

Articles

Jews in the World War

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

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THE outbreak of war in Europe adds a host of new problems to those left unsolved by the last World War. In many respects it was the failure to solve these problems which brought about the present conflict. The heavy toll of modern warfare, the vast sacrifices demanded of all people, the disasters from which society suffers are so great that only events of first magnitude make a lasting impression on the mind of the public. The smaller tragedies, however poignant, are noticed by only a few, and are soon forgotten. The effects of the World War on the Jews suffered this fate of obscurity. Yet, what happened to the Jews in that struggle has the markings of profound tragedy. Fighting in all the armies for their native lands, Jews, in many cases, were simultaneously forced to defend themselves against the hostility of the governments for which they fought. Victimized by many—but also befriended by many—the Jews bore a terribly disproportionate share of the sufferings imposed on humanity by the War. Today the theatre of conflict is once more in regions thickly populated by Jews; the destructiveness of war has reached unprecedented heights; and in some countries Jew-hatred has been elevated to the status of a national policy. The fate of the Jews in the last war is, therefore, a subject of timely importance.

I

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF JEWS IN 1914

Jews in the world today number more than sixteen million. The three great centers of Jewish population are the United States, where approximately 4,845,000 live, Poland with over 3,000,000 Jews, and the Soviet Union, where the number of Jews is well above 2,500,000. Rumania has 900,000 Jews; France, 300,000; and Great Britain, 300,000. Canada has about 160,000 Jewish residents. In South America there are approximately 330,000. In Africa the Jewish population has grown to about 600,000, while in Asia there are now more than 800,000.

In 1914, out of the approximately fourteen million Jews, more than six million resided in the Russian Empire, which at that time encompassed the

present territories of the Soviet Union, Latvia, Esthonia, Finland, Lithuania, Congress Poland, the region of Western White Russia, at present under Polish rule (more recently occupied by the Red Army), and the province of Bessarabia, at present under Rumanian rule.

Over 2,500,000 resided in the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, which then included Czecho-Slovakia; Transylvania, Bukovina, and other regions at present under Rumania; and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, which are now parts of Yugoslavia. About 600,000—approximately the same number as in 1933—resided in Germany. Rumania counted some 300,000 Jews. The number of Jews in France was a little over 100,000; Great Britain numbered then about 245,000. The rest of Europe's Jews was distributed among the Balkans, Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy.

The entire Jewish population of Asia amounted in 1914 to about 356,000 of whom about 100,000 resided in Palestine. Less than three million Jews resided in the United States. Canada counted only less than 80,000. South and Central America contained less than 80,000 Jews; Africa's Jewish population was estimated to be about 415,000. Australia and New Zealand numbered nearly 20,000.

II

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

A Jewish question in the present sense of the word did not exist then, nor was the problem of international anti-Semitism a factor of importance in 1914. It is true that the six million Jews of Russia were confined to a Pale of Settlement, were burdened by a great number of political and economic restrictions, and faced a policy of anti-Semitic collaboration on the part of the Church, State and the reactionary elements which often resulted in waves of pogroms and was the cause for their mass migration. On the other hand, the voice of liberal Russia was heard more frequently than ever before during the two decades which preceded the War. The revolution of 1905 proved the instability of the Tsarist regime. Jewish emancipation was in the offing and Russia's Jews were confident of obtaining equal rights. The same hopes were expressed by the Jews of Rumania who also suffered from numerous disabilities. In Germany and Austria-Hungary, anti-Semitism existed as a form of political propaganda rather than as a movement. The bureaucracy and army in these countries certainly were not free from the infection. Yet, its manifestations were regarded as unpleasant, but, unavoidable vestiges of the "unenlightened" past. France, where anti-Semitism had ceased to be of political importance following the ending of the Dreyfus affair, was a splendid example for the rest of Western Europe. In England, Italy, Holland, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries, no responsible person could ever conceive of the use of anti-Semitism as either an economic or political weapon. The prohibition of *shehitah* in Switzerland was viewed more in the nature of misconceived humaneness toward animals rather than as a restriction upon the religious Jew. Difficulties of naturalization of East European Jews in

some western countries were no greater than those faced by Christians from the same localities and constituted a minor problem. Persecution of Jews in Mohammedan countries like Morocco, Persia, and the Yemen were due to an entirely different background from that in Europe. Besides, the situation in Morocco and Persia was then steadily improving.

Religiously and ideologically, Jews were not as diversified as they are today. Reform Judaism was professed by relatively small numbers in Western countries. In the United States, it was still confined almost exclusively to German Jews and their descendants. The overwhelming majority was then Orthodox and Yiddish-speaking. Russian Jewry was still a unit. Secularism was just beginning to make its influence felt there, but it was limited to Yiddish-speaking intellectuals and a small sector of the working class. Many of its adherents, however, had steadily emigrated overseas. Zionism was a growing movement which competed with the non-political orthodoxy. The effects of its cultural activities in modernizing education and reviving the Hebrew language were just beginning to be felt. Colonization efforts in Palestine had just begun to strike permanent roots. The fifty odd colonies and settlements, and the Hebrew Gymnasium at Tel Aviv, were grounds for gratification. The Hebrew language had just won its initial battle against the German tongue in the dispute centering over the medium of instruction at the Haifa Technical School. Hope was felt that a charter for mass colonization could be obtained from Turkey. Palestine was not considered at that time as even a partial solution of importance for the problem of the contemporary refugees, the Russian Jews. It was a free, almost passportless world. Emigration was open to both Americas and in South Africa. It was an optimistic world. The nineteenth century, the century of emancipation had just ended. Most Jews were convinced that the twentieth century, the century of technological improvement, would extend Jewish emancipation to Eastern Europe and the Near East. The shot fired at Sarajevo disturbed this scene, relatively prosperous and peaceful when compared to the vicissitudes of the post-War world.

III

JEW IN THE ARMIES

An examination of available statistics and estimates shows that the estimated total of men under arms on both sides was 65,000,000; the number of Jews was 1,500,000 or 2% of the total. The proportion of Jews among the general population of these countries was estimated at approximately 1%. Among the 42,000,000 men in the allied forces, 1,055,600 or 2.5% were Jews; of the 23,000,000 men in the armies of the Central Powers, 450,000 or 2% of the total were Jews.

The casualty figures for both sides demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of the Jewish soldiers saw actual combat, and their sacrifices equalled their comrades-in-arms. As in the Polish army today, the Jewish population, barred from the civil services and from the army offices, naturally

supplied more front line soldiers, particularly in Russia, Rumania, and Germany. In Russia, "Black Coat" regiments of Jewish soldiers, so called because of the color of their uniforms, were sent to particularly dangerous positions. Of the estimated total of 8,500,000 men killed in all the armies, the number of Jews is placed at 170,825—116,825 Jews in the Allied armies, and 54,000 in the forces of the Central Powers. The proportion of Jewish dead was therefore about 2%, roughly approximating their percentage in the armies.

