

# Eastern Europe

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## Soviet Union

**D**URING THE YEAR under review the ascendancy of Communist Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev was apparent in matters of domestic policy, as well as in foreign relations. He continued to represent the centrist line, a balance between the "Stalinists" and the "liberals." However, indications of the development of a new personality cult, around Brezhnev, augured ill for "liberal" hopes in the Soviet Union.

Suppression of dissent continued unabated. In April V. Pavlenkov, a history teacher, and three students in the city of Gorki in the Volga region were reported to have been convicted and sent to a labor camp for distributing a tract denouncing the revival of Stalinist practices in the USSR. Pavlenkov and one of the students, Kapranov, were sentenced to seven-year terms; the other two students to six and five years, respectively. In Kharkov, Ukraine, Arkady Levin was sentenced to a three-year term in a labor camp for signing petitions demanding the democratization of the regime.

Detention of political dissidents in mental institutions had become a common practice. Zhores M. Medvedev, a biologist known for his liberal views, was arrested and placed in such an institution in Kaluga. His book, *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*, which attacked the Lysenko genetic theories promoted under Stalin, was published in the West. The writer Natalia Gorbanevskaya was placed in a mental hospital for participating in "anti-Soviet actions." General Pyotr Grigorenko, who had been arrested earlier on charges of political dissidence, was also confined in a Kazan institution. His commitment was condemned in a joint protest by Andrei Sakharov, Vladimir Turchin, Mikhail Leontovitch, and Valery Chelidze, all well-known scientists. Sakharov, Turchin, and historian Roy Medvedev, brother of Zhores M., reportedly issued an appeal for gradual democratization. According to reports, Anatoly Levitin-Krasnov, the well-known Greek-Orthodox religious crusader of Jewish origin, was released from custody, but was re-arrested soon thereafter.

Yuri Daniel, who had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for "slandering the Soviet state," was released in September upon completion of his term (AJYB, 1966 [Vol. 67], p. 368).

In the meantime, Soviet authorities adopted a new law to replace the

1961 law permitting the prosecution and exile of persons characterized as "parasites" by local officials. While the old law permitted the internment of dissidents in labor camps under the pretext that they were not engaged in "productive activity," the new law appeared to place the emphasis on work, enabling authorities to force such persons to work in certain designated enterprises.

The Kremlin's harsh antidissident policy was reflected also in the assault on "liberal" intellectuals who were not active in the opposition, but demanded the right to express their opinions on matters of general concern. Alexandr Tvardovsky, editor of *Novy Mir*, the oldest Soviet "liberal" journal and for many years a target of conservative attack, resigned in February in protest against repeated Party attempts to undermine his authority and change the character of the publication. Vasily Kosolapov, a moderate, took over the editorship. At the same time, four members of *Novy Mir's* editorial board were ousted, among them Vladimir Lakshin, a critic known for his spirited defense of the writings of Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, winner of the 1970 Nobel Prize for literature.

Illustrative of the mood in certain Moscow circles was Ivan Shevtsov's novel, *In the Name of the Father and of the Son*, published by the regional publishing house Moscovski Rabotchi. The book vehemently attacked Western culture, "liberal" views, and "foreign" Zionist ideology, and defended Stalin's fight against Trotsky who, according to Shevtsov, was a Zionist masquerading as a Soviet militant. The novel's tone and language were such that even *Pravda* (July 12, 1970) felt impelled to criticize it as "ideologically and artistically weak." But the critique apparently appeared only after the novel had passed the rigid censorship and thousands of copies had been distributed.

### *Economic Policies*

In spring 1970 the Kremlin launched a widespread campaign of self-criticism focusing on the performance of state-directed enterprises. The Soviet press reported that large quantities of consumer goods could not be sold because they were inferior in quality. Workers, managers, Party officials, and technical specialists were harshly criticized for the Soviet economy's mediocre performance. According to official figures, the rate of economic growth in 1969 was some 7 per cent, compared to 8 and 10 per cent in 1968 and 1967, respectively. Brezhnev appealed to the patriotism of the workers and exhorted them to devote all their time and thought to improving the lagging Soviet economy. This time, however, he did not emphasize, as he had in the past, incentives and profit for workers. With the approach of the Lenin centenary celebration, the Soviet press abruptly ended the campaign of self-criticism, which unwittingly played into the hands of the dissident intellectuals who for many years had pointed to the ineptness of Party technocrats and managers.

Despite the rigidity of the Soviet economic setup, roving bands of "drop-outs" applying for all sorts of temporary jobs have of late appeared in many parts of the country. Living outside the mainstream of society, they were in a way similar to the tramps or hippies of the West. Authorities were taking measures to control these individuals, who somehow avoided registration for identity cards, union affiliation, and the like, and in fact showed signs of independence regarded as dangerous to the state.

### *The Party*

At a July 2 meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow, it was decided to postpone the scheduled 24th Party Congress until March 1971 (*Pravda*, July 14, 1970). Some local observers attributed this move to a complicated political struggle within the Politburo. However, at the Supreme Soviet's summer session, held at the same time as the Party plenum, Nikolai Podgorny was reelected chairman of the Supreme Soviet and Aleksei Kosygin, premier. Their reelection was proposed by Brezhnev. As far as could be ascertained, there was no change in the leadership group.

### *Foreign Relations*

During the summer 1970 session of the Supreme Soviet, party ideologist Mikhail Suslov, discussed the Kremlin's current pro-Arab policy. At the same time, Boris Ponomarev, a high party official, accused the United States of having been behind the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk's regime in Cambodia and expressed Soviet support of the rebellious forces led by the former ruler. Relations between the Soviet Union and Communist China did not improve. Mutual denunciations continued, and Soviet officials made it clear that the Russo-Chinese border was well guarded by Soviet soldiers. There was little hope that the deadlocked Russo-Chinese talks would ever lead to a mutually satisfactory agreement between the two countries.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population in the Soviet Union at the end of 1969 was estimated at some 2,620,000. This figure was computed on the basis of official Soviet estimates made between the censuses, and was to be adjusted after the 1970 census. Some Soviet sources, including the official press, estimated the Jewish population at about 3 million. However, the 1970 census did not show an expected increase in the population; it showed an actual decline, as indicated in the table below:

<i>Soviet Republics</i>	<i>Jewish Population<sup>a</sup></i>	
	<i>1959</i>	<i>1970</i>
Russian SFSR	875,307	808,000
Ukrainian SSR	840,311	777,000
Byelorussian SSR	150,084	148,000
Moldavian SSR	95,107	98,000
Uzbek SSR	94,344	103,000
Georgian SSR	51,582	55,000
Azerbaijani SSR	40,204	42,000 <sup>b</sup>
Latvian SSR	36,592	37,000
Kazakh SSR	28,048	28,000 <sup>b</sup>
Lithuanian SSR	24,672	24,000
Tadzhik SSR	12,415	12,500 <sup>b</sup>
Kirghiz SSR	8,610	8,500 <sup>b</sup>
Estonian SSR	5,436	5,300
Turkmen SSR	4,078	4,000 <sup>b</sup>
Armenian SSR	1,024	1,000 <sup>b</sup>
	<hr/> 2,267,814	<hr/> 2,151,300

<sup>a</sup> The 1959 figures are as given in the census. The 1970 figures are based on information gathered from the Soviet press and are rounded out (*Izvestia*, April 17, 1971).

