 262 Jewish United Hias Service-aided immigrants to Latin America in 1964, 92 settled in Brazil, most of them in São Paulo.

As a result of the great decline in immigration, the American Joint Distribution Committee and UHS reduced their offices in São Paulo to skeleton staffs. The São Paulo community institutions assumed responsibility for the local services previously rendered by these organizations. In particular, the "open workshop" for elderly people, initiated by UHS, became the responsibility of the Liga Feminina Israelita do Brasil (Jewish Women's League of Brazil). UHS retained only its Rio de Janeiro office in full force to serve the whole of Latin America.

There were no figures available on total Jewish emigration from Brazil, but 408 Jews were known to have left for Israel up to August (compared with 380 in 1963).

Communal Activities

The Confederação Israelita do Brasil (Jewish Confederation of Brazil—formerly the Confederation of Representative Bodies of the Jewish Communities of Brazil—CERCIB) (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 185) consolidated its influence on Jewish life, although its financial basis remained very weak.

The confederation was one of 11 Brazilian organizations enumerated in a December law creating a national youth foundation. It was the first time that the confederation was officially recognized as a representative of Brazilian Jewry.

As a constituent member of the World Jewish Congress and a fraternal organization of the World Zionist Organization, the confederation was represented at WJC regional and international meetings in Buenos Aires, Geneva, and Jerusalem, and at WZO executive-committee meetings. It sent four delegates to the 26th World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in December.

In response to an appeal from the confederation, the Jewish community contributed to a campaign *Ouro para o bem do Brasil* ("gold for the good of Brazil") in April. Organizations gave token contributions and asked their members to give.

When Castelo Branco became president, the confederation sent him a message to which he replied with thanks. On the occasion of General Charles de Gaulle's visit to Brazil in October the confederation delivered a letter to the French embassy welcoming the hero of the French resistance and friend of Israel. Other prominent visitors to Brazil were Union of American Hebrew Congregations President Maurice Eisendrath, in February, and David Kessler, publisher of the London *Jewish Chronicle*, who visited São Paulo and Rio in March and gave interviews to the general press. Kessler was officially received by the Jewish Confederation in São Paulo, and by the local branch

In October a five-day convention of CENTRA (Asociación de Comunidades y Organizaciones Israelitas en Latinoamérica; AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 191) in São Paulo was attended by 40 delegates from seven Latin American countries. Professor Fritz Bamberger of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion was guest speaker.

Four South American countries were represented at the first general meeting of Latin American organizations affiliated to the International Council of Jewish Women, held in São Paulo in November.

CJMCAG allocated 15,747,500 cruzeiros to six organizations in São Paulo and one in Porto Alegre, including 4,597,500 cruzeiros in currency adjustments paid during 1964 for allocations in 1963 and in the first half of 1964.

In São Paulo a new building for the oldest Jewish welfare organization, EZRA, was opened in March. The country-club-like Hebraica maintained a 13-acre camp; it had 5,000 affiliated families and 1,500 individual members, altogether about 18,000, by far the largest membership of any Jewish organization in Brazil.

In Rio de Janeiro a four-story building of the Centro Cultural Esportivo e Recreativo (Sports and Recreation Cultural Center) Monte Sinai was opened in March. The old people’s hostel celebrated its silver jubilee in November.

In the newly-built capital, Brasília, a new community sprang into being with a social structure completely different from the traditional one; most of the approximately 150 Jews belonged to the professional class or were in government service.

In Belém (Pará) a home for the indigent was opened.

Community life as a whole was restrained by the events of March, although no legal restrictions were imposed. Nevertheless, internal activities remained unchanged; projects were continued and completed. Because of the political situation, the confederation recommended that the Zionist parties refrain from holding elections to the 26th Congress.

On April 9 the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was commemorated, although on a much smaller scale than previously. On the occasion of Israel Independence Day, all Jewish papers printed special editions, and three dailies in Rio and São Paulo published supplements on Israel. Various state and city legislative bodies heard speakers of all parties pay tribute to Israel.

Communal Relations

The newspapers and journals gave surprisingly broad coverage to Jewish life. The big newspapers of the major cities published series of articles on Israel, the Auschwitz trial, and Nazi war criminals, always from a sympathetic point of view. Illustrated articles describing Jewish rituals and religious customs were widely published. Around the High Holidays rabbis were interviewed and services photographed.
Rabbis Henrique Lemle and M. M. Masliah in Rio and Chief Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss in São Paulo were officially invited to the memorial services for the Brazilian war dead.

In March a street in São Paulo leading to the future Albert Einstein Jewish hospital was named Avenida Albert Einstein. In December a street in the coffee port of Santos was named Estado de Israel (State of Israel).

In June Rio de Janeiro followed São Paulo's example in founding a Conselho de Fraternidade Cristão-Judaica (Council for Christian-Jewish Brotherhood). The rabbinical representatives to the councils were Rabbis Lemle and Masliah in Rio, and Rabbi Menahem Diesendruck in São Paulo, succeeding Chief Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss. Both councils organized various meetings; the São Paulo council arranged a public celebration of Human Rights' Day.

At the suggestion of the American Jewish Committee the highest Catholic authorities of Brazil were approached in February and March on matters concerning the third session of the Ecumenical Council, including Cardinals Dom Carlos de Vasconcellos Motta, then Archbishop of São Paulo, and Augusto Álvaro da Silva, then Archbishop of Bahia.

