

**SOVIET JEWRY, PALESTINE
AND THE WEST**

by

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TO MY MOTHER

WHO AT THE AGE OF 72 WAS DEPORTED
BY THE NAZIS TO THE EAST OF EUROPE
AND OF WHOM EVERY TRACE HAS BEEN
LOST

PREFACE

IN RECENT YEARS the interest of the world in Jewish affairs was mainly centred in two groups of events: One, the *destruction* of more than 5,000,000 Jewish men, women and children by the Nazis, with its prelude of persecution and its aftermath of expropriated, homeless masses; the other, the *conflict* about Palestine, with its Arab-Jewish friction, Arab riots and revolt, Commissions, White Papers, “illegal immigrants” and - in more recent days - increasing violence on the part of the Jews.

Beyond these events, however, the Jewish situation in the world since the first World War has undergone far-reaching, fundamental transformations which are not easily expressed in newspaper headlines. I hope that the following pages will contribute to their understanding.

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PART I

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EASTERN JEWRY

CHAPTER I
EASTERN JEWRY, THE DRIVING FORCE
1880 - 1941

FOR GENERATIONS Eastern European Jewry was the dynamic force which profoundly influenced, and often determined Jewish life in every country. Seventy years ago, three-quarters of the Jews of the world still lived in Eastern Europe. From there originated the great migration movement which within thirty years transformed the Jewish communities of the Anglo-Saxon world, swelled them to their present size, and maintained them in the physical and cultural sense by a constant influx of new immigrants. In addition, Jews of Eastern Europe gave the Zionist movement its greatest strength and provided the vast majority of immigrants who since the end of the 19th century returned to the Holy Land. In Eastern Europe, above all, the roots of the Jewish religious life - that mysterious force which has been the core of Jewish existence through the ages - ran deeper than anywhere else in dispersion.

Today Eastern Europe is changed. Russian Jewry, the source of Jewish vitality was transformed by the Soviet revolution, and its energies are devoted to very different aims than those of 30 years ago. Polish Jewry, with its age-long traditions of Jewish life and learning, is nearly annihilated and a part of the remnant has been absorbed in the Soviet Union. What is left of Eastern Jewry today, therefore, is completely different to the Eastern Jewry which existed at the end of the first World War; and this change - by transformation and destruction - must have profound influences on the Jewish situation everywhere. It is indeed the end of an era of Jewish world history.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The roots of Jewish life in Eastern Europe are of ancient date. Already in the early Christian centuries Jews were living in the Crimea and along the Eastern shores of the Black Sea in organised communities with their own synagogues. From there they spread to East and North towards the Caspian Sea, the lower reaches of the river Volga and the region of the Don.

In Poland and Lithuania traces of the presence of Jews go back to the 10th century, but immigration on a larger scale began only when, during the Crusades, riots and persecutions - from Rouen through the Rhineland, Bavaria and Bohemia - drove the Jews to the East, and the kings of Poland and Lithuanian princes offered them asylum in their then thinly populated countries.

In the Western world great social changes were developing. The feudal system was establishing itself; and a new class of Christian traders and of Christian bankers was rising, ready and anxious to take over from the Jews the social and economic functions which they had been fulfilling. The rising power of the Church worked in the same direction, and soon religious passions mingled in the issue. Combined religious and social forces led to the expulsion of the Jews from England, France and parts of Germany; and during the time of the Black Death persecution of the Jews increased. A vast migration to the East began, and was intensified by the contemporary movement of the Germans in the same direction. Poland and Lithuania meanwhile had extended their dominions to the South, and the Jewish settlements in their countries linked up with the much older colonies on the Black Sea. This was the beginning of the great centre of Jewish life in Eastern Europe.

The differences between Jews and Slavs were great and transcended the religious sphere. The Slavs, a young people, were mainly engaged in agriculture, and at that time mostly illiterate. The Jews, for more than a thousand years, had cultivated trade and commerce, and devoted themselves to learning and intellectual development. They brought with them unfathomable treasures of religious life - collected over more than two thousand years - embodied in the Holy Scriptures of the Bible, the wisdom of the Talmud and the revelations of the Cabbalistic mysticism. While the Polish peasant knew little of the world beyond the borders of his village, the Jews entertained regular relations with the centres of learning in Prague, Mayence, Venice, Salonika and Palestine. Thus the Jewish communities preserved their cultural traditions by the development of the autonomy which had been granted to them by the Polish and Lithuanian rulers.

One of the elements the Jews preserved in Poland was their language. Several times during the long history of their wanderings they had accepted for themselves the language of surrounding civilisations. Thus in Hellenistic days they had exchanged Hebrew for Greek; and in the Golden Age of Islam the Jews within the Caliphate - which reached from Persia to the Pyrenees - spoke and wrote Arabic. Similarly, the Jews in Germany had accepted German; but when they came to Eastern Europe they preserved their German in the Polish-Lithuanian world. In its medieval form, as they had known it when they left the German countries, and interspersed with Hebrew words and idioms, 'Yiddish' became the mother-tongue of Eastern Jewry and has remained so to the present day. And, as though history stood still for them, their dress also remained medieval - the long dark coat, the high boots, and the soft round hat.

The school of Jewish children was the Cheder. Here they learnt Hebrew, read the Bible and became acquainted with the elements of Talmudic knowledge. A higher education in the study of the Talmud was provided in the Yeshivoth, among which those of Lublin, Cracow and Lodz became particularly famous. All education centred in religion; for the religious life remained for centuries the dominating power in the life of Eastern Jewry, imbuing every sphere of day-to-day activities. Religion was the culmination of their world, and it developed on one hand Talmudic and scholastic learning, and on the other revived in modern times the ancient trends of mysticism and ecstatic revelation.

In the economic field the Eastern Jews mainly continued their traditional occupations of trade and commerce. But whilst in ancient times and in the early Middle Ages their trade had been on a worldwide scale - they once had helped to bridge the Mediterranean and to exchange the goods between the Eastern and the Western world - in Eastern Europe it was limited to very small proportions, and it became a shadow of its former greatness.

'They became go-betweens between the Polish aristocrat land-owners and their peasantry : estate agents, tax collectors, casual clerks, every kind of small trader and, particularly, keeper of public houses (the monopoly in vodka was in the hands of the big landlords who, to save themselves trouble and to gain bigger profits, everywhere leased it to the Jews).' (1)

(1) T R Feiwel, No Ease in Zion, London 1938, p. 37.

When, at the end of the 18th century, Poland was partitioned, her Jewish population found itself divided between the three neighbouring countries. The smallest part, the Jews of Western Poland, came under Prussian rule; they soon exchanged Yiddish for German and merged into the community of German Jews. Another part, numerically stronger, the Jews of Southern Poland, mainly of Galicia, were integrated into Austria, and largely preserved their Eastern character. The largest group of Polish Jews, however, lived in those parts which were incorporated into Russia; and they - together with the Jews who were already in the Czarist realm - formed the majority of the Eastern Jews up to the first World War.

HOLY RUSSIA

The Russian Government restricted to the new provinces the right of domicile of these newly incorporated Jews; and although the limits of this 'Pale of Settlement' were modified from time to time, almost all Jews in Russia were ultimately confined legally to the Western and Southern provinces of the country.

Jewish life within the Czarist state was always hard; and particular problems were created by the Eastern Orthodox Church. That Church had contributed in an essential way to the creation and development of Russia. Indeed, the baptism of the Holy Vladimir at Kiev in the 10th century is considered as the birth of the Russian nation. The Eastern Church had played a profound part in the whole life of the people, and deeply imbued Russian literature, architecture and art. Mystics and politicians saw in 'Holy Russia' a God-fearing nation which was destined to bring about the salvation of mankind; and to the autocratic Czar fell the task to realise this Kingdom of God on earth. The Jews were strangers in this community; and details of their lot varied under every Czar. When, however, in 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated - one link in the long chain of revolutionary attempts which had been shaking Russia since the beginning of the 19th century - Russian policy turned finally to fervent, national-religious counter-revolution. A few days after the assassination of his father, the young Czar Alexander III received a letter from his former tutor, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Constantine Petrovich Pobyedoneszew:

'If the old advisers come to you again with siren-songs that one must calm down; that one must continue in the path of liberalism, and surrender to the so-called public opinion, Oh, for the sake of God do not believe it, Your Majesty! Do not listen to it! It would be the ruin of Russia. The lunatic criminals who miserably murdered your father will not be satisfied by any concession. Their fury will even increase;... But one can make them silent. One can eradicate the evil seed by a fight for life and death, with iron and blood...There is only one right and straight way to rise and without tarrying a single instant begin the fight, the holiest in which Russia ever has engaged.'

The Czar followed the line his former teacher had suggested. All opposition and minorities were ruthlessly russified and oppressed. And, in particular, the Jews became the object of brutal anti-semitism.

The period opened with a series of pogroms, arranged or sponsored by high officials of the state. In social and economic life the Jewish sphere was greatly reduced by the introduction of severe new

restrictions, the so-called May laws. Thousands of Jews who had previously been allowed to live and work outside the Pale of Settlement were driven back, sometimes with great cruelty. Inside the Pale conditions worsened rapidly. The Jewish masses were crowded into the towns. Life in the country districts was made very difficult. Their 'Lebensraum' was shrinking. Technical schools were closed to them. In the Universities their numbers were reduced. They had no share in the civil service or in local government, even in towns where they formed half the population, and they were debarred from many occupations.

MIGRATION TO THE WEST

In Europe emigration to countries overseas had long been a way out for those who were oppressed; and English Non-conformists, Irish Catholics and German Democrats had contributed to the growth of the New World. Now under the oppression of the Czars, Russian Jews joined in that movement, They were soon followed by Galician and Rumanian Jews whose situation for political or economic reasons was as hopeless. A stream of emigrants from Eastern Europe broke its way 'out of the house of bondage' towards freedom, and by this movement Jewish life in every country of the world was transformed. In 1880 three-quarters of the Jewish population of the world still lived in Eastern Europe, most of them in Russia, but the new migration changed completely the composition of the Western Jewries.⁽¹⁾

(1) According to Arthur Ruppin, *Soziologie der Juden*, Berlin 1930, Vol. 1, p. 89, the number of Jews in 1880 was 7,662,500. Of these there lived in

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eastern Europe | 5,726,000 (74.8%) |
| Western and Central Europe | 1,044,500 (13.6%) |
| Total in Europe | 6,770,500 (88.4%) |
| America | 250,000 (3.3%) |
| Asia | 350,000 (4.5%) |
| Africa | 280,000 (3.6%) |
| Australia | 12,000 (0.2%) |
| Grand Total | 7,662,500 (100%) |

The number of Jews at the end of 1938 was estimated by Ruppin (*Jewish Fate and Future*, London, 1940, pp. 30-33) at 16,717,000. Of these there lived in

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eastern Europe | 7,440,000 (44.5%) |
| Western and Central Europe | 2,484,000 (14.8%) |
| Total in Europe | 9,924,000 (59.3%) |
| America | 5,286,000 (31.7%) |
| Asia | 868,000 (5.2%) |
| Africa | 609,000 (3.6%) |
| Australia | 30,000 (0.2%) |
| Grand Total | 16,717,000 (100%) |

At the beginning of this migration the number of Jews in England hardly exceeded 60,000. They had come to the country in two main streams. One was formed by Sephardic Jews sprung from Spain or Portugal, who had come after the re-admission of the Jews by Cromwell, from Western Europe and from Italy. Among them were such families as the Ricardos, Disraelis and Barnardos. The other group was formed by Ashkenasic Jews, mainly from Germany, who had entered since the 18th century, and had founded new communities in Manchester and Leeds, in Bradford and Portsmouth and in other towns.

The new stream from the East of Europe brought immigrants whose social standards and experience were completely different. Unlike their predecessors who generally had not been without means, most of the new arrivals were completely destitute. They came from conditions of the utmost misery, and often, in addition, had experienced dire persecution. Crowding into the poorest districts of the East End of London, they worked as tailors or as petty traders, and gradually spread to other centres. They brought from Eastern Europe their own language and their customs, which differed from those prevailing in the Western countries with their traditions of democracy and freedom. Their numbers grew and, since many were pressing on the labour market, they soon attracted the attention of the public. The problem of their immigration became a subject of discussion in the Press and in Parliament. And in 1902 a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into:

‘The character and extent of the evils which are attributed to the unrestricted immigration of Aliens, especially in the Metropolis.’⁽¹⁾

The Commission went thoroughly into the problem. After examining the part which previous immigrations had played in British history since Norman days - it declared:

‘The present movement of immigration began in about 1880, and is drawn mainly from the Jewish inhabitants of Eastern Europe.’

The Commission heard a great number of witnesses and experts, among them Dr. Theodor Herzl, founder and president of the World Zionist Organisation. He described how, for years, he had been pointing to the hopeless position of the Eastern Jews; “a dark cloud is gathering in the East. the Jews of Eastern Europe cannot stay where they are.” He urged that the problem of these Eastern Jews could not be solved by immigration laws in England, but had to be dealt with at the source, by the establishment of a new Jewish National Home in Palestine.

One member of the Royal Commission, Major Evans Gordon, went himself to Russia and Austria, to inquire into the conditions of the Jews and the main causes of their emigration; and his survey became a part of the Commission’s Report.

In summarising the evidence the Report pointed out that the root of the problem lay in Eastern Europe; and, in particular, in the oppression of the Jews in Czarist Russia.

(1) Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, 1903.

‘It was mainly the forcing of the Jews into the towns (of the Pale) that led to the exodus to England and America in these twenty years, and ... the expulsive influence still prevails.’

The Commission mentioned also that many of the poorest Jews in Eastern Europe entertained exaggerated hopes of prosperity in London and New York and concluded:

‘These two forces of expulsion and attraction are constantly at work, and supply the explanation to the immigration with which we are confronted.’

Since the Commission saw no reason to anticipate that under the conditions prevailing in the East of Europe, the number of alien immigrants in future years would be diminished, they made suggestions for restrictions, and, as a result the Aliens Immigration Act was introduced in 1905. Henceforth the influx was on a much smaller scale. Altogether about 200,000 Jews entered Britain between 1881 and 1914. Ninety per cent. came from the East of Europe (Russia, Galicia, and Rumania), and in the words of the historian Cecil Roth: ‘this immigration changed the face of Anglo-Jewry.’ (1)

Similar but on a larger scale was the development in the United States. Here, too, the early Jewish immigrants had been Sephardic Jews of Spanish-Portuguese descent. It was in 1654 that the first ship with about 20 Jews on board (men, women and children) sailed into the harbour of New Amsterdam. Further immigrants from Holland, England and Brazil brought their number up to about 3,000, by the time when the Colonies declared their independence. This was less than one-tenth of one per cent, of the whole population, which numbered about four million. In 1840, 15,000 Jews lived in a total population of 17 million. The Sephardic element still formed the large majority. But German Jews already played a part and there was also a sprinkling from the East of Europe.

(1) Exact figures of the Immigration are not available, owing to lack of statistics. *Vladimir Kaplan Kogan*, *Die Juedischen Wanderbewegungen in de neuesten Zelt*, Bonn, 1919, p.19, estimates the total figure at 240,000 of which came from

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Russia |180,000 |
| Rumania |30,000 |
| Austria (Galicia) |15,000 |
| Other countries |16,000 |
| Total |241,000 |

Arthur Ruppin, loc. cit. Vol. I, p.157, holds that between 1880 and 1929 altogether 210,000 Jews immigrated into Great Britain of which came from

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Russia |130,000 |
| Austria (Galicia) since 1920 Poland | ...40,000 |
| Rumania |30,000 |
| Other countries |10,000 |
| Total |210,000 |

The 40 years from 1840, which saw a vast expansion of the U.S.A., are often called the period of the German immigration. During those years the number of Jews increased from 15,000 to 250,000; and, as the total population grew to 50 million, Jews came to form about one half of one per cent, of all inhabitants. Moreover, the character of American Jewry was transformed from a predominantly Sephardic to a predominantly German community.

This was the situation when the 'flood broke in' from the East. Between 1880 and 1914 more than two million Jews came from the East of Europe to America. From 1900 onwards the yearly arrivals averaged 100,000, and in 1906 - after the abortive Russian revolution and the pogroms of the previous year - exceeded 150,000.⁽¹⁾

In 1927 the number of Jews in the United States had reached about 4,200,000; and it is estimated that out of this number 3,500,000 (or 83%) were either born in Eastern Europe or were of Eastern European descent. As far as numbers are concerned, the Eastern wave has swamped all the other elements in American Jewry; and in South Africa, Australia and Canada the situation, on a smaller scale, was similar.

The influence of Eastern Jewry was not, however, limited to numbers in the building up and the transformation of the large Jewish communities in Western Europe. It affected the substance and structure of these communities. The influx of immigrants maintained and strengthened their basic character and their cultural and spiritual existence. Those who were Western Jews by descent tended to assimilation, and their conceptions of Jewish life grew vague. Those, however, who came from the unexhausted sources of the Jewish world in the East, were full of Jewish vitality which brought

(1) The detailed figures according to *Kaplan Kogan* are as follows

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Immigrants from | |
| Russia | 1,593,000 |
| Austria (Galicia) | .240,000 |
| Rumania | .62,000 |
| Other countries (this figure includes Eastern Jews who entered the U.S.A. after having lived temporarily in another country | .602,000 |
| Total for the period 1880-1914 . . . | .2,497,000 |

A. *Ruppin* gives the following figures of Jewish immigration into the U.S.A. for the period 1880-1929:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| From | |
| Russia | 1,749,000 |
| Austria (since 1920 Poland) | .597,000 |
| Rumania | .161,000 |
| Great Britain | .114,000 |
| Other countries | .264,000 |
| Total | .2,885,000 |

Since, the immigrants from Great Britain were nearly all Eastern Jews who had lived for some time in the U.K., the number of Eastern Jewish immigrants amounts to about 2,620,000 out of the total of 2,885,000.

new life to the Jewish communities in the West. This is particularly evident in their language. The mother-tongue of all Jews who came from Eastern Europe to America or Britain is Yiddish; and the first generation generally continued its use. The pedlar or the garment worker in the East End of New York or London started with very little English. His contacts with the Gentile world were few; and in the circle of his family and friends Yiddish remained the living language. His children, on the other hand, learned English thoroughly at school. They often continued to speak Yiddish with their parents, but English with the younger generation and general society. They grew up to be bi-lingual, but their children knew Yiddish only in the rarest cases, and English had become their mother-tongue. Sometimes the process was accelerated; for some considered Yiddish as indicating a lower social standard. Yiddish might thus have fallen quickly into disuse, but a stream of new arrivals constantly kept it alive. 'By the time that one wave of immigrants had succeeded in leaving the ghetto,' wrote the Jewish author, Klatzkin, in 1930, 'the ocean had already spilled another wave on the shore and with it a new import of Judaism.' This was true not only of the language but of all other manifestations of social life, particularly of religious customs. The East alone has kept alive Jewish Orthodoxy among the Western peoples. 'The second generation - as a rule -,' said Ruppin, describing the conditions in the Western world. 'is already abandoning observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws; and in the third apostasy by lack of interest, assimilation or baptism are by no means rare.' The masses of new arrivals from the East continued to revitalise the anæmic body of Western Jewry. They kept alive learning and customs, language and religion everywhere, in the vast Jewish concentrations of New York, in South America, Germany, England and France.

ZIONISM

While Eastern Jewry had a great share in the building up and maintaining of the Jewish communities in the Western world, its greater part was in the renaissance of Palestine. Since the dispersion in Roman days, the Jews had retained a unique relationship to the Holy Land which combined in itself religious elements with those of nationality. The prophecies of restoration and redemption played their part in maintaining this relationship. Through all the centuries of dispersion the vision of the country had remained alive. But nowhere had it been a greater reality than among the Jews of Eastern Europe.

Through the centuries a Jewish remnant was living in the country. In the beginning of the 19th century the number of Jews in Palestine is estimated at about 10,000; the country then was poor and thinly populated. No change occurred for more than 50 years. The immigration maintained the level of the population which consisted mainly of old people who came to pray, to die and to be buried in the Holy Land. Some hundreds of immigrants arrived each year from Smyrna, Morocco and the East of Europe; and in 1880 the population had reached approximately 25,000.

In the East of Europe the great migration movement, within 30 years, brought millions of Eastern Jews to Western countries. A trickle reached Palestine. But more important than the number of these new arrivals is that - unlike the immigrants to other countries - those who came to Palestine aimed at a fundamental revival of Jewish life. They were convinced that in dispersion the Jewish question could never be solved: that much more was required than the abolition of persecution and a new concentration of Jewish life was needed to maintain and revive Jewish existence.

‘The whole existence of the Jewish people,’ wrote Leon Pinsker of Odessa in 1882, ‘in every country is a shadow. The Jewish people are everywhere present but nowhere at home. Thus the Jew is for the living dead, for the native an alien, for the possessing a beggar, for the poor an exploiter and millionaire, and for the patriot homeless.’

This state of affairs was now to be changed, and those who longed for or went to Palestine were resolved to re-establish a national community life in the fullest sense of the word. Pinsker’s call to the Jewish nation had little effect in the West, but made a deep impression among Russian Jews. A movement started there. Choveve Zion (the Lovers of Zion), which aimed at Jewish restoration in the Holy Land, and in the early 1880’s the first Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine since the dispersion were established by members of this Russian-Jewish movement.

More than 10 years later the spark which Pinsker had kindled became a fire. When, during the Dreyfus-affair, the Viennese Theodor Herzl heard the streets resound with the cry ‘Mort aux Juifs,’ in Paris, the city where the rights of man had been proclaimed, the whole foundation of his life collapsed and he became convinced that the Jewish question could only be solved by the creation of a Jewish national state.

‘We are a people,’ he exclaimed. ‘the enemy makes us into one, even if we do not want it. We have tried everywhere honestly to submerge ourselves in the national communities of the peoples who surround us, endeavouring to preserve only the faith of our Fathers. It is not permitted to us. In vain are we loyal, and even display excessive patriotism. In the fatherlands in which we have already lived for centuries, we are insulted as aliens.’

Although this call was issued in the West, and soon attracted those who either despaired of the possibility of national assimilation, or were wearied by the need to adapt their life according to other peoples’ model - the overwhelming majority of adherents of the Zionist movement were found in Eastern Europe. There Jewish community life was a powerful reality, and the new movement appeared to many not only as a way out of difficulties but as a means to link up organically the traditions of the past with the requirements of a new life in the future.

The movement was, of course, not universal, and opposition was strong in many camps. First the Jewish upper classes were not greatly interested in a revival of a Jewish station. Second, there were orthodox Jews to whom - especially in the beginning of the movement - the secular and worldly character of Zionism was repulsive: and finally Jewish socialists expected a solution of the Jewish problem within the wider context of a social revolution. But notwithstanding all this opposition large parts of Eastern Jewry joined the movement; and the transformation of the ancient mystical longing for the Holy Land into definite political aims gave a new meaning to their life.

When Herzl still hesitated whether the Jewish state should be established in Palestine or in South America, Eastern Jews made it clear to him that the Jewish National Home could be established only on the ancient soil of the Holy Land. Although from the economic and social point of view the Jews of Eastern Europe might seem backward. their spiritual insight and national tradition soon secured them a dominating influence within the Zionist movement. This became clear as early as 1903. The

British Government had offered to the Zionists through Joseph Chamberlain a district in East Africa for an autonomous Jewish Settlement. Herzl advocated the acceptance of this offer, at least as a matter of expediency for the time being, as a 'doss-house' (*Nachtsyl*) for the despairing Jewish masses. But the suggestion of 'Zionism without Zion' raised so violent an opposition - mainly among the Eastern delegates. although they needed more than anybody else immediate rescue from their plight - that the Zionist organisation nearly split. Ussishkin of Odessa led the opposition. A meeting of the Russian Zionists in Kharkow gave him unqualified support, and the scheme collapsed.

