SPECIAL REPORT

ANTISEMITISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

A CURRENT SURVEY

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Institute of Jewish Affairs
11 Hertford Street
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The Institute of Jewish Affairs, established in 1941, is an international research body, concerned with contemporary, political, social, legal, economic and cultural issues affecting world Jewry. With offices in London and New York, it works in association with the World Jewish Congress.

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FOREWORD

Jews make up only a fraction of the populations of the countries covered in this Special Report: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. The largest community, that of Hungary, has a Jewish population of 80,000-100,000--more than twice as many as the combined Jewish population of the other five countries. Physically, Jews are not a very visible target; each country has minorities living under greater physical threat.

But the number of Jews present in any society is no indication of the degree of antisemitism which prevails among the population. The persistent and ugly antisemitism in Poland and Romania (5,000-12,000 and 17,000 Jews respectively), for example, revealed in this Report, demonstrates this disturbing truth.

The picture that emerges from this Special Report is one of an intensification of antisemitism, an increase in expressions of antisemitism at all levels, an increase in antisemitic incidents, and the proliferation of antisemitic publications. Despite the small size of the Jewish communities, complacency about this would be completely wrong. And given the faltering steps these countries are taking towards democracy, and the fragility of their democratic institutions, antisemitism is a crucial factor undermining the success of this process.

In a report the IJA published last year, we drew attention to the fact that liberalization and the collapse of Communism had allowed repressed antisemitic sentiments to surface, and that this was the price to be paid for such change. And the point still needs emphasizing, given the long years of suppression of freedom of expression under Communism and the relatively short time since the old regimes collapsed.

However, the degree to which pre-Communist ethnic strife, not only prejudice towards Jews, has resurfaced has caught many observers unawares. We are beyond the first flush of freedom now, and the excuses for such excesses have passed their sell-by dates.

Most disturbing is the continuous use of antisemitism for cynical political purposes by major and minor politicians. Hardly an election has gone by anywhere in these countries without some party playing the antisemitic card to garner support and discredit rivals. This phenomenon is most serious in Poland and Hungary. In Poland, eyewitness reports of Christian-national party election meetings say "bellicose anti-Jewish chants are greeted with wholehearted applause". In Hungary, the impact of this phenomenon in the spring 1990 parliamentary election is still being felt.

It is not surprising therefore that many political leaders have been unwilling to make unequivocal condemnations of antisemitism. In this way they confer legitimacy on those for whom antisemitism is central to their political and ideological outlook. And some leaders put those who warn about antisemitism on the same level as antisemitism itself.

In all the countries covered by this Report, old and new antisemitic publications have been appearing. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a tsarist forgery, is available practically everywhere. Other pre-Communist antisemitic literature also circulates. In Romania, the country's largest circulation weekly, *Romania mare*, often carries antisemitic articles--a sign that slandering Jews is a popular activity. And in Hungary, material denying that the Nazi genocide of the Jews ever took place has begun to appear.

Parties with specific antisemitic orientations have emerged in some countries. In Poland, parties with the word "national" in their titles (10 per cent of all registered parties) are invariably antisemitic. In Hungary the ruling parties emphasize "Christian" policies, a term which meant anti-Jewishness in the pre-Communist past.

The range of antisemitic themes and stereotypes include those surfacing intact from before Communism and new ones adapted to current conditions: Jews are blamed for the introduction of Communism, for the hardships caused by the transition to free market capitalism--indeed, for every negative consequence of the upheavals of the last few years.

There is little evidence that the churches in some of these countries are taking a stand against antisemitism, and this is not surprising since they have mostly been isolated from the process of Christian-Jewish reconciliation that has gone on elsewhere. In Poland, an episcopal letter condemning antisemitism was issued, but such efforts are being undermined by the deep-rooted antisemitic trend in the Polish Catholic Church, of which the Primate, Cardinal Glemp, is a supporter.

Most countries have some legal provisions for dealing with incitement to race hatred, but these are, on the whole, very rudimentary. Actions initiated against antisemitic vandalism or publications have had little success to date.

There is not a great deal of evidence of physical attacks on persons, although antisemitic incidents--cemetery desecrations, vandalizing of Jewish property, arson, daubings of antisemitic graffiti and so on--are on the rise. But it would be entirely wrong to judge the significance of antisemitism today solely in terms of incidents of this kind.

Since Jews figured so prominently in the pre-Communist pasts of these countries, and those pasts can now be openly discussed in a way not possible before, it is not surprising that there is interest in the "Jewish question". But the kind of interest in the past which has emerged in many places is distinctly unhealthy and interest in the "Jewish question" has ominous echoes. Those who are turning past fascist and Nazi leaders into role models and leaders can only bring chaos and misery to their societies.

What is clear from this Report is that the rise of antisemitism is closely linked to the Europe-wide explosion of extreme nationalism, intolerance of foreigners and attacks on immigrants and asylum-seekers. And instead of a display of tolerance and pluralism, we see tolerance of intolerance on the part of many political leaders and intellectuals.

This report does not suggest that the plight of Jews is necessarily worse than that of other minorities. There should be no league table of suffering. But antisemitism is not only dangerous for Jews. Given the absolutely central role of antisemitism in the terrible events in Europe in this century, it must be seen as the Achilles heel of democracy.

Finally, it is precisely the correlation between the size of the Jewish presence in this part of Europe and the high degree of anti-Jewish expression which is so worrying, both for the Jewish communities and for the democratic future of the states concerned.

Antony Lerman
Executive Director
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1. BULGARIA

1.1 The Jewish community

1.1.1 The first Jews settled in the territory that is now Bulgaria in the first and second centuries CE. The Jewish population of the territory expanded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when many Jews who had been banished from Spain settled in the Balkans, which were then occupied by the Turks. With the end of Turkish rule in the late nineteenth century, the Jews swiftly integrated into the life of the Bulgarian state almost without assimilating.

1.1.2 The first Bulgarian constitution (1879) guaranteed equal rights for all ethnic and religious minorities. According to the census of 1926, the Jewish population of Bulgaria was over 46,000. Following the Second World War it was about 50,000, representing approximately 0.8 per cent of the total population of the country. At the time of writing, the Jewish community of Bulgaria totals some 5,000-8,000 people.

1.2 Past experience of antisemitism

1.2.1 Bulgaria has never developed its "own brand" of antisemitism. There were occasional anti-Jewish outbursts and pogroms in several locations around the turn of the century and anti-Jewish publications in the mid-1930s, but in most cases these were "imported" from abroad--from Russia in the earlier instance and later from Nazi Germany. There were no anti-Jewish laws in Bulgaria until the outbreak of the Second World War, although some discriminatory practices had begun to develop--for instance, there were no Jews in the state administration.

1.2.2 Official persecution of the Jews began with the Law for the Defence of the Nation, which was adopted in January 1941 and was modelled on Nazi German's Nuremburg laws. As in other countries allied with Nazi Germany, the Jewish population was destined for deportation to the death camps. However, the Jews of Bulgaria were saved. With the personal approval of King Boris III, their deportation was at first postponed and was later revoked altogether.

1.2.3 With the abolition of anti-Jewish restrictions at the end of the war, the life of the Jewish community returned to normal. The Zionist movement was revived and there began an emigration movement to Palestine which gathered force in 1948-53. At the time of Stalin's anti-Jewish measures in the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, Jews were expelled from the Bulgarian Interior Ministry and the security services. During this period, about 45,000 of the approximately 50,000 Bulgarian Jews emigrated to Israel.

1.2.4 The new Communist government, installed in September 1944, conducted a policy of assimilation. In 1949 all Jewish schools and libraries were closed. Shortly afterwards, all synagogues except those in Sofia, Plovdiv and Ruse were closed. The Jewish community centre in Sofia could no longer operate as the focus of communal life. Traditional Jewish festivities were gradually replaced by Communist Party social functions. The fortnightly Communist

newspaper *Evreiski vesti* (Jewish News) echoed the official propaganda, including its anti-Zionist line. Nevertheless, no systematic antisemitic policy on the part of the Bulgarian government can be discerned: the totalitarian regime was suspicious of all minorities.

1.3 **Bulgarian Jewry after the collapse of totalitarianism**

1.3.1 The downfall of the Communist dictatorship of President Todor Zhivkov in November 1989 marked the beginning of the transition to democracy in Bulgaria. It should, however, be borne in mind that in the first free elections in June 1990 the Bulgarian Socialist Party (formerly Communists) gained a majority of seats in the new parliament. During the election campaign the Socialist Party newspaper *Duma* published the Party's campaign slogan "Bulgaria above all!"[1]

1.3.2 But the newly founded nationalist parties went even further, declaring that Bulgaria was "for Bulgarians only". The rising tide of nationalism was directed mainly against the large Muslim minority in the country, which is regarded as a threat to Bulgarian unity and is often blamed, without any justification whatsoever, for the economic crisis in which the country finds itself.

1.3.3 It would, however, be incorrect to see this virulent Bulgarian nationalism as a wave of antisemitism. Six Jews were elected to parliament in the general elections of June 1990--three as Socialists and three as members of the opposition--a division which is characteristic of the Jewish community as a whole (the older generation tending to be pro-Communist and the younger generation being generally pro-opposition). As a result of this division, the Organization of Jews in Bulgaria split into two--Shalom and Zion. In the parliamentary elections which took place in October 1991, when a smaller number of seats were contested, it appeared at the time of writing that fewer Jews had been elected. Despite the mushrooming of nationalist organizations, there are no specifically anti-Jewish groupings in Bulgaria at the present time.

1.4 **Antisemitic publications**

1.4.1 While the mainstream Bulgarian media have shown no sign of systematic antisemitism, they have occasionally allowed some antisemitic references. The newspapers *Duma* (The Word) and *24 chasa* (24 Hours) have missed no opportunity to point out that Lea Cohen, the newly appointed Bulgarian ambassador to Belgium and former member of parliament, and Emi Baruch, who was nominated as her press secretary, are both of Jewish origin.[2]

1.4.2 Far more outspokenly antisemitic are several of the smaller newspapers. For example, in April 1991 *Zora* (Dawn), in an attack on the above mentioned Emi Baruch for having criticized the paper, attributed her criticism to her non-

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[1] *Duma*, 12 June 1990.

[2] Ibid., 22 May 1991. See also *Evreiski vesti*, 4 June 1991.

Christian origins.[3] Similarly, in the following month *Bulgarski glas* (Bulgarian Voice), noting that Emi Baruch and Lea Cohen were to represent Bulgarian interests in Brussels and the European Economic Community, wrote that "Emi Baruch was obviously instructed by Turkey before that. And why not--behind the screen of her Jewish origin, she is particularly easy to manipulate. The question is: how do we 'benefit' from it?".[4]

1.4.3 It must be emphasized that the main drift of these publications is not so much antisemitic as nationalistic, i.e. promoting the Bulgarian national identity in face of the large Muslim minority. Of more concern are, for example, the overtly antisemitic book[5] *Svetovnata konspiratsiya* (The World Conspiracy) by Nikola Nikolov and *Kladenetsat na malchanieto* (The Source of Silence) by Vladimir Svintila, which was published in two instalments in the literary journal *Plamak* in 1991. In the latter book the author links Communism with Judaism and blames the crisis of Bulgaria's political and economic system on the Jews.[6]

1.4.4 In some instances, Israelis of Bulgarian origin have been attacked in the press. *Svoboden narod*, the organ of the Social Democratic Party, published on 23 November 1990 a personal attack on one Nissim Cohen, an Israeli of Bulgarian origin who had started up a business in Bulgaria several years previously. The author of the article, Rumyana Apostolova, accused Cohen of having damaged the Bulgarian economy and of "laundering" money. The paper subsequently published a letter by Cohen responding to the article but rejecting his accusation of antisemitism and apologizing for those parts of the article which might have damaged his business reputation.

1.5 **Antisemitic manifestations**

1.5.1 In early 1990 swastikas were daubed on some Jewish homes. In February 1991 there was a fire in the offices of the Central Sofia synagogue which caused slight damage. In spring 1991 the Jewish cemetery in Ruse was desecrated and anti-Jewish graffiti appeared on the walls of Sofia's Albert Einstein School.[7]

1.5.2 These incidents, minor though they may be, clearly demonstrate some degree of resentment towards the Jewish community. This resentment may be provoked further by the fact that Bulgarian Jewish youth are turning to religion and Zionism. At the same time, emigration to Israel is growing. According to the Israeli-based Organization of Bulgarian Jews, since the beginning of 1990 1,400 people have emigrated to Israel and Bulgarian Jews are expected

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[3] *Zora*, 26 April 1991.

[4] *Bulgarski glas*, 8 May 1991.

[5] *Demokratsiya*, 17 April 1991.

[6] *Kultura*, 19 July 1991.

[7] *Demokratsiya*, 17 April 1991.

to continue to emigrate at the rate of twenty per week for the remainder of 1991.[8]

1.5.3 During the visits to Bulgaria of Israeli President Chaim Herzog in spring 1991 and of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in August 1991, Bulgarian politicians pointed out that Bulgarian Jewry had been saved in the Second World War and that antisemitism was without roots in Bulgaria.[9]

1.6 **Opinion polls**

1.6.1 A public opinion poll conducted in May 1991 by the Times Mirror Center for the People and Press (Washington DC) showed that 9 per cent of the population held unfavourable opinions of Jews (of which 1 per cent were very unfavourable), while 63 per cent held favourable opinions of Jews (of which 11 per cent were very favourable).

1.7 **Antisemitism and the law**

1.7.1 The Bulgarian constitution adopted in July 1991 establishes freedom for all faiths and proclaims that all Bulgarian citizens are equal before the law. It forbids forceful assimilation and guarantees the right of every citizen to his or her ethnic culture. There are no clauses relating specifically to antisemitism. This may be explained by the fact that, in contrast with other East European countries, the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Bulgaria has not been accompanied by serious antisemitism.

2. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

2.1 **The Jewish community and past experience of antisemitism**

2.1.1 Estimates of the Jewish population of present-day Czechoslovakia range from 5,000 to 15,000. The lower figure is based on the number of Jews registered as members of the Czech and Slovak Jewish religious communities. The higher figure is based on impressions and includes individuals who are Jews by birth, by positive or negative personal identification, or by any other criteria.

2.1.2 It is much easier in Czechoslovakia today to profess one's identity as a Jew than it was under the Communist regime, when association with the closely supervised Jewish community often entailed harrassment by the security forces. Nevertheless, many Jews are still reluctant to join a religious community and prefer membership of one of the Jewish cultural or social Jewish organizations which have sprung up since the "velvet revolution" of 1989. Most of the survivors of the Holocaust who identified as Jews in religious or national terms left the country between 1945 and 1949. Most of the remaining, highly assimilated, Jewish population fled abroad after the Soviet invasion of 1968.

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[8] Ibid., 14 June 1991.

[9] *Duma*, 19 June 1991.

2.1.3 Approximately 290,000 Jews out of a total Czechoslovak Jewish population of 365,000 perished in the Holocaust. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War Jewish survivors often found a lack of sensitivity among the general population. The Benes government pursued a policy of homogenizing the ethnically mixed population, a policy which entailed the mass expulsion of Germans and Hungarians who had lived in the country for centuries and affected Jewish survivors of Nazism who had declared themselves Germans or Hungarians in the 1930 census. Anti-German feeling in the Czech lands and anti-Hungarian feeling in Slovakia caused many survivors to adopt Czech or Slovak names. The possibility of registering as a Jew by nationality, which had existed in pre-war Czechoslovakia, was abolished by the Benes government. The procedure of restitution often dragged on until the Communist takeover in 1948, when almost all property was nationalized.

2.1.4 Between 1945 and 1948 a number of anti-Jewish riots, even pogroms, took place in Slovakia. Predominantly Roman Catholic by tradition, Slovakia had been during the war a Nazi satellite state, the authorities of which had eagerly co-operated in the promulgation of racist laws and the deportation of Jews. In Teplicany during this immediate post-war period, an accusation that a Jewish doctor had poisoned Christian children sparked off a pogrom; in Bratislava a mob repeatedly attacked Jews and Jewish quarters.

2.1.5 In the Czech lands too there were riots with anti-Jewish overtones, fuelled by Communist-controlled trade unions which used conflicts over restitution of Jewish-owned property to promote a policy of large-scale nationalization.

2.1.6 The above incidents were isolated and reflected the stance of individuals rather than a policy. Following the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948, however, several waves of terror against various groups of the population swept the country. Political antisemitism turned vitriolic in the early 1950s, when an antisemitic witch-hunt instigated by Moscow was launched in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak leadership also felt a need to "atone for" its policy, controlled by Moscow, of supporting the emerging state of Israel.

2.1.7 The antisemitic campaign in Czechoslovakia reached its peak in 1952 when a number of top Communist officials who were of Jewish origin, including party leader Rudolf Slansky, were executed. This trial was followed by a number of less publicized trials which also provided ample scope for action by local antisemites.

2.1.8 In 1956, in a further wave of trials, officials of the party-controlled Jewish religious communities throughout the country were purged and given prison sentences. In fact, since the antisemitic trials of the early 1950s it had become an unstated policy not to nominate Jews to important positions.

