

Eastern Europe

Soviet Union

THERE WERE NO CHANGES in the top Soviet leadership during the period under review. While rumors of the deteriorating health of Leonid Brezhnev, secretary-general of the Communist party, were recently confirmed by foreign visitors, he unquestionably remained head of the party and de facto head of state. Brezhnev's status was similar to that accorded Nikita Khrushchev in the last years of his political life. Appointed Field Marshal of the Army (AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], p. 454), Brezhnev was the second after Stalin in the top Soviet leadership to hold that post. In May 1976 his home town Dneprodzerzhinsk dedicated a bronze bust of him. Aleksei Kosygin, chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Nikolai Podgorny, chairman of the Supreme Soviet, along with Brezhnev, were the top ruling group of the USSR.*

Judging from the proceedings of the 25th Congress of the Communist party (February-March, 1976), the 70-year-old Brezhnev, like his colleagues, was aware of the physical limitations of his power and the inevitability of a change in the power élite. Among the 16 members and six candidate members of the Politburo, only three of the former and four of the latter were under 60 years of age. The most influential members were Andreii Kirilenko (70); Mikhail Suslov (73); Kosygin (72), and Podgorny (73). With Brezhnev, Kirilenko, Suslov, Kosygin, and Podgorny were always in the front row in official photographs appearing in *Pravda* and other newspapers. Some foreign observers were paying special attention to Gregorii Romanov and Dmitrii Ustinov, newly-elected members of the Politburo, both considered capable administrators and, in the opinion of some experts, men on their way up.

In October 1976 a number of changes occurred in the second-rank party group. Iakov Riabov (48) a Brezhnev protégé and former "boss" in Siberia, was brought to Moscow as a member of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the party.

The "monolithic unity" of the world Communist movement continued to be questioned by many Communist parties outside the USSR. At the 19th Congress

*In May 1977 Podgorny was ousted from the Politburo. At this writing reports had it that he will lose his post as president of the Supreme Soviet as well. Some changes also occurred among second-rank party personnel.

of the German party, which convened in East Germany in May 1976, representatives of the Italian, French, Rumanian, and Yugoslav parties reiterated their independent stand and stressed their right to full autonomy. They were joined by the Danish and Spanish Communists. The East Germans supported the Moscow line, as did the Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Czechs. The spirit of "local autonomy" prevailed at the June 1976 Berlin conference of 29 Communist nations, attended by Brezhnev and Tito. The presence of the latter underlined the end of the monolithic Moscow-type doctrine of socialism. It should be noted, particularly at this time, that the hard core of the conflict among the Communist parties was the Brezhnev doctrine, according to which Moscow has the right to interfere in the affairs of other countries in the interest of "proletarian internationalism and proletarian solidarity."

In January 1977 the Central Committee adopted a resolution reaffirming the dominant role of Moscow, the creator of the world Communist movement, as the center of the new socialist society. The resolution was a clear answer to advocates of the doctrine of an "independent way to socialism" at the Berlin conference.

While visible changes had occurred in the life-style of the country, including a lessening of fear of the secret police and some acceptance of Western modes in fashion and entertainment, Soviet society generally retained its conservative character, focusing increasingly on the "traditional qualities" of Russia and its people. The authorities continued to attack what they called "foreign bourgeois ideological import," and tried to establish a line that "honest Soviet citizens" should not overstep. In a propaganda drive, the West was pictured as a vulgar society, offering nothing of real interest to its citizens, giving no job security, and devoting itself essentially to a small clique of rich bourgeois. Party publications ridiculed Western dress, especially jeans, rock music, and the unauthorized use by American youth of military uniforms and insignia, to which of late many Soviet youths have also been attracted. The foreign ministry lodged a protest with the American embassy even against private showings of the film *Doctor Zhivago* at the residences of American diplomats, an event to which some of the Soviet notables were usually invited.

Soviet society by and large remained unaffected by the feminist movement. Although it has allowed women to penetrate into the professions (many Soviet physicians are women), it has kept them out of positions of professional leadership. Soviet women were well represented in the teaching profession, but were not to be found among the top administrators.

Dissidence

Soviet authorities were unable to stop the spread of internal dissidence, despite police oppression, imprisonment, and commitment to mental hospitals. A related important event was the appearance of *Twentieth Century*, a volume of essays edited by the historian Roy Medvedev and Mrs. R. Lert. It included articles by Zhores Medvedev, Sergeii Vlagin, D. Vitkovskii, and Boris Iampolskii, pleading for the

introduction in the USSR of "socialism with a human face."

In May 1976 nine Soviet dissidents announced the formation in Moscow of a group monitoring Soviet compliance with the Helsinki declaration of 1975. The group was concerned with basic freedoms, including religious freedom and the exchange of cultural information. Led by Iurii Orlov, a scientist, it included Elena Sakharova, Aleksandr Ginzburg, Anatolii Marchenko, and Piotr Grigorenko. A similar group was later created in Kiev under the leadership of Mikola Rudenko.

In December 1976 a Special Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers in the USSR was created, in which Father Gleb Iakunin, Deacon Varsonofi Khaibulin, and Viktor Kapitanchuk were active. Using various pretexts, including alleged illegal money transactions, Soviet authorities arrested Orlov and Ginzburg in Moscow and Mikola Rudenko, Oleks Tikhii, Marislav Marianovich, and Mikola Matosevich of the Kiev Helsinki committee. Andreii Tverdokhlebov, who was active in the Soviet section of the worldwide Amnesty International, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment (AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], p. 456). A. Melchukh, a well-known linguist, was dismissed from his academic post for his defense of Sakharov.

The authorities continued their policy of sending into exile abroad some of the most vocal dissidents, or those whom Moscow considered the most troublesome. The Kremlin leaders obviously were more cautious in their handling of the opposition, although harassment of dissidents continued. Thus Andreii Amalrik, the well-known dissident author of *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984*, and his wife Guzel were given exit visas, and they went abroad. Vladimir K. Bukovskii, who was serving a seven-year term in the Vladimir prison, was freed in exchange for the release of Chilean Communist party chief Luis Corvalán Lepe, who had been imprisoned in Chile since the seizure of power by the military in 1973. The United States acted as intermediary in the negotiations (*New York Times*, December 18, 1976).

During the period under review exit visas were given to writer Anatolii Gladilin, historian Aleksandr Nekrich, author of the well-known World War II study *1941, June 22*, sculptor Ernest Neizvestnyi, and conductor Rudolf Barshai, all of whom settled in the West. Arnosht Kolman, 84, for 58 years member of the Communist party, asked for political asylum in Sweden. Recently, too, some 1,000 members of the Pentecostal Christian sect in Moscow appealed to President Carter for help in emigrating. And in March 1977 ten Soviet Germans demonstrated in Red Square, demanding the right to emigrate.

Cases of self-immolation by protesting dissidents in Moscow, Kiev, Riga, Kaunas, and other cities were reported. The Soviet press took note of the incidents only by stating that mentally unbalanced persons had committed, or tried to commit, suicide by setting themselves on fire.

In a February 5, 1977, reply to a letter from Andreii Sakharov, President Carter, emphasizing his commitment to the principles of human rights contained in the Helsinki accord, promised to continue his defense of individuals persecuted for their

nonconformist views. Commenting on this exchange of letters in the *New York Times* of February 23, 1977, USSR Deputy Prosecutor Sergeii Gusev declared that Sakharov could be charged under articles of the Soviet criminal code for anti-state activities. In a detailed reply (*New York Times*, March 29, 1977), Sakharov indicated that, despite Soviet harassment of him, his family, and his friends, he would continue his activities on behalf of individuals repressed for their opinions or religious beliefs. Thus far Sakharov has not been arrested, apparently because he, as well as other dissidents, particularly those in academic posts, had become internationally so respected that USSR decided to refrain from extreme measures.

Pravda, official organ of the Communist party, openly defended the policy of repression of dissidents (December 12, 1977). Dissidents, it said, do not represent the masses of Soviet citizens; they "are paid, supported and glorified by the West," and, in fact, "serve the goals of foreign enemies and destroy socialism in the USSR and the East European countries." In this connection, the expulsion from Moscow of Associated Press correspondent George A. Krinsky, who had reported on dissident activities, is of interest.

Nationalities

One of the most difficult problems for the Soviet Union was the restlessness among its many component nations. Census figures and data that became available between censuses showed a continuing relative decrease in the number of persons belonging to the three Slavic groups (residing in the most industrially advanced areas), and an increase in the non-Russian, particularly Moslem, population of Asia. The Moscow policy of control and "russification" in the non-Russian areas of the Union has created intergroup tensions that might eventually endanger the very existence of the country. Mustafa Dzhemilev, who has been arrested many times since 1966, continued to campaign for the right of Crimean Tartars, exiled by Stalin to Central Asia, to return to their homeland. In Georgia in early 1977 Zviad Gamsakhurdia was arrested for advocating independence for the republic. He had also been active in a local group monitoring compliance with the Helsinki accord. Two other militants, Merab Kostava and Viktor Rtskhiladze, were taken into custody with him.

There was unrest in other Caucasian countries and in the Baltic area, where Latvia, Esthonia, and Lithuania were under heavy pressure to "russify," and where older traditions of cultural and religious diversity were still alive. The same situation prevailed in Bessarabia, which Rumania had been forced to cede to the USSR in 1940 (officially confirmed in treaty of 1947) and which had been attached to Moldavia. Under Russian pressure, the Moldavian language was now written in the Cyrillic alphabet, although it is very close to the Rumanian language (Latin alphabet) spoken across the border.

Economic Situation

Plans were initiated for a radical change in agriculture management, tending toward more centralized and industrialized production units. Some 6,000 such farming and processing complexes already in existence were reported to have shown positive results in terms of costs and efficiency. There were in the USSR some 30,000 collective farms and 18,000 state farms, and it was not clear how long it would take to institute the new system, which would in effect totally eliminate collective farms. The first units to be affected would be collectives producing mainly vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and meat. The planned change was said to provide for better technical organization and the elimination of management difficulties plaguing Soviet agriculture, including poor storage and lack of spare parts. The spirit of the reform is characteristic of the general trend toward greater centralization, although an overcentralized bureaucracy has been one of the factors creating the continuing economic shortages in the USSR. Kremlin leaders, pleased with the current grain harvest, stated that the economic gap between the United States and the USSR would be substantially narrowed by the end of the decade. According to figures released by Moscow, a 5 per cent growth in industrial output, with continued stress on heavy industry, was expected in 1977.

Dockworkers in Riga went on strike to protest meat shortages. Restaurants in many cities of the USSR introduced at least one "fish day" a week.

Foreign Affairs

The Soviet Union continued to view China as its greatest enemy. The hostility persisted after the Berlin Conference, where a deep ideological split in the world Communist movement was evident. Internal problems in China, created by the death of Mao Tse-tung, have thus far not affected the relationship between the two Communist states. Moscow tightened its grip on Eastern Europe, where 31 infantry and tank divisions of the Red Army continued to represent Soviet power.

Since the election of Jimmy Carter as president of the United States, the Kremlin has been reevaluating its policy of détente with the West. Speaking in Tula, Brezhnev urged further steps in Soviet-American accommodation, giving priority to an arms limitation agreement. His speech reflected the growing debate in Soviet military circles on the need for a new strategic doctrine and the vulnerability of Soviet armored divisions. At the same time, he made it clear that the Soviet Union was not interested in the issue of human rights promoted by the United States, which was not always compatible with socialist democracy as practiced in the USSR.

After Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's visit to Moscow in May 1977, it became apparent that there was a substantive difference between Moscow and Washington in their approach to a limitation of arms agreement. At this writing, preliminary conversations were taking place with a view to resuming talks as soon as possible in Geneva. Soviet diplomatic maneuverings seem to indicate

that the Kremlin leaders would like to maintain the climate of détente.

The Soviet Union continued its support of "liberation movements" in the Third World. According to the Tass news agency, "When it comes to consolidating national independence and economy, the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America can rely on the fully support of the socialist countries" (*International Herald Tribune*, Paris, August 22, 1976). Soviet policies in Africa, however, created a new mood among some of the older states of the continent. The Soviet Union has recently been active in Ethiopia, where a left military dictatorship was seeking help from Moscow. In Angola, it supported with military equipment and, with the help of the Cuban forces, succeeded in installing the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola as the ruling faction. In Africa, the USSR has been in open rivalry with China which, in many ways, had an initial geographic and perhaps ethnic advantage.

Egypt's President Anwar al-Sadat accused the Soviet Union of threatening his country, an accusation that was part of an ongoing dispute. President Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya, one of the closest Soviet allies in the Middle East, went to Moscow in December 1976 to sign an agreement for cultural and economic cooperation.

Relations With Israel

There was no change in the Soviet Union's pro-Arab policy. It continued to demand Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories, and to provide the Arabs with all kinds of weapons and, in some cases, military advice. In 1975 Soviet foreign commitments amounted to some \$1.3 billion, a great part of which was assigned to Arab countries.

Soviet authorities continued their strong anti-Israel propaganda identifying Zionism with racism and the Jewish state with imperialist colonialism. An article on the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism in the April 1976 issue of the *Moscow Military Review* maintained that as early as 1947 a Zionist campaign of genocide against the Arabs had prevented the establishment of an Arab state after the founding of Israel.

There were again reports that Moscow would like to resume official relations with Israel, which had been severed ten years ago. It was noted that Brezhnev's recent statements on Israel were less abusive than usual, and there were rumors that Brezhnev had informed Arab leader Yasir Arafat that the Soviets were considering the reestablishment of ties with Israel. Two Soviet delegations visited Israel in April and May 1976 to participate in the celebration of the 31st anniversary of the defeat of Nazism. An Israeli group had visited the USSR earlier. Four Israeli sportswriters made a ten-day visit to Soviet Georgia to participate in a convention of the International Journalists' Ski Club. A Moscow church delegation, headed by Metropolitan Sergii of Odessa, visited Israel during Easter 1977, and the Metropolitan later declared that he was satisfied with the situation of the Greek Orthodox churches in Israel that are under Moscow jurisdiction.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

No new information was available on the size of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union. While the official 1970 Soviet census figure of 2,150,000 was accepted by some experts in the West, a number of Jewish dissidents and other Jews in the USSR referred to 3,500,000 and even 4,000,000 (AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], pp. 468–76). Professor Arie Tartakover, in a recent article (*Hadoar*, New York, April 15, 1977), put the number at 2,600,000. It would be fruitless to debate this question in the pages of the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK. Suffice it to say that there are writers on the subject who have introduced a new concept, differentiating between assimilated and other Jews, which clearly is unacceptable in the field of Jewish population statistics. It is to be hoped that the new Soviet census will clarify the situation. Until such time, an estimate of 2,678,000 would appear reasonable. This figure is based on an approximate five per 1,000 natural increase in 1976, and takes into account Jewish emigration during the year.

Soviet leaders and Soviet demographers assiduously promoted the concept of the “Soviet people”—related to the “state-nation” idea that had some currency in the Russia of Nikolai I—which does not take into account the deep-seated national differences in the USSR. This policy is fraught with danger for many nationalities of the Soviet Union, and particularly for the Jews, as indicated by the Soviet census Jewish population figures.

Emigration

According to available figures, 15,000 Jews (about the same number as in 1975) left the Soviet Union in 1976, making a total of some 130,000 since emigration became possible. A substantial number with Israeli visas went to the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, choosing not to go to Israel. Israeli officials and Jewish organizations in the West were concerned over this development. Only an insignificant number of these emigrés wished to return to the USSR. Recently, some 700 who had left Israel organized a union in Vienna for the purpose of seeking ways to return.

Communal and Religious Life

There were in the Soviet Union no Jewish communal agencies, no Jewish schools, and no Jewish welfare institutions. Jewish religious life was contained in a few small congregations and synagogues. The Moscow Yeshivah Kol Iakov, headed by Itshak Hurvits, continued to function officially, but was not in a position to train competent rabbinic personnel. Rabbi Iakov Fishman of Moscow, on a visit to New York in 1976, reported that the *yeshivah* had ten students, and that two students from the USSR were attending the theological seminary in Budapest. There was a critical need of trained religious personnel (rabbis and *mohalim*) and a shortage of religious

articles (prayershaws, prayerbooks, and other articles). The *Bet Din* of Moscow, of which Sholem Toiibin and Rubin Zaiitchik were members, continued to function. Motl Lifshits and Shmuel Meshorer, were the *shohtim* of Moscow.

After two years of negotiations, the Soviet authorities granted permission to the New York Appeal of Conscience Foundation to ship to Moscow 10,000 copies of the Pentateuch. The Foundation was to photo-offset the well-known Vilna edition containing a Russian translation by Joshua Steinberg. It was hoped that the shipment would arrive in Moscow in time for Shevuot (May 1977). Copies were to be distributed to congregations in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Odessa, Kharkov, and Riga.

Soviet restrictions, which prevented the import of "alimentary doughs" and flour products converted into bread, made it impossible to send to the USSR *matzot* for Passover. It was reported from Moscow, however, that the authorities provided the city's Jews with 160 tons, Kiev and Leningrad Jews with 75 tons each, and Riga and Vilna Jews with 30 tons each, of flour to meet needs in 1977. Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth, N.J., informed the press that the Moscow rabbi had received from him two special shipments of 1,000 pounds each of *matzot shmurah*. The *matzot* situation in provincial towns was not as good, since local officials were not always sympathetic to Jewish needs. According to a letter from Sholem Kleinman, head of the Moscow Jewish community, some 50 communities in the USSR prepared *matzot* for their own members and for other Jews who wanted them. Kleinman invited Israeli Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren to visit Moscow.

The number of synagogues now functioning in the Soviet Union was not known. Recent official Soviet information referred to "several tens" of synagogues and 300 *minyanim*.

There were no official relations between Soviet Jews and world Jewry. It was reported, however, that the Moscow community had requested permission to send an observer to the World Jewish Congress. The request was made after a September 1976 meeting in Budapest of Jewish communal leaders of the USSR, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Poland, and was conveyed to the World Jewish Congress by Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania.

There were visible signs of a heightened interest in Jewish religious observance, possibly because of a general increase in religiosity in the country, also noted among the Greek Orthodox population. In 1977 Easter coincided with Passover, and both holidays were very much in evidence in officially atheistic Moscow. Following established tradition, thousands of Jews assembled around the Moscow synagogue in Arkhipova Street to celebrate Simhat Torah (October 1976). Recent Soviet emigrés were not always aware of the rise in religious interest in the USSR, most of them having had little to do with Jewish religious life. In this connection it should be reported that among active Christians were many converted Jews, such as Lev Regelson, one of those fighting the official Greek Orthodox Church, and Father Aleksandr Men, a popular Moscow priest and writer on Church matters.

Antisemitism and Discrimination

Antisemitic bias and anti-Jewish propaganda have become part and parcel of Soviet life. Supported by the ruling Communist party, though perhaps not officially, antisemitism has spread throughout the Soviet Union, acquiring different local characteristics. It was more pronounced in the Ukraine, where it has always been endemic, somewhat more subtle in Russian areas, and—a new phenomenon—has penetrated into the Asiatic USSR.

Crude anti-Jewish writings continuously appeared with the imprint of state and party organs. Some publications accused Jews of being Freemasons, an antisemitic allegation dating back to czarist times. *Moskva*, organ of the Writers Union, carried in its March 1977 issue an article by Dmitri Zhukov, "Judaism Without Embellishment," a clear reference to the blatantly antisemitic 1963 work by Trofim Kitchko with the same title. It was written in the genre of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, purporting to expose the Jewish design to "rule the world." Professor Valerii Emelianov of the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, in an interview published in the Arab press (February 1976), asserted that 80 percent of the economy in nonsocialist countries was in the hands of the Zionists, and that even some Arab oil companies belonged to "international Zionist capitalists."

In Moscow, the movie magazine *Kino* (August 1975) maintained that there had been close collaboration between the Jewish bourgeoisie and Hitler before the Soviet victory. *Ogonek* (Moscow, January 12, 1976), issued by *Pravda*, carried an article by Lev Korneev charging that Israel had executed Adolf Eichmann to cover up a 1937 Nazi-Jewish plot to establish a pro-Nazi state in Palestine (see AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], p. 463, for a variation on the same theme). *Izvestia* (July 21, 1976) carried a cartoon on the Israeli rescue of hostages at Entebbe under the caption "The International Law of the Tel Aviv Pirates." According to recent reports, films with strongly anti-Jewish bias were shown to Red Army soldiers as part of an indoctrination course for service in the Middle East area. One of these, *Secret and Open Things*, contained a reference to the 1918 attempt on Lenin's life by Dora (Fania) Kaplan, with the following statement by the commentator: "That was how Jewess Fania Kaplan tried to kill him."

Recent Soviet emigrés have confirmed continuing discrimination against Jews, particularly in admission to universities and academic promotion. Jewish applicants were frequently directed to provincial schools, while Russians were accepted at the universities of Moscow and Leningrad. There were still a substantial number of Jews in specialized state institutions, in the sciences, and in medicine. Most, however, occupied secondary positions.

Few Jews were in the top party ranks or in high state posts, and none in the Politburo. According to official information, 294,774 Jews held membership in the Communist party on January 1, 1976. Veniamin Dymshits, a deputy premier, was also a member of the Central Committee of the party, as were two other Jews, Aleksandr Chakovskii and Lev Volodarskii.

De facto anti-Jewish quotas, reminiscent of the situation under the czars, have been reestablished in the Soviet Union.

Jewish Resistance

While the authorities continued their efforts to liquidate Jewish resistance, party and state organs obviously were in no position to stop the spreading dissent among the various nationalities and the Jews. The Jewish underground continued to issue its publications, including *Tarbut*. Jewish dissidents openly demonstrated opposition to conditions of Jewish life and difficulties of emigration, basing the fight for their rights on the Helsinki accord. In October 1976 a group of 45 conducted a sit-in at the offices of the Supreme Soviet to protest denials of exit visas or delays in processing. They were removed by the police to the outskirts of Moscow and released. Among the sit-in group were Anatolii Sharashanskii and Vladimir Slepak, who had been refused exit visas. Sharashanskii was later arrested and accused of high treason and espionage. Another Jewish activist, Iosif Begun, was held on charges of vagrancy and parasitism. The well-known scholar-activist Aleksandr Lerner was told he might face charges of spying for the United States.

In their attempts to disrupt the activities of Jewish dissidents, the Soviet police placed a number of *agents provocateurs* among them. Thus, in May 1977 former dissident Dr. Sania Lipavskii announced at a conference sponsored by *Izvestia* that he and other Jewish activists had been recruited as spies by American diplomats. He stated that the CIA supplied him with espionage devices, which he showed to the press. The United States embassy denounced Lipavskii's allegations as slander.