After the death of Herzl the influence of Eastern Jews in the movement grew still greater; and many of the leading Zionists today - including Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organisation - originate in Eastern Europe. The same is true of the rank and file. Nearly all the Jewish immigrants to Palestine, from 1880 to the outbreak of the First World War - the Jewish population in the Holy Land increased within this time to nearly 100,000 - came from Eastern Europe; and Eastern thought and customs deeply influenced this first and fundamental layer of the Jewish life in Palestine.

From 1880 until 1914 Eastern Jewry, therefore, had acted as a driving power which transformed the Jewish position everywhere in the world. They had played a leading part in building up the movement of the national renaissance. They had provided nearly all the Jewish immigrants to Palestine, had permeated the Zionist movement everywhere, and provided its political leaders.

But in spite of the extraordinary expansion, Eastern Jewry - owing to their high birthrate - had increased in numbers even in the East of Europe. They had kept alive their national character, language, literature and folk-songs, their customs and tradition and religious life. They had become the source of strength throughout the Jewish world, and seemed to be an inexhaustible reservoir of vitality.

CHAPTER II
JEWS IN POLAND AND RUMANIA
1919 - 1939

THE FIRST WORLD WAR turned Eastern Europe into a battlefield; and its populations suffered all the horrors of battle and retreat, of conquest, plunder and occupation. When fighting ultimately ceased and civil war and revolutions ended, the map of Eastern Europe was transformed. Russia and both the Central Powers were defeated: Poland restored, Rumania largely increased: and Finland and the Baltic Provinces became independent states. The situation of the Jews was changed profoundly. Hitherto the vast majority had lived in Czarist Russia. Now they were divided by the new frontiers into two groups. The larger group - more than four millions - lived in the victor countries, Poland, Rumania, and the Baltic States; the remnant of three millions was within the Soviet Union. For centuries the world of Eastern Jewry had been one great living unit, in spite of differences and gradations of its various groups. They were united by tradition, language and a common fate. Now came a parting of the ways - their world was split into two hemispheres.

By far the largest Jewish group outside the Soviet Union lived in Poland, and its fate was linked up with that of the new state. Nearly 150 years had passed since the unfortunate country had been partitioned by Russia, Austria and Prussia. Her restoration was a triumph of her national persistence; and in the glorious days of reunion the future for all members of the state seemed full of hope. During the war. Pilsudski, then in exile, promised liberty to all; and the new Polish constitution of 1921 - in full accordance with the treaties for the protection of minorities - proclaimed equality of rights for all inhabitants, forbidding any kind of racial or national discrimination.

But in reality things were very different. The country, without much experience of self-government, was unable to concentrate its forces in a united effort of constructive policy. Between the parties of the Left and of the Right was a gaping chasm. Narutowicz, the first President of the Republic, was shot within a week of taking office. Internal conflicts hampered the working of the Government machine; and in 1926 Pilsudski's coup d'état ended the period of democracy. The Sejm, the Polish parliament, continued to exist for a time, but gradually the centre of power shifted to forces outside parliament, particularly to the "Colonels," the leading members of the Polish Legion. The range of civic liberties, including freedom of the Press, was more and more restricted. Parliament was dissolved in 1930. The leaders of the opposition, including Witos of the Peasant Party and Lieberman, the Socialist, were sent to the fortress Brest-Litovsk, and insulted and beaten in prison. The state gradually became authoritarian. In 1935 the constitution was revised accordingly; and shortly afterwards Pilsudski died.

This whole political development was indissolubly connected with the economic conditions and the social structure of the country. Poland had always been predominantly agricultural. More than three-quarters of her working population drew their living from the soil; and - as in pre-revolutionary Russia - it was the question of the land which was the burning social issue of the country. The feudal system hampered its development.

A few proprietors of big estates owned a large part of the cultivated areas, whilst the masses of the Polish peasants lived on holdings so minute that they could hardly earn a living for their families.⁽¹⁾ If one accepts - as the National Council of Poland did in 1944 - an area of five hectares as the minimum standard of small holdings, nearly two million Polish peasants owned less than the minimum required for the barest decent living of a family, and although certain adjustments have been made between the two world wars, the general situation was approximately unchanged in 1939. Conditions in the rural areas, therefore, drove masses of the population to the town. Since there, too, they could not find a living, they soon became a fluctuating element of unrest which threatened the existing social order. Little was done, however, to relieve that pressure, and the agrarian reforms which had been initiated in the beginning of the 1920's, were abandoned after Pilsudki's coup d'état.⁽²⁾

Since the Government was unable to deal with the land problem in a fundamental way, they turned with increased intensity towards the establishment of an authoritarian system. They sought to find the dominating motive, which should keep the various groups of the population together, in the idea of "National Defence." "How is it possible," exclaimed Marshal Smigly-Rydz in 1936, "to organise the State? How can we think about improvement in the country, when we do not have an organised and single-directed will? I believe that the only slogan which can give us that moral support is the *slogan of national defence*... Within this programme everything can find its place." Thus the Army became the dominating factor.

What was the position of the Jews under these conditions? Numbering more than three million, they formed about 10% of the Polish population ⁽³⁾ and as the share of the national minorities in Poland's public life steadily declined, the Jews in particular were subjected to most severe discriminations.

The social structure of the Jewish community - apart from the religious questions - differed greatly from that of the general population. Whilst the overwhelming majority of the Poles lived on the land and earned their living from agriculture, the greater part of the Jews lived in towns, and were

(1) This was the distribution of the land in 1921:

| Size | No. of holdings absolute | Per cent |
|---|-----------------------------|----------|
| Less than 2 hectares (1 hectare=2,471 acres) | .1,109,000 | 34 |
| 2-5 hectares | .1,002,000 | 30.7 |
| 5-20 hectares | .1,045,000 | 32 |
| 20-50 hectares | .76,000 | 2.3 |
| 50-100 hectares | .11,000 | 0.4 |
| Over 100 hectares | .19,000 | 0.6 |

(2) During the life of the Republic some 5 million acres were distributed among the poorer groups, but the natural increase of the rural population absorbed all the land so transferred.

3) The National minorities of the Ukrainians, White Russians, and Germans within Poland amounted to about seven million, or 20 per cent. of the total population.

engaged in trade, handicraft, industry, finance, transport and the liberal professions.⁽¹⁾ This difference in religion and in social life created many problems, the solution of which would have required great wisdom on both sides. But under the increasing pressure of social tensions sharpened by economic crises in the world abroad, by rising influence of Nazi-Germany and the growing international uncertainties, the Polish Government, in the last years before the second World War, embarked upon the complete *elimination of the Jews* from every sphere of public and economic life.

Politically Jews were barred from any influence by the authoritarian system. The Sejm had lost its power as a parliament. The parties could no longer even nominate their candidates. Power was concentrated in the so-called “Camp of National Unity.” to which no single Jewish member was admitted, not even if he had shared in Poland’s greatest honour, to have fought as a soldier of Pilsudski for the independence of the country. The civil service had but a few Jewish members, and they were practically non-existent when the second World War began.

In the universities and technical schools the proportion of the Jewish students rapidly diminished.⁽²⁾

In every sphere of economic life the tendency was the same; and the state by its widespread economic activities could and did exert far-reaching influence in this direction. From the state monopolies, which covered the tobacco, liquor, salt, and match industries, as well as lotteries, Jews were practically excluded. The same was true in all banks and credit institutes controlled by the Government, and the state forests, mines, chemical plants, public utilities, military works and communications. Thus in 1934, only 1.2% of the employees in the railroad services were Jews; and in Warsaw, where one-third of the population were Jews, out of more than 4,000 persons employed in the street car service, only two were Jews.

(1) O. Janowski, *People at Bay*, London, 1938, p.44, gives the following comparative table of the occupational stratification.

| | Jews% | Non-Jews % |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | .9.8 | 80.7 |
| Industry and handicraft | .32.2 | 7.7 |
| Trade and finance | .35.1 | 1.5 |
| Communications and transport | .2.7 | 1.7 |
| Liberal professions | .3.8 | 7.0 |
| Public service | .0.6 | 1.6 |
| Other occupations | .15.8 | 6.1 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 |

(2) Whilst in the years from 1923, to 1936 the number of non-Jewish students rose from 30,000 to 41,000, the number of Jewish students fell from 9,500 to 6,200 (among medical students from 1469 to 588); and in the succeeding years until the outbreak of this war, this process continued at an increased speed. In the technical and trade schools of the Government ruthless anti-semitic pressure reduced the Jews to not more than 1.3%, of the combined student body. Even in Warsaw, where Jews formed 54.8% of all artisans, their share in the technical schools was not more than 1.8%. Out of a total appropriation of 27,500,000 Zloties for trade education in 1931, 36 Jewish trade and technical schools altogether received 57,575 Zloties, or one-fiftieth of what it would have been according to their share in the population.

The private practice of physicians, lawyers and engineers, which in modern days depends to an increasing extent on the public and insurance services, was gradually affected. ⁽¹⁾

Under these conditions Jewish firms were *de facto* excluded from public works and from all orders given by undertakings which were controlled by the state.

But this was not all. The Government, not content with the elimination of Jews in all branches of state and public economy, openly called for a boycott of Jewish enterprises in every sphere of economic life. "*Cultural self-defence and economic independence from the Jews*" became the official programme of the Polish Government.

No wonder, under such pressure and at a time of a declining standard of living, the Jewish masses became nearly destitute. But worse than that, anti-semitic feelings, stirred up by the Nazis of Germany, threatened the very life of Jewish citizens. *Endeks* (National Democrats) and members of the *Nara* (National Radicals), created anti-Jewish riots, particularly at the universities (where special ghetto-benches for the Jewish students were installed); and plunder in the markets, violence and bomb outrages in places frequented by Jews were not rare.

The only way out which the Government suggested was *Jewish emigration*; and this became the Polish policy. In 1936 the Polish Foreign Minister, the late Colonel Beck, officially called the attention of the League of Nations to Poland's interest in Palestine, since Polish Jewry ought to emigrate. One member of the Polish Government went so far as to declare that Poland had room for only 50,000 Jews, and that the remaining three million must leave the country. Pressure to emigrate, therefore, became the final link in the chain of Polish policy towards the Jews.

In neighbouring Rumania things were hardly better. In 1878 the Congress of Berlin had tried to improve the miserable situation of Rumanian Jews by making the recognition of Rumania's independence dependent on the grant of equality of rights to all citizens; but this condition was never put into practice by the Rumanian Government. When after the first World War the territory of Rumania was greatly extended, and, as a result, the Jewish population increased from 240,000 to more than 750,000 (about 42% of the total population of 18 million), the Government again solemnly promised "complete civil and political equality for all religious and racial minorities," but even this did not change the situation fundamentally.

Jews were excluded from the civil and municipal service and from employment in any undertaking under Government control. Jewish firms were barred from orders from the state and subject to severe restrictions regarding labour, credits and facilities for imports.

Here, too, the plight of the Jews was partly a reflection of the social crisis of the country; but, as in Poland, hardly anything was done towards a readjustment of the social order. In vain the leaders

⁽¹⁾ In Lwow, for instance, out of 104 Jewish physicians who in 1935 were employed in public health and social welfare work, only 24 were left two years later; and the condition was the same in other parts of the country.

of the Peasant Party constantly pointed to the true cause of the existing trouble. The Government and the anti-Jewish parties directed public discontent against the Jews, and riots and continued terror were the consequence. (1)

The Church in Poland and Rumania largely assisted the “*cold pogrom.*” “One does well,” wrote Cardinal Hlond in a pastoral letter in 1936, “to prefer one’s own kind in commercial dealings, to avoid Jewish stores and stalls in the market... and particularly to boycott the Jewish Press”; and the Patriarch and Prime Minister of Rumania, Miron Christea, denounced publicly the Jews as parasites on the Rumanian people.

Emigration remained the only hope and way of escape for the Jews of Poland and Rumania; and in this respect these two countries continued the sad heritage of Czarist Russia. Whilst up to the first World War immigration to America was unrestricted, in 1921 immigration was limited to 3% of every nationality, as it had been represented in the United States in 1910. The number of Eastern Jewish immigrants, which in 1921 had still amounted to 119,000, sank, as a result of this new legislation, in the following three years to 50,000 annually. In 1924 the quota was reduced to 2% of every nationality; and, at the same time, the year 1910 was replaced as the determining factor by the year 1890. Since in 1890 the proportion of Eastern Jews in the United States had been much smaller than in 1910, the yearly share of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was reduced to about 10,000, i.e. to less than a tenth of the number of the Russian-Jewish immigrants who used to arrive in the States before the first World War.

With emigration to America nearly strangled, and all the doors to other countries closed, the only escape was to Palestine and Polish and Rumanian Jewry - between the two World Wars - became the centre of the Zionist movement, providing the majority of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. But since this immigration was also subject to severe restrictions, the burning need could not be met. The situation steadily grew worse; and shortly before the war a group of Polish Jews, in their despair, set out on a great hunger march, to walk from Poland through the Balkans to the Middle East towards the Land of Israel. They never reached their goal, they were disbanded by the police. But their frustrated march stands out in history as symbol of the Jewish misery in Poland and Rumania during the years between the two World Wars.

(1) In the universities the Jewish students often literally had to fight in order to attend their lectures. Their numbers under these conditions dwindled rapidly. For instance, the proportion of Jews among the medical students at the University of Cluh was 24% in 1922/23; 16% in 1923/24; 5% in 1925/26. In 1936 their number was reduced to half a dozen; and when in 1937, the remnant of the Jewish medical students at the University in Bucharest applied for help against continued maltreatment by their fellow-students, the Government refused assistance and advised them “to wait a few years till the situation might improve.”

CHAPTER III
JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION
1919 - 1939

COMPLETELY DIFFERENT was the development within the U.S.S.R. For the Soviet state - in contrast to Poland and Rumania - attempted a constructive answer to the Jewish question.

POLITICAL EMANCIPATION

There was complete political emancipation, not as a declaration on paper but in the full reality of life. Whilst the Czarist Government had aimed at a russification of its various peoples, the Revolution in determined contrast sought their liberation. Already on March 6, 1916, the Provisional Government had given freedom to Finns and Poles. Shortly afterwards it abolished throughout Russia every discrimination which was based on religion. All citizens, the Jews included, had henceforth equal rights and duties in the political and civic spheres. More than 125 years had passed since, in the famous decree of September 28, 1791, the French Revolution had proclaimed Jewish emancipation for the first time in the history of Christian Europe. But since those days great changes had taken place, and the emancipation of the Russian Revolution was very different from its French predecessor.

In France the Revolution had inscribed the *individual* on its banner. 'No man,' said Robespierre, 'must be deprived of the sacred rights which are implied in human dignity.' And the deputy Clermont-Tonnerre, one of the most fervent advocates of Jewish emancipation, added: 'To the Jews as *nation* we grant nothing, to the Jews as men we grant all.' But this recognition of the individual was granted from the outset only to those who professed full membership of the national community. At the National Assembly itself the question had arisen as to what should be done if the Jews did not wish to be French citizens; and Clermont-Tonnerre had answered: 'Then they must leave the country, for there must be no nation within the Nation.' This attitude went beyond that of the Catholic Church, which at least had granted a ghetto-existence to those who did not share the general belief.

The tendency became still clearer when, in 1806, Napoleon called together more than 100 representative Jews to the 'Assembly of Jewish Notables' in order to lay the foundations for the status of the Jews. In the opening session his Commissioner declared: 'Sa Majesté veut que vous soyez Français ' and the Assembly after some discussion, replied

'Today the Jews are no longer a nation, since they have the privilege of being integrated into the structure of the Grande Nation in which they see their political redemption.'

Thus the principle of national assimilation became the basis for the freedom of the Jews in France. It was an emancipation of individuals not of groups. The Jews, in order to secure political and civil liberty, had to give up claim to Jewish nationality and to integrate themselves completely into the countries of their domicile. This was in full accord with the tendencies of the time which aimed at creating a homogeneous nationality in every state.

Whilst in the West these tendencies succeeded to a large extent, things were different in Central and Eastern Europe, Austria and Czarist Russia, in particular, consisted of so many nationalities that all attempts made by the ruling groups to bring about national uniformity encountered fierce resistance. Even Imperial Germany, had difficulties with her Danes, Poles and Alsacians. In Austria the conflict between the Germans, Czechs, Poles and Southern Slavs dominated internal political life; and in Czarist Russia Poles, Ukrainians, Finns and other groups fought passionately for their national survival.

National issues were of paramount importance in all the conflicts which were shaking the foundations of these states, and the progressive and the revolutionary parties soon took a burning interest in the national question. They realised that internal conflicts between the nationalities prevented social progress. They saw that national oppression had to end if they were ever to realise their aims. It had been said by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: 'No people which oppresses other peoples can be free'; and the right of every nation within the state to develop freely became a revolutionary battle-cry.

The conception of the multinational state with equal rights for every nationality gradually developed. Emancipation, therefore, no longer meant freedom only for *individuals* - as Robespierre had once proclaimed - but also freedom for the *group* to develop its collective life, its language, national and cultural activities within the framework of the state.

Thus far all revolutionary parties were united; but on the wider issues the opinions were divided. One group hoped to reach the aim by combining all members of the same nationality - wherever they might live within the state - in one community which should have autonomy to order its cultural life. This theory had been developed by the Austrian Socialists at the end of the 19th century. It was accepted by the moderates of the Russian Social-Democratic Party (the Mensheviks) and it found many followers among the national minorities of Central and Eastern Europe, particularly among Jewish groups.

Autonomy for every nationality, irrespective of its territory, seemed indeed admirably fitted for the Jews who, notwithstanding their dispersion over many countries, had preserved their individuality. In Russia the historian Simon Dubnow developed the theory of cultural autonomy for Jews; and the *BUND*, the Jewish Labour League for Lithuania, Poland and Russia, made the claim for cultural autonomy part of its programme.

In the beginning of the Russian Revolution power rested with the parliamentary groups and with the right wing of the socialists. The first steps towards the solution of the national problem, therefore, followed these lines, and in the Ukraine where, owing to the German occupation, things took a somewhat different course from that in the rest of Russia, the Government ordered registration of the members of every nationality within its borders, and prepared general elections on this basis. Before, however, these preparations were complete, the Government was swept from power, and with the beginning of the Communist revolution, the issue of the nationalities entered a new phase.

Cultural autonomy was not enough for the Communists who were convinced that more was needed to solve the problem of the nationalities. The issue had been argued for nearly 20 years within the Party, and had been treated as a central problem of the revolution. Stalin himself summed up the discussion and laid down the principles of Communist philosophy and action on this fundamental problem.⁽¹⁾

It was utterly impracticable to organise a country of the size and population of the Russian state by registers and personal certificates for membership of various nationalities. Moreover, he maintained that territory was a necessary element of every nationality, and, therefore, no nation could be organised on any other basis than the land on which it lived.

Most important of all arguments was that to him the national idea by itself tends to *divide* the peoples instead of uniting them. He pointed to the Austrian Socialists who, in the 15 years since 1897, when they accepted the principle of cultural autonomy as guiding rule, had split into not less than six groups of various nationalities (Czechs, Germans, Southern Slavs and others), and now were disunited on essential issues. A *binding* element was required which could unite peoples in spite of their national and racial differences; and this element he saw in the Socialist Revolution. To him, the only way to peace among the peoples was revolutionary Socialism, and this was to become the basis of organisation for every nationality within the borders of New Russia.

Events followed the course of revolutionary thought; and no sooner had the Communists come to power than the national question was merged in the social revolution. The state was reconstructed on the basis of autonomous regions and transformed into a Union of federative socialist republics. Within each national republic equal rights were granted to each individual; as expressed in the Soviet Constitution of 1936:

‘The equality of the rights of the citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life is an indefeasible law.

‘Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of or, conversely, the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as the advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred or contempt, is punishable by law.’(Article 123.)

Going beyond the prohibition of discrimination every minority, wherever it might live, was granted full permission to develop its own nationhood, by the use of its own language, schools, theatre and Press. ‘The prison of the peoples’, as Lenin described the Russia of the Czars, had been transformed; and to make the change clear to all the world, the very name of Russia was abolished for the Federation, and was replaced by ‘Union of Socialist Soviet Republics,’ to indicate that in the new state all peoples had equal rights and duties.

(1) J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*, 1913.

Today a Soviet of Nationalities forms one of the two Chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the Union, and safeguards the position of its various peoples. Whilst Clermont-Tonnerre believed that 'there must be no nation within the Nation,' the Soviet Union at the outbreak of the war proudly counted 11 national republics, 60 living languages, and 113 nationalities within its borders. As in medieval days Christianity united Spaniards, French and Italians, so within the Soviet Union the new supranational conception of Socialism co-ordinated the nationalities. The peoples of the Soviet State were reunited in a deeper sense than ever before, and members of the most varied nationalities could join in singing:

'From great Moscow to the farthest border,
From our Arctic Seas to Samarkand,
Everywhere man proudly walks as master
Of his own immeasurable fatherland.'

And the new National Anthem of the Soviet Union, which was introduced at the height of the war, and which brought in again the conception of 'Great Russia,' proclaims:

'Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics,
Great Russia has welded for ever to stand
Created in struggle, by will of the peoples,
United and mighty, our Soviet Land.'

For the Jews, as for every other national group, the new order meant in the first place the right to use their own language in school, press, theatre, and every other sphere of cultural activities. It also meant that, where the Jews formed the majority among the local population, theirs was the official language in the courts and the administration.

Regarding the language itself a struggle had been going on among the Jews for many years. The Zionists fought for the revival of Hebrew, which has in fact come to life again in Palestine. The Socialists held fast to Yiddish, the mother-tongue of Eastern Jewry. They found allies in many sections of the orthodox: for, although Hebrew is the language of the Bible, the prayers and the greatest part of the religious literature - Yiddish for many centuries had been the language of the Jewish school and Jewish learning. The Revolution decided for the 'language of the Jewish masses.' Yiddish was accepted, Hebrew, the 'Church-Latin' of the Jews, became suspect and was subject to the same restrictions as the teaching of religion.

* * * * *

In the beginning of the Revolution there was no Jewish majority in any district large enough to form a Jewish national republic. Whilst under the system of cultural autonomy the Jews would have been reorganized from the beginning as one of the federative communities - even without a territory of their own - in the Soviet system they formed minorities in the republics of the U.S.S.R.

There were, however, several smaller districts which soon developed into Jewish 'National Regions.' Thus in the district of Kalinindorf in the Ukraine, 75% of the 25,000 inhabitants were Jews. Yiddish was recognised as the official language of the district, and Jews formed the majority in the local administration.

Similar districts were formed in the neighbouring regions, New-Zlatopolier and Stalindorf, as well as in Freidorf and Larindorf in the Crimea. There were in the Ukraine at the end of 1933 three Jewish national regions where the Jews numbered about two-thirds of the general population.⁽¹⁾ In White Russia at the end of 1931 there were 27 Jewish local Soviets, In the Crimea there were 32 Jewish rural Soviets and two national regions at the end of 1933. But since the number of Jews in the Soviet Union amounted to about three million, all these settlements together formed but a small proportion of the Jewish population.