In February the Brazilian minister of education and the rector of the University of Rio de Janeiro accepted invitations to join the national committee for the Third International Bible Contest. Local committees were set up in all state capitals.

**Human Rights**

In April Deputy Cunha Bueno introduced a bill to institute a "Day of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man"; the Chamber of Deputies approved this bill at the end of the year, which still needed the consent of the Senate. The São Paulo legislature approved a bill introduced by State Deputy Jacó Salvador Zveibil making "Human Rights' Day" obligatory in São Paulo state schools. A measure sponsored by City Councilor Hélio Dejtiar, making the same provision for municipal schools, was passed by the São Paulo city council in July. In Congress a Council for the Defense of the Rights of the Human Being was approved in March.

The Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura a Divulgação in Rio de Janeiro was instrumental in organizing a special session of the Brazilian Academy of Letters dedicated to Jewish culture in June. Among the speakers was the president of the Instituto, Joseph Eskenazi-Pernidji.

In January the Rio Instituto awarded the then Brazilian foreign minister, João Araujo Castro, its annual citation to a Brazilian for outstanding service on behalf of human rights.

**Religious Activities**

The number of congregations remained unchanged. In June the Centro Israelita Brasileiro Bne Herzl in Rio de Janeiro laid the foundation for Beth El synagogue, to seat 516 people.

In São Paulo the Congregação e Beneficiencia Israelita Sefaradi Paulista (known as the Alepinos, or Jews from Aleppo) opened a beautiful synagogue
in the residential district of Consolação, rua Bela Cintra, with Rabbi Diesendruck as its spiritual head. Diesendruck had formerly been with the Congregação Israelita Paulista, which, after his resignation, secured the services of Rabbi Michael Leipziger, a Brazilian-educated Jewish Theological Seminary graduate, working with Chief Rabbi Pinkuss.

Of the smaller communities, only Belo Horizonte had a rabbi. Rabbis Pinkuss and Lemle tried to maintain religious life in the other communities by occasional visits. In a new development, five communities in the north of Brazil named Rabbi Lemle their permanent religious adviser.

**Education**

In São Paulo, 3,714 pupils attended Jewish schools, including 1,760 in the Jardins de Infância. The school with the biggest attendance, Ginásio Renascença, was being enlarged to accommodate 2,350 pupils. Of the 14 schools in the city of São Paulo, three had college character. An Escola Normal Brasil-Israel was being organized in Rio de Janeiro.

It was estimated, on the basis of private studies, that one of every six Jewish young people of school age attended Jewish schools. In smaller communities the percentage was much higher: in Recife there were 270 students, or about 90 per cent of the total; in Curitiba 210, or about 80 per cent; in Salvador 70, about 98 per cent. These studies indicated, however, that attending Jewish schools did not interfere with the youths' participation in the life of the general community. As a matter of fact, a study of 1,736 children of school age, made by the United Zionist Organization of Brazil, showed that only 21 per cent of those born in Brazil spoke Yiddish.

The Conselho Educativo (Educational Council) of the Federation in São Paulo (a constituent organization of CERCIB) sought more active participation of the Zionist organization's school department in educational work and particularly in the activation and reconstruction of the Hebrew Seminary in São Paulo, which was under heavy criticism.

**Youth**

The general structure of Jewish youth organizations remained unchanged (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 191). There was hardly a Jewish community, no matter how small, without at least one or two youth groups. Some of them were only local; others were connected with the Conselho Juvenil Judaico do Brasil (Council of Jewish Youth in Brazil) and the Brazilian Jewish Youth Front, associated with CENTRA (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 191). Recife, with 1,200 Jews, had three youth groups with 170 members; Curitiba, with 2,300 Jews, had four youth groups with 405 members; Salvador, with 1,000 Jews, had one youth group with 60 members.

The week-long fourth national seminar of the Youth Council took place in July in Teresopolis, with 50 delegates from all over Brazil. The main topic was the study and preservation of the traditions of Brazilian Jews. Another seminar of the same council, with delegates from São Paulo, Rio, Porto Alegre, Curitiba and Belo Horizonte, was held in Rio in November. The Brazilian
Jewish Youth Front met in Linha Imperial, near Porto Alegre, in July. It had groups in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, and Pelotas, with a total of 1,390 members. It had largely solved its leadership problem by having Brazilian youth trained in Israel. Six such young people were already active. The Front’s importance was recognized by WZO, which invited it to send an observer to the 26th congress in Jerusalem.

Community Survey

Professors Gabriel Bolaffi and Heinrich Rattner of São Paulo University completed the first scientific survey on the attitude of Jewish students towards Jewish questions, under the sponsorship of the American Jewish Committee and with the assistance of the Committee’s Latin American director and its São Paulo representative. The study was based on a sampling of Jewish students at the University of São Paulo, the (Protestant) Mackenzie University, the (Catholic) Pontifical University, and several other university institutes in São Paulo. It indicated that 90 per cent of the Jewish university students in São Paulo were Brazilian born, but only 8 per cent had Brazilian-born fathers. Jewish students were less observant than their fathers: 50 per cent of them kept Yom Kippur, compared with 76 per cent of the fathers; only one per cent kept the Sabbath laws, compared with 7 per cent of the fathers; 27 per cent of the sons never went to synagogue, compared with 20 per cent of the fathers. Twelve per cent of both sons and fathers observed no Jewish religious tradition. Sixty-three per cent of the students had received some Jewish education, but only 29 per cent had attended Jewish schools. For 19 per cent Israel had no special significance, while 81 per cent felt some links with Israel. Thirty-four per cent declared themselves Zionists, 59 per cent non-Zionists, and 7 per cent had no definite opinion. All replies stressed the tremendous need for spiritual leadership in the religious and educational field, which could not be satisfied with the existing Brazilian Jewish personnel. The study was being published as a monograph in Portuguese and was to be translated into English.