Limitation of space does not permit a detailed description of the instances of valor on the part of Jewish soldiers in all the armies. Nor is it within the scope of this article to present a summary of citations and decorations for bravery earned by them. Because of the oft-repeated attempts to discredit the loyalty and patriotism of the German Jew, some facts regarding the war service of German Jews will be cited; these are typical of the conduct of Jewish soldiers in all the other armies. There were 100,000 Jews in the German army, comprising 1.1% of Germany's entire armed forces (the ratio of Jews to the total population was less than 1%). At least 78% of these served at the front; 29,875 were decorated, including 900 who received the Iron Cross, first class; and four who were awarded the rare Prussian Gold Medal. About 23,000 were promoted to non-commissioned ranks. Over 2,000, not including the medical corps, were commissioned. Before the War, no Jew could be a commissioned officer. There were 200 Jewish fliers in the German air corps, 30 of whom were shot down. Nor does space suffice for an analysis of the statistics of volunteers. The allied armies, especially those of France and Italy, had a number of Jewish generals; the Australian army was commanded by a Jew, Sir John Monash.

IV

THE RUSSIAN WAR ZONE

We shall now briefly review the treatment of the Jewish population residing in the Russian Empire, particularly in the war zone. The Russian policy towards it was a dual one. On the one hand, seeking the sympathy of neutrals and a possible American loan, the government pretended that it had the best intentions of regulating the Jewish question when the war was over. On the other hand, the persecution of Jews was carried over as a very useful instrument of war propaganda among a people which had been trained by the government, clergy and the reactionary press to blame everything disagreeable on the Jews. The War began with an appeal issued by the Tsar to "My dear Jews!" in which a definite promise of future equality was made.

The wave of patriotic emotion which swept across the country could not fail to affect the Jewish community. The fact that Russia was fighting on the side of the democracies was regarded by all the oppressed and underprivileged and by reformers as a harbinger of better treatment. The feeling of national unity in the face of a common danger, too, was considered a guar-

antee of a better future. The more far-seeing realized that the war was bound to result in the destruction or modification of the Tsarist tyranny. All these reasons, added to the natural love of the Russian Jews for their native country—and this in spite of their maltreatment—brought about a tremendous surge of patriotism among them. This was evidenced in the number of voluntary enlistments, in the bravery with which the Jewish soldiers fought, in the large numbers, and sizes of donations by Jewish communities and individuals to funds for the relief of suffering and for war needs. The brief period of hopefulness was over when Russia's forces began to face defeat.

The Tsar and his army rewarded this patriotism by inaugurating a series of forced deportations and pogroms. In their persecution of the Jewish civilian population, the Russian "Black Hundreds" were ably assisted by sections of the Polish people. The Poles were playing a dual role because of their desire to regain their independence. On the one hand, there were the National Democrats, the party of the reactionary middle class, capitalists and clergy. Since the Russian part of the country was intimately tied economically to the Russian hinterland, the National Democrats aimed at the reconstruction of a united Poland as an autonomous part of Russia. The more liberal elements in the Russian section of Poland as well as in Galicia were depending on the victory of the Central Powers. They accordingly organized a Polish legion under the leadership of Joseph Pilsudski, which was to aid the Austrians in the liberation of Poland from the yoke of Tsarism. The Polish war policy consisted of watchful waiting and a pretense of patriotism toward both sides. Denunciation of the Jews—to the Russians and to the Germans and Austrians—as spies and traitors was pointed to as proof of Polish patriotism and loyalty.

The war promises of Tsarist Russia to establish an autonomous Poland including the Galician regions within the Russian Empire caused grave apprehension among Galician Jews. Many of these, especially the assimilationists and the Zionists, favored the legitimate Polish national aspirations but could see an autonomous Poland only under liberal Austria. Many Jews volunteered in the Pilsudski Legion and continued to serve in it in spite of the mistreatment of the Jewish population in the conquered areas by members of the Legion.

The accusations made against Jews ranged from the medieval fable of well-poisoning to the charge that they were hiding enemy soldiers, firing on troops, and signalling to the invading armies. There were hundreds of such cases, many of which brought dire consequences to individuals and even entire communities. Whenever the military authorities went through the perfunctory formality of investigation, the absurdity of these accusations was immediately demonstrated. In some cases Polish clergymen and lay individuals felt compelled to protest against these libels and testified on behalf of the accused Jews. There were a number of particularly notorious incidents of this type. At Sochaczew seven Jews were executed. At Zamosc, five Jews were hanged by the Russian military authorities and seven others were saved after intervention by a Russian priest. While the army commanders were

more careful in their examination of such incidents, the anti-Semitic propagandists utilized them to poison the minds of the public and the army against Jews. The result was that the defamation of the Jew as a saboteur was common on both warring sides. It was most frequently accepted in Russia, where the reactionary groups were grateful to the Poles for supplying them with such excellent propaganda material. These outrages were resented and condemned by the liberal elements. Thus, the Conference of Progressive Deputies of the Duma held at Petrograd in January, 1915, adopted a resolution in which they declared that they would not extend any help to the Polish deputies in the furtherance of any of their national aims in the Duma because of this policy.

A variation of these accusations was the invention of spy stories and spy rumors. Such baseless charges were often reprinted in the reactionary newspapers and frequently magnified by the military authorities as part of the policy of fastening upon the Jews all the blame for defeats at the hands of the German armies. The Russian military command issued orders for special searches of Jewish homes. Prominent Jews in occupied Galician localities were taken as hostages; in case of sabotage or treacherous activities on the part of any one of the local inhabitants, the hostages were immediately executed. Orders were issued that the conduct of Jewish soldiers be closely watched. This policy opened a new avenue of army corruption, namely, blackmail. The demoralization resulting from these abuses in the Russian army became so flagrant that the higher military authorities were forced to order a careful investigation of all accusations and the punishment of all false witnesses. "By distracting the attention of officials from their necessary duties," the order read, "these reports promote disorder and excitement among the local population."

The Russian army authorities went further in their campaign against the Jewish population. Ostensibly because of its similarity to German, the use of Yiddish in correspondence, over the telephone and in public places was prohibited. No such excuse could be given for forbidding the printing of newspapers and books in the Hebrew language. The prohibition of correspondence in Yiddish affected hundreds of thousands of Jewish soldiers on the war front who were thus unable to communicate with their families. The Russian military censorship indulged in practices which were intended to brand the Jews as hostile and cowardly. It systematically expunged or changed the names of Jewish soldiers who had been awarded military honors. At the same time, the Russian press suppressed or changed Jewish names in reports referring to the heroism of Jewish soldiers in the Allied armies. Even routine letters by military commanders to the parents of Jewish soldiers informing them of the valor of their sons, were suppressed. News concerning the activities of Jewish war relief bodies or donations to relief activities by Jews was omitted from newspapers, and any declaration of the military which disapproved of anti-Jewish policies or cleared Jews of alleged misdeeds were kept out of the press. On the other hand, all kinds of false rumors, such as

spurious reports of wholesale desertions of Jewish soldiers and cases of spying, were published even if they carried no names or dates, and even after such reports had been repudiated by the military authorities. The circulation of a pamphlet by Russian intellectuals on behalf of the good name of Jews was forbidden. Jewish newspapers in Russian were severely censored and frequently suppressed for news items giving the truth about the Jewish situation. The reactionaries, headed by the Real Russian Union, kept up an incessant barrage of propaganda against any sign of concessions to Jews. Anti-Semitic petitions and memoranda were frequently presented to the Tsar. Pogrom literature was openly distributed, and brought frequent results in the form of attacks and riots. In this manner, the Tsarist government prepared a scapegoat for its own defeat.

