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THE JEWS IN POLAND SINCE THE LIBERATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH REPORT

OCL - 2312

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This paper deals with the physical, economic, and political condition of the surviving Jews in Poland since the liberation. It analyzes the policies of the Polish Government, the current anti-Semitic manifestations, and the possibilities for Jewish survival in Poland.

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SUMMARY

1. The onetime Polish Jewish population of 3,351,000 was reduced by the Nazis to a mere 80,000 or so within Poland itself and another 40,000 to 50,000 survivors in Western Europe; at least 100,000 also survived in the Soviet Union. Deprived of numbers, property, organization, and funds, the Polish Jews face many obstacles in reconstructing their life in Poland.
2. The core of revived Jewish life in Poland is the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny Komitet Zydowski w Polsce), which, with funds supplied largely by the Government, has undertaken a number of projects in the social, economic, and cultural fields. Religious matters fall within the purview of the officially recognized Union of Jewish Religious Communities.
3. At present, the occupational and economic structure of the Polish Jewish community is undergoing a change as producers and service cooperatives and, to some extent, agricultural pursuits replace the older forms of individual and private enterprise. The Government is encouraging Jews to settle in Lower Silesia on lands acquired from Germany.
4. At the same time that the Government has supported the Central Committee, it has also expressed itself in favor of Zionism and has officially approved the emigration of its Jewish citizens to Palestine.
5. Anti-Semitism, a traditional feature of Polish political and economic life, has again appeared. A tool of some forces seeking to unseat the present leftist regime, the movement has flared up in a number of violent incidents. The Government has made anti-Semitism a crime, but the outrages continue, although on a somewhat reduced scale.
6. Because of the difficulties of life in Poland and the dangers of anti-Semitism, Polish Jews have been leaving the country, hoping to reach Palestine by one route or another.
7. The continuance of the conflict between the Government and the opposition in Poland is conducive to a resurgence of anti-Semitism, which is easily employed as a weapon in this conflict. The surviving Polish Jews

thus remain victims of a political quarrel that is only tangentially their interest and not at all of their making.

8. The survival of Jewish life in Poland depends upon the vitality of the individuals who remain, the influence of Soviet policy, and the amount of aid received from Jewish organizations abroad. It also depends in part upon the attitude of those Polish Jews who are now being repatriated from the USSR to Poland.

THE JEWS IN POLAND SINCE THE LIBERATION

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The people of Poland were among the heaviest sufferers at the hands of the Germans after September 1939. More than three million of the Polish citizens who perished under the Nazi occupation were members of Poland's Jewish community, against which the Nazis prepared and carried out an elaborate program of deportations, enslavement, starvation, torture, and murder. Today a little more than 80,000 Jews survive inside Poland, the remnant of a community that once numbered well over three millions. Any generalizations about the Jewish community in Poland since the liberation of the country must, therefore, be stated in light of this fact.

The physical and social problems attendant upon the reintegration of some 80,000 Jews into the fabric of the new Poland would appear, on the face of it, to be relatively simple. The problem is complicated, however, not only by the weakness of the surviving Jewish community but also by the survival of anti-Semitism in Poland. So violent have been the anti-Semitic incidents reported and so widespread is the fear for their lives among the handful of Jewish survivors, that some Polish Jews have been reported seeking to escape to the American Zone in Germany rather than remain in Poland. Others, who have gone back to Poland, are reported to be returning to western Germany after only a short stay. Polish Jews in displaced persons centers in Germany have, moreover, almost unanimously declined to return to their former homeland. The goal of most of these people is said to be Palestine.

The present Polish Government neither supports nor condones these manifestations of anti-Semitism, which it treats as at least in part an expression of anti-Government sentiment. For a considerable period the Government appeared unable to halt the attacks upon Jews-- or, for that matter, upon non-Jews, some of whom were also attacked by right-wing forces operating clandestinely in the country. However, the Government has placed its opposition to anti-Semitism firmly on record and has given financial and other support to the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny

Komitet Zydowski w Polsce), the official body representing Jews in the country. Furthermore, a number of Jews have been appointed to posts in the Government, Jewish community life has been encouraged, and arrangements have been made to receive a considerable number of Polish Jews from the USSR, where they were taken after the Soviet occupation of the country in 1939.

Efforts are being made to restore the Jewish community in Poland, both by the Government and by the Jews themselves. To be fully successful, however, such measures must be accompanied by an improvement in general economic conditions within the country and by a stricter enforcement of internal security. In addition, the present ambivalent policy of the Polish Government as regards the choice between Jewish emigration and restoration of the Jewish community must be clarified. It is probable that if the Polish Jews returning from the USSR prove to be a vigorous group, willing to adapt themselves to conditions which will be severe at best, the Polish Jewish community may be able to begin the work of reconstruction, as distinct from the present emphasis upon relief and rehabilitation.

II. THE BACKGROUND

The Jewish community in Poland was once the largest in western Europe, outnumbered among the Jewish communities in the world only by the Jews in the Soviet Union and in the United States. Its 3,351,000 members, whose allegiance ranged from orthodox Judaism to secular nationalism, provided the basis for a range of vigorous although somewhat isolated cultural, religious, and social activities. Life for the Polish Jews was, however, constantly hampered by an anti-Semitism that had become increasingly widespread among the population since the early nineteenth century. Religious and economic in its origins, Polish anti-Semitism was preached by political parties and church heads and practiced by officials high and low. By 1939, it was one of the distinguishing factors of the country's political, social, and economic life. Because anti-Semitism had already become so ingrained in Polish thought, it is not altogether surprising that it still manifests

itself in post-war Poland, although common suffering at the hand of the Germans might have been expected to bring the Poles and the Jews closer together.

A. Historical Background

Jews first appeared in Poland in the ninth century, coming at the invitation of the King of Poland to escape persecution in Germany and Bohemia. It was the King's purpose to have the Jews establish a commercial class in a society that was then divided between a landowning nobility and a laboring peasant class. Because of the anti-Jewish risings which often accompanied the Crusades, Jews continued to immigrate into Poland, the greatest number arriving during the reign of Casimir the Great (1333-70). Protected by a special statute, the Jews prospered in the Polish lands, although their security varied with the authority of the successive kings. Indeed, when the peasants rose against the ruling classes, as they did in 1648, the Jews were attacked because of their role as stewards and managers of royal and noble properties. But by the time of the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century, four-fifths of all the Jews in the world were living within the borders of the then Polish Kingdom.¹

As a result of the partitions, most Polish Jews came under the rule of Imperial Russia, where they were subjected to persecutions and restrictions more severe than any they had known under Polish rule; those Jews residing in areas acquired by Germany and Austria came under more beneficent regimes. Many Jews in the latter two countries became assimilated, but the Jews in Russia continued to follow the course of orthodoxy and remained a more or less cohesive social group. When Poland was reconstituted as a nation in 1919, millions of Jews once again came under Polish rule.