The Instituto Brasileiro Judáico invited community leaders in São Paulo to participate in a round-table discussion of the implications of the survey for Jewish education and cultural initiatives, in June.

An unidentified Rio rabbi reported that of 262 marriages performed by him, 16 per cent were mixed. Two-thirds of these had a Sefardi partner and one-third had an Ashkenazi partner.

Cultural Activities

Under the auspices of the Jewish Confederation of Brazil, the Biblioteca Judáica Popular published Portuguese translations of several books: A História do Alef Bet ("The Story of the Aleph Beth") by David Diringer, Dois Caminhos; O Judaismo e o Advento do Cristianismo ("The Parting of the Ways; Judaism and the Rise of Christianity") by Abraham Cohen, and Uma Introdução ao Comentário Judáico da Bíblia ("An Introduction to Jewish Bible Commentary") by Bernard M. Casper.
The Fritz Pinkuss Foundation (of the Congregação Israelita Paulista in São Paulo; AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 190) continued its publication program with the issuance of the third and last volume of Cecil Roth's *Short History of the Jewish People* together with a special study of Jewish history in Brazil, *História dos Judeus no Brasil*, by Salomon Serebrenick of Rio de Janeiro.

The Instituto Brasileiro Judáico de Cultura e Divulgação published a translation of Kay Boyle's *Breaking the Silence* into Portuguese (*Relembrando a História*), which was widely distributed, especially among young people and through schools. Other books by Jewish authors included Jacob Guinsburg's *Motivos*, essays about literary subjects; Clarice Lispector's *A Legião Estrangeira* ("The Foreign Legion"), a book of short stories, and *A Paixão Segundo G. H."* ("Passion According to G. H."), a novel; Paulo Rónai’s *Homens contra Babel* ("Men Against Babel"), essays about artificial languages; Boris Schnaidman’s *Guerra em Surdina* ("Quiet War"), a fictional account of Brazilian participation in World War II, and Pedro Bloch’s *Criança diz cada uma* ("A Child Tells . . .").


In June Tsevi Caspi, cultural attaché at the Israeli consulate in São Paulo, became the first recipient of the degree of doctor in Hebrew letters from the department of Hebrew language and culture at São Paulo State University. (The department was headed by Chief Rabbi Pinkuss.) His thesis was on a comparative study of the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible.

The distribution of 100 copies of *Comentário* to secondary schools in São Paulo was financed through the initiative of State Deputy Zveibil, then director of the Federal Savings Bank in São Paulo.

The Conjunto Folclórico Chinani (a youth group for dance, song, and orchestra) was officially invited to take part in two folklore festivals, one in Curitiba in July, and one in Brasília in August; they won high praise.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was performed in August in the new and beautiful Hebraica theater as part of the Shakespeare Festival.

In June the Brazilian writer Herman Lima received the first Brazil-Israel prize, created by the Centro Cultural Brasil-Israel in São Paulo, for his book *História da Caricatura no Brasil* ("History of Caricature in Brazil").

In the second half of the year two new Portuguese-language periodicals started publication in São Paulo, at irregular intervals: *Folha da Coletividade* ("Community Page") and *Mandamentos do Judaísmo* ("The Commandments of Judaism"). The other Jewish papers continued circulation.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

Relations between Brazil and Israel remained markedly friendly. In March Ambassador Arieh Eshel left Brazil, Minister Avigdor Shoham acting as
The new ambassador, Joseph Nahmias, presented his credentials in Brasília on August 20. He made an official visit to São Paulo on October 6, and he purchased a plot for a new Israeli embassy building in Brasília. In December Brazil named Aloisio Regio Bittencourt ambassador to Israel.

In Rio de Janeiro the Brazil-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry had new elections in November, naming Ambassador Augusto Frederico Schmidt, now deceased, as its new president.

Some conventions and treaties concluded between the two states in previous years came into effect. Thus, the basic accord on technical cooperation was published in the Diário Oficial in November. In the same month a mixed company was founded between Shoevah-Water and Agricultural Development International, Ltd., of Tel-Aviv and CASOL—Comp. de Águas e Solos of Rio Grande do Norte. Israel gave a loan of $100,000 to buy drilling machinery.

In April 1964 an agreement was signed between SUDENE (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 190) and the Israeli Mission for Technical Cooperation in Brazil for drilling a pilot well for use of underground water and for technical assistance in the production of hybrid corn. In October Israel bought 10,000 tons of steel sheets. Altogether seven Israeli ships called at the port of Santos.

The convention for cultural exchange between Israel and Brazil, signed in April 1959, was ratified in March.

The cultural department of the Israeli embassy, which had charge of cultural activities in Latin America and was headed by Minister Shaul Levin, reorganized the Centros Culturais Brasil-Israel (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 191) in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, and Salvador (Bahia) and formed a Brazilian Federation of Centers. Other centers were being organized in Curitiba, Recife, and Belém. The first president of the federation was former Brazilian Foreign Minister Francisco Clementino de Santiago Dantas, who died in September; he was succeeded by Professor Flexa Ribeiro. A volume of Dantas's speeches was being prepared in Hebrew with a preface by Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir.

