Eastern Europe

Soviet Union

The Soviet authorities continued to maintain strict control, censorship, and rigid application of the party line to all areas of Soviet life. The system was obviously oppressive; repression without a legal framework was still the law; camps continued to exist, as did mental clinics for dissidents, but swift and secret execution of the opposition as practiced under Stalin, now was a thing of the past. According to available sources, there existed in the Soviet Union some 900 camps and special institutions, including prisons, in which about one million persons were being held. Among them were an estimated 10,000 political prisoners (according to Peter Reddaway, New York Times, January 13, 1974). After more than half a century, the revolutionary regime had in fact reverted to the system of czarist Russia. Aside from internal repression, the Kremlin has introduced exile abroad as an effective measure against dissidence. Vladimir Maksimov, Andrei Siniavskii, Andrei Volkonskii, and Michael Kalik joined many others who had been exiled earlier (see AJYB, 1972 and 1973) [Vol. 73 and 74].

Dissidence

While the forced departure of many of the leading personalities of the dissident movement weakened its activities, the Soviet authorities have not been able to liquidate the opposition, particularly among the intelligentsia, the youth, and certain religious circles. Visibly increased pressure by the police, however, has created some confusion among the opposition and forced recantations of "unjust attitudes toward our
social and state systems” by the well-known dissidents Piotr Iakir and Viktor Krasin. These two men, who were jailed for their activities, received relatively mild sentences. The Ukrainian writer Ivan Dziuba, sentenced in 1972 to ten years’ imprisonment, renounced his attacks on Great Russian influence in the Ukraine, and was pardoned. Andrei Amalrik, however, a dissident historian who had completed a three-year prison term, was sentenced to another three-year term. The Ukrainian cyberneticist Leonid Pliush was still in prison, and Piotr Grigorenko, a former general who had intervened on behalf of the rights of the oppressed Tatars, was in a mental clinic. Andrei Sakharov (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 473) and the geophysicist Grigorii Podiapolskii who had joined the Moscow Human Rights Committee in 1972 continued to be active. Sakharov even offered to put up bail for Iurii Shikhanovich, a member of the Committee who had been arrested, but thus far the authorities have not responded to the offer. In an interview televised in Sweden, Sakharov was openly critical of the situation in the Soviet Union. There have been repeated reports that he will be forced to go abroad. He was publicly criticized for advocating, in a celebrated series of articles, peaceful coexistence and East-West convergence. It should be noted that Sakharov’s ideas of East-West convergence were never publicly discussed in the Soviet Union.

Another issue of the underground Chronicle of Current Events (Krhonika Tekushchikh Sobytii) appeared and was distributed. How long this resistance on the part of the Chronicle will continue is questionable, especially in view of the arrests of Iakir and Krasin.

The authorities also intensified suppression of religious groups which they considered to be dangerous for the stability of the regime. Thus, a Buddhist scholar was sentenced to a prison term in Siberia for conducting unauthorized religious activities, and a group of Baptists in Belorussia were jailed for providing religious education for children. Anatolii Krasnov-Levitin, the well-known Greek Orthodox writer, was released from prison in June 1973.

According to reports of recent Russian émigrés there were nine groupings within the Soviet dissident movement: (1) neo-Communists or “democratic” Communists, who would like to see a return to the “real” Leninist tradition; (2) constitutionalists, who demand safeguarding of the rights guaranteed by the Soviet constitution; (3) Slavophiles, who think in terms of the 19th century Slavophile movement, some of whom are openly antisemitic; (4) liberals (in the European sense of the term), who oppose collectivization of the peasant economy; (5) Christian Socialists, more or less in the tradition of the Russian Christian existentialist thinker Berdiaev; (6) Christian
democrats; (7) defenders of human rights; (8) followers of the old social-democratic tradition; (9) various national movements: Ukrainian, Tatar, Lithuanian, Jewish. Some dissidents might properly be classified as belonging simultaneously to more than one of these groups, or accepting ideas expounded by various groups.

Party Apparatus

A significant shake-up of the ruling Politburo occurred in April 1973. Piotr Shelest, former boss of the Ukrainian party, and Genadii Voronov, former premier of Belorussia, who apparently advocated a hard-line policy, were removed from the Politburo (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 480). Both men, said to be conservatives, strongly opposed softening the policy on East-West relations. The 16-member top policy organization included the newly-elected Marshal Andrei Grechko, head of the armed forces; Iurii Andropov, head of KGB (secret police); and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Leonid I. Brezhnev, Aleksei N. Kosygin, and Nikolai Podgorny remained as the party’s general secretary, prime minister, and chairman of the Supreme Soviet, respectively. In addition to the 16 full members, seven nonvoting candidate members were elected to the Politburo. To the extent one can judge from the composition of the new Politburo, the Brezhnev line of improved relations with the West, particularly with the United States, was fully approved by the top leadership. Nevertheless, the inclusion in the new top organization of the heads of the armed forces and secret police may be significant, for they represent the two all-powerful forces of internal and external defense. Possibly, the presence of Grechko was deemed of special importance in the present situation involving negotiations on arms limitation. The chiefs of the Kazakh, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Uzbek parties, too, were members of the Politburo, in accordance with now established tradition, there was no Jew among the leadership, though the Politburo, for the first time in many years, has been broadened and new men have come to the top of the Soviet power ladder.

Following the decision of the 24th Party Congress held in April, 1971, the party organization began the process of preparation for the replacement of the party cards of the entire membership of some 14,500,000 members of the party. It is of interest that only some 40 per cent of the membership were workers; 15 per cent were members of the Kolkhoz, and the remaining 45 per cent were white-collar workers, intellectuals, and administrators.
State Structure, Economic Planning, and Nationalities

After much reflection, the Kremlin bosses began a thorough reorganization of the state structure. While the 15 constituent republics remain formally untouched, a seven-region economic system was superimposed. Each region, made up of various parts of the separate republics, was established as a dominant economic and management unit. A new 15-year over-all plan was being drafted to outline the needed investment in each area, as well as the interdependence of various industrial and agricultural regions without regard to whether they belonged to different national republics.

According to Brezhnev, the plan would take into consideration the over-all interests of the Soviet Union, thus bringing advantages to all areas of the country. It was foreseen that there would be three economic regions—the north-central, southern and Volga-Urals—in the predominantly European part, and four—Siberia, the Far East, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia—in the predominantly Asian part. The north-central region would combine the Baltic republics and Belorussia with the Leningrad and Moscow areas of the RSFSR, this clearly without regard for the national sensibilities of the Lithuanians, Latvians, and other nationalities involved in the epoch-making reform. Plans have been prepared to consolidate existing agricultural units on a national scale, eliminating small collectives and creating larger and, hopefully, more efficient farms. In February 1973, Soviet Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Matskevich was relieved of his post.