2.1.9 Reversal came slowly in the 1960s, culminating in the "Prague Spring". Czech writers, shocked by the new wave of official antisemitic propaganda which followed the 1967 Six Day War in the Middle East and by the severing of diplomatic relations with Israel, raised their voice in protest against the hate

campaign, which reminded them all too vividly of the terror of the 1950s. Czechoslovak intellectuals opposed the anti-Jewish purge which took place in Poland at that time in addition to the antisemitism espoused by the opponents of liberalization at home.

2.1.10 In the reaction which followed the "Prague Spring" considerable use was made of antisemitic invective against the defeated reform movement. State antisemitism as major element of the official policy of anti-Zionism was pervasive throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. The heavily censored mass media and publishing houses, whilst restricting to an absolute minimum publications on Jewish matters in general and on the Holocaust in particular, turned out an enormous amount of anti-Zionist and antisemitic material written by Soviet and Czech authors. The Jewish community was brought under strict surveillance. Antisemitism played a role in a number of trials against dissidents, and was generally used as a tool against the dissident movement.

2.2 Antisemitic organizations

2.2.1 Since the demise of the Communist regime, antisemitism has been driven onto the margins of political life. Speaking in a panel discussion in New York in March 1990 on the Jewish situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Dr Josef Klansky, representing the Czechoslovak Society of Friends of Israel, described antisemitism in present-day Czechoslovakia as "marginal".[10]

2.2.2 Antisemitism did not play a significant role in the campaign for the first free parliamentary elections in June 1990 or in the local elections in the autumn. With the exception of the separatist Slovak National Party, which won a number of seats both in the Slovak National Council and in the Federal Assembly, no extremist party obtained sufficient votes to achieve representation.

2.2.3 There are, however, a number of small but highly vocal chauvinistic parties in Slovakia in addition to the Slovak National Party. Their significance lies not so much in their numbers as in the influence they wield over moderate parties which feel compelled to placate them.

2.2.4 In the Czech Republic the most vocal of the extremist parties is the Republican Party. The party, however, is much more isolated in Czech political life than the extremist parties in Slovakia seem to be. On the other hand, its journal has a wide circulation, and the tactic of mobilizing resentment against the establishment may be increasingly successful in the prevailing atmosphere of economic hardship, rising unemployment, and fear of an uncertain future.

2.2.5 In March 1990, on the fifty-first anniversary of the arrival of Nazi occupying forces in Prague, President Havel equated anti-German feeling in Czechoslovakia with antisemitism. Speaking during the visit to Czechoslovakia of the West German President, Richard von Weizsäcker,

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[10] *Forward* (New York), 6 April 1990.

President Havel condemned both the evil deeds of Nazi Germany and the wrongs committed by Czechoslovakia against its German citizens after the Second World War, and warned against new attempts to lay collective guilt on any group.[11]

2.2.6 In June 1990 the late Desider Galsky, who was the head of the Czech Jewish community, said he "[took] seriously the manifest anti-semitism in the ranks of the clergy and nationalistic forces, which have a large following in Slovakia". Galsky noted that some groups were using the newly found freedom which existed in Czechoslovakia to speak out openly against minorities, He was, however, convinced that "they are not the mainstream in Slovakia and that democratic forces will have the upper hand there".[12]

2.2.7 On 8 July 1990 a commemorative plaque to Josef Tiso, the president of the war-time Nazi satellite state of Slovakia who was hanged for war crimes in 1949, was unveiled in the central Slovak town of Banovce nad Bebravou. Some 70,000 Jews, almost the entire Slovak Jewish population, were deported to Auschwitz in 1942.[13]

2.2.8 The unveiling of the plaque was condemned in many quarters. Czechoslovak Television in particular commented that it was "unconscionable" to honour a war criminal responsible for the deportation and murder of 60,000 Jews, especially when no memorial for Holocaust victims existed in Slovakia. Having strongly condemned the plaque to Tiso, President Havel said that he fully supported the erection of a monument to Jews deported from Slovakia.[14] The response to the incident of the Christian Democratic Movement, the coalition partner of Civic Forum in the federal government and of Public Against Violence in the Slovak Republic government, was ambivalent: while condemning the "unforgivable deportation of the Jewish population from Slovakia", it called for an "objective evaluation of the past" and warned against "raising emotions" against those responsible for unveiling the Tiso plaque. The plaque was removed several days after its unveiling.

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[11] *International Herald Tribune*, 17 March 1990.

[12] Jewish Telegraphic Agency (New York), 11 June 1990. On violence against minorities such as Gypsies and Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia see Jiri Pehe, "Racial violence increasing", Radio Free Europe, *Report on Eastern Europe*, 18 May 1990.

[13] As Yeshayahu Jelinek observes in his analysis of efforts by Slovak circles both within the country and in emigration to seek reconciliation with the Jews, Slovakia and Croatia were the only two Nazi satellite states to accede voluntarily to the deportation of their Jews. See his article "Slovaks and the Holocaust: attempts at reconciliation", *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1989, pp. 57-68.

[14] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 16 July 1990.

2.2.9 In the autumn of 1990, several days after President Havel had unveiled a memorial tablet in the former synagogue in Dolny Kubin in commemoration of Jewish families deported from that town during Tiso's rule, the Jewish cemetery in Nitra was vandalized (see "Antisemitic manifestations"). Vladimir Meciar, the then Slovak Prime Minister, and Jan Carnogursky, the leader of the Christian Democrats (then Meciar's deputy and currently his successor) condemned the vandalism only after having been asked to explain the silence of the Slovak authorities.

2.2.10 This did not end the controversy over the treatment of Jews by the Slovak state as far as the Slovak press was concerned: articles calling for an "impartial study" to "finally establish the historical truth" continued to appear. Proposals were made to set up an "international study group including historians from Israel" and to "cleanse the shield of the Slovak people once and for all". A continuous attempt was being made to rehabilitate the image of the Slovak Nazi satellite state, presenting this state as the historic fulfilment of Slovak aspirations for independence.

2.2.11 In May 1991 political antisemitism claimed its first casualty in Slovakia: Fedor Gal, the chairman of the liberal wing of Public Against Violence, the Slovak counterpart of President Havel's Civic Forum, resigned following increasingly vitriolic antisemitic agitation. Gal's resignation had been preceded by extremist agitation since November 1989, which culminated in physical violence against him and his family. Gal left Slovakia and now lives in Prague.

2.2.12 In another instance, antisemitism was used as a means of discrediting Miroslav Kusy, a liberal Slovak philosopher and before 1989 one of Slovakia's best known dissidents. Ads were placed in his name in a number of newspapers offering for sale the anti-Jewish forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.* Kusy is the representative of President Havel's office in Slovakia.

2.3 Antisemitic publications

2.3.1 Both in the Czech lands and in Slovakia editions of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as well as other antisemitic material have been circulating. This material is published mostly by anonymous publishing outlets and no data are available on the number of copies.

2.3.2 Conspiracy theories abound in Central Europe. In October 1990 the *Stredocesky Express*, a Prague-based sensationalist newspaper, published a piece claiming that, following the "velvet revolution", Czechoslovakia continued to be ruled by Communists with the connivance of the president and government leaders. The gist of the thesis was that the dissident movement had been financed by the West, controlled by the KGB and penetrated by Czechoslovak security. Consultations had allegedly been held between the the KGB, the CIA, the Mossad and Czechoslovak state security, and today's rulers of Czechoslovakia chosen. The rulers of Czechoslovakia were, of course, clients of the above mentioned institutions closely linked by ties of family and friendship--former Communists, offspring of Communists, Jews and Freemasons. The article was described by Czechoslovak

presidential spokesman Michael Zantovsky as "filth" and an attempt to make the public feel they were being manipulated by a secret Jewish masonic lodge.[15]

2.4 **Antisemitic manifestations and incidents**

2.4.1 In early November 1990 Civic Forum harshly condemned the vandalization of a Jewish cemetery in the Slovak town of Nitra, about seventy-five miles from Bratislava. Gravestones were daubed with swastikas and anti-Jewish inscriptions sprayed on the walls of a house in mourning. The vandalism in Nitra followed a series of nationalist excesses linked with demands for Slovak independence.[16] The vandalism was ascribed by Vladimir Meciar, the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, to the actions of "a small group of psychologically unbalanced skinheads".[17]

2.4.2 A tug-of-war has been going on over antisemitic and racist graffiti in the centre of Bratislava. In the outskirts of the city no one bothers to wash the graffiti off the walls. In Prague a huge, expertly painted Stürmer-like caricature of Franz Kafka has disfigured a wall in the ancient city centre since the spring of 1991. There have been other, similar, incidents.

2.5 **Opinion polls**

2.5.1 According to a survey conducted by the Institute for Public Opinion Research in June 1990, 8 per cent of respondents were disposed positively towards the Jews, 35 per cent rather positively, 10 per cent rather negatively, and 5 per cent very negatively; 42 per cent declined to answer. Among the nationalities living in Czechoslovakia, the Jews were liked less than Czechs, Slovaks and Germans but more than Hungarians, Poles, Ruthenians and Gypsies.

2.5.2 In a second survey, carried out by the Institute at the same time, respondents were questioned about their attitude to various nationalities. In this instance, the Jews rated better than the Gypsies but worse than all other groups. Thirteen per cent of respondents said they had a "good attitude" towards the Jews, 18 per cent reported "a rather good attitude", 3 per cent said they had a "rather bad attitude", and another 3 per cent "a bad attitude" towards the Jews; 29 per cent said they had "neither a good nor a bad attitude" to the Jews; and 34 per cent said they did "not have any relationship" with the Jews (the latter question was not asked). In both surveys, a noncommittal response to questions about Jews was much higher than in the case of the other groups. It would seem that the Jews are evaluated more highly than they are liked.

2.5.3 In April 1991 the American Jewish Committee and the New York-based human rights organization Freedom House co-sponsored a comparative survey of public attitudes towards Jews, Israel and the Holocaust in

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[15] See Institute of Jewish Affairs *Briefing*, vol. 2, no. 1, February 1991.

[16] Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 13 November 1990.

[17] Ibid., 11 December 1990.

Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. According to *Lidove Noviny*, the major Czech liberal daily, the survey showed that "distrust of alien races [sic]"[18] was "rather high in Czechoslovakia and Poland, while the Hungarians are more tolerant". Data published in the paper showed that 20 per cent of Czechs and 34 per cent of Slovaks preferred not to have Jews as their neighbours. However, many more people did not want Asians, Arabs, blacks or Gypsies as neighbours. The newspaper concluded its article on a positive note: "We must add that these attitudes are not of the overtly racially discriminatory sort which would lead to aggressive behaviour."

2.5.4 Dr Boguszak, the director of the Association for Independent Social Analysis, which conducted the survey in Czechoslovakia, told the liberal weekly *Respekt* that people in the three countries concerned "react very intolerantly to anything at all different", although they were most outspoken in their aversion to national minorities. "The attitude to the Jews is a special case", he said. "As far as direct contact with the Jewish population is concerned, the overall results are rather positive and there is certainly no danger of pogroms . . . What is much more threatening is the notion of Jews as a political and economic power." Thirty-seven per cent of Slovaks and 9 per cent of Czechs believed that the Jews had too strong an influence in political life, while 42 per cent of Slovak and 12 per cent of Czech respondents thought they had far too much economic influence.

2.5.5 The Times Mirror Center Poll of May 1991 found 20 per cent held unfavourable opinions of Jews (of which 6 per cent were very unfavourable) and 49 per cent favourable (of which 8 per cent were very favourable). When Slovakia and Bohemia are looked at separately, 33 per cent held unfavourable opinions in the former and 14 per cent in the latter. More disturbing still, when those holding unfavourable opinions are looked at according to level of education, 43 per cent were of a low educational level, the highest percentage recorded in all 12 countries covered by the poll.

2.6 Statements by leaders

2.6.1 President Havel has made numerous statements condemning racism and antisemitism. On Radio Czechoslovakia on 29 September, President Havel noted, among other things, that the Slovak Premier, Vladimir Meciar, had failed to condemn the appearance of antisemitic and neo-facist groups in Slovakia. The activities of these groups were very dangerous, Havel said, and should be sharply condemned from the outset.[19] In October, during the visit to Czechoslovakia by Israeli President Chaim Herzog, the first ever visit to Czechoslovakia by an Israeli President, Havel spoke out strongly against rising antisemitism in the country. "This is a very dangerous phenomenon", he said. "I am ashamed of these manifestations in the modern history of our

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[18] *Lidove Noviny*, 24 April 1991. The survey did not use this terminology.

[19] BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, EE/1191, 1 October 1991.

state." Havel said, however, that his powers to intervene were "limited, since I am neither an investigator, nor a public prosecuter, nor a judge."[20]

2.6.2 There are several other politicians and cultural and religious leaders who are active in this respect. Too often statements against racism and antisemitism have been made only after prompting by questions. It can fairly be said that the prevalent intolerance to anything different is matched by a widespread tolerance to this intolerance, intellectual circles not excluded. For five decades totalitarian regimes in Czechoslovakia have educated people in a spirit of intolerance and it seems it will take some time before the Czech and Slovak societies learn to take a firm stand on this issue.

2.7 **Legal system**

2.7.1 Long before the fall of the Communist regime, legislation against discrimination and the incitement of racial and religious hatred existed in Czechoslovakia. The new, freely elected parliament endorsed this legislation and promulgated a bill of civil and human rights containing stipulations for the protection of minorities. However, the implementation of the law, not only in this but also in all other respects, presents a problem for the judiciary, which finds itself not only in disarray but also overwhelmed by rising crime. As far as can be ascertained, not one of the charges which have been filed in this sphere until now has led to a conviction.

3. HUNGARY

3.1 **The Hungarian Jewish community**

3.1.1 Hungary has by far the largest Jewish community in Central and Eastern Europe (not including the USSR). Indeed, it has the fourth largest community in the whole of Europe (after the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain). Jewish sources in Hungary estimate the current Jewish population of the country at 80,000-100,000.[21]

3.1.2 The last census in which people were obliged to register their religion (1949) recorded the presence in Hungary of 133,862 persons of the Jewish religion, of whom 101,259 lived in Budapest.[22] This figure represented 1.5 per cent of the country's population--a considerable drop from the 5.1 per cent (400,980 in absolute figures) in 1930 in the "truncated" territory of Hungary as it was left by the Trianon Peace Treaty after the First World War. It is also a substantial drop if compared with the 4.3 per cent (725,007) in 1941 in the territory then increased by parts of Slovakia, Transylvania, Yugoslavia

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[20] *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 18 October 1991.

[21] According to M. Fenson, "Budapest incongruities", *Jerusalem Post*, 16 July 1991, Rabbi Professor Jozsef Schweitzer, head of the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary, considers the number of Jews in Hungary to be "closer to 65,000", while "others cite 115,000".

[22] *1949 évi népszámlálás. 9. Demografiai eredmények* (The 1949 Census, 9. Demographic Results) (Central Statistical Office 1959), pp. 30-1.

and the whole of Carpathian Russia--areas re-attached to Hungary in the two "Vienna Awards" made by the Axis powers or through occupation.[23]

3.1.3 On 31 December 1945 (by which time most of the surviving deportees had returned) the Hungarian Jewish population was estimated by some at 195,000 in the once more "truncated" territory (and 260,500 in the enlarged territory)[24] and by others at 118,000 only.[25]

3.1.4 However, these figures relate only to Jews by religion. It was assumed, on the basis of demographic data and calculations, that around 1940 there must have been at least another 100,000 persons (in the then enlarged terrritory) who, according to Hungary's Nazi-influenced anti-Jewish laws,[26] counted as Jews for the purpose of the persecution measures. Thus the 1941 census figure of 725,007 should be replaced by one of 825,007.[27]

3.1.5 In the same way all post-war figures of the Jewish population by religion need to be augmented by the number of those converted Jews and people of partial Jewish origin who are included in society's definition of a Jew. Ethnic Jews who are Christian by religion would, of course, be of no interest in a study of Jewish communal life. But in discussing the issue of antisemitism, they must be included in the picture because they are regarded by Hungarian society as part of "the Jewish problem" in its socio-political context.

3.1.6 There are no reliable figures on such "ethnic" Jews today, even less than on Jews by religion. There may well be another 25,000-30,000 people whom the non-Jews would describe as Jews "by origin"; this would give a figure of 105,000-130,000 "Jews" in Hungary today.[28]

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[23] Figures from *Reports of the Statistical Department of the World Jewish Congress Hungarian Section and the American Joint Distribution Committee*, Report no. 2, p. 3, 1 March 1947 (based on official census figures). The two "Vienna Awards" were made in 1938 and 1940.

[24] Tamas Stark, *Magyarország Második Világháborus Emberveszteségе* (Hungary's Human Losses in the Second World War) (1989), p. 26.

[25] *Reports of the Statistical Department of the World Jewish Congress*, p. 5.

[26] In particular, Laws 1939:IV and 1941:XV.

[27] *Reports of the Statistical Department of the World Jewish Congress*, p. 2. Yehuda Don and George Magos calculate that between the 1941 census and Hungary's occupation by the Germans on 19 March 1944, the number of Jews by religion must have decreased by 75,678, so that by the time of the German occupation there were only 649,329 Jews by religion in the (enlarged) country. See "The demographic development of Hungarian Jewry", in *Jewish Social Studies*, nos. 3-4, summer-autumn, 1983, pp. 197-8 and 215.

