While rumors about the precarious state of Leonid Brezhnev's health persisted throughout the year, he remained undisputed boss of Party and state. As Party secretary-general, he frequently was in the forefront in receiving foreign visitors and heads of state, and traveled abroad as the de facto head of state. On May 8 he was appointed Marshal of the Soviet Army, the highest military post. The two other top members of the collective leadership were Aleksei Kosygin, chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Nikolai Podgorny, chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Contrary to reports about imminent changes in the Soviet leadership because of the advancing age of most of the functionaries and the deteriorating health of Brezhnev and Kosygin, there was no indication that younger men were being considered for promotion to the ruling Politburo. Aleksandr Shelepin, who was a contender for a leadership position, was dropped from the Politburo in April 1975 (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 372).

The proceedings of the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR in February-March 1976 attracted worldwide attention. Contrary to expectations and analyses by Soviet specialists abroad, Leonid Brezhnev was not only reelected secretary-general; his prestige increased, and he was clearly becoming the head of the "collective leadership." Kosygin and Podgorny were also reelected. Like Shelepin, Minister of Agriculture Dmitrii Polianskii, who had been one of the younger pretenders to supreme power, was dropped from the Politburo. His sudden demotion was attributed by some to failures of Soviet agriculture, but a contributing factor may also have been a decision to eliminate a fast-rising and brash young pretender from the political fight for succession, if and when such a fight should become imminent. The new members of the Politburo—Grigory Romanov of Leningrad, Dimitrii Ustinov, head of defense industries, and Geiddar Aliiev of Azerbaijan, an alternate, will not substantially change the age structure of the top leadership, which has favored conservative, older men.

The Party's Central Committee was enlarged from 241 to 287 full members and 139 alternates. Total Party membership was reported at some 15,500,000.

A number of Party leaders in the Ukraine lost their positions, probably in the continuing purge of supporters of Piotr Shelest, who had been ousted from the Party in 1972 (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 480).

For the first time in many years, the Kremlin bosses had to accept a revival of
opposition to their doctrine of the primacy of a Moscow-directed Communist movement. The "monolithic unity" of the Communist movement showed cracks that might endanger the entire structure of Soviet power. Delegates of the Communist parties in Yugoslavia, Rumania, France, Italy, and England clearly indicated a preference for a "pluralistic and democratic" system. Within the French party there was questioning of the traditional dogma of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Its representative said his party would pursue "socialism in the colors of France." The Italian delegate supported his country's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It was clear at this stage that Moscow could not fight these heretical ideas. Chief Party theoretician Mikhail Suslov, in an address on March 17 to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, in an unmistakable allusion to the French and Italian Communists, branded them "enemies of Marxism" who had forgotten revolutionary Marxist ways.

It was reported that former Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin died in February at the age of 79. A collaborator of Khrushchev, he had been dismissed in 1958 and since that time had been excluded from the top Soviet leadership. He was later described as a member of the "anti-party group" of Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich (AJYB, 1959 [Vol. 60], p. 206).

**Dissidence**

While the Soviet authorities continued to fight dissidence with increasing police pressure and administrative repression, it was clear that, short of returning to Stalinist terror, there was no way of liquidating the opposition. A new underground political and social-affairs magazine, *20th Century*, was circulating in Moscow in the early months of 1975. Its editor was Roy Medvedev, the well-known historian and author of *Let History Judge*, a free Marxist evaluation of the Stalinist regime. His brother, Zhores Medvedev, was refused permission to return to Moscow from London, where he has been engaged in scientific research and in fighting for reform in the USSR (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 374). Roy Medvedev planned to publish in his journal material given to him by the late editor of *Novyi Mir*, Aleksandr Tvardovsky, who had been associated with the liberal thinking of some Soviet intellectuals. The new issue (March 31, 1975) of *Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytii* ("Chronicle of Current Events"), considered the most representative organ of the movement for human rights, was also circulating.

In June 1975 the well-known dissident leader Andrei Sakharov issued a pamphlet, *O Strane i Mire* ("About my Country and the World"), in which he again defended the ideas expressed in his 1968 essay, "Thoughts on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom," focusing on the necessity of freedom of exchange, defense of human rights, and freedom of emigration. The new pamphlet could well pass as a position paper written by a "Westerner," in contrast to the Solzhenitsyn statements, which might suggest a return to old Russian Slavophile views (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 373).

Sakharov, who was awarded the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize, was refused an exit
visa for Oslo. In his statement of acceptance, read in Oslo by his wife Elena Boner, who had gone abroad for medical reasons, Sakharov again emphasized the need for real détente based on a pluralistic society and mutual understanding. He also condemned the UN for "declaring Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination."

Seventy-two Soviet academicians, members of the prestigious Academy of Sciences, denounced the award of the prize to Sakharov as blasphemous and contrary to the concept of peace. Among the signers of the official statement were Jewish members of the Academy, including State-prize winner, physicist Bentsion Vul. Other members, including Piotr Kapitsa and Leonid Kantorovich, who were recipients of the 1975 Nobel prize for economics, did not sign the attack.

Dissident writer Andreii Amalrik, free after having served a prison and exile sentence, resumed his criticism of Soviet politics. He revealed that Soviet authorities had urged him to apply for a visa to Israel, but that he had refused since he had no ties to Israel and was only interested in going abroad for a year to lecture at Western universities (AJYB, 1974–75 [Vol. 75], p. 492).

The government continued to use police measures and confinement in prison camps and mental institutions (psikhushka) to stop the spread of dissidence. Sakharov put the number of political prisoners now in the Soviet Union at between 2,000 and 10,000, excluding thousands of men and women repressed because of their religious activities. The names of only some of the political prisoners were known in the West, among them Father Vasilii Romaniuk, a Ukrainian priest; the Leningrad writer Mikhail Kheifets, who was sentenced to six years for his article on the poetry of exiled Yosif Brodskii; Serguei Kovalev; Andreii Tverdokhlebov; Vladimir Osipov; Vladimir Bukovskii; Semën Gluzman, and Anatolii Marchenko. The well-known mathematician Leonid Pliushch was released to go abroad in 1976. Kovalev and Tverdokhlebov had been active in the Soviet section of the worldwide "Amnesty International," a group solely devoted to humanistic purposes, which Soviet authorities obviously were trying to liquidate.

An indication of the Kremlin's inability to suppress dissent was the invitation extended to dissident academicians to participate in the 250th anniversary celebration of the Academy of Sciences, held in October, at which Brezhnev delivered the keynote address. Also, the authorities did not suppress the now traditional December demonstration of dissidents for the defense of human rights at Pushkin Place in Moscow, which in 1975 celebrated the tenth anniversary of their first meeting. Sakharov headed the demonstration, in which some 50 persons participated.

Many former dissidents had left the USSR, among them Natalia Gorbanevskaia and Irina Belogorodksaia (AJYB, 1972 [Vol. 73], p. 533). Some of them made statements abroad, emphasizing that they were not anti-Communist, but were only seeking greater freedom (Novoye Russkoye Slovo, New York, February 1, 1976).
Nationalities

There were increasing signs that relationships among the various national groups of the Soviet Union were deteriorating and that national tensions might eventually endanger the very structure of the country. Sakharov, in his pamphlet, pointed to the climate of scorn and hatred that prevailed against Jews in Russia, Belorussia, and the Ukraine, against Russians in some of the Asiatic and Baltic regions, against Armenians in Georgia and Azerbedzhan. Colored visitors, students, and tourists were viewed with distrust and contempt even by Soviet bureaucrats dealing with matters involving foreigners. Soviet authorities continued to take measures to assure the maintenance of Russian influence in various parts of the country. As a matter of established policy, second secretaries of the Party in the various national republics were Russians selected by Moscow to serve as watchdogs over local conditions. (First secretaries customarily were local men.) Thus, in April Genadii Kolbin was appointed second secretary of the Party in Georgia, Viktor Periudin in Turkmenistan, Iurii Pugachev in Kirgizia, and Iurii Polukarov in Tadzikistan.