<sup>b</sup> 1970 figures were not available; therefore we used 1959 figures, except in the case of Azerbaijan, where the Jewish population is relatively large and probably showed an increase, as was the case in other Asiatic communities. The figures will have to be adjusted when all the census material becomes available.

According to the table, the Jewish population increased in Moldavia (by 3,000), in Uzbekistan (by 8,600), in Georgia (by 3,400), in Azerbaijan (by 2,000), and by a total of 1,000 in all other republics together. It decreased in the RSFSR (by 67,000), in the Ukrainian SSR (by 63,000), and in Byelorussian SSR (by 2,000). This resulted in a net decrease of approximately 116,000, bringing the Jewish population in the Soviet Union in 1970 to some 2,151,000. Soviet demographers suggested that the decline in Jewish population was the result of a natural process of assimilation. It would appear doubtful that a change of such magnitude could have occurred over a period of ten years. If the Soviet figures are correct, they would indicate that hundreds of thousands of Jews had suddenly decided to change their nationality. (The rules of the census formally left it to the adult individuals to indicate their nationality, thus creating under existing Soviet conditions an easy opportunity for misleading registration.)

In order to see the surprising results of the 1970 Soviet census in the proper light, it should be borne in mind that the same census figures showed an increase in the Soviet population from 208 million in 1959 to some 241 million in 1970, or about 16 per cent. If this rate of increase were applied to the Jewish population and using the 1959 figure of 2,268,000 as a base—of course without assuming that this rate is necessarily valid for the Jewish population, but using it only to illustrate the scope of the change—the in-

crease would be some 363,000. This would bring the figure for the total Jewish population in the Soviet Union in 1970 to about 2,630,000.

It is conceivable that the Kremlin statisticians were interested in showing a proportionately faster increase of the basic Slavic peoples than of other nationalities, and that therefore the decline in Jewish population was officially recorded as occurring in Russia, the Ukraine, and, to some extent, in Byelorussia. It is also possible that in some Soviet republics there were instances of forced registration of Jews as Russians, Ukrainians, and others. In such a situation a question of principle arises, which cannot be discussed in detail here: Jews do not cease to be Jewish because an unfriendly attitude forces them to change the formal classification of their nationality. In the interest of presenting a justifiable record, the 1969 figure of 2,620,000 was used for 1970 as well. Upon completion and availability of the 1970 census records, this figure will be adjusted accordingly.

### *Communal and Religious Life*

Although under Soviet law the Jews were a separate and recognized nationality, Soviet authorities did not encourage or facilitate national Jewish endeavors. No Jewish schools, social agencies, or research establishments existed. The promised reopening of the Yiddish legitimate theater did not take place. Jewish central communal or religious organizations were proscribed, although the Greek-Orthodox, Moslems, and some other religious groups had such institutions. Jewish synagogues could not maintain contact with Jewish religious bodies abroad. An exception was made to permit a Soviet delegation, headed by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow and Rabbi Israel Schwartzblat of Odessa, to participate in the 60th birthday celebration for Dr. Lavoslav Kadelburg, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia, held in Belgrade in September. Others in the group were D. M. Stiskin, the *hazan* of the Leningrad synagogue; Mikhail Mikhailovitch, chairman of the Moscow community; A. Kogan, chairman of the Odessa community, and M. Gutman of Kiev. On December 24, 1969, Mikhail Mikhailovitch's 70th birthday was celebrated at Hotel Rossia in Moscow; some one hundred guests attended the reception, including representatives from Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Canada.

No new information was available on the number of synagogues in the Soviet Union. According to official Soviet sources, there were 97 synagogues in 1965,\* including the so-called *shuiblakh* of hasidic Jews. Since no new synagogues were built in the interim, there was at best one synagogue for every 25,000 Jews. The Moscow Yeshivah Kol Jacob was not functioning, and no new generation of rabbis or other religious functionaries came to

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\* S. Rabinovitch, *Ytdn in Soviet Farband* (Moscow, 1965), p. 47. A similar figure was given by Rabbi Levin during his visit to the United States, but some Western sources considered this figure exaggerated.

replace the older rabbis. Religious articles, such as prayer shawls, phylacteries, and *mezuzot* were unobtainable, except at exorbitant prices on the black market. In September Rabbi Levin acknowledged receipt of four packages of religious articles sent to Moscow from the United States by Rabbi Pinchas Teitz.

Despite difficulties and the social stigma attached to participation in religious activities, there was an upsurge of religious feeling among Soviet Jewish youth. Some young Jewish men and women became vegetarians because kosher meat was not easily available. Soviet authorities did not interfere with the baking of *matzot*, and over 100 tons were prepared in Moscow under the auspices of the Central Synagogue. According to Rabbi Levin, Jews in Leningrad, Kiev, and Tiflis also had a sufficient supply. The situation in some provincial cities was more difficult, since facilities for baking *matzot* were not always available. Moscow Jews celebrated the Passover in the three prayer houses that remained open in the city.

As had become customary, large numbers of Jews in many cities attended synagogue on the High Holy Days. On Simhat Torah over 15,000 Moscow Jews, more than ever before, went to Arkhipov Street. The young people danced and sang Hebrew and Israeli songs. Some brought portable tape-recorders and guitars. It was clear that the young were trying in many ways to identify with Jewish tradition. The same situation apparently existed in Leningrad and in some smaller cities. There was no police interference with these activities, though secret agents were reported to have mingled with the crowds.

### *Antisemitism and Discrimination*

While Soviet authorities continued to deny that their policy with respect to the religious and cultural rights of the Jews was discriminatory, it was obvious that there was a deep distrust of everything Jewish. Of late, this distrust not only motivated official policy but was felt in the day-to-day relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Official propaganda insisted that a large majority of Soviet Jews had freely chosen to assimilate with Russian and other Soviet peoples. According to Joseph Braginsky, specialist in nationality problems, this would be the way to solve the Jewish problem radically.

Reliable foreign travelers reported that the word "kike" was freely used in conversation when referring to Jewish citizens of the USSR. In August the local television station in Latvia showed an anti-Israel film, *Drops of Poison*, which had clearly antisemitic overtones. Also in Latvia, *Sovietskaya Latvia* of July 10, 1970, carried an openly antisemitic piece in which the author said that two words were like music to Golda Meir's ears: money and war.

Anti-Jewish discrimination continued to be visible in the total absence of Jews in top Party or state positions. Neither were there Jews in top for-

eign office or army posts. The exception remained Deputy Premier Benjamin Dimchitz, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

### *Jewish Resistance*

While Jewish life in the Soviet Union was discouraged in every possible way, the resistance of Soviet Jews to cultural and ethnic assimilation increased in scope and content. They, like some of the other minorities in the USSR, refused to be passive objects of national annihilation. During 1970 they were actively fighting for the right to be Jews and to live a Jewish life. They signed petitions and participated in open protests and sit-ins. Some Jewish men and women took part in the general opposition movement; but most fought for their Jewish identity whatever the price.