[28] Stephen J. Roth, "Jewish renewal in Europe--Hungary", in William Frankel (ed.), *Survey of Jewish Affairs 1990* (London: Basil Blackwell for the Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1990), pp. 205-6.

3.2 **Past experience of antisemitism**

3.2.1 Antisemitism is not unfamiliar to Hungarian Jewry. Although the community is supposed to be 1,000 years old (it was expelled from the country in 1360; the expulsion was rescinded five years later), it attained emancipation only in 1867 and "reception" of the Jewish religion took place only in 1895.[29] The emancipation was followed by a liberal period, although in the 1880s an overtly antisemitic political party appeared on the scene, albeit without much success. More traumatic was the infamous blood libel case of Tiszaeszlar in 1882.

3.2.2 The end of the First World War and the ill-fated Communist revolution in 1919 had a considerable impact on the relatively calm existence of Hungarian Jewry. The fact that Bela Kun and most of the other leaders of that short-lived terror regime were Jews (at least by origin) led to a terrible reaction on its defeat--the so-called "White Terror", a wave of pogroms against Jews and Communists (the two having been regarded as identical).

3.2.3. It was the regime of Admiral Miklós Horthy which, as one of its earlier actions, adopted the so-called *numerus clausus* law, a law that restricted the admission of Jews to universities to 5 per cent, corresponding to their ratio in the population. This was the first anti-Jewish law in Europe after the First World War.

3.2.4 In spite of the Horthy regime's reactionary and antisemitic character, Hungarian Jews were able to flourish economically and make a great contribution to the country's intellectual and cultural life. But this state of affairs changed with Hitler's rise to power. A series of anti-Jewish laws was introduced in 1938, 1939 and 1941, reducing the ratio of Jews in the professions and white-collar employment and culminating in the adoption of the racist principles of the Nuremburg laws. In addition, all able-bodied Jewish men were conscripted into forced labour batallions which, during Hitler's campaign against Russia, were sent to the eastern front, where many perished.[30] Some atrocities, such as the deportation of Jews of foreign origin in 1941 and the massacre in Novy Sad (Ujvidek) in January 1942, also caused large numbers of victims.[31]

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[29] Hungarian law formerly differentiated between "received" religions (those with full rights and status in public law), "recognized" religions and those without any status.

[30] In what was probably the first serious estimate of Hungarian Jewish losses in the Holocaust, S. J. Roth put the Jewish victims of forced labour prior to the Nazi occupation of Hungary at 42,000--see *Uj Elet*, 17 November 1945. This estimate was taken over by the above cited World Jewish Congress Reports, no. 1, and these figures have served as a basis for the data used by Eugen Lévai and Randolph Braham, the two foremost historians of the Hungarian Holocaust. Don and Magos have also accepted this figure. Stark, however, estimates the losses at 25,000.

[31] Roth and the World Jewish Congress Reports estimated 20,000 in the 1941 deportation; Stark: 15-16,000. The number of victims at Novi Sad is generally accepted

3.2.5 The "Final Solution" of Hungarian Jewry occurred only with the German occupation on 19 March 1944. While it must be emphasized that Hungary abstained from the extermination of Jews until the country came under German command--the Hungarians confined themselves mainly to "eliminating" Jews from economic and cultural life--there was active co-operation in, and very little resistance to, the deportations under the Germans, particularly on the part of the Hungarian gendarmery (provincial police force). Moreover, the number of anti-Jewish denunciations was allegedly so large that even the Germans were taken aback, and some of the most brutal atrocities were committed by the Hungarian Arrow Cross. It cannot be denied that Germans and Hungarians shared responsibility for the "Final Solution" of Hungarian Jewry.[32]

3.2.6 A number of anti-Jewish excesses, in which the Communist Party was not entirely innocent, followed Hungary's liberation from the Nazis but, once the Communists came to power in 1948, these excesses ceased. Antisemitism, even discussion of the "Jewish question", became taboo. Yet antisemitism in Hungary was expressed in the customary anti-Zionist guise, particularly in the Stalin era. There were arrests of "Zionists" and it is widely believed that the Communist leader Rákosi was preparing a Hungarian-style "Doctors' Plot" affair. In the Kádár period which followed the 1956 uprising, the Hungarian voice against Israel was subdued compared to the wild chorus of the neighbouring countries. The deportation by the Communists in 1951 of former "bourgeois elements" from the towns into remote villages and farms affected Jews disproportionately, but this was partly the result of their social stratification. The Jewish religious community was permitted to continue to exist, albeit under strict government control, including the maintenance of a Jewish school, a rabbinical seminary, and various other institutions.

3.2.7 Yet the Jewish population remained distrustful. The particularly high proportion of Jews who left the country after the 1956 uprising, when the borders were temporarily open (about 10 per cent of all escapees), did so not only through hatred of the Communist regime but also through fear of a new wave of antisemitism should the Communist regime be overthrown.[33]

3.2.8 It is a commonplace to say that the new freedom which followed the defeat of Communism brought with it the liberty freely to express antisemitic sentiments again. But in regard to Hungary it should be borne in mind that democracy "crept in" quietly and slowly, largely at the initiative of Communist

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as about 1,000.

[32] The total losses of Hungarian Jewry in the Holocaust, including the territories which temporarily belonged to Hungary during the war, were calculated by Roth at 673,000 and the World Jewish Congress at 569,507. This latter figure, somewhat rounded up, has entered the public consciousness as 600,000.

[33] See Roth, "Jewish renewal in Europe--Hungary", p. 213, and Andras Kovàcs, "The Jewish question in contemporary Hungary", in *Telos*, no. 58, winter 1983-84, p. 65.

"reformists" and without the dramatic events of Leipzig, Prague or Bucharest. The voice of antisemitism emerged gradually too.

3.2.9 Whether today's antisemitism shows an increase as compared with the Communist times or whether it is simply being expressed more openly, is impossible to tell. All reports indicate that antisemitic expressions are now more pronounced, more frequent and more public. This openness in the expression of antisemitism frightens Hungarian Jews.

3.3 **Antisemitic organizations**

3.3.1 There are no antisemitic organizations in Hungary of the Pamyat type. While a myriad of political parties and associations of all shades have been established, none has adopted an overtly antisemitic programme. On the contrary, those suspected of harbouring such views indignantly deny that this is so. This does not necessarily mean that antisemitism is not regarded as a saleable commodity because it has no popular echo: it is rather a realization that the hour demands first of all democracy and integration with Europe--and antisemitism is not an entry ticket for either of these.

3.3.2 Perhaps the nearest thing to antisemitic organizations in Hungary are the Christian National Union-Hungarian National Party and the National Federation of Hungarians. In fact, very little is known about them except that they publish the openly antisemitic weekly *Szent Korona* and therefore are suspect of being themselves tainted with antisemitism.

3.4 **Antisemitic publications**

3.4.1 *Szent Korona* (Holy Crown--the symbol of both Christianity and nationhood to the Magyars) is the foremost antisemitic publication in Hungary today. Some of the articles it has published (also against Romanians) are so extreme that they are regarded as having fallen foul of the law, notably Article 269/2 of the Hungarian Criminal Code which outlaws incitement against groups of the population.

3.4.2 Investigations against *Szent Korona* by the state prosecution began in September 1990. One of the crudest articles it has published appeared on 10 April 1991 and was written by one Gyula Bujdosó. Having rehashed the old story of "Jewish responsibility" for the 1919 Bolshevik revolution of Béla Kún as well as for the postwar rule of Mátyás Rákosi, Bujdosó added for good measure that, even during the twenty-five years of Horthy's rule (1920-44), the Jews occupied almost all important positions in Hungarian economic and cultural life.

3.4.3 Bujdodsó also made the obscene charge that the Holocaust" has helped many Jews into well paid leading positions". Describing Hungarian Jews as "cruel" and accusing them of having "thrown mud" at the Hungarian people, the author concluded: "We Hungarians, living in this country and being its rightful owners since Arpád [the conqueror of Hungary in the ninth century], cannot permit citizens of other nationalities to occupy a leading position in whatever decisive capacity." Bujdoso applied this principle primarily to the

media, which, he said, "must be made Christian, national and Magyar", i.e. truly Hungarian. If the Jews objected, then "we will assist them to emigrate. The kibbutzes await the labour force with open arms".

3.4.4 An official prosecution was instigated against the editor in-chief of *Szent Korona*, Làszlò Romhànyi, and two of his associates. At the trial, on 15 May 1991, the defence counsel made two procedural objections. First, he asked that both Jews and Romanians should be barred from acting as judges, assessors or prosecuting counsel on the grounds that they were "prejudiced". Second, claiming that the prohibition of incitement was contrary to freedom of speech and therefore to the Constitution, he demanded that the Constitutional Court be asked to decide on the constitutionality of the prohibition. These defence manoeuvres effectively blocked the trial, which was postponed until the Constitutional Court reached its decision.[34] However, on account of subsequent articles, a new prosecution was initiated and a trial took place on 6 August 1991.

3.4.5 The *Szent Korona* case is not unique. A private-initiative criminal investigation is now in progress against the publishers of another ultra-right publication--*Hunnia Füzetek* (Hunnia Booklets)--on account of two articles on the theme of the denial of the Holocaust which appeared in its issue of 25 April 1991.[35] The articles are in fact excerpts from a book by one Viktor Padànyi, which was published in Australia in 1977. The editor of *Hunnia Füzetek*, Ferenc Kùnszabò, said in an interview with the provincial paper *Szegedi Naplò* that it was not he who was spreading hatred but the "arrogant Jews" who accused him of antisemitism. *Magyar Hirlap*, a leading Budapest daily, commented that what Kùnszabò said in this interview would have been fit for publication in the Nazi paper *Völkischer Beobachter*.[36]

3.4.6 Although *Szent Korona* and *Hunnia Füzetek* are no more than fringe periodicals with a circulation of around 4,000 copies each,[37] in the light of Hungary's antisemitic past, their incitement is regarded as a potential danger.

3.5 **Antisemitic books**

3.5.1 A number of books which are deeply offensive to Hungarian Jews have appeared or reappeared. One of these books, by the former gendarme Jòzsef Szendi, is entitled *Csendörsors* (The Fate of a Gendarme). Szendi here proudly recalls his services to the nation in 1944,[38] "services" which include the apprehension of Jews hiding from the deportations, the hunting down of partisans, and the arrest of politicians. Szendi escaped after the war

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[34] *Magyar Hirlap*, 16 May 1991.

[35] *Magyar Nemzet*, 14 May 1991.

[36] *Magyar Hirlap*, 11 March 1991.

[37] *Heti Vilàggazdasàg*, 1 June 1991.

[38] *Népszabadsàg*, 8 March 1991.

to America but recently returned to Hungary. When his book was impounded by the authorities and an arrest warrant issued against him, he quickly returned to the United States.

3.5.2 Another new book, by a Hungarian named Aron Mónus, is entitled *Összeesküvés: A Nietzschei Birodalom* (Conspiracy: The Nietzschean Empire). Mónus fled to France in 1957. The book, though mainly an attack on Freemasonry, has echoes of the anti-Jewish forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and contains quotations from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Mónus claims that Hitler was a "Zionist agent" hired by rich Austrian Jews to get rid of the "inconvenient poor relatives"--the East European Jews. He accuses the Hungarian liberal opposition, which is widely regarded as being strongly influenced by Jews, of selling state property cheaply to "Western conquerors". The State Prosecutor's Office, regarding the book as capable of incitement against a group of the population, impounded all copies of it.[39]

3.5.3 Much protest also followed *Hunnia*'s offering for sale, among other things, of two old books. The first is by József Bary, the investigating judge in the Tiszaeszlár blood libel case of 1882; unwilling to reconcile himself to the acquittal and rehabilitation of the accused Jews, Bary maintained the blood libel charge in his book *A Per* (The Trial), which was first published in 1933. The second book, *Kazárföldön* (In the Land of the Kazars) by Miklos Barthi was published at the beginning of the century and is an attack on the immigration of Jews to Hungary.

3.6 **Antisemitic incidents**

3.6.1 Perhaps more important than these publications and books, which are marginal phenomena and have very small circulations, is what may be described as the antisemitism of the street or grass-roots antisemitism: anti-Jewish remarks in shop queues, at the workplace, by children in schools, and at football stadiums. This phenomenon cannot be accurately monitored or measured: one can only refer to regular reports by Jews on the subject.

3.6.2 Grass-roots antisemitism manifested itself primarily at the time of the first democratic parliamentary elections in spring 1990. The Jewish issue had somehow become part of the electoral battle because one of the main rivals, the Free Democratic Alliance, has a number of Jewish intellectuals in its leadership (many of them are only half-Jews or converts to Christianity but remain Jews in the eyes of the public) and consequently was dubbed "the Jewish party". The other contender, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (which was victorious in the elections), was in turn called "antisemitic". In neither case did the epithet have any justification. Nonetheless, swastikas and the Star of David symbol were daubed on the Alliances's election posters. The daubing campaign died down when the election was over but (as we shall see below) it had its repercussions on political discussion.

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[39] *Tallózó* (Diary of Events), entry of 19 July 1991, and Jewish Telegraphic Agency (New York), 17 July 1991.

3.6.3 Antisemitic graffiti still appear from time to time, as do abusive leaflets sent through the mail. Letters to the editor in smaller newspapers often assume an anti-Jewish tone. A smoke bomb in the Jewish quarter of Budapest, alleged anti-Jewish slogans at a trade union demonstration outside parliament and frequent desecrations of cemeteries round up the picture. But at the last major cemetery outrage in Budapest, no antisemitic elements were noticeable[40]--it was clearly a case of hooliganism, probably with the intention of robbery (all the more so in that non-Jewish cemeteries were also vandalized).

3.6.4 An unpleasant incident was the appearance of the Minister of Culture, Bertalan Andràsfalvy, at a press conference with a visitor from the United States, Làszlò Tarnòi, who in 1944 was the chef-de-cabinet of the Nazi Arrow Cross Minister of Justice. Andràsfalvy subsequently claimed that he was unaware of the visitor's background and took steps to distance himself from him.[41]

3.6.5 A furore was caused by an episode in parliament in September 1990 when a Jewish deputy was interrupted (as an objection to his supposed demagogy) by the cry "Soapbox for the Jews!". At least this is how some heard it, while others maintain the shout was "Soapbox for the speaker!" (the expressions sound somewhat similar in Hungarian). There ensued a battle in the press over the issue with the Jewish communal organization becoming greatly agitated, but extensive laboratory examinations of all available tapes and sound tracks did not prove that the unidentified parliamentary deputy had made an antisemitic remark.[42]

3.6.6 Although they cause unease among the Jews, these incidents are more in the nature of irritants than a danger and are assessed as such even by more discerning Jewish observers. What is more worrying is the permanent raking up of the "Jewish question" on the political scene and in the media.

3.7 **The "Jewish question" in the political arena**

3.7.1 The manner in which antisemitism intruded on the spring 1990 Hungarian parliamentary election has already been mentioned. The impact of this confrontation is still being felt.

3.7.2 The government, which is a coalition of the Democratic Forum and two smaller parties, is certainly not antisemitic. It has performed no antisemitic acts although it has taken several unnecessary steps which irritated Hungarian Jews. The platform adopted by the Democratic Forum in October

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[40] *Magyar Nemzet*, 8 April 1991.

[41] *168 Ora*, 7 May 1991.

[42] *Kurir*, 17 May 1991.

1989[43] affirmed the equality of all citizens irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation, welcomed the increasing interest of Hungarian Jews in their Jewish identity, and recognized that "the fact of the Holocaust of 1944 and our responsibility for what took place has not yet received the place in our public thinking to which its historic weight and importance entitle it".

3.7.3 In practice, matters are often different. Some leading members of the Forum, passionately wishing to fight both former Communists and present-day liberals, and especially liberals who were once Communists but later became the most ardent reformers, have directed their attacks particularly against such people in the media. It so happens that many of these liberals in the media are Jews (of a sort). The most prominent of their critics is the well known writer Istvan Csurka, who is a member of the Forum's executive.

3.7.4 Csurka describes the target of his attacks as "cliques" and "sects", "a tiny minority" which forces its will on the country, the "Béla Kůns of today",[44] "cosmopolitan", "anti-Magyar" and "a-national" elements, in whose place he demands "true Hungarians" with "*völkisch*-national backbones" or "of pure national stock". Csurka never attacks these individuals as Jews but the euphemisms he employs are sufficient to raise the spectre of thinly veiled antisemitism. In a recent interview, for instance, Csurka claimed that if he did not like certain individuals it was not because they were Jews--a formula reminiscent of Jean-Marie Le Pen's infamous comments on Simone Veil and Mendés-France.[45]

3.7.5 The expressions Csurka uses are deliberately equivocal and obscure, thus enabling him to claim that he has in mind ex-Communist liberal cosmopolitans and to deny vehemently that he is an antisemite. To the Jews and liberal elements, however, the message is clear--they see Csurka's language as one of intolerance, extremism and antisemitism.