B. The Situation after the First World War

The new Poland adopted discriminatory policies toward its Jewish citizens. Although the religious functions of the Jewish community were legally recognized, the social and economic position of the Jews steadily

1. Simon Segal, The New Poland and the Jews, New York, 1938, p. 177.

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deteriorated. Restrictive legislation affected such peculiar Jewish institutions as Shehita (ritual slaughter of animals for food), on the one hand, and limited the number of Jewish students in Polish universities, on the other. Discriminatory taxation and state monopolies served to limit Jewish economic activity.

In the jockeying for political preference in Poland after 1919, most of the major political parties -- with the exception of leftist groups -- followed an anti-Semitic line. Catholic Church leaders, from Cardinal Hlond down, preached anti-Semitism and favored an economic boycott of the Jews. Polish nationalists sought to win peasant and working-class support by attributing many of Poland's internal difficulties to the Jews. Lawless elements attacked Jews, adding physical peril to the already discouraging social and economic conditions.

When Hitler came to power in neighboring Germany, anti-Semitic elements in Polish political life became more aggressive. In 1934, young nationalist Poles with a German orientation broke away from the elder National Democratic Party to form the National Radical Party (NARA), whose attitude toward the Jews followed the Hitler line. The effect of this bolt was to cause the National Democrats, in turn, to become more anti-Semitic.

After the death of Marshal Josef Pilsudski, who had acted as a brake upon the extremists, Polish political leadership became progressively more authoritarian and nationalist. By mid-1936 the Government itself, then under Prime Minister General Felicjan Slawoj-Skladowski, gave open approval to the economic boycott of the Jews and thus aligned itself with the anti-Semitic forces in Poland. About the same time, Poland proposed the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Jews, claiming that they were "superfluous."

In sum, Poland, under the leadership of right-wing political forces, eventually united in the so-called "Camp of National Unity," had become by 1939 a land in which most Jews lived as "second-class citizens." Although Jewish political parties sent delegates to the Sejm (Parliament), their role in the legislative body was merely nominal.

C. The Polish Economy and the Position of the Jews

Pre-war Poland was essentially an agrarian nation, with more than 61 percent of its total population engaged in agriculture and allied industries. Ownership of the land was, however, largely in the hands of a small landowning class, which dominated the social and political life of the country. The bulk of the actual farmers and producers were either landless or else restricted to holdings of five hectares or less.¹ The need for land reform was pressing, but the steps taken by the rulers of Poland did little to improve the basic situation. The effect of this intransigence was to retain the semi-feudalistic and backward features of the agricultural economy and to keep the general standard of living in Poland on a low level.

The occupational structure of the Jewish community in Poland, for historical reasons and because of the many legislative restrictions, presented a different appearance, as the following table shows:

Table 1; OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POLISH JEWISH COMMUNITY

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Census of 1921</u> <u>% of Jews</u>	<u>Census of 1931</u> <u>% of Jews</u>
Industry	33.8	42.0
Commerce	41.0	37.0
Agriculture	5.8	4.0
Transport	3.2	4.0
Other	16.2	13.0

The fact that the largest proportion of Jews were engaged in commerce and industry does not mean that they dominated these fields in relation to non-Jewish Poles. Those in commerce were mostly owners of small shops or market stalls with merchandise worth only a few zlotys. Few of these commercial enterprises employed labor outside the immediate family.² In industry, Jews played some part as entrepreneurs in the oil, textile, timber, and garment industries; they played almost no role in mining and heavy industry.³ Most of the enterprises owned by Jews were small-scale workshops

1. According to the census of 1921, 64.7 percent of the holdings were five hectares or under; 96.7 percent of all holdings were under twenty hectares. Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

2. According to the Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland, September 1939-June 1941, published in England in December 1941 by the Ministry of Information of the Polish Government-in-Exile (London), the occupational
(continued on next page)

rather than mass-production factories. In other words, in terms of wages, income, and economic power, most Jews in Polish economic life did not enjoy a high standard of living or an economic position of great influence. In terms of freedom to choose an occupation and work at it without restrictions, moreover, the Jews were much worse off than the Poles. This fact is clearly illustrated by the drop in the number of Jews engaged in "other" occupations between 1921 and 1931. In the case of government and city employment, only a handful of Jews were employed in Poland prior to 1939. It was for such reasons that Jews were forced into commerce and industry in disproportionate numbers.

III. THE SURVIVING POLISH JEWISH POPULATION

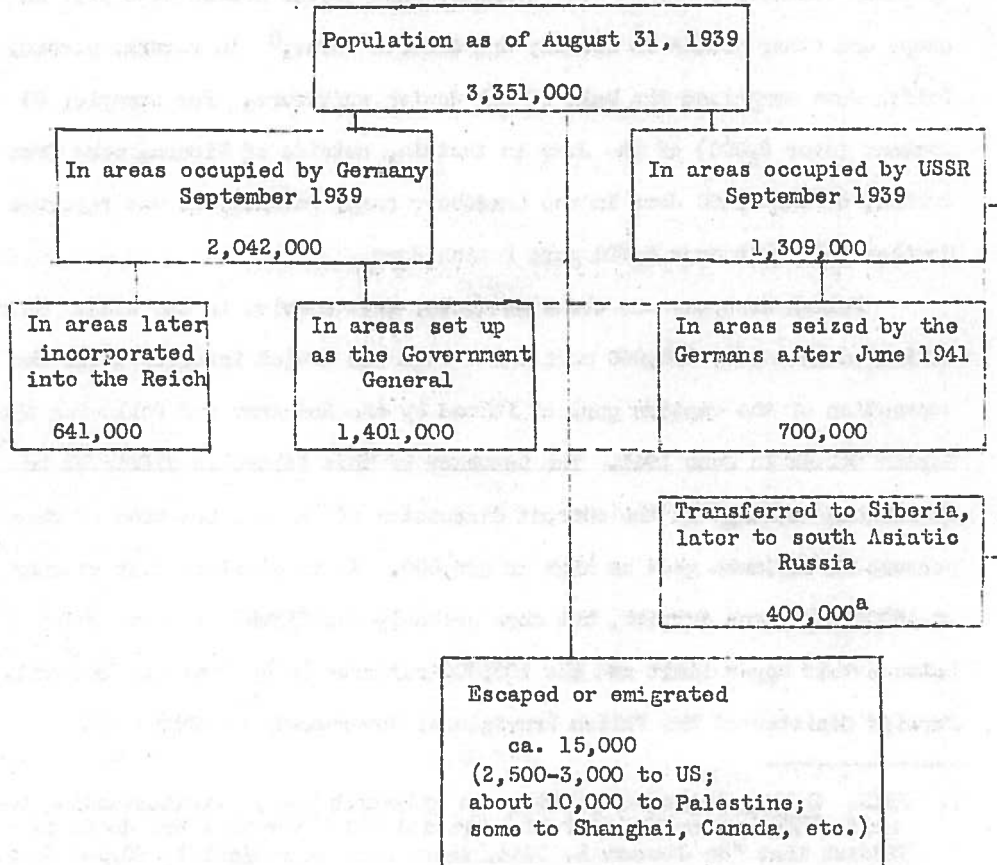
When the Nazis invaded Poland, in September 1939, the 3,351,000 Jews in the country represented 9.7 percent of the total population. More than 75 percent of their number lived in cities and towns, where they constituted 27.3 percent of the inhabitants.¹ In the three largest cities, Warsaw, Lodz, and Lwow, Jews constituted 30.1 percent, 33.5 percent, and 31.9 percent of the population respectively.