A ruthless campaign of the Russian government against its own Jewish population was conducted by means of wholesale expulsions from the war areas. From the very beginning of the War, there were individual cases of deportation of Jews or of entire civilian populations from certain localities. The new policy, however, affected about 30% of the Jewish inhabitants of the Russian Empire. Such a practice could be defended in cases of military exigency or, perhaps, in the occupied regions of Galicia. But the systematic expulsion of Jews from all the Polish provinces, commenced in March, 1915, as well as from the regions of Kovno (Kaunas) and Kurland (Latvia) and even those regions not occupied by the German troops, can be explained only by the need of the military to prepare a scapegoat to carry the blame for the coming defeat. Rapid invasion of these territories by the advancing German armies prevented the complete expulsion of more than two million Jews.

The enforcement of the expulsion orders was carried out ruthlessly and on short notice, sometimes less than twenty-four hours. Refugees were treated like criminals by the army and police. In many cases, no adequate provisions were made for the transportation or reception of the refugees. Frequently trains bearing deportees were shifted from place to place with no opportunity given to the passengers to alight. In many cases, Jewish communities were not permitted to assist their homeless brethren. No consideration was shown for age, sex or physical condition. Mothers were separated from their children; expectant mothers were forced to march. The number of people affected will probably never be known. Statistics of June, 1915, by the Central Committee for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers at Petrograd revealed that the total number of homeless Jews in Poland and in the North-western district was at least 600,000. In the government of Wilno, alone, there were 200,000 exiles. More than 250,000 crowded into the government of Volhynia. The concentration of refugees in these regions became so serious a problem that the Council of Ministers was forced to abolish the Pale of Settlement within which 95% of Russia's Jews were confined. By a decree, issued in August, 1915, the Jews of the area affected by the war were permitted to move into the interior of Russia. This temporary measure, dictated by military necessity and by the hope of obtaining American loans, was im-

mediately publicized in the neutral and allied countries as a generous act of a liberal government toward an oppressed population. Most of the refugees were soon overtaken by the German armies and returned to their homes. But at least 211,691, according to an 1918 report of the Central Committee for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, remained in the interior of Russia.

V

THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF GALICIA

In view of the maltreatment by the Russian army of the Jewish population in its own territories, the reader can well imagine the havoc wrought upon Jews residing in the occupied regions of Galicia where Jews were not only members of a hated minority but also subjects of an enemy power. Russia intended to retain Galicia, and the occupation of this region was greeted as a victory—for Russia and Greek Orthodoxy. A manifesto by the Greek Orthodox Union to the local peasantry announced their deliverance from the "Jewish Father Francis Joseph" and from Jewish judges and officials. Here, too, sections of the Polish population played an unfriendly role, accusing Jews of hostility toward the invaders, espionage, and terrorization of the "friendly non-Jewish population." Upon the capture of Kolomeya and Przemyśl, the commanding general threatened with deportation all the Jews in the cities and in neighboring communities in the event of any damage to the lines of communication. The chief commander of the army, Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaievitch, ordered the deportation of Jews in case of victory of the enemy and the sending of Jewish hostages to Russia, thus holding Jews alone responsible for misbehavior of the civilian population. Jews were accused of hiding fugitive war prisoners in their synagogues. The commander of the third invading army ordered Jews to be driven out of their homes and to follow the evacuating Austrian army "because we have too many Jews in Russia and we can not allow any more there, especially those from Galicia." Upon the entry of Cossack troops into any city, their usual procedure was to bombard the Jewish districts on the pretext that Jewish civilians had engaged in sniping. A more "quiet" form of pogrom was indulged in everywhere, involving pillage, murder, and rapine. In order to avoid being mistaken for Jews, local Christians decorated their houses with icons or crucifixes. In many communities, exorbitant fines were levied by the official commanders or by bands of soldiers. The members of Okhrana (the Russian secret political police) followed in the steps of the army, just as the Nazi Gestapo today follows the invading German armies. Their task was to clean up whatever was left by the Cossacks. Synagogues were destroyed and Jewish districts set on fire. Upon the forced departure of the army, 15,000 Jews were driven from Przemyśl; 8,000 from Zaleszczyki. The same fate befell all the Jewish inhabitants of Sniatyn, Husiatyn, Buczacz and other cities. The Russian army took along with it thousands of hostages, many of whom managed to come back to their homes only after the cessation of hostilities. A listing of places

and incidents would involve the inclusion of a catalog in this article. The great dramatist S. An-Sky, author of *The Dybuk*, described the results of the invasions in a three volume work, called appropriately *Hurban Galitsie*, The Destruction of Galicia. The same atrocities were repeated when the great offensive of General Brussilov was launched in June, 1916.

Jews in Galicia were well acquainted with the treatment of their brethren in the Tsarist Empire. Many remembered the penniless hordes of immigrants who poured through the town of Brody following the pogroms of the 1880's. They remembered the stream of refugees following the wave of pogroms in 1905. In the beginning, it was thought that the occupation would be short-lived, but when the success of the Russian operations became known and the siege of Lwow (Lemberg) commenced, a wave of mass migrations towards Vienna and Hungary began. Soon the capital became overcrowded with the result that entry was refused to the poorer refugees. They were directed to camps in the smaller towns and villages of Moravia and Bohemia. The number of voluntary refugees was soon augmented by several hundred thousand who were ordered by the military authorities to leave their homes.

A report of the Ministry of the Interior, published in the fall of 1915, revealed that Vienna alone harbored 137,000 refugees, 77,090, or about 60%, of whom were Jews. Lower Austria harbored 49,109 refugees, of whom 4,404 were Jews. Bohemia sheltered 96,607, of whom 57,159 were Jews, while Moravia took care of 18,429 Jews out of the total of 57,501. Official figures tell but part of the story. No statistics were published for Hungary and other parts of the Dual Monarchy. Private estimates by organizations caring for refugees place the total number of Jewish refugees at about 450,000, most of whom were completely impoverished.

VI

AUSTRO-GERMAN OCCUPATION OF POLAND

In contrast to the operations of the war on the western front, the movements of the armies on the eastern front were swift and covered a great deal of territory. The combined German and Austro-Hungarian armies quickly overran Poland. Their occupation, interrupted briefly by Russian counter-offensives, resulted in great hardship to the civilian population. As usual in warfare, the chief sufferers were the urban population, which was predominantly Jewish. The Germans pillaged the country systematically and punished the civilian population for resisting their advance. Especially appalling was the Kalisz incident of August 28, 1914 when, in reprisal for real or alleged civilian resistance, the property of the inhabitants was pillaged and the entire city destroyed by shells. Pillaging, execution of civilians, and maltreatment of hostages were reported from a large number of cities.