3.7.6 On occasion Csurka does express himself more clearly. For instance, he has declared that the new Hungary must be built up with "a Magyar ethnicum" and a "Christian middle class".[46]

3.7.7 An even weightier personality in the Democratic Forum, the writer Sándor Csoori, has remarked that while a policy of integrating Hungarian Jews into Magyardom could have been actively pursued at the turn of the century, today (after the Holocaust and the Communist experience) Jewish assimilation is no longer possible. In other words, Csoori sees the Jews as inevitably remaining an alien element. Hungarian Jews fear that such views are the

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[43] S. J. Roth, "Jews in the goulash democracy", *Congress Monthly* (New York: American Jewish Congress), vol. 57, no. 5, July-August 1990.

[44] Béla Kůn, a Jew, was the leader of the 1919 Communist revolution in Hungary.

[45] *Uj Magyarorszg*, 26 June 1991.

[46] *Magyar Nemzet*, 6 March 1991; *Népszabadság*, 15 April 1991.

ideological beginnings of a policy of discrimination and exclusion of Jews from the country's political life.

3.7.8 The leadership of the Democratic Forum, while distancing themselves from such expressions by some of their leading members, have never condemned them. There may be good reasons for the leadership's caution. Given that the Forum comprises political shades ranging from extreme populist nationalists through Christian democrats to national liberals, the leadership is very wary of provoking a split in its ranks.[47]

3.7.9 Some old skeletons have also come out of the closet. One is the Populist-versus-Urbanist debate of the 1930s in which a group of Magyar writers suddenly discovered the plight and the virtues of the peasantry. Although motivated by social concern, these writers, who extolled the peasantry as the backbone of the nation and contrasted it with the more cosmopolitan urban population (in which Jews were a strongly visible element), provided a racist undertone to the populist tendency. The Populist-Urbanist conflict has now been revived and some feel it is a more significant phenomenon in contemporary Hungary than the conservative-liberal dichotomy.[48]

3.7.10 Another shibboleth which evokes uneasy memories of the past is the emphasis of the ruling coalition parties on "Christian" policies. It is difficult to forget that in the Horthy era (1920-44) the term "Christian Course" was a codeword for an anti-democratic and outspokenly anti-Jewish system. The unease about its revival was so great among Jewish and liberal circles that the Christian Democratic People's Party, a junior member of the ruling coalition, found it appropriate to declare that they, and the coalition, bore no resemblance to the "Christian Course" of former days.[49]

3.7.11 The more liberal elements in Hungarian society are concerned that the response to the demise of Communism of a large section of the Hungarian population appears to be not a turn to liberalism as understood in the West but a return to the pre-Communist 1930s. The implication of this for the Jews could be far more significant than the occasional incidents and the marginal antisemitic publications.

3.7.12 That antisemitism--in one form or another--is a problem in today's Hungary cannot be denied. The popular, level-headed Hungarian President, Arpad Göncz, admitted as much to the visiting Israeli President, Chaim Herzog, in May 1991, adding that these trends were not strong and "were due mainly

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[47] The Democratic Alliance is similarly a conglomerate of several trends--liberal conservatives, Christian intellectuals, "bourgeois radicals", social democrats and even socialists.

[48] István Schlett in *Magyar Hirlap*, 30 December 1990.

[49] *Népszava*, 23 May 1990.

to the concealment of problems during the past few decades".[50] On another occasion, President Goncz wrote, in relation to antisemitism, of "nasty, unclarified views which were thought to have been buried but in fact have only been suppressed"--and now have been brought to the surface by the fledgling democracy.[51]

3.7.13 The eminent historian Laszlo Varga has correctly observed that in Hungary there has been no "coming to terms with the past" as was the case in Germany, that a knowledge and appreciation of the relevant history is lacking, and therefore many who make antisemitic or extreme rightist statements consider that they are neither antisemites nor ultra-rightists.[52]

3.7.14 Another disturbing feature is that the "Jewish question"--be it the existence of antisemitism, responsibility for the Holocaust, the problem of assimilation, the influence of Jews in society--is ceaselessly discussed in the Hungarian media. The Jewish journal *Mult és Jövö* (Past and Future) regularly publishes a useful bibliography of current books and articles of Jewish concern. For the months of February to April 1991 it lists no less than 129 press items on the "Jewish question" in its above mentioned political sense (i.e. the number does not include items on the Middle East, Jewish history, literature, art, religion, etc; nor does it include items appearing on the electronic media). This amazing number--more than one item per day--is especially glaring in a country in which these subjects were taboo for forty-five years. Hungarian Jews would no doubt be grateful for benign neglect.

3.8 **Opinion polls**

3.8.1 The May 1991 Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press public opinion poll found that 12 per cent of the population held unfavourable opinions of Jews (of whom 3 per cent very unfavourable), but 67 per cent held favourable views (of whom 10 per cent very favourable). Among the sample, 79 per cent were unfavourably disposed to Gypsies and 60 per cent to Arabs.

3.9 **Official statements on Jews**

3.9.1 There have been a number of statements on Jewish matters by the Hungarian government and other official personalities. These relate mainly to the present and the future (condemnations of antisemitism and promises of equal status for Jews) and far less to the past (the relationship of the Hungarian people to the Holocaust).

3.9.2. The occasions for such statements have normally been Jewish commemorative ceremonies. An outstanding instance was the unveiling of the memorial for the victims of Nazism in the courtyard of the great Dohàny Synagogue on 8 July 1990. President Göncz described it as particularly

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[50] MTI (Hungarian Telegraphic Agency), 12 June 1991, as monitored by the BBC.

[51] Letter to *Esti Hirlap*, 20 June 1991.

[52] "A turn to the extreme right?", in *168 Ora*, 7 May 1991.

tragic that the victims "were deprived not only of their life but, before their death, also of their fatherland" and declared that "The Holocaust was not only a Jewish but also a Hungarian tragedy". Prime Minister Jòzsef Antall said on the same occasion that "every Hungarian must know that the tragedy of the Jews is a particular disgrace to humanity. But he must also know that not everybody was part of this crime . . . Fear has silenced and paralysed the decent ones". The Prime Minister added that "the government feels responsible for the Jewish community living in this fatherland and regards it as its duty to defend those remaining here against any base ideas and thoughts directed against them".[53]

3.9.3 The Hungarian Prime Minister's visit to Israel in May 1991 was a major opportunity for a declaration on Jewish issues. In his reply to Prime Minister Shamir's welcome speech, he stated "on behalf of the Hungarian Government and Hungarian people" that "Hungary, now free and democratic and conscious of its responsibilities, will do everything to ensure that Jews who live on the banks of the Danube and the Tisza are able to feel at home, live in peace, security and dignified honour, foster their traditions freely, practise their religion, nurture their natural links with Israel, and emigrate if they so desire".[54]

3.9.4 Prime Minister Antall has also repeated on several occasions that the Hungarian authorities fully respect Jews who wish to emigrate to Israel and will put no obstacles in their way. Equally, there is respect for Jews who feel they have a "dual link" (i.e. Magyar and Jewish).

3.9.5 Less welcome were the Prime Minister's remarks, in Israel and elsewhere, that neither Jews nor non-Jews should "play with the fire of antisemitism" and that "the Hungarian government condemns antisemitism but also condemns any attempt to make a political weapon out of the issue of antisemitism".[55] This quasi-equation of antisemites with those who point out or protest against antisemitism is hardly apposite. It is a throw-back to the time of accusations and counter-accusations between government parties and opposition during the spring 1990 elections, as related above.

3.9.6 Many people in Hungary also regret the fact that the very positive statements on the rights and status of Jews are almost invariably made to Jewish and other sympathetic audiences, and not on the platforms of the parties where one might expect a more ambivalent reception and where--for this reason--these words need to be said all the more.

3.9.7 As for the issue of the Holocaust, no pronouncement by any Hungarian leader has been as explicit as the recent statements by President Lech

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[53] *Magyar Nemzet*, 9 July 1990.

[54] Ibid., 14 May 1991.

[55] Ibid., 16 May 1991.

Walesa in Israel and by Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitsky in the Austrian parliament.[56]

3.9.8 One should add that of the churches in Hungary only the minority Reformed Church has expressed an apology to Jewry--but not the leading Catholic church.

3.9.9 However, one should also record positive developments, for example the formation of an Inter-parliamentary Council against Antisemitism on 23 April 1991 with the initial participation of thirty-three members of parliament[57] and of a Christian-Jewish Council on 5 June 1990. It is also worth noting that whenever antisemitic or suspect antisemitic statements are made, a great part of the press and of the country's intellectuals condemn them.

3.10 **The legal situation**

3.10.1 Jews are equal citizens according to Hungary's Constitution, which forbids discrimination on grounds of race or religion. This situation has prevailed since 1945, when all anti-Jewish discriminatory laws of the Horthy and Nazi era were declared null and void, and throughout the Communist period.

3.10.2 It was the proud claim of the reform Communists that, when they eliminated all political crimes from the Penal Code in 1989, they retained only one: the criminalizing of incitement to hatred against a group of the population (see "Antisemitic Publications" above).

3.10.3 Hungary is now seized with the problem of compensation for losses sufffered by citizens through Communist confiscation. Claims for losses under the Communists naturally brought up the issue of the injustices suffered under the Nazis for which the victims--mainly Jews--have never received compensation.

3.10.4 In this respect, the government has made some unfortunate decisions--probably without any evil intention. It first decided, by a government decree which came into force on 1 January 1991,[58] to provide compensation (through augmenting their old age pensions) for those imprisoned for political reasons between 8 June 1948 and 1963,[59] i.e. the victims of Communism. Those incarcerated or deported by Nazi or Hungarian fascist regimes in 1939-45 had

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[56] On a visit to the Jewish state earlier this year, Walesa said: "Here in Israel, in the cradle of your culture and the land of your renaissance, I ask your forgiveness." In an address to the Austrian parliament this year, Vranitzky said: "We acknowledge all the facts of our history and the deeds of all sections of our peoples, the good as well as the evil. And just as we take credit for the good, we must also apologize for the evil to survivors and relatives of the dead."

[57] *Uj Elet*, 15 May 1991.

[58] *Magyar Kozlony* (Official Gazette), 21 December 1990.

[59] In 1963 there was a wide-ranging amnesty for political prisoners.

to wait for a later date.[60] Though the government claimed that the reasons for its differing treatment of the two categories were merely administrative, this decision was widely seen as an act of discrimination against the Jewish victims.

3.10.5 A similar situation has now arisen with the compensation for property losses. Again, the victims of Communism are being given priority over the victims of Nazism.

3.10.6 To sum up, it is clear that antisemitism is not the dominant feature of Jewish life in Hungary. Nevertheless, Jews have considerable forebodings. Perhaps this situation was best described by a non-Jewish Hungarian sociologist who now lives in France, Viktor Karady, as a "crisis of trust".

4. POLAND

4.1 The Jewish community and past experience of antisemitism

4.1. The Jewish community in Poland today is but a remnant of an ancient community which on the eve of the Second World War numbered 3.5 million. In modern times, the Polish Jewish population was the largest in the world, yielding first place to the United States only in the twentieth century. Until the seventeenth century the situation of Polish Jewry was, on balance, better than in most countries of Europe.

4.1.2 Deeply engrained in the historical memory of the Jewish people is the hostility the Jews encountered from large segments of the population and most governments in interwar Poland and, of course, the trauma of the Holocaust. The postwar hopes of a more amicable relationship were thwarted first by the murderous grass-roots antisemitism of the early postwar years, which reached its apogee in the Kielce pogrom of July 1946, and then by the government-inspired antisemitism which culminated in the antisemitic campaign of 1968. These developments brought about consecutive waves of emigration which considerably reduced the size of the post-Holocaust community (which peaked at about 250,000 in 1946). The Jewish population of Poland is currently estimated at between 4,000 and 10,000, most of them of advanced age.

4.2 Antisemitism in the political life of the country

4.2.1 Antisemitism, like other varieties of xenophobia in Poland, is rooted in ingrained tribal/parochial attitudes. However, antisemitism differs from other xenophobia in that it possesses a strong "ideological" ingredient which for centuries was provided in abundance by the Polish Catholic Church. Another "ideological" ingredient--the identification of radical political change with the Jew--was added in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In recent decades this "ideology" was expressed in holding the Jews responsible for Communism and the outrages of Stalinism.

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[60] A decree on their compensation was adopted by the government only on 30 May 1991, *Uj Elet*, 15 June 1991.

4.2.2 A major element in post-war antisemitism was the fear that the Jews might return to their homes and demand restitution of their property. The motive behind Communist antisemitism, however, was purely political--to remove rivals in the bureaucracy by presenting them as "Zionists" (i.e. Jews or sympathetic to Jews) and to reduce the unpopularity of the regime by playing on the xenophobia of segments of Polish society.

4.2.3. This dual motivation operates in post-Communist Poland too. The process of privatization seems to have kindled the fear of the possible restitution of Jewish property. But the use of antisemitism in the political struggle seems far more important. This was clearly noticeable in the presidential election campaign in the second half of 1990: it is widely assumed that propaganda pointing to the allegedly Jewish origins of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the real or imaginary Jewish origins of his close collaborators greatly contributed to Walesa's victory. Moreover, the Jewish theme is present both overtly and covertly in the polemic between the parties and organizations fighting for power.

4.2.4 As mentioned, antisemitism is not the only kind of xenophobia in Poland, but it lends itself easily to political exploitation. Behind the controversy around Jews and antisemitism in Poland today lies not so much hatred of the existing Jewish community or individual Jews as a clash between fundamental attitudes--openness versus parochialism, traditional Polish Catholicism versus modern post-Vatican II attitudes, adherence to old ways of thinking versus inevitable change. A Jewish journalist has noted that Poland is in the forefront of both antisemitism *and* the fight against it.[61]

4.3 **Antisemitic organizations**

4.3.1 Since the end of Communist rule about 200 political parties and groupings have emerged in Poland. One hundred and five of these were registered as of 18 August 1991 under the 28 July 1990 Law on Political Parties.

4.3.2 In May 1990 the programmes of twenty-two of the then 100 or so parties and groupings reportedly reflected chauvinistic and antisemitic tendencies in their platforms. Of the present 200 or so parties, close to twenty bear the term "national" in their name. Several have resumed their pre-war activities; others are newcomers. All claim to be the heirs of the pre-war National Democratic Party (the chauvinistic and antisemitic Endecja, the biggest party in pre-war Poland). Small though most of these organizations are, their antisemitic views are widely shared.

4.3.3 Among the better known of the "national" parties is the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe), which was registered in August 1990 and claims a membership of about 8,000. Its chairman is Professor Stefan Jarzebski, who was Minister for the Protection of the Environment in the last two Communist governments. Its vice-chairman is Boguslaw Rybicki. Rybicki, an activist in the antisemitic Moczarist wing of the former Polish United Workers' Party

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[61] Charles Hoffman, "Polish anti-antisemitism", *Jerusalem Report*, 7 March 1991.

(Communists), claims that a two-month prison sentence he served during the martial law period was for distributing "national literature". The literature he circulated at the time included *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other anti-Jewish materials produced by the then security apparatus. The chairman of the Supreme Council of the National Party is Professor Maciej Giertych, who is the son of the veteran Endek leader Jedrzej Giertych and is also chairman of the Advisory Council of the journal *Slowo Narodowe* (The National Word), which has defended Jean-Marie Le Pen. Giertych is a close friend and adviser of Cardinal Glemp, the Primate of Poland, and a member of the Primate's Social Council. He is known to hold and propagate anti-Jewish views.

4.3.4 The National Party's weekly *Ojczyzna* (Fatherland) holds Jews, in particular Jewish Communists, responsible for all the misfortunes that have befallen Poland. The party puts forward the slogans "National Poland" and "Poland for the Poles". It is ideologically close to the antisemitic Patriotic Association "Grunwald" but, unlike "Grunwald", it believes Poland is endangered by "Jewish messianism" and not Zionism (whose advocacy of Jewish emigration to Israel it approves). The National Party has opposed "cosmopolitanism" in the Polish media; emphasized "the danger to democratic change in Poland posed by people of cosmopolitan views who are reaching for total power"; condemned prominent Polish intellectuals who issued a declaration against nationalism, xenophobia and antisemitism for supposedly associating themselves with a national minority seeking to dominate Poland; condemned pro-Jewish statements made by President Walesa during his visit to Israel as a "humiliating apology for the alleged transgressions of Poles against the Jews during the last war"; and criticized Walesa "for insulting the dignity of Poland and jeopardizing Polish raison d'etat".

4.3.5 The National Party "Szczerbiec" (Stronnictwo Narodowe "Szczerbiec") was registered in November 1990 following a split in the National Party and the founding of another "national" party, the National Democracy. The extent of its membership is unknown. The party's leaders are Marian Barański, Miroslaw Szczepan and Stefan Hilary. Its publication is *Glos Narodu* (Voice of the Nation). The party accepts as members only persons of Polish nationality and the Christian faith and believes "revolutions were the work of Jews and judeo-masons and that Jews are deliberately spreading pornography, abortion, etc." (*Polityka*, 8 July 1991). It entered into a polemic (*Glos Narodu*, no. 2-3, 1991) with the Polish Episcopate against the 20 January 1991 Pastoral Letter (see below).

