

6. Taking into account these circumstances, we must regard the accomplished deportation of 11,343 Jews thus far as satisfactory. Since 20,000 Jews was agreed upon, over 50 per cent was achieved.

Because of the diplomatic reasons of tact, the [German] Ambassador will be temporarily forced to refrain from active pursuit of the deportation of the Jews from Old Bulgaria as he mentioned in our last private talk.

But since Prime Minister Filov promised unequivocally to the German Ambassador that the Jews of Old Bulgaria will be deported, therefore, the Ambassador will, at a time which will seem proper and fitting, try to intervene again for the solution desired.

Meanwhile... Dannecker is in constant contact with Belev in order to ascertain that Belev provides Gabrovski, the Minister of Interior, with an acceptable plan for further additional deportation.

Based on this situation, we may assume that the deportation from Bulgaria will be continued in the near future.

Seen and approved by:

Beckerle

Signed: Hoffman¹⁷

The above report from Hoffman to Berlin indicates that the "aktion" against the Jews of Old Bulgaria had been temporarily halted for two reasons. First, pressure was applied by members of the So-branje upon Gabrovski; and second, Gabrovski was given a "hint" from the highest source. The highest source in a monarchy is the King, in this case Czar Boris.

There is no difference of opinion among the number of scholars who have written on the subject of the Bulgarian Jews during the war as to what was the "ultimate cause" that prevented the implementation of the deportation of the Jews. There is, however, disagreement among the scholars concerning motives.

Benjamin Arditti is of the opinion that this "ultimate cause" was the Czar, who never shared any anti-Semitic feelings, and who could not sacrifice a part of his people for the sake of better German-Bulgarian relations.

Nathan Greenberg, on the other hand, pictures King Boris as a convinced anti-Semite, who in the face of a strong protest and the possibility of internal disharmony, decided to postpone the "aktion" at least temporarily.

Before I proceed with an alternative explanation, it may be helpful to add a number of personal details about Arditti and Greenberg.

Arditti was, and always has been, a member of the Revisionist Movement in Zionism. At present, he is in Israel where he serves as a member of the Knesset representing the "Herut" Party, which is the extreme right wing party in Israel.

Greenberg, on the other hand, has political leanings diametrically opposed to those of Arditti. Thus, Arditti, due to his personal political views, is trying to prove in his work that the Bulgarian people, though helpful, had no part in the salvation of the Bulgarian Jews. This credit was given to the Czar. Greenberg, on the other hand, gives credit to the people, who through the protests of their political representatives, forced the Czar to change the expulsion decree.

It is my opinion that both Arditti and Greenberg are mistaken in the sense that they seek for the motives of action on the part of the Czar in the wrong direction. It is not likely that personal

like or dislike of Jews by the Czar had anything to do with his intervention. The world of politics in general, and in the 20th century in particular, is rarely, if ever, conducted according to one's conscience, morals, likes or dislikes. Boris, as indicated previously, was a shrewd politician who carefully weighed the outcome of every action he attempted. What benefit to the state could he have derived from the deportation of the Jews of Old Bulgaria in spring of 1943? As far as his German ally was concerned, the 11,000 Jews from the new territories convinced them that he was with them. The Germans were pacified for the present, and as to the future, Boris already knew during ^{the} spring, 1943, that he would not have to account to them for too long in the future. Germany, in spring, 1943, was through, and Boris knew it, as we see from the following entry in the personal diary of Prime Minister Filov. Filov wrote on the 28th of March, 1943:

Sevov [Boris' personal advisor] notified me that the King has received an invitation to visit Hitler; he is to take with him to this meeting the Commander of the Armed Forces.¹⁸

On March 29, Filov wrote:

This morning I spoke to the Czar about his trip [to Berlin]...We discussed our situation and established a point of view concerning some important matters.

...The Czar this time is not anxious to go [to Berlin]; he is going without his heart being in it. He considers in the long run the German cause to be already lost.¹⁹

Thus, it may be said that during March, 1943, King Boris was

already aware that Germany was not going to win the war.

On March 26, 1943, a number of days before the King's departure for Berlin, Beckerle sent telegram #456 to Berlin, reporting:

About a week ago Peshev served the Prime Minister with a petition signed by him and forty-two other members of the Sobranje protesting the deportation of the Jews by the Bulgarian authorities.

In Peshev's petition it was said that measures against the Jews should be dictated by the present needs of the State and the people, and that the moral positions of the Bulgarian people must not be ignored. The petition does not protest against measures which are necessary for security's sake. The right to remove all obstacles, so that a successful implementation of the government's policies should be made possible, is not questioned by anyone. Furthermore, the petition said that the borderline of the actual needs [of the government] must not be overreached since this will bring about an unnecessary evil. In addition, the existing laws against the Jews in Bulgaria make new laws against them at present unnecessary. The [Peshev] petition was discussed during the majority [party] session in the Sobranje. The Prime Minister after a long speech called for a vote of confidence in the government and in its policy against the Jews. The vote of confidence was unanimous. Then Filov presented a motion that lack of confidence be expressed concerning Peshev. The majority voted for the lack of confidence motion. As a result of this vote Peshev resigned from his post as Vice-president of the Sobranje....

Among those members of the Sobranje who signed the [Peshev's] petition are many who are of friendly disposition toward Germany, as for example, Alexander Tsankov. He [Tsankov] told a person from the German Embassy here that his signature [of the petition] does not in any way express a principle decision against the expulsion of the Jews, but rather his signature of the petition expresses his criticism of the manner in which the evacuation was conducted by the Bulgarian authorities, who, by their brutal behavior, are only hurting the German cause [i.e. total expulsion]. Tsankov's point of view explains in principle his opposition to the expulsion decree.

Signed: Beckerle²⁰

Meanwhile, the King left for Berlin for his talks with Hitler

and Ribbentrop. The only source of information concerning the content of these talks is Ribbentrop's telegram to Beckerle in Sofia dated April 4, 1943. This telegram has six points of which only point #4 deals with the Jewish question. I will, however, quote point #6 in part, also, for a different purpose:

4. Concerning the Jewish question in Bulgaria, the Czar declared that so far he has given his consent only for the deportation of the Jews from the new lands. As to the Jews of Bulgaria (proper), he wants to deport only a small group of Bolshevik-Communist Jews. The remaining 25,000 Jews he, the King, wants to concentrate in camps located in Bulgaria because they are needed for road construction. I (Ribbentrop) did not discuss details with the King about his plan, but I emphasized to him that according to our point of view we consider a radical solution concerning the Jewish problem to be necessary.
6. I (Ribbentrop) asked the Czar to explain the travel of Mr. Puljev, a Bulgarian foreign office official to Turkey to meet with Mr. Earle. The King replied that Puljev is not an important official in the diplomatic service, and that he has had a diplomatic passport for many years and that during his visit to Turkey he was not on an official mission.

Signed: Ribbentrop²¹

A number of points made in the above document have relevance to our subject matter. First, the King openly declared that so far he had consented only to the deportation of the Jews of the new lands, which indirectly indicates that it was his order that stopped the deportation of the 6,000 Jews of Old Bulgaria. Second, and this point is rather ambiguous, he planned the concentration of 25,000 non-Communist Jews in camps in Bulgaria proper, which means that the remaining 23,000 Jews (as indicated previously,

there were 48,000 Jews in Bulgaria proper at the time) were considered in his eyes as dangerous Jews who had to be deported. Either the King was mistaken about the total number of Jews living in Bulgaria at the time, or else he was trying to deceive Ribbentrop. The 23,000 Jews, whom the Czar calls a small number of Jews, whom he would have liked to have deported, constituted at the time almost fifty per cent of the total Jewish community in Bulgaria and certainly cannot be called a small number. It would seem that the Czar knew exactly that the removal of a small number of Communist Jews from Bulgaria was likely to leave approximately 45,000 Jews in Bulgaria, rather than the 25,000 quoted; in order, however, to point to the insignificant size of the Bulgarian Jewish Community he quoted 25,000 instead of 45,000.

A third point made in Ribbentrop's telegram which is of interest is that a certain Bulgarian diplomat, Puljev, met with a certain Earle in Turkey. Judging from the name Earle, he must have been either a British or an American diplomat, and despite of the Czar's deprecation of Puljev's position in the Bulgarian Foreign Office, it is most likely that Ribbentrop had concrete evidence about a meeting between Puljev and Earle, otherwise he would never have brought the matter up. Indeed, I have come across a number of references and hints about secret negotiations between Boris and the western powers during 1943; I have, however, no concrete evidence as yet to explore these possibilities.²²

It is interesting to note the way that both Arditti and Greenberg distort the meaning of the report. Arditti only quotes

the passage referring to the Czar's plans to deport from Bulgaria only a small number of Jewish Communists, without fully quoting the next sentence of Ribbentrop's telegram where the number of remaining Jews (the non-Communists) is given as 25,000. On the basis of his incomplete translation, Arditti proves that the King wanted to retain all of Bulgaria's Jews except for a small group.

Greenberg, on the other hand, uses the complete text of Ribbentrop's telegram to prove that Boris wanted to deport 23,000 Jews from Old Bulgaria, without even questioning the fact that the King may have intentionally distorted the statistics in order to deceive Ribbentrop.