The Soviet police continued their practice of warning Jewish would-be emigrants against leaving the country, on grounds that this would be inimical to the state. Thus Amner Zavurov of Uzbekistan was tried on a variety of false charges and sentenced to a three-year prison term for trying to emigrate. Dr. Mikhail Shtern was released from prison in March 1977 (AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], p. 464) and left the Soviet Union. A book describing his trial had been published in Paris in December 1976, and many Western intellectuals, among them Heinrich Böll and Jean-Paul Sartre, had protested his imprisonment.

Assertions of Jewish Identity

While recognizing the importance of emigration for Jews wishing to leave Russia, some Jewish dissidents felt that efforts must be made to raise cultural awareness and national identity among Jews who did not expect to leave. In this spirit, a symposium on Jewish culture, organized by Professor Veniamin Fain and some 12 associates, was scheduled in Moscow for December 21–23, 1976. On its agenda were discussions of social and cultural characteristics of Soviet Jewry and religion, and an evaluation of future trends in Soviet Jewish life. Jewish scholars from abroad, to whom preliminary invitations had been sent, were expected to participate in the

various seminars. Aaron Vergelis, editor of *Sovetish Heymland*, declined the invitation, indicating that he was not interested in privately initiated cultural projects. Soviet authorities denied visas to invited foreign scholars, and most of the initiators of this first open Jewish national effort were arrested or placed under house detention. Nevertheless, the symposium, for which some 54 papers had been prepared, was held (for one day only), and seven papers were, in fact, presented to a small group of participants, among them Andreii Sakharov.

The Soviet disruption of the symposium was protested by many intellectuals and religious representatives in the West, including Columbia University president William McGill and City University of New York Graduate Center president Harold Proshansky. Some Communist journalists joined in the protest, among them *Neie Presse* (Paris, December 23, 1976) and the Canadian *Jewish Wochenblatt* (January 22, 1977).

Despite strenuous KGB efforts, a Jewish science seminar was unofficially convened in Moscow a few months later (April 1977) by Jewish dissident scientists. In the course of the three-day meeting, held in the apartment of physicist Mark Azbel, some 30 to 35 scholars, who had been barred by the authorities from pursuing their academic interests, discussed papers that helped update their skills. This time, the authorities showed restraint, and a number of academicians from the United States and Canada participated in the proceedings.

Repression of National Rights

No facilities have been provided for taking care of Jewish needs or for the transmission of the Jewish heritage. There were no Jewish schools, and Yiddish, while officially recognized, was denied the academic research facilities needed for its development. *Sovetish Heymland*, the only Jewish periodical in the Soviet Union, carried a special page devoted to Yiddish grammar, but this was hardly a substitute for research in the living language. Soviet authorities refused permission for Jewish research and the transmission of Jewish knowledge in the Russian language, except for some work in Semitics and Hebraica carried on at the university level and by a few individual scholars, such as Leib Vilsker. A questionnaire recently distributed to a sample of 1,000 Jews provided a clear answer to the question whether the Soviet Jews wished to maintain their identity. While only 1.6 per cent of the respondents indicated they wished their children educated in Yiddish schools, and about 6 per cent indicated preference for Hebrew schools, some 60 per cent said they wanted to have their children receive a Jewish education and learn Jewish subjects in Russian-speaking schools. Many Jewish parents, including some potential emigrants, were arranging for a kind of underground Jewish-studies program for their children and themselves.

The Arts

The wish to live a Jewish life was also seen in the maintenance of voluntary cultural activities. Despite the departure of many Jewish writers and actors, Jewish theatrical and art ensembles continued their work. The Kaunas Yiddish Folk Theater resumed activity and gave a number of performances in Kaunas and other cities. In 1976 it numbered some 50 artists, with veteran actor Iakov Beltser as director. The Vilna Yiddish Folk Theater presented a varied program, including a jazz concert and a presentation of Yiddish folk music under the direction of Vladimir Glushkov. The group celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1976. The Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble presented its work in Rostov, Piatigorsk, Iesentuki, and Novoro-siisk. Many Yiddish actors and singers continued to perform individually or in groups in Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa, and other cities. Sidi Tal carried on her theatrical activities in the Ukraine and other cities of the USSR. A new recording of Yiddish songs was issued by the Melodia Studio. Maks Goldin presented his compositions of Jewish music at a concert in Riga.

There were several exhibitions of works on Jewish themes by Jewish painters and sculptors, among them I. Mastbaum, Gershon Kravtsov, E. Kogan, Oleg Fired, and Moishe Veinman. Kravtsov, who concentrated on book illustrations, had a special exhibition in Moscow. Most issues of *Sovetish Heymland* devoted a page to Jewish art.

Publications

As far as could be determined, the following Yiddish books have appeared in the USSR during the period under review: *Kometa* (the name of a theater in Odessa) by Khaim Silberman; *Raizes* ("Journeys"), by Aaron Vergelis; *Dos ebike faer* ("The Eternal Flame"), by Motl Grubian; *A guter regn* ("A Good Rain"), by Khone Vainerman; *Oif di lebensvegn* ("On the Roads of Life"), by Ieshua Lubomirskii; *Klezmer* ("Musicians"), by Irma Drucker. Between 1959 and 1976, 60 Yiddish books were published in the USSR; none appeared between 1948 and 1959. However, Ilia Gordon, a Soviet Yiddish writer, reported in *Literaturnia Gazeta* (Moscow, December 6, 1976) that 50 Yiddish books had been published in Moscow since 1956; another 466 books by Yiddish writers were available in 15 Soviet languages in some 45,000,000 copies. A volume devoted to 81 writers who fell in battle in World War II was published in Moscow. Biographies of seven fallen Yiddish writers were included.

Commemoration of the Catastrophe

While the official policy of obliterating the Jewish past was maintained, items on the Jewish catastrophe continued to appear in *Sovetish Heymland*. Its May 1976 issue carried a report with photographs on a trip to Auschwitz. In Kiev, on the 35th

anniversary of the Babii Iar massacre, a group of some 25 Jews received permission to place memorial wreaths on the monument erected on the site, which, however, does not mention the Jewish victims, and to recite the Kaddish. Moscow and Riga Jews were barred from participating in the service. Soviet authorities continued to discourage Jewish memorial ceremonies in hundreds of cities where Jews had been killed by the Nazi forces.

Birobidzhan

There were no changes in Birobidzhan. The *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, the only Yiddish newspaper in the USSR, continued to appear five times weekly under the editorship of Nokhem Kortshminskii, but contained little of Jewish interest. There was little Jewish life in the region; the younger Jewish generation was not interested. A local Sholem Aleichem library from time to time organized forums on Yiddish literature but had difficulty in attracting audiences. An amateur Yiddish folk theater remained active. Reports from and about Birobidzhan in the Soviet press indicated that the region was making substantial progress in industrialization and transportation; its strategic location makes it an important part of the Soviet defense system. Lev Shapiro continued to be the secretary of the Communist party regional committee of Birobidzhan.

Personalia

Osher Margulis, a Soviet historian who, in 1930, published a work on the Jews in Russia, died in Riazan at the age of 83. Dmitrii Finkelstein, a veteran Yiddish actor and educator, died at the age of 70. Khaim Spivak and Zalman Mainin, Yiddish actors and members of the Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble, died in Moscow, both at the age of 62. Nokhem Fridman, a Yiddish writer in Birobidzhan, died at the age of 70.

LEON SHAPIRO

Czechoslovakia

EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA in the period under review (1975 to mid-1977) essentially continued to mirror the problems of a multi-national state which had not become reconciled to the monarchy imposed upon it by a foreign power.

The strength of the Communist party in 1976 was put at 1,380,000, or one out of eight adults in a total population of 15 million. Dissemination of Communism was in the hands of a team of 140,000 lecturers and propagandists—one for every 100 inhabitants. Membership of the CP youth organization was said to have risen from 300,000 in 1970 to 1.2 million in 1976. According to a statement by Gustáv Husák, state president and general secretary of the party at the 15th Communist Party Congress, 330,000 new members had been admitted to the party since the last Congress. For the first time in 20 years, he said, “reduction in the number of worker members had been halted,” and “over 90 per cent of CP members were under 35 and over half under 25 years of age.” He spoke in a low key about “those with whom our party was forced to part company in 1968–69,” quoting views of the CP Central Committee that “those who were not active representatives of right-wing opportunism, are working well . . . and actively support the policy of our Party should be eligible for readmission after an individual investigation of each case.”

In fact, however, the party's approach to deviants continued to be determined by the hardliners of the establishment. The Czechoslovak news agency reported appeals against the expulsion from the party or annulment of membership of 64,926 members, who, it said, represented “18.3 per cent of the total number involved.” This leads to the conclusion that membership of the CP up to and including 1975 was some 1.18 million. Membership had been restored in 3,913 cases (about 6 per cent); in another 2,613 cases (some 4 per cent) expulsion had been “reduced to annulment.” Thus 58,400 appeals, more than 90 per cent, were dismissed, indicating that the CP hierarchy preferred a political closed shop to a mass movement.

In the 1976 pseudo legislative elections, 10.6 million persons cast their votes, 99.7 per cent of them allegedly for the single-party National Front dominated by the CP, close to 13,000 of them, it was stated, by Czechoslovak citizens in 88 countries abroad, including 8,000 in the USSR.

Economy

A wider range of consumer goods were available, but this did not reduce public complaints that these frequently were not what the consumer wanted. Dr. Husák told the 9th Congress of the Trade Unions in May 1977:

We receive letters, complaints from every part of the country. True, not all are justified and not all can be solved; but some complaints are justified and there things must be put right. It just demonstrates that there still is, in many places, a complacent approach to people, to the solution of their personal problems, even to the problems of our society as a whole.

The Congress of the Slovak CP at the same time heard complaints about "shoddy workmanship, cheating, and bribery." At the close of 1976, an average 110 electric washing machines and spin dryers, 79 refrigerators, 171 radio and 93 TV sets, and 30 cars were reportedly available for every 100 households; but spare parts for these, as well as for electric mixers and vacuum cleaners, were "unobtainable even at Christmas time." Consumers frequently had to hunt for spare parts, although overproduction led to the introduction of "surplus fairs," which also offered sub-standard goods at reduced prices.

Social security payments to retired persons were increased to meet inflation. Free public transportation was made available to those over 75 years of age, and trade-union members in Prague, Ostrava, Brno, Plzeň and Bratislava, while those in the 65-74 age group with incomes below a certain level were issued travel passes at low cost. At the beginning of 1977, Kč 45 million (Kč 3 per capita of population; \$1 = Kč 5.60) was spent on health services. Slovakia reported a rise in available hospital beds from 13,600 to 31,800 since 1952, and a drop in the patient-doctor ratio from 1,575 to 375. Housing shortage was a recurring subject of public complaints; in Prague some limited improvements were reported for 1976, with the completion of 8,860 flats of an "average utilitarian and residential area of 60 square meters." In that year, the gross agricultural product in Western Bohemia dropped by 26 per cent, and hop farmers in the Moravian Hana were "the only ones to fulfill the 5-year plan in the country."

In the same year, alcoholism claimed 2,000 lives and caused close to 10,000 serious car accidents. The state of the economy was also reflected in the rising rate of "economic crimes." In 1976 in Bohemia-Moravia alone 100,000 persons, half of them under 30 years of age, were prosecuted. Prague radio condemned widespread corruption in public works leading to overcharges of up to 45 per cent on the repair of the exterior of houses.

Foreign trade figures for 1976 reflect Czechoslovakia's role as a leading industrial country of the Eastern bloc. Trade with Eastern bloc countries, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Communist China, Mongolia, and Vietnam, was almost balanced; exports were Kč 39,100 million and imports Kč 38,900 million, with the USSR responsible for more than 32 per cent of all trade. Imports from Western countries (Kč 13,796 million) exceeded exports to those countries by over one-third.