4.3.6 The Polish National Community-Polish National Party (Polska Wspolnota Narodowa-Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe) was registered in December 1990 and is considered the biggest "national" party in Poland with 4,000 members and sympathizers. Its chairman is Boleslaw Tejkowski, who was formerly a leading Communist official in the Cracow area. The party's press organ is *Mysl Narodowa Polska* (Polish National Thought).

4.3.7 This latter party is the most radical of the "national" parties and pathologically anti-Jewish. It intensified its anti-Jewish propaganda in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, urging Saddam Hussain to inflict a crushing defeat on the

"Jewish-American coalition"--after the war it congratulated the Iraqi leader on his "moral and political victory over the Jewish-American aggressors". Hostile towards the Catholic Church, it saw the 20 January Pastoral Letter of the Polish Episcopate as "proof of the Judaization of the Catholic Church brought about by the presence of priests of Jewish origin in the Episcopate and the Vatican". It called on President Walesa to step down, accusing him of supporting Jewish nationalism, whose main purpose was "to subjugate the Polish nation and erase the Polish state". It maintains contact with nationalist movements in Russia and Czechoslovakia and with Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National.

4.3.8 The Patriotic Association "Grunwald" was founded (or resurrected) in March 1981. It is known for its close links with the former security apparatus. Active in post-Communist Poland (present chairman: film director Bogdan Poreba), its membership grew in 1990 though it remains a fringe group. One of its declared objectives is to make Poles aware of the danger represented by world Zionism and German and Jewish "chauvinisms".

4.4 **Antisemitic propaganda and incidents**

4.4.1 A spate of anti-Jewish incidents accompanied the recent controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz. The most important of these incidents was the homily by Polish Primate Cardinal Glemp at the shrine of the Black Madonna in Czestochowa on 26 August 1989. Seeking to equate alleged Jewish anti-Polonism with antisemitism, Glemp claimed that anti-Jewish attitudes and violence in the past could be explained by Jewish exploitation of the Poles. He did not neglect to mention Jewish collaborators with the Nazis but had nothing to say about those Poles who assisted in the Holocaust, let alone those who showed indifference.

4.4.2 Numerous acts of vandalism against Jewish institutions have been reported. The restored synagogue in Lublin, the new memorial to the Jews of Katowice who perished in the Holocaust, the Jewish cemetery in Zary, and the Jewish State Theatre building in Warsaw are among objects which have fallen prey to vandals.

4.4.3 The local government elections which took place on 27 May 1990 saw an intensification in the use of antisemitism. In many places the election posters of all groupings were daubed with the word "Jew". Anti-Jewish agitation was especially pronounced in the city of Lodz. There was a spate of anti-Jewish incidents, not necessarily linked to the elections, including the throwing of a military smoke grenade during a concert given by a Soviet Jewish ensemble in Kielce as well as damage being inflicted on the musicians' vehicle, the destruction of newly restored ancient tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Lublin, the display of fascist symbols at a congress held by the Polish right in Warsaw, antisemitic rioting in Lodz, and the throwing of a smoke bomb, again in Kielce, during an electoral address by Jewish Solidarity activist Seweryn Blumsztajn.

4.4.4 The Jewish theme has assumed an even higher profile since mid-1990 in connection with the growing rift in Solidarity and Walesa's bid for the presidency of the Polish Republic. In the rivalry between Walesa and the

then Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Walesa's allies claimed they were more nationalistic and more Catholic than the opposite camp, and they (and other elements further to the right) labelled as Jews people in the Mazowiecki camp (naming both individuals with Jewish parentage and non-Jews). The wave of antisemitism encouraged by this power struggle gave rise to considerable concern in the Jewish community in Poland.

4.4.5 Antisemitic daubings and interventions at mass meetings greatly increased in the following month as the presidential campaign unfolded.

4.4.6 Poland is currently in the midst of the campaign for the 27 October 1991 parliamentary elections, the first completely democratic elections for decades. Once again anti-Jewish agitation--mostly, but not exclusively, by right-wing Christian-nationalist political groupings (to whom the controversy between Rabbi Weiss and Cardinal Glemp over Glemp's antisemitic remarks in connection with the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz is very useful)--is being witnessed. The agitation includes daubings of electoral posters with antisemitic symbols, graffiti on the walls, and various incidents.

4.4.7 According to the Polish Jewish paper *Folks-sztyme* (20 September 1991), "At innumerable meetings of Christian-national organizations held under the auspices of the Church and often on Church premises, bellicose anti-Jewish chants are greeted with whole-hearted applause. 'The Jewish peril' is keeping awake the new-old Endecja, which has links with Church circles, haunting Mr Tejkowski's 'party' [see above] . . . , and worrying chiefs of the electoral staff of Mr [Stanislaw] Tyminski's Party 'X' . . . [The latter] deemed it necessary to send out letters informing US public opinion, first and foremost the American Polish community, of this terrible danger to Poland and 'true Poles'. The letters contend that . . . Tyminski's party, which is striving to build a modern Polish state, is being obstructed by the 'Jewish mafia'. That mafia is delaying privatization because it is waiting for millions of Soviet Jews to be smuggled into Poland and take over the Polish economy . . . and generally is intending to incapacitate, rob, destroy and deceive the Poles." The Tyminski party is now working closely with Grunwald (see above).

4.4.8 The Centre Alliance, which sponsored Walesa for president and transformed itself into a Christian democratic party at its first congress in April 1991, ascribes recent press criticism of its policies to "an organized action by Mr Bagsik and company". Boguslaw Bagsik, a Jew, is involved in a financial scandal which has enraged public opinion in Poland.

4.4.9 Among anti-Jewish incidents reported so far are: damage to a monument at the Warsaw Jewish cemetery erected to Jewish soldiers who fell in defence of Poland in 1939 (2 August); a protest rally staged by pensioners at the presidential palace at which antisemitic slogans were shouted (27 August); and an attack by teenagers on the Warsaw synagogue (13 September).

4.4.10 President Walesa condemned the desecration of the Jewish cemetery as "the worst kind of hooliganism". The Polish Helsinki Committee held a protest march against ethnic hatred from Warsaw city centre to the Jewish cemetery. In a statement issued on 13 September Walesa's Council for Polish-Jewish

Relations voiced "deep concern over the use of antisemitic slogans in the campaign" and called on all Poles "to condemn and actively oppose these shameful practices."

4.4.11 An especially disturbing manifestation of antisemitism in Poland is the proliferation of antisemitic publications. First and foremost among these are reprints of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* with several new sections added. There are also other reprints and/or translations of pre-war antisemitic texts and new antisemitic publications. These publications are on sale on stands in the streets and, until quite recently, in a Warsaw church.

4.4.12 These facts contradict the assertions of many Poles to the effect that there is no antisemitism in Poland or that antisemitism is a marginal phenomenon. In fact, those who make these assertions often make hostile remarks about the Jews in the same breath.

4.4.13 Poles of a liberal disposition oppose the view that antisemitism is marginal and insist that Polish society is characterized by indifference towards antisemitism.[62] Polish attitudes to antisemitism were recently reflected in reaction to statements made by Walesa in the Israeli parliament during his visit to the Jewish state in May 1991. The press pointed to a "negative" or "critical" attitude on the part of the general public to these statements.[63] On the other hand, the liberal press took the view that detailed explanations as to why Walesa was right in making his plea for forgiveness were necessary.

4.5 **Opinion polls**

4.5.1 Though opinion polls were conducted in Poland under Communism, only recently have questions about Jewish matters appeared. It should be borne in mind that full information about the way in which the polls discussed below were conducted and the findings analysed is not available.

4.5.2 A public opinion poll co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and Freedom House in three East European countries in January 1991 found that 40 per cent of Poles said they did not want Jews to live in their neighbourhood, as compared with 23 per cent of Czechoslovaks and 17 per cent of Hungarians in response to the same question. The percentage of Poles who had no wish to live near Arabs and blacks was much higher.

4.5.3 Before last year's presidential elections the Centre of Social (i.e. Public) Opinion Research (CBOS), a well established and reputable organization, conducted a poll on attitudes to the possible sale of large-scale Polish enterprises to foreign capital. Sixty-three per cent of the respondents said they would not permit Jews to buy any share in a Polish enterprise, 26 per cent said they would agree to Jews' acquiring a minority share, and 5 per

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[62] See, for example, Krystyna Kersten, "Leaving the accursed vicious circle", *Rzeczpospolita*, 11-12 August 1990; Jerzy Tomaszewski in *Po Prostu*, 8 November 1990; Andrzej Szczypiorski in *Sztandar Mlodych*, 25 March 1991.

[63] See *Polityka*, 29 June 1991; *Dziennik Lodzki*, 21 June 1991.

cent said they would permit the sale of a half share. A month earlier a similar question was put to local government officials. Thirty-nine per cent of these respondents said that no shares should be sold to Jews. Furthermore, 30 per cent of the general sample and 24 per cent of the sample of local government officials were less willing to sell shares to Jews than to Americans, Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Russians or Japanese.

4.5.4 In October 1990 22 per cent of the respondents to the question "Who in your opinion has the greatest influence on Mazowiecki's government?" answered "The Jews". Other answers, some by a larger percentage of respondents, pointed to influence by the Catholic Church, the Polish parliament, the USA, Solidarity, the old Communist *nomenklatura* system and to the government's independence of any outside influence. At the end of February, i.e. after Walesa had been elected president, over three-quarters of the respondents to a CBOS question on "Who has too much power in Poland?" and "Who has too little power?" felt society's influence was too small. About two-thirds thought the influence of the Church was too great; 37 per cent thought the influence of the Jews adequate, 31 per cent too great, 8 per cent too little, and 24 per cent had no opinion. About one-quarter of the respondents to the questionnaire agreed with the statement "The influence of the Jews on events in our country is too great and of society too small."[64] CBOS commented: "In a country almost devoid of Jews, where no lobby or Jewish organization with the smallest political ambitions exists, large numbers of people feel they are being ruled by the Jews. This is evidence of strongly rooted negative stereotypes, which even the most obvious facts are unable to change."

4.5.5 The CBOS survey revealed that 5 per cent of those questioned admitted to "being extremely antisemitic", 10 per cent said they were "strongly antisemitic", and 16 per cent claimed they were "moderately or slightly antisemitic". These findings differ from the results of a survey conducted in 1989 which showed that 14 per cent of Poles questioned had a positive attitude to the Jews, 21 per cent disliked the Jews, and 65 per cent were not interested in the problem.

4.5.6 Liberal Polish leading personalities, whether connected with the Church or not, express the view that action to uproot antisemitism is necessary--first and foremost by the Catholic Church itself.[65]

4.6 Statements on antisemitism by political, religious and other leaders

4.6.1 From among the numerous writings and statements which have appeared in Poland on the subject of antisemitism only publicly expressed opinions of top leading personalities and official statements by the Church are presented here.

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[64] See *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 March, 4 April and 5 April 1991; *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 April 1991.

[65] See Barbara Spinelli in *La Stampa*, 22 June 1990; Jerzy Turowicz in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 17 February 1991.

4.6.2 Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Poland's first non-Communist prime minister for several decades, has a long record of opposition to antisemitism. Though he was constantly labelled as a Jew during the presidential campaign, he never resorted to the shameful device of proclaiming himself a "pure Pole". The address he delivered in New York in 1990 to the American Jewish Congress included a declaration of his government's convictions and policy: "condemnation of those hateful practices [i.e. antisemitism] is no longer sounded only by private brave voices, but is now the official position of the government and parliament". Mazowiecki condemned past antisemitism and the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism, and declared the Polish government's "preparedness to restore Polish citizenship to everybody who was forced to leave Poland".[66]

4.6.3 Lech Walesa's record on antisemitism is more chequered. With the development of the rift in Solidarity and the presidential campaign of 1990, Walesa did not hesitate to take advantage of antisemitic slurs against his opponents.[67] But since he became president Walesa has taken a clear line opposing antisemitism, apologised for statements he made during the presidential campaign, and (in March 1991) established a Council on Polish-Jewish Relations. In meetings with Jewish delegations from abroad and during state visits he made to the United States (19-26 March) and France (9-11 April), Walesa made clear his stand against antisemitism and promised to combat it energetically. In a meeting with World Jewish Congress leaders he said that Jews would be able to petition to recover their property in Poland and that a law on the protection of Jewish cemeteries would be adopted. In a meeting with the French Jewish body CRIF Walesa said he was planning legislation against racial discrimination and antisemitism. In Israel, which he visited in 20-23 May 1991, he made the following statement in the Knesset (parliament): "Though extermination was coming to us too, it was nevertheless not so terrible and unequal to the *Shoah* [Holocaust]. We helped in the way we could . . . There were evildoers among us. I am a Christian and I am forbidden to weigh up the account of harm of both nations on human scales. Here, in Israel, the country of your birth and rebirth, I ask you for forgiveness . . ."

4.6.4 There are no known statements on Jewish issues by the present Prime Minister, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki.

4.6.5 In practice--if not in theological doctrine--the Polish Catholic Church is divided on Jews and antisemitism. *Nostra Aetate* and the thinking behind it has not been widespread within the Church until recently. There are those in Polish Church circles, mainly among the intelligentsia, who have embraced these teachings and performed considerable educational work on Jews and antisemitism. But there has been an important segment among the hierarchy and clergy, not to mention the mass of lay Catholics, who have evaded the

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[66] *Congress Monthly* (New York: American Jewish Congress), July-August 1990.

[67] See Institute of Jewish Affairs *Briefing*, vol. 2, no. 2, May 1991.

problem of antisemitism in Poland. There are also those who are unable or unwilling to shed the parochial ethnocentrism and antisemitism traditionally ingrained in Polish Catholicism.

4.6.6 In view of the new trends in world Catholicism, in 1986--twenty years after *Nostra Aetate*--a Sub-Commission and then a Commission for Dialogue with Judaism of the Polish Episcopate was established under Bishop Henryk Muszynski. On 10 May 1990 the Commission met and, "referring to the current situation in Poland, it expressed concern about certain instances of antisemitism which have recently appeared in certain milieux. Certain groupings use antisemitic slogans as an instrument for attaining their political goals".[68]

4.6.7 In view of the above mentioned ugly phenomena during the presidential campaign, on 30 November 1990 the Commission announced that an episcopal letter on the Jewish issue would be read in all churches on 20 January 1991 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*. This statement followed numerous demands from liberal circles in Poland, Jewish circles abroad and some leading emigres that the Church take a stand on antisemitism.

4.6.8 The episcopal letter presented the Vatican II teachings on the links between Christianity and Judaism and the issue of alleged Jewish responsibility for deicide. It said that all manifestations of antisemitism were contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. It also dealt with specific Polish issues--antisemitism, past and present; the Holocaust; and alleged Jewish responsibility for Communism. The letter was well received by Polish liberal opinion, Jewish circles and world public opinion, though statements by Polish liberals and Jews clearly reflect regret that the letter came so late. The *New York Times* (21 January 1991) commented: "The document represents the most unequivocal stand on the issue ever taken by the Polish Church."

4.6.9 The real issue now is whether and in what manner the promises and declarations are implemented. The Church has at its disposal a powerful propagandistic and educational network, all the more so in that religion has become part of the school curriculum. Bearing in mind the place xenophobia and antisemitism have occupied in Polish public life, there is little doubt that a struggle against these social ailments will be an uphill one. Though Jewry can hardly deny its interest in the success of this struggle, it is first of all in Poland's own interest that public life should cease to revolve around myths and phantoms.

4.7 **The legal system**

4.7.1 The Law Concerning Guarantees of Freedom and Conscience, adopted on 17 May 1989 by the last Sejm under Communism, guarantees the equality of all churches and denominational unions irrespective of the form in which their legal and property status is regulated. At the same time, a separate law was passed which regulates in detail the legal and property status of the

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[68] PAP (Polish Press Agency), 10 May 1990.

Catholic Church. A similar law now operates with regard to the Orthodox Church. No separate laws govern the legal and property status of other faiths. As a result, minority denominations, including the Religious Union of the Mozaic Faith, the official Jewish religious body, face discrimination. They are not entitled by law to a number of benefits and are invariably in the position of a petitioner as regards, for example, restitution claims and exemption from court and notary fees.

4.7.2 Following pressure by the Catholic Church, religious classes were re-introduced in all state schools for the year 1990-91 by an instruction of the Ministry of National Education of 3 August 1990. The instruction stipulates that classes should be attended by all pupils whose parents declare such a wish. In regard to educational institutions above the primary level, the instruction speaks of the wish to attend religious classes expressed by parents *or pupils*. The instruction allows for crucifixes to be hung in classrooms in which the majority of children attend religious instruction and for prayers to be said before and after lessons; there is a cosmetic provision that the latter measure does not offend the feelings of persons of other faiths. Bearing in mind the dominant influence of the Catholic clergy, it may be assumed that there will be few classrooms which do not contain a crucifix and few schools in which prayers are not said.

4.7.3 An instruction of the Ministry of National Education of 27 August 1990 "defines the principles of co-operation with churches and religious unions outside the Roman Catholic Church. They are the same as in the case of the teaching of the Catholic religion". This instruction refers to religious teaching in an ecumenical spirit and delivered in an atmosphere free of intolerance.