Industrialization and expansion of educational facilities have made great inroads into what was formerly the preserve of the national republics, and the process of russification was continuing. Although there were local schools of higher learning in practically all regions, Russian was predominant as the language of instruction, for example at the University of Kazan in the capital of the Tatar Autonomous Republic. In some areas, particularly in the Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, and Armenia, national feeling was growing, and there was constant resistance to forced russification.

The case of the Crimean Tatars, who had been dispossessed and deported from their native land by Stalin, remained unresolved notwithstanding demands for repatriation and compensation for the wrong inflicted on them. Crimea was now part of the Ukraine, where there was little sympathy for the Tatars. It was obvious that Great Russian nationalism was spreading over the USSR. In this connection the dismissal of Aleksandr Iakovlev as acting department head of the party’s Central Committee was indeed important. It was reported that Iakovlev lost his post as a result of his critical attitude toward
overemphasis on the Russian past and the Russkost in some recent writings. It is of interest that nationalist Russian feelings, a kind of "Slavophile" trend, existed also among some dissidents.

Foreign Affairs

The election of Foreign Minister Gromyko to the Politburo was an important indication of the significance the Soviet rulers attached to foreign policy. Many Soviet diplomats have also been advanced to important positions in the state and party machinery. Thus former ambassador to France P. Abrosimov was appointed head of a department of the Central Committee of the party; V. Kortunov was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the post of assistant to the chairman of the Supreme Soviet; and Gromyko himself now had some ten top assistant ministers in his own department. It was obvious that the Soviet Union was preparing for an offensive on the foreign relations front.

The negotiations with the West, the situation in the Middle East, and the China problem required not only special attention, but also a corps of special advisers at the top. The Brezhnev policy of reconciliation with the West was still the official Moscow line, despite the difficulties encountered in its practical application in many areas where the Kremlin leaders did not wish to make the adjustments required by the "new spirit" of understanding with the West. Significantly, Andrei Sakharov warned the West against dealing with the Soviets. He openly supported Senator Jackson's amendment to pending trade legislation involving the granting of most-favored status to the Soviet Union. He pointed out that increased trade would help the Soviet Union to rid itself of many economic ills and would increase Soviet potential and strength. He also advocated the emigration of all desiring to leave the USSR, including Jews, Tatars, and others (p. 225). An opposing point of view was expressed by another Soviet dissident, the historian Roy Medvedev.

Although pursuing a policy of détente, the Soviet Union clearly rebuffed Western demands to ease East-West relations by permitting free cultural exchanges. Pravda of January 5, 1973, bluntly indicated that the USSR would not tolerate the "importation" of ideas from the West, that is, unless they were acceptable to Moscow. In the course of 1973 the Kremlin leaders intensified the ideological war against the West, "United States intelligence operations," and so on. Moscow took special pains to denounce Western support of Soviet dissidents, including "agents of world Zionism." The Soviet stand against
“interference” from the West received unanimous support at an unpublicized meeting of nine Communist parties held in Moscow in December 1973.

The Kremlin leaders were disturbed by the attitude of neighboring China, and in August, 1973, stated that Moscow had made no progress in its relations with that country. Moscow did not wish to start an armed conflict with Peking; it was aware that China’s ballistic arsenal was increasing and that its atomic power already represented a great potential danger to Moscow. The Soviet Union reportedly maintained 45 divisions on the 4,000-mile Sino-Russian border, including over 1,000 military planes. On the other side of the border, China increased from 32 to 45 the number of its divisions facing the Russians. The Soviet government eliminated all Chinese names of towns in Far Eastern Siberia in an apparent move to weaken Chinese claims to border areas. At the same time, through the friendship treaty with India, the Soviet Union was arranging for bases for the Soviet navy, which, in case of need, could then threaten the substantial Chinese coast. Moscow had also made felt its active interest in the Middle East, where it continued to support the most reactionary Arab régimes in their fight against the “Zionist aggressors.” In May 1973, Brezhnev visited Bonn and signed a ten-year agreement for the development of economic and technical cooperation between the two countries.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

There was no precise information on the Jewish population of the Soviet Union. The 1970 census figures should be considered suspect, particularly in view of the opportunity given Jews to choose their national category. However, a hidden Jew, i.e., one who registered himself as a Russian or Ukrainian, remained a Jew and should be counted as one. The question of who is a Jew in the Soviet Union will have to be faced one day, but for the time being it would seem more realistic to continue to estimate the Soviet Jewish population on the basis of the 1959 census. Allowing for differences in natural increase as between the urban and peasant populations (the Jewish birthrate was doubtless lower than the Russian), and taking into account the structure of the Jewish family, it was estimated that the number of Jews rose by about 9 per 1,000, or from 2,692,000 in 1972 to some 2,715,000 in 1973. About 35,000 Jews left the USSR in 1973, bringing the present estimated Jewish population to about 2,680,000. This is of course a provisional figure that will have to be revised if and when a more precise one becomes available.
It is of interest that *Sovetish Heymland* (No. 3, 1974, p. 136) quoted, without comment, the figure of 2,648,000 given in the *American Jewish Year Book* for 1972; it had also published the *Year Book* figure for 1971. While this does not mean that the *Year Book* figures were more precise, it is safe to say, in view of the roundabout ways of Soviet writers, that Soviet editors had some doubts about the accuracy of the 1970 census. There is no more need to accept the 1970 Soviet census figures, which to a large degree represent a change of national registration in the Slavic RSFSR and the Ukraine, than there is to accept other Soviet statistical data, which are selective and often politically oriented.

**Communal and Religious Life**

Jewish communal and religious life continued to deteriorate (*AJYB*, 1973 [Vol. 74], pp. 482–84). There were no Jewish schools, religious or secular, no preparation for *bar mitzvot*, and very few *mohalim*. The number of religious marriages were steadily declining. Although Rabbi Iakov Fishman had made some plans for the future, the *yeshivah* in the Moscow synagogue was inactive and there was no rabbinical training program. It was reported that Khaim Levitas of Moscow, aged 23, and Adolf Shaevitch of Birobidzhan, aged 36, went to Budapest in August for training and ordination at the Rabbinical Seminary (Neolog-Conservative), the only remaining institution of its kind in Eastern Europe.