Trading with the Middle East showed distinct political overtones, with Czechoslovakian exports three times as high as imports. The ratio was almost five to one for Iraq and Iran and even higher for Syria. In trade with Egypt, which was in disfavor with the Eastern bloc, exports almost balanced imports.

For energy, Czechoslovakia is now highly dependent on the Eastern bloc grid.

The first nuclear power station was built in Western Slovakia in 1976, with two more under construction in the region and a fourth planned for 1978 at Dukovany, Moravia. Coal output of 117 million tons in 1976 was described as a "Czechoslovak record," and new deposits were discovered. Stress continued to be laid on increased production of uranium, with the mine in Hamr na Jezeře (N. Bohemia), second after Jáchymov, having completed the first decade of operations in 1976. A contract between Škoda of Plzeň and the Soviet Atomenergosexport indicated further deliveries of Czech nuclear equipment to the USSR from 1977 onward. A \$2.5 billion contract with the Iranian National Gas Company, signed in Prague, provided for supply of natural gas from Iran for 1981–2003. Between 1971 and 1975 Czechoslovakia's imports of iron ore from the USSR were reported to have risen by 11 per cent and from capitalist countries by 60 per cent. Middle East countries and Turkey ranked among the principle importers of Czechoslovak iron and steel products.

Foreign Relations

MIDDLE EAST POLICY

In its relations with the Middle East, Czechoslovakia continued to combine concerted efforts to improve its economic and cultural foothold in the Arab states with undiluted enmity toward Israel. June 5 was declared "Day of Solidarity With the Peoples of Arab Lands," to be marked annually, according to briefings to editors, as the "start of Israeli aggression against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in 1967." A PLO spokesman acknowledged in a November 1975 Prague radio broadcast the "all-round assistance" by Czechoslovakia in terms of "political, moral and material support," after commenting on the November 1975 UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. At the close of 1975, a conference on "Zionism as a Contemporary Form of Anti-Communism" was held under the auspices of the Czech Socialist Academy at Vsetín, Moravia. At the time, Josef Grohmann, chairman of the Czechoslovak Commission for Cooperation with the UN on Education, Science and Culture (who was to be arrested a year later; see below), told the ČTK official news agency that the UN resolution had been used at the Paris conference "by 12 Western countries to crush UNESCO." Czech media continued to refer to the UN resolution throughout 1976 and 1977.

In 1976 an international seminar on foreign-trade planning of the Czechoslovak Chamber of Commerce in Prague was attended by delegates from Arab and African countries. Representatives of Arab labor organizations met with the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Prague to discuss the ILO conference in Geneva and "support of the Palestinian people." Both WFTU and ILO were "urged to fight the policies of discrimination, racism, and violation of trade-union rights pursued by the Israel authorities in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories." An "Arab Seminar," with participants from Syria, Iraq, and

Southern Yemen, held in Prague, coincided with the visit of a Czech trade union delegation to Syria. A Palestine Solidarity Committee of the WFTU met in Prague to prepare for a second World Trade Union Conference of Solidarity with the Workers and People of Palestine, scheduled to take place in Karl-Marx-Stadt in October of that year. The WFTU secretariat, in a statement released by ČTK on July 9, 1976,

reaffirmed its complete solidarity with the Palestinian resistance movement and the progressive forces of Lebanon, and urged the Syrian government to withdraw its forces from Lebanon; support the continuous presence of the Palestinian resistance movement in that country, and step up material and political aid to the working people of Lebanon, the victims of the war.

Israel's efforts at alleviating the plight of the Lebanese were ignored throughout, and little time elapsed before the Czech media cast Israel in the role of playing a major part in the Lebanon conflagration.

The mid-1976 an International Conference on the Fight Against Zionism and Racialism in Tripoli received wide coverage, as did Libyan President Muammar al-Qaddafi's offer of Tripoli as the seat of a permanent secretariat of that conference. At the time, *Rudé Právo*, the central organ of the Communist party, stressed that Prague radio, "during its 40 (sic!) years of foreign broadcasting," had taken a "clear position on Maoism and Zionism." A similar claim was made in May 1977 when Prague's Arabic service marked its 20th anniversary.

Later in 1976, Palestinians and students from Iraq, Southern Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria were reported to be among 50 foreign students of the Banská Bystrica Pedagogical Faculty at Herlany. A Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) mission in Czechoslovakia was officially established on September 23, 1976, replacing the PLO office which had been operating since May 1975 side by side with another PLO office at the Prague-based International Organization of Journalists. Establishment of the mission coincided with a two-day visit to Prague of a group of Israelis, which was not reported in the Czech media, but was described by the Soviet news agency Tass as a "delegation of the Communist group in the Israeli Histadrut," for talks with the WFTU. In November a PLO delegation came to Prague for talks on "further aid from Czechoslovakia." Czechs participated in an International Conference of Egyptologists in Cairo.

At the beginning of 1977 Czech tourists were told that visits would be available to Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco costing from Kč 5,670 up for two weeks. On January 23 *Rudé Právo* published an article by Zahi Karkabi of the Israeli Rakah (New Communist List) on the eve of the Keneset elections, stating that the crisis in Israel had been aggravated by "high military spending and the refusal to recognize the legitimate rights of the Arab people in Palestine." Later, ČTK reported that the first official meeting between delegations of the PLO and Rakah had been held in Prague on May 3 and 4 "in a friendly atmosphere, the two sides exchanging views on the aims of the joint struggle."

Addressing the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly on April 5, 1977, Foreign Minister Bohuslav Choupek lumped Israel together with South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Chile, as countries where "gross violations of human rights have been perpetrated by fascist and racist regimes."

Czechoslovak ties with Middle East countries, ostensibly outside the political orbit, also expanded considerably. This was true of Egypt, although it was criticized for its "increased Western orientation," especially after President Anwar al-Sadat's visit of West Germany in 1976. Egypt's deputy minister for culture spent a week in Bohemia to discuss expansion of the Charles University Egyptological Institute. Czech exhibitions, concerts, and other cultural events took place at Alexandria. The Czech army showed paintings and drawings at the Suez Cultural Palace in the "first international event at Suez since the Israeli aggression in 1967." Egypt's minister of culture went to the Prague Spring Festival of Music. Czech filmmakers attended a socialist Film Festival at Assuan and Alexandria. Czechoslovakia also participated in an Egyptian book fair, and staged exhibitions of Czech children's books at Cairo and Alexandria. Among books on Egyptian subjects published in Prague were Taha Husain's *Book of the Day*, the diary of a youth in a forlorn Egyptian village, and *Nitokris: the Egyptian Woman*, a novel by the Slovak author Jan Lenco, giving "an account of the life of a simple plebeian woman under the Pharaohs," which was published in Slovak and Czech.

Syria surfaced on the Czech book market in 1975 with *The Syrian Arab Republic* by Vladimír Šrom and J.S. Vokatý. Less literary was the interest of a Syrian government delegation visiting the Aero-Vodochody aircraft works in Bohemia in 1975 for test flights of the EL39 Albatros military jet and EL29 jet plane in production for Syria. In mid-March 1976 Prague radio reported that production of the EL39 jet (also shown at an industrial exhibition at Kladno, Bohemia) had been "stepped up by five per cent" and its military use by the Warsaw Pact armies "and abroad" was attested on Czech TV by Lt. Gen. Horáček, chief of the Czech People's Army political department.

Syrian children participated in an "international peace campus" in Bohemia. A Syrian-Czechoslovak Friendship Society was established in Prague. A protocol on TV cooperation between Czechoslovakia and Syria, signed at Damascus, covered coproduction and aid to Syria in the creation of a TV dubbing studio and the training of experts. A delegation of the Czechoslovak Youth Union went on a 10-day tour of Syria and Iraq, followed by a visit to Syria of the Prague-based International Organization of Journalists for consultations with Syrian journalists. On the occasion, the IOJ claimed a membership of 150,000. A Slovak-Syrian health cooperation program for 1976-78 was signed in Bratislava by the Syrian and Slovak health ministers. The visit of President Hafez al-Assad to Prague in September 1976 disclosed the presence of a substantial Syrian colony in Czechoslovakia, including students. At the beginning of 1977 a delegation of the Czechoslovak Farmers' Cooperative went to Syria to negotiate a cooperation agreement.

Relations with Iraq were also nurtured. In 1976 Czechs and Slovaks attended an

International Ideological Seminar on Zionism in Baghdad, at which reportedly 46 countries were represented. It found only modest echo in the Czechoslovak media. A TV and radio agreement providing for an exchange of programs and experts was concluded between Prague and Baghdad to "strengthen the fight against world imperialism." An Iraqi youth delegation visited Prague, Bratislava, and Kosiče, while a Czechoslovak youth delegation went to Baghdad. The Iraqi minister of the interior went to Prague to discuss "expansion of cooperation." Czechoslovakia participated in the 1976 Baghdad international fair with consumer exhibits from 13 companies and, at the end of the year, sent a two-ton chandelier with 22,000 crystal pendants and 320 electric bulbs to the Iraqi military club in Baghdad.

During the Lebanon conflict, Lebanese Communist and trade union leaders were frequent visitors of Prague. Radio listeners were repeatedly assured that there had been no casualties among the many Czechs in the country. Throughout, Czech and Slovak mass media reports left the impression that the Lebanese war had been engineered by Israel to divert attention from the Palestinian problem. Most other aspects of the tragic conflict received low-key treatment.

An information office of the Czechoslovak Chamber of Commerce was opened in Kuwait in 1976. A Southern Yemen trade union delegation signed an agreement in Prague on the training of cadres and the exchange of information. Cooperation between the health services of Czechoslovakia and Southern Yemen was discussed with representatives of the Southern Yemen Health ministry in Prague. Czechoslovakia was visited by a delegation of the Democratic Youth Union of Southern Yemen. At the beginning of 1976 Czechoslovakia's Prime Minister Strougal went to Turkey to sign a long-term agreement on cooperation in metallurgy, engineering, energy conservation, and the chemical and petrochemical industries. A joint Czechoslovak-Turkish economic commission was established. A Turkish industrial delegation visited Prague in May 1976, and in January 1977 Prague reported a contract for the building of an electrical plant at Samaba, with two energy blocks of 165 megawatt each to be supplied by the Škoda works. Later, the Czechoslovak Red Cross sent Kč 200,000 worth of blankets and clothing to aid the earthquake victims in Turkey.

NORTH AFRICA

In 1976 Libya and Czechoslovakia signed an agreement for regular air services between them and other countries. A committee for scientific and economic cooperation met in Tripoli and Prague, also in 1976. Libyan Premier Abdul Salam Jalloud visited Prague in mid-May 1977 and was assured by Prime Minister Strougal that the two countries had identical views on international affairs, especially on "the resolute anti-Zionist and antiracist attitude of the Libyan leadership." Jalloud expressed gratitude for the support given to the Arab world by the socialist countries in the past decade.

Experts from Algeria attended a three-month course on wage policy management

in Bohemia in 1975. An Algerian youth delegation came to Czechoslovakia in 1976. In Algiers, a delegation of the Czechoslovak foreign ministry discussed a new scheme on cultural, scientific, and educational contacts, with emphasis on university cooperation. Later in 1976 Czechoslovakia and Algeria signed a telecommunications agreement, and cooperation between the Prague High School of Economics and Oran university, especially with regard to postgraduate studies, was discussed at Oran.