Many Jews requested government permission to go to Israel. Many, who received no response to their applications for the necessary exit visas, addressed petitions to the Supreme Soviet and to the outside world, including the United Nations, giving their names and addresses. Among the petitioners were persons of different ages and social positions: doctors, engineers, writers, and scholars, whose professional occupations assured them adequate, if not privileged, living conditions in Russia. Among the signers of one petition were the well-known Yiddish poet Yosif Kerler, Anatolyi Dekatov, and Leonid Rigerman. (Kerler and Dekatov were able to go to Israel; Rigerman came to the United States.)

The Soviet authorities organized a barrage of press propaganda assuring Soviet readers, as well as their friends abroad, that the petitions and protests were the result of "Zionist racist machinations" paid for by Israeli "imperialists." Describing the protest movement in the United States, *Izvestia* (August 16 and 30, 1970) used the term "Zionist pogromchiks," and accused the American Jewish organizations of supporting the extremist Jewish Defense League. According to Moscow officials, Zionist violence and pogroms turned people into murderers (*Komsomolskoye Znamia*, August 16, 1970). The critical, negative attitude of Jewish communal agencies in New York to Rabbi Kahane's adventures was never reported. A second edition of Yuri Ivanov's *Ostorozhno! Sionism* ("Careful—Zionism"), a collection of anti-semitic stereotypes not unlike the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was published in 1970 (AJYB, 1970 [Vol. 71], p. 465).

On March 4 the Kremlin bosses organized a press conference in which Benjamin Dimchitz, Aron Vergelis, General David Dragunsky, and many other apparatchiks participated. They reiterated the official line that all was well with the Jews in the Soviet Union and that the discontent among them was caused by "Zionist traitors," who had somehow succeeded in fooling many simple Soviet Jews. These assertions by "official Jews" were criticized by many Jewish dissidents in open declarations and letters, which were not published in the Soviet press.

## *The Leningrad Trial*

A wave of arrests occurred in the Soviet Union in June. Among those taken into custody on June 15 were 12 persons accused of an attempt to hijack a Soviet airliner at the Leningrad Smolny airport and fly it to Sweden. Other arrests took place in Riga, Latvia, and in Kishinev, Bessarabia, and it was reported that Soviet authorities were preparing a Stalinist-type show-trial of a group of "Jewish Zionist traitors." In fact, in December, 11 persons were tried for violating Articles 64-A, 15, 70, and 93-1 of the Criminal Code, which carried a penalty of up to 15 years imprisonment or death. On December 24 a Soviet court, with chief judge Nikolai Yermakov presiding and two state attorneys S. Y. Soloviev and N. Katukova as prosecutors, sentenced two of the defendants, Mark Dimchitz and Edward Kuznetsov, to death. Josef Mendelevitch and Yuri Feodorov were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, Alexandr Murzhenko to 14, Leib Khanokh to 13, Anatoly Altman to 12, Boris Penson and Silva Zalmanson to ten, Israel Zalmanson to eight, and Mendel Bodnia to four years. Only Feodorov and Murzhenko were non-Jews (*Chronica Tekushstchich Sobityi* ["Chronicle of Current Events"] issued by *Samizdat* in the Soviet Union). The twelfth defendant, Vulf Zalmanson, was not tried with the others because, as a lieutenant in the army, he was to be court-martialed.

The severity of the sentences provoked indignation not only in liberal Western circles (p. 265), but also among Western Communists including the Italian and French parties. Many spiritual leaders and intellectuals cabled appeals to Moscow expressing anxiety and pleading for the lives of the condemned. Noting that the "planned" hijacking was not carried out, the supreme court of the RSFSR commuted the death sentences of Dimchitz and Kuznetsov to 15 years in prison camp. It was also reported that the terms of Altman and Khanokh were reduced to ten years, and that of Mendelevitch to 12 years. By year's end, nothing had been heard about the fate of the persons arrested in Riga, one of whom was the activist Ruth Alexandrovitch, and in Kishinev.

Since it was impossible to learn what actually happened at the Smolny airport on June 15, a full assessment of Soviet motivations for organizing the Leningrad trials was difficult. The trial was held *in camera*; the foreign press was not permitted to cover the proceedings, and the Soviet court did not permit foreign lawyers to enter the case. Some of the defendants admitted their guilt and some admitted partial guilt. But it was impossible to ascertain whether they were guilty of attachment to Jewish values or of the fantastic plot charged by the prosecution. What emerged from these closed proceedings was the fact that there were in the Soviet Union numbers of Jews who wished to lead a Jewish life and who were ready to fight for their self-respect as Jews.

## Culture

The attitude of the Soviet government toward Jewish cultural activities remained negative. For the Kremlin, Russian Jews were, in a cultural sense, still a non-nation. However, in many Soviet cities Jewish cultural endeavors were promoted by interested local groups. The Moscow art group—Joseph and Lea Kolin, Marina Gordon, the pianist Mikhail Ginsburg, and the violinist Mikhail Kopelman—toured Lithuania with a program of Yiddish poetry readings and music. Their concerts were warmly received in Vilna and Kovno. Sophia Saitan gave a number of readings from the works of Soviet Yiddish writers. Polina Einbinder, who participated in the fourth Soviet competition of singers of light music, chose songs with lyrics by I. L. Peretz and music by Leib Yampolski.

The Vilna Yiddish Folk Theater opened its 15th season with a performance of Zalman Kahan's play *Nit fargesn* ("Never Forget"), directed by Aron Lurie, with sets by Leonid Lutaski. The Kishinev Studio of Yiddish Drama presented David Bergelson's *Ikh vel lebn* ("I Will Live"), directed by M. Shternel. The Moscow Yiddish Drama Ensemble, directed by the veteran Benjamin Schwartzer, expanded its activities and played Jacob Gordin's *Over the Ocean* to full houses in the State Theater. The Leningrad Yiddish Ensemble, the Tallin Yiddish Ensemble, and the Kovno Yiddish Drama Ensemble toured many cities throughout the USSR.

Various cultural events were sponsored by trade unions, academic institutions, and local clubs. Thus in the fall, the editorial offices of *Sovetish Heymland* were used for an exhibit of the works of Jewish artists, among them paintings by P. Muliar, Robert Falk, V. Levik, L. Zevin, and M. Gorshman. A new film about Jewish life in the USSR was released to the public. It depicted World War II scenes, referred to Babi-Yar, and showed the Moscow synagogue; several Yiddish writers were heard in a discussion of Yiddish literature.

A study by Icheskel Lemban of the influence of the Lithuanian language on the renaissance of Lithuanian Jewry was published in Vilna. A part of the book was devoted to Lithuanian words that had become part of the Yiddish language. Volume 2 of the recently revised *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* contained a biography of the well-known Russian writer on Jewish themes, Isaac Babel, who perished in the Stalin purges. Five Yiddish books were published in Moscow (three were dated 1969 but became available only in 1970, and two appeared in 1970): *Mit layb und lebn* ("Devotion") by Izi Charik; *Sonengang* ("Course of the Sun") by Hirsh Osherovitch; *Fun alef bis tof* ("From A to T") by Aron Vergelis; *Tsum lebn* ("For Life") by Isaac Kipnis; and *Vidervuks* ("New Growth") by Nister. Thus, between 1948 and 1970, only 32 Yiddish books were published in the Soviet Union.