4.7.4 The introduction of religious teaching in state schools has prompted a heated discussion, with critics pointing to the danger of intolerance and discrimination and of the ostracism of young people who do not attend religious classes. Young members of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland protested against this measure as a "violation of the basic principles of religious tolerance in our country", declaring that it "forces parents" "to declare formally that they belong to a different religion, including the Jewish religion, and, as a consequence, leads to an intensification of antisemitic manifestations which are particularly painful and cruel in relation to children".[69]

4.7.5 A government bill on re-privatization submitted to the Sejm in July 1991 applies to "physical persons"--i.e. individuals not public bodies--and their heirs who were deprived of their assets after 22 July 1944 following nationalization or resettlement, and provides for compensation in the form of capital bonds or in kind. Full compensation is not envisaged. Among persons who lost their assets after 1944, only those whose property was confiscated in violation of the law then in force (meaning transgression of the nationalization provisions and non-compliance with the then legal obligations relating to compensation in the form of stocks) will receive compensation.

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[69] See the Polish-Jewish newspaper *Folks-sztyme*, 14-19 September 1990.

4.7.6 In its present version, the bill is not supported by President Walesa. As regards Poles living abroad, which presumably includes former Polish citizens of Jewish origin, he postulates that their entitlement under the re-privatization law should be respected providing they file a restitution claim within a year from the enactment of the law. Under the government version, however, two additional conditions must be met within a year--the claimant's permanent return to Poland and re-acquisition of Polish citizenship. If adopted, the presidential proposals may leave room for manoeuvre as regards restitution of Jewish property, while the government's conditions will make compensation to Polish Jews living abroad difficult if not impossible.

4.7.7 On 25 July the Sejm postponed deliberation of the bill, with some deputies demanding a referendum on the issue and others demanding that the government reconsider the bill. Urgent though the adoption of the bill is for the process of privatization, it will probably be some time yet before it becomes law.

4.7.8 The 1959 Law on Cemeteries and Burial of the Dead permitted local authorities to assign a cemetery to other purposes forty years after the final burial had taken place in it. In effect, this measure has contributed to the destruction since the war of over 600 (out of about 1,000) Jewish cemeteries considered abandoned and the use of some cemetery grounds for purposes which are insulting to the dead. An amendment adopted by the Sejm in the summer of 1991 forbids local authorities from converting cemeteries to other uses without the permission of the Catholic Church or the denomination concerned. Following the discovery by workmen of human bones in an area which was formerly a Jewish cemetery, the amendment was preceded in October 1990 by a freeze on all building projects that might encroach on Jewish cemeteries.

4.8 **Prosecutions**

4.8.1 Under the Polish Criminal Code, public incitement to or approval of strife on account of national, racial, ethnic or religious differences and the public insulting, deriding or degrading of a group of the population or an individual on account of national, ethnic or racial origin are offences punishable by deprivation of liberty. Similarly punishable are the public reviling, deriding or degrading of a group of people or an individual on account of non-belonging to any or belonging to a religion. Equally, for offending the religious feelings of others by publicly profaning an object of religious cult or a place designated for public worship is punishable by deprivation of liberty, restriction of freedom, or a fine.

4.8.2 Despite the intensification of antisemitic manifestations in Poland in the last two years, investigations have been initiated in only a few cases. This state of affairs, even in cases in which the identity of the offenders was not difficult to establish, has been condemned by some Polish intellectuals and publicists. More recently, a greater willingness on the part of the state prosecution organs can be observed. Credit for this may be due to the activities of the presidential Council to Combat Antisemitism.

4.8.3 The following cases are known to be under investigation: incidents which took place in Kielce last year--in April 1990 a smoke grenade was flung at a concert given by a Soviet Jewish folk ensemble, injuring two people; during the local election campaign in May 1990 a smoke bomb was thrown at an election rally addressed by a Jewish journalist belonging to the Warsaw newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*; an explosive device went off on the premises of the above paper's local supplement and a letter bomb was defused by the police; a Holocaust memorial was sprayed with paint. The decision of the city prosecutor to discontinue the investigation on the grounds that the perpetrators could not be found was rescinded by the prosecutor of the Kielce province, which ordered a further investigation.

4.8.4 The dissemination in many Polish cities by the Association of Third Reich Victims (a political group which lobbies for compensation from Germany) of antisemitic leaflets defaming individuals occupying public positions has been under investigation by the Warsaw-Mokotow public prosecutor since October 1990.

4.8.5 The publication and distribution in Warsaw of antisemitic literature, including *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is under investigation by the Warsaw-Śródmieście public prosecutor, as is the vandalizing in 1990 of the building of the Warsaw Jewish Historical Institute.

4.8.6 In March 1991 the Wroclaw city prosecutor initiated, at the request of the local branch of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, an investigation into the sale of reprints of a 1937 Polish edition of the *Protocols* in the city's bookshops. The investigation aims at establishing the publisher's motives in commissioning the reprints and at confronting the book's contents with the provisions of the law in force. In the following month the prosecutor impounded 11,000 copies (of a 30,000 print run) still undelivered by the printers to the publisher, and the sale of the remaining 400 copies (out of about 600 which found their way into Wroclaw bookshops) was suspended.

4.8.7 In July 1991 the Warsaw-Śródmieście public prosecutor began proceedings against the Polish National Community--Polish National Party, in the person of its Chairman, Boleslaw Tejkowski, for having disseminated anti-Jewish leaflets between February and June 1991 and insulting the authorities of the Polish Republic.

5. ROMANIA

5.1 The Jewish community and past experience of antisemitism

5.1.1 A census conducted in December 1930 put the number of Jews living in Romania at 756,930.[70] This figure was, however, widely regarded as unreliable on the grounds that many Jews had opted to declare themselves either as Romanian or as belonging to one of the other national minorities.

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[70] See Mircea Musat and Ion Ardeleanu, *Romania dupa marea unire* (Bucharest: Editura Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, 1988), vol. 2, part 2, p. 1305.

According to the census conducted in 1956, there were 146,264 Jews in the country. In the census of 1965, the number of Jews living in Romania had fallen to 42,888. The last census was conducted in 1977, when 25,686 persons declared their nationality as Jewish.[71] By the time of Nicolae Ceausescu's ouster, in December 1989, there were an estimated 20,000 Jews in the country. According to Israel's current Ambassador to Bucharest, Zvi Mazel, by May 1991 the country's Jewish population had dwindled to 17,000, most of them elderly.[72] This shrinkage in the Romanian Jewish population can easily be accounted for by the Holocaust and postwar emigration.

5.1.2 The number of Romanian Jews who were exterminated in the Holocaust is subject to dispute between Romanian historians. They have never produced a specific figure but regard estimates by Jews as grossly exaggerated. According to Jewish historians, between 250,000 and 300,000 Romanian Jews perished in the territories that were under Romanian jurisdiction during the Second World War. This figure does not include the approximately 150,000 Jews from Northern Transylvania who were exterminated in 1944 at the order of the Hungarian authorities.[73]

5.2 **Antisemitism in the political life of the country**

5.2.1 Many Jews, attracted by the promise that national and religious discrimination in Romania would be eradicated, joined the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) during its period of illegality between 1924 and 1944. The bulk of the Jewish population, however, voted for "democratic bourgeois" or social democratic parties in the interwar period.[74] At no point after the Communist takeover was the RCP's leadership composed of a majority, or even a plurality, of Jews.

5.2.2 The most prominent RCP Jewish leaders, such as Ana Pauker and Iosif Chisinevski, were purged from the party as early as the 1950s. Ana Pauker was a victim of Stalin's antisemitic campaign, which was shrewdly exploited by the RCP's First Secretary, Gheoghe Gheorghui-Dej, who was no less of a Stalinist than Pauker, in order to remove a political adversary. Chisinevski survived until 1958, when he was caught attempting to strike an "unholy alliance" with some Stalinists-turned-liberal elements in the party in an effort to emulate the Khrushchev line in the USSR.

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[71] See Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), p. 166.

[72] *Adevarul*, 22 May 1991.

[73] See Jean Ancel, *Documents Concerning the Fate of Romanian Jewry During the Holocaust*, 12 vols. (New York: The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1985-86); Moses Rosen, "The rehabilitation of Antonescu", in the Romanian Jewish newspaper *Revista cultului mozaic*, 1-15 January 1991.

[74] See Bela Vago, "The Jewish vote in Romania between the two world wars", *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, no. 2, 1972, pp. 229-44.

5.2.3 Jewish prominence in a variety of fields, ranging from the security service and foreign trade to propaganda, historiography and bona fide culture, was noticeable in the early period of Communist rule but had virtually disappeared by the late 1950s. This prominence reinforced among average Romanians the myth of the country's "Judeo-Bolshevization", a myth widely perceived as a possible threat in the interwar period. The neo-nationalist line adopted by Dej in 1964 reached a new peak under Nicolae Ceausescu, who succeeded him as party leader in March 1965. The last prominent Jew under Ceausescu's leadership, Leonte Rautu, once the chief ideologist of the regime, was forced into retirement in 1981.

5.2.4 Although antisemitism under Ceausescu was never officially endorsed, it was condoned and occasionally overtly displayed in the press or in literary works by authors closely associated with the regime, some of them even closely associated with the presidential couple.[75] The most prominent of these authors, the Ceausescu hagiographers Eugen Barbu and Corneliu Vadim Tudor, would eventually re-emerge at the head of Romania's antisemitic hordes in 1990-91.

5.3 **Antisemitic organizations**

5.3.1 On 12 February 1990 Radio Bucharest reported that the daily newspaper *Desteptarea* (Awakening), which is published in the Moldavian town of Bacau, had received a message from an organization purporting to be the Anti-Communist Iron Guard (one of several names for the antisemitic organization founded by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu in 1927). The message said that the "Legion" was about to be set up again "after forty-five years" and that it would fight against those who advocated a left-wing ideology "until they are all liquidated". The message, which carried a swastika in its four corners, concluded "Our time has finally come! Heil Hitler! We shall be victorious!"[76]

5.3.2 Speaking on behalf of the Romanian Jewish community, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen reacted by declaring that "our killers are returning".[77] Given the trauma of past experience, this reaction was not surprising. On closer examination, however, there is reason to doubt that the organization which had signed the message really existed. As a former member of the Iron Guard pointed out,[78] the Romanian fascists had never employed the "Heil Hitler" salute, had never used the swastika as a symbol, and their organization had not been liquidated forty-five years earlier by the RCP--it had been destroyed forty-nine years previously by their former political ally,

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[75] For details see Michael Shafir, "The men of the Archangel revisited: Anti-semitic formations among Communist Romania's intellectuals", *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 16, no. 3, autumn 1983, pp. 223-43.

[76] Radio Bucharest, 23 February 1990; *Adevarul*, 23 February 1990. A photocopy of the message was printed in full in the weekly *Mesager*, 10-16 March 1990.

[77] Associated Press, 27 February 1990.

[78] *Mesager*, 10-16 March 1990.

Romania's wartime leader Marshal Antonescu. Genuine former members of the organization would have been aware of these facts, the former Iron Guardist concluded.

5.3.3 It seems that as early as February 1990 someone (or some group) might have had a vested interest in ensuring that "evidence" of activities endangering the country's stability reached the interim state leadership. Also in that month a leaflet written in unmistakeable Iron Guardist terminology (this time apparently genuine) and signed by a Romanian emigre using a New York post office address was reported to have been found in the possession of anti-government demonstrators who broke into the provisional government's headquarters. That demonstration was used by the authorities to discredit the democratic opposition, which had organized it but had nothing to do with the break-in. The authorities, however, used the incident as a pretext to invite the miners to Bucharest to defend them,[79] in what turned out to be a dress rehearsal for the violent events which took place in the capital on June 1990. In June too it was claimed that the miners had discovered "legionary-type" accessories at the headquarters of the democratic parties.[80] Thanking the miners for having come to Bucharest, interim President Ion Iliescu dwelt at length on the manifesto supposedly found among the demonstrators and the danger of an Iron Guardist revival.[81]

5.3.4 The Securitate, the former Romanian secret police, which had been disbanded after Ceausescu's ouster, was known to have close ties with part of the extreme nationalist wing of the Romanian emigration, as well as with chauvinistic Ceausescu hagiographers, such as Tudor and Barbu. Soon after the February demonstration the Securitate was in all likelihood involved in staging the Romanian-Hungarian inter-ethnic clashes in Tirgu Mures, in the wake of which the new Romanian Information Service, which employs many former members of the Securitate, was set up.[82] For some time, anti-Hungarian diversionism made the antisemitic diversionism less prominently "functional" for the purposes of the former backbone of the Ceausescu regime.

5.3.5 It may not be coincidental, however, that both anti-Hungarianism and antisemitism were to be emphasised by two publications--*Romania mare* (Greater Romania), of which Tudor is editor-in-chief and Barbu director, and *Europa*, which is published by the Europa Nova publishing trust, headed by Iosif Constantin Dragan. Dragan, who has an Iron Guardist past and has

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[79] See *The Times*, *Guardian* and *Le Monde*, 20 February 1990.

[80] See Michael Shafir, "Government encourages vigilante violence in Bucharest", Radio Free Europe, *Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 1, no. 27, 6 July 1990.

[81] Radio Bucharest, 19 February 1990.

[82] Shafir, "Government encourages vigilante violence in Bucharest"; Dennis Deletant, "The role of Vatra Romanesca in Transylvania", Radio Free Europe, *Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, no. 5, 1 February 1991.

amassed a fortune in the West, is known for his close links with the former regime and its secret police.[83] On 2 June Dragan, who successfully headed the campaign for the rehabilitation of Ion Antonescu,[84] was elected honorary president of the anti-Hungarian extremist organization Vatra Romaneasca (Romanian Cradle)[85] and soon thereafter the organization protested against what it termed the "anti-Romanian campaign" against "the Romanian people" contained in Chief Rabbi Rosen's denunciation of Antonescu's anti-Jewish policies.[86]

5.3.6 *Romania mare* which, according to the former ideologist of the ruling National Salvation Front, Silviu Brucan, is not only the mouthpiece of the former Securitate but "the Securitate itself",[87] announced in May 1991 that it was setting up a political party under the same name as that of the publication.[88] Chief Rabbi Rosen subsequently said in reply to a question whether fascist parties could be set up again in Romania, that a party of that kind already existed.[89]

5.4 Antisemitic manifestations and incidents

5.4.1 Whatever their origins, the seeds of antisemitism re-planted in February 1990 fell on fertile ground. In February 1990 a British publication reported that the notorious antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was available in Romanian bookstores.[90] The scandal tabloid *Oblio* later published the *Protocols* in serial form.[91] But not all Romanian publications stopped at quoting or reproducing foreign sources. *Gazeta de vest* (Western Gazette), a Timisoara-based independent anti-government weekly, published apologetic articles on the crimes committed by the Iron Guard and began serializing Codreanu's writings.[92]

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[83] See *Romania libera*, 2 July 1991.

[84] See Dan Ionescu, "Marshal Antonescu honored by old and new admirers", Radio Free Europe, *Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 1, no. 34, 24 August 1990.

[85] Radio Bucharest, 2 June 1991.

[86] *Realitates romaneasca*, 4 July 1991.

[87] See interview with Silviu Brucan in the Israeli Romanian-language publication *Minimum*, no. 51, June 1991.

[88] *Romania mare*, 17 May 1991.

[89] See interview with Rabbi Rosen in *Expres*, 20-27 May 1991.

[90] *The Observer* (London), 11 February 1990.

[91] See interview with Rabbi Rosen in *Romania libera*, 19 February 1991.

[92] See for example *Gazeta de vest*, nos. 51 and 52, 1991.

5.4.2 Against this background, on 24 February 1990 Radio Bucharest reported the first incident of desecration of a Jewish place of worship after the ouster of Ceausescu. In Oradea, a Transylvanian town, unidentified persons had broken into a synagogue on the night of 15-16 February and scattered prayer books around. In spring 1990 the windows of the synagogue in the Moldavian town of Faliceni were broken. On the night of 21-22 January 1991 at the headquarters of the Jewish community in the Transylvanian town of Brasov unidentified individuals hurled stones and broke the windows. Soon after, the synagogue in the Moldavian town of Galati was broken into and candelabra with religious ornamentation were stolen.[93]

5.4.3 In May 1990 twenty-eight graves were desecrated in the Jewish cemetery in Tirgu Mures and eight in the Jewish cemetery in Galati. In January 1991 nineteen graves were damaged in the Sephardic community cemetery in Bucharest, while in the Transylvanian town of Alba Iulia several graves were damaged and profaned by offensive inscriptions.[94]

5.5 **Antisemitic publications**

5.5.1 At a press conference in Bucharest on 14 May government spokesman Bogdan Baltazar strongly condemned the publication of two antisemitic articles in the weekly *Europa* a few days earlier. Baltazar said that "such incitement to racial hatred has not been published in the Romanian press since the days of the legionary rebellion [of January 1941]".[95] Baltazar also claimed that he had repeatedly denouced "the attitudes of a legionary, Iron-Guardist type which are unfortunately systematically manifest in the Romanian mass media". However, the first official reprimand of articles containing racial insinuations was made on 23 April 1991[96] and has not been repeated since then.