* * * * *

Considering that the great majority of Jews lived in the larger towns where - in the words of President Kalinin - 'specific national characteristics tend to become slowly obliterated'. - the Government decided to put a special territory at the disposal of the Jews for the development - if they so desired - of their own national community. This territory was found in the Far East, north of the River Amur, in a district called *Biro-Bidjan*, In March, 1928, the Government resolved 'to set aside for adjoining Jewish settlements the free land in this district'; and added that the development of the region into a Jewish National administrative unit should be kept in view if the colonisation should proceed successfully. The Government did not intend to concentrate all or even the majority of the Jews within the Jewish region, but they offered a chance to those who desired to build up a centre of Jewish national life. President Kalinin described how he visualised the Jewish future there.

The Biro-Bidjan Jews will not be a nationality with the characteristics of a town Jew of Poland or Lithuania 'The Jews will become socialist colonisers with strong fists and sharp teeth, a strong national group within the Soviet family of nations.'

The vast district was only thinly populated when it was allotted to the Jews, and the first Jewish settlers began their pioneer work immediately.

Opinions about the result of the colonisation up to the outbreak of the war are divided. The Institute of Jewish Affairs in New York (in a brochure 'The Jews Under Soviet Rule,' August, 1941) sums up its judgment as follows:

'The results after 13 years are scarcely impressive. Out of more than 60,000 Jews who went there, no more than 23,000 (a bare 19.1%, of the total population) have remained and scarcely 5,000 of them have been able to win a living from the soil, the rest maintaining themselves as artisans or casual labourers. Only a small proportion of the Jewish children attend the Yiddish schools. Russian is the dominant language, alike in the government offices, the councils, the collective farms and the

(1) Jacob Lestchinsky, Jews in the U.S.S.R., Contemporary Jewish Record, New York, Nov./Dec 1940, p. 616.

workers' club. Not only has the settlement failed to provide the promised inspiration for Soviet Jewry as a whole, but even the Jewish colonists who reside there are utterly devoid of national aspirations or of any desire to establish a distinctively Jewish centre.'

Others give a more hopeful picture. Thus I. Rennap, whilst admitting 'that not all the settlers were able to stand the rigorous pioneer life,' says: **(1)**

'The initial difficulties have been overcome. Today the tiny village of the early days is large and prosperous, the first large scale collective farm village in the Far East... In industry tremendous developments have taken place. Side by side with the rise of collective farm villages, craft co-operatives have sprung up. Textile, clothing and furniture factories have been built, and a flourishing timber trade has been developed, while plans are well ahead for developing the rich iron and coal deposits to build up heavy industries. In recent years railway carriage and wagon building have become Biro-Bidjan's chief industries, and the town of Biro-Bidjan contains important work specialising in rail trucks. In respect of food, the territory is not only self-supporting : it sends corn and maize to other parts of the Far East ; and it has also become an important provisioning base for the Far Eastern armies....

'Jewish schools, clubs and technical institutes have been set up. Yiddish newspapers and periodicals on all subjects appear, and outstanding among them is the *Forepost*, a bi-monthly literary and political journal to which the best Jewish writers in the U.S.S.R. contribute.'

Rennap gives the number of Jews living in Biro-Bidjan at the outbreak of war as 30,000. It is obvious that this figure falls far below expectations. Kalinin himself estimated the number of Jewish settlers necessary to maintain Jewish nationality in hundreds of thousands. The figure, in fact, is less than 1% of the Jewish population of the Soviet Union, but in judging the result one must keep well in mind that the Jews have unrestricted facilities in all parts of the Union, and that no pressure whatsoever has been exercised to further their migration to Biro-Bidjan. In countries where the Jews enjoy full liberty even Palestine has exerted but little practical attraction in the past; and the movement of Soviet Jews to Biro-Bidjan on the lowest estimate within a period of 10 years has been much greater, absolutely and relatively, than the combined migrations of the Jews from Britain and the U.S.A. to Palestine in nearly twice that time. **(2)**

In 1934, Biro-Bidjan was made a Jewish Autonomous Territory, with its own representatives on the Supreme Soviet. Thus the political emancipation of the Jews in the Soviet Union was completed by the creation of a large self-administered territory for a Jewish population. In the autumn of 1940 the Jewish delegates from Biro-Bidjan reported to the Supreme Soviet that:

'Housebuilding in the towns and collective farms has greatly increased, providing accommodation for thousands of newcomers. The harvest has been exceptionally good this year, and marked progress has

(1) I. Rennap, *Anti-semitism and the Jewish Question*, 1942, pp. 48, 50, 51.

(2) See below, pp. 68-69

been achieved in the consolidation of the collective farms. Courses have been established for the training of tractor drivers, breeders and other qualified workers.

‘Particular attention is to be devoted during the coming year to the settlement in Biro-Bidjan of industrial workers and members of artisan co-operatives. The population of the Autonomous Region is steadily rising, and there is a continuous stream of immigrants, particularly of young people.’ (*Jewish Chronicle*, London, October 25, 1940.)

But before the ‘coming year’ had passed, the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Germans had begun.

ECONOMIC RESTRATIFICATION

The differences in political development between the Soviet Union on one side and Poland and Rumania on the other had their counterpart in the economic sphere. The social revolution in the Soviet Union was the precondition of its political achievements. Before the outbreak of the revolution general conditions in the Russian state were similar to those existing in Poland in 1939. “The central problem of Russian political life,” wrote Stalin in 1913, “*is the agrarian question.*” Land, was the cry of millions of the peasants and farmworkers; and the distribution of land through the revolution created the conditions for the vast industrialisation. This transformation of the economic world was bound to effect a complete change in the social structure of the Russian Jews.

Before 1917 the majority was occupied in trade, a smaller group in crafts. About a third were either communal employees, such as rabbis and teachers, or middlemen of all kinds, from agents on big estates to “luftmenschen.” Only a small number were engaged in agriculture.

‘The fact of the matter is,’ said Stalin, ‘that among the Jews associated with the soil is no large and stable stratum. Of the five or six million Russian Jews only 3 to 4% are connected with agriculture.’

Another Soviet publication described the pre-revolutionary social structure of the Jews as follows: ⁽¹⁾

‘Under Czarism less than 2% of the Jews were peasants, less than 4% were industrial workers. Roughly 20% were handicraftsmen, the majority in straitened circumstances.

Nearly 40% were petty traders, ekeing out a miserable existence. A small percentage were wealthy. The rest lived by unstable, unproductive means, concerned often with Jewish ritual observances and customs, many of which had no counterpart outside the ghetto.’

The crafts in which the Jews specialised were mainly of the lighter kind, such as tailoring, cleaning, leatherwork and furrier’s shops; and even when industrialisation had begun, the Jews were almost entirely cut off from iron, coal and steel, and confined to secondary industries.

(1) Jews in the U.S.S.R., a symposium by Diamondsteln, Kalinin and others, Moscow 1935, quoted from Rennap, p.40.

Miserable as their economic and social situation was in the crowded cities of the Russian Pale, the revolution brought at first a further radical deterioration. Only a few belonged to the rising class of farmworkers and small peasants; and the redistribution of the land - so beneficial to the vast majority of the general population - brought little immediate relief to the Jewish masses. On the contrary, wherever Jews had been dependent on the landowners as clerks, administrators, factors or as keepers of public-houses, they were involved in the fall of their masters.

Moreover, the nationalisation of trade destroyed the basis of existence of the traders; and the creation of agricultural collectives and co-operatives accelerated the elimination of the middlemen. Though many Jews, in the beginning, found employment in various Government departments, the distress of the majority was great. The period of the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy), which to some extent restored private enterprise, brought some relief. But in 1929, on the eve of the First Five-Year Plan, about half of the Jewish population were still without permanent work: and a communist writer summed up the Jewish situation:

‘Declassing is quicker than restratification,’

Meanwhile, however, reintegration had begun. Attempts to turn the uprooted classes to productive work were made very early, although conditions in the first years of the revolution were most difficult. Lenin himself had stressed the great importance of land settlements. The White Russian Republic went so far as to grant the Jews certain privileges in the distribution of land and made it clear that this was meant as compensation for the previous laws which had excluded them from working on the land. Existing Jewish settlements in the Ukraine and Crimea were extended, and new ones were established. According to Ruppin, ⁽¹⁾ in the Ukraine in 1926 the number of Jews engaged in agriculture was four times greater than in 1897, and had increased from 2.6 of every hundred working Jews to 9.7; and the Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York, estimates the number of Jews in the Soviet Union, who, in 1940, were working on the land, at 200,000 against 70,000 before the first World War.

The industrial development was similar. By 1940 the number of Jewish industrial labourers had grown from 160,000 before the revolution to 300,000. But more important still, the character of the work in which Jews were engaged changed fundamentally, from the light industries in which the bulk of the workers had previously been occupied, they shifted to the heavy industries.

‘Instead of being scattered over tens of thousands of one-man stores and workshops, the Jewish proletariat is concentrated in large plants.’

‘Thousands of Jews.’ wrote D. Bergelson, a Soviet Jewish author in 1939, ‘operate machines in factories and mills. In the city of Gorki (formerly Nizhni-Novgorod), where Jews were forbidden to live in Czarist days, about 8,000 Jewish workers are employed in the automobile industry alone. Among the prominent Stakhonovite workers we find many Jews whose names are known all over the country.’

(1) A. Ruppin, loc. cit. Vol. 1, pp. 353-54.

N. Barou estimates that the proportion engaged as workers in the heavy industries in 1943 reached 28 out of every hundred working Jews within the U.S.S.R., “a unique fact in Jewish history.”

This turning to industries was accompanied by a great internal migration from the districts of the Pale to the large cities, Moscow and Leningrad, and far beyond to the new centres of production in the Urals and Siberia.

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Great as these changes were in agriculture and in industry, one-third of all the working Jews, when war broke out, were still engaged as so-called white collar employees; and a further 17% in what are called, in Western countries the liberal professions, such as doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers.⁽¹⁾

Their share in office occupations was still high, even considering the vast expansion of the government organisation in the Soviet state. But in the 20 years between the two World Wars great strides have been made towards a new and sounder occupational stratification. Their greatly increased participation in agriculture, their entry as labourers into the heavy industries, combined with the wider dispersion throughout the Union, had broken down their previous concentration in certain specifically Jewish spheres of occupation. It was the development of a new social and economic life within the Soviet Union which created the conditions for an integration of the Jews.

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

The deepest change took place in the religious sphere. Jewish life was drawn into the crisis of religion in the Soviet State, and strangely interwoven with the fate of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

The Eastern Church had always entertained a most intimate relationship with the State, from the time when the Byzantine-Roman Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian faith. In the Orthodox conception the Christian Emperor was endowed with a special charisma, the grace of rule. “In him the State was crowned by the Cross.” He became, as it were, “the architect of the Kingdom of God on earth.” ⁽²⁾

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Government employed | Employees | 450,000 | 32.2% |
| 50% | Liberal professions | 250,000 | 17.8% |
| Labourers | | 300,000 | 21.5% |
| Agriculturists | | 100,000 | 7.1% |
| Craftsmen | | 200,000 | 14.3% |
| Unclassified | | 100,000 | 7.1% |
| Total | | 1,400,000 | 100.0% |

⁽¹⁾ The Institute of Jewish-Affairs, loc. cit., gives the following estimate of the occupational distribution of Soviet Jewry at the outbreak of the war:

⁽²⁾ S *Bulgakov*, *The Orthodox Church*, London, 1935, p. 182.

When in 1453 Byzantium was conquered by the Turks the Russian Czars took up the heritage of the Byzantine emperors; and although in the reforms of the Russian Church in the 18th century, particularly under Peter the Great, some ideas were modified, the main conceptions remained unchanged. The autocratic Czar united in his person State and Church; and at his coronation in Moscow's cathedral he not only placed the crown himself upon his head (Napoleon had done the same in Notre Dame) but also gave himself the Holy Eucharist, thus symbolising the conception of a "Holy Russia." Pobyedoneszew, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, described the union of the Church and State as follows:

'The Divine power has revealed itself in the Orthodox Church which our people entered 900 years ago. Blessed be this day which gave a firm foundation to our destiny. It is terrible even to imagine what would have become of us without this Church. She alone has enabled us to remain Russians... The autocracy of the Czar which has developed in an indissoluble connection with the Church has strengthened and saved the political integrity of Russia and created the Russian Empire... We have grown under the flag of monarchy and autocracy; under this flag we stand and form one body with one will, and in this we see the future guarantee for the truth and for the order and welfare of our country.'⁽¹⁾

This was the general opinion of the faithful. Dostoevski went even further. Dealing with the social problem, he prophesied that in Europe the social crisis would lead to a class struggle in its fiercest form and to unheard of bloodshed, but that Russia with her millions of believing peasants would solve the social problem in the spirit of Christianity.

'The only possible solution, not only for us Russians, but for all mankind, lies in Christianity... In Europe this solution is impossible, although even there, sooner or later, after streams of blood and innumerable executions they will recognise it; for there is no other way out.'⁽²⁾

The revolution seemed to prove the contrary. It brought what Dostoevski, with a dark presentiment, had once called "the flight into the blue, heels skywards"; and the Church was involved in the breakdown of the social order with which it had identified itself.

Revolutionary legislation on religion began with the decree of January 23, 1918, which separated State from Church and Church from School. This disestablishment, of course, primarily affected the Orthodox Church, for she alone had been connected with the Czarist State, and it was her influence on political affairs which was now to be destroyed. Other religious groups, such as the Baptists, Old-Believers, Roman Catholics and Jews, who had been no more than tolerated by the Czarist Government, were not affected by the separation. The revolution, by destroying the privileges of a ruling Church, seemed to bring a liberty and freedom which they had hardly known before; and negotiations were even conducted between the Soviets and the Holy See for the conclusion of a Concordat.

(1) Speech, delivered in Kiev in 1888 at the 900th anniversary of the baptism of Prince Vladimir.

(2) F Dostoevski, "The Diary," February, 1877.

The nationalisation of the land and of Church property, which hit hard the Russian Church with her possessions and State revenues, affected other congregations less. But all religious groups, and in particular the Jews, were fundamentally affected by the prohibition of religious teaching “in any government or common school, or in any private educational institution where general subjects were taught.” ⁽¹⁾ The Jewish schools, both Cheder and Yeshivah, which were still the backbone of the education of the Jewish masses, became illegal; and Jewish children henceforth flocked to the atheist state-schools of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Constitution of July, 1918, proclaimed priests and other religious ministers to be “non-workers and servants of the bourgeoisie.” As such they were disfranchised, and had to suffer many disabilities, including the exclusion of their children from all higher education.

Meanwhile the civil wars continued, and the Churches - rightly or wrongly - were suspected of counter-revolutionary activities and of sympathy with foreign interventions. The conflict between the State and the religious groups grew sharper. Churches were closed, bishops and priests arrested and the Patriarch sent to prison. Religious teaching to any organised group of persons under 18 years of age was forbidden. Anti-religious mock processions, deriding priests and rabbis, were common; the League of Militant Atheists, formed in 1925, for many years poured out a fierce anti-religious propaganda.

With the introduction of the First Five-Year Plan began the period of sharpest persecution. Many priests opposed the system of collective agriculture. Revolutionary passions on the other side ran high; and the fight against religion reached its climax. Churches and Synagogues were closed wholesale,⁽²⁾ mainly at instigation of the Young Communists. All social work of religious groups was interdicted. A law of April, 1929, decreed:

‘Religious unions are forbidden;

‘(a) to establish mutual aid funds, co-operatives, productive unions, and in general to use the property at their disposal for any other purpose than the satisfying of religious needs:

‘(b) to give material aid to Members, to organise special meetings for children, youth, women, for praying and other purposes, or general meetings, groups, circles, departments, Biblical literary, handworking, labour, religious study, etc., and to organise sanatories and medical aid. Only such books as are necessary for the performance of services may be kept in the church buildings and houses of prayer.’

Soon afterwards the Soviet Constitution was amended. Previously propaganda had been lawful both for religious and for anti-religious purposes: now it was reserved exclusively for atheism.

(1) Decree of January 23, 1918.

(2) According to P. Anderson, “People, Church and State in Modern Russia,” London, 1944, p. 20, the number of local Parish Churches decreased from 50,000 in 1917 to less than 10,000 in 1938. Figures for the corresponding decrease of Synagogues are not available.

The religious groups were limited to “the right of profession,” which in practice meant the conducting of worship. A six-day week was introduced which made the Sunday and the Sabbath wander through the civic week. Since absence from work was not only considered antisocial, but could result in dismissal, observance of the weekly religious holiday became nearly impossible for any worker. Anti-religious teaching became obligatory in all schools. Religious books were destroyed; priests and religious ministers were excluded from residence in the larger cities and their environs. The “League of Militant Atheists” became a public institution. In 1932 it reached a membership of 5½ million, and prepared for a vast expansion of its activities. (1)

All these measures were directed without distinction against Jews and Christians alike, and religious men in both camps had to undergo the same martyrdom. The Jews, however, suffered an additional hardship. They were subjected not only to the general attacks against religion, but to a special onslaught by the Yeveskia, the Jewish section of the Communist Party. Having themselves given up all vestiges of their tradition, these Jewish Communists outdid their Gentile comrades to prove their loyalty to the ideals of the Party. As though they wanted to destroy a part of their own past which they detested, and to oppress an inner voice warning them of the indestructible religious destiny of Israel which they rejected, they fought with greater zeal and fury than any Gentile Communist against the world of Judaism and of tradition; and Israel received the deepest wounds from his own sons.

About 1934 the Soviet policy towards religion became less severe. Anti-religious mock processions were forbidden; the children of the clergy were readmitted to the higher schools, the Stalin Constitution (1936) restored the franchise to religious ministers and priests. Voices were heard which recognised the great historic contribution of Christianity towards the building of the Russian nation and civilisation; and a new tendency began to show itself, which in the war grew in intensity, and which is bound to have far-reaching implications.

* * * * *

The causes of the fight against religion appear to have a twofold source. Marx had already called religion “opiate for the people.” To him religion had its basis in the helplessness of man in face of hunger, exploitation and disease, and was a mere reflection in the minds of his impotence. “Every religion,” wrote Engels in 1853, “is nothing other than the reflection in the minds of men of those external forces which dominate them in their daily life, a reflection in which earthly forces take on the form of unearthly.” He firmly believed that, as soon as the socialist society would be established, religion with all its prejudices would vanish.

Lenin had added:

‘All contemporary religions and churches, all and every kind of religious organisation, Marxism has always viewed as instruments of bourgeois reaction, serving as a defence of exploitation and for the purpose of doping the working class.

(1) See further details N. Timasheff, “Religion in Soviet Russia,” London, 1943.

‘To him who all his life works and suffers need, religion teaches humility and patience in earthly life, comforting him with the hope of heavenly reward. And to those who live by the toil of others religion teaches philanthropy in earthly life...’ (Socialism and Religion.)

He maintained that atheism was an essential part of Communist philosophy, and that religion could never be integrated into Communism. When in the years before the Russian revolution some of his friends - including Gorki and Lunarcharsky - began to waver on this issue, it was Lenin who restored the pure and unconditional orthodoxy of atheist thinking. Religion, in his words, was ‘spiritual oppression,’ and that is why ‘under no circumstances can we regard religion as a private matter in our party.’

Accordingly, the programme of the Communists, reformulated in 1919, affirmed:

‘With regard to religion the Communist Party of the Soviet State does not confine itself to the already decreed separation of Church and State and of School and Church... The Party strives for the complete dissolution of the ties between the exploiting classes and the organisation of religious propaganda.’

And the programme of the Communist International proclaimed

‘The fight against religion, the opium for the people, occupies an important position among the tasks of the cultural revolution. The proletarian power acknowledges freedom of conscience, but at the same time uses all the means at its disposal to conduct anti-religious propaganda.’

Materialism was, however, only *one* root of the movement. It could, indeed, hardly explain the zeal and fire with which Karl Marx himself condemned the fact of exploitation. His passion for the establishment of justice could never have been derived from a merely materialistic outlook. It springs essentially from spiritual foundations; and the whole socialist movement would be unthinkable without that basis. This holds true in particular of the Russian revolution. As the Autocracy could only be conceived in its association with Orthodoxy, so the Revolution also must be understood from its religious background. Already in 1908, the Russian writer Dmitri Merezhkovsky proclaimed

‘The deepest meaning of the Russian revolution can only be conceived by a religious analysis... The autocracy is a religion, and so is the revolution, although the latter is admitted by only very few revolutionaries.’

In recent years Nicholas Berdyaev, one of the greatest living thinkers of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, has shown how closely in Russia revolution and religion have been interwoven. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Nicholas Berdyaev, “The Russian Revolution,” London, 1933.

For centuries Russian Christianity had been permeated by a Messianic longing, which saw in Moscow the 'Third Rome,' heir of Byzantium, and in the Russian nation a 'God-bearing people.' (1) When in the 17th century a schism in the Church occurred, and soon afterwards the State secured control over the Church, and Western influence increased, Russian Messianism faded within the Church, but it remained alive among the people, especially among the so-called Old Believers. Alienated from the official powers, Messianism eventually joined with the radical revolutionary forces. Since then the Russian revolutionary movement united in itself two currents, each springing from an independent root; and the amalgamation of religious and materialist factors remained its most characteristic feature. Many of the Russian Nihilists - often sons of priests - had in their youth been believers, and their religion still resounded in their thoughts and deeds. Thus the Decabrists, who early in the 19th century stood up against the Government, proclaimed: 'The Czar is the Anti-Christ'; and ten years later Peter Chaadayev, a profound revolutionary thinker, expressed the longing of the anarchists by these three words: 'Thy Kingdom Come.' 'It was,' says Berdyaev, 'as if God had to be denied in order that the Kingdom of God might come on earth.' (2)

Among the Jews there was a similar development. True, Judaism could never have allied itself as closely with the State as Eastern Orthodox Christianity. On the contrary, the Jews were hardly sympathetic with a government which meant to them oppression. But an inclination towards the largely atheistic opposition parties which circumstances forced upon them in the Czarist State, endangered at the same time their own religious life. The process was intensified by the developing industrialism, and by the growing movement of enlightenment (Haskalah) which greatly influenced a large part of the intellectuals, and strengthened both secular and revolutionary forces.

There was, however, on the other hand, an ancient longing in the Jewish heart for social justice. For them religion was allied with the exploited, not with the exploiters; and all religious life demanded full realisation in the social sphere; 'Thirst for justice' was an element of prophecy, and even when all visible connections with religion had been severed, this 'thirst' lived on in many of the Jewish revolutionaries, and greatly contributed to the building of modern socialism. Christian Messianism and Jewish prophecy are intimately interwoven, and although the official bodies of the Church and Synagogue in Russia hardly met, the prodigal sons of both these communities in their longing understood each other, and joined hands in the united work for social reconstruction.

When the Russian Nihilist could say: 'Thy Kingdom Come', his Jewish comrade could remember the ancient prayer of the Kaddish, which is repeated thrice daily by the pious 'May He establish His Kingdom speedily and at a near time'; and if the Russian could give to the cause of the revolution the infinite dedication of the Christian soul, the Jew could bring the 'Burning of the Heart.'

(1) Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Russian Revolution" London 1933. B. H. Sumner, "Survey of Russian History," London, 1944, pp.185/96.

(2) N. Berdyaev, loco. cit., p. 28.

FROM OPPOSITION TO COMRADESHIP

The attitude of the Russian Jews towards the Soviet revolution was in the beginning by no means friendly. They sympathised, of course, with the progressive parties. The militant hostility of the White Armies made any other choice impossible. But nearly every organised group of Russian Jewry was fervently opposed to Communism.