Rabbi Fishman continued to be spiritual head of the Jewish congregation in Moscow; and Efraim Kaplun its chairman. With the death, at the age of 95, of Rabbi Khaim Lubanov on August 24, the Leningrad synagogue, of which Moisei Litunskii was chairman, was left without a rabbi. The situation was similar elsewhere; even the Kiev and Odessa congregations no longer had rabbinical supervision. There was a lack of prayershawls, *phylacteries*, prayerbooks, Torah scrolls, and other religious objects. The precise number of synagogues in Russia was not known. Official sources said there were 97 synagogues and *shtiblakh* in Soviet Russia in 1965, which was obviously no longer valid, especially since a sizable number of religious Jews had emigrated to Israel.

The Russian Orthodox Church has been a member of the World Council of Churches since 1961 and has had wide contacts with Christian churches in practically every country. The Armenian Church also was in contact with its sister churches abroad, and the Moslems sent pilgrims to their holy places in Mecca and Jerusalem. Clearly the Soviet authorities granted religious Jews no such advantages. While
closer contacts have been established between rabbinical groups in the West and the Jewish religious community in the Soviet Union, this has had little influence on the status of Soviet Jewish religious organization. A Jewish pilgrimage to the Holy Land was out of the question, and official contact with the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem was barred. There was still no central coordinating Jewish religious body in the Soviet Union, although the other religious denominations had such organizations. Thus Aron Vergelis, editor of Sovetish Heymland, was the only de facto official spokesman for the Jews of the Soviet Union.

Despite the strongly negative official attitude, attachment to Jewish religious tradition survived not only among the older generations but also among the younger, with religious feelings often expressed together with an undefined awareness of Jewish national identification. For many years these feelings have been expressed in open demonstration on the occasion of such festivals as Passover and Simhat Torah. Thousands of Jews, mostly young men and women, assembled around the synagogues of Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities, dancing and singing traditional Jewish songs and new songs from Israel. Participating in this expression of Jewish identification and solidarity were not only Jewish activists, who intended to leave for Israel, but many others, including old retired professionals who, for many reasons, could not accept the more radical protest demonstrations and similar activities of the younger generation.

There was no interference with the preparation of matzot in the large cities; but the situation was more difficult in the provinces, where local authorities were not always helpful in solving technical problems connected with matzot production. The Jewish community in Moscow was allotted 200,000 pounds of flour, the Leningrad community 100,000 pounds. Cantors Iakov Gramer and Solomon Kleinman conducted the Passover services at the Moscow synagogue. With the permission of the authorities, a kosher butcher shop was opened on the premises of the Moscow synagogue.

Antisemitism and Discrimination

Despite official denials, antisemitism has become an organic part of Soviet society, at both the bottom and top of the social ladder, and was manifested in some of the respectable underground publications of Samizdat, like Veche. Mistrust of the "alien" Jew was part of the everyday life of Soviet citizens. In the small town of Boguslav, a few hours from the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, some 15 houses inhabited by Jews were attacked on April 28-29 by a crowd calling on the "zhids"
("kikes") to "go to Israel." After an investigation, the instigators of the attack, one of them a student, were sentenced to five years in prison for hooliganism.

No Jews were at the top of the party and government hierarchies. The perennial Benjamin Dimshits was still a deputy premier minister and a member of the Central Committee of the party, but there were no Jews in top positions in the Army, foreign office, or in what were deemed "sensitive" activities. Jewish workers in Soviet institutions had difficulty receiving promotions, and in many instances were found to take early retirement to give their non-Jewish colleagues a "chance." A Jewish naval officer in Leningrad, with great wartime achievements to his credit, was frankly told by his chief that he could not expect normal advancement because this would mean placing a Jew in a "sensitive" top post. Young Jews had difficulty obtaining admission to schools of journalism of foreign service, since Jews were not considered "reliable" enough for such professions. The relative percentage of Jewish students in the universities and other schools of higher learning decreased from 3.2 in 1960-61, to 1.9 in 1972-73. Recent Soviet emigrants reported that anti-Jewish quotas were reinstated in many universities. Even Jews who passed entrance examinations with top grades were refused admission to the best schools of higher learning and were forced to enter small universities in remote places. It was no secret that Jewish Communists holding party jobs were having problems. (The Secretary of the Communist Party Committee for the Birobidzhan region, Lev Shapiro, was a Jew.)

The Soviet authorities continued to promote anti-Jewish writings, some of them under the guise of fighting Zionism, imperialism, etc. All, however, were patterned after the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. In many of this material Jews were accused of having a secret world organization, dominating banking, the press, and industry—all this through Zionist machinations tending, if necessary by "criminal means," to spread Jewish power everywhere. Some of these "writings" pretended to interpret Jewish religious precepts in a way not too different from the anti-Jewish canards of the Middle Ages about the Passover ritual, matzot, and other matters. Illogically, it was intimated at the same time that the Jewish nation had ceased to exist and that all these nefarious activities were being conducted by the "surviving" Jews in various countries. Such publications included Zionism in the Service of Anticommunism, by V Bolshakov; Zionism—Hypocrisy, Deception, and Treason, by R. Brodskii and I. Shulmeister; Prophetic Socialism and the Zionist Version of Socialism, by F. Mayatskii, and Zionism—Theory and Practice, edited by I. Mints, all published in 1972-1973. They were given wide coverage by the daily press and periodicals, and in some places, particularly in the
Ukraine, local writers helpfully expanded on the subject of "special Jewish character," "Jewish religion," etc., literally repeating the shocking falsifications of the czarist Okhrana (police).

This scandalous anti-Jewish propaganda forced even the apparatchik Aron Vergelis, editor of Sovetish Heymland, to publish a critical article condemning the antisemitic propaganda disseminated under the guise of anti-Zionism. He strongly condemned one of these books, Fascism Under the Blue Star, by Evgenii Evseev (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 485), which discusses "Jewish power," "Jewish domination," and similar topics, in a manner reminiscent of Nazi propaganda. In an article entitled "Not Only Ignorance" (Sovetish Heymland, #6, 1973, p. 168), Vergelis accused the author of misleading his readers by presenting a distorted view of the Jewish situation, based on misinterpretation of facts. Evseev's "accusations," Vergelis pointed out, were directed not against Zionism but against the Jews as a nation. Vergelis returned to the subject in a critique of Mints's book on Zionism (Sovetish Heymland, #12, December, 1973, p. 144).

Unfortunately, the authorities have continued to publish the antisemitic lies of Iurii Ivanov, Trofim Kichko, Vladimir Bolshakov, Iurii Kolesnikov, and others, and have promoted anti-Jewish bias in many languages and through various media. The magazine of the Writers Union of Belorussia, Nieman, carried a piece by Vladimir Begun which asserted that 69 per cent of the lawyers in the United States were Jews, that the Zionists seized control of the Czech Communist party under Alexander Dubček, etc., etc. Moscow also supplied antisemitic materials for publication abroad. One such article, released by the Soviet press agency Novosti and published on September 22, 1972, in U.S.S.R., the official newsletter of the Soviet embassy in Paris (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 398), moved the International League Against Antisemitism (LICA) in Paris to bring a civil suit against Novosti. On March 26, 1973, a French court found the managing directors of U.S.S.R. guilty of defamation and incitement to racial hatred and violence.