At the same time, there were reports of increasing resistance, particularly in Armenia, Georgia, the Ukraine, and the Baltic area, to the Russification of the national republics. This was also true of the Tatars in the Crimea. During the Stalin terror in 1944, the Tatars had been exiled to Middle Asia and the Tatar republic dissolved. Despite severe government measures taken in 1968–69 and the current police oppression and imprisonment of their leaders, the Crimean Tatars have been agitating for the reestablishment of their republic and the return of some 600,000 of them to their homes. Mustafa Dzhemilev, the well-known Tatar dissident, was currently facing new criminal proceedings initiated by the Soviet secret police. Russian dissidents, particularly those associated with the fight for human rights, have continuously supported national minorities in their demands.

Economic Situation

According to official reports presented to the Supreme Soviet (New York Times, December 4, 1975), the 1975 Soviet grain yield was some 79 million tons short of original estimates. No doubt, the bad harvest was a reason for the poor showing. But the inability of the economic bureaucracy to liberalize its centralized system, with resultant lack of coordination in transportation and day-to-day management, was a contributing factor. There was, too, obvious loss of interest on the part of peasants in the 37,000 state farms and kolkhozes in maximum production. The “private plots,” often less than half an acre in size, set aside for the personal needs of individual families and therefore outside the rigid control of the bureaucrats, yielded a disproportionately large amount of all the potatoes and other vegetables grown in the Soviet Union.

Extensive grain deficits forced the authorities to scale down over-all production goals. The 1975 economic growth rate was 7.5 per cent, compared with the projected
8.8 per cent. The poor harvest dashed the hopes of the people that consumer goods would be given higher priority than heavy industry and military requirements, which, incidentally, were "covered up" in the budget. The industrial production, too, did not come up to expectations, since the workers lacked interest in increasing output. Figures of the Soviet Central Statistical Board indicated that the average industrial wage was about 146 rubles ($193 at official exchange rates). High employment was apparently due to inefficient use of available resources. Kosygin's report to the 25th Congress was critical of poor management in certain enterprises and called for better coordination of efforts.

In a speech in Moscow in June 1975 Kosygin stressed the mutual advantages of economic ties with the West and Kremlin interest in expanding trade with it. While, after the passage of the Jackson amendment, the Kremlin leaders refused to sign a trade agreement with the United States (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 170), it was obvious that the Soviets were deeply interested in Western technology and in certain products that would bolster the lagging Soviet economy. Under these conditions, and notwithstanding rigid control, black markets and bribery were in evidence everywhere in the Soviet Union. Iurii Sosnovskii, head of a Soviet business organization, was executed in May after his conviction on a charge of accepting bribes from a Swiss businessman, Walter Halfelin. (The latter was sentenced to ten years in prison.) In the fall 1975 a change in the law against "parasites" (people without visible employment) gave local functionaries a free hand in meting out punishment to individuals whom the authorities suspected of falling into that category.

**Foreign Affairs**

The Soviet Union viewed China as its greatest enemy, with hostility developing on two fronts: the fight for predominance in the world Communist movement, particularly in the countries of the Third World, and the old Sino-Russian border problem and the relationship between the Chinese and some of the border population whose allegiance to the Soviet Union was doubtful. Periodic clashes occurred between Soviet and Chinese border troops; fighting near Ussuri and Amour was reported in February 1976 (New York Times, February 15, 1976). The "yellow peril" and the threat of Chinese invasion have been part of the Soviet cultural heritage since prerevolutionary times. Not only Kremlin Communists, but dissidents within the Soviet Union and abroad, have clearly indicated that in case of war between the USSR and China, all Russians, including dissidents and émigrés, would unite in a patriotic fight against China (see N. Korzhavin and N. Gradoboev in Novoye Russkoye Slovo, New York, September 16, 1975; October 1, 1975).

Moscow was especially disturbed by the possibility of a rapprochement between Japan and China, and made it clear in a statement released by Tass in June, and again during the visit of Foreign Minister Andreii Gromyko to Tokyo in January, 1976, that it was trying to slow down such a development. The Kremlin was particularly interested in forestalling the introduction into China of Japanese tech-
technology, which could substantially increase the Chinese war potential. Moscow continued to maintain, along the 4,000-mile border with China, 45 divisions prepared for all eventualities.

At the same time, the Kremlin leaders promoted détente with the West. As a signatory of the declaration issued at the closing session of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, held in Helsinki in August, the Soviet Union subscribed to the principles of inviolate frontiers in Europe and the liberalization of some internal policies as travel and reunion of families, and contacts with other countries. However, Brezhnev, who despite poor health represented the USSR at the conference, clearly stated that “no one should try to dictate to other peoples on the basis of foreign policy considerations the manner in which they ought to manage their internal affairs.” He made it quite clear, in a conversation with French President Valéry Giscard-d’Estaing during the latter’s visit to Moscow in October, that “international détente in no sense means an end to the ideological struggle.” Soviet authorities interpreted the Helsinki declaration of détente as not obligating them to permit a freer exchange of ideas or a more liberalized climate at home. They apparently also had their own interpretation of the declaration in the area of international relations, since they extended substantial financial and military support to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, in that country’s civil war as well as continued vast military supplies to the Arab states.

The Moscow-initiated Conference of Communist Parties of the West and East, which after repeated postponement finally met in East Berlin at the end of June 1976, continued to encounter difficulties not only among parties of the West but also in Rumania and Yugoslavia (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 376). In the lengthy preliminary negotiations, both the Rumanians and Yugoslavs asked for guarantees that their “independent way to socialism” would not be submerged in the over-all Soviet ideological dictates. While Moscow reportedly was ready to accept differences in the various parties, the French and Italian Communists, after months of study, issued a document reflecting their new line of independence from Moscow and asserting the acceptance of pluralistic multi-party democratic societies, free elections, etc. French Communist leader Georges Marchais stated on television that his party did not presently believe in the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat. Both parties also specifically endorsed freedom of movement within and outside of Russia and abolition of Soviet censorship. At the same time the French Communist organ L’Humanité toned down its strong criticism of Chinese policies.

Soviet-Israeli Relations

There were continuing reports of diplomatic contacts between Moscow and Jerusalem (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 376). In April 1975 two Soviet representatives visited Jerusalem and during their two-day stay had contacts with Israeli leaders. There was no change, however, in the Soviet Union’s strong pro-Arab policy. It continued to support the Arab demand for Israel’s withdrawal from all Arab territo-
ries, and provided the Arabs with sophisticated weapons and military advice. In April, too, Moscow also insisted that the PLO be invited to participate in the Geneva peace conference. In April 1976 the USSR, knowing full well that Israel would object, proposed that the conference reconvene and proceed in two stages, with Palestinians participating in both.

In April the Soviet news agency Tass quoted Premier Kosygin warning the Arabs to devise a united strategy against Israel, if they wanted to achieve favorable results for themselves. Otherwise, the Soviet press and media continued their hostile propaganda against Israel and the Zionist movement. Izvestia of December 2, 1975, carried an article by Vladimir Kudriavtsev on "The Criminal Style of Zionism," which repeated the old antisemitic slogan about the Jewish assertion of "the Jewish people standing above all others." It was again and again emphasized in the media that Zionist activities did not differ from the worst forms of racism. The Soviet Union supported the UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism (p. 97).