*Sovetish Heymland*, edited by Aron Vergelis, continued to appear 12 times a year. Its content had improved, particularly the foreign Jewish news, but

its political line faithfully reflected the ukase of the Party. The November 1970 issue (No. 11) contained an editorial attack on Yosif Kerler, which was in the "best" tradition and style of *Pravda's* attack on dissenters. The attack was called forth by Kerler's protests against the discriminatory policy regarding Jewish national activities, and his desire to go to Israel. Kerler did go to Israel, as did Zema Telesin and Rachel Beimvol, all well-known Yiddish writers. The September issue of *Sovetish Heymland* carried an article responding to Prof. I. Shmidt's remarks about Russian being the mother tongue of Russian Jews, published in *Sovietski Sakhalin*, a remote regional newspaper. *Sovetish Heymland* insisted that Prof. Shmidt was wrong, that the mother tongue of Russian Jews was Yiddish. Recently, material concerning Jewish problems also appeared in the Jewish underground publications (*Samizdat*).

### *Soviet-Israeli Relations*

The Kremlin's Israel policy continued to be strongly negative. Speaking at a luncheon given for an official Egyptian delegation on December 21, Kosygin stated that Soviet-Arab friendship was a basic Soviet policy which nothing would change (*Pravda*, December 23, 1970). Soviet leaders made it clear that they would not tolerate another defeat of the Arabs, and that they were ready to take all necessary preventive measures. The official press continued to give a prominent place to its correspondents in Arab countries, who reported "crimes" being committed by the Israelis, the "murderers" of innocent Arabs (*Pravda*, February 14, 1970).

Protest meetings were organized at factories and offices where "the people" strongly condemned "Israeli aggression." Newspapers published letters allegedly written by Soviet Jews, expressing solidarity with the Arabs (*Pravda*, March 2, 1970). Even Chief Rabbi Levin of Moscow came out in support of the anti-Israel campaign. *Pravda* (March 1, 1970) said he specifically condemned the methods used by the Jewish Defense League, in an interview with *Vechernia Moskva*, and that Rabbis A. Lubanov of Leningrad, G. Mizrachi of Baku, I. Schwartzblat of Odessa, M. Openstein of Kuibishev, and Livshits of Novosibirsk endorsed his statement. In another published letter, 100 members of the Kiev Jewish community expressed support of the Soviet policy (*Izvestia*, March 12, 1970).

The government's campaign was protested by 39 Soviet Jews, who declared that anti-Israeli statements were prepared by official Jews and did not represent the true feelings of the Jewish community. The Communist party in Israel, headed by Moshe Sneh, condemned the Soviet anti-Israeli campaign as an attack on the entire Jewish people. At the same time, the Kremlin insisted that it favored the resumption of the peace mission of United Nations envoy Gunnar V. Jarring. During 1970 Soviet authorities continued to permit the departure of some Soviet Jewish citizens to Israel; Israeli sources put their number at about 1,000 (p. 440).

### *Birobidjan*

Birobidjan, located close to a strategically important area of the Far East, received special attention of late. On August 7 Moscow television presented a special program showing its industry and its achievements. There was no Jewish life in Birobidjan, whose Jewish population numbered some 15,000 in a Russian and Ukrainian population of about 150,000. There were no Jewish schools, no Jewish social institutions. On November 1 the *Birobidjaner Shtern*, the only Yiddish-language newspaper appearing in the USSR, was 40 years old. The four-page paper, a sort of abbreviated Yiddish translation of a local Russian newspaper with the same name, appeared three times weekly under the editorship of Nochem Kortchminski. There was an amateur Yiddish theater group which functioned under the direction of Mikhail Bengelsdorf, who celebrated his 70th birthday in August.

### *Personalia*

Hillel Aleksandrov, a historian of Russian Jewry and professor at Leningrad University, died in 1970 at the age of 80. Simon Roginski, a chemist and corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, died in Moscow in February. Chaim Reise, known for his research in Yiddish literature, died in Leningrad in fall 1970. Julian Oksman, a social historian and literary critic, died in Moscow in September, at the age of 75.

LEON SHAPIRO

## Poland

**I**N DECEMBER 1970, following a week of rioting in the port city of Gdansk in protest against rising prices, Wladislaw Gomulka, secretary-general of the Communist party (PPZR) and undisputed leader of Poland, was forced out of the Politburo and lost all his followers. A broken man, he entered a hospital. The riots spread to Szczecin and Slupsk and brought out demonstrators armed with Molotov cocktails and home-made bombs. The death toll was 45 killed and some 1,200 injured. Edward Gierek, former Communist boss of the mining region of Silesia, replaced Gomulka as head of the party and, in fact, of the country.

The riots came some 14 years after the 1956 Poznan riots, when popular discontent had reached a boiling point and brought Gomulka, at that time a victim of Stalin's purges, back to power. Rehabilitated in 1956, he had withstood the formidable pressure of Nikita Khrushchev, Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, and Anastas Mikoyan, who came from Moscow to try to stop the drift away from Russian control. Gomulka soon became the symbol of liberalization, and for a time Poland breathed more easily. It had been hoped that Gomulka would introduce fundamental changes in the existing system.

While Gomulka knew that there could be no turning back to the Stalin-type setup, his reforms proved to be half-hearted and ineffectual. He did away with the Stalinist repression of the opposition, curbed the terror of the secret police, gave up the collectivization of agriculture, and made peace with the Catholic Church. But, a product of the earlier Polish Communist organization, he continued to adhere rigidly to the general line: intellectual freedom was strictly limited, and opposition was considered treason. Most important, nothing was done to change the archaic system of Polish economic planning. It soon became apparent that "liberalization" was permitted only to the extent that it was not in conflict with the policies pursued by the Polish Communist leadership.

Gomulka's policies soon provoked opposition and acts of protest from the intellectuals. Foremost Polish writers demanded that cultural policy be changed to conform to the spirit "of the rights guaranteed by the . . . constitution" (AJYB, 1965 [Vol. 66], p. 431). The authorities did not heed these demands. Leszek Kolakowski, the well-known philosopher, was expelled from the party. Students and teachers continued to be jailed. In February 1970, after a ten-day trial, four students (Maria Tworkowska, Krysztof Szymborski, Jakub Karpinski, and Maria Szapakowska) were sentenced to various terms in prison. Gomulka lost his touch.

Gomulka's leadership was marked by an antisemitic campaign without precedent in postwar Poland. Unable to solve the country's economic problems, he permitted the use of the classic Polish tool for solving problems that could not easily be solved. As discontent among the masses spread to all parts of the country, the Polish authorities charged that the rebellious mood was caused by "Zionist" propaganda and "Zionist" organizations that were creating disorders in the cities. Gierek, the present boss, repeated these charges against the Jews in a speech in the industrial city of Katowice (AJYB, 1969 [Vol. 70], p. 369).