Jewish Resistance

The Soviet authorities were no more successful in their effort to stamp out dissidence among Jews fighting for the right to lead a Jewish life in Russia and those wishing to emigrate, than they were in liquidating democratic dissidence. It is difficult to determine the number of Jewish activists or of Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel. It was estimated that some 1,000 to 1,200 activists belonged to the vanguard of Jewish resistance to forced assimilation and Gleichschal-
tung and to the utter disregard to Jewish national efforts. Some of these activists were, at the same time, participants in the Russian democratic resistance; some confined their activities to specific Jewish matters and to Jewish national demands.

An estimated 40 to 50 Jewish activists were in prisons and camps. Among other measures initiated by the authorities in its drive to suppress the increasing Jewish demonstrations were disconnecting of telephones of suspects, arrests for "public drinking," and the referral of demonstrators to special anti-alcoholism centers for "sobering up." It was reported that a retired colonel, Efim Davidovich of Minsk, who had been promised a visa for Israel was continuously harassed by the police and accused of promoting "anti-Soviet activities." This repression had no impact, and Jewish activists continued to protest and to demonstrate their strong national stand by going on hunger strikes, sending appeals to the American Jews and the UN and many other means. In June seven Jewish scientists—Mark Azbel, Aleksandr Voronel, Moisei Giterman, and Vladimir Raginskii (all physicists); Viktor Brailovskii, a cybernetics expert; and Anatolii Libgover and Aleksandr Lunts, mathematicians—who had been dismissed from their jobs upon application for emigration but refused exit visas, organized a hunger strike.

As part of their campaign of repression, the Soviet authorities initiated a number of trials of Jewish militants in various cities, some on the ugly charge of spying for a foreign power (Israel). Thus, Isaak Shkolnik was found guilty by the military tribunal in Vinnitsa (Ukraine) of espionage, and sentenced to ten years of deprivation of liberty. The clearly trumped-up charges provoked protests in the West, but the Soviet press said Shkolnik had "confessed" to his crime. Lazar Lubarskii, an engineer and former Communist who had wished to emigrate to Israel, was tried in Rostov (Ukraine) and sentenced to four years of deprivation of liberty. Aleksandr Feldman, a Kiev engineer, was sentenced to three and one half years of confinement for hooliganism. There were intimations that other trials linking some Soviet Jews to incidents involving relations with foreign powers, espionage, and the like (on data fabricated by the secret police) were being prepared.

It was reported that United States Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, during his visit to Moscow, received assurances from Brezhnev that Soviet Jews would be permitted to emigrate at the rate of 40,000 to 50,000 a year. It was also reported that Brezhnev pledged to look into some 1,000 hardship cases involving persons who had been refused exit visas, usually for arbitrary reasons. Among those refused visas were Veniamin Levich, a renowned physicist, and Valerii Panov, a dancer, who could hardly be said to be working in a "sensitive" area.
In March 1973 the Soviet authorities, in an effort to counteract American congressional opposition to a trade pact, indicated that the "diploma tax" introduced in 1972 had been permanently lifted (p. 211; AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 487.

All told, about 35,000 Jews left the USSR in 1973 most going to Israel; a small number, perhaps 5 per cent, entered the United States and other Western countries.

Culture

Jewish resistance to assimilation and the fight for the right to lead a Jewish life did not change the authorities' negative attitude toward Jewish cultural endeavors. There were no Jewish schools. Sovetish Heymland, the only Yiddish periodical, continued to appear under the editorship of Aron Vergelis. (The Birobidzhaner Shtern, issued five times a week in the Far Eastern region, hardly satisfied the needs of the Jewish population.) Sovetish Heymland enlarged its format; it printed many items from abroad, including pieces on, excerpts from, Hebrew literature (Bialik) and occasionally reproductions of works of Jewish artists on Jewish themes.

Despite lack of official support and the obstacles encountered, Jewish cultural activities were pursued in many areas. Numerous local groups were promoting Jewish efforts in areas tolerated by the authorities. While there was no legitimate Yiddish theater, individual actors and musicians and semi-professional art groups continued to perform throughout the USSR. The 27-member Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble performed works of Sholem Aleichem and Gordin at Moscow's Sovetskaia Concert Hall, and made an extended tour of North Caucasia and Dagestan. When its veteran director Benjamin Shwartser retired, he was succeeded by Felix Berman, a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Drama. The Yiddish Folk Theater of Birobidzhan, under the direction of Berta Shilman, presented Goldfaden's Di Kishefmakherin ("The Sorceress"). This 65-member group included a dance group, with Tamara Chernis and Boris Beilin at its head, and an orchestra conducted by Georgii Shmatko. A small Yiddish theatrical group in Tallin, Estonia, continued to present Yiddish plays and variety shows. The Vilna Yiddish Folk Theater had a new program of songs and drama, shown in many summer resorts of the region. The Yiddish Art Ensemble, directed by Anna Guzik, toured many cities; it played to full houses in Leningrad. Polina Einbinder,
accompanied by her sister Svetlana, gave an evening of Yiddish folk songs in the Moscow Ethonographic Institute.

Exhibitions of paintings and sculpture on Jewish themes were organized in many cities. Shloime Gershov exhibited his work in the galleries of the Union of Leningrad Painters, and Meir Axelrod presented his oil paintings and theater sets in Leningrad. An exhibition of graphics by the veteran Shloime Iudovich was shown at the Vitebsk Museum. The Leningrad publishing house RSFSR Artists issued a 270-page de luxe edition of reproductions of the works of Anatolii (Tanhum) Kaplan covering the years 1928-69, which included his illustrations of Sholem Aleichem books. In June Marc Chagall visited the Soviet Union after an absence of 51 years. In his honor, the Tretiakov Galleries in Moscow held an exhibition of his works, mostly lithographs and gouaches.