In São Paulo a House for Hebrew Culture and Language was opened in November.

There was a constant exchange of prominent people between Israel and Brazil. Professor Israel S. Drapkin, chairman of the department of criminology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, lectured in July in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Salvador (Bahia), and Belém (Pará). In São Paulo he was the official guest of the Instituto Latino-Americano de Criminologia (Latin-American Institute of Criminology), an affiliate of UNESCO. Other visitors from Israel included General Tsevi Tsur; Technion President Jacob Dori, in May; General Abraham Yaffe and Hayyim Yahil, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry in June, and Finance Minister Phinehas Sappir in August. Professor Michael Sola, director of the department of immunology of the Weizmann Institute, was a guest lecturer at the University of Brazil.
Israeli scientists took part in the first international congress for biochemistry and nuclear medicine in Rio de Janeiro in September.

Brazilian visitors to Israel included Professors Flexa Ribeiro and Carlos Chagas of Rio de Janeiro, Professor Elisio Paglioli of Porto Alegre, Minister of Foreign Affairs Arinos de Mello Franco, and Professor Ana Amélia Carneiro de Mendonça of Rio de Janeiro, who took part in the international conference on the role of women in the struggle for peace and development held in Israel in November.

Professor Oscar Niemeyer, the architect of Brasília, exhibited his “90 days in Israel” in Rio de Janeiro and in Brasília in November.

The Cultural Department of the Israel embassy sponsored an exposition of paintings by Moses Gat in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Salvador (Bahia); concerts by the Tel-Aviv Quartet in Porto Alegre, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Salvador (Bahia), Recife and Rio, and an exhibition of the works of the Israeli painter Zamuch Gilead in Rio in January.

Gilberto Freire's classic study in Brazilian sociology, Casa Grande e Senzala ("Masters and Slaves"), was translated into Hebrew. An anthology of Brazilian stories, edited by Paulo Rónai, was to be brought out in Hebrew by the Massadah publishing house of Tel-Aviv. Israel Music Publication of Tel-Aviv published Suite Cosmopolitana by Bernhard Hoff of São Paulo. The illustrated magazine on Israel, Israel—Jovem Terra Milenar ("Israel—Young Ancient Land"), edited by the Israel embassy, reached a circulation of 10,000 and seven editions (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 191).

Antisemitism

In the course of the general unrest during the early part of the year, there was some swastika-smearing in Rio, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte. A grave incident occurred on February 29 in São Paulo, when a bomb exploded in the Instituto Feminino de Educação e Cultura Beth Jacob (Beth Jacob Institute for Education and Culture for Women). No one was hurt, but there was considerable damage. The authorities did their utmost to find the criminals, and Public Security Secretary Alderio Balboso Lemos and State Governor Adhemar de Barros published a strongly-worded condemnation. The press unanimously denounced the outrages, as did representatives of all parties in the city council and the state legislature.

In São Paulo, Beth El synagogue was smeared before Yom Kippur. The police organized protective measures for all synagogues.

Arab propaganda against Israel increased considerably, but without antisemitic trend, as in other South American countries. Relations between Brazilian citizens of Jewish and Arab origin were not affected.

Personalia

Waldemar Levi Cardoso, a Sefardi, was the first Jew to become a four-star general of the Brazilian army. His brother, Armando Levi Cardoso, also a general, was active in Jewish community life.

The centenary of the birth of Alexandre Levy, first authentically Brazilian
composer, was celebrated on November 10, and the Academy of Letters held a special meeting in his honor in December. A high-fidelity record of his compositions was produced, and many concerts featured his works.

In January the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Globo*, with the largest circulation in Brazil, included two Jews in its list of ten personalities most deserving of the title of Honorary Citizens of Brazil: Regina Feigl, wife of the scientist Fritz Feigl, and Adolfo Bloch, editor of the *Life*-type illustrated weekly *Manchete* ("Headline").

In December the Premio Albert Einstein (Albert Einstein prize) was awarded by the Brazilian Academy of Science to Hans Zocker, a former assistant to Albert Einstein.

The Brazilian Institute of Architects gave prizes to Ruben Breitman, Rachel Esther Prochnik, Jacques Hazan, and Wit Olaf Prichnik.

Alexandre Wollner, a São Paulo landscape architect, won a competition for urbanization plans for Rio in November.

Isaac Karabchevsky, founder and conductor of the Renascença choir of Belo Horizonte, was given a gold medal by the São Paulo association of dramatic critics. Karabchevsky received high praise on tours of Europe and the United States.

Oscar Ornstein of Rio received the Saci prize of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* for his direction of *Minha querida Senhora* ("My Fair Lady").

In São Paulo Rabbi Diesendruck and Dr. Moisés Kahan, former president of the local federation, were named Citizens of São Paulo. Dr. Manoel T. Hidal, president of the Albert Einstein Hospital society, became a Distinguished Citizen.

Dr. Isaias Raw became full professor of biochemistry at São Paulo University.

Ruben Tabacof of Bahia University represented Brazil in international congresses as president of the Brazilian Society of Cardiology.

In Belém, J. J. Aben-Athar was named secretary of finance of the state of Para.

A bust of the late painter Lazar Segall, by the Jewish sculptress Ljuba Wolff, was unveiled on Russel beach in Rio de Janeiro in September.

Alfred Hirschberg was reelected vice-president of the World Council of Synagogues at its convention in Mexico in July.