At year's end, a thoroughgoing change in both party structure and state machinery was taking place. Together with Gomulka, four other leading members of the Politburo resigned: Zenon Kliszko, the party's top ideologist; Boleslaw Jaszczuk, chief economist and planner; Ryszard Strzelecki, a close associate of Gomulka, and Marian Spychalski, president of Poland. Among the new members of the Politburo was General Mieczyslaw Moczar, known as the head of the "partisan" faction and closely associated with the antisemitic elements of the party. Prime Minister Jozeph Cyrankiewicz was replaced by Piotr Jaroszewicz and was made the formal head of state.

It was too early to assess the effect of Gomulka's downfall, particularly since the new leaders, with Gierek at the top, were not victims of the old regime. All bore responsibility for the sad economic situation in Poland, and all participated in the party's nationalistic and anti-Jewish campaign. In fact, nothing had as yet changed. Intellectuals were still in prison, and there was no reason to expect that Gierek would usher in a new political "spring." Before the resignation of Gomulka, the government had concluded a treaty with West Germany, affirming the existing western boundaries of Poland at the Oder-Neisse rivers.

### JEWISH COMMUNITY

Some 15,000 Jews were living in Poland in 1969. By the end of 1970, only some 9,000 remained. While accurate information on the number of Jews who were forced to leave the country during the antisemitic campaign promoted by the Gomulka government was not available, the figure of 9,000 was borne out by data on Polish Jews who, during the period under review, were found living in Denmark, Sweden, France, Canada, the United States, and Israel. Among recent Jewish emigrants from Poland were many who for decades had been dedicated and loyal servants of the post-World War II regime. It was reported that, in addition to the 9,000 Jews indicated above, a probably relatively small unidentified number of Jews still remained in Poland. Some of these had converted and some, under changed names, had become completely assimilated into the Polish population.

## *Communal and Religious Life*

Under the impact of the antisemitic campaign and the ensuing emigration, Jewish life in Poland was disintegrating. The liquidation of Jewish communal activities was accelerated by the openly unfriendly attitude of the authorities. While the Cultural and Social Union of Polish Jews, under the leadership of Edward Reiber, existed officially, it was strictly controlled by the administrative apparatus of the ministry of the interior. In fact, the union had lost all contact with Jews who remained Jewish in terms of their interests and needs, but who, for various reasons, could not leave Poland. Jews were afraid to identify themselves with Jewish interests and activities. The situation outside Warsaw was even worse: local pressures and administrative measures by local authorities prevented any participation in Jewish activities.

All official Jewish institutions in Warsaw were housed in a new building on Grzybowski Place, which was partly financed by the Jewish Producers Cooperatives, now without any Jewish affiliation. The Cultural and Social Union, *Folks-shtimme*, and the Yiddish Theater had offices in this building. The liquidation of Jewish social and welfare programs created a serious situation for aged, ill, and unemployed Jews.

Jewish religious life had completely disintegrated. Many congregations disappeared. There were no rabbis, *mohelim*, or other qualified religious personnel. No circumcisions were performed; no *bar-mitzvahs* took place, and very few religious marriages were consecrated. There were no services during the Jewish High Holy Days, except for those conducted by residents of the Jewish home for the aged.

## *Cultural Activities*

There were no Jewish schools, and Jewish youth did not study Jewish subjects or learn to speak Yiddish. Except for some activities in Warsaw, Lodz, Bialystok, and perhaps two or three other cities, Yiddish cultural programs had been liquidated. Those Jewish educators who remained in Poland were afraid to promote participation in Yiddish art ensembles or Yiddish drama circles, since such activities would have put them in a difficult position with the authorities. Yiddish publishing had, to all intents and purposes, disappeared. The Yiddish weekly *Folks-shtimme* continued publication, but was subject to special Polish censorship. Its readership had fallen to a few hundred, mostly elderly persons.

The Jewish Historical Institute continued its activities under the direction of the well-known party stalwarts: Edward Reiber, I. Gitler-Barski, and L. Losowski. Its former director Szymon Datner, who was forced to resign, was temporarily replaced by Marian Fuks, "who will work in close cooperation with the above-mentioned individuals." Strictly supervised by the authorities, the Institute's character had undergone considerable change.

According to a report in *Folks-shtimme* (Aug 29, 1970), the Institute was working under difficult conditions, for its current research programs on the fate of the Jews under Nazi occupation were frowned upon by the authorities, and it had lost the scholars on its staff through emigration.

The Yiddish State Theater, directed by Szymon Szurmieg, opened its 1970 season after Yom Kippur, with a presentation of Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye der milkhiger*; Chewel Buzgan appeared as Tevye. Among the actors were some non-Jews, who had to learn Yiddish for their roles. The three scheduled performances a week drew audiences of about 200, including non-Jews.

### *Commemoration of Catastrophe*

The 27th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising was marked, in April 1970, in a manner that completely obliterated the specifically Jewish character of the struggle. *Folks-shtimme* wrote that "the battle of the Warsaw ghetto had been primarily a Polish battle." The Polish press emphasized that the Polish underground resistance movement was responsible for the revolt, and completely ignored its Jewish character. Colonel Zbygniew Gabinski, a leader of Polish war veterans, told a Warsaw ghetto anniversary meeting that "thousands of Poles spilled their blood and sacrificed their lives in defense of the Jewish population." Chairman Reiber of the Cultural and Social Union used the occasion to attack the Israelis for "their aggressive, imperialist policy."

### *Personalia*

Sarah Rotbaum, well-known Yiddish actress and sister of the actor-director Jacob Rotbaum and of actress Lea Rotbaum, died in her sixties, in Warsaw on August 5. For a number of years she had been a member of the Moscow Yiddish Theater under the late Solomon Mikhoels.

LEON SHAPIRO

## Czechoslovakia

**P**OLITICALLY, economically, and culturally Czechoslovakia in 1970 moved further down along the path of neo-Stalinism. By the end of the year, the conservative faction of the Central Committee—composed in part of turncoats but mostly of people who had opposed the reforms initiated by Alexander Dubček and his partisans in 1968 to the point of inviting the Soviet armies to invade Czechoslovakia—was preparing to wrest control of the state and party from Gustav Husák. Husák had succeeded Dubček as first secretary of the Communist party in April 1969. As a former political prisoner, he then seemed a good candidate for the role of the Kremlin's plenipotentiary in Prague. But it soon became obvious that Moscow's support was conditional and not to be taken for granted.

The conservative offensive started at the January plenum of the party's Central Committee at which Dubček lost his seat and Prime Minister Oldřich Černík was forced to resign from the Central Committee's presidium. The ruling presidium was revamped, and its new majority reflected the ascendancy of the anti-Husák wing. In March Josef Smrkovský, next to Dubček the most popular of the reform movement's leaders, was ousted from the party. In June Dubček himself was expelled, to be followed later by Černík, Dubček's prime minister, who later had tried to adjust himself to the new course. Thus, of the 1968 team, only President Ludvík Svoboda remained a party member in good standing.