Five left-wing Israelis—Dov Zakin (Mapam), Avraham Levenbraum (Rakah), David Shaham (Mapam), Amnon Kapeliuk (Mapam), and Jaakov Rifkin (Independent Socialist)—visited the Soviet Union in September on the invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee. The Israeli delegation later reported on what they called a more "understanding attitude" on the part of the committee.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

No new information was available on the Jewish population of the Soviet Union. Estimates varied from 2,150,000, the official 1970 census figure, to 3,500,000, suggested by informed Russian Jews in the USSR and recent emigrés (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], pp. 434–442, and New York Times, January 22, 1975, quoting the highest figure). It is apparent that Soviet authorities have for some time pursued a policy of "fusion of nations"; therefore official statistics on the number of Jews in the Soviet Union must be used with caution. Until such time as it is possible to establish who is a Jew in the Soviet Union, an estimate of 2,693,000, based on the 1959 Soviet census and allowing for an approximate five-per-1,000 natural increase in 1975, would seem to be reasonable. Taking into account the 13,000 Soviet Jews who in 1975 left for Israel and other countries, the figure would be 2,680,000.* It should be understood that this estimate, subject to change if and when better figures become available, includes "hidden" Jews, "assimilated" Jews, and others. We believe that a Jew does not cease to be a Jew when for one reason or another he changes his name, or registers as belonging to the Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian, or other nationality.

*See correspondence at end of this article.
Jews ranked fifth in population in the Soviet Union, after Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Tatars. They were spread over some 100 territorial units of the country.

Communal and Religious Life

Jewish communal and religious life continued to deteriorate. There were no Jewish schools, no Jewish social agencies, and no bar-mitzvah classes. According to unofficial sources, there were five rabbis in the Soviet Union, two in areas with Ashkenazi majorities and three in areas where the non-Ashkenazi rite was followed. Rabbi Iakov Fishman, who continued in the post of Rabbi of Moscow, visited the United States in May 1976, as a member of a delegation of Soviet clergymen, which had been invited by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, a private interfaith organization.

The Moscow Yeshivah Kol Iakov continued to function officially, with eight students attending. It was, however, not in a position to train the needed rabbinical personnel. It was reported that two students would be sent to Budapest, joining two other Soviet Jews now being trained at the rabbinical seminary in that city. Iakov Ryklin, who had been a student at the Moscow yeshivah, was spending the current academic year at New York's Yeshiva University. It was reported that, under an agreement between the Appeal of Conscience Foundation in New York and Soviet authorities, Moscow granted permission to five Soviet Jews to study for the rabbinate at Yeshiva University; the first two were to arrive in fall 1976. Under an agreement made with Victor Titov of the Council for Religious Affairs in the USSR, Soviet authorities were to provide transportation costs, with the Foundation paying tuition fees and living expenses, some $10,000 per annum per student.

There continued to be a critical need for more trained religious personnel, including mohelim, and a shortage of prayerbooks, prayer shawls, and other ritual articles. Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania stated that he had sent to the Soviet Union 300 prayer shawls and a quantity of mezuzot. The authorities reportedly granted permission for the publication of a Russian translation of the Bible, which, if and when made, would be helpful to Jews who do not know Hebrew.

The precise number of synagogues in the Soviet Union was not known. The old official figure of 97 was no longer valid, since many prayer houses, whose congregants had emigrated to Israel, were closed. According to unofficial sources, there were 62 synagogues in the Soviet Union in 1975. As recently as October 1974, the synagogue of Tomilino, near Moscow, was closed by the authorities who claimed it was functioning without proper registration.

The president of the Moscow religious congregation, Mikhail Tandetnyi, informed United States religious leaders that the kosher dining facilities of the Moscow synagogue would be continued and that, in preparation for Passover 1975, the congregation was baking an adequate quantity of matzot. It was also reported that there were enough matzot in the central cities, but that the situation in the provinces
depended on local officials not always sympathetic to Jewish needs. The police disrupted the 1975 Passover services at the Moscow synagogue (March 26), which had to be shortened to some 20 minutes, and many participants had to return to their homes. The same occurred during the Sabbath services three days later. After these occurrences the chairman of the Moscow synagogue received assurances from the Moscow authorities that the police would henceforth be kept out of the synagogue. There was no disruption of the 1976 Passover services at the Moscow synagogue, which, according to the Tass news agency, were attended by 1,000 persons. Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galich, at a luncheon tendered by the Synagogue Council of America in March 1975, denied there was anti-Jewish bias in the Soviet Union.

Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth, N.J., reported the establishment of a Committee for Family Affairs at the Moscow synagogue to deal with the complicated problems of families broken up by emigration and similar situations. The members of the committee were Sholem Toibin, Abraham Miler, Berl Kreiner, and Reuben Zaitchik, all of whom were qualified to consider requests for religious divorce.

Of late, there has been a visible growth of religious awareness among Soviet Jews. Unfortunately, Soviet Jewish immigrants to the United States have not been helpful in shedding light on this phenomenon, since many of them know little about Judaism and had no connection with the synagogue.

Conversions

A recent disquieting trend in the USSR has been the number of conversions of Jewish intellectuals to the Greek Orthodox faith (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 378). A volume compiled by the writer Mikhail Meerson-Aksenov, *Dva Zaveta* ("Two Testaments"), is to the point. His preface states: "True religion is universal. . . . We found that universalism in the faith of the Jewish prophets. . . . And in that tradition of universalism we begin this dialogue between Christians and Jews, in the full knowledge that our God is a God of love and righteousness, one God, Father of all men, who sees to it that all should be saved," and that all should understand the truths manifested in Jesus of Nazareth.

The fifth assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December, received a message from Father Gleb Jakunin and physicist Lev Regelson of Moscow, protesting the situation of the Greek Orthodox Church in the USSR. Regelson, a 35-year-old Jew and son of a Party man, had converted to Greek Orthodoxy. Oddly enough, some converted Jews were becoming spokesmen of Greek Orthodox dissidence. Before her recent emigration from Moscow, Natalia Gorbanevskaiia (AJYB, 1972 [Volume 73], p. 533) declared that she was not Jewish, that she had converted to Greek Orthodox Christianity. The Russian emigré press, including *Vestnik*, organ of the Russian Christian movement in Paris, took note of this development. Curiously, none of the Jewish organizations that have been devoting so much time and effort to the problems of Soviet Jewry have dealt with it.
Antisemitism and Discrimination

Anti-Jewish bias continued to spread throughout Soviet society. Soviet dissident writer Abram Terz (Siniavskii), now living in Paris, referred to the widespread Soviet judophobia in a piece in the West German emigré publication Kontinent (No. 1, 1974). In fact, the discussions and writings of some Jewish dissidents reflected their acceptance of current anti-Jewish stereotypes.

Anti-Jewish discrimination, particularly in admissions to universities and academic promotions, were confirmed by Sakharov in his About My Country and the World. Ukrainian dissident Leonid Pliushch, in a statement made in New York, declared that official Soviet encouragement of anti-Jewish bias "exists at both government and grass-roots levels. With very few exceptions, no Jews were found in the top ranks of Party or state. So far as could be ascertained, the only Jew on the Central Committee was Veniamin Dymshits, a deputy prime minister of the USSR. Jews among candidate members were Aleksandr Chakovskii and Lev Volodarskii. Gen. David Dragunskii and Lev Shapiro, both Jews, were elected to the Central Auditing Commission of the Party. Jews were not welcome in the army, foreign affairs, and all departments considered "sensitive." Many Jews continued to be active in the sciences, medicine, and similar fields. It was obvious, however, that the authorities applied de facto anti-Jewish quotas to limit the number of younger Jews in responsible positions.