F. The Second Attempt

The March plan for the deportation of the Bulgarian Jews of greater Bulgaria was only partially successful. More than 11,000 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia were sent to Auschwitz where they were most certainly exterminated. The planned deportation, however, of 6,000 to 8,500 Jews from Old Bulgaria met many obstacles and did not materialize.

Both Dannecker and Belev and all their subordinates were greatly upset due to their partial failure. Belev, to prove his disappointment with the government and the Czar, handed in his resignation to Gabrovski, his superior. A number of days later, however, Belev, perhaps realizing that there was still a chance for him to fulfill his supreme mission on this earth -- the utter

destruction of every Jew in Bulgaria, consented to continue serving as the Commissar of Jewish Affairs.

His plan this time was first, to try to remove the Jews from their homes in the cities, to isolate them from the reach of public opinion and non-Jewish friends, and then deportation might be tried again, and perhaps this time successfully.

To provide for concentration camp facilities in Bulgaria proper, where the Jews could be interned, Belev needed supplies from the different government departments as well as their cooperation. On April 15, 1943, Belev wrote the following materials requisition to Gabrovski:

Honorable Secretary,

For the construction of twenty-five wooden barracks, each of one hundred persons' capacity, to be used for the accommodation of persons of Jewish origin, is needed 625 cubic meters of lumber...¹

Gabrovski sent this requisition to Filov after enclosing to it the following comment:

The Honorable Prime Minister,

It is high time that those Bulgarian Jews who held opinions contrary to the government's policy [Communists and etc.] and who are unemployed be interned in camps. For that purpose it is necessary for the time being to construct twenty-five wooden barracks for 2,500 persons.²

At that time Belev and his commissars, and most likely with Dannecker's assistance, worked out another plan for the expulsion of the Jews from Bulgaria. The plan reads as follows:

1. THE PURPOSE

The deportation to the outside of the monarchy [Bulgaria] of all of the Jews except: a) Jews who are foreign citizens, excluding German and other German-occupied countries citizens; b) Jews who are deemed to be absolutely indispensable to the State; d) Jews who are sick with contagious diseases.

2. GENERAL PLAN

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| a) Subject to deportation are | 25,000 Jews from Sofia |
| and from the provinces | 23,000 Jews |
| Total | <u>48,000 Jews</u> |
- b) discusses transportation details
- c) 16,000 Jews will be deported every month...
- d) It is undesirable that the removal of the Jews from the cities be done in a piecemeal way. From the decided upon date, for example, May 30, 1943, all Jews would have to be in concentration camps [the intent of this regulation was to prevent uprising and escape of Jews to the partizan's groups which would have been the case if a piecemeal removal from the cities would have been adopted].
- e) ...The deportation of the Jews from Sofia to the inland must take place first. This will remove any suspicion that deportation to Germany is planned. The local and police authorities of the provinces to which the Jews of Sofia will be deported should be notified that the Jews' presence there will be only temporary.

Regulations e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, deal with the technical arrangements such as food and etc, noting that the same plan of organization and arrangements that were used for the deportation of the Jews of Thrace would be used again.³

About the same time that this plan was being prepared, a Sofian Jew, Menachem Leon Papo, who was a member of the underground, killed Kultso Yanakieff, a radio engineer working for the government and who apparently was a supporter of the Bulgarian Fascist regime. Gabrovski, ten days after the murder of Yanakieff on May 15, 1943,

published the following public statement:

The enemies of Bulgaria do everything possible to destroy the order and security of the country. These [enemies] are foreign agents who want to bring chaos to the country, and they deprive Bulgaria of its best sons [referring to the assassinated Yanakieff]...The role of the Jews in these occurrences [against the government] is very important. The assassin of Kultso Yanakieff, for example, was a Jew, Menachem Leon Papo. He has already participated in another sabotage and assassination for which he has been sentenced to death [in absentia]. Yesterday in the hinterland a group of seven saboteurs was apprehended. They were armed and ready for their destructive activities. Six out of these seven saboteurs were Jews.⁴

All indicators point to the fact that the possibility for the expulsion of the Jews was getting better. On May 17, Gunter, Eichmann's assistant at IV B4, sent the following note to Von Tadden from the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin:

I have taken note of your May 24th telephone conversation with Beckerle [Von Tadden phoned Beckerle in Sofia on March 14th prompting him to bring the Jewish problem in Bulgaria to a successful solution]; and I declare that the following attitude must be adopted in your communications with Beckerle:

The still present 51,000 Jews following the expulsion of the 11,500 Jews from the new territories, constitutes a great danger in the rear [back] of the German armies in southwestern Europe. As the major pretext against their deportation [of Jews] to the East, Czar Boris has stated on different occasions that these Jews are absolutely indispensable for the construction projects of Bulgaria.

So far, 6,000 Jews are included in the labor forces. It seems that in the near future another 8,000 Jews will be mobilized for the labor groups; thus, in the very near future the entire Jewish population which is capable of labor would be mobilized into labor groups.

With the above mobilization, the entire Jewish population of Bulgaria would be bound up [i.e. every Jewish family would have some family representative mobilized and

thus become not available for deportation]. Since in the case of deportation to the East a separation of the families is undesirable and does not correspond to the underlying basis of the final solution [It was the German practice never to separate families during deportation, especially in the case where the men were left behind, since separation always resulted in riots and disorders by the remaining members of the family. In addition, I suspect that the Germans wanted primarily the men who were capable of labor, and during 1943 Germany was experiencing a shortage of labor in their factories which were adjacent to the death camps].

The results of the labor of the Jews in their construction of railroads and highways has been so far very insignificant. For example, in the count of Stara-Zagora 2,000 Jews are working under very poor supervision by a personnel which is politically ignorant [i.e. the officers and guards were not politically trained anti-Semites]. These Jews have succeeded in attaining a day of labor of only a number of hours, and in general, they lead very good lives. In the same vicinity there is a labor camp for Greeks who, contrary to the Jew's situation, are forced to work twelve hours daily. Even the Bulgarian Commissar of Jewish Affairs [Belev] is of the opinion that Bulgaria is not receiving any significant [worthwhile] results from the labor of the Jewish groups. In addition, it must be said that by the mobilization of the Jewish males, families are separated which results in a propaganda against the government and the policy of the Axis which is blamed for all anti-Jewish measures [text not clear].

In conclusion, it must be indicated that the Bulgarian Government, in a rather clear manner, by its mobilization of the Jews into labor forces, is seeking a pretext against the evacuation proposed by Germany and is making this evacuation at present more or less impossible.

For the sake of a speedy final solution as desired by the Reich Fuhrer, the German-Bulgarian negotiation for the deportation of all the Jews of Bulgaria eastward must utilize the extremely favorable [for that purpose] present climate which was created by the last assassination that took place in Sofia [referring to Yanakieff's assassination by Papo].⁵

The German Government began putting the pressure on its representatives in Bulgaria, who in turn did the same to the Bulgarian Government officials.

The members of the Consistory gathered on May 21st to discuss possible ways and means for action. Many prominent non-Jewish Bulgarians were visited by members of the Consistory and urged that they intervene with the Czar for the Jews. On May 23rd, an important meeting took place in the home of General Damyan Velchev, former Chief Commander of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, which sought immediate intervention with the Czar on behalf of the Jews of Sofia. To this meeting were invited twenty persons, most of whom were either former secretaries of departments in the Bulgarian Government or generals in the reserves. Their decision was to seek an appointment with the King and that the following petition be served to Czar Boris:

For the past two days the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs has been ordering Jews from Sofia...to leave Sofia within three days for the hinterland towns...and eventually probably to be expelled outside of the borders of the State.

This expulsion of innocent Bulgarian citizens who possess equal rights and whose expulsion is executed by force...is unwelcome to the majority of the Bulgarian people and is accepted with anger.

The decision for this inhuman treatment [of the Jews] can be revoked only by His Majesty since His Majesty is [on the final account] the government; otherwise, [if the expulsion takes place] the responsibility would be placed upon His Majesty.

We see it as our supreme duty to make it known to His Majesty the fate that awaits our compatriots, the Jews, who are destined for expulsion for no wrong committed by them, just as the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia were expelled.

We rest assured that His Majesty will revoke the fatal decision [awaiting the Jews], and we incline his ear to our warning and cancel the [expulsion] order.¹⁰

May 24th is a national holiday in Bulgaria, and in 1943 it was going to be celebrated as usual with military parades and public manifestations, all reviewed from the grandstand in Sofia by the King and other dignitaries. This year, however, May 24th was to be the decisive day for the Jewish community of Sofia.

There is great divergency of opinion as to what exactly took place in Sofia on May 24, 1943. I shall not attempt to examine and to reconcile the different versions describing the day's events. I will merely cite them.