To the religious man its atheism was deterrent. The structure of the Jewish population, moreover, did not favour a social revolution. The number of the Jewish proletarian workers in agriculture and the larger industries was small, and neither the cry for land nor the nationalisation of the factories had any direct meaning for the Jews. The Bund and other parties of the Jewish working class were associated with the ‘moderates,’ such as the Mensheviks, who were in opposition to the Communists.

The Zionists, numerically strong, longed for national renaissance of the Jewish people in the Holy Land. The Soviet Government, however, prohibited any emigration - without distinction between Jews and Gentiles; for every person was conceived as a potential worker for the social good. In addition, there was a particular hostility against the Zionist movement. Stalin, in 1913, had described Zionism in these words:

‘A reactionary and nationalist movement, recruiting its followers from among the Jewish petty and middle bourgeoisie, business employees, artisans and the more backward sections of the Jewish workers. Its aim is to organise a Jewish bourgeois state in Palestine and it endeavours to isolate the Jewish working class masses from the general struggle of the proletariat.’⁽¹⁾

The revolution hardly changed this attitude; under these circumstances no Zionists could be followers of Communism, and Zionism was suspect of counter-revolution and ruthlessly suppressed in practice.

Apart from individual Jews who played a leading part among the Communists - they had mostly cut their links with Judaism and Jewish life - the Jewish front against the Bolsheviks in the beginning of the revolution was nearly, united. ⁽²⁾ Many Jewish intellectuals were leading anti-Communists; and it was a Jewish girl, *Dora Kaplan*, who shot at, and wounded Lenin.

(1) J.Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question,” London 1941. p.289.

(2) In the elections to the Ukrainian Jewish National Conference of November, 1918, not a single Communist was returned out of 125 deputies. The detailed figures, which give a picture of the political structure of the Jewish population of that period, are as follows:

| Party | Number | Percentages |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Zionists | 42 | 33.6 |
| Bund | 23 | 18.4 |
| Abduth (Orthodox Party) | 19 | 15.2 |
| Young Zionists | 14 | 11.2 |
| United Socialists | 12 | 9.6 |
| Poale Zion (Labour Party) | 11 | 8.8 |
| People's Party | 4 | 3.2 |
| Total | 125 | 100% |

But gradually the opposition vanished. The Bund split as early as 1919. In the course of the next year it was resolved to give up opposition to the Soviet Government, and recognised that 'the demand for national and cultural autonomy loses all meaning in a socialist revolution.' In 1921 the remnants of the Bund, with a few exceptions, joined the Communists.

The Zionist power of resistance was much stronger. Especially the Haluzim (young pioneers who were preparing themselves for future work on the land in Palestine in settlements in Southern Russia), persevered for years under most difficult conditions. But finally they, too, were overcome. Political oppression combined with the improvement of those social and economic conditions which had favoured the development of Zionism, greatly reduced the number of its followers. The more Jews took an active part in the new Soviet life - with its innumerable tasks and prospects - the more the thought of Palestine receded into the background of their minds. When war broke out, only a small proportion of the younger generation still preserved a longing for the Holy Land.

The greatest perseverance, without doubt, was shown by the religious groups. Their roots reached to a deeper layer than those of either Jewish socialists or merely political Zionists; and they could draw on the inexhaustible experiences which had been gained during centuries of persecution. In the last few years before the war, however, the fight against religion lost much of its previous sharpness. The Communists reduced the scale and character of their attack; and the religious groups on their side recognised the great achievements of the Soviet state, trying to reconcile the Soviet system with the ethical and social claims of their religion. Thus opposition to the Soviet policy, based on religious grounds, died down; and for the great majority of Russian Jews this meant the end of their resistance to the Soviet state. The comradeship created by the social revolution, exerted a profound attraction on all Soviet nations; and to the Jews it was a new expression of their ancient longing for a communion with the world at large, which has been dammed up in the Jewish heart for centuries.

This new development, however, was not free from anti-Jewish interference. Opposition to the Communists had always been allied with anti-semitism; and even when the civil wars ended, there were repeated anti-Jewish outbursts, particularly in 1928/9, when general conditions were difficult. But the Government dealt efficiently with the rising tensions.⁽¹⁾ In the first place, there was the law which makes racial discrimination a punishable offence, ⁽²⁾ and all reports agree that the Soviet courts have enforced this law whether this crime was committed against Jews, Chinese, Negroes, or any other group. Moreover, the *legal* approach was only one side of a much wider undertaking, directed at the creation of a *new society*. Anti-Semitism came to be regarded as an essentially 'bourgeois' prejudice. The fight *against* anti-semitism, therefore, appeared only as a part of a greater fight *for* the establishment of a community which fundamentally improved living conditions for the people as a whole. It was an element of a constructive policy, and therefore justified in the conviction of the people. Compared with the traditional persecutions of the Jews in Czarist Russia and the 'cold pogroms' in Poland and Rumania, outbursts of anti-Jewish feeling in the Soviet Union appeared to

(1) See A Steinburg, "The Fight Against Anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia"; British Section of the World Jewish Congress, 1944.

(2) Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution, see above page, 18.

be slight; and they could neither shake the Jewish dedication to the common cause, nor interrupt their movement towards integration into Soviet life.

So great was the attraction of the surrounding culture and civilisation that the Jews of the Soviet Union largely lost interest in their own national and cultural affairs. Although the use of Yiddish was officially encouraged by the establishment of schools and the promotion of numerous publications, it steadily decreased. In the old Soviet territories in 1940, not more than 85,000 Jewish children (18%) were attending Yiddish schools, whilst about 400,000 were frequenting Russian or Ukrainian schools. In Central Russia, where the number of Jews had reached a million and was steadily increasing, no Yiddish school was left by that year. In other spheres the development was similar. The number of Yiddish newspapers had dropped to three, and it is reported that their combined circulation was not more than 40,000 ⁽¹⁾ Yiddish technical institutes began to teach some subjects in Russian; and even in Biro-Bidjan the Russian language was replacing Yiddish to a considerable extent. Yiddish cultural activities everywhere receded; and ‘there was no heart in the work and no faith in its future.’ ⁽²⁾

‘Heart and Faith,’ however, there were in the new society. The society was more and more permeated by the powerful vitality of the Russian people; and a Yiddish secular civilisation fought a losing battle. Not only did the orbit of Yiddish life steadily narrow, but intermarriage increased to an unprecedented extent. It was as if Gentile and Jew together wanted to establish the new community beyond the limitations of their race and creed.

At the eve of Hitler’s war the struggle against Communism in the Soviet Union had been almost wholly abandoned on all fronts, political, economic and religious. The Soviet peoples were united in their determination to create a new communion in which, to use the words of St. Paul, there would be ‘neither Jew nor Greek.’

⁽¹⁾ J. Lestchinsky, “Contemporary Jewish Record,” Nov./Dec., 1940, p. 618.

⁽²⁾ In the elections to the Ukrainian Jewish National Conference 1940, p. 610.

CHAPTER IV
THE WAR AND THE NEW SITUATION

WAR

THE FIRST COUNTRY to be invaded was Poland. Hard as the life of Polish Jewry had been before the war, the invasion of the Nazis made their previous sufferings insignificant. It was no time for them to remember discrimination and boycott by State, Church and people, and how they had been pressed to leave the country. Even the humiliation of Jewish youth, the ghetto benches in the universities, the defamation and the anti-Jewish riots were forgotten; and Poland's Jews rallied round Marshal Smigly-Rydz and the 'Government of the Colonels.' The Jewish masses joined the Polish peasants, and sacrificed their all in the unequal struggle. When ultimately Warsaw fell, and the resistance of the Polish army in the country temporarily ceased, more than 30,000 Polish Jewish soldiers had given their lives in the defence of Poland.

With the German armies spreading towards the East, the Soviets moved westwards and occupied the eastern part of Poland, i.e., the Western Ukraine and parts of White Russia, the Baltic States and Bessarabia with the Northern Bukovina. The greater part of these territories had once belonged to Czarist Russia, but in the chaos after 1917, had either, like the Baltic States, won independence, or had been seized by Poland or Rumania. They were now integrated into the Soviet Union.

The number of Jews who lived in these newly acquired territories was great.

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Eastern Poland | 1,270,000 |
| Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina | 330,000 |
| Lithuania (incl. Vilna) | 250,000 |
| Latvia | 95,000 |
| Estonia | 5,000 |
| Total | 1,950,000 (1) |

Thus in 1939/41 the Jewish population in the Soviet Union increased by about two millions.

To this figure must be added the Jewish fugitives from Western Poland, who had escaped from Nazi occupation. During the first months of the war, the Soviets kept their frontiers open for the refugees. Afterwards they offered every refugee the choice between acceptance of Soviet nationality and return to his former country. Those who accepted Soviet nationality were integrated into Soviet life. Some chose to return to the western parts of Poland, hoping for reunion with their families which they had left behind. The majority, however, could not make up their minds. The Soviets offered them work in the Don-Bas, and a number of refugees made use of this opportunity. They, too, became Soviet citizens. Those, however, who stayed without accepting Soviet nationality were later - when the future battlefields were cleared - transferred to Central Russia and Siberia; their fate seemed hard at the time, but for most of them it was the saving of their lives.

(1) Jews under Soviet Rule, Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York, 1941.

The total number of these refugees who remained in the Soviet Union is reported to be about 500,000. **(1)** By the summer of 1941, the Jews within the Soviet Union had reached a total of about 5,500,000, **(2)** i.e., more than a third of World Jewry and more than 60% of all Jews living on the Continent of Europe. Thus the great majority of Eastern Jews who, since the end of the first World War, had been divided between various countries, were reunited within a single state.

The Soviet Government began at once to reconstruct the newly integrated territories, taking care to avoid unnecessary hardship in the process of transition. **(3)** Large estates were confiscated and distributed among the poorer peasants. Banks and industries were nationalised. Trade was as much as possible eliminated and replaced by the activities of state departments or co-operatives.

The policy towards the Jews followed the lines which were developed in the older districts of the Soviet Union. Jews were granted full equality of rights and duties; and all discriminations, based on racial or national grounds, were ruthlessly abolished.

The Bund, the Jewish Labour League, which had been strong in Poland and Lithuania, was dissolved, many of its leaders were arrested, and some, later on, executed. Zionist activities were suppressed, and immigration to Biro-Bidjan encouraged. But some refugees in possession of their immigration papers were allowed to leave for Palestine or America. Anti-religious propaganda was encouraged. Some of the most famous Polish Yeshivoth, however, which had escaped to Lithuania, were not only permitted to continue their work, but were later transferred to interior districts, and thus preserved.

Great efforts were made to absorb the newly annexed territories. But before any success could be stabilised, the invasion of Russia herself began.

When on the eve of June 22, 1941, Hitler ordered his armies to cross the frontiers of the Soviet Union he aimed not only at a military conquest, but at complete disintegration. His aim was to destroy the union of her peoples, her social structure and her spiritual foundations. His lightning attack by land and air was combined with an attempt to stir up all the *old* internal struggles of the country - national feuds which by that time had nearly been forgotten - and the more *recent* conflicts, rooted in the revolutionary changes. Thus he attempted to incite Ukrainians and the Baltic peoples against Russia; believers against atheists; the Christian groups against each other; peasants against workers, kulaks against collective farms, and all, of course, against the Jews. 'Cease all resistance to the German Army,' German leaflets at the front proclaimed from Leningrad to the Black Sea, 'only the Jewish Bolsheviks want to continue the war.' German broadcasts and loudspeakers repeated the appeal a thousand-fold. But the attempt to break the spiritual resistance of the Soviet peoples - contrary to experience in France in 1940 - failed.

(1) D. Grodner, In Soviet Poland and Lithuania, Contemporary Jewish Record, April, 1941, p. 136.

(2) American Jewish Yearbook, 1941/2. p. 319. The brochure of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, "Jews Under Soviet Rule," estimates the number - without counting the refugees - at 5,250,000.

(3) American Jewish Yearbook, 1941/42, p. 239.

The structure of the Soviet State, no less than the Red Army, stood the test. The unity of all its peoples did not break. The ancient rivalries between the various nations within the state - powerful in Czarist days - had lost their meaning to the younger generation. They knew that the defensive power of their state was based not on the rule of any single nationality, but on the union of *all* the nationalities for the common aims; and they were not prepared to give up this foundation of their strength by a relapse into a world which had been outgrown. A resolution passed in Moscow in 1942 expressed this attitude towards the past:

‘He who tries to return to this terrible past and convert trees into gallows, orchards into graveyards, and our native land into a prison for the peoples, will be wiped off the face of the earth.’

The multiplicity of more than 100 nationalities - in spite of all attempts to break their unity - proved no obstacle to oneness, and the foundation of the multi-national state remained unshaken.

Nor did the conflicts of the revolutionary period break out again. On the land and in the towns the revolutionary system of production worked, beyond expectation. Collective farms produced the food that army and civilians needed, although some of the richest districts had been lost. Industry showed the highest standard of efficiency, and the young army - less than 25 years old - surpassed the proud traditions of the German High Command.

The Soviet peoples did not waver in their faith. They remained unmoved by Hitler’s jeer that the whole Soviet Union was ‘verjudet,’ dominated by the Jews. ‘The Fascists are poisoning the air’ wrote ‘Pravda’ a few weeks after the outbreak of the war. ‘They try to create race conflicts.’ Another Soviet paper summed up the official attitude:

‘We have no need to discriminate between Jews and non-Jews. The Soviet Union is using the abilities, the initiative, the inventiveness of all nations and of all peoples. The road is open to all of them, including the Jews.’

And Stalin in an Order of the Day on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the Red Army in February, 1942, stated:

‘The Red Army is free from the feeling of racial hatred. It is free of such degrading feelings because it has been brought up in the spirit of racial equality and respect for the rights of other peoples.’

Government, party and people remained united on this issue. There was no camouflaging of the Jewish war effort. Jews, like the members of all other groups, could reach - according to their personal achievements - the highest positions in the Fighting Forces as well as in production and administration. The Government encouraged every nationality to play its special part within the common struggle and welcomed national variety. ‘Everywhere,’ said a report from Stalingrad, ‘in the trenches, in the pillboxes, in the firing line, men of different nationalities are fighting shoulder to shoulder, Russians, Armenians, Kalmuks, Tartars and Jews.’

The Jews themselves made the fullest use of their opportunity. They knew that in this war their whole existence was at stake, and that defeat, whatever slavery it might impose on others - to them would mean complete extermination. So they threw themselves into the struggle without reservation. They fought on land, on sea, and in the air, on every battlefield, particularly those of Moscow, Stalingrad, Sevastopol. They served as sailors with the Soviet Navy in the Black Sea and in the Baltic, and with the small boats on the River Volga.

Jews won distinction in the battles of the air. Jewish guerillas, men and women, fought behind the German lines. for instance in the forests round Briansk; and Jewish nurses won renown in helping wounded soldiers on the battlefields.

Many Jewish generals have given outstanding service to the Soviet Army, among them the late General Mikhail Czerniakovsky of Kiev, who lost his life during the siege of Koenigsberg, and the Divisional Commander Jacob Osher Kreiser, one of the victors of Sevastopol, and decorated with the Order of Suvorov. 'As a general of the Red Army,' he said in 1942, 'and as a son of the Jewish people, I vow not to put down my sword until the last Fascist has been destroyed.'

By the end of 1943, 32,000 Jewish soldiers of the Red Army had been decorated for gallantry; the title 'Hero of the Soviet Union' had been conferred on more than a hundred; and they held the fourth place in number of decorations among the soldiers of all Soviet nationalities, ⁽¹⁾ although their population in the Soviet Union stands numerically on the seventh place.

In industry and agriculture the Jewish contribution was no less. Jewish tank designers have been awarded high distinctions; and Biro-Bidjan, the Jewish autonomous territory, has won a prize for war-time agricultural production.

'The patriotic war for liberation,' wrote a well-known Jewish author in the U.S.S.R., 'has transformed the most tragic chapter in the history of the Jewish people into one of Jewish heroism. There is not a weapon used in the air or on the ground, in the water or under it, there is not a tool in agriculture or industry, with which the Jews are not making their contribution.'

To strengthen solidarity between the Jewries of the Soviet Union and the Jews abroad, conferences were held in Moscow, in which Jewish soldiers, workers, farmers, writers, scientists, musicians, actors and commanders called the Jews of every country in the world to arms. These conferences were imbued not only with a dauntless will to fight, but with a boundless confidence in victory and in the security of Jewish life within the Soviet Union. The chairman of the conference said in a broadcast to World Jewry:

My Jewish heart is filled with excitement and pride; for I am addressing you as a citizen of a great free country, as a son of the Soviet people, I represent that section of the Jewish people which, with a freedom and conviction to be found nowhere else on earth, can pronounce that wonderful word motherland.'

(1) Soviet War News, London, April 5, 1944.

How different were these words from those which, less than 40 years ago, came from the Jews of Czarist Russia, beseeching all their brothers in the West for help against oppression and pogroms. This time the Jews of Soviet Russia took the lead; and in a resolution passed in Moscow in 1942 they could declare:

‘At a time when the Jews of Paris and Rome, of Amsterdam and Salonika, Warsaw and Riga, Lvov and Kiev, Minsk and Odessa are being hounded, exterminated and tortured to death... we citizens of the great Soviet people, assembled in the capital of our sacred native land, solemnly say to you: Fight to the last drop of blood! The hour of victory is near!’

Meanwhile, behind the German lines, the Nazis set to work to put their final anti-Jewish plans into operation. They had declared time and again their resolution to exterminate the Jews; and here in the East of Europe they set out to make their promise true. Gradually the world - reluctant to believe such monstrosity - has realised the extent of scientific torture followed by mass destruction. More than five million Jews; men, women and children from Poland as well as from every country where Nazis ever set their foot, died in the East of Europe as a result of murder and disease. Most died as helpless victims. But when in 1943 the Warsaw ghetto was to be liquidated, and its survivors were sent eastwards to an extermination camp, the remnants stood up in their misery, half starved like skeletons, and, with the assistance of Polish patriots, fought a battle of despair against the Germans. Flame-throwers, guns and plans were used before their resistance could be broken; and this last battle of the Warsaw ghetto stands out as one of the most sombre pictures of heroism in this war.

The concentration camps and ghettos in the East of Europe have become Golgathas for Israel, where a whole nation - *natio dolorosa* - has been scourged and tortured. Here, in the East, apocalyptic visions are fulfilled; and the countries where not long ago Jewish vitality had its roots, have become the greatest Jewish graveyards.

THE NEW SITUATION

A comparison of the Jewish position in the East of Europe today with that of 1939 shows the following picture: Before the War the Jews of the Soviet Union numbered about 3,300,000, (1) whilst the combined Jewish communities of Poland, Rumania and the Baltic States had a population of approximately 4,250,000. The total of Eastern Jewry therefore amounted to 7,500,000 of which Soviet Jewry formed 43% and the Jews of the five other countries together 57%. Today the Jewish communities outside the Soviet Union are nearly destroyed. Of the 7,500,000 less than half have survived, and the vast majority of the survivors live in the U.S.S.R. The centre of Eastern Jewry has shifted into the Soviet Union, the only country in the East of Europe which did not fall completely into Nazi hands. In vast districts with great communities of Jews; no German soldier ever set his foot. Before the German-Russian war began, Moscow alone had a Jewish population of 430,000, and Leningrad nearly 300,000. In addition, other Jewish settlements in the interior parts of Russia had

(1) The census of 1939 showed a figure of 3,020,000 of declared Jewish nationality. But there is reason to believe that about 10% of Soviet Jewry did not register as Jews, particularly in the larger towns. See “Jews Under Soviet Rule,” Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York, 1941, p. 2.

sprung into life after the restrictions of the Pale of settlement had been abolished by the revolution; and with the progress of industrial development in the Urals and even in Siberia a steady stream of Jews had moved towards the East. So a large proportion of the Jewish population - probably more than one million - were living in peacetime already in districts which were spared the German occupation.

When war began, a flood of refugees moved from the border districts to the centre of the country. A large part of the population was evacuated by order of the Soviet Government. Industries were transferred, comprising both labour and installations; and where the plant could not be removed, it was destroyed in conformity with the 'Scorched Earth' policy. A great proportion of the industries in Kiev, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk and other towns was saved, and so were masses of the workers, employees and engineers. A publication of the International Labour Office ⁽¹⁾ shows the extent of this evacuation.

| <i>Population Town</i> | <i>Population Pre-war</i> | <i>After evacuation</i> | <i>Source of information</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Kiev | 850,000 | 330,000 | Izvestia, 14.10.42 |
| Odessa | 604,000 | 300,000 | Novoye Slovo, Berlin 22.7.42 |
| Dniepropetrovsk | 501,000 | 152,000 | ibidem, 7.1.42 |
| Mariupol | 270,000 | 178,000 | ibidem, 7.1.42 |
| Smolensk | 156,000 | 20,000 | Soviet War News, 7.9.42 |
| Nikolaev | 167,000 | 100,000 | New York Herald Tribune, 26.10.41 |
| Mozhaisk | 18,000 | 5,000 | New York Times, 27.1.42 |

According to these figures the evacuation from the towns and cities reached nearly sixty out of every hundred of the urban population. Even if one assumes that these figures include refugees who did not succeed in reaching the interior of the country, but remained in dispersion and in hiding on the land, those who escaped to safety still amount to at least 50%. This estimate is confirmed by the German occupation authorities. The Chief of the War Economy Department in the German Economic Administration in the East, Dr. Rachner, asserted ⁽²⁾ that by the end of 1941 at least one half of the urban population in the occupied part of the U.S.S.R. had been evacuated, and he estimated the number of these evacuees at more than 12,500,000. There is reason to believe that during 1942 the proportion of those who were saved by evacuation was considerably higher.

It is obvious that these evacuations had included a great number of Jews. The majority of them had lived in the towns, and the urban population was the main object of the transfer. Moreover, they formed a large proportion of those sections of the population - engineers, workers, employees and officials - which were evacuated first: and, in addition, Jews as such were considered to be in special danger. If, therefore, the average of the evacuated town population is 50-60%, it can be assumed that

(1) *E. Kulischer*, *The Displacement of Populations in Europe*, published by the International Labour Office, Montreal, 1943, p. 90.

(2) *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 5.III.42, quoted from *Kulischer*, p. 91.

in the Jewish section it will amount to at least 60-70%. The well-known Soviet Jewish writer, David Bergelson, estimated that even four-fifths of all Jews from the towns which fell into Nazi hands, were saved and brought to Tambov, Tashkent, Yaroslav, the Caucasian mountain villages, and to Siberian collective farms. **(1)**

In addition to the urban population a considerable number of Jews were rescued from the rural settlements. The majority of settlers on the collective Jewish farms in the Crimea, after wandering many months with livestock and with implements, succeeded in reaching Siberia and were resettled near Krasnoyarsk. Settlers from the Ukraine went to Saratov and were established on land which had previously been possessed by Volga Germans. Altogether the number of Jews who were evacuated from the pre-war 1919 territory of the U.S.S.R. is estimated by Kulischer at 1,100,000 but it can be hoped that the figure is even higher. If one assumes that the number of Jews in those parts of the Soviet Union which fell into Nazi hands was approximately 2,000,000, an evacuation of 60% would have saved 1,200,000; and an evacuation of 80%, as estimated by Bergelson, would amount to a figure of 1,600,000. An estimate of 1,400,000 does not, therefore, seem too optimistic.