Anti-Jewish writings continued to appear in Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and other cities. Ukrainian writer Trofim Kitchko, renowned for his Judaism Without Embellishment (Kiev, 1963), which Communist parties in the West criticized as an outright anti-Jewish tract, reappeared in the press. Writing in the Literaturna Ukraina (May 30, 1975), Kitchko saw a connection, a partnership between Maoists and Zionists, and linked both to Nazism. The roots of the "inhumane nature" of Judaism and the "inhumanity" of Maoists, he asserted, were to be found in their traditions which teach hatred of foreigners. Kitchko's writings had official support and encouragement. B. Antonov, writing in the Riga Sovetskaia Molodezhh ("Soviet Youth") emphasized the "extremely racist character of Judaism." Vecherniaia Odessa wrote that "Zionists were serving Hitler with all their souls and bodies" (June 23, 1975). Sotsialiticheskaia Industriia explained that Simon Wiesenthal arranged the apprehension of Eichmann because it was necessary to liquidate a dangerous witness of Nazi-Zionist collaboration (January 1, 1976).

Anti-Jewish bias existed also in prisons and camps, where, according to Vladimir Bukovskii, Soviet officials openly displayed their prejudice (letter by Bukovskii to Kosygin from Vladimir prison, June-July, 1975).

In Derbent (Daghestan), the city's Jewish cemetery was vandalized.
Jewish Resistance

Soviet authorities continued their efforts to liquidate Jewish resistance. Many activists have been detained and some have been put on trial. Well aware that they could expect heavy prison sentences at the hands of Soviet judges, some Jewish dissidents openly demonstrated opposition. Thus, in February 1975, Mark Nashpitz and Boris Tshitlionok, both of whom had applied for exit visas some years earlier, participated in a demonstration in front of Moscow's Lenin library for the right to free emigration. In March both were sentenced to five years in exile for participating in groups accused of disturbing the public order. In Kishinev (Bessarabia) on March 8, on International Women's Day, 11 Jewish women began a fast to protest the difficulties experienced by applicants for exit visas to Israel. Many young Jews refused army draft, declaring they wanted to go to their fatherland, Israel, where they could live Jewish lives. Professor Aleksandr Lerner, who had been refused an exit visa, called upon American scholars to boycott Soviet scientific bodies that did not oppose official measures against Jews seeking to emigrate. The Ukrainian Supreme Court rejected the appeal of Dr. Mikhail Shtern, who had been convicted on the charge of accepting bribes for medical services after his sons applied for emigration to Israel, and confirmed his eight-year sentence (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 322). Col. Efrim Davidovich of Minsk, who had repeatedly been refused an exit visa and who had been stripped of his rank, died in Minsk on April 24, 1976.

Of late, the KGB in various cities initiated the practice of warning Soviet Jews against "Zionist activities" or other manifestations that might be construed as inimical by the authorities, including "joint celebrations of Jewish festivals." Authorities conducted a search of the apartment of Ilia Rubin, who was connected with the unofficial publication Evreii v SSSR ("Jews in the USSR").

Felix Dektor, who had been expelled from the Soviet Writers' Union, submitted to that organization a plan which would give a substantial outlet to Jewish cultural efforts in the USSR. He suggested a collaboration between writers and the official Yiddish magazine, Sovetish Heymland, provided that writings on Jewish thought and Jewish history would be permitted by the authorities. He advocated the establishment of a Russian-language magazine of Jewish affairs, or the inclusion of such a publication in Sovetish Heymland.

Soviet authorities refused exit visas to most of the 60 applicants who, in February 1976, were told by Lt.-Col. Vladimir Obidin of the Soviet visa office to request a review of their applications. Among them were the physicist Mark Azbel and the China expert Vitaly Rubin. Some 13,000 Jews left the Soviet Union in 1975, compared with some 20,000 in 1974 and 35,000 in 1973. A substantial number (about one-third) of them did not go to Israel, but to the United States, Canada, and other Western countries. According to Tass, 115,000 Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union during the period 1945 to 1975 (p. 159).

Moscow authorities continued their propaganda efforts to discourage would-be emigrants. Moscow papers published an interview with a certain Grigorii Malamed,
who had recently returned from the United States, where, he said, he could not find a job and felt rejected by American Jews. In February 1976 the authorities arranged an elaborate news conference for seven Soviet Jews who had returned to the USSR from Israel. Under questioning by Vsevolod Sofinskii of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the returnees said that Soviet Jews have nothing in common with Israelis and that Zionism was a misfortune for the Jewish people. Pravda, Moscow, repeatedly stated that large numbers of Jewish emigrants had requested permission to return to the Soviet Union. The number of actual returnees, however, was insignificant.

Soviet authorities were in the process of changing some of the technical aspects of the emigration procedure. Visa fees were reduced from 400 to 300 rubles, but applicants would continue to pay 500 rubles ($655) for renunciation of Soviet citizenship required of emigrants to Israel, since Moscow does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

In February 1976 leading representatives of Jewish organizations all over the world met in Brussels for the Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry (p. 153). While the emphasis of the meeting was on the problems encountered by Jews wanting to leave the Soviet Union, attention was also given to the cultural and religious needs of the Jews remaining in the country. The participation of prominent non-Jews lent additional weight to the proceedings.

Culture

Jewish needs continued to be ignored by the authorities. While officially Jews in the Soviet Union have been considered a minority nationality, the Kremlin obviously was bent on reinforcing the policy of forced assimilation promoted for many years. There were no Jewish schools in the Soviet Union and no Jewish agencies that could deal with Jewish cultural concerns. But despite the lack of official support and the anti-Jewish bias existing in all sectors of Soviet society, Jewish secular activities were pursued in many places.

Despite the departure of many actors, Jewish theatrical and art ensembles continued their activities. The Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble, directed by Felix Berman, presented Sholem Aleichem's Der farkishvuter shneyderl ("The Bewitched Tailor") in Moscow. On a two-month tour the group performed in many cities of the Ukraine and Moldavia and gave six performances in Riga. The Vilna Yiddish Folk Theater, under the direction of Judi Kats and Boris Landau (drama), Emil Janovski (vocal ensemble), Jasha Magid (jazz), and Nikolai Margolin and Raissa Svichova (dance), recently gave a first performance of Buzi Miler's play Funem himel fakt gornit arop ("Nothing Drops from Heaven"). The group also appeared with similar Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian groups in a film produced by the Lithuanian Film Studio. The Vilna Yiddish group was sponsored by the Central Trade Union House of Lithuania.

Many Yiddish actors and singers, among them Polina Einbinder and Sofia Saitan, performed, individually or in groups, in programs of Yiddish songs and music in
various cities. It was reported that the official recording studio Melodia was preparing a number of recordings by Jewish artists, such as Marina Gordon, Hannah Blushchinskaia, and David Ashkenazi.

Works on Jewish themes by Jewish painters and sculptors, including Hersh Inger, Meir Akselrod, Nohem Alpert, and Mendl Gorshman, were shown in one-man and group exhibitions. Works of graphic art by Shloime Telingater, some of them dealing with Yiddish literature, were shown in Moscow at the Home of Soviet Artists Union.