Joseph Tenenbaum writes:

Whatever measures were adopted, the people invariably offered resistance and foiled the German designs. On May 23, 1943, the decree of Jewish evacuation from Sofia to the provincial towns was promulgated by the government at the instigation of the Nazis. Next day a huge demonstration of the population converged on the Royal Palace in protest against the evacuation of the Jews. The police broke up the demonstration and four hundred demonstrators and ring-leaders were jailed. The orthodox Metropolitan and the Papal Nuncio also made representations to the government against some of these measures.¹¹

In Hitler's Ten Year War on the Jews, the following account of May 24th is given:

On May 20th, the Berlin radio made the startling announcement that the entire Jewish population of Sofia numbering some 25,000 had to be out of the city within three days. The German news agency DNS reported that Jews who did not leave within the prescribed 72 hours 'will be compulsorily transferred to Poland by virtue of an agreement made between the Bulgarian and German governments.' The Minister of Interior explained that 'The measure has become necessary in the interests of the nation.'

The announcement of the deportation order brought

turmoil in the capital. Crowds of Bulgarians massed in various parts of the city, shouting, 'We want the Jews to remain!' and charging that the government was a tool in the hands of Germany. In the district around Klementina Street, several thousand Jews formed a procession and marched through the streets in protest until they were dispersed by police clubs. At 6 o'clock on the evening of May 26th, when the first group of 4,000 Jews was being marched off to the railroad station, the column was blocked by a great throng of Bulgarians singing their national anthem. Another crowd converged upon the Ministry of the Interior building, shouting anti-Axis slogans. When the police charges broke up the demonstration, the protesting crowd regrouped to parade before the Sofia synagogue. In the scuffle that followed, the police finished second, and the military had to intervene. Several hundred demonstrators were arrested. The people of Sofia won a brief reprieve for about half the Jews scheduled for expulsion that evening.¹²

Rabbi Daniel Zion, who was at the time a rabbi in Sofia, relates in his memoirs, that on May 24th, thousands of Jews decided to express their protests against the expulsion by marching toward the Royal Palace. Their protest march, however, was dispersed by armed police.¹³

Nathan Greenberg is of the opinion that the demonstration did take place, and furthermore, that the Jews who were marching toward the palace were joined by passersby (non-Jews) who made the Jews' protest their own cause. Greenberg thinks that it was this manifestation of brotherhood that proved to the Czar and the government that the Jews of Bulgaria were part and parcel of Bulgaria.¹⁴

Arditti, it is not surprising, is of the opposite opinion. He was a member of the Consistory in 1943, and he maintained the position of the Consistory concerning the events of May 24th, 1943.

His account follows:

It is true that a protest march was scheduled to leave from the synagogue of Yetzeh-Bunar [the Jewish ghetto of Sofia, primarily populated by the low socio-economic Jewish families of Sofia]; a delegation, however from the Consistory made up of Haimov, Flintsi, and myself [B. Arditti] tried to influence the multitude not to demonstrate. The members of the Zionist youth group formed a human fence around the gathered crowd and assisted us in our efforts to prevent the demonstration. At that time [while the crowd was still gathered before the synagogue], armed police units attacked the crowd and dispersed it. About 250 demonstrators were jailed. All of the arrested were Jews.¹⁵

Arditti brings additional evidence from four sources independent of the Consistory to prove that first, the contemplated demonstration never left the Yutzeh-Bunar Synagogue; and second, that there were no non-Jews among the gathered crowd.

The question may be asked, what prompted the Jewish community of Sofia, its Consistory, groups of prominent Bulgarians, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Stephan of Sofia, the Papal Nuncio, and many others to protest the Czar's order, if the purpose of the proposed decree was only for the resettlement of the Jews of Sofia in the towns of the hinterland, rather than their expulsion from Bulgaria? It is very likely that the protests on the part of the Jews, as well as non-Jews, were due to misinformation on the part of the demonstrators and protestors. It was the general opinion that the expulsion from Sofia was only the first stage toward the final solution, to be followed by expulsion to the Eastern territories. The suspicion that the removal from Sofia was to be followed by total expulsion from the country was based

upon Belev's plan and intentions, which were well known to the public. As we will see from Hoffman's report of June 7, 1943, whose text will shortly follow, the above suspicion regarding Belev's ultimate intentions was not unfounded. The protestors and demonstrators, both Jews and non-Jews, however, were not familiar with the Czar's decision to adopt plan B, namely, resettlement of the Jews of Sofia in the hinterland.

The Jewish community of Sofia was informed about the Czar's decision that the Jews of Sofia would not be expelled outside of the borders of Bulgaria through Metropolitan Stephan on May 24, 1943. The Metropolitan made the following statement to Rabbi Daniel Zion:

Go and tell your people that the Czar gave solemn promise before the Prime Minister [Filov] and me that the Jews of Bulgaria will not be expelled outside of the country. Go and communicate to them this message; comfort them; and may they [your people] believe in the providence of God who never forgets his children. Go in peace.¹⁶

Rabbi Daniel Zion communicated the Metropolitan's message to the crowd that was gathered awaiting the return of the Metropolitan from the Royal Palace.

The next day, May 25th, marked the beginning of the Jewish exodus. During the following twelve days, 19,153 Jews left Sofia and were resettled in over twenty small and middle-sized towns in the hinterland of Bulgaria. A few hundred Jews, for various reasons, were taken to the concentration camp, Somovit, in Bulgaria. About 2,300 indispensable Jews were left in Sofia.

An excellent summary of the events that took place in Bulgaria during the months of April and May of 1943 was prepared and sent by police attache Hoffman to the Gestapo in Berlin on June 7th. The Hoffman report to the Gestapo was enclosed in the report sent on the same date by Beckerle from Sofia to the Foreign Office in Berlin. The following is the translation of both reports, first Beckerle's and then Hoffman's:

From: Beckerle in Sofia
 To: The Foreign Office in Berlin
 Subject: The Jewish Problem in Bulgaria

I refer you to the report which was sent today from here by Hoffman, the attache for police questions. I want to emphasize that you should be convinced that we are doing here all that is possible concerning the Jewish question in order to achieve the final clarification of the issue.

Concerning the productivity factor of the Jews [labor factor], I point to the fact that the King, as well as the Prime Minister and other important personalities, have emphasized the importance of the Jewish labor force for the Bulgarian economy. Also, there are no complaints about the productivity of the Jews employed in the road and rail construction, but to the contrary, always the necessity to employ additional forced labor brigades is stressed because of the scarcity of manpower which makes them indispensable. The reports of Commissar Belev should not be valued as absolute and reliable because Belev belongs to the opposition movement which is in an antagonistic relationship to the Prime Minister... [Belev was more extreme in his Fascism than Filov and the rest of the government which brought about antagonism]. Many times I had doubts about Belev's activities because he did not foresee or pay regard to important issues. In fact, the development of the Jewish question in Bulgaria proved me to be right.

I am firmly convinced that the Prime Minister, as well as the government desire and strike for a final absolute solution to the Jewish question, but they are hand-tied by the mentality of the Bulgarian people who lack the ideological enlightenment which we [Germans] possess.

The Bulgarian people, who have been raised among Armenian, Greek, and Gypsy minorities see in the Jews nothing abhorrent that will justify action against them. Since the majority of Bulgarian Jews are artisans and laborers, and in contrast to the other [non-Jewish] laborers, they are regarded as diligent workers. The Bulgarian Government, in my opinion, is right in approaching the Jewish problem from a different point of view, [not by trying to prove that the Bulgarian Jews were parasites], namely, the participation of Jews in the armed political assaults and in anti-Axis and pro-Communist activities. It was possible to predict that further underground activities performed by Jews will cause the Jewish problem here to become acute again; and so it happened.

The technical difficulties that will ensue following the deportation of the Jews from Sofia to the hinterland will probably contribute to their faster deportation to the Eastern territories.

Anyway, I regard it as tactically improper on our part to apply immediate pressure concerning the solution of the Jewish question here since this will imply that the deportation was our responsibility....

In conclusion, I may say that the Prime Minister and the government will endeavor to solve the Jewish problem according to our approach, and if we will behave tactfully and skillfully we will soon achieve our desired target.

Since the whole issue is very vital to our security and interwoven with our aims, I will keep the Jewish problem always before me and will do my best to hasten its solution.

Signed: Beckerle¹⁷

The following is the report from Police Attache of the German Embassy in Sofia to the Gestapo in Berlin:

Subject: The Deportation of the Jews

1. In my report from April 5, 1943, I summarized that in the deportation of the Jews will soon be resumed. During April, the situation has changed unfavorably [deteriorated] because the Bulgarian Government, under the influence of the Czar, ceased considering the

possibility of deportation, but instead began mobilizing the Jews to labor groups. Now, this Jewish labor action has encountered two major obstacles:

- A. The productivity of the Jews is in no relationship to the input [all the money and materials spent on the transportation, administration, and etc. for these Jews was much more than the benefits from the road construction].
 - B. It is impossible to build the necessary barracks for the Jewish labor groups.
2. Following the assassination committed on May 5, 1943, of the radio engineer, Yanakieff, by the Jew, Papo, the Jewish problem came again into focus. At the same time a communist band of seven men was apprehended in Rusjuk, among them six Jews. The Minister, Gabrovski, after these incidents, issued a statement which was also quoted in the German press in which he emphasized the role of the Jews in these terroristic activities. This statement was made by him without doubt as a psychological preparation for further anti-Jewish actions. Belev, too, submitted to Minister Gabrovski new plans for deportation utilizing these latest developments.