The immediate result of the German invasion and the subsequent advance of the Soviet troops from the east was to bring over 2,000,000 Jews under the Nazis and over 1,300,000 under the Soviets. The probable distribution of Polish Jews after the end of the Polish campaign is suggested by the accompanying chart. It is apparent that less than half a million Polish Jews had more than a very slim statistical chance of survival, since most of them eventually fell into the power of the Nazis.

2. (continued from preceding page)
structure of the "Jews in Poland" revealed that most of them operated independent businesses and did not employ hired labor.
3. Jews had pioneered in the oil industry and had largely created the textile industry, but discriminatory legislation had gradually restricted their activities. Their role in the timber industry goes back to the time when they managed the great forests in the interests of Polish nobleman owners.

1. American Jewish Committee, The Jews of Poland (1944?), p. 1.

Chart 1. DISPERSION OF THE POLISH JEWS, 1939-1945



a. Present estimates of the survivors of this group do not run above 250,000.

By the time Poland was liberated the worst fears of outside observers were realized. The Polish Jews remaining in Poland itself were finally estimated by the Central Committee in January 1946 at 80,060.¹ Other Polish Jews were found in Germany, Austria, and other countries in Western Europe. By early December 1945, it was estimated that 40,000 Polish Jews were in camps and other places in Germany and Austria alone.² In several places, Polish Jews comprised the bulk of all Jewish survivors. For example, 90 percent (over 9,000) of the Jews in Austria, outside of Vienna, were from Poland; of the 5,000 Jews in the Landsberg camp, Bavaria, it was reported in October 1945 that over 3,700 were Polish Jews.

Polish Jews, as was observed above, also survive in the USSR. It was estimated that some 400,000 were taken into the Soviet interior after the occupation of the eastern part of Poland by the Red Army and following the German attack in June 1941. The accuracy of this figure is difficult to determine, although in the current discussion of the repatriation of these persons no estimate goes as high as 400,000. It is possible that as many as 250,000 persons survive, but more probably the figure lies somewhere between this upper limit and the 100,000 referred to by Wincenty Rzymowski, Foreign Minister of the Polish Provisional Government/ⁱⁿ October 1945.³

1. FBIS: Daily, January 29, 1946. In mid-March 1946, notwithstanding the earlier announcement, the Polish Provisional Government broadcast in Yiddish that "on January 1, 1946, there were approximately 80,000 Jews in Poland. Most of them /reside/ in large towns such as Warsaw, Lodz, Cracow, Reichenbach, Breslau, and others. These communities comprise 80 percent of the Jews in the country." FBIS: Daily, March 18, 1946. This broadcast followed the reports that Jews were fleeing Poland to escape the anti-Semitic outbursts.
2. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York, Report of the Secretary, December 9, 1945.
3. New York Times, October 23, 1945. The Organizational Committee of Polish Jews in the USSR stated in February 1945 that there were 250,000 Polish Jews in the Soviet Union. In October 1945, however, a delegation representing Polish Jews in the USSR told the Polish Ambassador in Moscow that there were "approximately 200,000 Polish Jews" in the country. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee said in September 1945 that there were 250,000 foreign Jews in the USSR, including 160,000 Polish Jews. The Central Committee of Jews in Poland stated on January 20, 1946 that the number was 170,000, although the Resettlement Department of the Committee said, only five days later, that there were 150,000.

The repatriation of these Polish Jews was agreed upon by the Polish and Soviet Governments as early as July 6, 1945.¹ Hopes ran high in foreign Jewish circles that the return would take place quickly, but it was not until March 1946 that observers reported the return of any considerable numbers.² On March 21, 1946 an official Polish Government broadcast in Yiddish spoke of a daily increase in the number of repatriates and stated that "before the end of April, 90,000 will have arrived under the Government plan."³

To recapitulate, the Polish Jewish survivors comprise the 80,000 who were in Poland during 1945; the 40,000 and more estimated to remain in Austria, Germany, and other western European countries; and the 100,000, at least, to come from the USSR. The 15,000 Polish Jews who escaped to Palestine, the United States, and elsewhere will almost certainly never return to Poland. What human material there is to rebuild the Polish Jewish community must come from the survivors in Europe and the Soviet Union. But it is also clear that among the Jews inside Poland there is a strong desire to get out, while among the Polish Jews outside Poland there is almost no wish to return. What the Polish Jews returning from the USSR feel or want has not yet been reported.

IV. THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE SURVIVORS

The 80,000 Polish Jews who remained alive inside Poland after the liberation represent a group which might well have been further decimated had the Nazis continued in control a few months -- or even weeks -- longer. Those who came through did not escape unscathed. Many were seriously ill, almost all needed food, clothing, medical care, and jobs. The Central Committee of Jews, which was organized in Poland early in 1945, has reportedly referred to the superhuman tasks it has confronted in meeting even the basic physical and health requirements of the Jews in Poland.

1. Polpress (London), July 27, 1945.
2. REF - XL 46478, March 8, 1946.
3. FBIS: Daily, March 21, 1946. By early May 1946, it was reported that Polish Jews from the USSR were coming to transient camps in Germany "in increasing numbers." See Edward P. Morgan in Chicago Daily News, May 3, 1946.

As a result of starvation, unhygienic conditions, and nervous shock, many diseases were prevalent; one observer stated that 60 percent of the Polish Jews were suffering from either latent or active tuberculosis. The condition of the children was so poor that the same observer gave it as his opinion that there were "almost no healthy Jewish children in Poland."¹ The extent of the general health problem was summarized in a report by the Central Committee to the London meeting of the World Jewish Congress in August 1945:

"Without losing time...the Health Department of the Central Committee began to organize local health bureaus in the various regional divisions ...With the increasing return of sick people from the camps, it was noted that the most prevalent disease among them is pulmonary tuberculosis. [Other illnesses showing high incidence were] tuberculosis of the bones...dropsy...missing fingers, ruptures...neurasthenia.... From the very first, our Health Committee had to work against tremendous odds -- an almost complete lack of general sanatoria and absolutely none of our own, no available beds in any of the public hospitals and no bathing facilities."