Tunisia's Minister of Cultural Affairs Mahmud al-Masadi participated in the first Week of Tunisian Culture, held in Prague at the beginning of 1976, coinciding with an exhibition of Tunisian art in the city's Naprstek Museum.

Antisemitism

Milos Vejvoda, Czechoslovak deputy foreign minister and co-author of the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism, was quoted by Czech media in the autumn of 1976 as having "again pointed out that antisemitism has always been alien to our people, and that we shall not allow the just struggle against Zionism to be misrepresented as antisemitism, as Israel's friends frequently do."

The Czechoslovak establishment, however, was "allowed" to indulge frequently in undiluted antisemitic attacks. At the turn of 1975-76 Prague radio ascribed the United States decision to send American volunteers to serve at the Sinai surveillance station to "Jewish banking clans and family business dominating the U.S. Congress." Czechs and Slovaks were told that Israel "has become for the Arabs what the Third Reich used to be for the Czechs," the "notorious yellow star now having been transformed into the blue star, with many of the victims of racism now in the role of the racists." Another Prague commentator found that Zionist leaders the world over "expected religious Jews around the globe to consider Zionism, the Jewish religion, and Judaism to be synonymous in order to put a halo around Israel."

In 1975-76 two books slanted against Jews and Israel were introduced as primers in eight-class basic schools in Bohemia and Moravia: *Beware Zionism*, edited by Yuriy Ivanov and published in 1970 in Czech and Slovak, and *Zionism: Theory and Practice*, prepared by an author's collective and published in both languages in 1974. They were being used as sole reading matter on "the principal non-Christian denominations, their development and contemporary trends." Both volumes carry undiluted antisemitic venom. One of the contributors to the Ivanov volume, writing under the pen name of Yevsejev, is the Prague journalist Svatopluk Dolejš, who had been a member of the editorial staff of the Czech Nazi weekly *Arijský Boj* during World War II. He was appointed chief editor of the Prague radio's youth and children broadcasts in 1976.

In a broadcast on "Zionism in Theory and Practice," František J. Kolár, a Jew by birth, and elder statesman of the Communist literary establishment, declared that a "worldwide Jewish nation exists only in the lunatic dreams of Zionist fanatics;"

that the "vast majority of the 13 million Jews in the world has nothing in common with Zionism and condemns it." The aggressive nature of Israel and Zionism, he alleged, has its "reactionary religious-judaistic roots in the Old Testament, such as the Book of Isaiah," which "told the ancient Jews to show no mercy toward the vanquished, to annihilate mercilessly on the land of their many enemies all people—the old, women, and children." In a feature in *Tribuna*, Kolár declared: "As far as the martial antisemitism of the Nazis is concerned, it came to the Zionists—even if this sounds terribly paradoxical and incredible—like manna from Heaven."

In 1976 *České Slovo*, a Czech monthly in Munich, published the facsimile of a circular letter written by Gustav Husák on October 20, 1942, when he had been secretary of the Slovak Central Federation of Forwarding and Shipping Agents, which appealed for tax-deductible contributions for the Hlinka guard, the Hlinka youth organization, and two Nazi organizations, to be used for premilitary training. Prague did not deny the authenticity of the document, which reportedly was being widely circulated in Czechoslovakia in 1976. The same was true of a list of 14 former Nazi collaborators, now in leading positions in the Czech CP, published in February and August 1976 by the London-based International Council of Jews from Czechoslovakia.

A number of Jewish cemeteries in Bohemia and Moravia were reported to have been vandalized. In 1976 the London *Times* reported an attack by masked men in Prague on Dr. František Kriegel, a prominent figure in the 1968 reform movement, who has been under police surveillance since. Kriegel had been barred by the Russians from attending a conference in Moscow with Alexander Dubček because, they said, he was a "Galician Jew."

In a series of broadcasts during 1976, Prague radio reverted to the language of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The political and economic structure of the industrially advanced countries, listeners were told, had been "strongly influenced by Zionists who can boast control of the entire assets of the capitalist world." In a seven-day press, radio, and TV marathon, geared to the return of Cpt. Pavel Minařík who, with the connivance of the Czech secret service, allegedly infiltrated the Czechoslovak section of Radio Free Europe in Munich, Jews of Czech origin in the United States, Britain, and West Germany were listed as foreign agents in the pay of the CIA and the British Secret Service. Among those singled out were Fred Eidlin and Julius Firt of Radio Free Europe; Bedřich Uttitz (at the time editor of *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung*, Düsseldorf); Jan Sling (son of Rudolf Sling, a defendant in the Slánský trials who had been executed), and several London journalists. Also attacked for their alleged involvement in the operations were then United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, several congressmen, and other public personalities.

In November 1976 *Tribuna* published a two-part feature by Jiří Bohátka, now revealed to be a civil servant in the security section of the Ministries of Defense and the Interior, and employed by the publication as free-lance "specialist on the Jews." It charged that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and HIAS were

“spreading anti-Soviet propaganda in the USSR to induce Jews to emigrate.” Yad Vashem was said to have “published very little from original documents on the cooperation of the *Judenräte* and other Jewish institutions with the Nazis in the solution of the Jewish question.” Publishing in Israel and the capitalist countries, Bohátka asserted, was “controlled by Zionists.” Consequently, “no memoirs, chronicles or testimonials are published revealing the treacherous stance of the Zionist movement towards assimilated Jews or Zionist-Nazi collaboration.” Other organizations under attack were the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna and the Society for the History of Jews from Czechoslovakia in New York.

In March 1977 Prague media maintained that Ota Sling, Jewish-born CP leader, a defendant in the Slánský trials who had been executed, had been “exposed in the 1950s and convicted as an enemy of Socialism, a Zionist, and capitalist agent.” In response to Western protesters, joined by Euro-Communists, Czech newspapers and broadcasts in a rare exercise of retraction later described these reports as “inaccurate.” Said *Rudé Právo*, March 12, 1977: “The decision on the full rehabilitation of Rudolf Slánský, Ota Sling, and other comrades has not been changed in any respect; it has never been revoked and is therefore fully valid.” Responsibility for the blunder, the paper insisted, rested with the editors of the respective media. Since there was “no censorship in Czechoslovakia,” the paper held, it is “incorrect to regard every statement in the press, on radio or TV as the official view of the party or the state organs.” The incident was a stark reminder, 25 years after the 1952 purges in which 11 leading Communists, seven of them Jews, were executed, that the mentality of some leading members of the CP establishment had undergone little change.

“Charter 77”

Evidence of this has also been provided by some of the efforts of the party machinery to counter the effects of the “Charter 77” human rights manifesto, published on January 6, 1977, which, the signers stated was not a statement of political opposition, but a petition to their government to guarantee their civil, economic, social, and cultural rights under the Czechoslovak constitution, the international covenants and the Helsinki declaration. From the outset, the document was classed as having been produced “on order of the anti-Communist and Zionist headquarters.” A government-inspired whispering campaign had it that “between 100–150” of the initial 240 prominent Czechs who signed the declaration were Jews. One of the signers arrested (and still in prison at the close of August 1977), the Prague journalist Jiří Lederer, was characterized by Prague radio as “such a Jewish creature . . . a man of the Jewish stripling type . . . a Jewish toady of true Viennese vintage.” Ironically, the commentator added that he “could go no further lest he expose himself to charges of antisemitism.”

Another Jewish signer, arrested with Lederer, was Ota Ornest, a Prague theatrical producer twice decorated for his work by the Communists, who, during World War

II had been with the broadcasting services of the Czech government-in-exile in London. He is believed to be suffering from a serious heart condition. Both Lederer and Ornest were designated prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International in the spring of 1977. On May 20, 1977, Prague radio announced that investigations "in the criminal cases of the accused Ota Ornest and Jiří Lederer have been recently concluded and the cases were passed on to the public prosecutor for further action." It also reported the release of playwright Václav Havel (who, it was claimed, had "relinquished acting as spokesman for 'Charter 77' so as not to participate in actions which could be misused for campaigns against Czechoslovakia") and of František Pavlíček, director of Prague's Vinohrady Theater, adding that "criminal proceedings against Havel were continuing after his release." According to the same source, passports had been issued to Zdeněk Mlynář, a former leading member of the Communist Party Central Committee and one of the party's foremost ideologists, and to his wife Irene Dubská, enabling them to emigrate to Austria.

Political Prisoners

The amnesty proclaimed by President Ludvík Svoboda on February 22, 1973, brought no immediate relief to those who had suffered for their political views, as it excluded political and major economic offenders, as well as "those who had slandered any state of the socialist community or representatives; persons sentenced for violating state secrets, spying or harming the interests of Czechoslovakia abroad." Amnesty International was to summarize the position succinctly in a position paper published in London on March 27, 1977: "Laws under which many political prisoners were charged in Czechoslovakia were of such a nature that practically any political activity could be called an offense."

In Bohemia-Moravia, 3,000 persons were under "protective surveillance" in 1975. From Slovakia, Bratislava radio reported in 1976 that 1,500 persons had been sentenced for "acts against state organs and public functionaries." Prof. Dr. F. Janouch of the Nuclear Physics Institute of Copenhagen (who had left Czechoslovakia in 1973) pointed to the economic harassment of political prisoners. Even if released only on remand, they were frequently presented with bills for maintenance in prison and payment of "defense lawyers" provided by the state amounting to seven to ten months' average earnings. There was also job and educational discrimination against their families.

In 1976 Dr. Hubert Stein, sentenced in 1971 by the Prague City Court in a secret trial to 12 years' imprisonment on charges of espionage (AJYB, 1976 [Vol. 76], p. 393), was released a few months after Amnesty International had adopted him as a prisoner of conscience. He was one of three Jewish defendants among six arraigned on the same charges, including his wife Milada Kubiasová. By mid-1977 no reports were available on the fate of Dr. Stein's codefendants.

In January 1977 Czech media reported the arrest, on October 21, 1976, of Josef Grohmann (see above), who was also director of the state publishing house for

technical literature from 1963–1968, deputy minister of culture from 1966–67, and permanent representative to UNESCO since 1969, on charges of espionage on behalf of Western intelligence services.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

After the 1972–1976 changes in communal leadership, a new pattern emerged. With Dr. Bedřich Bass heading the Jewish community in Bohemia-Moravia, Julius Eherenthal in Slovakia, and Dr. František Kafka in Prague, the affairs of Czechoslovak Jewry were for the first time conducted by men who had, at best, been only marginally associated with prewar community efforts. And some of their deputies were altogether newcomers in the field.

On assuming office in March 1975 in the presence of the director for church affairs of the Czech ministry of culture, Bass called for “unreserved adherence to the building of the Socialist state,” and described relations between the government and the Jewish community as “at present positive.” Jews, he held, were “citizens of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic of the Jewish faith,” who must “never be in conflict with the laws of the land,” and urged “heightened political involvement” by communal publications. Religious observance, he claimed, posed no problems. Since, however, there was “no chance in the foreseeable future” to engage a rabbi to fill the vacant post, a Collegium of Ministers had been established to resolve such matters as disputes over religious observance “in a clearcut fashion in accordance with present-day requirements,” without any change in “fundamental laws.” The problem of the 400 abandoned cemeteries in Bohemia-Moravia, Bass pointed out, could be solved only in cooperation with the state. Charitable work would have to continue in cases where “even the most progressive social legislation offers inadequate protection,” and the community was “prepared to accept funds from abroad” for this purpose. Dr. Bass insisted that his predecessor had resigned for “personal reasons and because of ill-health.” In a subsequent broadcast he maintained that elections had been held “because the five-year term of office had expired.” In an unprecedented move, on June 20, 1975, Dr. Bass gave a “pledge of loyalty to the Czecho-Slovak Socialist Republic” to Minister of Culture Milan Klusák.