Dannecker informed me that Belev proposed two plans:

- A. Deportation of all Jews from Bulgaria to the East territories for reasons of internal security
- B. Resettlement of the 25,000 Jews from Sofia to the hinterland if Plan A is not possible to carry out

Plan A would have been very difficult to execute because of the insufficient number of police forces available to carry out a round up of the Jews. Despite the projected difficulties, Belev was ready to carry out Plan A [pending the government's approval of it].

3. Gabrovski personally accepted Belev's suggestion [for deportation]. Before his audience with King Boris on May 20, 1943, Gabrovski advocated the approval of Plan A; the King, however, decided to start immediately with the deportation of the Jews to the provinces. Thus, Plan A was rejected and B was adopted.
4. The deportation to the provinces is taking place at present in the following way. Up to now, about four to six thousand Jews a day are receiving their notice for evacuation in which the train and the city of evacuation are indicated....

Believ's office established control and check points at railroad stations to register the departing Jews. The Jews who did not leave the cities within the prescribed time received an extension period of 36 hours. After this deadline, they were arrested by the police and were brought by force to their destined towns and villages. As far as we can judge now, approximately 90 per cent of the summoned Jews voluntarily obeyed the order. Originally, it was planned that these evacuated Jews should be resettled in towns where Jews already lived, but the Minister of Defense insisted that in no case should Jews be resettled in border towns. With this restriction, there were only eighteen to twenty towns to which Jews could be evacuated. They are taken in, generally, by other Jewish families, and if this is not possible they are lodged in vacant schools.

5. The furniture of the evacuated Jews from Sofia is sold on public auction after their departure. Their apartments were made available to other people. The lodging in the provincial towns of the 5,000 Jews already evacuated could be regarded only as a temporary measure because the school buildings are vacant only during the summer vacation.

Since all the Jews have at their disposal great quantities of money, without doubt, the food prices will soar highly in these towns. We can, therefore, expect that in the provinces all the growing anti-Jewish attitude will become more pronounced. Also from the point of view of internal security, the concentration of a large number of Jews in towns, which were not prepared to accept them, will create a certain danger in itself.

We may, therefore, expect that even the King and also the Bulgarian Government will recognize that this evacuation is only a temporary solution which must lead to the deportation to the Eastern territories.

6. The evacuation of the Jews of Sofia to the provinces was announced on May 23, 1943. On the next day, a large crowd assembled for the purpose of demonstrating before the King's Palace. The police prevented them from reaching the Palace and took 400 demonstrators into custody, 120 of them being Jews who were brought to the concentration camp, Samovit. The same day, the Rabbi of Sofia tried to persuade the Papal representative, as well as the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Stephan, to intervene. Because of the attempt on the part of the rabbis of Sofia to seek help, Gabrovski ordered their arrest until further

notice. The Chief Rabbi of Sofia could not be arrested because he stayed in the home of the Metropolitan Stephan.

Propagandists spread the news that the deportation is postponed for two weeks. Also they spread the rumor that Sofia will suffer aerial bombardment immediately after their departure. They did not succeed in getting the expected reaction from the population of Sofia.

7. Belev has already declared to the S.S. Dannecker several times that the general deportation will be carried out in the near future. Belev urgently requested that the vacant ships which are at present docked on the Danube be kept in readiness for the transportation of the Jews which will take place the first half of the month of June. At the moment, there are five big ships and one small one at our disposal. They can transport about 25,000 Jews during a month by making three round trips. Belev is even ready to pay the expenses for the idleness of the ships [20,00 leva per diem]....
8. According to the schedule planned by Belev, the deportation of the Jews from Sofia to the provinces will end on June 7, 1943. After that time there will probably remain two to three thousand Jews in Sofia....
9. As I have already reported to you in my last report from April 5, 1943, it is improper to assume that the Bulgarian Government, especially Filov and Gabrovski, has seriously attempted to sabotage the Jewish deportation. Especially, I must point out the impeccable attitude of Filov before the German Ambassador here concerning the Jewish question. The German Ambassador tried several times to influence Filov to speed up the solution of the Jewish question in Bulgaria. Filov always assured him that he is determined to deport all Jews to the East. If, despite all, the deportation of the Jews is meeting with more obstacles than has been the case in the other countries under the Reich's sphere of influence, then it is so because you have to consider that the Bulgarian Government has problems in the solution of the Jewish problem because it has to consider the internal political consequences, as well as the foreign implications this solution will have. If we compare, for example, the behavior of the Bulgarian Government with the behavior of the Hungarian Government concerning the Jewish problem, then the Bulgarian Government will definitely be judged as the one having a more positive attitude to the solution [proposed by us] than the Hungarian Government. And here we have to take into account that the attitude of the Hungarian Government causes the Bulgarian Government many political difficulties [The Hungarians, by

their passivity toward the Jews make it difficult for the Bulgarian Government to implement the Jewish solution]. Also it is the desire of the Bulgarian Government to avoid excessive preoccupation by the world press of the Jewish question in Bulgaria. The government, therefore, wants to execute the deportation in a way as not to give the world press reasons to assail Bulgarian politics. This consideration on the part of the Bulgarian Government is only a tactical maneuver and will not deter the government from implementing the solution.

In my April report, I mentioned the attitude of Filov toward the Swiss Ambassador here who represents Britain's interest in Bulgaria. At present, I can cite another example for the anti-Jewish attitude of Filov. The deputy of the Sobranje, Dimiter Andreov, well-known anti-Semite, reported to Belev that Filov spoke to the Sobranje members after the assassination of the member of the Sobranje, Sotir Yanev. Filov replied to a question asked by one of the deputies concerning the deportation of the Jews outside of Bulgaria by saying that deportation will be pursued by all means. This he said in an unequivocal manner.

10. After the deportation of the Jews from Sofia, and until the final deportation materialized, there will arise, without doubt, new complications. In any event, we have made considerable progress toward the ultimate solution. The lot has been cast, and we are beyond the point of return. In conclusion, I may say that the promise of the Bulgarian Government, especially of Filov given to the German Ambassador that the Jews of Bulgaria will be deported to the east, will be kept.

Signed: Hoffman¹⁸

The June 7th, 1943, reports of Beckerle and Hoffman contradict each other in one respect. This contradiction may be attributed to the fact that Beckerle drew his information from Gabrovski and the other members of the government, while Hoffman, in his position, dealt primarily with Belev. The contradiction is with respect to the productivity of the Jewish labor groups. Beckerle states, in the name of the Czar and Filov, ^{that} these labor groups to be very

important to the state economy, while Hoffman states the opposite.

An interesting point is made in Hoffman's report when he states that 400 people were arrested by the police during the May 24th demonstration in Sofia, and that 120 of the arrested were Jews who were sent to the concentration camp, Samovit. If Hoffman's information was correct, it means that 280 of the arrested demonstrators were Bulgarians (non-Jews). This would imply that the opinion expressed by the writers, who declared that many Bulgarians joined the Jewish demonstration, is correct.

The expulsion of the Jews from Sofia in the hinterland was followed by a similar expulsion of the Jews from the cities of Stara-Zagora and Varna. Stara-Zagora was an important railroad center, while Varna, located on the Black Sea, was a naval base used by both the Bulgarian, as well as the German Navy. The resettlement of the Jews of these two cities in the hinterland was completed on June 10, 1943.¹⁹

These resettlements brought to an end the measures against the Jews initiated during the months of May and June of 1943. As far as the Bulgarian Government and the Czar were concerned, the solution of the Jewish question in Bulgaria was brought to an end.

Both Beckerle and Hoffman had realized the failure on their part to bring the Jewish solution in Bulgaria to its desired conclusion. With a zeal typical to the Nazi mentality, however, neither one of them allowed the present situation to stop them from further attempts. Belev, the Commissar, persisted to ignite hope in Beckerle and Hoffman that the resettlement in the hinterland

was only the first stage of the total deportation scheme. To this effect, we learn from telegram #792 from the 25th of May sent by Beckerle to Berlin: "...According to Belev, the resettlement from Sofia is only a preparatory stage for expulsion to the eastern territories...."²⁰

A week later on June 1st, 1943, Von Tadden from the Foreign Ministry in Berlin sent the following letter to Eichmann:

According to telegraphic report from the German Embassy in Sofia, Belev, the Commissar for Jewish Affairs, has stated that the resettlement of the Jews from Sofia is only a preparatory stage for expulsion to the east....²¹

Additional proof that Belev did not abandon his original intention for the deportation of the Jews eastward is cited in the previously-quoted Hoffman report from June 7th, whereby, Hoffman declared that Belev had arranged for six ships to be standing by idle on the Danube awaiting to transport their Jewish passengers down the Danube to a harbor in Austria. Considering the shortage of transportation vehicles for the German war effort that prevailed in mid-1943, the idling of six ships on the Danube may well indicate that Belev was still very optimistic about the final solution. The cost of keeping the ships idle, which amounted to 20,000 leva per day, was paid out of the "Jewish fund" of the Commissariat. This fund consisted of monies that were confiscated from the Jews. In Bulgaria, as in other European countries, the Jews were to pay for their transportation with the money and possessions confiscated from

from Sofia, may be an excellent starting point for further development in accordance with our program.