In view of the unavailability of outside aid on any scale, the problem reduced itself to that of the number of Jewish survivors who were able to work. It was reported early in 1945 that 18,000 of the survivors were then unable to work because of illness. That this problem still remains is borne out by a more recent report that of 7,743 unemployed Jews in Upper Silesia, 277 were ill, while the others were "not working because they have not yet adapted themselves to normal conditions."² While evidence is lacking, it is highly probable that a considerable number of the original survivors will never again be able to assume a productive role in the community; their physical and psychical injuries have rendered them incapable of resuming normal activities.

The problem of the survivors is also complicated by the fact that probably no single Polish Jewish family remains intact.³ In the absence of family units, the Central Committee of Jews in Poland undertook as one of

1. The health of the younger members of the community was of such concern to the Central Committee that arrangements were being made for the visit of children to other countries for recuperative purposes. The Finnish Jewish community invited 100 children to come as guests to Finland; FBIS: Daily, January 17, 1946. Three hundred other children were said to be on their way to France, from whence they would eventually go to Palestine; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Prague, April 3, 1946.
2. FBIS: Daily, March 18, 1946.
3. Statement of Dr. Joseph Schwartz, European chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, in PM (New York), October 23, 1945.

its first tasks the compilation of a register of known survivors in order that bereaved persons and orphan children might have some opportunity of discovering possible relatives or other connections.¹

It has been reported that the majority of the survivors were between the ages of 17 and 35. The general youthfulness of the Polish Jewish survivors thus raises another problem, since it is most likely that those below 25 years of age are entirely on their own, and that the younger ones are without any training or skills. Dr. Schwartz reported: "A boy of 17 today [who] went into a concentration camp at 11...is unfitted for any productive work and must be trained."

The poor physical condition of the Jewish survivors caused the Central Committee to devote much of its energy and resources to meeting immediate health requirements. Furthermore, the Committee has repeatedly sought financial aid from the Polish Government and from Jewish relief organizations abroad.² At the end of its first eight months the Central Committee reported that 36,000,000 out of 57,000,000 zlotys made available to it had been spent on care of and aid to the sick, children, invalided and aged persons, and on related activities.

V. THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE SURVIVORS

The economic position of the Polish Jews remains serious. The activities of the Germans, abetted in many instances by native Poles, rendered them destitute and homeless. An American observer summarized the outlook as follows:³

1. In a note to the first list of survivors, the Central Committee stated: "Before the Central Committee in Warsaw had been able to take control of the whole work and give it central direction, the first registration had already been completed in Poland. Anyone who regarded himself as a Jew, anyone who came out from bunkers and hiding-places asked to be registered. Even persons who declared themselves to be of Polish nationality and of not being attached to the Jewish community registered with the Jewish Council/[the local body undertaking the registration work] which was regarded as the only way of tracing lost relatives."
2. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, alone, reported that it had made available \$1,000,000 worth of relief goods in 1945. It also transmitted \$500,000 in November and December, after it was permitted to send such funds, and has procured another \$1,000,000 worth of supplies since the beginning of 1946. These supplies will be forwarded as soon as conditions permit. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, New York, April 4, 1946.
3. Irving Brant in PM, October 23, 1945. See also Brant's "Eyewitness in Poland," in Now Republic, January 7, 1946.

"All who remain of the pro-war Jewish population...find themselves in a hostile land, their property destroyed, their means of livelihood gone, every synagogue burned down... Factories with fewer than 50 employees in which the Jews found their principal investment and employment can be revived under private ownership. But how that is to be done by men who have no buildings, no machinery, no material, no money, no credit, and who have lost their greatest asset of all -- their skilled workers -- is a question."

A vexing problem, which has cropped up in other countries in Europe, is the restitution of Jewish-owned property and reparation for lost property. According to information supplied to the Jewish Agency in Palestine, there remains in Poland a considerable amount of estates and properties, community buildings and lands, privately owned buildings, land, factories, shops, stores, mills, etc., which were formerly owned by Jews, individually or through organizations, but which are now in the hands of Poles or the Government.

Much of the property in private hands is alleged to have been plundered; indeed, it has been suggested that one of the reasons for the current anti-Jewish acts in Poland is the fact that Poles resent and resist the efforts to restore property to the original Jewish owners. The total value of all the property involved may run very high; a preliminary and partial estimate of the value of Jewish communal property destroyed or lost already approaches \$40,000,000.¹

The question of ownership is complicated by the fact that so many of the former Jewish owners have died or disappeared. The Government has already taken cognizance of this situation in its plans for nationalization of basic industries. Hilary Minc, Minister of Industry, stated that "about two-thirds of the industries would be taken over without compensation because they were formerly owned or controlled by Germans, or were voluntarily ceded to the Germans during the war or belonged to persons who went over to the enemy or belonged to persons who are dead and who have no immediate heirs."² The last category undoubtedly refers to property belonging in large part to Jews.

1. A distinction must be made between property completely destroyed and property which has changed from Jewish to non-Jewish ownership. If reparations are assessed and collected for damage done by the Germans, it can be assumed that the Polish Jews will have their claims presented for consideration.
2. New York Times, January 17, 1946. Emphasis supplied.

The position of the Polish Government on this question was further elucidated by Dr. Arieh Tartakower in a report to the World Jewish Congress, meeting in August 1945 in London:

"The Polish Government seems to observe the principle of equality of rights...in the field of indemnification and restitution of property, with, however, certain restrictions arising out of its general social policy. Jews whose property was robbed under the Nazi occupation will have it restored, if they or their heirs are still alive. Concrete steps are being taken to have this principle enforced. This, however, does not refer to the big Jewish enterprises which will be nationalized, just as the big Polish enterprises will be."

At present there is no indication of how much communal or private property has been returned to the Jews. The fact that a number of communities have been revived suggests that their property may have been restored, but the settlement of Polish Jews in former German territory now held by Poland gives rise to the belief that those settlers will presumably receive property once belonging to Germans and that much of the private property once owned by Jews may either pass to the State or remain in the hands of the present owners.

The Polish Government and the Central Committee of Jews have undertaken several measures to meet the economic problem of the Jews. The Government has thrown open new lands for settlement, particularly in East Prussia and Lower Silesia, areas acquired by Poland from Germany. The Central Committee has encouraged Jews to enter factories, where employment is promised, and, at the same time, has initiated a program for establishing cooperatives.

As of mid-March 1946 the Government reported that 8,951 Jews (skilled and unskilled) had been settled in Upper Silesia, of whom 1,618 were employed. In Lower Silesia, 12,874 employable persons were enumerated, of whom 5,962 were currently employed. The breakdown for Lower Silesia reveals some significant changes in the occupational structure, as the following table shows:

Table 2: EMPLOYMENT OF JEWS IN LOWER SILESIA, 1946

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Crafts	1,672	27.3
Manual labor	1,923	32.3
Agriculture	373	6.3
Industry	1,047	17.6
Free Professions	185	3.0
Administration	807	13.5

It will be observed that no Jews are reported as being engaged in commerce, a statistical classification in which they were once prominent.¹ It is also significant that the percentage engaged in agriculture still remained small, in spite of the fact that both the Government and the Central Committee have been interested in setting up agricultural projects.²

Cognizant, presumably, of the unbalanced economic situation into which Polish Jews had been forced prior to 1939, the Central Committee has repeatedly emphasized the idea of "productive" work. For example, it called upon the Polish Jews "to organize [their] lives on the basis of productive work," and promised to "give help to all those who want to live by their own work."³ Moreover, the Committee has a so-called Productivization Department. The Committee also has frequently called upon the Jews to enter factories where, it says, "there is enough work for all." At the same time it has set up vocational training centers and cooperatives of various types.