To this figure must be added the evacuees from those territories which were integrated into the Soviet Union between September, 1939, and June, 1941, and the fugitives who escaped from Poland and Rumania proper. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from Eastern Poland, the Baltic States, Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina either reached the central parts of Russia or were brought to Siberia. Their numbers at the time were estimated at more than 600,000; and although many did not survive the hardships, a considerable number were received into Soviet life. The London Jewish Chronicle, in 1943, gave the following report: **(2)**

‘Thousands of Polish evacuees are working in all parts of the Soviet Union. They are centred in Kuybishev, Saratov, Tambov and other places, but particularly in the Ural district. Many of them have settled on collective and state farms. There is a whole group of Jewish workers from Warsaw in Krepos Usen collective farm in the Saratov province. Thousands more are working in big plants and factories... Many Polish Jews work in flour mills and granaries. There are also thousands of young Polish boys and girls at school throughout the Soviet Union. Hundreds of Polish Jews are studying at the Leningrad University (evacuated to Saratov). The Moscow conservatoire has also opened its doors to Jewish students from Poland. New centres of Yiddish and Polish literature have been moved to Jambul in the Asiatic Republic of Kazakhstan.’

The American Jewish Yearbook described the development of Jewish wartime life in Siberia, as follows:

‘A new Jewish centre is rapidly coming into existence in the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, where it has been estimated that no less than a million Jews have been concentrated, including those from the Ukraine, White Russia and Crimea... and Polish Jewish refugees released from the Siberian internment camps.’ (Vol. 44, P. 239.)

(1) Jewish Chronicle, London, August 21, 1942.

(2) April 1, 1943.

‘New settlements were established in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Chuvashia, the Bashkir Republic and other Soviet areas east of the Urals, Kokand, the capital of Uzbekistan, has become a place where the Yiddish of Jews from Vilna and Kaunas can be heard in the streets... Miniature centres of Polish historic Yeshivoth have been established in small Siberian villages. Faculties and students from Poland continue their studies in an area where there were formerly few, if any, Jewish inhabitants. Tashkent has been swelled by a tremendous influx of Jews from Russia proper... Jews from the Ukraine and White Russia were evacuated by the thousands to the Bashkir Republic where many of them now work on collective farms. The Kiev Jewish State Theatre has been moved to Jambul in the Asiatic Republic of Kazakhstan. The White Russian Jewish Theatre opened its season in Novosibirsk, industrial centre of Southern Siberia. Thousands of Russian and Baltic Jews are in Samarkand,’ (Vol. 45,p. 299.)

An estimate of the total number of Jews who in the U.S.S.R. were prevented from falling into Nazi hands, gives the following figures:

| | Approximate |
|--|------------------|
| (1) At the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and the Soviet Union living in districts which did not come under German occupation | 1,200,000 |
| (2) Evacuated from pre-1939 territories | 1,400,000 |
| (3) Evacuees, deportees and fugitives from territories acquired after 1939 and from Poland and Rumania | .500,000 |
| Total | 3,100,000 |

Since the loss of life during evacuations, sieges and other military operations was heavy, it must be assumed that the total number of those who ultimately survived is not larger than 2,700,000-3,000,000. The Report of the Anglo-American Committee ⁽¹⁾ estimates the number of Jews in the Soviet Union (Europe) in 1946 at 2,665,000.

Whilst thus the great numerical losses which Soviet Jewry had to suffer at the hand of the Nazis. are largely replaced by the expansion of the Soviet territories and the influx of fugitives beyond the border, Polish Jewry is nearly annihilated. Out of the 3,300,000 Jews who lived in Poland in 1939, 1,300,000 were incorporated into the Soviet Union before the German attack on Russia began: and the international agreement on the Eastern frontiers of Poland has essentially confirmed; this situation. Those of them who have survived, are contained in the above estimates of the Jews in the U.S.S.R. Of the remaining 2,000,000 only 80,000 were found alive in present day Poland; their number today is estimated at not more than 50,000. To these may be added about 70,000 Polish Jews among the Displaced Persons in the Western Zones of Germany and Austria, of whom the vast majority refuse to return to Poland, and another 150,000 in the Soviet Union who are said to be on their way back from Siberia. The total number of Polish Jews - spread from Germany to Siberia - appear therefore to be less than 300,000, and their number in Poland itself will hardly reach one half of this figure.

(1) Cmd. paper 6806.

In Rumania the Jewish population before the war amounted to about 850,000. The annexation of Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina (which have now been confirmed) brought approximately one third into the Soviet Union. Today the number of surviving Jews within the country is given at 850,000, to which must be added a certain number of displaced persons and fugitives in the U.S.S.R. The total number of Jews in Poland and Rumania together will hardly reach 600,000. In 1939 Soviet Jewry formed 43% of the Eastern Jews. In 1941 this figure had risen to 66%. Today they form 80% or five out of every six survivors. As a result of migrations towards the East, of the integration of refugees and deportees into Soviet life, of the massacres committed by the Germans, and of the expansion of the Soviet frontiers to the West, the *overwhelming majority of the surviving Jews of Eastern Europe are now within the Soviet Union.*

For more than 60 years emigration was the key-note of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Unbearable conditions in the countries of their domicile had driven the Jews overseas; and this migration dominated all events in modern Jewish history. From 1880 to the first world war the emigrants came equally from Russia, Galicia and Rumania. Between the two World Wars Jewish emigration from the East of Europe was mainly confined to Polish and Rumanian Jews. But since in this period the doors of the United States were practically closed, and Palestine could not receive even the would-be emigrants from Poland and Rumania, the startling fact that the 3,000,000 Jews of Soviet Russia had ceased to press for emigration hardly entered into the public mind. Moreover, Soviet Russia then seemed to be an isolated 'far-away' experiment, which could hardly affect the structure of the Jewish situation in the world at large. This is now changed; and with the U.S.S.R. comprising five out of six of all Jewish survivors in the East of Europe, the change has become self-evident. For the great bulk of the surviving Eastern Jews the pressing urge to leave the country by mass emigration has ceased to exist - quite apart from the fact that at present emigration is practically impossible for Jews and non-Jews alike.

In addition, the expectations of prosperity in Western countries which, 50 years ago, played such a part in Jewish hopes and dreams in the Eastern ghettos, has been severely shaken by a chain of crises, unemployment, immigration laws and anti-semitism in the Western world. The West no longer seems a paradise. The Soviet world has proved at least equally spacious and has become a powerful and near attraction for those who lived in misery in Eastern Europe. *The wandering of Eastern Jews towards the West, which determined Jewish life for many years for the overwhelming majority of the survivors - now comprised in the Soviet Union - has come to an end. That is a change of fundamental and historical importance.*

The position in Poland and Rumania is very different. True, governments which in the past had deliberately aimed at discrimination and expulsion of the Jews have been replaced by others who try to overcome racial and religious conflicts, In both countries radical attempts are made to solve the agrarian question - so largely responsible for troubles in the past; and the Soviet example of solving the problem of national minorities may radiate beyond the borders. But the disastrous experiences of the Hitler period have shaken Jewish life to its foundations; and there is a deep unrest among those who live in the regions where most of the massacres took place. The poison of Nazi propaganda combined with strong anti-Jewish traditions in certain sections of both peoples may last long, and the economic factor will make the reintegration of the Jews into the social fabric of these countries

difficult. At the same time Zionism - always strong in these districts - is exerting a greater attraction than ever, and strong forces are working for emigration. In Rumania Jews appear to consider their position as slightly more stable than in Poland, particularly in the Regat which was less affected by the deportations. But here, too, pressure is strong, and Palestine appears as the haven of salvation. The Anglo-American Committee, therefore, summed up the situation as follows: "Of the 80,000 Jews found in Poland the vast majority want to leave; of those who are returning from the U.S.S.R, the majority will not wish to remain; and in Rumania about 150,000 have applied for Palestinian certificates."

CHAPTER V
THE FUTURE OF SOVIET JEWRY

TENDENCIES TOWARDS DISSOLUTION

FOR MANY YEARS it was accepted as an axiom that Soviet Jewry would dissolve. Today, however, the issue is becoming doubtful. Strong forces have been working in this direction since the beginning of the revolution; the breaking up of the old social order and the destruction of those occupations which had been largely cultivated by the Jews; the shifting of a large proportion of the declasses towards the heavy industries and agriculture; the dissolution of the Jewish settlements within the Pale; the mass migration to the East and the increasing Jewish dispersions throughout the endless space of interior Russia; the general decline of all religion, resulting in a lack of interest in Hebrew studies, dilution of the Yiddish world, attraction by the surrounding Russian culture, and finally enthusiasm for the New Society, based on the common fight against class exploitation - spelt dissolution of the old community.

Theoretical considerations accentuated the process. Lenin himself had been of the opinion that Jewish nationalism was but the result of the oppression of the Jews in Russia and Galicia. He believed, that the Jews in the Western, more progressive world were assimilated, and that "the fight against assimilation was exclusively the work of the Jewish reactionary petty bourgeoisie." (1)

Stalin, too, had expressed doubts regarding the present, and even more the future of the Jewish nation. He warned against any attempt to save the nation from assimilation "just for the sake of preserving it," and made it clear that Communist policy could offer no guarantees whatsoever against assimilation of the Jews. (2)

Some of the Communists of Jewish stock went further: they were convinced that the Jewish fate-through more than 2,000 years - was not only indissolubly connected with the system of private ownership of the means of production, but could find its full explanation by the particular part which the Jews had been playing in the process of the circulation of goods. They believed that the Jewish question would be solved in its fullness by the advent of the Communist Society; and that Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, would fade away - "like so many other ghosts" - as soon as private ownership was abolished. (3)

These theories became part of the official education. Practical and theoretical reasons, therefore, worked together towards dissolution of the Jewish community and the "remnant of Israel" in these years within the Soviet Union must have grown small in numbers.

(1) The National Spectre of Assimilation, 1913.

(2) Loco. cit. p. 41.

(3) O. Heller, "Untergang des Judentums," Wien-Berlin, 1933, p. 11.

NATIONAL REAWAKENING

But other forces are working in the opposite direction: Russia experienced an unheard of rebirth of her national feelings. As early as 1914, Lenin declared that “the enlightened proletarians of Great Russia loved their language and their motherland”; but only in the last years before the last war this love of Russia found expression as a reality in Soviet life. During the first years of the revolution the idea of the class struggle had completely dominated all conceptions, and Russian history seemed to begin, as it were, with the rising of the proletarian movement. What lay before appeared as a dark age of feudal or of bourgeois reaction, now overcome by the “new area” of the revolution. During the last few years before the war, however, these conceptions gradually changed; and Russian history came to be recognised again as an unbroken chain of a coherent entity. Great men of Russia’s past - not only artists, writers, and musicians - but statesmen, generals and even Czars and Saints - Peter the Great, Dmitri Donskoy and Alexander Newsky (who in the 13th century defended Russia against Swedes and Germans) - were reinstated as heroes of the Russian nation and were conceived as predecessors of the present leaders; and whilst in the beginning of the revolution the binding element of the community was found essentially in the common aim to establish the New Society in the *future*, attention was now, to an increasing extent, given to the *past*. The Soviet State began to sink its roots deeply into the traditions of the Russian people and drew its strength from the profoundest layers of its national experience.

The Jews were deeply influenced by these events, and parallel developments took place within the Jewish sphere. There, too, in the beginning of the revolution it was as if the real Jewish history began with the foundation of the Jewish Labour League, the Bund, and what had been before appeared to be an endless chain of persecutions, sufferings and superstitions. When the trend towards the recognition of the national past increased among the Russians, the Jews likewise remembered their own history; the Yiddish Theatre in Moscow began to show historic plays, particularly one which celebrated the revolt of the “ancient rebel” Bar Koch-bar; an anniversary of the medieval Jewish poet Jehuda Halevi was celebrated solemnly, and Jews began to speak again in public of their “age-old civilisation.”

The integration of vast masses of Polish and Rumanian Jews into the Soviet Union in 1939 strengthened such a development. They were rooted - much more than the Russian Jews at the time - in the traditions of the Jewish past. Their consciousness of Jewish nationality had developed strongly under persecution. They were the backbone of the Zionist movement and were connected by innumerable threads with the development of Jewish life in Palestine. Among them Yiddish was the living language; Hebrew studies flourished; and their religious life - in contrast to conditions in the Soviet Union - had not been hampered by official atheism. Some of the famous Yeshivoth from Poland and the Baltic States were transferred to Siberia, and Polish and Rumanian Jews were strengthening the Jewish consciousness among their Soviet brothers.

The war brought the national development throughout the Soviet Union to a climax. Hitler’s invasion and his march on Moscow revived the memories of Napoleonic days. The spirits of the past seemed to have come to life. ⁽¹⁾

(1) It is significant that some of the highest military distinctions of the Soviet Union were named after the great Czarist generals Suvorov and Kutuzov.

The nation, gathering its strength, drew inspiration from its deepest sources. Russia became again the Holy Motherland which in her destiny had suffered and survived innumerable storms. The Mongols, Tartars, Swedes and French had come and disappeared again. The onslaught of the Nazis under such an aspect appeared as one of many links in this great chain, and ultimately all assaults had led to greater glory and renaissance of “eternal Russia.”

Glorification of their past became the tendency with every nationality within the Soviet borders. The Cossack Hetman Chmelnitzky, who, in the 17th century, fought against Poland - a war in which innumerable Jews were murdered - became a hero and a symbol to Soviet Ukrainians. The Polish patriots in Moscow named their first division which was established in the Soviet Union after the Polish hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who had led the Polish insurrection against Czarist Russia.

In history these forces were opposed to each other, but now they were regarded as great patriotic symbols of the past, and were interwoven with the common struggle against Hitler.

For the Jews the war brought a special strengthening of their national consciousness. The fact that under Nazi rule the Jews were singled out for special persecution and extermination, created a new solidarity among them, as expressed in the passionate appeals which the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow year by year addressed to the Jewish communities all over the world. This new realisation of the identity of Jewish fate may greatly influence the Soviet Jewish attitude to Jewish life. Thus, for all the peoples of the Soviet Union the war not only increased the intensity of their communion, but strengthened the links with their own past, and contributed to a new development of every national community.

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

In this connection the revival of religion became of paramount importance. It has been said above that, from 1934 onwards the attitude of the Soviet Government towards religion became more flexible. The mock processions were prohibited; the children of the clergy readmitted to the higher schools; and priests and ministers again allowed to vote. But there were other changes, more dramatic and far-reaching. When in 1936 the famous Kamerny Theatre in Moscow produced “The Knights,” an opera by Borodin, in which a modern librettist had ridiculed Russia’s Christianisation by Prince Vladimir, performances were suppressed after a few days, since a derision of an event sacred to Russia’s history was ‘incompatible’ with the spirit of the new time. The Central Art Committee issued a statement: ⁽¹⁾

‘It is well known that the Christianisation of Russia was one of the principal factors in the rapprochement of the backward Russian people with the people of Byzantium and later with the peoples of the West, namely with peoples with higher culture. It is also well known what a big part priests, particularly Greek priests, played in promoting literacy in the Russia of the Kiev period. From a historical standpoint the libretto is an example not only of *anti-Marxist* but also of a *frivolous* attitude towards history and a cheapening of the history of our people.’

(1) Quoted from N. S. Timasheff, *Religion in Soviet Russia*, London, 1943, p. 47.

Soon afterwards a joint conference of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Science and the Central Committee of the Militant Atheist League was called, and, after long and careful deliberations, not unlike those of an ancient Church Council - laid down the following principles on the historic value of Christianity: ⁽¹⁾

‘Christianity did not allow racial or national *discrimination*... It proclaimed the *equality of men* independently of their social status... It preserved its ideas of *human dignity* and *universalism*, it introduced new ideas, a basis on which a new society could be built.’

Thus Christianity was recognized as an historical event which had been beneficial to the *world*, and more particularly Christianity was now considered as an essential element of *Russia’s* cultural and national development. ‘It would be wrong to think,’ wrote one of Russia’s leading atheists, ‘that the Christianisation of Russia was a reactionary step, as unfortunately has been asserted in our anti-religious activity.’ The journal of the Militant Atheist League admitted

‘The Christianisation of Russia by Prince Vladimir certainly was a progressive act. Christianity struggled against slavery and blood feuds... Christianity favoured the advance of culture and laid the foundation of Russian art and literature.’

These words resembled strangely the historic speech which Constantine Pobyeodoszew, the Procurator of the Holy Synod and “prophet of the darkest forces of Czarist reaction” in 1888, had made at the 900th anniversary of Vladimir’s baptism:

‘Blessed be this day which gave a firm foundation to our destiny. It is terrible even to imagine what would have become of us without this Church. She alone enabled us to remain *Russians!*’

A bridge was built to a most vital part of Russia’s past.

The war greatly promoted this development. From the beginning all religious groups identified themselves completely with the war and rallied round the Soviet government in order to defend the mother-country and its institutions: ‘Let us then lay down our lives together, with our flock’ proclaimed Sergius, late Patriarch of Moscow, ‘the Church of Christ gives its blessing to Orthodox people defending the sacred frontiers of the country.’

Stalin, in turn, received the Metropolitan and gave permission for the re-election of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. State and Church drew nearer to each other; and when, after the death of Sergius, in January, 1945, a new Patriarch was elected by a most solemn ceremony, to which the dignitaries of the Eastern Church gathered from the various countries, the representative of the Soviet Government officially expressed the wish “that the Church will be strengthened in order to assist the Soviet people in the achievement of the major historical tasks which confront it.” The National Assembly of the Russian Orthodox Church, on their part, appealing to the Christians and blessing all the working people of the whole world, warned against those who ‘in the name of forgiveness call to pardon the infanticides and traitors.’

(1) Timasheff, *ibidem*, pp 114/5

The recognition of the Church by the Soviet Government and its participation in the national struggle of the Soviet peoples represent, however, only one side of the development. It can be assumed with certainty that behind this façade a less visible but far more essential spiritual force is revealing itself. There is hardly any example in history of Christianity being eradicated by persecution. Every 'crucifixion' has been followed by a resurrection; and Christianity has always seen its ultimate fulfilment in the transformation of 'defeat into victory' and 'death into life.' How could that be different in a country like Russia whose whole history for a thousand years has been connected most intimately with Christianity and whose literature is imbued by the passion and the spirit of religion? In fact, all observations show that Russian Christianity - apart from its official recognition by the state - has persevered as a spiritual reality. Abroad it has produced in men like Bulgakov and Berdyaev some of the leading Christian thinkers of the time who deeply influence the course of thought in every Western country. At home it has survived in spite of dire persecutions - not only in the timber camps and prisons, but among large parts of the population - particularly on the land; ⁽¹⁾ and it is most likely that the change of Soviet policy towards religion in the years before the war is a recognition of this fact.

From the last decades of the 19th century up to the revolution the trend of thought among the Russian intelligentsia, whose influence in spite of their small numbers was profound, *led away from the Church*. Since then the world of revolutionary atheism was officially established, and it is most natural that the trend is moving now in the *opposite direction*. The dogma of "religion as an opiate" for the people could be accepted, when the Church was shielding the hated social order - but it cannot give permanent satisfaction to the human heart. It would not be surprising if today an increasing number of the younger generation will be attracted again by the daring adventures of spiritual experience - infinitely more exciting than the teachings of Marxism - and will turn to the mysteries of Christianity. The character of the Eastern Church with its stress on sacraments and rites will favour this development; and if the trend leads again toward the Church - it is the trend and not the numbers which are here decisive - it may become a turning point of modern history.

What will the Jewish attitude be in this case? How will the Communist of Jewish origin react if his comrade of Gentile stock should one day turn again towards Christianity? Their comradeship was based on other grounds. Will he feel isolated and abandoned? Will he become a Christian, remain atheist or will he find his way home to his own religion?

The renaissance of general national life in the Soviet Union, the recognition and increasing strength of the Eastern Orthodox Church will make a dissolution of the Jewish community very unlikely. The more the centre of the community life among the various peoples shifts away from the common aim, which unites all "men of good will" to the traditions of the past, the more the ways of Russians and Jews are likely to part. The cultivation of a history in which he does not share on equal terms is bound to make the Jew again a stranger in society. The whole tradition of the Russian peasants, the Czars and Christian Saints, is not the world of his ancestors. He has been rooted in

(1) When in 1937 the leader of the Godless movement surveyed their activities, he estimated that, in spite of all anti-religious propaganda, in towns about one-third, and on the land two-thirds of the adults were still believers.

another sphere with different traditions and experiences; and this will be felt most by those who are essentially the leading elements in every community.

In the religious sphere itself the prospects of reunion are not greater. Both religions, it is true, long for universal oneness. "Ut omnes unum sint" prays the Christian. "The Lord shall be One, and his name One," prays the Jew. But as things stand today, the gulf which separates tragically the two communities has not yet been removed. Jews and Christians in the Western world have in recent years made serious efforts to reach deeper understanding of one another, and - particularly among liberal representatives of both religious groups - considerable progress has been made. What is required in the East, however, and what will be needed everywhere, is a growing understanding among the Orthodox groups; and in this sphere not much has been achieved. There are undoubtedly some indications that a revived and purified Eastern Church will not fall back on all the lines of thought which were dominant before the revolution. Eastern Christendom is seeking new forms, and the whole development is still in flux.

Thus, it has been shown by Sergey Bulgakov ⁽¹⁾ that the conception of the Czar, in spite of the historic and intimate connection between Orthodoxy and Autocracy, is no longer to be considered an essential element of Eastern Christianity. The special grace, the "charisma" which Orthodox theology had granted to the Czar, is now conceived as granted to the people.

The Eastern Church has furthermore cut its connections with the feudal system in which it was entangled for so long. Kallistrat, the Catholikos of Georgia, predicted many years ago a revival of religion and a fusion with Communism; "for the Communist ideal does not contradict Christian doctrine" ⁽²⁾; and Bulgakov ⁽³⁾ explained the social teaching of the Eastern Church in harmony with that of Soviet policy.

Conceptions which had been developed in the past, and seemingly had been essential elements of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, are therefore in a state of complete transformation. But it is certainly premature to assume that in the U.S.S.R. Christians and Jews have reached a new understanding of their most intricate and unique relationship.

Disintegration of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union has undoubtedly gone far. But the pre-conditions for a complete dissolution do not exist. On the contrary, the new tendencies are likely to strengthen again Jewish self-consciousness, and to revive those forces which through all the years of the revolution have maintained the "remnant of Israel." Nationality and religion hitherto have been the poles of Jewish existence. Both are again in the ascendant in the Soviet Union; and they will tend to re-awaken Jewish loyalty to the Jewish past and the desire for a Jewish future.

The settlements in Eastern Asia will hardly be enough to satisfy completely such a longing - in spite of the fact that the Pacific Ocean may soon become the centre of world communications, and

⁽¹⁾ S. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, London, 1935, p. 184.

⁽²⁾ Timasheff, *loco. cit.*, pp. 112/13.

⁽³⁾ S. Bulgakov, *Social Teaching in Modern Russian Theology*, 1934.

that the U.S.S.R. may grant special diplomatic representation to a "Jewish Republic of Biro-Bidjan." When all the other peoples of the Soviet Union link up their future with their ancient past, the Jews will try to do the same, and life in Palestine will be a mighty force towards strengthening this desire.

Of all changes within the Soviet Union the religious re-awakening is likely to have the greatest significance. It is the culmination of the national revival. Not only is Christianity the historical force which, nearly a 1,000 years ago, brought Russia into existence; it has continuously provided the most precious and characteristic element of Russian life. Christianity, moreover, as manifested in the particular form of Eastern Orthodoxy, has given to the Russian people that sense of mission and destiny in which - in the words of Dostoevski - every nation must believe if it wants to survive. For centuries Russia has seen the ultimate purpose of her existence in the Christian salvation of the world, a salvation of which, in her opinion, neither Rome nor the Protestant churches were capable.