The following Yiddish books have become available: *Es shpint sikh a fodem* (“A Thread Is Spinning”), by Rivka Rubin; *Barshever motivn*, a collection including a novel and short stories by Haskel Tabachnikov; *Der veg tsum zig* (“The Road to Victory”), by Iankev Rives. Between 1959 and 1974, 54 Yiddish books were published in the USSR; none appeared between 1948 and 1959. *Sovetish Heymland* (No. 9, 1975) published two pieces on the Yiddish poets Itzik Fefer and Leib Kvitko, members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee who had been executed in 1952 during the Stalinist terror. The articles made no mention of their executions by the KGB.

Among the recipients of Soviet State prizes for 1974 were Mikhail Perelman (medicine), David Shtern (engineering), Veniamin Latzkam (engineering), Victor Sverdlow (technology), Josif Resnik (science), and Iliia Press (films). As of 1975, according to the official Novosti, 1,460 Jews (13 per cent of the total) were awarded State prizes, and 120 (11 per cent of the total) received Lenin prizes.

An important meeting was convened by the Near East Division of the Leningrad Institute for Oriental Research to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of the Karaite scholar Avram Firkovich. A number of scholars spoke on Firkovich and subjects related to research in biblical and archaeological fields. Special catalogues were being prepared describing collections of materials relevant to the area.

Some work in the field of Semitic and Hebraic studies was maintained on the university program level. In addition, some competent members of the Jewish community, interested both in maintaining Jewish culture and preparing Jews who wished to go to Israel for emigration, conducted classes in the Hebrew language, Jewish history, and other related subjects without official permission.

**Birobidzhan**

Of late, the Soviet press has given special attention to the Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan, clearly owing to its strategic location in the event of a conflict in the Far East. Jewish life was minimal. The *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, the only Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union, continued to appear five times weekly, but there were no Jewish schools or other institutions, and the younger generation was not interested in Jewish activities. The Yiddish Folk Theater of Birobidzhan, however, celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1975. It was preparing for production Leonid Leonov's play *Invasie* (“Invasion”).
The Jews numbered 15,000 to 17,000 in a total population of the region of some 175,000. Lev Shapiro continued to serve as secretary of the Party’s regional committee and as one of the Jewish deputies in the Supreme Soviet of Nationalities.

**Commemoration of the Catastrophe**

In keeping with the official policy of obliterating the Jewish past, activities commemorating the Jewish victims of the Nazis were discouraged. A memorial complex was established in Kiev at the Babii Yar ravine, where thousands of Jews had been killed in September 1941. The simple stone slab that had marked the place was being replaced by a 19-acre site with a monument, designed by Ukrainian sculptors, bearing the inscription that 200,000 Soviet citizens of various nationalities had been murdered there. It makes no mention of Jewish victims.

**Personalia**

The well-known Yiddish writer Aleksandr Gubnitskii died in Moscow on January 9, 1975, at the age of 63. The Yiddish writer Natan Zabara died in Kiev on February 19, at the age of 66. Rabbi Menachem Openstein of Kuibyshev, one of the handful of practicing rabbis in the Soviet Union, died in that city on August 25, at the age of 84. Lea Kolina, one of the great actresses who had appeared in the Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble, died in Moscow in February 1976.

LEON SHAPIRO
CORRESPONDENCE

About the Year Book estimates of the Jewish population in Soviet Russia, U.O. Schmelz, associate professor in Jewish demography at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, writes:

The World Jewish Population article in the 1976 American Jewish Year Book contains a footnote referring in an irritated manner to an article in which I analyzed certain demographic data on Jews from the 1959 and 1970 Soviet population censuses.¹ Allow me to try and clarify for your readers the substance of the issue in question and its implications.

1. In recent decades, the demographic situation of the Jews in the Diaspora countries has become a complex one because of many unsettling factors: low fertility, aging, low natural increase, often actually constituting a population loss, mobility, and assimilation involving also out-marriages. There is, too, the fact that in most of these countries statistics on Jews are quite unsatisfactory. Therefore, it is particularly important to analyze the various factors of demographic change and to assess correctly their net effect.

It has been the great merit of your Year Book and of Professor Leon Shapiro, for many years author of your annual World Jewish Population article, to have attempted to update figures for each volume. However, a comparison of the annual estimates for the same countries over a period of years indicates lack of attention to underlying evolutionary trends, against which I warned in an article published in your 1969 volume.² The estimates for Soviet Jewry, to which I shall confine myself here, are a case in point.

2. The complexity and difficulties of computing Jewish population figures apply particularly to the USSR. During the first 15 years after World War II there was much uncertainty regarding the size and demographic condition of Soviet Jewry because of the absence of direct statistical documentation, the discontinuity produced by the Holocaust and major boundary changes, the rigors of the political regime and the consequent seclusion of the Soviet Jews. Since then, however, an ever increasing volume of information has become available, though often fragmentary and scattered. Not a few revealing statistical data, mostly local or regional, have been disclosed in Soviet publications, including research reports.

Much nonstatistical information on basic aspects of the demographic situation of the Soviet Jews can be gathered from other publications, from observers who visited the USSR, and from recent Jewish emigrés. Above all, two comprehensive statistical sources, the official population censuses of 1959 and 1970, have become available (for some reservations see point 4 below). Especially valuable is the possibility of comparing two consecutive censuses taken in a period when conditions remained rather stable. Such a comparison was made in Schmelz (1974); some of the findings are mentioned below.

3. The census taken in 1939 in the pre-war territory of the USSR indicated slightly more than 3 million Jews. The estimated number of Jews then residing in the territory which today constitutes the Soviet Union is about 5 million. Most of the Jews were wiped out in the Nazi-occupied areas of this territory, with resultant demographic distortions and geographical dislocations among the survivors. In the absence of comprehensive statistical information before the 1959 census, the commonly accepted estimate of post-war Soviet Jewry had stood for many years at some 2 million, substantially below the 1959 census figure of 2,268,000.

Professor Shapiro accepted this figure, but increased it markedly year after year, until his estimate for the end of 1969 reached 2,620,000. Yet the new Soviet population census of January 1970 indicated only 2,151,000 Jews—a discrepancy of nearly half a million. Since then Professor Shapiro’s estimates continued to grow somewhat—despite the substantial emigration of Jews from the USSR—to 2,680,000 in 1973 (the same figure was repeated for 1974). Inevitably, the questions arise of what happened between the two population censuses, and which source gives a better picture of the intervening changes in the size of Soviet Jewry: the 1970 census or Professor Shapiro’s estimates. They can be examined only after determining what is known, or can be inferred, about the dynamics of the Jewish population in the USSR.

4. Before dealing with these matters, however, two aspects of evaluation of the Soviet population censuses of 1959 and 1970 must be considered briefly:
   a) The census instructions enjoined the enumerators to record the replies of the interviewed individuals without inspecting documents. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that some persons concealed their Jewishness to the census takers. At the same time, one should not disregard the probably low degree of Jewish identity of some of those Jewish persons who hid their Jewishness in the census. At any rate, there are no factual indications for satisfactorily estimating that additional number of Jews or ex-Jews. Therefore, I have always held the rigorous procedure to be to cite the official figures for the respective census dates, and state an explicit reservation. I also presented evidence in Schmelz (1974) to support that the conjectural “complete total” cannot be as high as 3 million or more, as is sometimes claimed.
   b) As for the possible suspicion that the census data on the Jews may have been tampered with by the Soviet authorities, such direct interference does not seem
likely. It is unlikely for such reasons as the considerable amount of geographical
detail provided by both censuses and the fundamental agreement between the
inferences tha: can be drawn from the age composition of Jews disclosed in the
1970 census and the actual intercensal changes in the total number of Jews (see
below).