In its report to the World Jewish Congress in August 1945, the Central Committee stated that its Productivization Department was giving "primary attention" to the establishment of "production and labor cooperatives," also referred to as "collective workshops." Several purposes were ascribed to these institutions: to restore the Jewish population to productive work; to employ both skilled and unskilled workers; and to furnish some means for the training of the unskilled.

It is not altogether clear whether these cooperatives are similar to the producers' cooperatives as known in Great Britain and the US. The question of ownership and control does not seem to be the primary interest in these arrangements, which appear to be pools of skill and labor engaged

1. FBIS: Daily, March 18, 1946; see Table 1, p. 5 above.
2. A report from Warsaw, dated April 17, 1946, stated: "The attempt to settle [Jews] on [the] land proved...to be successful. About 400 Jewish farmers settled on 85 farms and are farming 1470 Ha. They possess 1,611 head of livestock. Jewish farmers are active members of the Peasant Mutual Aid Union. They fulfill contributions in kind up to 104 percent..."
FBIS: Daily, April 17, 1946.
3. FBIS: Daily, January 5, 1946.

in a common, collective effort to produce goods. The Central Committee has reported on cooperatives of carpenters, shoemakers and leather workers, electrical workers, weavers, soapmakers, tailors, underwear workers, masons, brushmakers, and printers.

To help finance this work, a credit cooperative was organized, which had spent 8,500,000 zlotys on the projects by October 31, 1945. But the work was hampered by the insufficiency of funds, and the Central Committee has appealed to foreign Jewish organizations for financial assistance.¹ In Lower Silesia, for example, the credit fund available to cooperatives in the district totaled only 1,050,000 zlotys (about \$10,000).

The current importance of these cooperatives is not altogether clear. Conceived as self-help devices, it may very well be that they are not adapted to the type of large-scale settlement which the Government wants to encourage in western Poland. But it is probable that as long as the Polish Jewish community remains small and semi-isolated from the rest of the population, it will tend to set up and support such cooperative ventures to serve its own needs. Similar considerations may apply to Government-sponsored efforts to settle Jews on farms. Available evidence indicates that most of these are small farms -- usually operated by Jews who can prove they were farmers before the war -- but as the farmers become integrated into a community it is likely that they will be able to produce money crops instead of remaining merely self-suppliers.²

VI. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

As regards the Jewish question, a new era in Poland was inaugurated with the establishment of the Provisional Polish Government on the basis of the Yalta Agreement. Dvoid of the anti-Semitism which had characterized pro-war governments and had marked some elements in the former Government-in-Exile in London, the new Government has steadily declared itself in favor of equitable treatment of the Jewish population.

1. Appeals were also made for equipment for various kinds of craftsmen; raw materials were sought for workshops (leather, thread, cloth, metal, etc.).
2. See note 2, p. 14 above.

Undoubtedly influencing the attitude of the Polish Government toward the Jews is the position of the Soviet Union on the Jewish question.¹ The Soviet attitude concerning the Jewish problem in Poland has, however, been expressed only in vague terms. The closest approach to an official expression of policy was contained in conversations between Marshal Stalin and Dr. Emil Sommerstein, chairman of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, on the occasion of a reception to members of the Polish Government in the Kremlin in July 1945. Stalin is reported to have told Sommerstein that he knew what the Germans had done to the Jews and was prepared to avenge it, and to have replied "certainly and seriously" to Sommerstein's query whether the Soviet Government would be interested in an international solution to the Jewish problem.² Since that time there has been no indication of any further elaboration of policy, aside from the steps taken to facilitate the repatriation of Polish Jews from the USSR. However, the Polish Government, in making anti-Semitism a crime, appears to have borrowed a leaf from the Soviet book.

It is very likely that both Moscow and Warsaw are sensitive to the fact that the current anti-Semitism in Poland is in part an expression of hostility toward the new regime and, ultimately, toward the USSR. It may be their policy, therefore, to proceed slowly in uprooting the movement

1. In the USSR, Jews are recognized as a distinct national element and have been granted a large measure of cultural autonomy, with Yiddish as their national language. Biro-Bidjan in eastern Asiatic Russia is a Jewish autonomous republic. There are schools throughout the USSR where instruction is in Yiddish; research institutes, theaters, and other cultural activities are carried on in the same language. As a natural concomitant of this recognition, anti-Semitism has been outlawed. On the other hand, Zionism is regarded as a bourgeois reactionary movement and the Hebrew language has been banned. During the war, Soviet Jewry was encouraged to renew contacts with Jews elsewhere through the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. This Committee collaborated with the Jewish Agency in Palestine and the World Jewish Congress in publishing materials on Nazi atrocities, but such cooperation did not mean that the Soviet official position on Zionism had changed. It is not clear to what extent Polish Jews in the USSR were influenced by Soviet policy, but it may be of significance that the Soviets have consented to their repatriation.
2. Overseas News Agency, September 4, 1945.

rather than intensify a feeling that evidently enjoys considerable popular support.

A. The Government Policy

The new policy of the Polish Government toward the Jews was summarized in a letter written by Prime Minister Edward Osobka-Morawski to Dr. Sommerstein. Intended to be read to the World Zionist Conference held in London in 1945, the letter stated:

In connection with your trip to the World Zionist Conference in London, I authorize and beg you to inform all interested about the attitude of the Government of National Unity toward the remaining Jewish population alive in Poland....

1. The Government of National Unity most categorically condemns and will fight with all possible means racism and anti-Semitism as the remnants of the criminal ideology of Fascism and Militarism.
2. The standpoint of the Government is the equality of citizens' rights for all citizens without distinction as to race, religion, or nationality.
3. The Government will give its full support to the action of economic reconstruction and productivization of the Jewish population in Poland and to the reconstruction of the cultural and educational life of the population.
4. The Government will do everything possible to facilitate the access of foreign relief to the Jewish population in Poland.
5. The Government will not restrict, but on the contrary, will support, the efforts of individuals or of institutions which organize the voluntary emigration of Jews from Poland.

This statement of policy has been supported by other officials and has been reiterated by Osobka-Morawski on several occasions.¹ Political parties, trade-unions, and similar bodies have also voiced these views. For instance, a representative of the Polish Peasant Party declared on July 21, 1945 that "in democratic Poland there will be no discrimination because of race or creed." A joint political party and union declaration of April 19, 1945 read, in part: "All citizens of our country are equal before the law and ought to have equal possibility of existence and development." The oath of allegiance taken by officers and enlisted men of the Army enjoins the soldiers to "respect all citizens as equals, and devotedly [to] protect democratic freedom."