The campaign of villification against Jews found a response among the German and Austro-Hungarian troops, but nowhere did this approach the extent of the Russian terror. At the same time, for reasons of strategy and propaganda

among neutral countries, the German and Austrian troops entering Russian Poland distributed the now well-known appeal of the General Command of the United Armies headed by General von Ludendorff. This manifesto addressed to "Jews in Poland!" proclaimed that the war "was not a war against the population, but against the Russian tyranny." It reminded the Jews of their sufferings under "the iron yoke of Russia," of oppressions, pogroms, deportations, the Beilis Trial and other ritual murder libels. "We come to you as friends and saviors!" the appeal proclaimed. "Our banners bring you justice and freedom: equal and complete citizenship rights, real freedom of religion and freedom of activity in all economic and cultural fields." Other proclamations in the same vein were issued by both the united German and Austro-Hungarian commands, as well as separately by the Austro-Hungarians. A periodical, under the title, *Kol Mevasser* (Proclaiming Voice), published both in Hebrew and Yiddish, was launched for propaganda purposes by the invaders.

After the situation became stabilized, the country was stripped of food-stuffs, factories of their equipment, and a system of forced work for the population, under adverse conditions and practically without pay, was introduced, resulting in the separation of families and in going into hiding of thousands of young men and women. The economic problem was the most serious—that of finding food and work in a war-stricken, impoverished country, repeatedly stripped of its produce. The political problem of importance was the relation of the Polish majority to the Jewish minority, as influenced by contemporary developments.

The demand for labor in Germany resulted in the recruiting of many Polish and Lithuanian Jews through special employment offices and their frequent forcible deportation to Germany. Generally speaking, however, the lot of the Jews under the German occupation was not bad. The German regime was strict, but it maintained order, and treated the population fairly; anti-Semitic officials were the exception rather than the rule.

The occupation of Poland by the German and Austrian troops brought an additional complication in its wake. Rivalries between the partners became evident when their chancelleries began to plan the future of Poland. Each tried to obtain the sympathy of the local population, both Jews and non-Jews. Among the Germans there was no definite agreement as to the method of carrying out this policy. Some maintained that, while the Jews ought to receive equitable treatment, their ultimate fate was the purely internal concern of the future Polish regime. Others preferred to utilize the Jews as a spearhead for the spread of German cultural and, consequently, economic influence. This plan was based on the predominance of Yiddish, a Germanic language, among the Polish Jews and on their pro-German as opposed to anti-Tsarist sympathies. A considerable literature about the Germanism of the *Ostjuden* was produced and fostered by both Jewish and Christian Germans.

The most concrete application of this policy was the school law passed by the German General-Government on September 17, 1915, which ordered the opening of schools and the use of the Polish language for the instruction of Polish children and the German language for both German and Jewish children. The Poles, naturally, saw in this measure a danger to themselves. Now, they had a new grievance against Jews as the spreaders of Germanism. Among the Jews, the assimilationists insisted on Polish-language schools; the Zionists on Hebrew-language schools; and the Yiddishists on schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. This struggle served to awaken even more the hitherto slumbering Jewish nationalism among the orthodox masses. Finally, it tended to sharpen the clash with the Poles, who retaliated politically and economically.

The postponement of the final decision concerning the future of Poland, and the establishment of the Polish National Committee in Paris, increased the uneasiness in the country and made things more difficult for the Jews. The proclamation by the Central Powers on November 6, 1916 of the newly-established Polish state, from which Galicia was to be excluded, resulted in heightened anti-Jewish feeling. Serious anti-Jewish riots broke out in Krakow and other regions following the exclusion of the Chelm region from the proposed Polish state by the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. These developments were fore-runners to the series of pogroms and attacks on Jews during the early years following the re-establishment of the independence of Poland, and the policy of discrimination continued systematically thereafter.

The influence of the Germans, on the other hand, served to westernize the Jewish Hasidic and obscurantist masses. To Polish Jews the German occupation was a period which combined both phases of emancipation, *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) and nationalism. It stimulated the Zionist and labor movements. It galvanized the slumbering secularism into a real mass movement, the fruit of which was the growth of the press and the Yiddish secular school system. Orthodoxy too, under the influence of the German delegations of the Agudath Israel, became politically conscious and organized. The result was that at the time of the reconstruction of the Polish state, the Jews of the country were no longer an inchoate mass. They were highly politically conscious, even over-organized, and imbued with the Wilsonian principles of self-determination, conscious of their rights as equal citizens, and as a national and religious minority.

VII

THE OTHER RUSSIA

The cruel persecutions of Jews did not save the Russian army from defeat, nor did it save the Tsarist regime from its inevitable downfall. The soldiers knew that the enemy was not the Jew. The common saying went: "We are fighting against three enemies: the Germans, Russian sloppiness, and the Russian generals." Nor did the common people permit themselves to be convinced that Russian reverses were all the fault of the Jews and not

of the corrupt regime. Russian liberals and progressives did not hesitate to brave the wrath of the military regime in order to protest, time and again, against the policy of the government. Nor were they afraid of carrying their protests to the public, both at home and abroad. The Left groups in the Duma reacted sharply to the illegal acts against Jews. Liberal political parties voiced their protest at their national conventions, and pressed their demands for the immediate emancipation of the Jews. Even municipalities and Zemstvos (regional self-government bodies) outside the Pale, frequently petitioned the government for the abolition of anti-Jewish measures. In this they were joined by trade and professional organizations, and by leading citizens. The great manifesto on behalf of the abolition of Jewish restrictions, signed at the beginning of the War by 225 of Russia's leading writers and publicists, called for the granting of equal rights to "the sorely-trying Jewish nation which has given to the world such precious contributions in the domain of religion, of philosophy, of poetry." "The ultimate disappearance of persecutions against the Jews and their complete emancipation will form one of the conditions of a truly constructive imperial regime," the voice of the other Russia declared. The spirit of this period greatly resembled that of the revolutionary year 1905. Indeed, it was but the prelude to the democratic revolution of March, 1917.

The complete emancipation of the Jews of Russia was achieved shortly after the downfall of the Tsar. On April 3, 1917, scarcely a few weeks after the establishment of the Provisional Government, a decree signed by the Premier, Prince Lvov, and by the Minister of Justice, Alexander Kerensky, brought the long awaited equality to the Jews of Russia. With it came a new Russian patriotism. The anomaly of England and France fighting on the side of Tsarism disappeared overnight. Jewish young men volunteered by the thousands. Advancement in rank was opened to them, and they took full advantage of these new opportunities. Together with all liberal Russians, Jews hoped that the alliance between their progressive, liberated country and the democratic allies would bring an end to German despotism and would usher in a new era of justice and democracy.