Christianity, therefore, is the innermost core of the Russian question; and it is in this sphere that the Jewish problem within the Soviet Union will ultimately have to be faced. The fates of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Eastern Jewry are strangely intertwined, as if they had mutually to maintain each other. If it were possible to assume that Russia could finally abandon Christianity, "the remnant of Israel" with its memories of the sacrifice of Mount Moriah (where Abraham bound his only son, the son of promise) might have re-kindled the light of Golgatha. Conversely a revival of Christianity within the Soviet Union will be a fundamental challenge to the Jews to re-assert their religious destiny, and to bear witness again to the innermost meaning and ultimate purpose of their life.

Russian Christian thinkers have repeatedly expressed the thought that the culmination of Jewish history is still to come. "In spite of their history of 40 centuries," said Dostoevski, "the Jews have not yet said their last, and perhaps most important word," and he was convinced that this could only be a word of religion, "for the Jew, even the modern and educated Jew, cannot be conceived without God."

Soloviev foresaw that in the East of Europe Russians and Poles would bring about - after the schism of a 1,000 years - one day a reconciliation between Moscow and Rome and the reunion of the Churches. For this purpose he attached the greatest importance to the millions of Jews who lived in the very region where Eastern and Western Christianity meet. For he believed that the Jews would have to play a decisive part in the creation of the Christian reunion which without them could never be established.

Today, in spite of all the destructions wrought by the Germans, Soviet Jewry ranks still second in numbers among all Jewish communities. It is nearly cut off from the outside world, and mostly thought of in the West as being in a state of dissolution. But it is not dissolved yet. It is faced by tremendous challenges, and it would be contrary to all experiences of its history if its core should not continue - like a forgotten army - to wrestle with the deepest problems of Jewish existence. It may even have to play once more a leading part in future Jewish life.

PART II

PALESTINE

CHAPTER VI THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRISIS

WHILST IN THE EAST OF EUROPE Jewry went through the cataracts of the Russian Revolution, the stagnation of the Polish and Rumanian 'Gold Pogroms' and, above all, the slaughterhouses of the Nazis, a miracle of creation took place in Palestine. For the first time since the destruction of the Temple, Jews returned to their ancient homeland, not 'on sufferance but by right,' and built again their own community. Homelessness had been the curse of Jewish life throughout the ages. It had brought about nameless sufferings and persecutions. Even in better times, the Jew had remained an alien, and this had affected his whole relationship with the Gentile world. Homelessness was now to end; and within less than one generation the Jewish National Home became the greatest source of strength and hope for the Jewish masses.

The astounding development since the issue of the Balfour Declaration has often been recorded. Within 25 years the Jewish population in the country increased from 100,000 to about 600,000 (whilst the number of Arabs grew simultaneously from 500,000 to 1,000,000). More than 100,000 Jews settled on the land and returned to agriculture. More than 250 rural settlements and villages were founded. By the hardest toil and in spite of heat and fever Jews turned swamps into fields, and desert into gardens. Land which seemed barren today bears rich field crops; and even the shores of the Dead Sea, poisoned by salt throughout the ages, have been regained by unceasing work and produce vegetables, fruit and roses. As a young settler said, pointing to the ancient sites of Sodom and Gomorrhah. 'the land is under a curse. The curse is the salt, and we have to take out the curse.'

In Palestine Jewish Youth has found a new ideal: the Halutz, the Pioneer - who combines in his personality the hardest manual labour with the dedication to the spiritual rebirth of Israel. In the Kwutzoth, as the collective settlements are called. a new style of community has been developed. All work in field and house is shared on equal terms, no hired labour is admitted, A spirit of community has become the basis of their life "To be among them, wrote a Christian writer, "was a religious experience. They live in great simplicity with love for the land they are tending and love for one another. They combine hard manual work and great simplicity of living with a high level of culture, and, they are happy and full of hope. Is not their life as God meant it to be?" (1)

The urban and industrial development was not less striking. Tel-Aviv, the first completely Jewish town in modern times, grew from 8,000 to about 200,000 inhabitants. Built on the Eastern Mediterranean shore, it is a Western town, modern in outlay, with boulevards, shops, cafés and cinemas, a highly developed life in music, art and drama, a piece of Europe on the fringe of Asia. Some smaller towns, completely Jewish too, came into life; and in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tiberias, the Jews form half - or more - of the total population.

Hebrew, the language of the Bible, was revived as the language of the people. Today it dominates the Jewish scene in Palestine in daily life, in schools, in theatre and Press; and a new Hebrew

(1) Joyce Pollard, in *Community in Britain*, 1940, p. 93.

literature is growing. A summit of modern Jewish life in Palestine is the Hebrew University. In the summer of 1918 - before the war had ended - 12 foundation stones were laid on Mount Scopus above Jerusalem, in order to make clear that the rebirth of the Jewish nation from the beginning should for ever be indissolubly connected with learning, study and creative thinking. "The wandering soul of Israel," said Dr. Weizmann, "may here find its haven." Since then, the University has stirred the imagination of the Jews in every country.

The growth of the Jewish National Home can be compared with the intensity of the American development in the 19th century and the achievements of Soviet Russia in the 20th. But in addition to the technical and social progress, Palestine has seen the national reunion of a scattered people, the realisation of an age-long sacred longing, and has thus brought about a unique link between the future and the ancient past. After a wandering of two thousand years Jews, who have been aliens for ages, took up again the severed threads of their own history. One day a Jewish Homer may arise to sing the song of this unprecedented Odyssey with all its vast experience and ventures. The Jew who has returned to Palestine comes home. He has no longer any need to be explained, defended, understood; to form his life according to surrounding nations, to speak *their* tongue, to celebrate *their* feasts, to love where *they* love, fight where *they* fight, and to adapt himself to every movement of *their* heart. Here he is free and can fulfil the duties of his destiny.

This whole development took place against the background of a most complex situation; for Palestine comprises not only different communities and civilisations but, as it were, different periods of historical development. Within the Arab world agricultural life - in its methods and style - recalls biblical times. There is furthermore the mediaeval Islamic civilization - centred round the Dome of the Rock; and lastly modern nationalism with its trend for self-expression. The Christian world which - in spite of the numerical weakness of the Christian communities - greatly influences the character of the country, is composed of different layers: the Eastern Orthodox Church, established in the days of the East-Roman Empire, has survived under the ancient patriarchat of Jerusalem the rise and dominion of Islam. Roman Christianity which came to the country during the Crusades has prevailed with its Norman churches, monasteries and convents throughout the period of Turkish domination. The 19th century brought the Anglican and Russian Churches of which the latter has linked up with the ancient communities of Eastern Orthodoxy; and there is lastly the Mandatory Power of Great Britain which rules the country. All these forces are alive and active, and it was against the background of their conflict and co-operation that the Jewish National Home had to be built.

JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONSHIP

When at the end of the 19th century the political conceptions of modern Zionism were formed, the indigenous Arab population hardly entered the picture. The country was indeed not only indescribably poor and neglected but, under the misrule of the decaying Ottoman Empire, it was thought of as almost without population. 'The Land without a people for the people without a land' became a slogan of early Zionism. So overwhelming was the vision of millions of Jews returning to the Holy Land that the few hundred thousand backward Arabs hardly seemed a reality; and if they were remembered, it was only with the sincere conviction that Jewish immigration into Palestine would be to their certain benefit.

In vain Achad Ha'am, one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of the time, issued the warning:

'How careful must we be in dealing with an alien people in whose midst we want to settle. How essential is it to practise kindness and esteem toward them... For if ever the Arab could consider the action of his rivals to be oppression or the robbing of his rights then, even if he keeps silent and waits for his time to come, the rage will remain alive in his heart.'

The majority of Zionists were full of hope and optimism. Herzl himself, in describing future life in Palestine in his utopian novel *Old-New-Land*, summed up the future attitude of Arabs to the Jews by putting into the mouth of an Arab character:

'The Jewish immigration was a blessing for all of us... The Jews have enriched us. Why should we be angry with them? They dwell among us like brothers. Why should we not love them?'

To make this sweet idyll still more attractive, his Moslem adds

'My Jewish friend prays in a different house to God who is above us all. But our houses of worship stand side by side, and I always believe that our prayers, when they rise, mingle somewhere up above, and then continue on their way together until they appear before our Father.'

Such were the hopes of leading Zionists, and the Jews, who in the ghettos of the Russian Pale were dreaming of salvation in the Holy Land, knew little of the conflict which was brewing beneath the surface of the sleeping country.

In fact, both Jews and Arabs, since the second half of the 19th century, unknown to each other, experienced an independent but similar revival in the national sphere, and this development continued until both found themselves involved in an unexpected conflict.

Both peoples are drawing their strength from the deepest roots. If Jewish religious genius had made Palestine the Holy Land for the millennia, it was the rise of Islam which, 1300 years ago, enabled the Arabs to undertake one of the greatest conquests in world history. They overran the countries from the Persian Gulf to North-West Africa and conquered even Sicily and Spain. Inspired by the message of their creed, they made Arab civilization - expressed in language, Islam, art and thought - the binding element of all the subjugated nations; and so the Golden Age of Islam was born, centred in Baghdad with its fairy tales and with the wisdom of its scientists and scholars.

But Arab rule did not last very long; and just as the Jews, after the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, were driven from their country, the Arabs, too, were subjugated by a series of foreign conquerors. In the crusading period a Christian kingdom of Jerusalem came into being. Conquests followed by Mamluks from Egypt, and later by the Turks. When Sultan Soliman, the Magnificent, died (1560), the Ottoman Empire included all the Arab countries. Arabic, however, remained the dominating language, that of the Koran which had shaped the world of Islam. When later on the Turkish realm declined, its provinces of Western Asia sank to a state of utmost misery; and in the 19th century travellers from Britain, France and Germany write unanimously about the desolation of the Holy Land.

Meanwhile in the middle of the 19th century the Western world saw an awakening of great national movements everywhere. Greece had successfully fought for her independence; Italy and Germany were longing for national unity; and both Jews and Arabs were drawn towards the same aim. Whilst Moses Hess in his 'Rome and Jerusalem,' under the influence of Mazzini proclaimed, that the Jews were a *nation* and, like other oppressed nations, had to fight for their freedom, the seeds of a new Arab movement were sown in Beirut. There in the vilayet of Syria - which had included parts of Palestine since ancient times - a small society had been formed under the patronage of missionaries from America, to foster interest in Arab literature and history. The national aspirations of the Western world, with which a living contact was established, awakened a resounding echo among Arab students: and some began to long for the past glory of the Arab Golden Age. Whilst Zionism aimed at the reunion of the scattered parts of the Jewish people, Arab revival had to fight the national oppressor. Thus, when at the beginning of the eighties in Odessa young Jewish pioneers united as 'Lovers of Zion' to resettle in the Holy Land, the first Arab secret society came into being in order to shake off the Turkish rule; and in 1883 a traveller from France reported:(1)

'Everywhere I came upon the same abiding and universal sentiment: Hatred of the Turks... An Arab movement newly risen is looming in the distance... and a race hitherto downtrodden will presently claim its due place in the destinies of Islam.'

Since the autocratic rule of the Turkish government made any aspirations towards freedom a punishable crime, the Arab national movement was necessarily kept underground. And whilst the Zionists could hold their conferences publicly under the eyes of the world, the Arabs were limited to clandestine meetings of secret societies in Cairo, Beirut or Damascus, and an occasional conference in Paris.

The first World War gave both movements their chance, and both the Arab will to independence and Jewish hope for Palestine were recognized by the Allies as additions to the mighty forces arrayed against the Turkish state. When victory was won and the conflicting interests of all the victors had to be combined, there was at first a hope for Arab-Jewish understanding. In January, 1919 - in preparation of the post-war settlement - Weizmann for the Zionists and Feisal for the Arabs signed a treaty by which friendly relations were to be established between the 'Arab State' and Palestine. In this treaty the Arabs recognised the Balfour Declaration and gave their full consent to Jewish immigration into Palestine. But the agreement was dependent on the grant of full and unrestricted freedom to the Arab countries, and, since this freedom was not given by the powers, the agreement never came into force.

In the 20 years between the two World Wars the Arab peoples throughout the Middle East fought a continued struggle for a reduction of Western influence and for that independence which was withheld from them in the peace settlements of 1919 and 1920. They have succeeded to a large extent. Today Syria and Lebanon are free. Egypt is negotiating for a revision of her treaty with Great Britain and Iraq and Transjordan are recognized as independent states. But through all these years

(1) Denis de Revoire, *Les vrais Arabes et leur pays*. pp, 294-5. quoted from George Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, London, 1938.

Arab opposition against Jewish immigration into Palestine has hardened; and although Arab-Jewish co-operation in daily life, in business, production, municipal administration and civil service is much greater than is usually recognised abroad, the political cleavage has led to a complete deadlock,

GREAT BRITAIN

England's connections with Palestine, and in particular her interest in Jewish restoration are not of recent date.

Long before Great Britain had undertaken, in modern times, to extend her influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, all countries of Western Europe had united their efforts to conquer Palestine in the Crusades. This attempt had aimed not only at the liberation of the Holy Land, but also at the establishment of economic and political power, and in addition, at the reduction of Eastern Christianity which since the great schism between Rome and Byzantium in the 11th century had become the protector of the sacred places of Christendom. When the Crusades had ultimately failed, and when not only Palestine but even Constantinople were firmly in the hands of the Moslems, hope for re-conquest of the Holy Land was given up in the West, whilst Moscow began to feel itself as the heir of Rome and the successor of the Byzantine Empire. Soon afterwards there developed in the English mind a peculiar link between the Christian faith and the conception of a Jewish restoration to the promised land. St. Paul had proclaimed that the salvation of mankind was interwoven by a mystery with the destiny of the Jews, and would find its ultimate fulfilment in Israel's conversion for which he prayed. When in the Reformation the Messianic longing re-awakened, and Puritans; took a new interest in Hebraism, the thought developed that the conversion of the Jews would lead not only to Messianic times for all, but also to the Jewish restoration in the Holy Land. ⁽¹⁾ In 1621 - Sir Henry Finch describing Jewish sufferings as punishment for the crucifixion - "no nation so contemptible and so abhorred in sight of God and man"- called for repentance and exclaimed:

'Out of all the places of thy dispersion, East, West, North and South, His purpose is to bring thee home again, and marry thee to himself by faith for evermore.'

When later on John Milton in *Paradise Regained* sang of the ten lost tribes of Israel:

*'Yet he at length, time to himself best known
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring him back; repentant and sincere...'*

the notion of the Jew's return to the Holy Land sank deep into the British mind.

Whilst such ideas were, at first, connected with the conversion of Jews to Christianity, later the conviction gained ground that, if the Jews strictly observed the Torah (as revealed to Moses), this in itself would be enough to lead them back to their country and to establish the Messianic era for Jews

(1) See F Kobler *Historical Antecedents in "The Jewish National Home,"* edited by Paul Goodman, London, 1943

and Gentiles. Cobbet, a Christian writer of the 18th century, implores the Jews to turn their hearts completely to the Jewish law, in order to fulfil the prophecies of God. He points to all the miseries on earth. “Wars, Fears and Trouble, and the sufferings of thousands.” “Gentlemen, to you all Nations look, to you who are to be Restorers of the better times.” Such an approach from the Christian side was in strange accord with the teachings of orthodox, and mystical Jewish thinkers.

Lord Shaftesbury, likewise; whose interest in Jews was always profound and who once, on the promenade in Carlsbad bowed to some unknown Eastern Jews in order to express “his respect for the nation,” (1) worked for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and hoped that their return might be connected with the Second Coming. (2)

During the 19th century the interest in Messianic speculation was confined to more restricted groups; and the attitude of public opinion in Britain towards the Jewish question was one of sentiment, of pity for the homeless and sympathy with those who had to suffer without guilt. George Eliot, in her novel *Daniel Deronda*, made a young Jew the noble and romantic hero, and showed deep human understanding for the Jewish problem. She felt the need for a new “organic centre,” a nationality “which would give dignity to all who are dispersed”; and she had the vision of “a new Judea, poised between West and East - a covenant of reconciliation.” That was no longer Christian Messianism, nor even longing for fulfilment of - the Jewish law. The hero makes it clear “that he will not believe exactly as his fathers have believed.” But it contained the recognition of a *Christian obligation*, in view of “all the multitudes of Jews who died of misery when Christians were the cruellest.” When Lord Balfour later on proclaimed that - “Christendom has shown itself not quite oblivious of the wrongs it has done.” he had in mind such an obligation.

There was, however, a second link between Britain and the Holy Land of a very different order. Naval control of the Mediterranean had been long an essential element of British power; and had proved a decisive weapon when Nelson, in the battle of the River Nile, thwarted Napoleon’s attempt to conquer Egypt. The Congress of Vienna (1815) confirmed Britain in her possessions of Gibraltar and Malta; and British influence increased further when in the days of the Greek War of Independence the Turkish fleet was sunk in Navarino Bay (1827).

But at the time Britain took no further steps to help in the destruction of the Turkish Empire. The notion of a Russia expanding towards the Mediterranean had become a dominating element of British policy, and this seemed to demand the preservation of the Turkish State. For many years this idea determined British policy in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. When in 1840 the Pasha of Egypt, Mohamed Ali, tried to shake off the Turkish Suzerainty and to extend his influence to Syria, Britain, under Lord Palmerston, intervened. The British Fleet took Beyrut and Acre, and Ali was forced to retreat.

In these weeks Shaftesbury submitted to Lord Palmerston a famous memorandum, by which the first attempt was made to link the interests of British policy with the ancient longing of the Jews for their return to Palestine.

(1) E. Hodder, *The Life and Work of the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury*, 1892, p. 270.

(2) E, Hodder, *loco cit.*, p. 493.

‘The powers of Europe have determined that they will take into their own hands the adjustment of the Syrian question... and if we consider the return of the Hebrews into the land of their fathers in the light of a new establishment of colonisation, we shall find it to be the cheapest and safest mode of supplying the wants of those desolated regions.’

At first, no practical results followed these suggestions, but British policy continued in the same direction; and in the Crimean War, British, French and Turks together checked - at least for a time - further expansion of Russia to the South.

The opening of the Suez Canal made the Mediterranean still more important; and when in 1875, Lord Beaconsfield secured for Britain the shares of the Khedive in the Canal Company, Shaftesbury repeated the suggestion which he had made 35 years before:

Syria and Palestine will ere long become most important... It would be a blow to England if either of her rivals should get hold of Syria. Her Empire, reaching from Canada in the West to Calcutta and Australia in the South-East would be cut in two... To England then naturally belongs the role of favouring the settlement by the Jews in Palestine.

The year 1877 saw the outbreak of a new Russo-Turkish war. The victorious armies of the Czar approached Constantinople, and Russia was determined to solve the Eastern question according to her own interests. But Britain again intervened, and by threat of war, forced upon Russia the solution of the Congress of Berlin. To use words of Beaconsfield : ‘Russia was kept out of the Mediterranean’; and by a special treaty Cyprus was ceded to Great Britain who guaranteed the Turkish status quo in Asia.

It was within the wider context of this policy that Laurence Oliphant took up the thread of Jewish settlement in Syria. In his book, ‘The Land of Gilead’ ⁽¹⁾, he pointed out that the Congress of Berlin was practically a European Alliance against Russia to stop her expansion towards the Balkans. Russia, therefore, he concluded would turn to the conquest of Asiatic Turkey, and would not stop until she reached Palestine. ‘Nobody who has seen the Russian pilgrims in Jerusalem can doubt the strength of their religious fanaticism; and a Crusade to conquer Palestine, to join the Holy Places to the Eastern Church, will be an inexorable demand of the religious feeling of the country... With Russian arsenals at Haifa and Akaba the route to India via Egypt would be closed... The Persian Gulf no less than the Red Sea would soon be open to the Russian Fleet.’

Against these dangers he proposed to strengthen Turkey by a Jewish colony, especially in the provinces East of the River Jordan. He did not aim at Jewish independence; on the contrary, the settlers were to become subjects of Turkey, ruled by Turkish governors, and to employ Moslems as their labourers. But he felt certain of Jewish sympathy and help; and had a strangely exaggerated notion of the power of Jews in world affairs.

(1) Laurence Oliphant, ‘The Land of Gilead, London, 1880, p. 503.

‘There is probably no one power in Europe that would prove so valuable an ally to a nation likely to be engaged in a European war as this wealthy, powerful and cosmopolitan race.’⁽¹⁾

Thus in these years the British plans which aimed at the establishment of Jews in Palestine were essentially connected with the British desire to strengthen Turkey in order to prevent the expansion of Russia into the vulnerable districts of the Eastern Mediterranean.

This was not clear to all those Jews who in the East of Europe waited for their liberation. When in 1880 Oliphant published a letter in the “Jewish Chronicle” of London, in which he offered to assist the Jews in their attempt at settlement in Palestine - a letter which, naturally did not contain the wider political conceptions of the scheme - the effect among the Jews was profound. In Rumania, where the anti-Jewish pressure was particularly great, a group of pious Jews even assembled in the House of Prayer to ‘bless this unknown helper of the Jewish cause, and ‘the whole congregation raised their voices, praying that in the coming year they might repeat a threefold blessing in the House of God in Palestine.’

CZARIST RUSSIA

Through all these years Russia viewed the British attitude with great resentment. In the words of the historian S F Platonov, ‘English policy, both in the Balkans and in Central Asia, was distinctly anti-Russian’ ⁽²⁾ The Berlin Conference appeared to the Russians as a means to deprive them of a position to which they were entitled:

‘When the Russian delegation headed by Prince Gorshakov reached the Congress they found the combined diplomacy of Europe arrayed against them... The Treaty caused profound disappointment throughout Russia and deepened the distrust of England and Austria as well as Germany... Military success was not accompanied by proportional political success, and when it was all over, Russia found herself isolated without friends and without allies’ ⁽³⁾

Likewise Dostoevski wrote in 1877: ‘The Russian people are like a giant who has grown to the ceiling of his room. They must step into the open to breathe the fresh air of the sea and oceans.’ But he felt certain to meet with British resistance: ‘wherever the English have established themselves, it is difficult to expel them again; for they are like burrs.’

No wonder that the Russians were deeply suspicious of every attempt sponsored by the British to re-establish Jews in Palestine. But with the Russians as with the English the issue was not merely

(1) One year earlier, Sir Edward Cazalet in a brochure, *England’s Policy in the East*, 1879, had expressed similar ideas. After declaring that the oppression of the Jews in Russia would further the establishment of a Jewish settlement in Turkey, he continued: “Without the support of England in Asia the Turks would have to accept the protection of Russia; and an offensive and defensive alliance between Russia and Turkey would be the inevitable consequence. Such an alliance would be prejudicial to the whole civilized world.”

(2) S. F. Platonov, *History of Russia*, London, 1925, p. 390.

(3) S. F. Platonov, *loc cit.*, pp. 393-4.

political. Since in the 15th century Constantinople fell to the Turks, Russia had considered herself the heir of the Byzantine Empire and the Czar was considered as the protector of the Christians and their Holy Places against the Moslem world. This was expressed in many wars against the Turks: and the question of the Holy Places played even a part at the outbreak of the Crimean war. Russia's profoundest thinkers saw her destiny linked up with the re-erection of the Cross on St. Sophia. 'The meaning of the Eastern question for the Russian people lies in the liberation of all orthodox Christians, and in the future great union of the churches... 'Sooner or later,' wrote Dostoevski, 'Constantinople must be ours... It is not alone the famous harbour, not alone the way to the seas and oceans, not even the union and reawakening of the Slav peoples that attaches Russia so closely to the portentous question. Our task lies infinitely deeper. We Russians are indeed indispensable for Christendom in its entity in the East, and for the future of Orthodoxy on earth and its union... In one word, this fateful Eastern question contains nearly the whole of our destiny; it contains all our tasks, above all, our only way into the fullness of world history. And there lies at the same time our ultimate reunion with Europe... Sooner or later Constantinople must needs be ours; even if we have to wait until the next century.' (1) Thus the fronts stood against each other in the political as well as in the spiritual sphere. But when after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/1, European policy began to centre around the German danger (of the Hohenzollern era) these problems gradually receded into the background.