Signed: Hoffman and Beckerle²²

This report by Beckerle and Hoffman mentions Kallay's speech to have had considerable influence upon the present Bulgarian policy toward the Jews. Kallay, the Prime Minister of Hungary, delivered the following speech during the last day of May, 1943:

In Hungary live more Jews than in all of western Europe.... It is self-explanatory that we must attempt to solve this problem, hence the necessity for temporary measures and an appropriate regulation. The final solution, however, can be none other than the complete resettlement of Jewry. But I cannot bring myself to keep this problem on the agenda so long as the basic prerequisite of the solution, namely, the answer to the question where the Jews are to be resettled, is not given. Hungary will never deviate from those precepts of humanity which, in the course of its history, it has always maintained in racial and religious questions.²³

In reality, the Hoffman and Beckerle report of June 24, 1943 brings to an end the epic of the "second attempt" of the Bulgarian Commissariat and the German Gestapo to expel the Jews of Bulgaria to the eastern territories. Both, the first and the second, attempts had failed to achieve their ultimate objective; and yet, neither of them was a complete failure. The result of the first attempt was death for the 11,000 Jews of Thrace and Macedonia, while the second attempt brought about the resettlement in the interior of the Jews of Sofia, Varna, and Stara-Zagora.

The war realities had failed to lend support to Germany's desire for the final solution in Bulgaria. In view of the general situation Bulgaria was reluctant to collaborate; and yet, as we

shall see in the next chapter, the Gestapo and the German Foreign Office in Berlin felt that despite the course that the war had taken, their first and foremost task was the creation of a "judenfrei" Europe.

G. The Beginning of the End

During the month of August a difference of opinion developed between the SS IV B4 in Berlin and the German Embassy in Sofia. The crux of the problem was whether the evacuation of the Jews from Sofia in the hinterland was progression or regression in the implementation of the final solution. The Gestapo felt that the dispersion of the Jews in the provinces was an obstacle to the final solution. Beckerle claimed the opposite to be true.

On August 15, 1943, Wagner (Wagner was Luther's successor as head of inland section number 2 in the Foreign Office in Berlin) sent the following telegram to Beckerle in Sofia.

The Gestapo has a number of times requested that a firm attitude be adopted before the Bulgarian Government for the Jewish solution in Bulgaria. This must result in deportation to the East for the following reasons: The resettlement of the Jews in the hinterland has not brought about the desired anti-Semitic eruption [among the Bulgarian population of the provinces]. The resettlement of the Jews afforded them an opportunity to increase their propaganda in Bulgaria. The espionage activities of the enemy are assisted by the Jewish network spread in Bulgaria.

The Jewish influence upon senior government and clerical circles is constantly on the increase; the final solution, therefore, of the Jewish problem is becoming more difficult. In the event of an enemy landing in the Balkans, the Jews will constitute a serious danger in the rear of the fighting [German] armies. Security reasons make the rapid solution of

and being "harmless" in this respect, their removal outside of Bulgaria was unnecessary. Yet, one can easily counteract this claim by pointing to the extermination of the entire Jewish communities of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, communities that on the whole were much poorer and less influential than the Bulgarian Jewish Community. At any rate, the relatively non-influential position of Bulgarian Jews may have lessened Bulgarian interest in their destruction.

The data collected in this thesis explicitly proves that the Greek or Eastern Orthodox Church of Bulgaria intervened on behalf of the Jews during the March and May, 1943 attempted deportations. Again, however, one cannot give any considerable weight to the intervention by the Church, since Bulgaria was not the only European country where the Church intervened on behalf of the Jews.

Generally speaking, therefore, I conclude that none of the factors discussed above are, in themselves, responsible for the salvation of the Jews of Bulgaria. At their best, they may have ameliorated the condition of the Jews by some degree but certainly not more than that.

B. External Factors

The most important external factor was Bulgaria's alliance with Germany. Again, however, Bulgaria was not the only German ally with a Jewish problem. Roumania, Italy and Hungary were in a similar position

Roumania destroyed the Jews from northern Bukovina and

Bessarabia just as Bulgaria collaborated in the destruction of the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia. But there was a difference between Bulgaria and Roumania in this respect. Bukovina and Bessarabia were Roumanian territories (even though Roumania lost them to Russia on June 28, 1940 and which it recovered, with Germany's help, a year later in 1941). The second difference is that Roumania was the only country except Germany that set up its own killing centers. These were located in Transnistria, and they were operated by Roumanians without German help.

Like Bulgaria, Roumania did procrastinate the deportation of the 350,000 Jews of "Roumania proper." Their deportation never materialized; as mentioned above, however, the 270,000 Jews of Bukovina and Bessarabia and Transylvania met the tragic fate of total annihilation.

In order to stress once again the uniqueness of the Bulgarian Jewish situation, I would like to emphasize the fact that the great majority of the half million Roumanian Jews who were exterminated were Roumanian citizens, unlike the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia who did not possess Bulgarian citizenship either before or after 1941.

Italy, under the Duce, did not sacrifice its Jews to German demands. Following the overthrow of the Duce on July 25, 1943, and the occupation of Italy by its former ally, Germany, the fate of the Jews changed for the worse. During the spring and summer of 1944, all Italian Jews who were apprehended were deported to Auschwitz.

During spring, 1944, Hungary contained 750,000 Jews, the largest concentration of Jews in Europe at the time. All attempts on the part of the RSHA to bring about the deportation of these Jews eastward had failed. On March 15, 1944, the Hungarian Regent, Horthy, was summoned by Hitler, who gave him the choice between a military occupation by Germany or a government approved by Germany. On March 22, 1944, a German approved cabinet took office in Hungary. During the following eleven months the majority of the Hungarian Jews met death in the German concentration camps.

Bulgaria's status as an ally rather than a satellite allowed Bulgaria to retain its internal independence throughout the war. The Czar, until his death, was the undisputed leader of Bulgaria, and in this capacity he was often reluctant to cooperate with Hitler. There is no question that the autonomy and independence of Bulgaria were indirectly responsible for the failure by the Germans to destroy the Jews of Bulgaria. This, however, was only an indirect factor.

C. The Time Factor

The most important cause responsible for the salvation of the Bulgarian Jewish Community was the failure of Germany to win the war.

As early as 1941, Hitler had decided that Europe must be judenfrei. During the following four years the Nazi machine faithfully executed the Fuhrer's decision.

The Bulgarian Jewish Community survived the Nazi holocaust

only because Hitler failed in his design -- the conquest of Europe and the world.

Despite its uniqueness, the history of the Jews of Bulgaria during the Second World War has no positive lessons to teach. The fact that this Jewish community was the only one to survive in its entirety from among the Jewish communities of Nazi Europe should prompt one to learn a formula for community survival for the sake of future generations facing a similar fate. The conclusion of this thesis, however, proves the opposite than this desired objective; it proves that in reality there is no such formula.

The Bulgarian Jewish Community was doomed to extinction, despite the spirit of brotherhood that existed between the Jews and the non-Jews, and in the face of the spirit of identification and nationalism experienced by the Bulgarian Jews for their beloved mother country.

The Bulgarian Jewish Community survived only as a chance of aimless fate. Cultural integration, a lack of prominent position, and the defeat of Germany -- these were the historical circumstances which slowed down the eventual timebomb of the Nazi holocaust. It was a freak of history, an instance where a set of coincidences changed the expected course of history. History, though blind, does have its whims and it was a historical whim, an odd combination of factors, that saved the Jews of Bulgaria from the Nazi holocaust.

FOOTNOTES

I. Foundations

A. The History of the Community from its Beginning till the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878

¹Dr. Levi Hertzfeld, Handelsgeschichte der Juden des Altertums quoted in Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar HaNazi, 1940-1944, p. 1.

I have tried to authenticate Benjamin Arditti's reference to Dr. Hertzfeld's work for the primary purpose of defining the term "different European nations" and its relationship to Bulgaria. Unfortunately, Dr. Hertzfeld's work is at present missing from our library.

²Joseph Klausner, From Jesus to Paul, p. 11.

³Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar HaNazi, 1940-1944, p. 2.

⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁵Dr. Shimon Marcus, HaYehudim B'Bulgaria, " Encyclopaedia Hebraica, Volume VII, p. 797.

⁶Solomon Rozanes, Divrei Yemei Israel B'Tograna, quoted in Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁹Dr. Shimon Marcus, op. cit.

¹⁰Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

¹¹Eli Baruch, Iz Istoriata Na Bulgarskoto Evreistvo, p. 13.

¹²Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume XII, pp. 125-126.

¹³Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁶Dr. Schulim Ochser, "Ventura," Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume XII, p. 416.

¹⁷ Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁸ Eli Baruch, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁰ N. M. Gelber, "Jewish Life In Bulgaria," Jewish Social Studies, Volume VIII, April, 1946, p. 104.

B. The Beginning of the Modern Period -- from 1878 till the end of the First World War

¹ N. M. Gelber, "Jewish Life in Bulgaria," Jewish Social Studies, Volume VIII, April, 1946, pp. 104-105.

² Marchel Kalev, "Yahadut Bulgaria V'Tnuata HaTzionit," in HaAaron Ben Yoseph, Joseph Shapiro, ed., p. 146.

³ Gelber, op. cit., p. 122.

⁴ Ibid., p. 123.

⁵ Ibid., p. 106.

⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

⁷ Ibid., p. 106.

⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 108-109.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 111.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 105.

¹² Dr. Marchel Kalev, op. cit., p. 145.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ N. M. Gelber, op. cit., p. 105.

C. From the End of the First World War till the Rise of Hitler in 1933

¹ Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar

²Ibid., p. 26.

³N. M. Gelber, "Jewish Life in Bulgaria," Jewish Social Studies, Volume VIII, April, 1946, p. 125.

Arditti contradicts Gelber and notes that the National Society for Political Renaissance was not established until after 1931 when part of the membership of the Homeland Defense split away to establish the Renaissance Society (See Arditti's "Yehudei Bulgaria," p. 28).

I am inclined to accept Arditti's dating as the more authentic, since he was an active Jewish leader in Bulgaria during these years, while Gelber wrote his article on the basis of a single visit to Bulgaria.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 26.

⁶Ibid., pp. 26-28.

⁷Dr. Marchel Kalev, "Yahadut Bulgaria V'Tnuata HaTzionit," in HaAaron Ben Yoseph, Joseph Shapiro, ed., pp. 189-190.

⁸N. M. Gelber, op. cit., p. 111.

⁹Eli Baruch, Iz Istoriatata Na Bulgarskoto Evreistvo, p. 26.

¹⁰N. M. Gelber, op. cit., p. 113.

¹¹Ibid., p. 114.

¹²Eli Baruch, Cooperatziata e Bulgarskoto Evreistvo, p. 27.

¹³N. M. Gelber, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁵Dr. Marchel Kalev, op. cit., p. 145.

¹⁶N. M. Gelber, op. cit., p. 121.

¹⁷Ibid.

D. The Period of Uncertainty -- From the Rise of Hitler till the outbreak of the War

¹Dr. Marchel Kalev, "Yahadut Bulgaria V'Tnuata HaTzionit,"

in HaAaron Ben Yoseph, Joseph Shapiro, ed., p. 198.

² Eli Baruch, Iz Istoriat Na Bulgarskoto Evreistvo, p. 96.

³ Dr. Marchel Kalev, op. cit., p. 196.

⁴ Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, p. 28.

⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

⁶ Eli Baruch, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

⁸ Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 24.

⁹ Dr. Marchel Kalev, op. cit., p. 199.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 197.

¹¹ Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 31.

¹² Ibid., pp. 31, 202, 391.

¹³ Joseph Schechtmann, "Bulgaria," in Hitler's Ten Year War On the Jews, Boris Shub, ed., p. 114.

According to Joseph Schechtmann, after 1937, when through manipulated trade pacts, the Reich achieved economic domination over Bulgaria, Nazi political influence grew rapidly.

¹⁴ Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE BULGARIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. Bulgaria's Role in the Second World War

¹ Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, p. 33.

² W. L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, p. 1079.

B. The Anti-Jewish Laws of Bulgaria

¹Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, p. 37.

²Ibid., pp. 38-39.

³Ibid., p. 40.

C. The Implementation of the Anti-Jewish Laws

¹Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, p. 55.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 59.

⁴Ibid., p. 58.

⁵Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, C XII-II, V e 15.

I have in my possession on microfilm a number of documents of similar content. These documents testify to the fact that despite the persecutions of the Jews in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Legation in Paris (it may well be that other Bulgarian Legations elsewhere acted similarly; I have no evidence, however, to the effect) offered protection to the Bulgarian Jews in France, as late as the fall of 1942.

The Bulgarian documents' collection of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Library, Cincinnati, Ohio, possesses on microfilm all the documents and references pertaining to Bulgarian Jewry during the Second World War found in the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris. It is unfortunate that these documents on microfilm have not uniform system of identification, but rather, carry markings given to them by different authorities. To make reference to these documents possible, I shall include in my "notation on sources appendix a table describing and identifying the documents as found in their order on the microfilm.

⁶Ibid., XXVa-255.

⁷Ibid., XXXVI-23, March 22, 1941; Number 17, CIV 13-215;

⁸Ibid., XXXVI-172, September 21, 1941.

D. Further Anti-Jewish Decrees in Bulgaria and the Desire for a Continental Solution to the Jewish Problem

¹Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority, 486183/184.

The Bulgarian documents' collection possesses the photo-stats of all the documents and references pertaining to Bulgarian Jewry during the Second World War found in Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, Israel. These documents have been systematically identified by the Yad Vashem Archives. In this thesis I shall use the Yad Vashem Identification system.

²Ibid., 372043/044.

³Ibid., 372039.

⁴William Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, pp. 1256-1257.

⁵Ibid.,

⁶Yad Vashem, 372033.

⁷Ibid., 372041/042.

⁸Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, pp. 60-61.

⁹Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, p. 493.

¹⁰Yad Vashem, 486203/204/205.

¹¹Ibid., 486218.

¹²Ibid., 486234/235.

¹³Ibid., 371973.

¹⁴Ibid., 486208/209.

¹⁵Ibid., 486223.

¹⁶Ibid., 486234/235.

¹⁷Ibid., 486237.

¹⁸Ibid., 486262/263.

¹⁹Ibid., 486261.

²⁰Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., pp. 90-91. Also see R. Hilberg, op. cit., p. 481.

²¹Ibid., p. 91. R. Hilberg, Ibid.

²²Ibid.,

Both Arditti and Hilberg fail to give the source for Gebrovski's comment to Belev.

²³Raul Hilberg, op. cit., p. 481.

²⁴Ibid., p. 475.

²⁵Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 91.

²⁶Ibid., p. 92.

²⁷Raul Hilberg, op. cit., p. 481.

²⁸Ibid., p. 482.

On the basis of Schellenberg's letter Ng-5351 of November 9, 1942 to Luther.

E. The Final Solution

¹Abraham Asa, personal interview, July, 1961.

²Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority, 486272.

³Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishtar Ha-Nazi, 1940-1944, p. 109.

⁴Yad Vashem 486278/279.

⁵Ibid., 486284.

⁶Ibid., 486285/286/287.

⁷Nathan Greenberg, Documenty, p. 89.

⁸Yad Vashem, 486293/294.

⁹Ibid., 486292.

¹⁰A photostat of this agreement is available in the Bulgarian documents' collection in the Hebrew Union College Library,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

- 11 Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 117. Nathan Greenberg, Hitlerskiyat Natisk za Unishto javaneto na Evreite on Bulgaria, p. 66.
- 12 Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 125.
- 13 Nathan Greenberg, Documenty, pp. 40-41.
- 14 Ibid., p. 31.
- 15 Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 127.
- 16 Yad Vashem, K207595.
- 17 Ibid., 486316/317/318/319/320/321.
- 18 Nathan Greenberg, Hitlerskiyat Natisk za Unishto javaneto na Evreite on Bulgaria, p. 86.
- 19 Ibid., p. 87.
- 20 Yad Vashem, E420913/914.
- 21 Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, 173890/891.
- 22 During the course of my research I wrote to the Archives of the United States Department of State, Washington, D.C. to inquire concerning whether they possess any information about certain secret negotiations between Bulgaria and the United States during the Second World War. As yet, I have not received an answer to my letter which leads me to believe that if such information does exist, it is still considered as "classified information."

F. The Second Attempt

- 1 Nathan Greenberg, Hitlerskiyat Natisk za Unishto javaneto na Evreite on Bulgaria, p. 86.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
- 3 I do not possess a documented copy of this plan; its full text is found in Mr. Greenberg's Documenty, pp. 185-186. I have no reason to suspect its authenticity despite the fact that there was no mention of this plan in the archives of the Commissariat of Jewish Affairs in Sofia on September 9, 1944. The only copy of this plan was found in the briefcase of Belev's Secretary, Liliانا Panitsa, a number of days after September 9th. Liliانا Panitsa played a

²¹ Ibid., 486347.

²² Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Ng 0-96 CXX 13a.

²³ Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, pp. 525-526.

G. The Beginning of the End

¹ United Restitution Organization Collection of Yad Vashem, Document 11, as quoted by Nathan Greenberg, Hitlerskiyat Natisk za Unishtoivaneto na Evreite on Bulgaria, pp. 117-118.

² Ibid., Document 190, ibid., pp. 118-119, 126.

³ Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, NG-3302.

⁴ Benjamin Arditti, Yehudei Bulgaria B'Shuot HaMishetar HaNazi, 1940-1944, p. 270.

⁵ Nathan Greenberg, op. cit., p. 135.

⁶ Benjamin Arditti, op. cit., p. 270.

⁷ Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, p. 484.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Law of January 21, 1941

Note:

There is no special Anti-Jewish Law in Bulgaria, but in the Bulgarian Official Gazette No. 16 of 1941, (January 23, 1941) we find a law named the "Law for the protection of the Nation." The first section of this law deals with secret and international organizations; the second section, with persons of Jewish descent; the third section, with anti-national and subversive activities. The final section, four, contains mostly penal provisions.

The following is a true translation of Section 2 and of Article 47 of Section 4.

Section 2

PERSONS OF JEWISH DESCENTChapter I
Descent

Article 15

Persons having at least one Jewish parent are considered of Jewish descent.

Persons born (or to be born) of mixed marriages between persons of Jewish descent and Christian faith, and persons of Bulgarian descent, who have adopted or will adopt Christian faith as their first religion, are not to be considered of Jewish descent.