Nor was this feeling of patriotism limited to the purely external political manifestations. The new federation of nationalities, the Jews hoped, would also give national rights for the Jewish minority and enable it to carry on its own cultural and religious life. Communal life, long smarting under the Tsarist restrictions, found an outlet for its suppressed energies. Democratic community organizations were soon set up. With the newly acquired freedom of press and assembly, both Hebrew and Yiddish journalism were soon revived. Organizational life thrived. Zionism, long underground and suspect of pro-Turkish sympathies, became the strongest movement within the Jewish community. The labor parties and groups, too, emerged and began their organizational activities. Even tradition-bound Orthodoxy acquired a new consciousness. School systems were set up by all groups, with the Hebrew *Tarbut* system of schools and seminaries the most successful. The Bolshevik

Revolution and the civil war, however, radically changed the complexion of Russia, and with it that of the Jewish community.

The Civil War turned Jewish sections of the Ukraine and some White Russian regions into shambles. The number of victims of the White Guard pogroms will never be known. According to the most conservative estimates, about 35,000 Jews were killed in the Ukraine alone. Other estimates place the number of victims at 200,000—figures that horrify. The Polish-Russian War, too, brought dire results to the Jewish population. Fighting continued in that part of the world as late as 1921.

VIII

THE WAR IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The Rumanian Government, whose attitude to the Jews had always been hostile, followed the procedure of Tsarist Russia. In August, 1915, a year before Rumania's official entry into war, mass exilings of Jews from the border territories took place on the pretext that they were friendly to Germany. Upon the commencement of hostilities, the deportation of the Jewish population increased in intensity. In some communities Jews were driven out by the gendarmes, without notice. Even parents and relatives of the 30,000 Jews in the Rumanian army were not spared. Since many of Rumania's Jews had never been granted citizenship, they were interned in Moldavia as "foreigners." Accusations of spying and unfriendliness followed the Russian precedent. The presence of Russian troops in the country added to the difficulties of the Jewish population. Attempts at intervention by representative Jews of neutral countries were of no avail. As in Russia, promises were made to Jews of better treatment after the establishment of peace. The fate of the Jewish population in the war zones of Bulgaria and Serbia was not much different from that of the rest of the population, except that the predominantly urban character of Jews made their situation more difficult.

IX

THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE

The period of war was undoubtedly the saddest in the history of Jews in modern Palestine. There is no doubt that even the recent period of terrorism and political set-backs presents fewer difficulties than the painful three war years under the Turkish regime,

The Jewish community in the Holy Land underwent severe hardships even before the entrance of Turkey into war. A large proportion of the community were *Halukah* recipients, scholars and students of the Talmud supported by contributions from abroad. With the outbreak of the war, all the *Halukah* recipients were left without means of support. The fact that Palestine then had to import its grain and meat to a much larger extent than today left her without sufficient food following the cessation of normal navigation.

The situation became even more critical after Turkey joined the Central Powers, on October 30, 1914. Approximately 50,000 Jews were citizens of Russia and they found themselves in the position of enemy nationals. This situation was partly alleviated when a number became Ottoman subjects.

The savage military regime intensified the crisis. Turkish soldiery, underfed and completely demoralized, frequently resorted to robbery. The military leadership ruled with an iron hand and persecuted both Jews and Arabs, whom it suspected of separatist ambitions. It was headed by two commanders, both called Djemal Pasha, one of whom, Djemal Pasha the little, was a sadist who delighted in hangings. It was he who ordered mass deportations of Jews. Egypt alone harbored 11,277 Jewish deportees from Palestine. Intervention by the German and Austro-Hungarian ambassadors, and the American ambassador, Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., was of occasional help but did not seriously affect the situation. Tel-Aviv, then a small suburb of Jaffa, frequently received the personal attention of the Turkish authorities. Its inhabitants were called upon to furnish military needs such as the demand for 10,000 canvas bags within 24 hours, which were to be used in filling the Suez Canal with sand. Later, the entire population of the city was ordered to leave. The relief activities of the local Jewish communities were hampered by the Turkish authorities. Hunger stalked through the land, and with it came the epidemics which ravaged the country and decimated its population. American relief activities, discussed in detail elsewhere, were of great assistance.

The situation was further aggravated when Turkey became aware of Zionist negotiations with the Allied Powers. Early in the war Djemal Pasha declared his desire to liquidate Zionism by stopping Jewish immigration, deporting the recently arrived Jews and prohibiting land purchase by older Jewish settlers. Enver Pasha, the chief commander of the Turkish army, openly threatened Jews with the same fate that was meted out to the Armenians. Deportations of communal leaders to Turkey and Syria were frequent. Under such conditions it was not surprising that both the Jewish and Arab populations impatiently awaited the arrival of the British armies. The conquest of Palestine by the British, however, was a slow process. At the beginning of 1916 the British Expeditionary Force, composed mainly of Anzac regiments and including the Judaeans, was at Gaza. Not until November, 1917 did General Allenby make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Soon after, the Turkish army was driven out of the entire Holy Land. By that time the Jewish population, which had numbered 100,000 on the eve of the war, was reduced, through deportations, disease and hunger, to a little more than one-half of its original size. The rule of the British army brought peace into the country. It also, however, laid the foundations for the subsequent policy of hampering the development of the Jewish National Home, which reached a climax in the issuance of the British White Paper of 1939. It was the military regime which began the tendency of antagonism to Zionism. This was later inherited by part of the civil service, laying the foundation for the subsequent attitudes which resulted in the virtual scrapping of the Mandate.

X

RECRUDESCENCE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE WEST

The patriotism of Germany's Jews in times of both war and peace has been sufficiently described in various books and pamphlets. Not only did they furnish a large proportion of volunteers in the army, but they were also very active on the domestic front. They participated widely in all philanthropic activities, social work, care of the wounded, widows, orphans and German war refugees. Of the individuals who helped to gear German economy to its war-time demands, the name of Walter Rathenau, later assassinated by nationalists, cannot be left out from even this sketchy review. Yet, anti-Semitism did not cease; it merely subsided, to raise its head from time to time. Jews in the East Prussian regions, temporarily occupied by the Russians, were accused of having welcomed the invaders. Announcements warning the people against foreign spies mentioned Jews specifically. At the annual meeting of the Society for Combating Anti-Semitism held in Berlin in December, 1915, it was revealed that anti-Jewish feeling, which had diminished at the beginning of the war, was again on the rise. But these were merely indications of what could follow.

The real anti-Jewish campaign began in earnest in 1916 when frequent rumors concerning the alleged small number of Jewish soldiers on the war front crystallized into demands for a "Jewish census" of the army and navy. In spite of the general condemnation of such an idea by the press, the Ministry of War issued the order for the conduct of this census upon the ostensible excuse that it would serve to allay existing suspicions concerning Jews. The plan was attacked in a fiery debate in the Reichstag. Nor was "war-shirking" the only accusation leveled against Jews. They were accused also of speculation and profiteering. The administration deported Jewish subjects of Austro-Hungary from certain districts of the country. An interpellation by Socialist deputies concerning this atrocity was lodged in the Reichstag on July 20, 1917. Ostensibly, as a measure designed to conserve meat consumption, an order prohibiting *shehitah* was issued in Munich by the local food authorities, but was rescinded at the order of the government. Anti-Semitic pamphlets were distributed in large numbers by a Conservative deputy in January, 1916. A vigorous campaign against the admission of East European Jews was kept up throughout the war years.