1. For example, in an address to the Polish National Council, as reported from Warsaw by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, January 3, 1946.

The anti-Semitic outbreaks in the country have tested the Government's intentions to live up to its expressed policy. Soon after a particularly violent anti-Semitic outbreak in Cracow in 1945, a law was passed making anti-Semitic agitation a criminal offense.¹ On December 21, 1945, the Government promulgated a decree providing the death sentence or life imprisonment for violence against Jews.² Shortly afterward Osubka-Morawski told the National Council that Jews would enjoy the fullest protection of the State and promised that anti-Semitism would be wiped out. Subsequently, trials of persons guilty of attacks upon Jews and Government supporters have been held in Poland.³ Another indication of the Government's attitude was evident in the formation of the semiofficial All-Polish League for Combating Racial Ideology, composed of government employees and social workers.⁴

There is thus no doubt of the intentions of the present Government toward the Jews, and of its conviction that the anti-Semitic outbursts also reflect a basic hostility toward the new leftist regime. But it is also true that hostility toward the Jews is widespread and that the general lawlessness throughout the country makes it difficult to control the situation.⁵ Therefore it is not surprising that the Polish Government, as shown by the fifth point in Osubka-Morawski's letter, also gives support to individuals or organizations engaged in aiding the voluntary emigration of Jews from Poland. Osubka-Morawski told the National Council in January 1946 that the Government objected only to illegal emigration, which, at that time, had assumed considerable proportions. By taking this stand, the new Polish Government has indicated its recognition of the part that Palestine has come to play in the lives of many Jews and its readiness to make it easy for Jews to leave Poland if they so desire.⁶

1. Independent Jewish Press Service, October 26, 1945.

2. Reported by the Polish Committee of the American Jewish Congress, New York, January 1946.

3. See, for example, the account in FBIS: Daily, May 13, 1946.

4. FBIS: Daily, April 11, 1946.

5. For an important judgment on this question, see Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, Washington, April 30, 1946, p. 74.

6. The Report of the Anglo-American Committee says (p.75): "Accounts of life in Palestine given before the war are remembered and rendered doubly attractive by contrast with the ordeals they have endured. These accounts are repeated now and play their part in inducing the Jews to set out on the road...which is believed to lead to Palestine."

In an address before the London World Jewish Congress, Dr. Arish Tartakower gave the following analysis of this seemingly ambivalent attitude on the Part of the Polish Government:

No less clear is the attitude of the Polish Government on the question of Zionism. No difficulties whatsoever are being made against Zionist activities in Poland. All the Zionist groups, as well as the Hechalutz Movement whose aim is to train Jewish youth for emigration to Palestine, are developing their work freely. In his conference with us, the Polish Ambassador in London stressed his admiration for Zionism and promised that as soon as the Polish Government overcomes the present great political and economic difficulties with which it is faced in the administration of the country, it would consider support of Zionism as one of its duties. The Ambassador at the same time stressed that this attitude has nothing to do with any wish of the Polish Government to have the Polish Jews leave the country; on the contrary, the Polish authorities would prefer to have the Jews stay in Poland, but they also appreciate highly the will of the Jewish population to have their own national home established in Palestine.

Another indication of the Government's generally favorable attitude toward the Jews is found in the fact that a number of Jews now occupy important governmental or other public positions. Among them are Hilary Minc, Minister/^{of} Industry; Leon Chajm, Vice Minister of Justice; Jakob Borman, Under Secretary to the Premier; Jerzy Boroisha, head of the State Publishing Trust (Czytelnik); Boleslaw Drobner, Henryk Altman, S. Szer, Jerzy Szapiro, Foliks Mantol, in various ministries and other posts; and Emil Sommerstein head of the Central Committee of Jews. It must be emphasized that these men not only represent different political views but are also divided with respect to Jewish political issues. Nevertheless their presence in the Government, civil service, and police has made it possible for hostile elements to attribute unpopular measures to them. The Government, however, shows no indication of responding to the clamor and agitation by removing these men from office.

The Government has also given its support to the idea of "Jewish minority rights in Poland," although, as Dr. Tartakower suggested in his London address, this stand is largely academic in view of the small number of surviving Jews. In respect to contacts with Jewish communities abroad, moreover, the Government has shown its willingness to have Polish Jews renew their relationships with Jews in other lands. The Government, for example, gave its "express blessings" to the large Polish delegation which attended the London Conference of the World Jewish Congress last year. RESTRICTED

B. The Organization of the Jewish Community

The mere fact of an organized Jewish community is no proof of the Government's favorable attitude toward its Jewish citizens, but developments in Poland suggest that the Government views with favor and supports the Jewish community organization there. As early as 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (FCNL), the forerunner of the present regime, established a Jewish Department.¹ At about the same time, Jewish leaders who had been active in the Jewish underground² established a committee in Lublin. The leader of this committee was Dr. Emil Sommerstein, who already held a post in the FCNL. Soon after the FCNL was transformed into the Provisional Government of National Unity in January 1945, the Jewish Committee was expanded into the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny Komitet Żydowski w Polsce) with Sommerstein as chairman.

The Central Committee has been described as "a coalition body of all Jewish political parties -- the Zionists, Bundists, Democrats, and Workers Party, in equal numbers." The Zionists include the Mizrachi (religious), the Zionist State Party (rightist), the General Zionists (center), and the Ha-Shomer ha-Sa'ir, Right Poale Zion, and Left Poale Zion (all labor). It was the sheer pressure of events that forged a committee out of these ordinarily disparate elements in Polish Jewish life. But the Committee is more than a device for party representation; it reflects the current Jewish alignment with the Provisional Government in Poland.

From the time of its origin, the Central Committee has been the core of reviving secular Jewish life in Poland. Enjoying official sanction, it has played a leading role in organizing relief (financed by the Government and foreign sources), in undertaking steps toward economic reconstruction, and in encouraging the revival of cultural life. Jewish communal buildings

1. Several Jews were connected with London Government-in-Exile, but their presence was overshadowed by the anti-Semitic elements which were also affiliated with that government.
2. For a partial account of the Jewish underground see the remarks of Jakob Berman, reported in FBIS: Daily, April 11, 1946; also the Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, pp. 72-3.

have been restored or established; an association of writers, journalists, and artists has been created; a Yiddish-language weekly, Dos Haie Leben (The New Life), is being published. In Lodz a Jewish library has been opened and a lecture series begun. A historical commission has started to collect documents of various kinds bearing upon Jewish life. Broadcasts in Yiddish are made regularly over Polish radio stations.