Ten new Yiddish books became available: Yorn un reges (“Years and Moments”), by Yehiel Shreibman; Seyre blikn hobn sikh begegnt (“Their Glances Met”), by Meir Yelin, and In Vald (“In the Forest”), by Noa Lurie; Yam lider (“Songs of the Sea”), by Iasha Zeldin; Kimat a legend (“Almost a Legend”), by Mikhail Lev; Meyn oitser (“My Fortune”), by Aleksandr Gubnitskii; Yorn, yorn meyne (“My Years”), by Khaim Maltinskii; Friling (“‘Spring’”), by Shmuel Gordon; Zelmenianer, by Moshe Kulbak; Unzere Tseyten (“Our Times”), by Tevie Gen. Between 1959 and 1973, only 47 Yiddish books appeared in the Soviet Union (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 489). No Yiddish books were published between 1948 and 1959. In Georgia, a few Jewish writers devoted themselves to Jewish themes. Among them was Avram Mamistavalov, writing in Georgian, whose poem, “The Jewish Wedding,” was very popular. The recently issued Short Literary Encyclopedia (1973) included some Yiddish writers, notably Itsik Fefer who, with other Jewish writers and intellectuals, was executed in 1952. Recently some Yiddish writers and other intellectuals involved in various Jewish creative endeavors have emigrated. Their departures will doubtless affect negatively secular Jewish cultural activities. Rivka Rosenstein, daughter of the late Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow, also left for Israel with her children. Sovetish Heymland again and again attacked departing Yiddish intellectuals, accusing them of all sorts of political sins (Sovetish Heymland, #10, 1973, p. 183, and #12, 1973, p. 178). The Yiddish writer Buzi Miler was awarded the Badge of Honor on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Miler, a resident for some 40 years of Birobidzhan, was deputy editor of the Birobidzhaner Shtern. Hersh Remenik presented his dissertation on Sholem Aleichem to the Gorkii Institute of World Literature.
Soviet-Israeli Relations

Although the Kremlin leaders continued to promote the Brezhnev line of detente with the West, Soviet policy in the Middle East was rigidly pro-Arab, belligerent, and uncompromising. In the course of the Yom Kippur war, the Soviet government issued a statement blaming Israel for its expansionist, imperialist policies which, according to Moscow, created the conflict. The Kremlin again promised all-out support for the “just Arab cause.” In an Arab-language broadcast in September Moscow Radio pointed out that the USSR should not be blamed for permitting Jewish emigration to Israel in light of the fact that some 800,000 Jews from Arab countries have been permitted to go there. In the UN, Moscow blamed the Israelis for all kinds of “heinous crimes” which, as was later proved, had never been committed.

At the same time, Soviet authorities supplied the Arabs, more recently the Syrians, with modern sophisticated weapons to be used in offensives against Israel. After the visit of Yugoslav leader Marshal Tito to Moscow, a communiqué was issued in November backing the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state. Soviet leaders promoted all kinds of activities designed to give Moscow propaganda advantages and to facilitate the policy of penetration into the area. A three-member Soviet delegation consisting of Gen. D. Dobroshin, Prof. J. Ivanov, and F. Franshkuss visited Israel for ten days in August as guests of the Israel-Soviet Friendship League. An Israeli basketball team participated in a series of games in Moscow. The presence of the Israelis created incidents by some sympathetic Jews but also by unidentified Russians in civilian clothes, who obviously had come there with special instructions.

In December Abba Eban met with Andrei Gromyko in the first high-level talks between Israelis and Russians since diplomatic relations had been broken in 1967. Despite the hostile attitude of the Soviet authorities, the departure of Soviet Jews to Israel continued unabated and was not interrupted during the Yom Kippur war.

Birobidzhan

There were some 15,000 Jews in the total population of about 165,000 in the so-called Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan. Despite the name there was very little about the region that was distinctly Jewish. It had no synagogues, no rabbis, no secular Jewish schools, and the Jewish population was in the process of rapid assimilation with the surrounding Russians, Ukrainians, and other
nationalities. The Sholem Aleichem library was still functioning, Yiddish books were available, and there were Yiddish-language broadcasts. The Birobidzhaner Shtern, the only Yiddish-language newspaper in the USSR, has recently been enlarged; it appeared five times a week. Its pages were mostly devoted to subject matter generally covered in Soviet publications, including the usual attacks on "Israeli aggressors" and "imperialist Zionism." In September a special plaque with the inscription, "This street was named for Sholem Aleichem (Rabinovich), the celebrated Jewish writer," was unveiled on the main street of Birobidjan.

The region has recently been in the news in connection with the Soviet government's policy of encouraging internal migration to areas close to the Chinese border. By a decree of May 31, 1973, a number of special benefits were provided settlers going to the frontier regions, including loans and higher wages. In connection with the celebration in 1972 of the 50th anniversary of the USSR, all Soviet republics and national regions, among them Birobidzhan, were awarded the Order of People's Friendship (December 29, 1972).

Commemoration of the Catastrophe

Despite official discouragement, Soviet Jews continued to hold memorial meetings for the victims of Nazism. On September 29, some 1,000 Kiev Jews went to Babi Yar to pray on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Nazi slaughter of Jews there. The police prohibited memorial lights or religious services. The demonstration was dispersed, and five persons were arrested for unlawful assembly. Memorial meetings were also held in Vilno, Kaunas, Riga, and other cities. A criminal court in Torchin, Ukraine, sentenced two Ukrainians to death, one to 15 years in prison, and five to exile for killing 3,000 Jews and 300 Ukrainians during the Nazi occupation. The convicted had belonged to the Bandera army.

Personalia

Rubin Lerer, research fellow at the department of Yiddish culture of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences before World War II and the author of many books on Yiddish linguistics and lexicography, died in Kiev at the age of 70.

Leon Shapiro
Poland

Under the continuing leadership of Edward Gierek, secretary-general of the Communist party (PPZR), Poland steadfastly followed a policy of internal and external stabilization. Remembering the economic crisis that had erupted under his predecessor, Vladislav Gomulka, and the subsequent Gdansk rebellion (AJYB, 1971 [Vol. 72], p.411), Gierek introduced in government a "business" style designed to prevent a recurrence of dangerous discontent. In this he had the support of Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz. The Sejm (parliament) adjusted its work to conform to the change. Not that it could initiate and promote policy; but its opinions, suggestions, and interpellations were transmitted to the government for action. The government was promoting an important administrative reform whereby more authority was to be given districts to make them self-managing, thus providing for some decentralization and increase of local responsibility.

Some 22 million Poles participated in the 1972 Sejm elections. The 625 candidates for the 460 seats were presented in a single list; all were candidates of the National Unity Front, which was Communist-dominated but also had members of the Democratic and Peasant parties and of Roman Catholic groups acceptable to the régime. The elections had been advanced a year in order to facilitate the Gierek reform program. The new Sejm had 255 Communist deputies, 117 from the Peasant party, 39 from the Democratic party, and 49 from Roman Catholic organizations. Gierek emphasized improvement in the living standards of the workers through increases in real wages, peasants' income, and social security benefits. Interestingly enough, the régime was trying to improve conditions of individual farming, while periodically pointing to the advantages of collective agriculture. In fact, over 80 per cent of the total agricultural product came from the private sector.