At the end of November 1975 Bass attended as an observer a London meeting of the European Branch of the World Jewish Congress in London—the first time since 1971 that a representative of Czechoslovakia participated in an international Jewish meeting. On his return to Prague, he declared in broadcast on December 25:

We are not Zionists and do not support Zionism, which has increasingly turned into the tool of an imperialist policy against Czechoslovakia, the USSR and other socialist states. We are not against Israel, but we do not agree with the policy of Israel's aggressive Zionist forces, prolonging occupation of Arab territories and rejecting realistic negotiations in the spirit of the UN Security Council resolutions.

World Conference on Soviet Jewry

In February 1976 Czech and Slovak Jewish leaders were forced to participate in organized protests against the Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry held in Brussels February 17–19, and to insist that the gathering had “nothing to do with concern for Jewish coreligionists in socialist countries” and was “in conflict with the spirit of Helsinki.” In broadcasts attacking the Conference, Bass objected to the participation of American Jewish leaders who, he claimed, had been described by Nahum Goldmann at the recent WJC session as “cold warriors.” Goldmann later denied ever having made such a statement. These broadcasts, in which Bohumil Heller, vice-chairman of the Council of Religious Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, Dr. Rudolf Iltis, its general secretary, František Kafka and Julius Ehrenthal of the Union in Slovakia participated, were relayed to Britain, Germany, Africa, and Asia, and received wide coverage on Czech and Slovak radio and TV, and by the ČTK news agency for several days just before the Conference opened. The full text of an “Open Letter” from the Czechoslovak Jewish leaders to the conference organizers was published by *Rudé Právo* on February 14 under the heading “We Are Loyal Citizens of the ČSSR.”

Czech-Jewish observers were again permitted to attend as observers the World Jewish Congress meeting in Madrid at the close of 1976. Dr. Iltis went on a lecture tour of West Germany in the same year, and František Fuchs was granted permission to spend six months in the United States with members of his family. Czech and Slovak communal leaders occasionally also attended interdenominational meetings in the country. No Western Jewish leaders were invited to Czechoslovakia during the period under review.

The increased politicization of the Jewish communal leadership was reflected in an official announcement published in the March 1977 issue of *Věstník*:

In publishing the text of the statement by the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech Lands on the so-called “Charter 77” . . . the Czechoslovak news agency, which passed it on to the press and other media, committed a serious error in referring to persons of “Jewish nationality.” They should correctly be described as “persons of Jewish origin and faith.” The responsible editor of the ČTK has personally apologized to us for this mistake, and we have accepted his apology. Therefore, the Council of Jewish Religious Communities will not insist on the formal publication of a correction, in accordance with existing press laws. We ask for the understanding of members of our community.

Members of the community will no doubt have wondered why a similarly strict approach had not been applied in the past to the many vicious antisemitic attacks, not infrequently published or distributed by the same official news agency.

Demography

Jewish leaders in Czechoslovakia estimated the membership of the Jewish communities in January 1977 at some 6,000, equally divided between Bohemia-Moravia

and Slovakia, with 1,000 of them in Prague. If "persons of Jewish origin and faith" not identifying with the communal organizations were to be added, the International Council of Jews from Czechoslovakia held, the actual Jewish population would be between 12,000 and 15,000. A survey of the International Council of Jews from Czechoslovakia (ICJC) in London, at the end of 1977, found "identifiable Jews" living in 108 localities, 82 in Bohemia-Moravia and 26 in Slovakia.

ICJC's 1976 analysis of the age structure of communal members, based on birthday announcements and obituaries published by *Věstník* provided a "sample" of 292, or almost five per cent, of the assumed communal membership of 6,000 for scrutiny. Of these, 31 (10.6 per cent) were between the ages of 28 and 60, with 12 of them 50 years old; 37 (12.7 per cent) in the 61–65 age group, with 31 of them 65 years of age; 68 (23.3 per cent) in the 66–70 age group, with 56 of them 70 years old; 84 (28.8 per cent) in the 71–80 age bracket, with 32 of them aged 75 and 26 aged 80; 65 (22.3 per cent) in the 81–90 age group. All these figures should be read against the median age of the total population, reported to have risen from about 63 in 1949 to 70 in 1974.

During the period *Věstník* reported one circumcision and one religious wedding in Prague.

Emigration

There were some single cases of emigration from Czechoslovakia in 1975–77, but family reunions continued to be impeded by severe financial conditions imposed on those granted emigration visas. These included reimbursement of cost of education and professional training, and forfeiture of pension rights. A number of Jews of German cultural background were believed to have benefited from the bilateral agreement on emigration between Czechoslovakia and Federal Germany. It was known that among the Jews who were permitted to leave the USSR for Israel were a few of Czechoslovak origin who had gone to the Soviet Union after World War II. An estimated 30,000 Jews of Czechoslovak origin were now living in Israel.

Another aftermath of the Holocaust was that inquiries continued to be received from Czechoslovakia by the ICRC-controlled International Tracing Service at Arolsen, Federal Republic of Germany, on missing persons and incarceration certificates. There were 1,417 such inquiries in 1975, against 1,383 in the preceding year.

Community and Religious Activities

Of the 108 localities where, according to ICJC, Jews were living, about 30 (20 in Bohemia-Moravia; 10 in Slovakia) reported some communal activities, such as religious services conducted in synagogues or private homes and meetings commemorating the Holocaust. In rare instances, small communities have been merged with others located nearest to them. Synagogue services continued at the Jerusalem

and Old-New synagogues in Prague, in Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava, Galanta, Košice, and other towns. The synagogue schedules for Prague and, later in 1977, also for Brno were published in *Věstník*, the Jewish community's monthly organ.

The ancient Pinkas synagogue of Prague, one of the city's principal tourist attractions, continued to be boarded up. Restoration work, begun in 1950, was proceeding at snail's pace on the pretext that a private tenant on the top floor of the synagogue building constituted an impediment. The synagogue contains the memorial tablets with the names of 77,000 Jewish victims of the Holocaust from Bohemia-Moravia, which were now dangerously affected by rising dampness from the Vltava river.

Hundreds of other synagogues throughout the country—300 in Bohemia-Moravia alone—were no longer in use and the buildings were badly damaged. Many of them have been transformed into warehouses, schools, or offices. Yet, the Czech government claimed to have spent Kč 180 million in Prague alone in 1976 on the restoration of "more than 200 historical buildings."

The rabbinical post for Bohemia-Moravia remained vacant after the death of Dr. Richard Feder in 1970 and after the refusal of a rabbinical candidate to return to Czechoslovakia after completing his studies in Budapest and London. At the beginning of 1976 it was announced that an 18-year-old student had again volunteered to attend the rabbinical seminary in Budapest, and that "appropriate steps" had been taken with the authorities. Thus far, there has been no follow-up to this statement.

The synagogue, *bet ha-midrash*, *mikvah*, and the rabbi's apartment in Galanta (Slovakia) were reported to have been expropriated in 1976. The report was later denied by the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia, but the officiating rabbi for Slovakia, Izidor Katz, moved from Galanta to Bratislava at the close of the year, and in mid-1977 was promoted by the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia to "chief rabbi."

During the period under survey, *Věstník* reported the liquidation of 13 cemeteries in the country including three in Bohemia-Moravia and ten in Slovakia.

Facilities for *kashrut* continued to be maintained in Prague and, privately, in Bratislava and Košice. An allocation of Israeli wine was allowed into the country for the Passover 1977.

Cultural Attrition

The Jewish community continued to suffer from systematized cultural attrition, partly induced by government policy which sponsors atheism and treats communal bodies as strictly religious institutions, while gearing them to political activities when required. As a result, there were neither Jewish cultural societies, nor lectures on Jewish subjects, and existing communal publications turned almost exclusively to the distant past of a once flourishing Jewish community.

However, several Jewish cultural events not organized by the community occurred in 1976. The Prague Viola Theater of Poetry devoted ten evenings to readings of Heinrich Heine's prose and poetry, translated by Jindřich Flusser. František

Langer's play *Periphery* was well received at the Prague National Theatre. A memorial plaque for Franz Kafka was unveiled in 1976 at the Palais Schönborn (Kafka's residence in 1917 and now the seat of the United States Embassy) by Jack Perry, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Prague.

There was no link between the government-controlled State Jewish Museum, which allegedly had supervision of all public historic Jewish edifices in Prague, and was in charge of the 41,000 exhibits from 504 prewar Jewish communities and the present Jewish community. The museum has been purged of all Jewish staff; last to have been dismissed at the close of 1975 were the historian Jan Herman and Anna Hyndráková, a survivor of Terezín. Erik Klima, the museum's director since the dismissal of Vilém Benda in 1972, was relieved of his post at the end of 1976, and replaced by another non-Jew, Miroslav Jaroš, equal in qualification in that he lacked knowledge of Jewish history. The museum's journal, *Judaica Bohemiae*, continued publication as a biannual, with an increasing tendency to apply Marxist-Leninist principles to the treatment of ancient Jewish history.

The peripheral position of the Jewish community in matters affecting it again became apparent when, in January 1977, the ČTK news agency reported the discovery of a 12th-century Jewish settlement in the heart of Prague during excavations for an extension of the Prague Metro. The community had not been notified of the discovery before the press announcement, nor had it been invited by either the Soviet special commissioner for the construction of the Prague metro, who controlled the building project, or by the municipal authorities, to evaluate the discovery. The excavations have reportedly laid bare remnants of an unknown Jewish quarter beneath Hradčín Castle, a market place, and a Jewish cemetery believed to be older than the ancient Prague cemetery dating from the early 15th century and other landmarks of Jewish settlement in the Josefov district, the city's former Jewish Town.

A further indication of the attempt by the authorities to undermine Jewish life was the politicization of Holocaust memorial meetings, especially at Terezín which sealed the fate of 250,000 Jews, chiefly from Bohemia-Moravia and Slovakia. In 1975-1977, the traditional commemorations of the Jewish community increasingly gave way to rallies marking the "liberation of Terezín by the Soviet Army," peace demonstrations, and Communist party anniversaries. An exhibition of photographs at the notorious "small fortress" of Terezín depicted Hiroshima and Vietnam, but not the camp's fatal role in the Holocaust. In 1976 a "Hall of Traditions" was introduced at the Terezín memorial as a "prominent place for the galaxy of leading members and associates of the illegal Central Committee of the CP, which established the renowned tradition of Terezín by its heroic fight in the concentration camp." An audio-visual program for tourists focuses on the "development of Terezín in the postwar years," with only a casual reference to the "troubled history of Terezín during World War II." No doubt as a result of this shift in accent, there has been, according to *Věstník*, a drop in Jewish attendance at the memorial meetings.

Publications

Besides *Věstník*, the German-language *Informationsbulletin* (mimeographed) continued publication, as did *Židovská Ročenka*, the annual almanac—all under the editorship of Rudolph Iltis, general secretary of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Prague until his death. The editorial policy of self-imposed censorship continued; the publications did not even react to the strongest antisemitic attacks by the public media. There was, however, some evidence of more extensive coverage by *Věstník* of “non-controversial” events in the Western Jewish communities.