5. In regard to the population dynamics of Soviet Jewry during the intercensal
interval 1959–1970, one feature is beyond dispute: the external migration balance
was of minor importance. No one claims immigration of Jews into the Soviet
Union, and their emigration, too, was very limited during that period (it became
considerable only after the 1970 census, which was held in January of that year).
Therefore any change in the number of Jews must have resulted from (a) the
balance of births and deaths, (b) assimilation or its opposite.

6. Professor Shapiro has repeatedly and unequivocally stated in recent volumes
of the American Jewish Year Book his method of estimating the Jewish
population of the USSR. He raised the official 1959 census figure annually at
about the same rate of growth as that of the general population in the entire area
of the USSR, taking into account Jewish emigration in the 1970s.

7. Professor Shapiro's persistent working assumption of the same growth rate
for Soviet Jewry and the total Soviet population is demographically untenable. To
illustrate this for the American reader, he has attributed to Soviet Jewry a growth
rate that would have slightly exceeded that of the total United States population
in 1959–1970, though the latter was boosted by such factors as the natural
increase of blacks and continual immigration. Analogies with other Jewish popu-
lations as well as newly published evidence on the age structure of Jews in the
USSR (see below) in fact make it more than likely that Soviet Jewry actually
sustained a not inconsiderable decrease.

8. Available data indicate that nearly all Jewish populations of Europe today
(excluding recent immigrants from North Africa) are characterized by very low
fertility, great "aging," partly an after-effect of the Holocaust, and a consequent
excess of deaths over births. These tendencies are heightened by frequent out-
marrriages, which lead to losses for the Jewish group, both in the first generation
and, especially, among the offspring (namely if they are not brought up as Jews).
In some countries all these trends have been outweighed by a comparatively large
Jewish immigration, but this certainly is not true of the Soviet Union. In all
European countries for which data are available, the percentage change in the size
of the Jewish population (exclusive of external migration) is below that of the
general population and, in fact, is negative. Nor is this differential fortuitous: where
the necessary documentation is forthcoming, it can be clearly assigned to
very plausible differences in the magnitude of the factors of demographic change.
All this stands in full contrast to Professor Shapiro's basic assumption of equal,
and therefore substantial, growth of the Jewish and the general populations of the
Soviet Union.

9. In the general population of the Soviet Union there actually are substantial
differences in levels of natural increase between the Asian and the European territories, and between town and countryside. Over the last two decades there has been a marked decline in natural increase in the European areas, so that only a very slight natural increase persists in the main cities of the RSFSR, where a considerable proportion of the Jews is concentrated. A virtually universal observation in the last few decades has been that the Jews in culturally advanced countries have preceded, and exceeded, their surrounding populations in any decline of natural increase. It would be more than surprising if Soviet Jewry had shown a markedly opposite tendency, especially a natural increase far above that of the general population of the main cities. For political-social reasons, Soviet Jews have tended toward out-marriages and other forms of assimilation earlier than other East European Jews and, according to fragmentary evidence, out-marriage among Soviet Jews was at a high level in the 1960s. Besides, the demographic after-effects of the Holocaust, e.g., age-sex distortions, make themselves felt to this day. All these traits had to affect adversely the numerical evolution of the Jews in the Soviet Union.

10. The fact that the Soviet census of 1970 recorded no growth of the Jews since 1959, but actually some decline, supports these arguments. Specific evidence, which permits a more penetrating demographic analysis, was provided in the publications of the 1970 census.

11. One of these gave the age distribution of the Jews in the Russian Republic (RSFSR), the main component of the Soviet Union, with 38 per cent of the total Soviet Jewish population. The census indicated that this republic, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia together account for 81 per cent of all Soviet Jews. Since, according to all authorities I was able to consult, conditions in the RSFSR are essentially similar to those in the other two, it is permissible, with due caution and reservations, to apply the respective RSFSR findings to the USSR as a whole.

12. The recorded age distribution of the Jews in the RSFSR showed heavy aging: only 7 per cent were in the 0–10 age group, as against 26.5 per cent in the 60-years-old-and-above category, a situation that is in line with the over-all picture of European Jewry (point 8). The percentage of the youngest age group is tantamount to an effective Jewish birthrate (i.e., after losses from mixed marriages, etc.) of approximately 6 per thousand per annum. The deathrate, which in the general populations of all advanced countries, including the USSR, is above 6 per thousand, must be markedly higher for an overaged group like the Soviet Jews (despite the long average life span of the Jews as individuals). In fact, my exploratory computations have led to an estimate of nearly 1 per cent for the annual rate of decrease among the Jews in the RSFSR during the intercensal period. Of course, this figure must be taken cum grano salis, but it contrasts irreconcilably with Professor Shapiro's explicit assumption of a steady and fast growth between 1959 and 1970, which led to a discrepancy of nearly 20 per cent between his figure and the census of 1970 for the whole Jewish population of the Soviet Union.
13. If, on the other hand, one starts with the official 1959 figure, as Shapiro did, but allows for cumulative decrease to the extent indicated by the 1970 age distribution in the RSFSR, one can reconcile the empirical evidence. The decline between the two censuses is explained; the intercensal evolution essentially agrees with the published age data, and there is reasonable analogy with the known demographic trends in the general population of the main Soviet cities, on the one hand, and in all other European Jewish populations, on the other.

14. On the basis of this evidence, the present figure—allowing for continued internal decrease and emigration—must be somewhat below two millions and not 2,680,000, as alleged. This widens the gap between the two approaches to nearly three-quarters of a million.

15. It would be inadmissible to accept the 1959 Jewish census figure and, at the same time, to argue that assimilation in the intercensal period, particularly out-marriages involving loss of children to the Jewish group, has invalidated the 1970 census findings. A strong tendency toward out-marriage among the Soviet Jews, with resulting losses of children to the Jewish population, had long preceded both these censuses. Incidentally, this was also reflected in the very small proportion of teenagers, like that of the younger children, in the RSFSR found by the 1970 census, indicating low fertility as well as heavy assimilatory losses prior to the 1959 census.

16. In summary:

a) The 1959 and 1970 censuses are highly important empirical evidence insofar as they substantiate the negative trend of population change and permit measurement of the decrease. It should be borne in mind, however, that some respondents, whose number cannot be closely estimated, probably concealed their Jewishness in both censuses.

b) Had there been no censuses, it still would have been unwarranted to ascribe to the Soviet Jews a growth rate as substantial as that of the general population of the USSR. It would have to be assessed much lower in view of: (1) the nonstatistical information and the fragmentary statistical data (from sources other than the censuses) available on the major sections of Soviet Jews, on their high urbanization, educational attainment, low fertility, aging, frequency of out-marriage, and the strong impact of the Holocaust; (2) the statistical documentation on the dynamics of the Jewish populations in other European countries and the differentials between them and the respective majority populations.

Clearly, for the Jewish community the above-outlined demographic facts and trends regarding Soviet Jews—except for the departure from the USSR of many of them in recent years—must be very disappointing. I personally share this disappointment. However, enlightened Jewish self-interest makes it imperative that we try to ascertain and understand the realities of our situation.