In October, 1914, Turkey joined the Central Powers, and now the way was free for her destruction. After a period of nearly a hundred years, in which Britain had tried to preserve the decaying fabric of the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France and Russia joined hands for its dismemberment. They agreed in a secret treaty that Constantinople should be given to Russia whilst the Arab provinces should come under the influence of the West. When the idea of the Jewish National Home was resumed, and the Balfour Declaration issued in November, 1917, Russia had practically ceased to be a co-belligerent. But the establishment of a Jewish National Home under a British Mandate was in accordance with the general aim of British policy in the Mediterranean, as it had been pursued for many decades, safeguarding the Eastern shores and the lines of communications through Suez to India and the Far East. Jewish longing for a return to the ancient home. British religious sentiments and military and political considerations appeared to be in harmony.

THE MANDATE

Under these conditions the Mandate for Palestine was not entrusted to a Power which itself was disinterested in the country and, therefore, free to fulfil the Mandate purely on its own merits. For Great Britain had developed her own far reaching interests through many decades in the regions in question; and whilst in the sphere of private law no trust with a personal interest in the trust would ever be admitted no similar restrictions were felt in the field of international affairs. The control of the Eastern Mediterranean, the maintenance of the vital communications to India and the Far East by land and sea, and the exclusion of every power which might threaten this lifeline were naturally the overriding issues for Great Britain, compared with which the Jewish National Home was bound to be a subordinate concern. Not only, therefore, did the Mandatory Power lack the enthusiasm, imagination and creative energy which naturally only the Jews could apply to the building of the

(1) F. Dostoevski, Diary, July. 1876, and March, 1877.

National Home, but every step in the direction of this National Home had to be watched with regard to its repercussions on the imperial situation. In the beginning British and Jewish interests seemed to coincide but soon the ways began to part. The general movement for independence among the Arab peoples throughout the Middle East - connected with the problems of India - had to be taken into account, particularly since it found assistance from various powers. Thus in the first few years after the first World War it was greatly encouraged by the leaders of the revolution in Moscow. To them the expansion of France and Britain in the Middle East was a new link in the chain of imperialist development. The establishment of a Jewish National Home under a British Mandate appeared to be the continuation of the policy which had been voiced by Shaftesbury, Cazalet and Oliphant. At the same time they felt threatened by Western interventions from Archangel to Baku, and reacted with utmost hostility. A manifesto issued in Moscow, proclaimed:

‘Mohammedans of the East, Persians and Turks, Arabs and Indians, all those with whose heads and with whose freedom and homeland the greedy robbers of Europe have traded between themselves for centuries. We declare that the secret treaties of the Czar concerning the forcible acquisition of Constantinople are now torn up and abolished. We declare that the treaty concerning the partition of Turkey is torn up and abolished. Lose no time in shaking off your shoulders the robbers who have pilfered your countries for centuries. You must be yourselves the rulers of your countries, your destiny is in your hands!’

And in 1920 a congress of Eastern nations at Baku declared:

‘Our main blow must be aimed at British capitalism’

In later years Italian Fascists and German Nazis appeared on the scene, and close links were formed between the Axis Powers and the Mufti and his friends.

Today, with Germany and Italy defeated, the Palestinian issue is more than ever before involved in the struggle for independence and freedom which is spreading from Egypt through Syria, India and Malaya, to the Indonesian Islands. “The French must go today, the British tomorrow,” were Mr. Jinnah’s words during the Syrian crisis; and if he joins the opposition against further Jewish immigration into Palestine, his ultimate aim is the elimination of British power in the Moslem world. On the other hand the imperial needs are unchanged; and there are many who see in Palestine a suitable military base for the defence of the Suez canal, a base which might replace the British position in Egypt.

Jewish and Arab problems, therefore, are overshadowed by the ultimate shape of Anglo-Russian relations. This hundred year old question has again come to the forefront. Seventy years ago Dostoevski complained that Russia was blocked everywhere by the British. Today Russia again feels encircled by the Anglo-Saxons.

Between the U.S.S.R. and the Arab world there are some special links. Russia herself has a large Moslem population, and readily cultivates her relations with the Moslem countries. One of her leading Islamic scholars became Soviet ambassador in Cairo, and the U.S.S.R. was the first of the

great Powers to recognise the theocratic regime of King Ibn Saud. She is the only Great Power which carefully selects Moslem officials as ministers and junior diplomats at the Islamic courts; these officials share the religious life of the Moslem populations; and - together with special deputations from the U.S.S.R. - took part even during the war in the annual pilgrimages to the Holy Places of Islam in the Middle East.

But probably even more important is that Russia has taken up again the ancient connection between the Orthodox Church and the Holy Land, with all its mystical implications. In January, 1945, the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, together with Archbishop Athenegor of Jerusalem, went to Moscow to take part in the election of the new Patriarch of Moscow and all-Russia, and were received with great honours. A few months later the newly elected Patriarch went to Palestine himself to take solemn re-possession of the Russian sanctuaries in the Holy Land. The Russian colony in Palestine which is mainly composed of emigrés, hostile to the Bolshevik regime, did not give him an unrestricted welcome. The Russian Church in Palestine today is in a state of division on the issue of the recognition of the Moscow Patriarch. Thus the famous convent of Ein Karin is divided and the Church of the convent is closed. But one day the Russian sanctuaries in Palestine may be re-integrated into the mother Church and this will have far-reaching repercussions.

For generations a continuous stream of Russian Christian pilgrims had kept the link between the Russian people and the Holy Land alive. Laurence Oliphant had recognised the significance of these pilgrimages. Thirty years after him Stephen Graham described how a thousand Russian peasants, after endless wanderings came to Jerusalem to pray at the Holy Places and to bathe in the Jordan. "They feel," he added, "that when they have been in Jerusalem the serious occupations of their life are all ended."⁽¹⁾ With the reunion of the Russian Churches in Jerusalem and Moscow, the Russian Christian pilgrims will return, and the rise of Eastern Christianity - which the Jews have to face not only in Russia but also in Palestine - may deeply influence the Middle East.

The linking of the Mandate with the imperial interests of the Mandatory power created an additional difficulty. For it made Zionism appear to many as a "tool of Western imperialism." Russians and Arabs had opposed Zionism for this reason for many years. In India Moslems and Hindus united in their opposition on that basis. In 1938, Mr. Gandhi - under the impression of the German pogroms - wrote

'My sympathies are all with the Jews. They have been the Untouchables of Christianity. But my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English.... I have no doubt that the Jews are going about it the wrong way. It is wrong to enter the country under the shadow of the British Government, they can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs. There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs if they will only discard the help of the British bayonet. As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done no harm to them.'

(1) S. Graham, *With Russian Pilgrims in Jerusalem*, London, 1913.

In March, 1939, the Congress Party passed the following resolution:

‘The Congress has previously declared its full sympathy with the Arabs in Palestine in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British imperialism. and has condemned the policy of the Mandatory Power in Palestine... While sympathising with the plight of the Jews in Europe and elsewhere, the Congress deplors that in Palestine the Jews have relied on British armed Forces to advance their special privileges and thus aligned themselves on the side of British Imperialism.’

It is a paradox - typical of Jewish history - that whilst colonial peoples identified Zionism with British Imperialism, many representatives of this Imperialism themselves looked with suspicion at the Jewish collective agricultural settlements in Palestine, which appeared to them as the spearheads of a communist revolution. Both conceptions are equally wrong, but the fact remains that in the whole political world at present hardly any sympathy has been left with the aspirations of Zionism.

There still remain those who - following the tradition from the Reformation to Lord Balfour - believe in Jewish restoration for spiritual and religious reasons. The spiritual element is indeed the strongest foundation of the Zionist hope. But those among the Gentiles who have the deepest understanding of “Israel’s destiny ” have been alienated for years by the merely “political approach” of modern Zionism and the lack of a creative spiritual leadership.

Zionism by a tragic combination of circumstances and shortcomings has arrayed against it not only the Arab countries, but imperialists *and* colonial peoples, Moslems and Hindus, Believers *and* Communists. Never was the Jewish National Home more isolated.

CHAPTER VII REORIENTATION

ISRAEL AND THE HOLY LAND

WHATEVER SOLUTION MAY BE FOUND for the future of Palestine, for the Jews the development of the National Home has become a matter of life and death. The events of the Hitler era have created desperate needs for the survivors. But beyond these immediate requirements, there is everywhere a dawning consciousness that a decisive hour of Jewish history is at hand. This hour of destiny is indissolubly connected with Palestine. All those who regard the Holy Land as merely one among several places where Jews might find a refuge, fail to understand the issue at stake. What is required is not only a refuge, but a home; and the home of the people can only be in Palestine. The world is witnessing the rebirth of a nation with all its birthpangs; and as a birth once labour has started, cannot be stopped, so the homecomers are irresistibly streaming towards Palestine in miserable boats from concentration camps and death houses. Throughout the centuries innumerable pilgrims have gone to the Holy Land to pray and to draw strength and inspiration from its sanctuaries. The multitudes who are coming now aim at both: a realisation of an age-long dream, nourished from deep religious sources, and at the establishment of a home for themselves and the generations to come. Jews have never accepted a division between the heavenly and the earthly Jerusalem. It is in accordance with their noblest tradition that they try to establish their oneness.

The first condition for a permanent realisation of these hopes is the establishment of a satisfactory relationship between Jews and Arabs. Compared with this task, even British and Russian interests recede into the background. For, as an Arab proverb says, conquerors come and go, but neighbours remain. Moreover, in this issue Jews bear a special responsibility; and it is one of the few spheres in which they can exert any direct influence. At present political relations between Jews and Arabs have completely broken down, and if Zionist policy has ever earnestly aimed at a constructive solution of the conflict, in this respect it has ended in a total failure. If there is still time to save anything, a new beginning is therefore necessary.

THE ARAB CASE

The foundation of the Arab case is: possession. They do not deny that for many centuries they themselves were subjected to foreign rule and the country was conquered in succession by Crusaders, Mamlucks, Turks and British. But they maintain that - in spite of political oppression - they formed the substance of the population of the country; that their language, religion and civilisation determined the country's life, and that they have buried their ancestors in its earth. When the first World War came to an end, they formed the overwhelming majority of the population. Since then, they have incessantly demanded its independence and self-government, and have based their claim both on special promises and the general principles equally proclaimed in Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Atlantic Charter. The Mandate over Palestine has never had their recognition.

For the Jews they claim to have neither hatred nor dislike. But they emphatically refuse to re-

admit them on the strength of previous possession. The general recognition of such a claim, they say, would lead to a re-mapping of the world and to a dissolution of the existing order. They regret the Jewish plight in Europe, but deny responsibility for the crimes of others. They are willing to admit Jewish refugees in the same proportion as other nations. They regard, however, a mass-immigration of Jews into their country as an invasion by force.

THE JEWISH CASE

Since the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate have never been recognised by the Palestinian Arabs, the claim of the Jews against the Arabs - whatever their rights might be against the British and the members of the League of Nations - cannot be based on an *agreement*. It must therefore be derived from *general principles*. In the main, the Jewish arguments can be brought under two groups:

(a) Comparative needs. Whilst the Arabs own more than a million square miles, the Jewish people has not one square inch of sovereign territory. Whilst the Arabs have at least six independent states - Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon - and have six voices in the Council of the United Nations, the Jews have no state and no representation whatsoever. Whilst the Arab countries are admittedly underpopulated, and the lack of population is one of their most urgent problems, homeless Jews are herded in concentration - and reception camps and are roaming through the destroyed countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This state of affairs is the more unjust since Arab sacrifice in the Allied cause were negligible, their sympathies uncertain, and some of their outstanding leaders - the Mufti and Rashid Ali even sided openly with the Axis. The Jews on the other hand lost in Eastern Europe alone about six million dead, that is more than a third of the whole Jewish people; and in addition fought in large numbers and gave their lives in the armed forces of Britain, the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, and most other Allies.

(b) Historical connection. Between the Jews and the Holy Land exists an ancient indestructible connection. Not only have Jews made Palestine what it is, a unique country linked for ever to every soul throughout the worlds of Christendom and Islam. They have never given up their claim and hope. Never throughout a history of nearly 2,000 years have they built a state anywhere else. They have lived throughout the ages in the one and exclusive expectation of ultimate return, and for millennia have taken upon themselves the burden of being aliens. In daily prayers they have maintained their longing, and believe that it is their destiny after the return to make one more outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of mankind.

To the Arabs they offer recognition of their religious and civic rights. They add that they aim neither at expulsion nor exploitation; that no Arabs have ever been dispossessed by Jewish immigration; that the standard of living in Palestine has risen for all; that the Arab population has doubled - partly through Arab immigration from neighbouring countries - and that the country is large enough, if properly developed and irrigated, to provide for both peoples a life of happiness.

A NEW APPROACH

If the issue at stake was a Jewish conquest of Palestine by force, it would have to be admitted, I believe, that rarely in the history of wars a conqueror was driven by greater needs than are the Jews today. But the issue is not force but justice; and if we aim at the establishment of a permanent peaceful relationship with the Arabs, we should do well to reconsider the position carefully.

That in relation to the Arabs we cannot base our claim on the Balfour Declaration, has already been mentioned. But apart from the fact that the Arabs have never accepted this Declaration we should not cling too much to it. It would be a grave mistake to assume that the protection of the Arabs' civic and religious rights, as demanded by the Balfour Declaration, are sufficient to meet the case. When the Balfour Declaration was formulated, little progress had been made towards recognition of the national and political rights of the peoples of the Middle East. Hardly two years had passed since Britain and France, in a secret agreement, had defined among themselves their respective spheres of influence throughout these regions; and the movement for independence among the Arabs was in its initial stages. This time has passed; and the Jews, least of all peoples, should try to maintain it. The Jewish connection with Palestine is older than the Balfour Declaration and must continue beyond it. The building up of the National Home must not be affected by those limitations of the Declaration which have their roots in the ephemeral political conceptions of its time.

Mass-migration into Palestine - whatever may be the safeguards for the Arabs is an infringement of Arab rights. It cannot be contended that the matter does not concern them at all. It affects their political position in the country. Nor does it help to argue that after the conquest by Great Britain the Arabs anyhow are not masters in their house. At present authority may rest with the victorious Mandatory Power. But the claim of the indigenous population for self-government remains, and their potential sovereignty may one day turn into reality.

It is necessary to face the truth that in the present state of personal and international relationships the conception of the distribution of earthly goods according to *relative needs*, has no foundation in fact. As long as the vast thinly populated areas of the globe, particularly those in Canada, Australia and Siberia, are not opened to all who are in need, the Arabs can rightly deny such an obligation for themselves. They can plead that the responsibility must rest on the community of nations; and they have repeatedly offered to take their share in proportion to others. Unbearable as the plight and the need of the Jews are, it must be recognised by us in justice, that this need alone cannot create the obligation of the Arabs to meet it.

What then is the position regarding the *historical connection*? It is obvious that prepossession as such, especially if it ended nearly 2,000 years ago, cannot form the basis of a claim. The Arabs are right in arguing that the general recognition of such a principle would throw the world into chaos. That we Jews never gave up our hope and continued to pray for restoration does not deprive the Arab of his rights; and also the fact that through the greater part of the time small Jewish groups lived in the country can hardly affect the position of the majority. Even the claim that it is our destiny to return, will carry little conviction with those who, as Christians, consider the Jewish claim forfeited,

and, as Moslems, have never recognised it. Moreover, it is a dangerous course to introduce the question of destiny into politics. Peoples are apt to confuse their wishes with their mission. "Sooner or later Constantinople must needs be ours," wrote Dostoevski in interpretation of the Russian mission; and Hitler led Germany to her ruin, in order to fulfil her destiny. In the sphere of destiny the spiritual power alone will decide; and the spirit requires complete and unconditional truthfulness.

In truthfulness we have to admit that the Arab position in the country is justified according to general recognised standards among all nations and that their position is essentially affected by the mass immigration of Jews. The repeated assurances that we Jews want friendship with the Arabs cannot under these conditions be sufficient, They must appear meaningless to the Arab who feels that his rights are violated. More is, therefore, required than such declarations.

In the sphere of law it has been recognised since the days of Hugo Grotius that under certain conditions personal rights can be interfered with for the sake of a superior public interest, provided that adequate compensation is made. This principle is known under the name of dominium eminens. Accordingly a church may be extended or a railway may be built on private property, even if the agreement of the owner is not forthcoming. His right however remains recognised. The public need does not lead to his deprivation. His ownership is merely transformed into different forms. It is not claimed that this principle can be applied directly to the Jewish-Arab case. But it contains an element of thought which throughout the centuries has helped to overcome conflicts of rights and needs in a constructive way, and it may help again to find a way out of the present deadlock.

The problem of Jewish homelessness has become more than a personal concern of the Jews themselves. It has grown to a matter of the widest interest, a major issue of world politics which is engaging the attention of the Cabinets of the greatest countries. It appears therefore justified to consider the problem as one of public interest.

If the problem at stake is the homelessness of a people, its solution must require the establishment of a national home. All those suggestions which envisage a new and further distribution of individual Jews to different countries well meaning and necessary as they may be do not touch the core of the problem. What is required is a land on which the people as such can build its collective life. Just as for the building of a church it is of no avail to offer disconnected plots of land, dispersed throughout the village, so a coherent territory is required to build a nation. It is obvious that this land can only be Palestine, where the establishment of a National Home has already been recognised by 51 nations, where 600,000 Jews form a living self-conscious community and where they produced - according to general consent - miracles of creation. In this context, for the choice of the territory, the historical link between Israel and the Holy Land is decisive.

The responsibility of providing adequate and fair compensation for the Arabs rests in the first place with the Jews who are the immediate beneficiaries. But it may also be recognised to a certain extent by the community of nations, and in particular by the Germans who have brought about such unspeakable sufferings. The recent suggestions of the Anglo American experts, according to which the United States are asked to grant to the Arab states financial help in order to raise their cultural level and standard of living, come under the same heading. But whatever other nations may do to

help in this matter, the fundamental liability remains with us Jews; and this will still hold good if a political solution, such as partition, is adopted by the decision of the Powers. It will always remain to us "to win," as Mr. Gandhi said, "the Arab's heart"; and if we remain conscious of the fact that we owe him a debt, it will not be impossible to find the necessary ways and means. Much valuable time has been lost since Achad Ha'am issued his warning. Many mistakes have been made and necessary actions omitted. The difficulties of the task have become almost insurmountable. But it is the only way which in the end can lead to success.

CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE IMMIGRATION

What is required on the Jewish side is the right of immigration. Immigration is the centre of the problem. But the structure of the immigration has changed considerably during the last 25 years. From the beginning of the Zionist movement Eastern Jews had formed its strongest element. In the East of Europe, where the consciousness of the common Jewish destiny had always been alive, the movement had its roots. From here the settlers of the "Lovers of Zion" had started. Here Herzl had found his most active friends. From Eastern Europe came the profoundest and most creative thinkers of the movement - such as Pinsker, Achad Ha'am and Bialik; and Eastern Jews - Weizmann and Sokolow - negotiated for the Balfour Declaration and succeeded in convincing British statesmen.

It was a strange and paradoxical coincidence that the Balfour Declaration was followed within less than seven days by the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution. Thus Russian Jewry, which had done more than any other community for the revival of the Jewish national idea, and which more than any other could make it a reality, was cut off in the very moment when the fulfilment of the ancient dream seemed to be near.

The doors of Palestine were opened for immigration in 1922. The Churchill White Paper of the same year (which also cut off Transjordan from the West of Palestine) laid down that the extent of the immigration should be determined by the economic capacity of the country. The quota of workers was announced twice a year; and in addition there was free access for those who brought with them a capital of £500, later £1,000. Within the first ten years, from 1923 till 1932, Western Jews, including those of Central Europe, took hardly any active part in the migration. The Jews of Soviet Russia soon fell out, and thus Poland, Rumania and the Baltic States, where the position of the Jews was miserable, provided the majority of the immigrants.

The total number of immigrants within this period - according to official figures of the British Government - are 96,000: and they came from the following countries:

TABLE I

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| British Empire excluding Aden | 1,248 | 1.3% | | |
| Poland | } | | | |
| Russia | | | | |
| Rumania | | | .69,976 | 73.0% |
| Lithuania | | | | |
| Latvia and Estonia | | | | |
| Central Europe | .5,302 | 5.6% | | |
| Balkan Countries | .4,877 | 5.1% | | |
| Other European Countries | .1,092 | 1.1% | | |
| North Africa (incl. Egypt) | .971 | 1.0% | | |
| West and Central Asia | .8,411 | 8.8% | | |
| U.S.A. | .3,461 | 3.6% | | |
| Central and South America | .425 | 0.4% | | |
| Other Countries | .108 | 0.1% | | |
| Total | .95,871 | 100.0% | | |

The immigrants from Eastern Europe, therefore, formed about three-quarters (73%) of the total. They were followed at a long interval by Oriental Jews, from Yemen, Turkey, Syria, Persia and Iraq; whilst those from Central Europe amounted altogether to not more than 5%.

The Jewish immigrants from Germany in 1932 - the year before the Nazi revolution - were well below 400. The Western Jews, of whom at that time tens, if not hundreds, of thousands would have been in a position to provide the minimum capital which was required for immigration, kept almost completely aloof, and the combined communities of the United States, Central and South America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Spain - amounting altogether to about six millions with their vast resources - produced in a decade a total of 6,000 immigrants or one in ten thousand every year.

Till the Nazi revolution practical Zionism was confined mainly to the countries of the East; and the late Arthur Ruppin, Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Jerusalem, summed up the situation in 1930:

‘The Jews in England, France, Italy and Holland - apart from those who have arrived recently from Eastern Europe - remained nearly inaccessible to Zionist propaganda, and completely identified with the life in their native countries.’

‘In the United States also Zionism finds its strongest hold among the immigrants who have spent their youth in Eastern Europe, and brought thence Jewish knowledge and feeling. In the second and third generations Zionist influence is much weaker. In like manner it has only found isolated adherents among the Americanised Sephardic and German Jews.’

Eastern Jewry, however - first from Russia and later from Poland - became the backbone of Jewish Palestine. Their Jewishness became the strongest element in the new life, and brought about a new amalgamation between Hebrew civilisation and the world of Eastern Europe. Thus the Hebrew Theatre, Habima, one of the proudest achievements of Jewish renaissance, is unthinkable without the Russian background of Moscow, where it grew up; and even the Horrah, national dance of Jewish youth, danced through innumerable nights under the starry sky of Palestine, originated among Russian peasants of the south.