Ominous of what was to follow in the post-War period was a secret report about the Jews in the World War circulated in July, 1917 among influential persons in the army, navy and civil services. This had been prepared by a group of anti-Semites who had been meeting secretly since the end of 1915. The group included such notorious propagandists as Count Ernst Reventlow, Professor Bartels, and Theodor Fritsch, the author of the *Handbuch der Judenfrage*. As the likelihood of the defeat of Germany became more evident, anti-Semitism was stimulated even more by the German High Command in its effort to create a scapegoat for its military failures.

It was Major-General Count von Schulenberg who suggested "that the report be spread that the Jews have betrayed the country and sold the people to the enemy." The lie factory of the German reactionaries thus began to pour out its poisonous products. The legend of "Jewish war guilt" was one of its earliest products to be accepted avidly by the war-worn and starving population.

A major expression of anti-Semitism in Austria was the sentiment against refugees. Particularly in Vienna, the presence of large numbers of outlandish Jewish refugees was resented. Forgotten was the fact that these refugees had not come voluntarily and were citizens whose suffering was much greater than that of the population of the protected capital. Incited by the anti-Semitic administration of the city, the local population held fast to its hostility despite the personal admonition of the Emperor Francis Joseph to the Mayor of the city and the instructions of the Ministry of the Interior urging the kindly treatment of these victims. A concession to anti-Semitism was the introduction, on February 11, 1915, of a *numerus clausus* in the Viennese bar. Jewish lawyers from Galicia and Bukovina were permitted to practice only after their names had been entered on the list of the Vienna bar candidates for the period of two years. This law remained in effect until 1917.

The situation of the refugees was even worse in the territories of Hungary. The partnership of the Magyars and German Austrians within the Dual Monarchy had never functioned too smoothly. The arrival of a great number of "Austrian" refugees was resented by the Magyars, particularly because the new arrivals were Jewish. The Magyar authorities promptly deported the refugees into Austrian territories. Those fortunate enough to be permitted to stay lived in perpetual fear of deportation.

The accusation of war-shirking was raised publicly in 1917 by a number of Polish parliamentarians headed by Wincenty Witos, later Premier of Poland. A denial by the War Ministry followed. The example of the "Jewish Census" in Germany spurred on the Austrian Jew-haters. A demand for a similar census was made by a number of deputies on June 23, 1917 and several times subsequently, although the accusations against the Jews were disproved by the military authorities. Some consternation was caused by an order issued on March 10, 1917, which warned against the stationing of Jews, Italians and Czechs as guards in war prisoners' camps.

Although the central authorities, as well as both war monarchs, Francis Joseph and Charles I, were well inclined towards Jews and expressed their appreciation of their patriotism and devotion, the petty and higher bureaucracy found a number of ways to express their anti-Jewish feelings. Jews were made responsible for the rise in food prices and for speculation in other commodities. The presence of Jewish refugees was blamed for the rise in rents. The closing of the universities in Galicia brought a large number of Jewish students to Vienna with the result that the Medical Faculty of Vienna University introduced a *numerus clausus* for graduates of Polish gymnasias and students of Galician universities. A ban against the use of the Yiddish language was in force for about a half year in 1914 and 1915.

In Hungary, anti-Jewish sentiment was directed also against the native Hungarian Jews, in spite of the fact that they were patriotic to the point of chauvinism. The bitterness of the Jewish population was aroused by the practice of the Magyar military authorities of raiding synagogues in different Hungarian cities in search of suspects. The appointment of Wilhelm Vaszonyi, a Jew, to a cabinet position, the first in the history of Hungary, was a mollifying factor.

War anti-Semitism was also a problem in the Allied countries in the West, although in no place did it approach the extent or intensity it reached in Russia, Germany and Austria. British public opinion was incensed by the refusal of unnaturalized Russian Jews, living mostly in the White-chapel section of London, to return to Russia to join the army of the Tsar. There was then no provision for the enlistment of aliens. They were urged to join the French Foreign Legion, which enjoyed a reputation more unsavory than romantic. The British Government, however, decided not to go through with the cruel order of deportation to Russia and finally granted Russian subjects the right to join the British army, a right which was not too eagerly grasped, as most of them still would not fight on the side of the Tsar. This incident provided the occasion for a campaign in the English press against the "cowardly Jews." Naturalization of those who elected to serve as well as the later organization of the "Jewish" regiments in the British army which fought in Palestine soon solved this problem.

The March Revolution, however, which abolished Tsarism in Russia brought with it another anti-Jewish press campaign. The foundations of the later identification of Jews with Communism were laid then through their identification with revolution in general by conservative public opinion. Resentment was voiced at the return of many Russian Jews then residing in England to take up arms in their native land after it had been freed from the yoke of Tsarism. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian Jews and their families were deported to Russia. Charges of espionage and treachery were made at intervals even against Jews who had been residing in the country for a long period. These charges reached the point of tragi-comedy. Thus, the lighting of candles on a Friday evening by a Jewish woman in Wolverhampton brought the accusation of signalling to German zeppelins. The situation was particularly strained in Brighton where many Jews sought refuge from air raids. In June, 1917, attacks on the Jewish districts in Leeds, after concerted propaganda by the local press, lasted for three days and assumed the form of a mild pogrom. Following German air-raids on London in July of the same year, Jewish-owned stores in Lambeth Street were attacked ostensibly because their owners were "German." Such incidents can be passed over lightly in view of the Russian experiences and the "Jewish census" in Germany, yet they helped to prepare the public mind for the easy acceptance of the canards of Jewish Bolshevism and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in England during the early 1920's.

France, too, showed minor symptoms of anti-Semitism. In spite of the large number of Russian Jews who joined the Foreign Legion, the anti-Semitic press continued to attack them.

XI

THE PROBLEMS OF RELIEF

The material losses of the Jewish population in the war zones were incalculable. Losses resulting from the destruction of houses, villages and entire cities, and from robbery, pillage and requisitions were the most direct. The interruption of the normal economy of these regions affected the urban population far more severely than the rural. Conscription left many families without support. These factors, together with military operations and wholesale deportations, created a problem of relief whose magnitude and complexity were beyond the understanding no less than the efforts of the local communities. To solve this problem with the resources made available by voluntary contributions by Jews in the few lands left unscathed by the War, was out of the question. All that was possible was a considerable degree of palliative action, and a smaller though not insignificant number of reconstructive steps. To the difficulties of relief work arising from the vastness of the problem were added hardships created by unfair discrimination. In the Russian war zone, local relief committees refused to accept Jews as representatives and very often denied any relief to Jewish war victims. Such discrimination was continued despite the fact that Jews had contributed the major part of the relief funds, which were gathered with the express understanding that there would be no discrimination on the grounds of race or creed in the distribution of relief. In Warsaw, for instance, out of 11,000,000 rubles (\$5,500,000) distributed from the outbreak of the War until September 1915, only 100,000 rubles went to the Jewish needy.