An anthology of sermons, speeches, and articles by Dr. Gustav Sicher, the late chief rabbi of Czechoslovakia, *Choose Life*, edited by Rudolph Iltis, was published in 1975, and in a second edition in 1976. Rabbi Sicher left Czechoslovakia in 1939 and, after World War II, returned to the chief rabbinate, which he held until 1960. A *Hebrew-Czech Dictionary*, edited by Blahoslav Pipal, a Protestant clergyman, was published in Prague in 1975, and was sold out almost immediately. By the end of 1975 six of 14 volumes of a new Czech translation of the Scriptures (projected 1970) had reportedly been published in Prague up to the end of 1975. The translation, the work of the Old Testament Translation Commission headed by Pater Kalich, was described by *Věstník* as “the first modern work in this field since the publication of the Kralice Bible.”

The State Jewish Museum project of a new *History of Czechoslovak Jewry* was abandoned in 1976, since Dr. Koloman Gajan, one of the three principal authors commissioned, had been “removed” from the CP list in 1975. At that time, Gajan, a professor of modern history at Charles University who had spent the war years in a Nazi concentration camp, was refused access to the museum’s library, which was also closed to Western and Israeli researchers. Richard Feder’s volume of essays and sermons, *Life and Bequest* (1973) was published in a second edition in 1975, but was withdrawn from bookstores a year later presumably because it contained a preface by František Fuchs, former chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities.

Among other books of Jewish interest published in Czechoslovakia since 1975 were: Joža Mikula, *Children Behind Bars* (on the wartime fate of children of German-Czech mixed marriages); *Pohořelice* (published by an authors’ collective to mark the 750th anniversary of this Moravian town, and containing substantial references to the fate of its Jewish inhabitants); František Bielík and Elo Rákoš, *Slovak Emigration, Volume II: 1919–1939* (slanted against Jews); Karel Kašák, *Assassins Without Alibi*; Bohumír Polách, *The Perplexions of Lt. Col. Prokop*; Jiří Loukotka and others, *On Topical Questions of Atheism*; Jiří Hájek, *We Walk the Streets Again*; Jaroslav Žižka, *Against the Occupants* (party and people in the fight against the Nazis).

Authors of Czechoslovak origin, including emigrants of the 1968–69 period, have in recent years increasingly published outside Czechoslovakia. The following works,

published in various languages, including the Czech and Slovak, complement the list of publications of Jewish interest within Czechoslovakia:

H.G. Adler, *The Administered Man* (German; for which he received the Buber-Rosenzweig prize in Germany [AJYB, 1976 (Vol. 76), p. 347]); H.G. Adler, *The Freedom of Man* (German); *An American Baedeker: Poems by Jiřina Fuchs*, illustrations by George Karger (English); Ludvík Ařkenazy, *Paul, Pauline and the Yellow Tiger* (German); Joshua Robert Bůchler, *Topolřany: The Story of the Jewish Community* (English, German, Hebrew); Pavel Eisner, *Czech by Touch and Ear* (Czech); Pavel Eisner, *To Mother*, a selection of popular songs (Czech); Ota Filip, *A Clown in Town* (Czech); M.R.D. Foot, *Resistance* (English; including a chapter on Czechoslovakia); Peter Gosztony, *Hitler's Foreign Armies* (German); Ladislav Grosman, *Head Against the Wall* (Czech); Michael Jacot, *The Children of Terezín* (French); Emil F. Knieřa, *Make Me Responsible for All of It* (Slovakian) and *Jankel Tannenbaum's Squadron* (German edition of *The Kosher Squadron*); Ivan Kraus, *It Will All Dehydrate* (Czech); Erich Kulka, *Collection of Testimonies and Documents on the Participation of Czechoslovak Jews in the War Against Germany* (English); Erich Kulka, *The Plight of Jewish Refugees from Czechoslovakia in the USSR* (English; in *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. XI); Jiří Langer, *The Chassidic Mysteries: Nine Gates* (English); A.J. Liehm, *The Happenings of Miloř Forman* (Czech); Arnost Lustig, *Darkness Casts no Shadow* and *Night and Hope* (English; from *Children of the Holocaust series*); John Lukacs, *The Last European War* (English; with a substantial chapter on Jews in Central and Eastern Europe); Adina Mandlová, *Today I Laugh About It* (Czech); Bert Nagel, *Franz Kafka* (German); Jiří Pelikan, *A Spring That Never Ends: Recollections of a Prague Communist* (German); Walter Skaupy, *Accused* (German; with a substantial chapter on the Slansky trials); Josef Skvořecký, *Miss Silver's Past* (English); *The End of Sergeant Borůvka* (Czech); *The Tank Battalion* (Czech); Káthe Starke, *The Führer Gives the Jews a Town* (German; illustrated volume on Terezín); Friedrich Torberg, *The Second Encounter* (German); Jaroslav Válek, *The Sad Man* (Czech); Jiří Weil, *Life With the Star* (German); Zbyněk Zeman, *The Masaryks* (English).

In a list of 148 Czech authors blacklisted in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of 1976, some of them dead or in exile, many were of Jewish origin, among them Stanislav Budín, Ivo Fleischmann, Jiří Fried, Eduard Goldstůcker, Ladislav Grosman, Egon Hostovsky, Ivan Klíma, Erich Kulka, Gabriel Laub, Jiří Lederer, Eugen Lůbl, Arthur London, Arnořt Lustig, Bedřich Uttitz, Bedřich Wiener, and Kamil Winter. Also banned were the works by or on Thomas G. Masaryk, founder-president of Czechoslovakia.

Personalia

In 1975 Frantiřek Kafka was elected chairman of the Prague Jewish community to succeed Pavel Kollmann; Arno Steiner was deputy chairman. In 1976 Jiří Fried was appointed secretary of the Prague Jewish community to succeed Rudolf Iltis,

who relinquished this part of his communal functions. Julius Ehrenthal was elected chairman of the Union of Jewish Communities in Slovakia, succeeding Benjamin Eichler now living in Canada. Izák Fleischer was elected chairman of the newly-created Collegium of Ministers at the Council of Jewish Religious Communities.

Rudolf Iltis died in Prague in August, at the age of 78. Norbert Frýd, the Prague author and former Czech cultural attaché in Mexico, a survivor of Terezín, died in Prague in 1976. Some of his volumes reflected concentration camp life. Liza Fuchsová, the renowned pianist, died in London in 1977, at age 63.

KARL BAUM

Soviet Bloc Nations

AMONG THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES in Eastern Europe, those in Poland, Hungary, and Rumania occupied a special place both in terms of their traditional role in Jewish religious and cultural life in past centuries and of their valiant efforts to maintain Jewish life under present difficult conditions. All three countries are in the so-called socialist sector of Europe, but their relations with the dominant Soviet Union were different in both practice and outlook. Poland, at this writing, was the most conforming of Moscow satellites. Hungary, while conforming, permitted itself some divergent approaches to economic management, and perhaps more freedom in the arts and literature. Both countries accepted the primacy of Moscow in the world Communist movement. Rumania pursued an independent line in foreign policy and insisted on following its own path to the realization of the socialist society. The political structures of the three countries directly affected the status of their Jewish communities.

Poland

There were no changes in the top leadership of the government during the period under review. Edward Gierek was secretary-general of the Polish Communist party (PPZR) and Piotr Jaroszewicz was prime minister. The country experienced a violent crisis in June 1976, when the government ended its five-year experiment in price-freezing and announced a substantial increase in food prices. The reaction of the working population was reminiscent of the events in 1970, when workers' riots following an increase in food prices forced the removal of Wladislaw Gomulka as the party's secretary-general. Workers struck in protest against the increases; railroad tracks were torn up; shops in Radom were set afire. Two demonstrators were killed and 75 policemen were injured. The authorities understood the clear message of the events and soon decided to withdraw the new economic regulations. Some of the strikers were brought to trial in July 1976 on charges of damaging state property valued at about \$1.5 million, and 13 were sentenced to prison. After the riots, relations between workers and government worsened, and an atmosphere of tension prevailed.

In September 1976 a Workers Defense Committee was organized by a group of intellectuals and professionals to help the families of those jailed or dismissed from their jobs. The committee, representative of the dissident mood in the country, included, among many others, the Marxist historian Edward Lipinski, the writer Jerzy Andrzejewski, the actor Daniel Olbrychski, and the pop singer Maryla Rodowicz. A letter to the government, signed by 172 writers and actors and 28 professors, requested an inquiry into the actions of the police in quelling riots.

There were bitter complaints about lack of consumer products. The Catholic Church, on September 10 issued an appeal to all classes of Polish society to make sacrifices and have confidence in the government, and ordered it to be read in all churches. Kazimierz Kokol, head of the government's office of religious affairs, acknowledged the help given by the Church. In November, however, Polish bishops, in a pastoral letter signed by Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski that was read in all Catholic churches, protested attacks on religious faith, particularly in the field of education.

In December the government decided to give priority to the production of consumer goods. New people were brought into the cabinet, among them Minister of Administration and Environment Maria Milczarek, to succeed Emil Wojtaszek, who became the foreign minister. Details of a five-year development plan for 1976-80, submitted to parliamentary committees, included a rise of \$6 billion in investment in consumer-goods industries. Other planned investments were in housing, agriculture, and food. At the same time, a new price structure was being prepared for food and consumer goods.

In the spring of 1977, the authorities, disturbed by the spread of dissent, raided several apartments of oppositionists. A new opposition group, Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights of Man, similar to groups monitoring the Helsinki agreement in the USSR, sprang up in Warsaw. The Communist party daily *Trybuna Ludu* denounced the new group as anti-Polish and accused it of "blind servility to foreign anti-Communist centers." The movement of dissent continued, however, with strong support from the working masses.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population of Poland, including some Jews who did not want to be identified with the Jewish community and were integrating into Polish society, stood at about 6,000. Some 1,500 were affiliated with the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, of which Edward Reiber, who continued to be in poor health, was president. Shmuel Tenenblat was vice-president and Ruta Gutkowska secretary. There were functioning departments of the Union in Wroclaw, Katowice, Zary, Bielsko-Biala, Walbrzych, Dzierzoniow, Krakow, Lodz, Gliwice, Szczecin, Swidnica, and other towns. Under the new administrative division of the country (AJYB, 1977 [Vol. 77], p. 477), local Jewish Unions were to be transformed into "Jewish Circles," directed by Central Union in Warsaw through a system of inspectors.

Polish authorities did not encourage Jewish activities, but a small group of Jewish activists continued their work. Polish Jewish representatives participated in a conference of Jewish communal leaders from the USSR, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Rumania, which took place in Bucharest in September 1976.

The Jewish community had a disproportionately large number of aged persons, and the social base of Jewish life was steadily narrowing. Except for services which

some older Jews were able to conduct under certain circumstances, Jewish religious life in Poland was disintegrating. There were no rabbis and no *mohalim*, and it was difficult to find the *minyanim* needed for public prayer. The Union of Religious Congregations, which claimed 18 affiliated local congregations, continued to operate. With the help of the authorities, *matzot* were made available for Jews observing Passover. Kosher meat, however, was rare in many cities, including Krakow.

There were no Jewish schools, and Jewish cultural activities had largely been liquidated. Jewish clubs existed in some cities, and lectures on Jewish subjects were given from time to time by visitors from Warsaw. The Yiddish weekly, *Folks-shtimme*, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in October 1976, continued to appear. Although bilingual, it did not attract younger readers. To the extent that it could be ascertained, no Jewish books were known to have been published in Poland during the period under review. The Jewish Historical Institute continued its activities, but strict party control made it doubtful that it will be able to publish objective studies on the Jewish situation in Poland. The rich archival resources of the Institute were strictly supervised and were made available only for specific purposes in accordance with the wishes of the party. The director of the Institute was Mauritz Horn.