U.O. SCHMELZ
The following is a reply by Leon Shapiro:

Apparently, Professor Schmelz was not pleased with my reply to his article on the Soviet Jews (Jewish Journal of Sociology, December 1974), particularly with what he considered my “irritated manner.” The statement was a footnote to my annual “World Jewish Population” article (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], pp. 435-36). I failed to detect any element of “irritation” in my brief comment. I do, however, confess to having been astonished by the tone of his warning that “one must view with reserve the widely circulated population estimates of the Soviet Jews by the American Jewish Yearbook.” Before discussing the merit of Dr. Schmelz’s argument, I would point out that every article on Jewish population in the YEAR BOOK carefully begins by calling the readers’ attention to the fact that the figures represent estimates, perhaps the best reasonable estimates, which were obtained from many sources, including local informants, and that they are always subject to revision and change. While I felt that in these circumstances difference of opinion was perfectly legitimate, I thought Professor Schmelz’s special warnings somewhat unnecessary.

Professor Schmelz’s statement was even more puzzling, since in a 1970 article he, himself, used my figure for the USSR—about 2,500,000 in 1967. He indicated as the source the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1968, adding, as I did, that it was based on the 1959 census figure of 2,268,000 (Jewish Population Studies—1961–1968 [Jerusalem-London, 1970], p. 36).

When the Soviet 1970 census results became available, Professor Schmelz apparently accepted its figure of 2,151,000 Jews, and proceeded to marshal all possible evidence to prove that the Soviet census reflected the true situation: a drop of some 117,000 in the number of Jews—practically the only national group to show a decrease, among hundreds of nationalities, all indicating natural increase. Professor Schmelz chose to ignore the quite clear and explicit statement by Soviet demographer Maksimov, who provided all the answers to Schmelz’s doubts. Maksimov wrote that the decrease in the Soviet Jewish population shown in the 1970 census (5.2 per cent) was the result of the “process of fusion of nations which, under the conditions of a socialist society, has the character of friendship and bears no resemblance to assimilation in bourgeois society."

Before examining in detail some aspects of Schmelz’s present evaluation, the reader’s attention is drawn to what seems to be the essential element of his approach. He admits that, in addition to the figures officially recorded in the 1959 and 1970 censuses, “there were persons who concealed their Jewishness to the census takers,” suggesting at the same time that “... one should not disregard the probably low degree of Jewish identity of some of those Jewish persons who hid their Jewishness in the census.” He then adds, “at any rate there are no factual

1Istoriia, USSR, Moscow, #5, 1971, quoted in my reply in the 1976 YEAR BOOK.
indications for satisfactorily estimating that additional number of Jews or ex-Jews" (my italics). Let me make it clear that I disagree with this methodology, which, if generally applied, would bring chaos into our accepted conceptual framework. Professor Schmelz apparently makes a distinction, for statistical purposes, between various groups of Jews—those of a low degree and of supposedly high degree of identification—between Jews and ex-Jews, as he calls them. He does not feel it necessary, however, to share with us his definition of these categories, but, if I read him correctly, he does not consider the hidden Jews as fully Jewish. Again, if I read Schmelz correctly, he disregards this category.

In establishing my estimates, I proceed on the theory that a Jew is a Jew; that an identified Jew, an assimilated Jew, a hidden Jew is always a Jew, and should be taken into consideration. Jakob Kantor, a Soviet statistician, included the hidden Jews in his analysis of the 1959 census. It must also be remembered that in the 1970 census it was possible for a citizen to register on the basis of his choice: as a Jew, Russian, Ukranian, etc. We must, therefore, properly define who is a Jew before proceeding to establish an estimate. This method is, of course, very difficult and always be subject to error; but there is no other way to deal with Soviet statistics, which should be closely watched at all times. Dr. Schmelz avoids this crucial matter, and instead builds a questionable statistical structure.

Let me go into some of the specific problems: 1) I did accept the figure of 2,268,000 Jews, given in the 1959 Soviet census. During World War II we had various estimates of surviving Jews in the territories of the USSR. They ranged from some 1,500,000 to about 2,000,000. Schmelz's statement that most of the Jews were wiped out in the Nazi "occupied areas of the Soviet Union" is obviously wrong. According to accepted estimates, some 1,000,000 were killed by the Nazis within the pre-war borders of the Soviet Union. Solomon Schwarz estimated that approximately 1,870,000 or 1,910,000 survived, out of some 3,000,000. All of us who worked in the field, including Lestchinsky, Schechtman, Robinson, and Tartakower, more or less accepted this figure.

When the 1959 census figure of 2,268,000 Jews was published, it was possible to check our estimates. Since the total population of the Soviet Union had increased from 167,000,000 at the end of the war to 209,000,000 in 1959 (or about 25 per cent), the figure of 2,268,000 could serve as an approximation, if one accepted the same rate of increase for the Jews.

We knew, of course, that the natural increase among Jews was smaller. Still, we felt that it was better to use the census figure of 2,268,000, hoping to

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3 J. Lestchinsky, in "Latest Data on the Jews in Soviet Russia," *ORT Bulletin*, January–February, 1940, already then pointed out that a certain percentage of Jews "passed" as Russians.
check it against the result of the next census and, in this way, to arrive at a truer estimate. However, Nehemiah Robinson⁴ felt that in addition to the 2,268,000 Jews, there were a few hundred thousand others, who already in 1959 were registered as members of other nationalities. Rothenberg,⁵ while disagreeing with the YEAR BOOK method, estimated the 1959 population at 2,500,000 to 2,650,000.

2) Consequently, for some years—and for purely technical reasons—I used the general rate of increase in the expectation of checking the figures when the 1970 census results became available. The same method was used by Schwarz and many others. On the basis of more information from the USSR in the late 1960s, I drew attention to differences in the rate of natural increase between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations in the USSR (see YEAR BOOK reviews of the Soviet Union for 1968–1970). Later, after speaking to many observers who had visited Russia and after contacts with some visiting Soviet social scientists who were familiar with population statistics, I employed a lower estimated Jewish rate of increase in computing the figure (see reviews in 1970–1977 YEAR BOOKS). I must add that most Soviet dissidents, with whom I discussed this matter, felt that my figure of over 2,600,000 was considerably lower than the actual figure, which they thought was about 3,500,000 or even higher.

3) Professor Schmelz thinks that “direct interference [with the census data on Jews] does not seem likely.” I have no idea what his sources for such a statement are, but my confidence in Soviet statistics is not as complete as his. Soviet census data do not provide direct information on all Jewish populations in the USSR. I believe that, while assimilation has been going on for many decades, the Soviet authorities, on their part, have contributed to what Maksimov called the process of “friendship” among Jews and non-Jewish peoples, particularly in the Slavic areas, i.e., “passing” Jews into the Russian and Ukrainian nationality to increase the proportion of the Slavic peoples in the Soviet Union—a current concern of Soviet demographers.

4) Obviously, I closely follow evolutionary trends among Jews in various countries, and agree with Schmelz on the demographic characteristics of Soviet Jews: low fertility, the results of the Holocaust, and others. But I do think that in this case we must be very careful not to put too much stress on the comparative method, on applying fragmentary evidence and making definitive deductions. Incidentally, who are Schmelz’s authorities for his assertion that conditions in the RSFSR (Moscow) are the same as those obtaining in USSR (Kiev) and BSSR (Minsk)? In view of the complexity of the situation, Dr. Schmelz’s proposition should not be accepted without an in-depth discussion of all factors as well as a precise definition of terms. My estimate of the 1976 USSR Jewish population

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would be 2,680,000. Perhaps the next census will help establish more exactly the number of Jews in the Soviet Union.