To carry out these objectives, the Central Committee organized the following departments: Social Welfare, Child Care, Productivization, Statistics, Information and Propaganda, Libraries, Health. The Government supplies funds for this work. For example, it has underwritten the entire budget for schools in which Yiddish is the language of instruction, and many Jewish subjects (including Hebrew language and literature) are taught.

Religious matters per se are the province of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities, another committee organized with the permission of the Government. The legal basis of the Union is a circular of February 5, 1945, according to which any ten Jews can form a religious community, although there can be only one such group in any one place. At present, 58 such groups are said to be in existence, of which 40 were represented at a meeting in Cracow in March.¹

The surviving public property of the Jewish community was divided between the Central Committee and the Union, general property devoted to cultural matters going to the former, religious properties -- synagogues, mikvehs (ritual baths), etc. -- to the latter. The religious Union also maintains homes for children.

It is reported that relations between the two groups are occasionally tense, largely because of the presence of Communist members on the Committee.² At times the Central Committee has tried to diminish the influence of the religious communities, but in the smaller towns the Union is said to be very

1. Interview with Mr. Z. Warhaftig, World Jewish Congress, New York, who returned from Poland early in March 1946. It is probable that the number of ten Jews who can organize a religious community was based upon the traditional minyana of Orthodox Jewish practice.
2. At least four members of the twenty-one man original Central Committee were identified as Communists.

strong. The Union, moreover, is supported by the Jewish religious parties -- Mizrahi and Agudists (ultra-orthodox) -- as well as by some general Zionists. Rabbis, it is reported, have also been organized into a central union, which is recognized by the Government.

Nevertheless, the Central Committee will continue to receive support from various factions, because all relief has to be siphoned to Polish Jews through its agency. Even though it has no mandate and was not chosen by election, the Central Committee is the body around which Jewish life is being built in Poland.

VII. THE PROBLEMS OF JEWISH SURVIVAL

The question of Jewish survival in Poland is not only one of the welfare and protection of numbers. It also involves the extent to which Jewish religious and cultural life can be expected to endure. The opposing factors are powerful: the few, weakened survivors, whose problem has been discussed above; the impact of anti-Semitism; the influence of native left-wing and Soviet views upon the manner in which Jewish settlements will be organized.

A. The Anti-Semitic Problem

There is little doubt that the current anti-Jewish manifestations in Poland represent a continuation of activities by right-wing groups that were at work before 1939, when even major political parties had anti-Semitic programs. By exploiting the surviving remnant of Polish Jewry, these elements are seeking to compromise the Government and to attack leftist trends in Polish life either as purely Jewish creations or as a Soviet-Jewish conspiracy. In other words, there is not much that is essentially new or different in the current anti-Semitic agitation. However, the anti-Semitic overtones in pre-war Polish politics predisposed many Poles to the acceptance of Nazi racial theories, and there is evidence that Poles persecuted the Jews as vigorously as did the Germans during the occupation. The retreating Nazis, moreover, left in their wake a heavy residue of their racial theories. Even before the liberation of Poland, anti-Semitic propaganda

emerged in Polish emigre circles. In London, for instance, there was published the anti-Semitic sheet, Jestem Poliakem (I am a Pole). Anti-Semitism reached such dimensions in the Polish Army under General Wladyslaw Anders that many Jewish soldiers felt compelled to desert those forces and seek enlistment with other Allied armies.¹

By mid-1944, widespread anti-Semitism was reported in Lublin and other parts of Poland, attributable at this time to the departing Germans. By April 1945, more reports were current and a dozen Polish towns were named as places where Jews had been killed, allegedly by members of the Polish Home Guard (Armja Krajowa), the armed force formed by and loyal to the Government-in-Exile. These sporadic instances finally culminated in two fairly large-scale anti-Semitic incidents: at Rzeszow on June 11 and at Cracow on August 11, 1945.² The authorities moved quickly to sentence the persons charged with complicity in the Cracow pogrom, but the anti-Semitic agitation did not cease. The Polish Jews, furthermore, did not think that the sentences of two to seven and one-half years were heavy enough for the guilty persons.³

By early October 1945 it was reported that Polish Jews who had returned recently were again fleeing Poland because of the anti-Semitic excesses.⁴ In fact, Polish officials were said to be advising Jews to leave Poland for their own safety. From Prague, too, came reports of increasing anti-Jewish manifestations and the news that the Jews were becoming panicky. Leaflets were being used to warn Jews to get out before they were killed.⁵

1. See General Anders' statement of denial in the New York Times, February 18, 1946.
2. See Jewish Telegraphic Agency reports from London, August 21, 1945; from Warsaw, August 27, 1945; from Moscow, September 3, 1945. See also Independent Jewish Press Service reports from Warsaw, September 4, 1945; from London, September 14, October 29, November 5, 1945.
3. Another element seems to have projected itself into the turbulent scene, according to Dana Adams Schmidt (New York Times, September 7, 1945), who reported that Polish emigres were saying in Paris that the Government's actions were being directed not only against the anti-Semites involved but also against so-called "anti-Communist elements."
4. Carl Levin, reporting from Zeilshelm, Germany, in New York Herald Tribune, October 4, 1945; see also Gladwin Hill's account of his visit to Poland, in New York Times, October 27, 1945.
5. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Prague, September 11, 1945.

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As the tension mounted within Poland and rumors increased that the local police in Cracow had been involved in the pogrom, there were signs of increasing panic among the Polish Jews. Soon they were reported appearing in Germany by the hundreds daily.¹ It was at this juncture that Lt. Gen. Frederick E. Morgan, UNRRA chief in Germany, made his statement that Jews were flooding Poland as part of some preconceived plan. But the Polish Ambassador to the United States, Oscar Lango, almost immediately confirmed the fact that "there had been one pogrom in Cracow . . . and numerous individual acts of violence against Jews in [his] country." Shortly afterward, Foreign Minister Rzymowski gave official confirmation of the extent of the anti-Semitic disturbances in Poland.²

The Central Committee of Jews in Poland, nevertheless, announced that the situation in Poland did "not justify panicky emigration."³ This statement was immediately questioned by foreign Jewish sources; it was alleged that the Communist and Socialist members had dictated the framing of the statement, that it had been issued against the wishes of the Zionists, and that Sommerstein had signed under duress.⁴

The presence of anti-Semitism in Poland presents the Central Committee with a difficult political problem. Dependent as it is on the good will of the Government, it has to minimize the extent of anti-Semitism or else suggest that the Government is unable to make the country internally secure. Yet it cannot deny the fact that opposition elements, outside and inside Poland, have been carrying on a campaign of violence against the Government in which the Jews have suffered. The general policy of the Central Committee

1. See, for example, Kendall Foss in the New York Post, December 7, 1945.
2. For Morgan's statement, as originally reported, see Washington Daily News, January 2, 1946; for rebuttal, see Raymond Daniell in The New York Times, January 4, 1946, and interview with Judge Simon Rifkind, advisor on Jewish affairs to Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, American commander in the European theater, in Evening Star (Washington), January 3, 1946. For Lango's statement, see Overseas News Agency (Washington), January 3, 1946, and Alexander H. Uhl in PM (New York), February 1, 1946. Rzymowski's interview is in FBIS: Daily, January 25, 1946. The Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine has an excellent summary section on Poland, pp. 72 ff.
3. New York Times, January 11, 1946; FBIS: Daily, January 5, 1946.
4. Independent Jewish Press Service, January 11, 1946.