In Rio Paul Rosenstein, urologist and former professor in Berlin, died at the age of 89 in September.
Mexico

An American historian once commented that most historical accounts of Mexico were legends with footnotes. Most accounts of Mexican Jewry have fallen into this category. Statistics and other data have often been unreliable, perpetuating earlier errors. Hence portions of the ensuing article are at variance with previous accounts.

A survey of the attitudes of the Mexico City Jewish community (Estudio Sociosicológico de los judíos mexicanos) was conducted during 1962 and 1963 by a committee of qualified Mexican Jews, with technical and financial cooperation furnished by the American Jewish Committee. The findings were still unpublished when this article was written.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jews (or rather crypto-Jews) were among the conquistadores in 1521, and Jews have lived in Mexico continuously since then. In the early days crypto-Jews were a substantial part of the Spanish population in Mexico.

Two Jews were burned at the stake in 1528 by order of the Dominican Fray Vicente de Santa Maria, who exercised inquisitorial powers. Of the many autos-da-fé during the colonial period (1521-1821), there was hardly one which did not have at least one Jewish victim. When Mexico attained its independence in 1821, and the secret cells of the Inquisition were opened, the last prisoner found was a Jew who had been incarcerated since 1795. However, there were decades during which the Mexican inquisitors did not seek them out, and Jews had the opportunity to play an important role in the cultural and commercial development of the country.

For three centuries, Mexican Jewry was mostly of Iberian origin. German Jews came in the second and third quarters of the 19th century. Austrians, Belgians, and French in the last two quarters; Turks, North Africans, Syrians and Lebanese from 1870 to World War I, and East European Jews, including Hungarians and Rumanians, after World War I.

JEWISH POPULATIONS

Mexico’s last official decennial census was held in 1960. The three religious categories listed for the census were Católico, Protestante, and Israelita.

Not only Jews registered under the Israelita category, but also members of several Protestant sects. One such Protestant sect, known as Casa de Dios, or Bet El, had about 4,000 members. This sect nominally adopted Judaism, but it was evangelical and looked to both Testaments for ethical and moral inspirations. Two other Protestant sects, both of which used the name Iglesia de
Dios (Church of God) and had branches in the United States as well as in Mexico, observed the Saturday Sabbath as well as other Mosaic laws, but they also used the New Testament and honored Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles. They called themselves Jews, without rabbinical sanction or conversion rites. They were neither descendants of Jews of the colonial period nor were they recognized as Jews by the Mexican Jewish communities. Their members registered as Israelitas because they contended that they were descendants of the biblical Jacob-Israel. The groups of so-called “Indian Jews,” popular tourist attractions, were formerly adherents of these Protestant sects. The “Indian Jews,” of whom there are fewer than 200, have never been converted to Judaism. They are mestizos—persons of mixed ancestry—as are the majority of Mexicans.

The Jews of European or Levantine origin also call themselves Israelitas, and the word is applied to many of their institutions. They do not use the synonymous word Judio, or any derivative. (Spanish dictionaries often include a pejorative definition of the word.)

Although the 1960 government census reported 100,750 Israelitas, this was no indication of the Jewish population. The Jewish communities had never undertaken a scientific demographic study. They used figures varying from 29,000 to 32,000, based on affiliations with organized Jewish bodies and philanthropic contributions to local and overseas campaigns. Calculations of the Israeli embassy in Mexico and the author’s personal observations during extended trips throughout the country indicated that an estimate of 45,000 was warranted. This included many who had married non-Jews and did not practice Judaism, but who nevertheless acknowledged their Jewish identity. The difference between the actual Jewish population and the figure of 100,750 was accounted for by Casa de Dios and the Iglesias de Dios and the 200 mestizos who called themselves Indian Jews.

Communal Structure

The three principal Jewish communities in 1964 were in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey, and there were smaller communities in Cuernavaca, Tijuana, and Veracruz. Small groups or individual Jews were to be found in practically every town on a principal highway, in the capitals of the 29 states of Mexico, and in other towns with populations not exclusively Indian.

Each Jewish community was divided into origin groups, and the affiliation of even the native-born was dependent upon the national origin of their ancestors. The major groups were the Ashkenazim, the Sephardim, and the Arab or Oriental Jews. The Ashkenazim comprised East Europeans (Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Rumanians), Hungarians, Austrians, and Germans. The Sephardim were immigrants, or their descendants, from Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, and North Africa. The Arab Jews were from Aleppo and from Damascus.

Nidhe Israel, the Ashkenazi kehillah, maintained a number of synagogues and two shtot-rabbonim (communal rabbis), supervised the Ashkenazi kosher
butchers, two mohalim, a cemetery, a hevrach kaddisha and undertaker, and all other persons and things required by an integral Orthodox community. It was currently erecting a building, Bet 'Am, to house its own offices and many other community organizations. In the 1963 annual elections for its executive committee, five different slates were presented. Nidhe Israel had more representatives on the Comité Central Israelita de México (Jewish Central Committee) than any other group, because the Ashkenazim were believed to comprise the largest section of the Jewish population.

The Sephardi kehillah, Unión Sefaradi, had one rabbi and cantor. The Arab Jews had their own community organization, and their charitable work was done through the Alianza Monte Sinai Beneficencia, the central organization of Jews from Damascus, and Sedaka Umarpe, founded in 1912 and 1909 respectively. Each had its own rabbi.