Since Gierek's accession to power more than three years ago, efforts have been made to placate Polish intellectuals, writers, and artists who had lost status during the Gomulka régime. They were promised more freedom in the choice of subjects and improvement in their material conditions. Of late, Poles have found it easier to travel outside the countries of the Soviet bloc.

The authorities have also taken measures to stabilize relations with the Roman Catholic Church, which now was relieved of the obligation to submit reports of its income and expenditures. The struggle between
the godless régime and the Church continued, however, since the fundamental issue was the education of Polish youths and their preparation for life.

While the "strong partnership" with the Soviet Union remained the key policy, Gierek nevertheless made substantial overtures to the West, opening the country to Western technology and credits. President Richard M. Nixon's visit to Poland in June 1972 added a symbolic note to this new policy. In September 1972 Poland and West Germany signed an agreement to establish diplomatic ties and to take further steps to improve relations. Of great importance to Bonn, besides the economic factors, was the status of some 100,000 ethnic Germans living in Poland.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

There was no precise information on the number of Jews living in Poland. Jewish religious sources estimated that in 1973 there were some 10,000, including mixed couples. Representatives of the official Jewish organization, the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, put the figure between 9,000 and 15,000; some reliable informants said there were some 8,000, not counting Jews who, under assumed names, have been completely integrated into Polish society. Of the total, some 2,000 were between 18 and 30 years of age, most of them in training, at school, or in state employment. A substantial percentage of the others received pensions and other social benefits, which represented their only means of support.

Although there were some departures of Jews from Poland, it may be assumed that the present small Jewish community was the hard core of those who, for various reasons, have decided to remain. No exit visas were issued to persons in sensitive positions in the party or state machinery.

**Communal and Religious Life**

Jewish life continued to disintegrate. While overt antisemitic propaganda was banned, anti-Jewish acts during the Gomulka régime and the charge of "pro-Zionist treacherous activities" against all Jews has created mutual distrust that was impossible to overcome. Gierek, on a visit to France in the fall of 1972, restated this anti-Jewish attitude in a special interview with *Le Monde*. He said that "the decisions taken by our government after the Israeli aggression against the Arab
countries [the six-day war of 1967] were sharply criticized by a large majority of the people of Jewish origin. The rest of the population, including a number of Jews, disapproved of this attitude. A number of the Jews who have opposed us have since left Poland voluntarily, while others have reconsidered the matter. Gierek maintained that there has never been racial discrimination in Poland.

There is no need to go into the implications of Gierek’s remarks, except to note that they reflected the deepseated anti-Jewish feelings of the Polish leadership. It is important to remember that in 1967-1968 thousands of Jews—devoted Communists, anti-Zionists, and high functionaries—were summarily dismissed from their jobs (AJYB, 1969 [Vol. 70], pp. 396-97). This anti-Jewish action was undertaken, as had been the case in Poland in the past, to provide a scapegoat and target for the discontented population, as well as an easy explanation for the anti-government demonstrations organized by students and intellectuals. In 1973 some 2,000 Polish Jews, who had been forced to leave Poland and did not want to emigrate to Israel, were still in Denmark. All would have preferred to remain in Poland and to continue what they regarded as service to their country.

The Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, under the chairmanship of Edward Reiber, who succeeded Leib Domb after the Gomulka anti-Jewish campaign, was still in existence. Its membership was estimated at more than 1,500. Its activities, however, were severely curtailed by the authorities and by the leadership of the Union itself, which felt there was no need to emphasize the separateness of the small remnant of Polish Jewry.

In February, after a six-year interval, the sixth Congress of the Union met. Participating in the proceedings were 120 delegates from 17 cities, as well as representatives of the Communist party and of the Social and Cultural Union of the Ukrainians. Ruta Gutkovska, the Union’s secretary, stated that the organization had adjusted its activities to the new situation created in the last few years by the mass emigration of Polish Jews.

Jewish religious life was coordinated by the Union of Religious Congregations under the chairmanship of Isaac Frenkel. It claimed a membership of about 1,700 in some 18 congregations. No detailed picture of the Union’s religious activities could be obtained; but the fact was that religious life had disintegrated. There were no rabbis, no mohalim, and no cantors, and very few religious services were conducted even during the High Holy Days. It was impossible to find a minyan (a quorum of ten males needed for public prayer). There were few bar-mitzvah celebrations and few religious marriages. The condition of Jewish cemeteries continued to deteriorate; many were
completely unattended. The Union provided a public kitchen for those wanting kosher food. Each year before Passover, a special matzot bakery functioned in the old Nozik synagogue. The Religious Congregations also issued a Jewish calendar. Both the secular Cultural and Social Union and the Union of Religious Congregations have been supported by the state through the Ministry of Interior and the Office of Religious Affairs, respectively. The policy of the authorities was to hold Jewish endeavors to a minimum.

Cultural Activities

No Jewish schools existed in Poland; the last state-supported Yiddish school was closed in 1967. All cultural programs, ensembles, choirs, and drama circles were liquidated. Yiddish publishing practically disappeared. The Yiddish weekly Folks-shtimme, edited by Samuel Tennenblatt, continued to appear, but no longer had its distinctive character. Most of the material it published came from the Polish press. The younger generation, alumni of Polish schools, did not know Yiddish, and the readership was constantly declining.

The Jewish Historical Institute continued its activities under the strict surveillance of the party. Its director, Marian Fuks, retired in March 1973. There were no younger scholars who could continue Jewish research activities, and it was doubtful how much longer the authorities would permit even the limited work of the Institute. The 13th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto revolt was commemorated at a public function on April 13, 1973. A special meeting devoted to the event was also held at Warsaw’s City Pen Club.

The state-subsidized Yiddish State Theater, led by Ida Kaminska until she left Poland, was still in existence, under the direction of Shymon Shurmiey. Among its younger actors were non-Jews, and audiences were increasingly non-Jewish, requiring the use of earphones with simultaneous translation. According to reports, some Jews who were living a Marrano-type life also frequented the Yiddish theater. Local informants reported that the Yiddish State Theater played to full houses in cities having no Jewish population; it also gave guest performances in Hamburg, East Germany.

The Domb Affair

Leib Domb (Leopold Trepper), president of the Cultural and Social Union from 1962 to 1968 when he was dismissed during the Gomulka
“anti-Zionist” campaign, was finally permitted to leave Poland. The authorities had for three years refused his request for an exist visa for "reasons of state" (AJYB, 1972 [Vol. 73], p. 548). In November 1973 he arrived in London, where he was to receive medical treatment for a serious circulatory ailment. His three sons, who had left Poland earlier with their mother, had mounted a campaign to effect his emigration. There had also been private intercessions by Western statesmen with top Polish officials. Domb had been a Communist functionary assigned to the Jewish sector. His stewardship of Jewish affairs in Communist Poland was not the happiest period in the annals of Polish Jewry.