5.5.2 Antisemitism, on the other hand, had clearly been making a comeback since at least February 1990. Its main thesis was that Communism had been brought to Romania by the Jews, a theme frequently intertwined with that of deicide. As *Romania mare* put it in February 1991, the "Eskimos" who had brought Communism to the country had also "nailed it into our bones and flesh till they crucified us".[97]

5.5.3 Specific targets of the antisemitic campaign were Silviu Brucan, the former chief ideologist of the ruling National Salvation Front and a former high Communist official under Dej, and (now former) Prime Minister Petre Roman, whose paternal grandfather had been a rabbi and whose father had been a

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[93] See *Romania libera*, 8 March 1990; *Revista cultului mozaic*, 15 April 1990 and 1 February 1991.

[94] See Associated Press, 25 May 1990; *Revista cultului mozaic*, 1 February 1991.

[95] Radio Bucharest, 14 and 17 May 1991.

[96] See Rompres (official Romanian news agency) (in English), 23 April 1991.

[97] *Romania mare*, 1 February 1991.

high Communist official. The apogee of the campaign was reached in 1991, when *Europa*'s editor-in-chief, Iulian Neacsu (a former minor official under Ceausescu and a graduate of the RCP academy), claimed that Jews were "occupying the majority of decision-making functions" in post-Ceausescu Romania, despite the fact that their total number among the population did not exceed 20,000. "All that is lacking," Neacsu added, "is for them to penetrate military institutions and turn our churches into synagogues, and then we can also move our capital to Tel Aviv".[98]

5.5.4 Shortly thereafter, in an interview with *Europa*, retired naval captain Nicolae Radu said that the proportion of Jews in the government was "overwhelming", despite the fact that their proportion in the population as a whole was only 0.08 per cent. (In fact, no member of the government other than the former Prime Minister is known to be of Jewish descent.) The "fact" that no Jews had fought in the anti-Ceausescu uprising was proof of the Jews' "anti-Romanian" policies, Radu claimed, and he urged parliament to consider passing a law against "anti-Romanianism". Radu said that the uprising itself had been masterminded by "the CIA, as an annex of the Mossad" and that he personally was at the top of a secret list compiled by the Mossad, which intended to kill some forty generals and officers in the Romanian army who were loyal to their nation. In what read as an appeal to the armed forces to act against the country's Jewish population, Radu called on "the entire officer corps of the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to prove their patriotism" in these "difficult hours, when jackals and hyenas are biting into the body of the country with rare cruelty".

5.5.5 The purpose of the Jews, Radu added, was to transform Romania into a "colony of a Mediterranean state"--i.e. Israel. In fact, this was why the government was ready to implement the programme suggested by the International Monetary Fund, for that body, like the government, was nothing but an instrument of the international Jewish conspiracy. For longer than a century, according to Radu, that conspiracy had been striving to turn Romania into one of its annexes. The purpose of the International Monetary Fund was to "transform the Romanian people into cesspit cleaners, dog catchers, refuse collectors and porters, serving individuals who are foreign to the nation and to the country".[99]

5.5.6 In an article published in the same issue of *Europa* and entitled "The Brucan phenomenon", Radu wrote that the Jews' alleged attempt to take power could be described as "the Brucan phenomenon". It was well known that "the Brucans" saw themselves as "the only ones who deserve to be masters of the world". Radu claimed that he knew that the present government, "which is stuffed with numerous Brucans", planned to resettle in Romania in the near future "several thousand would-be Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union"

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[98] *Europa*, no. 23, May 1991.

[99] Ibid., no. 24, May 1991.

who would be given the properties and assets left by the ethnic Germans who had left the country.[100]

5.6 **Statements on antisemitism by political leaders**

5.6.1 At a meeting with National Defence Minister Constantin Spiroiu on 15 May 1991, Rabbi Rosen protested the publication of the interview with Radu and Radu's appeal to the army to act against the Jewish population. Subsequently at a press conference Spiroiu condemned the attitude of *Europa*'s editorial board and declared that the army "repudiated the appeal . . . and its racist theses".[101] On the other hand, a spokesman for the Securitate's successor, the Romanian Information Service, said later that "the accusation of antisemitism brought against the weekly *Europa*" was "extremely superficial".[102]

5.6.2 On 4 June a declaration published in the name of the Romanian government stated that the government had "nothing in common" with the "antisemitic articles" recently published and that it regarded these articles as expressing only "the opinion of the authors [and] editorial staff of the publications". The government itself, it was stated, "strongly disapproves of such racist displays, condemns them, and clearly dissociates itself from their authors, whoever they may be".[103]

5.6.3 Speaking at a press conference three days later, President Iliescu said that he did not regard the publication of the articles in question as representing the true spirit of Romanian public opinion, but that they indicated the "existence of extremist forces, which must meet with disapproval"; he himself favoured "subduing such manifestations".[104] When, however, Rabbi Rosen stated (on 24 June) that if the antisemitic attacks continued "Bucharest is near enough to Israel and I assure you that it would be easier to create an air bridge from Bucharest to Tel Aviv then it was to airlift Jews from Ethiopia",[105] Iliescu did not hesitate virtually to equate Rosen's statement with the antisemitic campaign that had given rise to it. At a press conference on 18 July Iliescu said that he considered the publication of antisemitic articles such as those which had appeared in *Romania mare* an "irresponsible act" that damaged Romania's image abroad, but added that to talk about an airlift of Romanian Jews to Israel because of the dangers the community was facing was an equally "exaggerated and extremist manifestation".[106] Iliescu

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[100] Ibid.

[101] *Romania libera*, 17 May 1991.

[102] See dispatch of the independent news agency AR Press, 13 June 1991.

[103] Rompres (in English), 4 June 1991; Radio Bucharest, 4 June 1991.

[104] Radio Bucharest, 7 June 1991.

[105] Reuter, 24 June 1991.

[106] Radio Bucharest, 18 July 1991.

seemed obliquely to confirm Rosen's statement of 15 July according to which the administration had been "intimidated by the brazen demagogy" of the antisemitic circles.[107]

5.6.4 In the first week of September, President Iliescu visited Israel, the first visit by a Romanian head of state. During his visit, he was told by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy that it was "inconceivable to talk about democracy [if it is] accompanied by a rising tide of antisemitism in its most repugnant, vulgar and infuriating form". Iliescu was asked to take action against Romanian newspapers that had published antisemitic articles.[108]

5.7 Opinion polls

5.7.1 No public opinion polls on attitudes to the Jewish community are known to have been conducted in Romania. The only survey of some relevance is a poll conducted by the Romanian Institute for the Study of Public Opinion between 3 and 18 July 1991 on attitudes towards the mass media.[109] The sample of 2,179 persons was said to be representative of the country's population who were aged seventeen and over. In response to a question on their attitude towards anti-Jewish articles published in the press, 78 per cent of respondents replied that they disapproved of such articles, 11 per cent that they approved of them, and 11 per cent were unable to reply to the question.

5.7.2 Despite these sentiments, the weekly *Romania mare* shared with another weekly, *Expres*, the greatest popularity (9 per cent) among readers. *Romania mare*'s circulation is estimated at about 600,000, by far the largest among the country's many weeklies.

5.8 The legal system

5.8.1 Since Ceausescu's overthrow, the entire Romanian legal system has undergone change. The Penal Code has not yet been revised (apart from some changes that are not relevant for the purpose of this discussion) and it includes two articles (166, dealing with propaganda of a fascist character, and 317, on nationalist-chauvinist propaganda or incitement to racial hatred) according to which incitement to antisemitism constitutes an offence.[110] It was apparently in line with these articles that Chief Rabbi Rosen announced that he intended to sue both *Europa* and Radu personally.[111]

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[107] AR Press, 15 July 1991.

[108] Radio Free Europe, *Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, no. 37, 13 September 1991.

[109] Radio Bucharest, 26 July 1991.

[110] *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Socialiste Romania*, part 1, no. 55-6, 23 April 1973.

[111] Radio Bucharest, 14 and 17 May 1991.

5.8.2 The position adopted by the authorities was more ambiguous. At a press conference on 14 May government spokesman Baltazar said that the government had "drawn the attention of the Prosecutor General to this case of incitement to a pogrom". According to the spokesman, Radu could hardly be prosecuted as he was a "severely deranged" personality whose "mental health" put him outside the range of the law. The case of Neacsu and the journalist who had interviewed him (Angela Bacescu) were, however, clearly cases for the prosecution, according to the spokesman.[112] Nonetheless, a government statement of 4 June said that "racist articles" such as those published in *Europa* were "an abuse in exercising the freedom of the press" but that it was up to the journalists' moral obligation code, which was still to be adopted, to take care of such matters in the future.

5.8.3 The recently published draft of the country's new Constitution forbids any discrimination on racial grounds (Article 30.7). In a recent debate on a draft law on national security the Assembly of Deputies (one of the parliament's two chambers, the other being the Senate), decided after a vociferous debate to re-introduce the interdiction on antisemitic manifestations in the law. The interdiction had been replaced by a more general one forbidding "racist" manifestations. Some deputies used the debate to launch personal attacks on Rabbi Rosen who, they claimed, had sought to hold the entire Romanian nation "culpable" by raising the issue of past and present antisemitism.[113]

6. YUGOSLAVIA

6.1 The Jewish community and past experience of antisemitism

6.1.1 The Jewish community of Yugoslavia is currently estimated at 5,000 (equal Sephardi and Ashkenazi). The first Jewish settlement on what is now Yugoslav territory is believed to have been established over 2,000 years ago. Owing to the civil war that has broken out in the country the state of Yugoslavia no longer effectively exists.

6.1.2 It is generally accepted that there is no tradition of antisemitism in Yugoslavia. There are no antisemitic organizations in the country as such. As far as can be ascertained, no opinion polls related to Jewish affairs have ever been conducted in Yugoslavia. Under Yugoslav law, all nations and ethnic minorities are guaranteed full and equal human rights and there are laws against incitement to ethnic hatred. There are no specific laws with regard to antisemitism.

6.1.3 Since the Second World War Jews have held important posts in Yugoslav government, scientific, cultural and research institutions.[114]

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[112] *Realitates romaneasca*, 11 July 1991.

[113] Radio Bucharest, 26 July 1991.

[114] Jews prominent in Yugoslav life have included: Moshe Pijade, the highly celebrated partisan who served as Vice-President of Yugoslavia and President of

6.1.4 Despite the strong pro-Arab orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy following the Six Day War in 1967, Jews in Yugoslavia have not suffered particular harassment. Although Yugoslavia severed diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967, the countries have maintained bilateral economic and cultural relations.

6.1.5 It has been suggested that Jews have ceased to identify themselves as such and find it more practical to change their Jewish names to Slavonic ones. The Yugoslav Jewish writer and translator David Albahari, who is now President of Yugoslav Jewry's representative body, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia (FJCY), has remarked that Jews in Yugoslavia have undergone assimilation which, he says, "will continue despite the fact that the Jewish faith does not recognize the process of assimilation". The majority of Yugoslav Jews have married non-Jews and more than half are over the age of forty-five.[115]

6.1.6 Antisemitic manifestations and incidents have occurred during the history of Yugoslav Jewry but have been sporadic and limited for the most part to local disputes among businessmen. The role of the Jews in interwar (1918-41) Yugoslav politics was minor and no organized antisemitic movement existed in Yugoslavia before 1941.

6.1.7 In the interwar period there was no clear pattern to the various instances of antisemitic activity. Antisemitic manifestations and incidents were never officially sanctioned either by local or regional governments. Boycotts of Jewish businesses normally failed and most expressions of antisemitic activity were suppressed by the police. In the 1930s several newspapers in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia published articles of an antisemitic nature and small right-wing parties increasingly made antisemitic remarks.

6.1.8 The Nazi genocide did not spare the Jews of Yugoslavia. There were about 76,000 Yugoslav Jews and another 2,000-3,000 Jewish transients from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany in Yugoslavia when Axis forces invaded the country in April 1941. Over 80 per cent of Yugoslav Jewry perished between 1941 and 1942. Around 5,000 Jews joined the Communist-led partisans; 1,300 of them were killed.

6.2 **Antisemitic publications and literature**

6.2.1 In May 1989 photocopies of an antisemitic pamphlet originally published in 1934 and containing the notorious antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the*

Yugoslavia's Federal Assembly in the 1950s; Branko Horva, Yugoslavia's most prominent economist, former director of the Economics Institute in Belgrade and Nobel Prize nominee; Slavko Goldstein, well-known publisher, former president of the Jewish community of Zagreb and former director of Zagreb University Press, and one of Croatia's first and most active proponents of a Western-style multi-party system; Danilo Kis, internationally acclaimed novelist and short story writer.

[115] *Intervju*, 17 February 1984.

Elders of Zion appeared in Belgrade.[116] Publication of the *Protocols* had been banned by officials in 1985 following its re-appearance in a book entitled *Tajanstveni Svet Masona* (The Mysterious World of the Freemasons), which was written by a Macedonian named Mihail Popovski. Popovski was accused by a founding member of the FJCY of popularizing a "sinister and faked document . . . which Nazi German propaganda used as further proof that the world should be liberated from the Jewish plot [resulting in the call for] the mass annihilation of the Jews".[117] It is unknown how many copies of the pamphlet were distributed in 1989, but the Belgrade authorities swiftly confiscated copies from book stores and kiosks near Belgrade University and the student dormitories.

6.2.2 In August 1989 the *Protocols* were again published in Yugoslavia--on this occasion in instalments by *Tribuna*, the bi-weekly of the students' association at Ljubljana University.[118] That October the FJCY, describing the student magazine's actions as a "neo-Nazi manifestation", filed a criminal suit against *Tribuna*.[119] The Jewish organization stated that "it is simply unbelievable that such material is being spread in cultural and civilized circles", adding that it did not believe that "Slovenes would support such an irresponsible pro-Nazi act committed by the magazine". Ljubljana's Public Prosecutor dismissed the criminal charges. On 9 November 1990 the Society of Serbian-Jewish Friendship protested sharply to Ljubljana officials against "this and other manifestations of fascism in Slovenia".[120]

6.2.3 The Russell Tribunal, then headed by the prominent Yugoslav historian Vladimir Dedijer, launched an investigation into the *Tribuna* affair and issued a statement sharply critical of the publication and Joze Skolc, then President of Slovenia's Socialist Youth League (now the Liberal Party). Dedijer pointed out that in March 1989 Skolc had told *Mladina*, the official voice of the Slovenian Socialist Youth League, that "Jews are against the Slovenian Youth League because they requested money from [us] and did not receive it". Dedijer concluded that the incident was "unfortunate because throughout Slovenian history the Slovenes have fought against the Germanic genocidal yoke and clerical violence".[121]

6.2.4 In an interview with the Zagreb bi-weekly *Start* (a toned-down Yugoslav version of *Playboy*) in 1986, Slavko Goldstein, a prominent Jewish leader in

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[116] *Vjesnik*, 24 May 1989.

[117] Aleksander Mosic, *Intervju*, 17 February 1984.

[118] *Tribuna* (Ljubljana), 14 August 1989.

[119] *Vjesnik*, 21 October 1989.

[120] *Politika*, 10 November 1989.

[121] *Borba* (Belgrade), 27 October 1989.

Zagreb, emphasized that there was no antisemitism in Yugoslavia.[122] However, in March 1990, Goldstein reversed his earlier assessment.[123] The Jewish leader said he was disturbed by the publication of an interview with Ivo Omrcanin, a representative of Croatia's fascist government to Berlin during the war who had subsequently become an American citizen, which had appeared in the independent Split weekly *Slobodna Tjednik*. Omrcanin had told the weekly that Goldstein, in his capacity of President of the Croatian Social Liberal Alliance, had received over $120,000 from American Jewish organizations and that Franjo Tudjman (who became President of Croatia in May 1990) "is the best man to govern his people". Goldstein said that "not since 1945 have I read such an obscene antisemitic article in our press" and added that he was particularly disappointed by the Omrcanin interview in as much as "I stated in *Start* over three years ago that there is no antisemitism in Croatia. My views have frequently been cited in the domestic and worldwide Jewish press. I am deeply sorry that I must now refute this". The interview resulted in a law suit by the district attorney in Zagreb at the initiative of the local Jewish community for "the spreading of racial, religious and national hatred". Also a target for the lawsuit was the chief editor of the newspaper *Slobodni Tjednik*.[124]

6.2.5 Indeed, with the end of the Communist system and the emergence of nationalist republican governments throughout Yugoslavia after multi-party elections in 1990, there has been growing concern on the part of several Yugoslav scholars about the rise of right-wing extremism. The most disturbing phenomenon is the emergence of Croatian right-wing parties, some of which are represented in both the local and republican government and have glorified the war-time Ustashe regime. Dr Tudjman has made efforts to distance his regime from this period of Croatian history and told American Jewish leaders in autumn 1990 that his government would not tolerate any manifestations of antisemitism.[125] More recently, in October 1991, Isi Leibler, Co-Chairman of the Governing Board of the World Jewish Congress and a leading member of the Australian Jewish community, met in Melbourne with Tomislav Bosnjak, Secretary General of the Croatian National Congress. The Croatian representative declared that an independent Croatia would not tolerate antisemitism and would dissociate itself from its pre-Nazi past.