The various Jewish communities were in the hands of the 20th-century immigrants. Descendants of these Jews, who had been living in Mexico for almost a century or longer, were nearly all converts to Catholicism or Protestantism, or agnostics, or simply preferred not to be identified with the existent groups. Intermarriage was almost universal among the old Mexican Jewish families, although most of the offspring were aware of their Jewish ancestry.

Other Organizations

There were no national Jewish institutions. Each community was autonomous, and there was no bond between them except that of friendship. Discussion of mutual problems was informal. Each community had its own organizations more or less patterned after those of Mexico City, described below.

The Comité Central Israelita was equivalent to a Jewish community council, acting as spokesman for the Jewish community vis-à-vis the government and the non-Jewish community. It included representatives of practically all organized institutions, religious and secular; institutions affiliated with parent organizations were represented through the latter. In 1963 it elected its first new president in ten years.

The largest organization in Mexico City was the Zionist Federation, with which the Sephardim were not affiliated because meeting notices and much of the discussion were in Yiddish. The federation included General Zionists, Labor Zionists, Revisionists, Pioneer Women, and Mizrahi. There was also a WIZO group, which conducted Hebrew classes and in 1962 had its first graduating class. The most active of several Zionist youth groups affiliated with the adult groups was Bene Akiva, founded in 1947. It had its own synagogues, a director (Madrikh) from Israel, study groups, a two-week camp session in the country, and a training center.

B'nai B'rrith had an English-speaking lodge which surrendered its charter in 1964 for failure to maintain a minimum membership of 25 and failure to pay dues to the grand lodge. A new Spanish-speaking lodge was chartered in October 1964. The original Spanish-speaking lodge, in existence for thirty
years, averaged about 130 members and operated as a ritualistic society with occasional open meetings. Its principal activity was to maintain representation on the Comité Central Israelita with which it shared the operation of a monthly publication, *La Tribuna Israelita*. This was not a house organ and reflected no activity of the lodge or of B’nai B’rith anywhere.

The Consejo Mexicano de Mujeres Israelitas (Mexican Council of Jewish Women) worked for the welfare of the Mexican general community. Although represented on the Central Committee, it was autonomous. It gave eight scholarships for poor Mexican Christians at the Mexican National University in 1963 and again in 1964. It maintained a room with 12 beds at the Red Cross, and 40 of its members worked in the campaign to eradicate polio, under the aegis of the ministry of health. These women formed a group known as Cavi—Comité Auxiliar Voluntarias Israelitas.

The Comité Central was affiliated with the World Jewish Congress.

The Centro Deportivo Israelita (Jewish Sport Center), affiliated with JWB in the United States, was one of the largest of its kind in the world. It was similar to a YMHA, and required no community financial aid. Non-kosher food was served in its restaurants, but kosher banquet facilities were also available. The center had a hall with a seating capacity of over 1,500, a large library, a theater, cinema, and meeting rooms, besides a gymnasium, swimming pool, and related facilities. Membership was open to all and dues were on a sliding scale determined by financial ability. The Sport Center had a representative on the Comité Central but did not pay any dues to that body.

Jewish doctors and dentists and Yiddish journalists had their own professional organizations. There were several philanthropic organizations, the most important of which, OSE, served all sectors of the community. It was administered by the Jewish doctors and dentists, who gave their services without charge.

**Schools**

There were six secular private Jewish schools and one yeshivah, of the East European traditional kind. (Two schools were called *yeshivot* but were not of the traditional type.) Three schools were sponsored by the Sephardim and Arabs, four by the Ashkenazim, including Tarbut, founded by the Zionists, and the Or Israel yeshivah. All of the Ashkenazi schools except Tarbut taught both Hebrew and Yiddish. Tarbut and the Sephardi and Arab schools taught only Hebrew. The secular programs of all schools were under the jurisdiction of the Mexican ministry of education, which assigned to the school teachers who were not necessarily Jewish.

All the secular schools had some Mexican Christian students, assigned by the ministry of education on a scholarship basis or because they lived nearer to these schools than to a public school.

Or Israel and Yeshiva Yavne included primary and secondary classes. They were under the supervision of Rabbi D. S. Rafalin, the original *shhot rov*, but not the first rabbi in Mexico. It received a subvention from Nidhe Israel, and the other Ashkenazi schools received some financial support from the *kehilla*. 
Sedekah Umarpe conducted a Talmudical Academy for advanced students and adults.

The oldest school was the Colegio Israelita, founded in 1924, with classes from nursery through senior high school. Like public-high-school graduates, its graduates were eligible for the National University. Five per cent of its enrolment was non-Jewish and tuition-free. When the Colegio Israelita introduced Hebrew into its curriculum in the 1940s, the Bundists founded the Nuevo Colegio Israelita. The Bundists soon lost influence in their own schools, however, since the younger parents did not share the anti-Zionism of their elders. In 1963-64 there was a change in the directorship of the school and the school board.

Although the Ashkenazi schools jointly supported a teachers' seminary, there was a dearth of teachers. Few men were attracted to the profession in the first place, and many young women left teaching after marriage. Most Hebrew teachers were imported from Israel and stayed two to four years.

The 1962-1963 survey of the Mexican Jews confirmed the suspicion held by many that only about 65 per cent of Jewish children attended the Jewish schools at any one time, rather than 85 per cent, as had been estimated by Jewish community leaders. Even this figure was perhaps high, since the survey sample was selected from the membership lists of synagogues and the Centro Deportivo Israelita. In other words, no account was taken of Jews for whom there was no positive Jewish identification. The records of individual schools showed Jewish secundaria (junior-high schools) enrolment to be 50 per cent lower than Jewish elementary-school enrolment. The indication was that most of the dropouts transferred to non-Jewish private schools.