In view of these needs the Jewish Committee for the Relief of Sufferers from the War was organized at the very beginning of the hostilities, with headquarters at Petrograd (Leningrad). Its first activities were directed almost exclusively to the care of the Jews in the Polish war regions. Later, much of its work was centered on providing food, shelter, education, religious instruction and manual training for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were deported or who had fled from the war areas, particularly those in the Galician regions occupied by the Russian army. It also extended aid to the Jewish war prisoners captured by the Russians from the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Bulgarian armies, and gave support to Russian Jews deported by Turkey from Palestine to Egypt. This Russian organization, in spite of non-cooperation and even frequent interference by the civil and military authorities, conducted its work vigorously and efficiently, and succeeded in raising large sums of money in the Russian-Jewish communities, which responded generously and enthusiastically to this humanitarian call. The Russian Committee was also generously aided by the Joint Distribution Committee in America.

The German and Austro-Hungarian communities, too, immediately upon the commencement of hostilities, took action for the relief of the Jews in the occupied regions of Poland. For this purpose the *Jüdische Hilfskomite für Polen* was organized in Germany. The territory under the rule of the German army was divided into two regions, the "General Government" of Warsaw which included roughly the regions of former Congress Poland, and the *Ober-Ost*, comprising the White Russian provinces. Private relief activities were prohibited in the *Ober-Ost*, but in response to representations by the *Jüdische Hilfskomite* the civil administration of the region took steps to assure that funds collected for Jewish relief reached their destination. In the Warsaw region the *Hilfskomite* cooperated with the local communities. Rumors concerning "discrimination" by German Jews against their East-European coreligionists were proved false by an investigation made by a delegation of the Joint Distribution Committee of America, which visited the war regions in the summer of 1916, as well as by the testimony of reliable authorities.

Various relief organizations and local communities, notably the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*, provided for the needs of the Polish Jews who were recruited or forcibly drafted for work in Germany, the large number of Jewish war prisoners interned in the Reich, and other needy groups. This relief work was also assisted by American funds.

Austro-Hungarian Jewry faced a situation similar to that confronting the Russian community. The masses of Jewish refugees who fled to interior cities upon the Russian invasion of Galicia had to be provided for during their temporary stay in the various regions of the Dual Monarchy and rehabilitated upon their return to Galicia following the retreat of the Russians. As was not the case in Russia, a major share of the task of refugee aid was undertaken by the state. Specific needs of the Jewish groups, particularly of the professionals, students, religious functionaries, and children, were supplied by the various communal and political organizations, such as the *Israelitische Allianz zu Wien*, the B'nai B'rith lodges, the Zionist Organization, the Agudath Israel, as well as the local communities, with the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Of great help in locating relatives, sending private remittances from relatives and friends in America to those in the stricken areas, and in general contact and communication, was the World Zionist Organization. Its branches in the neutral countries were in constant touch with central organizations in the stricken areas, which in turn maintained a steady contact with almost every community in the war regions, hardly any one of which was without its Zionist society or group. In Palestine, aid was given by local communities and special food and clothing committees in cooperation with the American consular authorities and the German Jewish organizations. Relief work in England was conducted by the Distressed Polish Jews Committee. Similar relief bodies were set up, or relief was undertaken by established organizations, in France and all the neutral countries. Only through such cooperation and assistance of govern-

ment authorities, international bodies, and funds from the United States was the amelioration of this unprecedentedly grave problem made possible.

The largest burden of relief fell upon the shoulders of Jews of the United States. Here, far removed from the war front, resided the second largest Jewish community in the world, in a country which was not involved in the War for over two and one-half years after its outbreak. The first call for help came from Palestine, which was suddenly cut off from contact with its chief supporters, the Jews in Russia. The sum of \$50,000 which was needed to save them from actual starvation was raised from appropriations by the American Jewish Committee, the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs and a contribution by the late Jacob H. Schiff. It was transmitted by cable to Henry Morgenthau, Sr., then United States Ambassador to Turkey, and distributed by a local committee in Palestine. Appeals also came to the American Jewish Committee, then the only representative Jewish organization in the field, from the Central Committee of Belgium, the Alliance Israélite Universelle of France, the Anglo-Jewish Association, the *Israelitische Allianz* of Vienna, and the Chief Rabbi of Salonika, Greece. All pleaded for help, mainly for stranded immigrants, war refugees, and enemy nationals. Jewish organizations in America, particularly the various *landsmanshaften*, B'nai B'rith lodges and Orthodox congregations, began to collect funds for relief. After several months of war had passed, with no sign of the expected peace, the feeling became widespread that sporadic and separate attempts of this type were insufficient in the face of the grave emergency. The first attempt to organize a general relief committee was made by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. As a result of its efforts, the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War was organized on October 4, 1914. On October 25, 1914, a conference of forty organizations was held at the invitation of the American Jewish Committee for the purpose of considering unity of action on the problem of overseas relief. As a result the American Jewish Relief Committee was formed. On November 27, both existing committees joined in establishing a single distributing agency, the Joint Distribution Committee for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, known today as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In August, 1915, a third fund-raising agency, designed to reach the labor elements was organized under the name of the People's Relief Committee, which became a constituent member of the Joint Distribution Committee.

These relief agencies worked through local committees in every community in the country, as well as in Canada and several Latin American countries. The sum of \$1,500,000 raised up to December, 1915, soon proved insufficient to meet the needs of the Jews in the war zones. The leaders of the relief movements thereupon resorted to a more intensive and graphic presentation of their needs. A series of mass meetings was launched all over the country for the purpose of raising the quota of five million dollars for 1916. The designation, in a proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson, of January 27,

1916 as Jewish Relief Day, in accordance with a resolution of the United States Senate, gave an additional impetus to the campaign. On that day alone, over a million dollars was collected. By 1917, the fund-raising technique and organization had been so well developed that every community accepted a quota in a \$10,000,000 campaign. While most of the funds were distributed through the Joint Distribution Committee, the component agencies also made direct remittances to various communities, agencies, committees and institutions abroad. It is estimated that the total of \$37,933,000 was spent by the Joint Distribution Committee from its inception to the end of 1920.

The Joint Distribution Committee cooperated with the various local relief organizations abroad. Its agent in Russia was the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), which turned over the funds to the Central Jewish Committee for the Relief of Sufferers in the War. Relief was administered in the territories occupied by German troops by the *Jüdische Hilfskomitee für Polen*, organized shortly after the beginning of the War, and assisted by the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*. The Galician refugees as well as those in the regions occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army were assisted through the *Israelitische Allianz* of Vienna, while, in the Galician territories occupied by the Russian troops, aid was administered through the Russian relief committee. In Turkey, Palestine, Salonika and Alexandria, funds were distributed through local committees accredited by United States diplomatic officials.

After the entry of the United States into the war, the distribution of funds in the countries of the Allies was made through the Netherlands ambassador to the United States and the consular and diplomatic officials of that country. In this connection, the cooperation given by the American Government to the relief activities abroad is worthy of special mention. Consular and diplomatic offices cooperated wholeheartedly. In March, 1915 and February, 1916 respectively, the United States colliers, *Vulcan* and *Sterling* transported provisions and medical supplies to Palestine through the courtesy of the U. S. Navy Department. These efforts of the Jewish community of America were but preparations for its future role in post-War reconstruction of the European communities and financial assistance in the upbuilding of Palestine.