6.3 Antisemitic manifestations and incidents

6.3.1 Antisemitic manifestations have, however, persisted in Croatia in recent months. On 19 August 1991 two bombs exploded in Zagreb, one damaging the Miroslav Salom Freiberger Jewish Community Centre, the other destroying two graves in a Jewish cemetery. The Croatian authorities immediately

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[122] *Start* (Zagreb), 14 November 1986.

[123] *Vecernje Novosti* (Belgrade), 19 March 1990.

[124] *Institute of Jewish Affairs Briefing*, vol. 1, no. 4, December 1990.

[125] *Danas* (Zagreb), 13 November 1990. See also *IJA Briefing*, vol. 1, no. 4, December 1990.

blamed the attacks on "Serbian terrorists anxious to discredit Croatia abroad" and the Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs offered a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. However, local Jewish community leaders criticized the Croatian authorities for "having reached a conclusion without beginning an investigation".[126]

6.3.2 On 21 August 1991 President Tudjman told Anton Irek, President of the Croatian-Jewish Society of Los Angeles who was in Zagreb, that Jews in Croatia need have no fear that they would be a target of recrimination. At the same time, Slavko Goldstein told the Zagreb daily *Vjesnik* that the bombings provided an opportunity for the Croatian government to distance itself from the sale by small vendors of Ustashe and other fascist and Nazi symbols and publications in the city's Ban Jelacic Square which had apparently been going on since spring 1991. Despite complaints by local Jewish leaders and human rights activists, the vendors reportedly continue to sell their wares.[127]

6.3.3 The *Jerusalem Post* recently noted that there had been no reported cases in which Jews had been endangered during the civil strife in Yugoslavia and that there had been no mass exodus of Yugoslav Jews to Israel.[128] The newspaper observed that in the past three years only forty-five Jews had emigrated from Yugoslavia to Israel.

6.3.4 Slavko Goldstein recently described the "active backing" by Serbia's ruling League of Communists (now the Socialist Party) of the founding of the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society in March 1989 as the first attempt to manipulate the Jewish community. Goldstein said that Zagreb's Jewish community "for the first time ever had to distance itself from its Jewish associates in Belgrade". He added that the current Croatian leadership was "suggesting that Zagreb's Jewish commmunity should say that antisemitism never existed in Croatia and that Jews have always lived better here than in Serbia. Unfortunately, this is not true."[129]

6.3.5 According to Aleksandar Mosic of the FJCY, "As Holocaust victims, we feel deeply shaken by all nationalistic disturbances and frictions among nationalities in Yugoslavia since we felt it on our skin how far this can go".[130] That Yugoslavia's small Jewish community will be singled out by any side as

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[126] *Vecernje Novosti*, 20 and 21 August 1991; *Vecernji List* (Zagreb), 20 August 1991.

[127] *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 22 August 1991; *Vjesnik*, 23 June and 21 August 1991.

[128] *Jerusalem Post*, 5 July 1991.

[129] *Vjesnik*, 21 August 1991.

[130] The most astonishing aspect of Mosic's comment was that it was made (in an interview with *Politika Ekspres*) on 30 April 1989, long before the escalation of ethnic violence in Yugoslavia.

a target of ethnic-religious hatred is unlikely. But a near state of anarchy prevails in many parts of Yugoslavia today, and Yugoslavia's Jews again find themselves in the midst of a fratricidal war.

7 SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

7.1 The "Jewish Question" in Central and Eastern Europe

7.1.1 Two years or more have passed since the collapse of Communism in the countries covered by this Special Report--Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. Of these countries, Czechoslovakia (in particular the Slovak Republic), Hungary, Poland and Romania have a history, to varying degrees, of intolerance towards their Jewish minority, both in the pre-Communist period and under Communism. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have traditionally demonstrated greater tolerance. This tolerance, or its absence, was reflected in the fate of the Jewish populations of these countries in the Holocaust.

7.1.2 Each of the countries analysed in this Report has, of course, its particular national history and culture, elements which the Communist rulers sought at various times to suppress. The principal force which is tending to replace not only the ideology but also the strong central control exerted by the former Communist regimes is a powerful resurgence of ethnic identification and nationalism, in some cases chauvinism. As could be expected, this force is heavily influenced by the precarious economic situation which many of these societies are facing.

7.1.3 For the Jews, who in this region are no more than a remnant of their pre-Second World War numbers, the re-surfacing of the "Jewish question" and of old antisemitic stereotypes in precisely those countries where intolerance towards the Jewish minority has long been manifest is most disturbing.

7.1.4 The situation which obtains in the individual countries as of November 1991 is as follows:

7.2 Bulgaria — Jewish population: 5,000-8,000

7.2.1 The downfall of the Communist dictatorship of President Todor Zhivkov in November 1989 marked the beginning of the transition to democracy. Since the fall of the Communist regime, a rising tide of nationalism has been directed principally against the country's large Muslim minority, which is often blamed, without justification, for the economic crisis in which the country finds itself. Despite the mushrooming of nationalist organizations, there are no specifically anti-Jewish groupings in the country at the present time.

7.2.2 There have been occasional antisemitic references in the media, with the Jewish origins of prominent political figures being pointed out and one Israeli of Bulgarian origin attacked. And from time to time there have been personal attacks in minor newspapers on certain Jewish members of parliament.

7.2.3 In the last two years two overtly antisemitic books have appeared. One of them was published in the literary journal *Plamak*. There have been several antisemitic manifestations, such as the daubing of swastikas on Jewish

homes and the appearance of antisemitic graffiti on the walls of a Jewish school in Sofia.

7.2.4 By and large, the transition to democracy in Bulgaria, where there is no tradition of democracy to speak of, has not been accompanied by a serious rise in anti-Jewish sentiment. (Nine per cent of Bulgarians hold unfavourable opinions of Jews, perhaps the lowest figure in Europe.) Nevertheless, the antisemitic incidents that have occurred clearly demonstrate some degree of resentment towards Jews.

7.3 **Czechoslovakia** **Jewish population: 5,000-15,000**

7.3.1 Since the demise of the Communist regime, antisemitism has been driven onto the margins of political life, but there is evidence of strong antisemitic sentiment just below the surface.

7.3.2 Antisemitism did not play a significant role in the campaign for the first free parliamentary elections in June 1990 or in the local elections in the autumn of that year. With the exception of the separatist Slovak National Party, no extremist party obtained sufficient votes to achieve representation. Nevertheless, moderate parties feel compelled to placate the few highly vocal chauvinistic parties.

7.3.3 Since late 1989 a continuous attempt has been made to rehabilitate the image of the Slovak Nazi satellite state. (Some 70,000 Jews, virtually the entire Slovak Jewish population, were deported to Auschwitz in 1942.) In July 1990 a plaque in memory of Josef Tiso, the leader of the war-time Nazi satellite state of Slovakia who was hanged for war crimes in 1949, was unveiled in the Slovak town of Banovce nad Bebravou. The plaque revealed a disturbing ambivalence on the part of members of the governing coalition and its counterpart, Public Against Violence, in the Slovak government. It was removed only after strong public condemnation in many quarters, including by President Havel.

7.3.4 There have been several instances of vandalism of Jewish institutions, for example cemeteries. Government politicians in Slovakia appeared reluctant to condemn the vandalizing of the Jewish cemetery in Nitra. Antisemitic agitation forced the resignation of a leading Slovak politician, Fedor Gal, Chairman of the liberal wing of Public Against Violence, counterpart to Havel's Civic Forum. These incidents have generally been linked with nationalist demands for Slovak independence.

7.3.5 *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* circulates. Racist grafitti in Bratislava remain untouched, and in Prague an antisemitic caricature of Kafka has disfigured a wall in the ancient city centre since spring 1991.

7.3.6 Polls show a disturbing 20 per cent holding unfavourable opinions of Jews. Higher percentages are registered on questions about Jewish economic and political power. Especially worrying are the figures for Slovakia where 34 per cent hold unfavourable opinions about Jews and 42 per cent say they have too much economic influence.

7.3.7 Too often, antisemitism has been condemned by political leaders only after prompting. There is widespread tolerance of intolerance.

7.4 **Hungary** **Jewish population: 80,000-100,000**

7.4.1 Hungary has by far the largest Jewish community in Central and Eastern Europe (not including the former Soviet Union). There may well be another 25,000-30,000 individuals whom the non-Jews might describe as Jews "by origin".

7.4.2 As elsewhere, the new freedom which followed the collapse of Communism has brought with it the liberty freely to express antisemitic views once again. And antisemitic expressions are more pronounced, frequent and public than under Communism.

7.4.3 Perhaps the nearest thing to antisemitic organizations in Hungary are the Christian National Union-Hungarian National Party and the National Federation of Hungarians. Little is known of them except that they publish the anti-Jewish weekly *Szent Korona*, which has been under investigation by the state prosecutor. A private-initiative criminal investigation is also underway against the publishers of another ultra-right publication, *Hunnia Fuzetek*, which published two articles on the theme of the denial of the Holocaust. Several anti-Jewish books have also been published.

7.4.4 Perhaps more important than these publications is grass-roots antisemitism: anti-Jewish remarks in shop queues, at the workplace, by children in schools, and at football stadiums. This phenomenon cannot, of course, be measured accurately.

7.4.5 The "Jewish question" became involved in the first democratic parliamentary elections in spring 1990. One of the contending parties, the Free Democratic Alliance, which contains a number of Jews in its leadership, was dubbed "the Jewish party"; the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which was in fact victorious in the elections, was in turn labelled "antisemitic". A leading Forum intellectual, Istvan Csurka, has made statements about Jews similar to those made by the French extremist Jean-Marie Le Pen. Another leading Forum figure, the writer Sandor Csoori, sees the Jews as an alien element in Hungary. Such expressions have never been expressly condemned by the Forum leadership.

7.4.6 The ruling coalition parties emphasize "Christian" policies. In the Horthy era (1920-44) the term "Christian Course" was a codeword for an anti-democratic and outspokenly anti-Jewish system.

7.4.7 The "Jewish question" is discussed ceaselessly in the media--more than one item appears each day in a country in which these subjects were taboo for forty-five years. Political leaders, the prime minister included, have sometimes made ambivalent statements about antisemitism. They have also been more forthright addressing Jewish and sympathetic audiences rather than those to whom these sentiments should be addressed first.

7.4.8 The more liberal elements in Hungary today are concerned that the response to the demise of Communism of a large section of the Hungarian people appears to be not a turn towards liberalism as understood in the West but a return to the pre-Communist 1930s. The implications of this for the Jews could be far more significant than the occasional antisemitic incidents and the marginal antisemitic publications.

7.4.9 The eminent Hungarian historian Laszlo Varga has correctly observed that there has been in Hungary no "coming to terms with the past" as was the case in Germany, that a knowledge and appreciation of the relevant history is lacking, and that many of those who make antisemitic or ultra-rightist remarks do not therefore consider themselves antisemites or extremists. Jews have considerable forebodings.

7.5 Poland — Jewish population: 5,000-12,000

7.5.1 Antisemitism, like other varieties of xenophobia in Poland, is rooted in ingrained tribal/parochial attitudes. However, antisemitism differs from other xenophobia in that it possesses a strong "ideological" ingredient which for centuries was provided by the Polish Catholic Church. Another "ideological" ingredient--the identification of radical change with the Jew--was added in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In recent decades this "ideology" found expression in holding the Jews responsible for Communism and the outrages of Stalinism.

7.5.2 In May 1990 the programmes of twenty-two of the then 100 or so registered political bodies reportedly reflected chauvinistic and antisemitic tendencies in their platforms. Of the present 200 or so parties and groupings close to twenty include the word "national" in their name. All claim to be the heirs of the chauvinistic and antisemitic National Democratic Party (Endecja), the largest party in pre-war Poland. The largest "national" party is pathologically anti-Jewish and maintains contact with antisemitic parties elsewhere in Europe.

7.5.3 In the last few years numerous acts of vandalism against Jewish institutions have been reported. The local government elections which took place in May 1990 saw an intensification in the use of the antisemitic weapon. The Jewish issue assumed an even higher profile in connection with the growing rift in Solidarity and Lech Walesa's bid for the Polish presidency. The tool of antisemitism was immediately introduced into the campaign for the parliamentary elections in October 1991. Eyewitness reports of election meetings say "bellicose anti-Jewish chants are greeted with wholehearted applause". The Centre Alliance, which backed Walesa for the presidency, more or less blamed a Jewish conspiracy for press criticism of its policies.

7.5.4 Antisemitic publications proliferate. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is prominent but other pre-war antisemitic tracts are also on sale in the streets and, until recently, a church.

7.5.5 Levels of antisemitic sentiment in Poland are very high: 34 per cent hold unfavourable opinions about Jews; 40 per cent would not want Jews in their neighbourhood; 63 per cent would not permit Jews to buy shares in a Polish enterprise.

7.5.6 In practice--if not in theological doctrine--the Polish Catholic Church is divided on Jewish matters. There is an important segment among the hierarchy and clergy, not to mention the mass of lay Catholics, who have evaded the problem of antisemitism in Poland. There are also those who are unable or unwilling to shed the parochial ethnocentrism and antisemitism traditionally ingrained in Polish Catholicism.

7.5.7 The Polish Catholic Church has at its disposal a powerful propagandistic and educational network, all the more so in that religion has become part of the school curriculum. Bearing in mind the place xenophobia and antisemitism have occupied in Polish public life, there is little doubt that a struggle against these social ailments will be an uphill one.

7.6 **Romania** **Jewish population: 17,000**

7.6.1 Although antisemitism was never officially endorsed under Ceausescu, it was condoned and occasionally overtly displayed in the press or in literary works by authors closely associated with the regime, some of them closely associated even with the presidential couple. The most prominent of these authors, the Ceausescu hagiographers Eugen Barbu and Corneliu Vadim Tudor, re-emerged at the head of Romania's antisemitic hordes in 1990-91. The Securitate, the Romanian secret police which was disbanded after Ceausescu's ouster, was known to have close ties with part of the extreme nationalist wing of the Romanian emigration, as well as with the likes of Barbu and Tudor.

7.6.2 It may not be coincidental that antisemitism was emphasized by two Romanian publications--*Romania mare* (Greater Romania--at 600,000, the country's largest circulation weekly), of which Tudor is editor-in-chief and Barbu director, and *Europa*, which is published by a trust headed by Iosif Constantin Dragan. Dragan, who has an Iron Guardist past and is rumoured to have amassed a fortune in the West, is known for his close links with the former regime, including its secret police. *Romania mare* is said to be the mouthpiece of the former Securitate.

7.6.3 The principal theme of present-day antisemitism is that Communism was introduced into Romania by the Jews. This theme is frequently intertwined with that of deicide. As *Romania mare* put it in February 1991, the "Eskimos" who brought Communism to the country also "nailed it in to our bones and flesh till they crucified us".

7.6.4 The *Protocols* are available in bookstalls and a scandal tabloid published them in serial form. In antisemitic publications, the government and the International Monetary Fund are accused of being instruments of the so-called international Jewish conspiracy, whose purpose is to "transform the Romanian people into cesspit cleaners". Referring to two antisemitic articles

which appeared in the weekly *Europa*, a government spokesman said that such incitement to racial hatred had not been published in the Romanian press since 1941.

7.6.5 Whatever their origins, the seeds of antisemitism re-planted in February 1990 fell on fertile ground. Since that time, numerous attacks on Jewish cultural institutions, for example synagogues, have been reported. These outbreaks of antisemitism have been condemned by government figures. However, this condemnation does not appear to run very deep. President Iliescu has said that warnings about antisemitism are themselves "exaggerated and extremist manifestations".

7.7 **Yugoslavia** **Jewish population: 5,000**

7.7.1 It is generally accepted that there is no tradition of antisemitism in Yugoslavia. There are no antisemitic organizations in the country as such. However, developments since the current violence began in earnest have been disturbing.

7.7.2 With the end of the Communist system and the emergence of nationalist republican governments throughout Yugoslavia following multi-party elections in 1990, there has been growing concern on the part of several Yugoslav scholars about the rise of right-wing extremism. The Croatian President, Dr Franjo Tudjman, gave assurances in late 1990 to World Jewish Congress leaders that his government would not tolerate any manifestations of antisemitism. He also dissociated himself and his government from the Second World War quisling state of Croatia and the Ustashe movement.

7.7.3 In March 1990, a Croatian Jewish leader, Slavko Goldstein, reversed his earlier assessment that there was no antisemitism in Yugoslavia. "Not since 1945 have I read such an obscene antisemitic article in our press", he said, referring to an article in a Split weekly.

7.7.4 There have been reports that since spring this year Ustashe and other Nazi and fascist symbols and publications have been on sale in a Zagreb square. Despite complaints by local Jewish leaders and human rights activists, the vendors have apparently continued to sell their wares.

7.7.5 On 19 August of this year two bombs exploded in Zagreb, one damaging the Jewish Community Centre, the other destroying two graves in a Jewish cemetery. As far as can be ascertained, the criminals have not yet been apprehended.