The Jewish state-supported theater, under the direction of Shimon Shurmily, continued to produce Yiddish plays, providing audiences with simultaneous Polish translations, since the theater attracted a substantial number of non-Jews and some Jews who could not follow the original Yiddish text.

The annual commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt took place as usual, but was losing its Jewish character. This obviously was the desire of the authorities, who were not overly interested in recalling the Jewish past.

Hungary

For some time, the Communist leadership of Hungary, one of the countries of the Soviet bloc, has been trying to establish a free, market-oriented economy. Consumer prices were raised, but the government also increased wages to avoid worker protests similar to those in neighboring Poland. With frontier restrictions lifted, Western tourists came to Hungary. Some Hungarians, who had fled in 1956, were impressed by the changes they saw in the country's social and economic life. About 60,000 of the 200,000 refugees from the Soviet invasion have returned to their country (*New York Times*, October 29, 1976).

The government also tended to allow more freedom in internal life than was the rule in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, Hungary faithfully continued to follow the Soviet Union in foreign policy and proclaimed the primacy of the Communist party. Janos Kadar, secretary-general of the Communist party, had come to power in 1956 with the help of the Russians, and there still were some 60,000 Russian soldiers in the country, a reminder to Hungarians of the reality of their situation. In 1975 Janos Fock was replaced as premier by Gyorgy Lazar, a man in his early fifties, who had

been deputy premier. There were no other important changes in the top state personnel. Among Communist party members, some 750,000 in 1975 were said to be many young people who feel free to join in view of the relatively unregimented social life in Hungary.

After the retirement in February 1974 of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, who had been the Roman Catholic primate of Hungary (he died in May 1975), Pope Paul VI appointed four Hungarian titular bishops, thus improving the relationship between the government and the Catholic Church. In September 1976 the new Primate, Laszlo Cardinal Lekai, who was also named Archbishop of Esztergon, appealed for the continuation of a national dialogue between Marxists and Catholics.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were no changes in the Jewish community. Standing at about 80,000, including Jews who did not participate in Jewish religious or communal activities, the Jewish population in Hungary was the second largest in Eastern Europe. There was no overt antisemitism and little visible expression on the part of Jews of a desire to emigrate. In July 1976 the Jewish community publication *Uj Elet* criticized the state television network for portraying a former SS member as "a victim of circumstances." While Hungary followed the strong anti-Israel stand of Moscow, the status of the Jewish population was satisfactory, and there were no complaints of official discrimination or bias.

Jewish religious life was coordinated by the Central Board of Jewish Communities, which represented the existing religious trends, the Orthodox and Neolog (Conservative). The Board's president was Imre Heber; Frederik Bramer was treasurer. Official records indicated some 70 affiliated Jewish communities maintaining 40 synagogues and a *Bet Din* in Budapest. There were more than 25 rabbis attached to various communities. Rabbi Laszlo Szalgo was spiritual leader of the Great Synagogue in Budapest. The Central Board maintained a ritual bath and a burial society. It supervised *kashrut* and kosher butcher shops, and supplied *matzot* for Passover. Salaries of religious functionaries of all faiths were paid by the authorities, who also provided for all religious needs. At the same time, the number of mixed marriages was increasing, and it was obvious that the younger generation was not interested in maintaining traditional Jewish life.

WELFARE, EDUCATION, CULTURE

The Central Board continued its programs of social welfare and Jewish education. The welfare program provided essentially for older Jews, invalids, and those who could not find employment. Two homes for the aged housed some 100 persons, for whom the community provided health care and kosher food.

Budapest had the only rabbinical-training institution in Eastern Europe, providing

for students from the region, including the Soviet Union. With a small enrollment, the seminary was maintaining adequate standards of Jewish learning under the direction of the well-known scholar Rabbi Alexander Scheiber. Its students conducted religious services several times a year in a number of provincial Jewish communities. Of late, these services attracted an increasing number of young people. The Jewish educational program included a *gymnasium*, providing classes in Jewish studies for high-school students, and a Yeshivah Quetannah for children of elementary school age. The Jewish community conducted an important publication program, including the *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*, a scholarly historical compendium of which 18 volumes were already available; a Jewish prayerbook, and various monographs devoted to Jewish subjects. The educational and cultural work of the community has been supported by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Rumania

There were, from time to time, reports about pressure by Moscow on independent-minded Rumania to return to the fold and support the Moscow brand of socialism. There were also persistent rumors that Rumania and the Soviet Union were nearing a break in relations. Thus far, however, nothing has occurred to confirm these predictions. Rumania was still a member of the Warsaw Pact and of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). However, Rumanian President Nicholas Ceausescu, who was reelected to a five-year term in November 1974 as secretary-general of the Communist party, continued to follow an "independent line to socialism," stating repeatedly that he would not tolerate impingement on Rumanian sovereignty. Thus he rejected the Brezhnev doctrine and, unlike all other countries of the Eastern bloc, retained diplomatic relations with Israel. In August 1976 Ceausescu, who visited Brezhnev in Crimea, reiterated his own doctrine of socialism. From Crimea he flew to Yugoslavia for a meeting with President Tito, the first to proclaim the concept of an "independent road to socialism," which he staunchly pursued for decades. In June 1975 Ceausescu visited Washington, where a trade agreement concluded between Rumania and the United States gave Rumania most-favored-nation status on condition that it complied with the United States request for free emigration for Rumanians wishing to leave the country. In 1976 the United States and Rumania signed a ten-year agreement of economic, industrial, and technical cooperation. The question of continuing the most-favored-nation status for Rumania was being debated in the United States Congress, where some legislators pointed to violations of human rights and denial of free emigration in 1976 and 1977.

Rumania continued to maintain friendly diplomatic relations with Israel. It also carried on a lively trade with Israel, which was promoted by a substantial tourist exchange. In 1976 there was a decline in the number of emigration permits granted Rumanian Jews. Some local observers felt that this was the result of the generally harder line adopted by the Rumanian government.

At home, Ceausescu continued a policy of strict control, censorship, and severe limitations of personal freedom and expression. The first Congress of Political Education and Culture, in which more than 6,000 delegates of all varieties of Communist-dominated cultural and scholarly organizations participated, took place in June 1976. While the state accorded many benefits like adequate income and housing to writers, artists, and scientists who were members of the appropriate Communist-dominated associations, it markedly increased controls and rigid supervision of all creative activities.

Arrests of leading dissident writers and artists continued. Among those arrested were Paul Goma, who was one of a group of eight intellectuals who had appealed to foreign governments to exert pressure on Bucharest to recognize human rights. Goma was later given a passport to Paris, but he refused to use it. It was reported in March 1977 that he allegedly was beaten in his Bucharest apartment by assailants attempting to seize a list of 180 signers of a protest statement. Passports to Paris were also given to Carmen-Maria Menoliu and her son Sergiu, both artists, as well as to Virgil Tonase, a well-known nonconformist novelist. Critic Ion Negoitescu, was charged with acts of moral turpitude and was to stand trial.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

It was estimated that the Jewish population of Rumania numbered 60,000, including Jews who neither belonged to the Jewish community nor identified with secular Jewish activities. The largest community, numbering some 30,000, was in Bucharest. There were some 3,500 Jews in Timisoara, 3,000 in Iassy, 3,000 in Arad, 2,000 in Bacau, 1,500 in Galatzi, 1,000 in Brasov, and 800 in Botosani. The rest were scattered throughout the country. It was an aging community, for the younger people were leaving for Israel—some 710 in 1976.

COMMUNAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Jews enjoyed all religious and social rights within the general political limitations imposed by the regime. Yet the quality of Jewish life continued to decline, and the disproportionate number of aged persons made the outlook for the future of the community a pessimistic one.

Jewish activities were directed by the Federation of Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of 68 local communities and 135 synagogues. Sixty-one synagogues had daily *minyanim*, and 74 held only Sabbath and holiday services. Bucharest had 16 synagogues and a ritual bath. Talmud Torah instruction was provided in 22 communities, and special classes in Judaism and Jewish history as well as Hebrew language study sessions, were attended by youths in many cities. But there were only three rabbis and ten *shochtim* in the country.

The Federation published the semi-monthly *Revista Culturui Mozaic*, which was

issued in three languages (Yiddish, Hebrew, and Rumanian) and had a circulation of about 10,000. Its general editor was Victor Rusu; its Yiddish department was headed by Wolf Tambur, a Yiddish writer. *Revista Culturui* was the only periodical containing Hebrew text in Eastern Europe. It had a section devoted to Jewish theology, rabbinical surveys, and biographies of religious leaders. A Jewish calendar containing other information on Jewish life was issued in some 16,000 copies.

There were no changes in the leadership of the Federation. Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, its president and a member of the state parliament, was the guiding spirit, initiator, and organizer of its Jewish religious and cultural activities. The Federation maintained close contacts with many Jewish organizations, including the World Jewish Congress, and Rabbi Rosen frequently participated in Jewish assemblies held in Europe, the United States, and Israel.

Operating outside the Federation was the state-supported Yiddish theater, directed by Franz-Joseph Auerbach, whose chief dramatist was Izrael Bercovici. In 1976 the theater organized public celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Yiddish theater in Rumania. Both the Jewish communities and the authorities participated in a special public meeting. The theater issued a special 80-page publication of text and illustrations on the occasion of the centennial.

Among Yiddish books published in 1976 by the state publishing house Criterion were Wolf Tambur's *Lebedike meysim* ("Living Corpses") and two volumes of poetry, by Reli Blai and Leon Bertish.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The large number of old persons in the Jewish community required a special program of cash assistance and food parcels for the needy. Eleven kosher restaurants were maintained by the Federation in Bucharest, Arad, Iassy, Doroboi, Bacau, Galatzi, Cluj-Napoca, Oradei, Timisoara, Botosani, and Brazov. They provided daily meals for 2,000 persons, of whom only 30 per cent paid. On Passover they conducted *sedorim*—the one in Bucharest attracted some 800 persons—and distributed *matzot*. The Federation also arranged public celebrations on Purim, Tu bi-Shevat, and Hanukkah.

Through its medical services and health clinics, the Federation provided care for all the aged and sick. Included in the relief program were five homes for the aged—one in Bucharest, two in Dorohoi, and one each in Arad and Timisoara. A building under construction in Bucharest was to house a modern Jewish hospital and a home for some 200 persons. The Federation arranged for the renovation and repair of communal buildings, many of which have served the communities for decades. It also supervised the restoration of graves, particularly the mass graves of victims of the Holocaust and the graves of renowned rabbis and scholars of past centuries.

Among the victims of the earthquake that struck Bucharest in March 1977 were more than 100 Jews. Another 1,000 were injured, and a number were missing. Some

Jewish communal buildings and several old cemeteries were damaged. In response to an appeal by Rabbi Rosen for help, the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) allocated \$30,000 to the community to assist in reconstruction and relief work. On his visit to New York in April 1977, Rabbi Rosen reported that on the Sabbath after the catastrophe special prayers giving thanks for the rescue from danger were recited in the synagogue.

The Federation financed its own activities, but received state funds to pay salaries of religious personnel and administrative employees. It also received financial assistance from JDC for its welfare program and from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture for its cultural and educational work.

COMMEMORATION OF THE CATASTROPHE

On July 19, 1976, the Jewish community of Iassy memorialized the 12,000 victims killed by the Nazis and their Rumanian collaborators. Rabbi Rosen and representatives of the Communist party and the state spoke at the ceremony, at which a monument to the victims was unveiled.

LEON SHAPIRO