5) It should be added that the Moscow Sovetish Heymland (No. 7, 1976, p. 165) uses the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK estimate, apparently without giving too much credence to the official census figures.*

Leon Shapiro

Poland

Edward Gieck, secretary-general of the Polish Communist party (PPZR) since 1970, was reelected at the close of the Seventh Congress of the party in December 1975. His moderate policies, directed toward avoiding repetition of workers' riots which resulted in the removal of two predecessors in 1956 and 1970, appeared to have the support of the masses. But economic conditions remained quite difficult. Inflation brought increasing costs of imports (both from the East and the West), a growing shortage of low-priced commodities, and a thriving black market.*

On February 10, 1976, after long debate, the Polish constitution was amended to give recognition to the key role of the Communist party, as well as to Poland's special relationship with the East European Communist bloc, especially the Soviet Union. Dr. Stanislaw Stomma, a leading member of the pro-government Catholic group Znak, abstained from voting for the amendments. Soon thereafter he was dropped from the electoral list, and consequently from the parliament. It was reported that 59 writers, scholars, and intellectuals made an appeal to include in the new constitution provisions guaranteeing such civil liberties as freedom of speech and the abolition of censorship.

Radical reform of the country's administrative apparatus helped to centralize power at the top and to diffuse it at the local level. Instead of 22 provincial areas, Poland was divided into 49 regions, thus diminishing the power of the local bosses. At the same time, Franciszek Szlachcic was removed as secretary of the party's Central Committee, and then dropped from the Politburo. Szlachcic was a close associate of Mieczyslaw Moczar, both known as fiercely chauvinistic, antisemitic militants (AJYB, 1972 [Vol. 73], p. 546). Jerzy Lukasiewicz, an alternate Politburo member, and his assistant Kazimierz Rokoszewski, who had been active in the anti-Jewish campaign of 1968 in Warsaw, remained in the government. Two militants, Gustaw Gottesman, managing editor of Literatura, and Krzysztof Toeplitz, editor of the satirical magazine Szpilky, were dismissed from their posts in April 1975. They had been among the very few Jews still remaining in political life.

Church-state relations considerably improved of late, with steady contact between Poland and the Vatican. Since 1971 the authorities had issued 263 permits to build churches, and taxes on Church properties were considerably reduced.

In October 1974, during his visit to Washington, Gieck and President Gerald R. *Workers' riots took place in June 1976. They will be covered in the next volume of the YEAR BOOK.
Ford signed a pact of friendship and a trade agreement. It was expected that trade between the two countries would reach a volume of some $2 billion by 1980. A treaty providing for the resettlement in West Germany of some 125,000 ethnic Germans living in Poland, which had been negotiated in summer 1975, was ratified by the West German parliament in March 1976. In exchange, the Bonn government undertook to provide Warsaw with long-term trade credits of some $400 million and agreed to pay some $550 million to cover pension claims of Poles who had worked for German companies during the Nazi occupation.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

The estimated Jewish population of Poland was 6,000. There were also some Jews who did not wish to be identified with the community and, in fact, took Polish names and have blended into the surrounding society. It may therefore be assumed that the present small Jewish community represented a hard core of persons who, for whatever reasons—political allegiance, economic dependence as pensioners, and the like—decided to remain. According to reports, a very large proportion of Jews were aged.

**Communal and Religious Life**

Because most of the active Jewish militants had left Poland and many of those remaining were too old to be active, Jewish life has steadily been disintegrating. The Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, under the chairmanship of Edward Reiber, continued to function; but its work was necessarily limited by the size of the community. Formally, the Union had a membership of 1,500. Reiber, who had been ill, returned to his post. Shmuel Tenenblat was vice-president and Ruta Guttovska secretary of the presidium. Moritzi Kajler was chairman of the Commission of Control and Audits.

Polish leadership under Gierek was not interested in encouraging the Jewish community to retain its separate individual character. However, the Cultural and Social Union, one of the institutions representing various national minorities, did receive financial support from the regional authorities and interested institutions of special concern. The Union had branches in Wroclaw, Legnica, Walbrzych, Lublin, Sosnowiec, Mislowiec, Bielsko-Biala, Gliwice, Dzierzgonow, Krakow, Katowice, Szczecin, Zari, and Swidlica, among others. At a plenary meeting of the Union's presidium, held in Warsaw on January 31, 1976, it was decided to call a general congress (the seventh) of all affiliates later in the year.

There was urgent need to change the Union's organizational structure to adjust it to the new administrative setup of the country. Indeed, some of its small local units were now located in the central cities of the newly established regions. In the meantime, it was decided to manage some of the local Unions from the Warsaw
headquarters through a specially established corps of inspectors. In addition to special Union commissions, which were in charge of various Jewish activities, clubs, and press, there was a commission for the care of the aged.

Jewish religious life was under the jurisdiction of the Union of Religious Congregations. It claimed some 18 affiliated local groups, though Jewish religious life was almost nonexistent. There were no rabbis, no mohalim, no cantors; and it was difficult to find a minyan needed for public prayer. Local Jews often asked the Social and Cultural Union to make arrangements for burials, though theoretically this was a function of religious congregations. Matzot were available for those desiring to observe Passover.

Cultural Activities

No Jewish schools existed in Poland. In fact, the widespread cultural activities, conducted before Wladyslaw Gomulka's anti-Jewish excesses, had been liquidated. Some of the cities, where local Unions functioned, had cultural clubs and Jewish reading circles which, from time to time, conducted Jewish literary evenings or organized lectures on general and political topics. Yiddish publishing had practically disappeared. The Yiddish weekly, Folks-shtimme, edited by Avraham Rock and others, continued to be bilingual, Yiddish and Polish (Glos Ludu). The younger generation, educated in Polish schools, did not know Yiddish and displayed no special interest in this area.

The Jewish Historical Institute continued its work under strict party control, with Professor Moritzi Horn as its new director and Josef Gitler-Barski and Dr. Henryk Kroshtor among its officers. In 1975 the Institute issued Horn's study, The Jews in Eastern Galicia in the Sixteenth and First Half of the Seventeenth Centuries, and Rut Pups-Sakowska's People in the Closed District: Jews in Warsaw During the Hitler Occupation. A number of other studies on historical subjects were being prepared by the Institute's research staff. The Institute had a library of 36,777 volumes, 6,482 periodical publications, 1,163 old manuscripts, and many other items. Its archives possessed unique materials of exceptional value for Jewish scholarship. Recently, after a period of interruption, the Institute renewed publication of its scholarly magazine Bleter far geshikhhte, which was to appear biannually. It was also decided to publish Emmanuel Ringelblum's writings on the Warsaw ghetto on the eve of the revolt.

The state-supported Yiddish Theater continued its work under the direction of Szymon Szeremiej. Its new repertoire included Isaac Babel's Sunset. In the course of 1975 it gave performances also in Italy, Switzerland, and in East Germany. In December the Jewish Theater commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Ester-Rachel Kaminska. Ida Kaminska came from abroad to take part in the proceedings. A special publication was planned in celebration of a century of Yiddish theater. Jakob Rotbojm, the well-known stage director, gave many prose and poetry readings throughout Poland.
Commemoration of the Catastrophe

The commemoration of the 33rd anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto revolt began on April 20, 1976. Flowers were placed on the memorial of the ghetto, and special meetings took place in Warsaw and many other cities. School children and factory workers participated in the events. Special delegations visited the site of Auschwitz concentration camp, where appropriate ceremonies, organized by the Social and Cultural Union, took place.

Personalia

Eliahu Rjsman, the well-known Yiddish poet, died early in 1975. Samuel Schapiro, the first president of the Jewish Committee in Lublin after its liberation in 1944, died in Warsaw in February 1976.

LEON SHAPIRO