Religion

Nidhe Israel maintained a chain of synagogues in various parts of Mexico City. The Polanco branch was building a new edifice. Two of the branches employed their own rabbis, with the aid of a small subvention from Nidhe Israel. All services were Orthodox.

Until 1963 the Arab communities had no branches, but then they began to build a branch in the Polanco area. The Germans had a weekly Friday-night service on the lower floor of the Avenida Yucatán synagogue and rented quarters for the High Holy Days. In 1963 and 1964 they rented space at the Rabbi Judah Halevi Temple (the Sephardi synagogue). The Sephardim had a unique form of liberal service.

There were two Conservative synagogues. The older, Beth Israel community center, had approximately 90 affiliated families and much of its service was in English. It had been without a Conservative rabbi since 1962, and in 1964 was led by a graduate of the Hebrew Union College (Reform). The congregation held no Saturday-morning services except for a rare bar mitzvah, and conducted a three-hour weekly Talmud Torah. The second Conservative synagogue, founded in 1960, acquired land for its own building in 1964 and had about 300 affiliated families. Daily services were held throughout the year, but a four-hour weekly Talmud Torah was disintegrating. Most of its
members were native-born Mexican Jews who sought a change from Orthodoxy.

There were several European-trained rabbis in Mexico who acted as religious functionaries for the Bet Din and kashrut supervision. A few taught in Jewish schools.

**Cultural Activities**

There were five Jewish periodicals—one monthly, and the others weekly, semi-weekly, or thrice-weekly. The weekly *Prensa Israelita* was in Spanish, two others divided their space between Spanish and Yiddish, and the rest were entirely in Yiddish. *Horizonte*, a monthly magazine in Spanish devoted to worldwide Jewish news, made its appearance in 1964. The monthly *Tribuna Israelita* was in Spanish and had a circulation of about 2,300, mailed to the Latin American embassies and other important agencies and people. It contained mainly translations of material from American and Israeli publications and included digests of speeches by prominent Mexican non-Jews.

The last Jewish Book Week was in 1960. The Centro Deportivo Israelita held many art exhibits of various kinds each year, at which non-Jews as well as Jews exhibited.

Rabbi Jacob Avigdor, one of the shtot-rabbonim, gave a series of lectures in Yiddish each year on various secular subjects. There was a community-sponsored choral group of excellent caliber. Nidhe Israel sponsored a series of concerts in 1964 which featured American cantors and Metropolitan Opera stars. The Mexico-Israel Cultural Institute sponsored several lectures and Israeli song and dance recitals. Most organizations had programs for their own members, usually in Yiddish. This made Mexico a magnet for Yiddish journalists from abroad.

In April a *Guide to Jewish References in the Mexican Colonial Era, 1521-1821*, by Seymour B. Liebman was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in Philadelphia.

In 1963 the Kessel award for literature, administered by the Central Committee's cultural committee, went to Masha Greenbaum for her collection of reminiscences of Jewish Lithuania during the war. The author was an English citizen living in Mexico and writing in Spanish and won one of the rare awards to a Mexican resident. Previous recipients had almost all been American and Israeli authors of Yiddish works, but in recent years there had been an increase of books in Spanish written by Jews.

**Civic and Political Status**

There was no legal or governmental discrimination against Jews, but during the regime of President Adolfo López Mateos, 1958-64, there were only two known Jews who had governmental posts. One of them was promoted to a higher position under the new president, Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. For the most part, Mexican Jews were not active in politics.

There were only a few Jewish university professors, but this was the result of Jewish occupational choice rather than of any bias against the employment
of Jews. These few, as well as those in governmental employ, took no part in Jewish communal affairs. Mexican Jews tended to isolate themselves within their own ethnic sphere both socially and professionally, although good relations existed in business and professional activities. Staff positions in hospitals were open to any Jewish doctors seeking them. It was not because of discrimination that Jews did not achieve more public prominence.

There were no ghettos. Most Jews lived in three areas in Mexico City, but Jews were to be found in every part of the city except the slums. In general, Jews had not integrated themselves into the general stream of Mexican life. For this they were not entirely responsible. Assimilation to the Mexican Christian community presented certain difficulties which were not easily overcome. The *campesino* of the countryside, who had never seen a Jew, thought of Jews as possessing horns and a tail. He was not antisemitic in any real sense, even though on leaving church on Good Friday he placed sparklers in a figure of Judas, fired them and shouted, "Death to Judas" and "Death to the Jews," without distinguishing between the two.

The urban Mexican who had no close business or personal relationships with Jews regarded them as foreigners, non-Mexicans. This was illustrated by an event in the fall of 1964. The Jewish community had arranged a dinner in honor of President López. On the morning of the affair (the first of its kind in modern Mexican history) the new Israeli ambassador to Mexico, Shimshon Arad, presented his credentials. After the usual exchange of cordialities, the president invited Ambassador Arad to be present at the affair "which your people are tendering to me." Like most Mexicans, he did not distinguish between Israelis (citizens of Israel) and *Israelitas* (Jews).