Article 16

All persons of Jewish descent (or their legal representatives or guardians) are obliged to declare their descent to the County Administration or Police Station within one month of the date this law goes into effect.

This descent is to be noted in the register of the community of residence, on the identification card, and on the police card-system for persons of Jewish descent.

Persons who do not fulfill this provision will be punished by imprisonment and by a fine of 1,000 to 100,000 Levas.

Article 17

When a birth certificate is to be made out for a person of Jewish descent, the first name of the new-born must be declared in the respective Bulgarian County. On the basis of the birth certificate, the County issues a baptismal certificate. The Board of Synagogue (of the Jewish community) can give to the new-born the name which was indicated in the baptismal certificate issued by the respective Bulgarian County. This first name must be inserted in the birth certificate.

Each person of Jewish descent must bear the first name which is indicated on his birth certificate. This name must appear on all his books and documents as, for instance, identification cards, school diplomas, draftee and certificates, draftee release certificates, taxation certificates, business firms, etc.

Article 18

Persons of Jewish descent who, on the date of the publication of this law, have first names other than those indicated on their birth certificates, must within three months change them to accord with the birth certificates, and these changed first names must be inserted in all books and documents as listed in the previous article.

Persons born before 1893 must submit birth certificates from their respective Jewish Communities.

Persons of Jewish descent born in Bulgaria and naturalized there, must submit their birth certificates in their respective Counties. Those born outside Bulgaria must submit an authenticated copy of their birth certificate drawn up by the respective County of the State where they were born.

Article 19

Persons of Jewish descent, if baptized, should have their birth certificates corrected in their home counties immediately after accordance with the decision of a competent court. The new first name is to be registered in the population register but the old Jewish name is also to be retained.

Persons of Jewish descent and of female sex, baptized and married to Bulgarians, keep the second name, (their maiden name) which is the name of the Jewish father.

Persons of Jewish descent are not to use the ending ov, ev, etch and so forth in their names. Jewish second names as

they are now and as they are registered in the birth certificate should remain unchanged.

Article 20

Persons of Jewish descent are not allowed to adopt or legitimize children of Bulgarian descent.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

Article 21

Persons of Jewish descent are not allowed:

- a) To be naturalized in Bulgaria. Women of Jewish descent follow the nationality of their husbands.
- b) To elect or to be elected either in assemblies of public law or in assemblies of other societies and organizations having ideal purposes, unless the assembly is of an organization composed exclusively of members of Jewish descent.

All persons of Jewish descent occupying, at the date of the publication of this law, offices by election and who, by virtue of this law, cannot keep these offices, must leave said offices within one month of the date this law goes into effect.

- c) To be employed in state, self-government, or other services of a public character as well as services in organizations of private law except purely Jewish organizations having some privileges of private law or being subsidized by the government. Jews cannot be agents or representatives of state, self-government or autonomous directorships, institutions, etc.

All persons of Jewish descent holding such offices are to quit them within one month of the date this law goes into effect.

- d) To be released from military service.

Jews are drafted in accordance with the general law, but they perform their military service as laborers in segregated labor camps. Those who are not fit for labor service are to be assessed a military tax.

- e) To be members of organizations which are under the supervision of the War Office.

- f) To marry persons of Bulgarian descent or to live out of wedlock with such persons; marriages between persons of Jewish descent and Bulgarians, contracted after the date on which this law goes into effect are null and void.
- g) To employ persons of Bulgarian descent in domestic service in whatsoever quality or form. Domestic servants employed still employed on the date this law goes into effect are to be released within 15 days from that date.

Persons not fulfilling the requirements of this paragraph are subject to punishment of prison and a fine of from 1,000 to 30,000 Levas.

Article 22

In a Bulgarian or foreign school not especially designed for Jews, where admission of pupils is limited, Jews may be accepted only in the percentage to be established by the Minister of Education, provided that there are no Bulgarian candidates.

Chapter III

The Domicile of Persons of Jewish Descent

Article 23

After this law goes into effect, no person of Jewish descent is allowed to establish a new domicile without the authority of the Directorate of Police.

Persons violating this provision will be punished by the Minister of the Interior and National Health by a fine of from 3,000 to 25,000 Levas; in addition, the old domicile will be re-established.

From this date on Jews will not be allowed to establish any new domiciles in Sofia.

On the report of the Minister of the Interior and National Health, the Cabinet of Ministers may establish villages and cities, or parts of them, in which persons of Jewish descent are barred from residing, and to indicate new domiciles for persons living in these places.

Chapter IV

Property of Persons of Jewish Descent

Article 24

Persons of Jewish descent are not allowed to be proprietors,

possessors or renters of land (city lots), directly or indirectly; not of houses or land in the country, except in summer resorts.

Within three months of the date this Law goes into effect, Jewish land owners must offer their land for sale to the State Land Fund of the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property. The Fund buys this property (in succession as they are offered) applying the Law of Labor-Land Property.

Buildings in villages except summer resorts are to be sold by persons of Jewish descent, within one year after this Law goes into effect, to Bulgarians or corporations with Bulgarian capital exclusively.

Land not offered to the State Land Fund and buildings not liquidated by persons of Jewish descent within the above time limits will pass to the Fund for Social Relief, at the disposal of the Minister of the Interior and National Health.

Persons of Jewish descent renting land in the country must leave such land before October 1, 1941. From that date all rent contracts lose their validity unless the contract itself stipulates a previous date.

Chapter V Professional and Business Activities of Persons of Jewish Descent

Article 25

Jewish professionals and businessmen engaged in trade (except peddling) or industry are admitted into each profession, trade (except peddling) and industry in the same proportion as there are Jews in the general population of Bulgaria. This proportion is to be determined separately for each locality and city in the country. The Cabinet of Ministers is to determine, within six months from the date this law goes into effect, the delays to be granted for the execution of the provisions of this paragraph.

Article 26

On the report of the Minister of Trade, Industry and Labor, the Cabinet of Ministers may limit, fully or partially the number of persons of Jewish descent and the extent of Jewish capital to be employed in certain business, industry, crafts and other forms of economic activities, and on the reports of the Ministers of Finance and of Trade Industry and Labor, take measures for the establishment and supervision of the economic conditions of persons of Jewish descent.

There can be no appeal against the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers taken on the basis of this Article.

Within one month of the date this law goes into effect, all persons of Jewish descent having property in the Kingdom must declare their property movable or immovable to the Bulgarian National Bank, using the forms provided for the purpose by this Bank.

Persons of Jewish descent must submit to the Bulgarian National Bank, upon its request, a report on the position of their property including also reports on expenses made. The same reports must be submitted to the Bulgarian National Bank by all persons of Jewish descent emigrating from the Kingdom, regarding the money received from liquidation of their property in the country and also regarding expenses incurred in connection with this liquidation. The assets remaining from the liquidation of property, the savings and other assets are to be kept on a current account in the local Bulgarian Bank. Withdrawals from these accounts are under control of the Bulgarian National Bank. Jewish emigrants from Bulgaria who will not comply with these requirements will not obtain their passports or visas.

Reports to the Bulgarian National Bank are also to be submitted by persons charged with the administration of non-liquidated property of persons of Jewish descent who have emigrated or are about to emigrate.

The violation of the provisions of this Article will be punished in accordance with the Law on Foreign Exchange, the violation of which is to be treated in accordance with this Law.

Property (movable or immovable, money, shares, etc.) intentionally concealed by persons mentioned in this paragraph, will be confiscated in favor of the Fund for Social Relief on the order of the Minister of the Interior and National Health and on the report of the Bulgarian National Bank.

Article 27

Persons of Jewish descent cannot:

- a) Be proprietors, share holders or participants in capital in whatsoever form in schools, all kinds of theaters, movies, publishing houses, production and trade of films and gramophone records, amusement, hotels, production and trade of arms; in credit corporations they are not allowed to participate more than 49% in the capital or vote of the concern. Within six months of the date this law goes into effect, all persons of Jewish descent must liquidate or transfer their

rights to persons of Bulgarian descent and nationality or to corporations with Bulgarian capital. Rights not liquidated or transferred in accordance with this provision will be confiscated in favor of the Fund for Social Relief on the order of the Minister of the Interior and Public Health.

- b) Be in whatsoever leading position, managers, directorates, editors and other leading services in the enterprises mentioned under paragraph a) of this Article. These persons must leave such services within one month of the date this Law goes into effect.
- c) Be sworn expert accountants, custom brokers or commissioners.
- d) To trade with state, self-government and guaranteed by state value and precious metals.
- e) To be members of the Administrative Board, Supervisory Board, Directorates, vice-directorates, managers, and trade appointees wheresoever, even in purely Jewish cooperatives, or in private credit institutions or Banks. Such persons must within one month of the date this law goes into effect, leave their positions and the Minister of the Interior, basing his action on the opinion of the governor of the Bulgarian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank if the matter concerns credit concerns or cooperative banks, or on the opinion of the Governor of the Bulgarian National Bank if the matter concerns credit institutions as a private or limited one, must nominate provisional professional members for the Administrative and Supervisory Boards, but Bulgarians only. Vacant non-elective positions, (directorates, vice-directorates, etc.) are to be filled by nomination of a temporary administrative purely Bulgarian Board. However, General Assemblies to elect regular members of the Administrative and Supervisory Board are to be called within three months of the date this Law goes into effect.
- f) Be proprietors and administrators of pharmacies, drug stores and sanitary stores. The existing stores are to be liquidated within one year from the date this Law goes into effect.