Leon Shapiro
Hungary

HUNGARY CONTINUED on its political middle course. Paying tribute to the rigid Soviet Marxist-Leninist doctrine, it followed strictly Soviet foreign policy. At the same time, it promoted internal liberalization both in its economy and in the country's general structure. It gradually extended individual liberties but, remembering the tragic revolt some 17 years earlier, the authorities were careful not to offend the Soviet Union, even in doctrine. Though the elections were still organized around a single list of candidates, the voters had a choice of candidates, since their number exceeded that of deputies to be elected. In addition, candidates could be nominated not only by the official People's Patriotic Front, but also by qualified local citizens, with the approval of at least one-third of the district nominating assembly.

The economic reform introduced some five years ago has substantially changed the old system of rigid, centralized planning and control through special incentives applied on a broad scale to all areas of industrial production. Consequently, the plant managers were forced to think in terms of profit and not quantity. At the same time, there were increased possibilities of choice in the selection of shop stewards and local workers' representatives. Over 40 of the largest Hungarian enterprises were permitted to deal directly with Western firms, thus decreasing both bureaucracy and rigid control.

The liberalization also extended to cultural endeavors, with the authorities tolerating greater diversity in the publication of music, in radio broadcasting and television than was thought possible in the Soviet bloc. Though Hungarian leadership under János Kádár, first secretary of the Communist party, and Jenő Fock, chairman of the Council of Ministers, was very careful, it had some difficulties in 1972 with the Kremlin bosses who were uncertain about the trend of events in Hungary. Characteristically, the Soviet press indicated that of late there were signs of imperialist, Zionist propaganda in Hungary and that there was a need for a greater struggle against various manifestations of alien ideologies. However, after Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev's visit to Budapest in December 1972, the Kremlin acknowledged the importance of economic reforms in Hungary and in a special communique promised total support to the Budapest leaders. The Hungarians appeared to be more content with their situation than was the case some years ago, and according to official sources, about
1,200,000 of them went abroad as tourists in 1972. The Vatican continued its policy of normalization of relations with Hungary; but in 1973 there still remained the question of the status of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, who was in exile in Vienna since 1971 and did not wish to relinquish his post as Catholic Primate of Hungary and Archbishop of Esztergom. There were still some 50,000 Soviet troops in Hungary, but their presence was not too apparent in every-day life.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

According to local Jewish officials, the Jewish population in Hungary in 1973 remained at some 80,000, including Jews who did not participate in religious or communal activities. There was no emigration, and given the demographic structure of the Jewish population, there was, except for some individual cases, little visible expression of a desire to emigrate. Information on the occupational distribution of the Hungarian Jews was not available but it was reported that gainfully-employed Jews were in government-controlled businesses, bank enterprises, in many cultural endeavors and the professions.

From time to time, there were scattered anti-Jewish incidents, but the authorities did not tolerate overt antisemitism. In March 1973 many in the audience at a performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* walked out in demonstration. It was reported that some belonged to the antisemitic right and some to the extreme New Left who were unhappy with the situation in the Middle East. Jenö Kovacs of the Communist Youth Organization, one of the officials of the Student Union, blamed the demonstration on the traditional anti-Jewish attitude of some in the audience. Meanwhile, the government continued to follow the Kremlin's Middle East policy; the Hungarian press was anti-Israel and strongly anti-Zionist.

**Communal and Religious Life**

Jewish religious life was coordinated by the Central Board of Jewish Communities, on which the two existing religious trends, the Orthodox and the Neolog (Conservatives) were represented. According to official records, there were in Hungary some 70 Jewish communities that maintained 40 synagogues and a *Bet Din* in Budapest. Dr. Geza Seifert was chairman of the Central Board, Rabbi Jenö Schuk was the Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox group, and Dr. Laszlo Szalgo the rabbi of the great synagogue in Budapest. There were over 25 other rabbis attached
to various communities. The authorities provided for the salaries of the Jewish religious functionaries, as well as for the religious needs of all recognized religious cults. The community maintained a mikveh, a Hevra Kaddisha, supervised kashrut and supplied, through kosher butcher shops, sufficient quantities of meat as well as matzot for Passover. The great problem facing the community was the lack of interest in Jewish religious life among the younger generation which was educated in a climate that was frankly hostile to all religious traditions. There were many mixed marriages, with many individuals leaving Judaism.

Welfare, Education and Culture

The Central Board conducted programs of social welfare and Jewish education. The welfare program was intended for older Jews who could not find employment or who, because of their age or health, were unemployable. Cash relief and meals were provided for some 4,500. Two homes for the aged had 110 residents who received medical aid. Kosher food was provided in all communal facilities.

The Jewish Gymnasium (secondary school), maintained by the Central Board, provided a regular academic program as well as Jewish studies for 75 students from Budapest and provincial cities. Jewish children of traditional families had the opportunity to study at the Yeshivah Quetannah (elementary school), as well as in the Talmud Torahs where they received an intensive Jewish education. The only rabbinical training institution in Eastern Europe—the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary—continued its program under the guidance of the well-known scholar, Rabbi Alexander Scheiber. It had a small enrollment of 15 Hungarian students.

The presence of many scholars enabled the Central Board to conduct a well-developed research and publications program. Among other works was the Monumenta Hungariae Judaica series, a collection of documents and other source materials bearing on the history of Hungarian Jewry, of which 14 volumes have so far been completed. The publications program also included a yearbook and almanac dedicated to Jewish life in Hungary. Steps have been taken to transfer to Budapest the archives of the provincial Jewish communities, which were being catalogued and put in order. The Central Board received financial support for its cultural and educational program from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Leon Shapiro
Rumania

RUMANIA MAINTAINED its independence in building a socialist society. It openly clashed with the Moscow line in its foreign policy and economic development program. At the same time, it maintained a régime of strict internal control, censorship, and severe limitation of free expression. Significantly, no criticism of the Moscow doctrine was permitted and there was no discussion in the press of the deep differences between Bucharest and Moscow. There were no Soviet troops in Rumania, and military cooperation with the Soviet Union was rather limited. Thus far President Nicolae Ceausescu has been able to withstand the continuing pressure from Moscow both in foreign policy and in the management of the economy.