Altogether some 700,000 Communists left or were removed from the party since the summer of 1968. Three hundred thousand of them were dropped during the 1970 screening operation when all party members were required to exchange their membership cards for new ones. Resignations and expulsions were most widespread among professionals and industrial workers. Also the wife and son of Rudolf Slánský, the main defendant of the 1952 show trial, were once again stricken from the party rolls. Artur London, one of the three survivors of that trial whose book and movie *The Confession* had created a sensation in the West, was also deprived of his Czechoslovak citizenship, an act qualified by the Italian Communist party weekly *Renascita* as a "measure which reveals a sort of blind automatism, an absurd mechanism of revenge."

Despite this regressive development, a modicum of legality was preserved. Although the number of arrests rose sharply during the second half of 1970, there were no political trials; those scheduled to take place were postponed. Among the accused were several Jews, and the virulence of many antisemitic press pronouncements made it difficult to exclude the possibility of more

drastic action in the future. The most industrious anti-Zionist publicists were Jaromír Lang and J. F. Kollár.

### *Campaign Against Zionism*

The publication of a translation of Yuri Ivanov's Russian tract *Beware: Zionism!* under the title *Zionism* by the publishing house Svoboda was the high point of the antisemitic campaign. The book appeared in Czech as well as in Slovak, and its topical importance derived from an *Epilogue* by Jevgenij Jevsejev about the year 1968 and an appendix by Tadeusz Walichnowski on *Zionist Organizations and Their Representatives*, the latter a translation from the Polish language.

Ivanov's lengthy pamphlet has had several printings in the Soviet Union. It described the government of Israel as the junior partner in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, closely allied with United States monopolies. By the same token, the Zionist world organization was the representative body of the Jews of the whole world and, simultaneously, an international espionage center. In a footnote, however, there appeared a statement distinguishing anti-Zionism from antisemitism and supporting the right of self-determination for "the nation of Israel." It said in part: "We defend the right of the State of Israel to its independent existence."

The author of the "Epilogue," Jevgenij Jevsejev, has been variously identified as a Russian historian working in Prague and as a Czech journalist using a Russian pseudonym. Its thesis is that international Zionism was the vanguard of the liberalization effort in Czechoslovakia, which brought about the occupation of the country by the Soviet Army, and that the "spring of Prague" was essentially a Jewish undertaking.

The local leaders of the Zionist organizations of Czechoslovakia followed the directives of the Center abroad, they benefited from extensive financial and other assistance, and as the guiding group of the counterrevolution, they tried to subvert the role of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia and to deprive it of its influence on the development inside the country.

The villains of the story are Eduard Goldstuecker, a pre-war Communist who had been ambassador to Israel, then a political prisoner, later a university professor in Prague and now an exile in England; Jiří Hájek, minister of foreign affairs in the Dubček government; Ladislav Mňačko, a Slovak writer who broke with the Communist party over its anti-Israel policy in 1967; the personnel of the Israel Embassy in Prague, even though diplomatic relations between the two countries had been severed in 1967, several months before Alexander Dubček took over from the discredited regime of Antonín Novotný; Charles Jordan, the executive director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, who was killed in Prague in August 1967; František Kriegel, Ota Šik, Josef Smrkovský, and Josef Pavel, four prominent party and government leaders of the Dubček period; the writers Ludvík Vaculík

and Ivan Sviták, spokesmen of the cultural revolt, and the two men who were in charge of television and radio programming in Prague during the spring of 1968, Jiří Pelikán and Zdeněk Hejzlar.

Most of the people accused of having been the Czechoslovak ringleaders of the Zionist conspiracy were not Jewish, and none were Zionists. Of the actual leaders of liberal Communism in Prague, only two or three were Jews—Kriegel and Goldstuecker, and perhaps Šik who has denied being of Jewish extraction. All the more ominous was the attack on the Jewish religious communities of Czechoslovakia which, according to Jevsejev, acted as transmission belts for the money, hard currency, and instructions from the Center abroad. Benjamin Eichler and František Fuchs, the two chairmen of the central Jewish religious bodies of Czechoslovakia, were listed by name.

The international Zionist organizations described in Walichnowski's appendix included the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and United HIAS Service. The AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK was cited as one of the sources of this compilation.

This explanation of the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia led with a certain logic to a reaffirmation of the guilt of the defendants of the bloody purge trials of the early fifties notwithstanding the fact that all of them had been officially exonerated by the pre-Dubček government. The personal tie was again provided by Goldstuecker, the "lifelong Zionist" who, when recalled from his post as ambassador to Israel in 1951 and in danger of being unmasked "in connection with the impending trial of Rudolf Slánský and other officials accused of contacts with international Zionism, falsely implicated some innocent people who stood in the way of the Zionist cause."

Jan and Karel Šling, the sons of one of the executed defendants in the Slánský trial, and Václav and Jan Vlk, the sons of a victim of another trial, reacted to Jevsejev's diatribe in an open letter to First Secretary Gustav Husák, copies of which were sent abroad. In their letter they made the point that the Ivanov-Jevsejev book and its reviews in the Czechoslovak press aimed at "the rehabilitation of the state security police and its role in the fifties. . . . Many people who are not even Jewish are denounced in it as agents of international Zionism. This fact shows clearly that we are dealing with a dirty antisemitic campaign . . . against which we are forced to express our strongest protest . . . Once before we witnessed in our state a campaign against Zionism. It ended in the criminal proceedings of the fifties. Now the same campaign is being mounted again."

The voices of protest never reached the Czechoslovak public. But it was not long before the themes of the Czechoslovak antisemitic texts appeared with further embellishments in the press of the Soviet Union, notably in a two-part article by Vladimir Bolshakov in *Pravda*. It repeated the egregious fabrication of the Zionist origins of the liberalization process that occurred

in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and again singled out Kriegel, Goldstuecker, and Šik as the masterminds of the Zionist plot.

If one remembers that the leaders of the Soviet Union right after the occupation had offered their Czechoslovak counterparts the material proofs necessary for preparing an anti-Zionist trial, the 1970 campaign was portentous beyond its transparent propaganda aims. Quite a few of those linked with the alleged conspiracy were still living inside Czechoslovakia.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

The number of Jews in Czechoslovakia was estimated at 14,000.

*Věstník* ("Gazette") of the Jewish Religious Communities of Czechoslovakia continued to be published as the monthly of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech Socialist Republic as well as the Central Association of Jewish Religious Communities in the Slovak Socialist Republic. The German-language *Informationsbulletin* for readers abroad also appeared in 1970, as did *Židovská ročenka* ("Jewish Year Book") which contained contributions by Chief Rabbi Richard Feder, the writers and poets František Kafka, Norbert Frýd, František Gottlieb, Dagmar Hilarová, and others.

No longer able to speak out on contemporary Jewish issues, *Věstník* became essentially a literary and historical periodical, well-written and quite varied in contents, though most of its issues were limited to eight pages. Its local news were a chronicle of a disappearing community, recording deaths more often than other events and reflecting the difficulties of congregations reduced, as a rule, to a handful of people.