XII

THE PEACE

The World War witnessed a great resurgence of nationalism. The declarations of the war aims of the Allies and the announcement of President Wilson's Fourteen Points were considered by the submerged nationalities of Europe and the Near East as charters of their forthcoming freedom in a world of peace and democracy. Even the Central Powers were forced to pay lip service, at least to the demands of the small nations under their control or occupation. Only in this light can the national revival of the Jewish

population in most countries of the world, and, in particular, in the multinational states of Europe, be understood. Jewish emancipation had on previous occasions been the subject of international negotiations, and even conferences.

During the World War, Jews in most countries were preparing to present their demands for full equality, national minority rights and a national home in Palestine. A special *Komite des Ostens* (Committee of the East) was organized in Germany with the aim of defending the rights of the Jews in the Russian regions occupied by the Austro-German troops. In January, 1916, all Jewish organizations in Germany united into the *Vereinigung jüdischer Organisationen Deutschlands zur Wahrung der Interessen der Juden des Ostens* (VIOD), with the purpose of defending Jewish rights both during the War and at the expected peace negotiations. It was through such efforts that the Treaty of Bucharest between Rumania and the Central Powers in May, 1918, included articles 27 and 28 which contained special, though very limited, provisions for Jewish rights. In Austria, a Jewish National Association was organized in 1916, and a movement for a Jewish Congress developed in the same year. Following the March Revolution in Russia, which brought a resurgence of nationalism among the various groups in that country, a similar movement found its expression in the preliminary organizational activities for a Russian Jewish congress, elections for which were held in 1917-1918, with the Zionists winning a majority of the seats. Because of the prohibition of the sessions of the Congress by the Bolsheviks, a Jewish National Council was formed at Petrograd in 1918 from among the congress delegates, and plans for a Federation of Communities were laid. In the Ukraine, during its brief period of independence, Jewish national autonomy was secured with a Vice-Secretary for Jewish Affairs in the cabinet. In Poland, a Provisional Jewish National Council was set up in March, 1919. In Lithuania, Jewish autonomy was achieved and a Jewish National Council elected early in 1919. Even in Germany, a Jewish National Council was formed in November, 1918, and presented demands for national rights. Similar central bodies and committees were established, or conventions of communities were held, in Turkey, Rumania, Crimea, Georgia, Bessarabia, Greece, Switzerland, Siberia, Austria and Hungary. In the United States, the first American Jewish Congress was called into existence for the purpose of defending Jewish rights abroad. In Canada, a Canadian Jewish Congress was held in March, 1919. Efforts of Socialist Zionists were successful in incorporating in the peace proposals and manifestoes issued by various working-class bodies, demands for a Jewish National Home in Palestine and for minority rights in European states.

In spite of differences between nationalists and non-nationalists, a fairly united Jewish representation at the Paris Peace Conferences was achieved in the Committee of Jewish Delegations. The efforts of this body were in large measure, responsible for the guarantees for the protection of minorities in the peace treaties concluded with the various states in Central and Eastern

Europe and the Balkans, some of which included specific provisions protecting Jews. The establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine was also a result of negotiations and activities by Zionist and other bodies. But a detailed description of both diplomatic negotiations for the obtaining of Palestine and the minority rights is not within the frame work of this brief historical sketch.

The peace treaties which followed the War brought a far-reaching revision in the boundaries of the various countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. As a consequence, the distribution of Jews according to countries was also changed radically. Following the breakup of the Russian Empire, the Jewish population of the Soviet Union was reduced to about 2,500,000. Poland, composed of the Russian territories of Congress Poland, Western White Russia and Volhynia, the regions of Galicia gained from former Austria-Hungary, and of Posen and Pomerania, obtained from Germany, included a Jewish population of over 3,000,000. Of the other new states which were created out of former Russian territories, Lithuania included nearly 250,000; Latvia, about 100,000; Estonia, about 7,500; and Finland, about 1,500 Jews. Rumania, enlarged by the addition of the Russian territory of Bessarabia and the Austro-Hungarian regions of Bukovina and Transylvania, harbored a Jewish population of over 900,000. The Jewish population of Hungary was reduced to less than 500,000 and that of Austria to 350,000. The Free City of Danzig included less than 3,000 Jews. The breakup of the Turkish Empire reduced its Jewish population to about 155,000 and at the same time increased that of Greece to nearly 90,000. The new states of Iraq and Syria under the Mandates of Great Britain and France included about 88,000 and 27,000 Jews respectively. No important changes occurred in the other countries as a result of the War.

XIII

RETROSPECT

The civilized world is still living under the shadow of the last War; indeed, it is often said that the present war is merely a continuation of it. Its permanent effects can be evaluated by the historian only after a long lapse of time. An evaluation of the permanent consequences of the War so far as the Jewish people are concerned, must also wait for the verdict of history. The immediate effects of the War, however, were indeed dire. Death, starvation and misery were fates common to all sections of the armed forces and civilian populations of the belligerent powers, to Jews and non-Jews alike, but they fell with special severity on the Jewish civilian populations. Also, mass massacres were shared with but one other group, the Armenians. Moreover, while most of the people in the war areas soon recuperated as best they could from the effects of the War, Jews in the same areas continued to suffer from its wounds until the present. The distressing economic situation of Jews in Poland and Rumania and the increase of anti-Semitism culminating

in the adoption of racism by some governments in Europe are to a considerable extent consequences of the last war. The loss to the Jewish religion of nearly three million Jews in the Soviet Union can be directly attributed to the War. The closing of virtually all countries of the world to immigration, which played such a large part in the survival of Jewish communities, is also a product of that conflict. Among the numerous homeless Jews of today, there are many who have not yet found a place of refuge after more than two decades of wandering. Jewish communities throughout the world, as a result, were burdened with grave problems of relief and reconstruction which still continue to demand their attention and devotion today.

The only developments which can be considered as gains for the Jewish people as a result of the last War are the promise of Great Britain to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine and the political emancipation of Jews throughout the world, with the exception of some minor Arabic countries. But Jews were prevented from taking full advantage even of these gratifying developments. The establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine has continually been impeded by the British Government. Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the Comintern have all joined in preventing Palestine from playing its part in solving the refugee problem. The future of the Holy Land, in which so much hope has been placed and so much effort and resources invested, is still very uncertain.

Full emancipation remained in most cases on paper, and in several tragic instances, Italy, Hungary and Germany, where Jews were emancipated long before the War, it was completely revoked. The fact remains, however, that for the first time in modern history, political emancipation was granted to Jews as individuals and as a group throughout the world. Consolation and encouragement may be gleaned from the reminder that the march of the Jews to emancipation in the nineteenth century, too, was frequently interrupted by temporary waves of reaction, which were eventually overcome by the forces of progress, liberalism and democracy.

It is clear, therefore, that while the few advantages and privileges gained by Jews following the concluded peace were either illusory, as in the case of the minority rights, or were never fully realized, as in the case of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, the losses to the Jewish people were real, far-going and in most cases irreparable. The War was a calamity to the world at large; to the Jews it was a disaster of stupendous proportions.