When Hitler came to power, the position changed. Migration to Palestine from Central Europe greatly increased, and German Jews took a growing share. For the first time in the history of modern Jewry a mass migration from a country other than the East, began. They differed greatly from their predecessors. Whilst the majority of Eastern Jews had come from direst poverty, the German Jews had lived in comfortable, some in splendid circumstances. In the beginning many were able to bring with them a substantial part of their possessions, and thus increased the wealth of the country to an extent which previously had been hardly thought possible. Furthermore, the Jews of Germany had lived for more than hundred years in almost complete freedom, and had absorbed Western civilisation, knowledge and experience. The finest and most intimate ramifications of the Western world had been integrated into their Jewish life, and so great had been their dedication and adaption to the Western world that they had nearly lost themselves. When this Jewish world in Germany was

cut off from its surroundings, a great part of it was transferred to Palestine. The early settlers from the *East* had contributed to the rebirth of the country the rural settlements - often very primitive - and revered traditions of religion. Now modern factories and scientific institutes were built by *Western Jews*, and the Symphony Orchestra of Palestine sprang into life, conducted at its opening performances by Toscanini!

Yet the great majority of immigrants still came from Eastern Europe. In the first six years of Hitler's rule - from 1933 to 1938 - the composition of Jewish immigration into Palestine was as follows:

TABLE II

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------------|---------------|
| Great Britain and Canada | ..... | 1,610 | 0.9% |
| Poland | } | Eastern Europe | ..... |
| Russia | | | |
| Rumania | | | |
| Lithuania | | | |
| Latvia | | | |
| Estonia | | | |
| Germany | | | |
| Austria | } | Central Europe | ..... |
| Czechoslovakia | | | |
| Balkan Countries (excl. Rumania) | ..... | 7,361 | 4.0% |
| Other European Countries | ..... | 5,558 | 3.0% |
| Africa | ..... | 1,593 | 0.8% |
| West and Central Asia | ..... | 14,254 | 7.6% |
| U.S.A | ..... | 4,784 | 2.5% |
| Central and South America | ..... | 803 | 0.4% |
| Other Countries, Stateless, etc | ..... | 4,479 | 2.4% |
| Total | ..... | 187,641 | 100.0% |

In these six years the number of immigrants was about twice that in the decade from 1923, to 1932. The Jews of Eastern Europe formed one-half, those of Central Europe one-quarter of the total immigration. The share of Western Jewry remained unchanged. **(1)**

(1) Taking together all the figures for the 16 years from 1923 to 1938 the composition of the Jewish immigration was as follows*

| | | | |
|--|-------|----------------|---------------|
| Eastern Europe | ..... | 168,715 | 59.5% |
| Central Europe | ..... | 53,762 | 19.0% |
| Asia (Yemen, Iraq, Turkey, Persia, etc.) | ..... | 22,665 | 8.0% |
| Balkans (excl. Rumania) | ..... | 12,238 | 4.3% |
| U.S.A | ..... | 8,245 | 2.9% |
| Great Britain and Canada | ..... | 2,858 | 1.0% |
| Africa | ..... | 2,564 | 0.9% |
| South and Central America | ..... | 1,228 | 0.4% |
| Other European Countries | ..... | 6,680 | 2.4% |
| Other countries, stateless, etc. | ..... | 4,587 | 1.6% |
| Grand Total | ..... | 283,542 | 100.0% |

During the war only a small trickle was able to enter Palestine. But since its end a mighty new movement has started from the camps of Displaced Persons and the traditional emigration centres Poland, Rumania, and to a less extent Hungary. These Jews form today the bulk of the potential immigrants. They are probably the most passionate seekers of Zion in the whole of Jewish history and a claim for admission has certainly never been based on stronger grounds. But the intensity of their suffering and need must not blind us to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Jewish survivors in the East of Europe are in the Soviet Union and that for these mass migration appears to be at an end. To most of the Jews in Soviet Russia the Zionist dreams of the last generations will appear today as the result of Czarist oppression; and the distinguished representatives of Soviet Jewry - Professor Mikhoelis of the Yiddish Theatre in Moscow and Colonel Feffer, a well known author - who during the war visited America and England, certainly expressed the present feeling of the majority when they declared:

‘In Russia Soviet Jewry have dug themselves into the soil; they are completely part of it and every Russian Jew can honestly proclaim: Russia is my fatherland, and I have no need for any other.’

Even if the Soviet Union should one day remove the present prohibition of emigration (for Jews and Gentiles alike), the pre-conditions for a Jewish mass migration from the country no longer exist; and the experience of the United States whence only an infinitely small proportion of Jews migrated into Palestine is a strong indication of the development which is to be expected.

When Herzl made his famous statement before the Royal Commission that “the Jews in Eastern Europe cannot stay where they are,” they numbered more than six million. Since then the Russian revolution has changed for about half of them the conditions on which his statement had been based. Regarding the Jews in Poland a member of the Polish government suggested before the outbreak of the war that not less than three million Jews had to emigrate from the country. Today the total of Jewish survivors from Poland - including those in the camps of the Displaced Persons and the fugitives in the U.S.S.R. - scarcely amounts to a few hundred thousand, Zionism has lost what has been till now its most important hinterland. It has been lost by mass destruction of the Jews in Poland and Rumania and by the abolition of those preconditions in the Czarist state which greatly favoured its development. The problem of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe has been multiplied in urgency, but reduced to a fraction of its former size.

(To these figures have to be added the illegal immigrants. Since they came mainly from countries where the pressure was the most severe, that means from Eastern Europe, and, since Hitler, Germany, the proportion of immigrants from these countries is even higher).

The number of potential emigrants is difficult to determine. It will depend on many factors. The Anglo-American Committee estimated that “as many as 500,000 may wish or be impelled to emigrate from Europe”. The authors of the American survey “Palestine Problem and Promise” (1) reckon with a minimum figure of 600,000 (including 65,000 Jews from the Arab Middle East), and Dr. Weizmann in his testimony before the Anglo-American committee, including about 400,000

(1) Palestine: Problem and Promise, by Robert R. Nathan, Oscar Gass and Daniel Creamer, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1946.

Jews of the Moslem world, spoke of “a total of something like a million, which constitutes the urgent and immediate problem.”

If violence and war are to be avoided and if there still exists a hope for a peaceful and just solution, it is obvious that any infringement of the Arabs’ rights must be reduced to the absolute minimum, and every possible effort must be made to safeguard their position in the country. The protection of the religious, economic and social rights presents no insurmountable difficulties. The crux of the problem is the political control. In this respect there appear at present to be two main alternatives:

- (a) A form of condominium in Palestine in which Jews and Arabs will ultimately rule jointly.
- (b) The country might be divided into two more or less independent states.

What is asked from the Arabs in both cases is to *share* the political control with the Jews, if and when the Mandatory government comes to an end. It is a restriction of potential sovereignty; and if this principle is acknowledged, it will surely not be impossible to define the details. Nobody will deny that the Jewish claim asks for far-reaching sacrifices on the side of the Arabs, but if it is considered that the Jews will certainly submit to the strictest international control regarding the arrangements, that furthermore all over the globe millions of people live in states which they do not fully control, and that the vast majority of Arabs now live in countries of their own, the hardship to be suffered in the general interest, does not appear so great that it could not be made bearable by a just compensation. In 1919, when Weizmann and Feisal concluded their famous agreement, the Arabs were willing to grant more for less. Is it too late to work for an agreement now?

The nature and size of the compensation will not easily be determined. There are no precedents for such a case. Yet there are certainly a number of possibilities, and, to quote Mr. Gandhi once more: “There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs.” Some of the following suggestions, singly or combined, may contain the elements of a possible compromise.

1. Help in raising the general standard of living of the Arab in Palestine. By this is meant not only the more or less incidental rise which has been the result of the Jewish development, but a planned and deliberate effort for its own sake. Much thought has been given to this task, and it may be sufficient in this connection to refer to the Memorandum: “The Case for a bi-national Palestine,” prepared by the Hashomer Hatzair Workers’ Party, and to the above mentioned American work “Palestine, Problem and Promise.”
2. Help in the development of a modern health service. It is obvious that in this field the Jews can make a very valuable contribution to the well-being of the Arab population, and the Hadassah-University Hospital above Jerusalem has given an inspiring lead in this direction.
3. Help in the building up of a modern system of education, particularly in the field of Science. Here again, the Hebrew University and the Jewish Research Institutes at Rehovoth can be of great assistance.

4. Help in the scientific development of Arab agriculture, including the fight against animal diseases.
5. Help in the development of irrigation and electrification.
6. Help in the financial sphere either to the Arabs of Palestine, or to some of the Arab states.
7. There is furthermore, and perhaps most important, the possibility of an agreement in the political field. The Jewish community may agree under certain conditions to join an Arab Federation, provided that sufficient self-government is guaranteed and that international representation - similar to that enjoyed by some member republics of the U.S.S.R - is granted. Such participation in a wider Federation may help to abolish once and for all Arab fears of Jewish domination.

These suggestions are necessarily tentative. They are not even in a form which might provide a basis for discussion. But if the energy, intelligence and imagination of the Jewish people - and all those who are seriously interested in the solution of this conflict - are devoted to the task of working out better plans - and if the problem is thus shifted from the sterile struggle for rights onto a more constructive plane, it should indeed not be beyond the wit of man to devise a plan which will create the conditions for a *modus vivendi*.

It would be ideal if a solution could be agreed upon by Jews and Arabs themselves; and, I submit, the Jews should make an effort to open new negotiations on such a basis. But if these negotiations fail, a decision of a disinterested third party should be sought. Perhaps the International Court of Justice might be asked to decide "*ex aequo et bono*." The Jews can, with confidence, accept any obligation which an impartial authority fixes as compensation for the Arabs. Since for them everything is at stake, they will, I believe, be willing to make every sacrifice for the restoration of their nation, which this authority thinks fair. With these qualifications: Fullest international guarantee of the Arab rights and a compensation fixed for the Arabs by a disinterested authority, the Jewish claim for unrestricted immigration into their ancient homeland must be recognised as just.

EPILOGUE
REPERCUSSIONS ON THE WEST

THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES of the Jewish situation in Eastern Europe and in Palestine are bound to have far-reaching repercussions on the Jewish position in the West. For about two generations migration from the East of Europe was the most characteristic and dominating event of Jewish history. Within the fifty years between 1880 and 1929, more than 3,700,000 Jews had migrated from the East of Europe to the countries overseas, and nearly 3,000,000 of them had found a new domicile in the United States. Everywhere the tendency had been the same and in every country where Jews immigrated during this period, Eastern Jews provided the main share of Jewish immigration. Thus in these fifty years the figures were

- Canada:** 120,000 out of a total Jewish immigration of 195,000.
- South Africa:** 17,000 out of a total Jewish immigration of 60,000.
- Argentina:** 170,000 out of a total Jewish immigration of 180,000.
- Australia:** 17,000 out of a total Jewish immigration of 20,000.

If now the source of Jewish emigration in the East of Europe is drying up, and - quite independently of the immigration laws in Western countries - the era of Jewish migration from East to West is coming to an end, the Jewish communities in the Western world will be dependent in the future on their own resources. This will create profound problems.

There is first the question of numbers. The Jewish birth rate everywhere is rapidly decreasing.⁽¹⁾

(1) A. Ruppin, Fate and Future of the Jews, London, 1940, p. 77, gives the following striking figures for the decline of the Jewish birthrate in Prussia

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|----------|
| 1822-1840 | ..... | .35.5 | per 1000 |
| 1841-1866 | ..... | .34.7 | “ “ |
| 1898-1902 | ..... | .19.7 | “ “ |
| 1913 | ..... | .15.0 | “ “ |
| 1924 | ..... | .14.6 | “ “ |
| 1931 | ..... | .8.8 | “ “ |
| 1933 | ..... | .6.6 | “ “ |

In all Western countries the Jews fully share in the general decline and since the fall of the birthrate has been greatest in the towns, the Jews, as a predominantly urban population, have been affected more than other people. In every country of the world - including even Palestine - the Jewish birthrate today is smaller than that of their neighbours. (*) A stoppage of immigration will therefore greatly reduce the relative numerical position of the Jews in all the Western countries.

But the effect of the change is not limited to numbers. It affects the substance of Jewish life in the Western world. Since the days of the emancipation in the West the Jewish communities were exposed to the steadily increasing influence of the surrounding world; and only a comparatively small number was able to withstand this influence. Many of those families who had come in the past were assimilated, dissolved or even integrated into Christendom; and the remnants of Jewish life in the Western world today would be very small and insignificant, if they had not been strengthened continuously by the influx of new arrivals from the East. The East was not only a reservoir of physical strength; Eastern immigrants were the torch-bearers of Jewish consciousness and knowledge. They provided rabbis, talmudic scholars and political leaders. They formed the backbone of the synagogue and of Jewish communal and political life; they maintained a constant link with the Jewish communities in the East, and represented, in fact, the core of Jewishness in the West. The stoppage of immigration from the East means the end of an era in the history of Western Jewry, the effects of which will be felt throughout the Western world - from London and New York to the farthest towns at the Pacific coast.

(*) The following table, compiled from A. Ruppin, *Soziologie der Juden*, Vol. 1, p. 175, and *Fate and Future of the Jews*, p. 79, illustrates this fact:

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Live Birth per 1000</i> | |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| | | <i>Jews</i> | <i>Non-Jews</i> |
| Prussia | 1900 | 19.5 | 36.3 |
| “ | 1927 | 11.1 | 19.5 |
| “ | 1935 | 6.4 | 15.4 |
| Bavaria | 1926-27 | 9.8 | 21.1 |
| Vienna | 1936 | 3.8 | 5.7 |
| Italy | 1925-30 | 13.0 | 24.7 |
| Hungary | 1900 | 33.8 | 39.3 |
| “ | 1926 | 13.1 | 29.7 |
| “ | 1935 | 10.6 | 22.4 |
| Bohemia | 1927 | 17.4 | 19.3 |
| Moravia | 1927 | 10.4 | 22.3 |
| Slovakia | 1927 | 14.4 | 33.4 |
| Carpatho-Russia | 1927 | 30.1 | 39.5 |
| Soviet Russia | 1896-7 | 35.9 | 50.2 |
| “ | 1926 | 24.6 | 43.3 |
| Poland | 1928 | 20.8 | 38.0 |
| “ | 1936 | 19.3 | 28.1 |
| Rumania | 1927 | 17.2 | 35.4 |
| “ | 1934 | 14.8 | 34.8 |
| Palestine | 1928 | 35.3 | 58.3 |
| “ | 1938 | 26.4 | 45.5 |
| Lithuania | 1931 | 14.9 | 30.3 |
| Canada | 1931 | 14.0 | 23.3 |

Since there are neither religious nor “racial” statistics in Great Britain and the U.S.A., it is impossible to give exact figures for these countries. The trend is, however, undoubtedly the same as everywhere else. Jewish families with more than two children have become a rarity. The one-child family has become very common, and many families are childless.

At the same time the rebirth of Jewish life in the National Home has become a source of new strength for the West. It is strength of a different kind from that which was derived from Eastern Europe. It is not based on immigrants but on the national and cultural revival in the country. It is not merely rooted in the recollection of a common past, which must become more vague with every generation, but in the hope of a new *future*. Hitherto old men, rabbis and teachers kept tradition alive. Now youth in Erez Israel gives to the older generation abroad hope of a new period of creative life in Jewish history.

Whilst in the past only a few went from Western countries to the East of Europe and Lithuania, in the future a steadily increasing number of visitors and students from all parts of the globe may flock to Palestine, to see for themselves the rebirth of the holy Land, to learn the Hebrew tongue as a living force, to study the experiments of social life, to see the growth of Jewish settlements, to dedicate themselves to Jewish learning, and to draw strength from the revival of the Hebrew world. Up to the outbreak of the second world war, the Jewish communities in the West drew most of their leading elements from the East of Europe and its Talmudic schools. Tomorrow Jewish leaders, rabbis, teachers, social workers may find their education in the Holy Land. The Hebrew University above Jerusalem can play a leading part in this development; and if it succeeds in blending the achievements of modern science and scholarship with the ancient revelations of eternal truth, it will indeed become the centre and the crown of Jewish renaissance.

As far as immigration into Palestine is concerned, nearly all Jewish groups are united. Thus the internal conflict between Zionists and their opponents has lost most of its meaning for the present generation. For nearly fifty years - since first leading German Rabbis declared the Zionists to be "Russian fanatics and hot-headed youthful students" - this conflict, had been a major theme of Jewish life in every country, and rent in twain nearly every Jewish community. Today, there is probably not a single Jew in the world who would like to see this precious venture ended: and Jews of all parties are united in the resolve that the further development of the great work must be secured. Jewish nationalism in Palestine and Jewish life in full emancipation in the world outside are no longer considered to exclude each other. In America Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the leading Protestant theologians, proclaimed the compatibility of such a "double strategy" towards the Jewish question. Pointing out that in the life of nations "collective particularities and vitalities have a more stubborn life than liberal universalism had assumed." he issued a warning against any tendency which tries to create a too simple homogeneity within the nation.

'We must on one hand preserve and, if possible, extend the standards of tolerance in the dispersion, and on the other hand support the legitimate aspirations of Jews for a homeland in which they will not be simply tolerated but which they will possess.'

Similar, Dr. James Parkes, one of the leading English Christian thinkers on the Jewish problem wrote:

'There cannot be one single solution for the problem. The attempt to force all Jews into either mould is a false one, for this dualism is inherent in Jewish history; it is implicit in the nature of Judaism itself. Citizenship in the dispersion and freedom in the National Home are the twin crown, of Jewish development. The controversy between the two is futile. For there is only the remotest possibility that

either side will win a complete victory, and it would be a tragedy for both Gentiles and Jews if either side did. United Jewish action would be easily achievable once the basic fact were admitted that *there must be more than one* solution. So long as unity means that all Jews must demand for others and accept for themselves either assimilation or nationalism, it is unachievable and extremely undesirable.’

Again, Dr. Paul Tillich, a well-known German Protestant philosopher, now - Professor at the Union Theological Seminary New York, stresses the double character of the approach to the Jewish problem.

‘Jews and non-Jews must have the possibility of living together in the same place in cultural interpenetration and cross-fertilisation. That is one solution. Jews on the other hand, must have the right of living in their own homeland as reservoir of the special gifts and the special spirit of this nation... That is the other solution. They do not exclude each other in any way.’

When during the war the formation of a Jewish Brigade group created some doubts regarding the position of Jews in the British Forces, Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking to the House of Commons, replied in words which sum up authoritatively the situation as it presents itself to the modern world:

‘I know there are vast numbers of Jews serving with our Forces and the American Forces throughout all the armies, but it seems to me indeed appropriate that a special Jewish unit, a special unit of that race which has suffered indescribable torments from the Nazis, should be represented as a distinct formation among the forces gathered for their final overthrow.’

This is a conception upon which all Jews - Zionists and non-Zionists - can agree.

Emigration from Western countries hitherto was practically negligible. Their conception of Zionism did not include the obligation of a Jew to go to Palestine himself. Whilst Zionism for the Eastern Jew - beyond his spiritual connection with the Holy Land - had always been a matter of most urgent personal concern, a means to find himself salvation from a dire plight, the movement in America and Britain was mainly meant for others in distress, and sprang from sympathy and not from suffering. When in 1882, the Jewish poetess Emma Lazarus, stirred by the Russian pogroms, claimed a Jewish home in Palestine for the victims, she emphasised that such a Jewish state would have “not the remotest bearing on the position of the Jews in America.” So, too, Justice Brandeis urged every Jew in the United States to help in the establishment of Palestine, “although he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there.” Very few of the Zionists in Western countries in these days intended to go to Palestine themselves. Even today, the authors of the American book “Palestine: Problem and Promise” ⁽¹⁾ sum up the situation as follows

‘The organizations of American Zionists do *not* consist of people who wish to go to Palestine. They consist of people who are prepared to assist other people who wish to go to Palestine... Therefore, despite Palestinian Zionist efforts to attract American Jews, it seems extremely unlikely that more than one or two thousand Jews per year will wish to go from the United States to live in Palestine.’

(1) See footnote on p. 71

A certain change of attitude has, however, become apparent. Western Jews do not look any longer to Palestine *merely* as haven for others. The events of the Hitler period, have roused Jewish self-consciousness all over the world. Uncertainty of the Jewish situation has made many Jews very sensitive regarding the stability of their position; and the achievements and tasks in Palestine are exerting attraction on Jews everywhere. Moreover, among certain circles of the younger generation there is a definite turning to traditional and religious values. In spite of disintegration in many other fields there are trends towards a new consolidation; and the beginning of a migration from the West, small as it is, can be recognised. We should not expect a mass exodus of Western Jews. But the loss of quantity will be more than made good by the quality of the immigrants. They will be composed, not of people seeking refuge, but of men and women who, of their own free will, want to fulfil their destiny in their own land.

The present conflict in Palestine is shaking Jewish life in every country. But independent from this actual crisis, there is a deep restlessness in the Jewish mind. For the spiritual foundations upon which, 150 years ago, the Jewish position in the Western world was built, today are in a state of transformation. The significance of this process may even transcend the changes in Eastern Europe and in Palestine.

When in the 18th century Jewish emancipation in the modern world took place, it was a time of religious decline. Not Christian love, nor tolerance, but the secular, rationalistic enlightenment of the French revolution broke down the Ghetto walls. For the first time in Christian history equal rights and duties were offered to the Jews without any request for their conversion. But this change of mind was based not so much on real tolerance but on the fact that Christianity itself had become to the bourgeois society a matter of secondary importance. The great religious issues of sin, salvation and immortality, which a century earlier had still roused the passions of the nations, receded to the background, and were replaced by the ideals and idols of the modern era of secular civilisation. For the Jews this development was of fundamental significance. When in 1806, Napoleon summoned more than a hundred representative Jews to the so-called Assembly of Notables, in order to lay the foundations of the Jewish status in modern France, the opening session was fixed for a Sabbath morning, as if to make it quite clear that in the new order the political duties of the 'citoyen' should have priority over his religious obligations. The pious of old, the Talmud says, had reached such a state of devotion in their prayers that even if the King saluted them, they would not return the greeting; and even if a snake was twisted round their heels, they would not interrupt their prayer.' (*Berakoth* 11.5.1). But when the Emperor called, the delegates - after some hesitation - appeared, while the military guard of honour presented their arms to them and beat their drums. Secularism became the keynote of future development; and the situation was similar in every country which followed the French example. For the majority of the emancipated Jews - like that of the Christians in the West - the 19th century was a period in which religion had ceased to be the dominating force; and the spiritual vacuum was filled in turn by the various pseudo-religious beliefs of the time.

There was first the movement of liberalism and enlightenment with its faith in progress, which had been so closely connected with the emancipation itself. After centuries of isolation and stagnation, the Jewish mind drank in and absorbed the great achievements of the West, and within a few decades. Jews themselves began to play a leading part in nearly every part of modern life; and

although many of those who appear mind - such as Ricardo, Marx, Felix Mendelsohn, Disraeli to the outside world as particular representatives of the Jewish or Heine - had ceased to be professing Jews, it was a great period of Jewish history.

There was furthermore the rise of modern nationalism. In the Jewish sphere it largely shaped the character of the Zionist movement. It brought about outstanding achievements in Palestine itself, and at a time when other values were in decline, it brought a new meaning to Jewish life all over the world.

There was ultimately the dedication to the Marxist-socialist creed which to the Jews in the Soviet Union gave complete emancipation.

But none of these movements was able to replace the spiritual foundations upon which Jewish life had been based in the past; and none of them could give the Jewish mind a new and permanent direction.

Liberalism, Nationalism and Socialism have achieved remarkable successes in their spheres. But the world is realising their ephemeral limitations and is longing again for stronger foundations. The religious life of the Jew, the centre of his whole personality, is in a state of crisis and frustration. Even the return to Palestine cannot be more than a preparation. Israel's ultimate destiny will depend on his rebirth in the spirit.

'For Thou, O Lord, hath created us towards Thee and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee.'

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