The celebration of the septicentennial of the founding of the famous Old-New Synagogue of Prague, originally planned as a major international manifestation, took place on May 23 and 24 as a strictly local festivity attended only by representatives of the Jewish Religious Communities and most of the remaining synagogal congregations. There were no delegates from abroad, and no government official put in an appearance.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945, both František Fuchs, chairman of the Czech Council, and Benjamin Eichler, chairman of the Slovak Association, contributed articles to *Věstník*. In his editorial Fuchs inserted an appeal for "cooperation with Jews anywhere in the world who contribute to world peace and who fight against antisemitism wherever it appears." And Eichler mentioned that "during the years 1968–1969 a substantial number of Jewish citizens emigrated (from Czechoslovakia) . . . partly because the unsettled internal conditions of that time were experienced as a psychological shock, partly because they had lost the feeling of personal security . . . and also because they were influenced by the flight of the Jews from Poland, and finally, because of the resurgence of elements of antisemitism in reactionary ranks."

*Personalia*

Chief Rabbi Richard Feder died in Brno on November 18, at the age of 95. At the time of his death, he was the only rabbi in all of Czechoslovakia. Before World War II, he headed the community of the town of Kolín near Prague. He stayed with his congregation when the Nazis took over and was imprisoned in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. His immediate family did not survive the war. In 1945 he was named district rabbi of Brno, the capital of Moravia, and in 1960, after the death of Gustav Sicher, chief rabbi of Czechoslovakia. He was a man of great erudition and kindness.

Bedřich Hellmann, vice-chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities, died in Prague on January 6, at the age of 54.

## Hungary

**W**HILE NEIGHBORING Czechoslovakia under the Soviet-installed Húsak regime was becoming more and more rigid and conservative, Hungary under János Kádár had a relatively liberal government. Gradually, and without high-sounding declarations, it extended the scope of individual liberties within the controlled society and tolerated diversity of opinion in radio and television. Interior Minister András Benkei declared that there was a difference between pardonable ideological errors and obvious political crimes. In March a decree was promulgated, which, within the framework of the law, gave all citizens the right to travel abroad. A bill under consideration would provide voters with choices between candidates for public office and would permit others, besides the official Front, to nominate candidates.

Although the model for economic reforms was hailed as a big step forward, there were still many areas of weakness, such as the lack of adequate housing. The shortage of apartments was felt especially by newlyweds, who had to share living quarters with family or relatives. However, the two-year-old economic reforms brought a measure of relief for consumers. Economic management was decentralized, directors of state-owned enterprises were permitted more freedom of action, and the viability of an enterprise was evaluated by its profits. Enterprises could now compete with one another, making price reductions possible. Bonuses for managers and workers created a happier climate in the factories.

It was expected that, under the new economic plan (1971–1975), state and cooperative enterprises would be given opportunities for working out their own long-term programs. Except for Yugoslavia (which is not in the Soviet bloc), Hungary was pursuing the most liberal policies of any country in the Soviet area, and it was doing so while accepting the over-all hegemony of Moscow. The changes taking place were carried out under the ideological umbrella of Leninist Marxism, which was not openly questioned.

While the Catholic Church had normalized its relations with the state, Josef Cardinal Mindszenty was in the 15th year of his asylum in the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, which began after the 1956 revolt. He did not wish to leave Hungary unless the government withdrew its 1949 accusation of treason against him.

The Party appealed to the people in August to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Hungarian liberation, the millenium of St. Stephen's birth, the centenary of Lenin's birth, and the 25th anniversary of the death of the composer Bela Bartok.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

According to local Jewish communal officials, the Jewish population of Hungary in 1970 was about 80,000, including Jews who did not participate in religious or communal activities. Emigration was not permitted, and the Jewish population remained stable. Precise information about the social distribution of Hungarian Jewry was not available; but it was reported that Jews in the younger age brackets were in the professions or in white-collar categories in state-owned enterprises.

### *Communal and Religious Life*

Jewish religious life in Hungary was coordinated by the Central Board of Jewish Communities, under the chairmanship of Dr. Geza Seifert. Both religious trends, the Orthodox and the Neolog (Conservative), were represented on the Board, but each group maintained its own form of worship. There were 70 Jewish communities throughout 18 districts, and each district was represented on the Central Board. Some 40 synagogues and 30 rabbis served the religious needs of the communities. Budapest also had a *Bet Din*. Rabbi Jenö Schuck was Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox group, and Rabbi Imre Beneshofsky of the Neolog community. Dr. Laszlo Szalgo was rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Budapest. Salaries of Jewish religious functionaries were paid by the government, which provided for the religious needs of all recognized religions. The community maintained a *mikveh* and a *Hevra Kaddisha*, supervised *kashrut*, and supplied sufficient quantities of kosher meat as well as *matzot* for Passover. It also supplied *matzot* to Jews in East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

There was no open antisemitism in Hungary, but the general climate in the atheistic state was not conducive to Jewish religious life. The trend was away from Judaism, and mixed marriages and nonobservance of rituals were common. The younger generation was under the strong influence of its peers and was breaking away from religious tradition.

### *Welfare, Education, and Culture*

The Central Board conducted a well-developed program of social assistance and education. Older Jews, who could not find employment and were without their own means of support, received cash relief. A kosher kitchen supplied meals to some 2,000 persons. The community maintained orphanages, one for boys and one for girls. There were also a 224-bed Jewish hospital, three homes for the aged, and a convalescent home near Budapest. Kosher food was provided in all these institutions.

The Jewish *gymnasium* (secondary school), supported by the Central Board, provided general and Jewish education for 68 students (24 boys and

44 girls) in the 1970–1971 academic year; 47 of the students were from Budapest and 21 from provincial cities. The *Yeshivah Quetannah* (primary day school), a kindergarten, and Talmud Torahs provided traditional Jewish education. However, the majority of Jewish youth did not make use of these educational facilities.

The Budapest Theological Seminary, under the direction of the well-known scholar Rabbi Alexander Scheiber, continued its activities. It was the only rabbinical training institution of its kind in Eastern Europe. Though it had a small student body, it maintained its reputation for scholarship. The Central Board made use of the talents of seminary scholars for work in the Jewish field and continued its programs of research. Three volumes of Jewish historical research, part of a series under the general editorship of Dr. Scheiber, were published in 1970: *Evkonyv* (“Yearbook”) for the year 1970; *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitkoszecz Törteneje* (“History of the Jewish Community of Szentés”); *Adalekok A Hajduvarosok Szidosaganak Törtenejehez* (supplement to “The History of the Jews of the Cities of Haidu”). The latter two volumes were prepared by Laszlo Hirsanyi. Work was continued on the *Momumenta Hungariae Judaica* series; Volume 13 was about to be published, and Volume 14 was in preparation. The Central Board received financial support for its cultural and educational programs from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

LEON SHAPIRO

## Yugoslavia

WHILE to all intents and purposes Yugoslavia maintained a one-party system, it tried to devise means whereby certain freedoms would be assured to the people. The life style was indeed different from that prevailing in the East European Soviet area, and in many ways was closer to that of Western Europe. Some latitude was permitted in the expression of diversity of opinion within the party, but the Communist League retained over-all control, particularly where the state's ideological principles were involved. Mihajlo Mihajlov, whose critical writings have appeared abroad and who refused to retreat from his independent stand, was released from prison in March, after having served a term of three-and-a-half years on charges of "hostile propaganda" (AJYB, 1967 [Vol. 68], p. 407). Milovan Djilas, one-time leading party theoretician who had been imprisoned and released, encountered some difficulties with regard to planned travel abroad.