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seems to be one of minimizing the seriousness of the attacks, although shortly after the appearance of the above-mentioned announcement, Pawol Zalocki, secretary general of the Committee, revealed that "fascist gangsters" had killed 352 Jews in Poland since the liberation, and that 20,000 Jews had left Poland in the previous year.¹

The motivation for the current anti-Semitism in Poland arises from political and economic more than from ideological factors. The political factors are those which motivate the elements opposed to the present regime. The economic factors are found in the question of the restitution of property and the competition for jobs.² But none of these factors would be effective without the presence in Poland of an anti-Semitic tradition.

The opposition ranks include extremist elements which represent a pro-fascist attitude and hope for an eventual war between the Western Powers and the USSR. So long as they are in a position to carry on this agitation, anti-Semitism in Poland is unlikely to diminish. On the other hand, if political evolution in Poland results in the curbing of extremist elements in the opposition, the chances of survival of the Jewish community will be correspondingly enhanced.

B. The Factors in Survival

Provided the menace of anti-Semitism is eradicated, there are certain factors which would tend to promote the restoration of Jewish life if they operate in a positive direction. It is clear that the Jews themselves, under the leadership of men from various walks of life in the Central Committee and the religious Union, have taken the lead in doing things for themselves. Even without the support of added numbers of Polish Jews from other areas, the fragment within Poland has shown vitality and forcefulness.

1. Independent Jewish Press Service, February 1, 1946. The Committee also published population data showing that numbers of Jews had declined from 80,000 to 60,000 in the early months of 1946. See Chapter III above. Dr. Joseph Tononbaum, president of the American Federation of Polish Jews, reported from Warsaw that 800 Jews had been slain since the liberation. Evening Star (Washington), April 20, 1946.
2. Report of the Anglo-American Committee, p. 74.

Nevertheless, without aid from the Government and support from abroad -- support which is being sought in increasing amounts ¹ -- the Central Committee could not have achieved what it has. It is quite probable that one key to eventual survival may be the amount of foreign aid, especially that coming from Jewish organizations in the United States.

The attitude of both the Polish and the Soviet Governments is of extreme importance for Jewish survival. Here a distinction must be made, however, between the mere preservation of Jewish lives and the resurrection of a Jewish religious and cultural community. The Poles seem more inclined to restore the historic Jewish community than is likely in the case of the Russians, whose Polish Jewish guests have sometimes been described as unwilling converts to Communism. The test of Soviet influence will appear in the future form of the settlements of Jews in Silesia, the future policy of the Polish Government toward Zionism, and the degree to which Jews continue to direct their own affairs. The fate of the estimated 85,000 repatriates now going to Silesia will provide the answer, probably before the end of 1946.

The extent of the survival of Jewish culture may be decided, furthermore, by the interplay of two additional factors. One is the matter of the number of books, school buildings, and other physical properties that have survived. The tradition of scholarship ran deep in the historical Polish Jewish community, and it is probable that it will again become an important aspect of Jewish life there.² A more important factor, however, is the personal interest in Jewish affairs of the individuals who have come to play a part in leading the revived Jewish community. The Central Committee comprises men of varying political views, ranging from the representatives of the labor parties (Communists and Socialists, the latter of whom are traditionally anti-Zionist) to religious Zionists. These men also represent such

1. For example the Jewish Labor Committee, New York, has announced the creation of a special fund of \$250,000 for the maintenance of institutions established in Poland for the Jews. The new arrivals from the USSR were said to be in need of food clothing, and money. New York Times, May 19, 46.
2. It should be pointed out, however, that the Yiddish Scientific Institute, one of the leading bodies of its kind in the world, has moved its headquarters from Poland to the United States. It is now engaged in retrieving what remains of its archives and in bringing them to this country.

disparate experiences as those of underground fighters and of scholars. In view of these facts, it is quite possible that the Zionists may have been motivated as much by a fear of left-wing dominance (mainly Communist) as they have been by a desire to get Jews out of what they regard as a pogrom-threatened Poland to Palestine. In spite of those conflicts, the Central Committee has shown great interest in reviving Jewish intellectual activities, undoubtedly in recognition of their importance for the morale of the survivors.

If the surviving Polish Jews from the USSR have become indoctrinated with communism they will probably be equipped to play a leading role in a country whose government is already sympathetic to the Soviets, and the preservation of the orthodox Jewish way of life will be threatened.¹ If these elements achieve prominence, it is very likely that the Zionists will intensify their own activities, although they may be forced to work clandestinely. On the other hand, some observers have suggested that the repatriates will prove to be anti-Communists. If this is the case, many of them may seek to emigrate to Palestine, although some may prefer to remain in the new settlements in Silesia. If Palestine is closed to immigration, however, the tension within the Jewish community in Poland will mount and the future of the Central Committee and of the Jewish community generally will become even more uncertain.

Poland is now threatened with a political crisis involving the future position of the Peasant Party led by Mikolajczyk, former premier of the Government-in-Exile and now a member of the Warsaw Government. The resolution of this crisis may have its effects upon the fate of the Polish Jewish community. Although some of the members of the Central Committee are Communists, the bulk of the surviving Jews in Poland are undoubtedly not. (This situation may, of course, be changed once the political inclinations of the repatriates returning from the USSR are known). In spite of their general

1. At least one report, however, suggests that the repatriates are bringing back Jewish religious books and objects from the USSR; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Moscow, April 6, 1946.

non-leftist views, however, most of the Jews in Poland probably feel that the present Government with its declarations on minorities and racial and religious groups guarantees the Jews a fair chance for survival in a physical sense. On the other hand, the more conservative Peasant Party may not seem to them to represent such a guarantee. Thus, while there is not necessarily any ideological tie between the Jews in Poland and the present leftist regime, they will certainly prefer to support a government that promises and endeavors to protect them. Mikolajczyk himself is not suspected of anti-Semitic tendencies, and if he can persuade his party to take a similar stand, the Jews in Poland would probably have no reason to object to its hegemony. At the same time, they cannot overlook the fact that Mikolajczyk's party draws upon the support of extreme rightist and fascist groups in Poland, and that these elements may prove more powerful than the present leadership of the Peasant Party.

Whatever the political prospect, life for the Jews in Poland will be harsh. At this moment, their position is especially endangered by forces outside the Government and basically opposed to that Government. Presumably, the Jews can survive as persons only if extremist opposition elements are held in check; their chances of survival as Jews, in the religious and cultural sense, are governed by a complex of other factors, some of which cannot be controlled by either Poles or Jews.

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