Even the Jews seemed to regard themselves as foreigners. In the summer of 1962 the Jewish community of Guadalajara presented a school building to the ministry of education. This was in keeping with the custom of most resident foreign communities whose members were not citizens of Mexico. In 1958 the Mexico City Jewish community had made a similar gift.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

The community, except for the Bundists who were comparatively few in number but quite vocal, was Israel- and Zionist-minded. All campaigns received some popular support. A new and successful campaign for the Tel-Aviv University was inaugurated in 1964 when the presidency of the university was assumed by George Wise, who had been a resident of Mexico for more than 25 years. The outstanding event of the year was the visit of Deputy Prime Minister Abba Eban, one of whose numerous addresses was made in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies. The death of Adolfo Fastlicht in August 1964 was a serious loss to Zionism and Israel. He had been Israel's first honorary consul (really acting consul) from 1949 to 1954 and was an important figure in community life in Mexico.

The city of Puebla held a week-long festival in honor of Israel in July 1964. Among the many Mexican Christians prominent in political and cultural life who visited Israel in 1964 were former President Miguel Alemán and the
renowned artist Rufino Tamayo. In 1964, too, a group of young Mexican farmers went to Israel for an extended stay in order to study farming, irrigation, and *kibbutz* and *moshav* life. Because the climate and soil of Mexico and Israel shared many common characteristics, the experience of the *kibbutzim* was relevant for the Mexican *ejidos*. Several books and articles on Israel were published in 1963 by prominent journalists and political figures who had visited Israel.

*Antisemitism and Intergroup Relations*

There was a small nucleus of antisemites among the same Mexicans who were generally anti-foreign in their attitudes. Most of them were third- or fourth-rate cultural pretenders who could be readily influenced by any "anti" group. Some of them were in the habit of making disparaging remarks to Jewish students on the National University campus.

In 1963 and 1964, a number of antisemitic books and monographs in Spanish were published. These were mainly translations, including Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the *Protocol of the Elders of Zion*. *Derrota Mundial* ("World Defeat") by Salvador Borrega, first published in 1953, went into 16 printings. These books could be purchased in any bookstore and were prominently displayed in or near slum areas. It was believed that the Arab League and some of the Arab embassies subsidized the publication of this hate literature.

Although generally friendly, the newspapers were inclined to add the word *judío* (Jew) to names in the news. When a man in jail for murder was involved in a prison scandal, the newspaper accounts almost invariably referred to Pedro Kleiman, *el judío*. The word was also used when the daughter of a prominent Jewish woman won a beauty contest at the National University. The girl was described as *la hija de la judía*. . . .

In January 1964 the editor of *Excelsior*, an important daily newspaper, held his annual house party in honor of the Epiphany. For the first time, a rabbi attended. The Sephardi Rabbi Gambach cut one of the traditional cakes called *rosca de los reyes* (cake of the kings). Archbishop Miguel Dario Miranda y Gomez of Mexico City, a great Catholic liberal, and a Protestant minister cut the other two. The resultant publicity brought upon the rabbi the wrath of many Ashkenazim, who felt that he should not have participated in the ceremony. However, he was supported by B'nai B'rith and subsequently by a prominent staff member of the World Jewish Congress on a visit to Mexico.

Monterrey and Guadalajara each had its own rabbi. Monterrey, the better organized of the two, had the Ha-tikvah community center and a private school, extending from kindergarten through *secundaria*. In Guadalajara, Ashkenazim and Sephardim shared the same building for prayer and their children attended the same private Jewish school.
Summary of the Findings of the 1962-63 Study of Attitudes of Mexican Jews

This is not a complete digest of the 1962-63 survey. The findings of the survey were delivered to some of the leading members of the Central Committee in 1964 but received no recognition or even discussion. They showed that 52 per cent of working males were in business and 21 per cent in professions—medicine, dentistry, engineering, and architecture. Most were self-employed, and 58 per cent of those employed by others worked for Jewish-owned firms.

Sixty per cent were affiliated with a synagogue, with the highest percentage belonging to the Sephardi synagogue. Almost 75 per cent of the community belonged to the Jewish Sport Center, and 43 per cent to a Zionist organization. While 83 per cent believed that a Jew must marry within the Jewish faith, only 76 per cent believed that to be a Jew one must believe in God; 49 per cent believed that a Jew must belong to a synagogue, and 28 per cent that a Jew must observe dietary laws. But 29 per cent never attended Rosh Ha-shanah services, 40 per cent had homes where Sabbath candles were never lit and 38 per cent never ate kosher food (23 per cent always did, and 39 per cent sometimes). Fourteen per cent recited prayers daily, 19 per cent sometimes, and 67 per cent never. Provision of a Jewish education (not defined) was regarded by 84 per cent as very important and by 14 per cent as "somewhat important." The publication of Yiddish books was considered "very important" by 21 per cent, "somewhat important" by 33 per cent, and "not at all important" by 46 per cent.

In response to the question, "Which organization does the most for Mexico City Jewry?" 15 per cent selected the Central Committee, 2 per cent B’nai B’rith, 18 per cent Nidhe Israel, 16 per cent the Jewish Sport Club and 5 per cent the Zionist organizations; 29 per cent had no opinion.

With respect to antisemitism, 35 per cent said that they themselves had experienced it but 65 per cent said that they had not. An interesting question was, "Are you ever embarrassed by the activities or behavior of other Jews?" It brought an affirmative answer from 68 per cent, a negative answer from 27 per cent; 5 per cent said that they did not know. Poor taste or behavior caused embarrassment to 57 per cent, dishonesty to 17 per cent, "assimilated" Jews to 5 per cent, "racists" to 9 per cent, and Yiddish to one per cent.

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