In the course of the year, Yugoslavia's ruling circles showed increasing concern over the question of the state's structure. Marshal Tito emphasized the problem of succession and proposed that a group of men take over the direction of the state, if and when necessary. At the Ninth Congress of the Yugoslav Communist League in 1969, a 15-man executive was formed to take charge of affairs under Tito's leadership. The current proposal to create a collective presidency extended the collective principle from the party to the state machinery.

A collective presidency would assure not only a degree of democratization of the power-holding center, but would also maintain the delicate balance between the constituent republics and nationalities. Growing tension among the nationality groups made necessary a stable basic relationship satisfactory to all. The proposal was to give equal representation to the constituent republics and to provide for a short-term rotating chairmanship to be held by a representative of each republic. Tito himself would naturally retain his commanding position under any system. But the situation could change substantially if for some reason he were to step down; under these circumstances, reform of the state presidency could be of great importance. Definitive steps to implement these proposals were expected to be taken in 1971.

Belgrade continued to expand its trade with the six countries of the European Economic Community (EEC; Common Market). In 1969 imports from Common Market countries were 49 per cent, and exports 32 per cent, of Yugoslavia's total imports and exports, or 39 per cent of its total trade. Some 70 Yugoslav and three American business firms formed a joint corporation for the expansion of mutually advantageous commercial exchanges. At the same time, Yugoslavia continued to trade with the USSR.

President Richard M. Nixon's visit to Yugoslavia, September 30 to October 2, 1970, was seen as Belgrade's answer to the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty of the so-called socialist countries in the Soviet area.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

According to official communal sources, the Jewish population of Yugoslavia in 1970 stood at 7,000. This figure was based on the 1961 Yugoslav census and adjusted by the local Jewish community. Some 1,600 lived in Belgrade, 1,330 in Zagreb, 1,090 in Sarajevo, and 400 in Subotica.

### *Communal and Religious Life*

Jewish communal life was coordinated by the Federation of Jewish Communities comprising some 36 affiliated local communities. Lavoslav Kadelburg was its president and Luci Petrovic, secretary. Enjoying official recognition, the Federation had full freedom of activity and was in contact with Jewish bodies in Europe, the United States, and Israel. With the approval of the authorities, it maintained affiliation with the World Jewish Congress and the European Council of Jewish Organizations, and was in close contact with the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

The Federation remained essentially a secular organization dealing with cultural and educational endeavors, and only to a very limited degree with religious activities. There were no rabbis in Yugoslavia, and no qualified religious personnel. Rabbi Menahem Romano, the last remaining rabbi, died in Sarajevo on October 31, 1969, at the age of 87. The funeral service was conducted by Rabbi Josef Schweitzer of Pecs, Hungary. The Federation made efforts to bring a Sephardi rabbi to Yugoslavia, but at year's end had not succeeded in doing so. The community had no *shohet*, and it was almost impossible to obtain kosher meat. Sabbath and holiday services, which were held in some of the larger cities, were conducted by cantors and, in some cases, by knowledgeable laymen. A religious calendar for the year 5731 (1970-71), compiled by the late Rabbi Romano, was published by the Federation.

On the occasion of Lavoslav Kadelburg's 60th birthday, special celebrations were organized in Belgrade, with the participation of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow, Mikhail Mikhailovitch, chairman of the Moscow synagogue, Rabbi Israel Schwartzblat of Odessa, and other delegates from Eastern and Western Europe. D. M. Stiskin, cantor of the Leningrad synagogue who also was there, conducted Friday evening services at the Belgrade synagogue. There was an official government reception for Dr. Kadelburg and the foreign guests, as well as a banquet arranged by the Federation.

## *Cultural Activities*

The Federation conducted wide cultural activities for the members of its affiliated communities, especially for young people and children, in the larger communities of Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, as well as in such smaller places as Subotica and Novy Sad. Some of the youth projects centered around preparations for Hanukkah, Purim, and Tu bi-Shevat. Children received Hebrew language instruction. Special attention was given to the organization of summer camps, which offered intensive educational programs conducted by specially-trained counselors. Groups of children from other East European countries spent some time in a Yugoslav summer camp. Regular lectures on Jewish history, literature, and other Jewish subjects were given at student and youth clubs. Among the topics discussed by the student groups were problems of Jewish identity and the situation of Jews in various countries. Jewish student representatives participated in international seminars conducted by the World Union of Jewish Students in Europe and in Israel.

The Federation maintained a Central Judaica Library which provided some research tools for interested scholars.

The Federation also developed a comprehensive publishing program. It issued *Jevrejski Pregled* ("Jewish Review"), *Kadima*, a magazine for youth, and the periodical *Jevrejski Almanah* ("Jewish Almanac") for 1965-67, which had 376 pages and contained articles on history, literature, and art of Yugoslav Jewry, as well as articles on Israel, Jerusalem, and S. Y. Agnon. The volume was edited by Dr. Lavoslav Glesinger, Ivan Ivanji, Aleksandr Levi, and Dr. Zdenko Lowenthal. Among projected publications was a book of Hebrew songs in translation for use in summer camps and clubs.

The Jewish Historical Institute continued its activities including research, publication, and archival work, particularly material on the area's Jewish community in the 16th and 17th centuries. The second volume of the Institute's *Zbornik* ("Anthology") was in preparation. In cooperation with the Hebrew University Institute for Contemporary Studies, steps were taken in 1970 to initiate demographic research on the Jews of Yugoslavia.

The Jewish Museum organized exhibits of objects of Jewish interest. The 15-year-old Jewish choirs, Brothers Baruch in Belgrade and Mosa Pijade in Zagreb, presented programs of Jewish music. The Jewish Chorus toured other countries, including Israel.

Some of the Federation's cultural endeavors received financial support from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

## *Social and Welfare Activities*

Jewish welfare activities, including aid to some 1,000 indigent and aged persons, were partially supported by JDC. The communal home for the aged in Zagreb had a capacity of 110 beds. Religious services were conducted for inmates of the home.

*Relations with Israel*

While Yugoslavia severed its relations with Israel following the six-day war of 1967, it did not, once the situation had stabilized, follow the uncompromising Soviet attitude toward Israel. Neither did authorities interfere with the Jewish community's support of the state; contact between Israelis and Jews in Yugoslavia was never broken. Yugoslavia maintained its political friendship with the Third World, and especially with Egypt. There were reports that Tito was trying to find a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict; but if efforts in this direction were made, nothing seemed to have come of them.

LEON SHAPIRO