Foreign Relations

In December 1973 Ceausescu visited Washington, marking his fourth meeting with President Richard M. Nixon. They discussed not only trade, but also Rumania’s role in developing Far East and Middle East policies. Rumania maintained friendly diplomatic relations with China and was the only Soviet bloc nation to have diplomatic relations with Israel. So far Ceausescu has successfully resisted Moscow's plan to organize an international conclave of Communist parties which would be invited by the Kremlin ideologists to condemn the “Chinese revisionists.” In October 1972 Corneliu Manescu, known as the promoter of Rumania’s independent foreign policy, was released from his post as foreign minister, but this did not affect the Ceausescu line emphasizing the equality of all nations, small and large, and the sovereign rights of small states to conduct their policies in accordance with their own interests. In an effort to underline Rumania’s independent line and win support for his program, Ceausescu traveled throughout the world, with an extensive stay in Latin America in 1973.

Economic Situation

Rumania defied the Soviet Union in its over-all economic planning and grew more emphatic in declining any form of integration with the Moscow-directed programs of the Council for Mutual Economic
Assistance (Comecon). It particularly rejected the Kremlin-planned close cooperation among the various satellite countries in which the Rumanian economy was basically projected as a supplier of agricultural products. In his drive for total independence from Moscow, Ceausescu promoted intensive industrialization, with machinery and equipment imported from the West. According to present estimates, Rumania would become a highly industrialized country by 1990. To achieve this goal, Bucharest planned to raise its steel production threefold—from 6.5 million tons in 1970 to some 20 million tons in 1990. Since imported capital goods had to be paid for in hard currency, Rumania enlarged its exports substantially, thereby creating a dearth of much-needed consumer goods. While Rumania doubtless made considerable efforts to industrialize and to promote urban development, it continued to have difficulties in arranging for sufficient credit from the West.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The 1973 official communal estimate put the Jewish population of Rumania at 90,000, the largest of any East European country, except for the Soviet Union. This figure included Jews who did not identify with Jewish religious and secular activities. The largest community of 40,000 was in Bucharest, with 4,000 in Timisoara, 3,000 in Yassi, 2,400 in Arad, and 1,500 in Bacau. Other sources considered the figure of 90,000 an overestimate. As a result of emigration, the Jewish communities consisted mostly of old people. Despite the decreasing number of Jews, there was a rather low rate of intermarriage, especially in the last few years.

Communal, Religious, and Cultural Activities

Jews enjoyed all the economic, cultural, and religious rights within the general political limitations imposed by the régime. Yet, the quality of Jewish life declined increasingly. Jewish activities were directed by the Federation of Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization for 68 local communities in various cities. Of the 135 synagogues, 61 provided daily minyonim and 74 held only Sabbath and holiday services. Bucharest had 16 synagogues, a mikveh, a talmudic study group, and Talmud Torah instruction for the young. Twenty-five other communities had Talmud Torahs and Hebrew language study groups.
Social Welfare

The large number of Jewish aged, sick, invalids, and widows required the establishment of a special program of assistance to the needy. Some 7,000 families received cash grants. In addition, special food packages were distributed to 4,000 persons on each of the Jewish festivals. In view of the special needs of the Jewish aged and sick, a central Jewish medical service provided assistance, including laboratory analysis and dentistry through Federation-supported health clinics. A traveling physician supervised the local medical work in Yassi, Botosani, Timisoara, and other places. The Federation maintained nine kosher restaurants in Bucharest, Arad, Oradea, Galati, Dorohoi, Timisoara, Yassi and Cluj, providing some 2,500 persons, including those who paid for their food, with daily meals. Special kosher food (and matzot) was distributed by the restaurants during Passover. The widespread relief program also included four homes for the aged in Bucharest and elsewhere.

The Federation published the semimonthly Revista Cultului Mozaic edited by Victor Rusu, which contained material written in Yiddish and Rumanian, as well as in Hebrew. It is the only periodical with a Hebrew text in Eastern Europe. Its circulation was some 10,000 copies. Besides covering current news and Jewish community affairs, the periodical also had a section devoted to Jewish scholarship, traditional rabbinical sources, and the biographies of outstanding religious leaders. On its 15th anniversary, in January 1972, Revista received official greetings from the government’s Department of Religious Affairs.

There were no changes in the leadership of the Federation. Dr. Moses Rosen was its president and Chief Rabbi of Rumania; Emil Shekhter was secretary-general. Rabbi Rosen also was a member of the parliament, which afforded him many opportunities to extend Jewish activities in various areas. His 60th birthday in 1972 was the occasion of a large celebration attended by guests from West and East European Jewish communities. He received congratulations from representatives of the Rumanian State Council, as well as from President Zalman Shazar and Prime Minister Golda Meir of Israel. Following established tradition, Rabbi Rosen visited the local communities during Hannukah and participated in the solemn ceremonies organized in many cities. He was accompanied by Rabbi Itshak Meir Marilus of Bucharest and by the Bucharest Synagogue choir under the direction of A. Schwartz.

The Federation conducted widespread cultural and educational activities in an attempt to counteract the growing deterioration of
Jewish life. The cultural program included weekly lectures for the young, courses in the Hebrew language, and Jewish choirs. The Federation also maintained a Jewish museum and library. This work was subsidized by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. The Federation financed its own manifold activities, including the supervision of kashrut, but also received state funds to pay the salaries of the religious personnel and the administrative employees of its various religious bodies. The Federation maintained close contacts with many Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and B'nai B'rith. Recently, it transferred to Israel Torah scrolls for distribution to synagogues, more particularly those serving new emigrants. Rabbi Rosen made frequent visits abroad, conferring with Jewish leaders in the United States and Israel. On many occasions, particularly at its annual assemblies, the Federation expressed full support of President Ceausescu's policies.

The state-supported Yiddish Theater, functioning outside the Federation, presented its repertoire in its own 300-seat theater. From time to time, the group performed abroad, also in the United States. On the 25th anniversary of the state theater special celebrations took place in Bucharest, in which the authorities and local artists and musicians participated.

Relations With Israel

Rumania continued friendly diplomatic relations with Israel. According to available reports, President Ceausescu was helpful in transmitting to Israel the views and position of Egypt and other Arab countries in the Middle East conflict. In May 1972, the Prime Minister of Israel, Golda Meir, visited Bucharest where, in the course of a four-day mission, she had occasion to discuss problems of mutual concern with high government officials. She also participated in a Sabbath service at the Bucharest synagogue where she was warmly greeted by worshipers (see AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 554). Rumania also maintained lively trade relations with Israel which were promoted by the rather large contingent of Jewish emigrants from Rumania now in Israel. Rumania maintained its policy of freedom of emigration for those Rumanian Jews who wished to go to Israel.

Leon Shapiro