The general directorate of National Health is to announce the pharmacies to be liquidated in accordance with Article 269 of the Law of National Health.

The provisions of this Article do not concern schools and publishing houses destined for Jews only.

Persons of Jewish descent who do not comply with the provisions of this Article are subject to punishment of imprisonment and a fine of from 4,000 to 50,000 Levass; in addition the capital of such participants will be confiscated in favor of the Fund

for Social Relief by the order of the Minister of the Interior and National Health.

Article 28

In every kind of office service, Jews are not allowed to occupy more places than Bulgarians, in cooperatives or enterprises from which Jews are not entirely excluded.

In the cooperatives and enterprises in which the capital is not predominantly Jewish, Persons of Jewish descent cannot participate in leading services as members of the Administrative and Supervisory Board, Directorates, Managers, etc.

NOTE: Cooperatives in which the capital is owned by members who are not predominantly Jewish are in the same category, for all purposes of this Law, as cooperatives with personal shares in which the majority of the members are Jewish.

Kinds of services, which, on the basis of this Law, persons of Jewish descent cannot render, must be released within one month from the date on which this law goes into effect and the substitutes are to be nominated in accordance with Article 27 e).

For non-fulfillment of the provisions of this Article, persons occupying these services or leading in cooperatives or enterprises, will be punished by imprisonment and a fine of from 1,000 to 3,000 Levas.

Article 29

It is forbidden to transfer enterprises, shares and businesses and generally participation in capital in whatsoever form as well as in immovable property and the mortgaging of such property belonging to persons of Jewish descent, persons of foreign descent, foreign nationality or companies with predominantly foreign capital.

Article 30

All business with persons of Jewish descent carried out against the provisions of this law are, by virtue of the law itself, null and void; the invalid transfer of rights will be confiscated in favor of the Fund for Social Relief on the order of the Minister of the Interior and National Health, in accordance with Chapter III, Section 1 of this Law.

Article 31

The provisions of Article 30 will be applied to business concluded by persons of Jewish descent mentioned in Article 29 and completed after September 1, 1940 and to business done with

shares, from the date of the last General Assembly of the limited Company which took place before September 1, 1940. For this business, a delay of six months from the date this Law goes into effect is granted in which persons who acquired rights in this business have to transfer them, to persons of Bulgarian descent and nationality or to companies with predominantly Bulgarian capital. After the expiration of this delay, rights not transferred will be confiscated in accordance with Article 30.

Article 32

Persons of Jewish descent are not to take part as contractors in communal enterprises (in the sense of the law regarding budget, accountants and enterprises and other laws) concessions, and contracts, personally or through an intermediary. Communal enterprises with Jewish contractors not yet completed on the date this law goes into effect, as much as it does not concern concessions, are to be continued in accordance with the conditions mentioned in the contract, but the concession is to be non-valid and is to be liquidated. If the contract of concession did not foresee the order of liquidation, a special liquidating committee will be nominated by the Cabinet of Ministers. The decision of this Committee is to be approved by Parliament.

Article 33

The provisions of Section 2 of this Law are not to be applied to the following persons of Jewish descent:

- a) Persons born in Bulgaria having had an uninterrupted domicile in Bulgaria up until the date this Law goes into effect, being Bulgarian citizens and having been baptized before September 1, 1940.
- b) Persons who, before September 1, 1940, married persons of Bulgarian descent and were baptized before the date this Law goes into effect.

The provisions in Section 2, except a), b), f) and g) of Article 21, and Articles 26 and 27 are not to be applied to persons of Jewish descent who volunteered in the war or who are war invalids or rewarded with decorations for bravery.

Persons of Jewish descent, war orphans, should in all cases competing with other persons of Jewish descent, have preference when application is made of Article 25 and 26 of this Law.

The right for exemption from the provision of this Paragraph will be given upon request of the interested person made to the competent district court which should be accompanied with documentary evidence. The court will take its decision in secret

session after having heard the opinion of the Attorney General.

Section 3

Chapter IV

Article 47

Persons who, directly or indirectly conceal or assist to conceal or to transfer to foreign nationals, foreigners and companies with predominantly foreign capital, property belonging to persons of Jewish descent or to be taken away from them on the basis of this law, are responsible to the Fund for Social Relief, each one fully for the highest evaluation which the concealed or transferred property can be assessed.

APPENDIX B

Source: Durzhaven Vestnik/State
Gasette/92 Published in Sofia
Bulgaria, August 29, 1942

AN EDICT

On the basis of the law authorizing the Cabinet to take necessary measures for regulating the Jewish question and the problem in connection with it.

/Confirmed by decree 70 of the Cabinet in its session of August 26, 1942, Protocol .111, published in Durzhaven Vestnik/State Gasette/ .192, for the 29th of August, 1942/

CHAPTER 1

Concerning the Administration of Jewish Affairs/Literally Questions/

Article 1. The Ministry of the Interior and Public Health has created a department for Jewish Affairs. All measures for solving the Jewish problem will be discussed in this department except those dealing with the law against speculation on real estate property and the law on the fixed tax levied on properties belonging to the people of Jewish descent. The Commissioner for Jewish questions has the right to demand that all departments carry out the measures taken against the Jews. His approval is required for everything dealing with the regulation of Jewish Affairs. Before deciding any matter which also concerns another department, the Commissioner will ascertain the opinion of the department in question.

Article 2. With the Commissioner there shall be a council consisting of a member of the supreme administrative court, appointed by the Minister of Justice; one representative of the Ministry of the Interior; one of the Ministry of Commerce; one of the Ministry of Labor; and representatives of the Ministry of Finance, of the Bulgarian National Bank and of the staff of the civil mobilization.

Article 3. In accordance with articles 23 and 25 of the Law for National Defense and Article 10 of the Law on Global Tax upon the properties of people of Jewish extraction, the powers of the Cabinet, Committees of Ministers, or single ministers, in accordance with the decrees and decisions for the application of Part II of the Law of National Defense and Article 10 of the

Global Tax upon the properties of persons of Jewish descent. Those powers as well as other decisions in connection with the Jewish question will be exercised by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs who is obliged in these cases to consult with the council of his department.

Article 4. There is no right of appeal from the decrees and decisions of the commissioner.

Article 5. The Commissioner for Jewish Affairs is appointed by the Council of Ministers on nomination of the Minister of the Interior. The staff of the department is appointed by the commissioner himself. When absent, he appoints a deputy pro tem. The already existing departments concerned with the Jewish questions are transferred to the main department for Jewish questions, with their staff and complete inventory. People working in this department are government employees. They are members of the Fund of Mutual Help for Employees of the Ministry of the Interior, besides being members of any other fund. Employees working for the department will get back their former jobs in the respective ministries they came from., provided they have good references from the department. The required funds for the departments' expenses will be taken over from the budget of the fund: "Jewish Communities."

Article 6. From the funds derived from payment according to the law of national defense and from frozen Jewish funds in local Bulgarian banks and in the National Bank, certain amounts of money go to the account of the fund "Jewish Communities."

A/ 5%	from frozen accounts under	100,000 Leva
B/ 8%	" " " "	100,000-300,000 Leva
C/ 10%	" " " "	300,000-1,000,000 Leva
D/ 12%	" " " "	1,000,000 Leva

All the cash from the Jewish synagogues and schools as well as the income from taxes collected by the Jewish community are passed on to the fund "Jewish Communities."

The cash from the fund "Jewish Communities" is used for the upkeep of the Jewish communities, to help poor Jews and provide for their installation in camps and villages.

Salaries for the staff of the department and salaries for the members of the council attached to the department are to be drawn from the same fund.

The budget of the fund is made up by the commission for Jewish questions and must have the Cabinet's approval.

Article 7. The Jewish communities are under the supervision

of the department. Each Jewish community is under the administration of a commission composed of a president and 4-6 Jewish members, all of them appointed by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs. Each commission has a special delegate appointed by the Commissioner. In Sofia there is a Central Commission composed of a president, 6 Jewish members and a delegate appointed in the manner indicated above. The commission is obliged to follow the delegates instructions. The commission is allowed to appeal against the delegates decision to the delegate of the Central Commission or to the Commissioner. The Jewish communities are under regulations worked out by the council attached to the department for Jewish Affairs. The Jewish communities' task is to prepare for the deportation of Jewish inhabitants. All Jewish synagogues, school, and charity organizations are under the supervision and control of the various Jewish communities.

CHAPTER II

Definition of the Term "Jewish Descent"

Article 8. Individuals are of Jewish descent/Jews/, whatever their citizenship or religion are, if:

- a/ Their parents or grandparents were of the Jewish faith;
- b/ One of the parents or 2 or 3 of the grandparents were of the Jewish religion;
- c/ One of the grandparents had formerly the Jewish religion and another of the grandparents had been converted to the Jewish religion.

Remark: The Jewish religion is considered to be the first acquired in the following cases: individuals

- a/ Born from parents with the Jewish religion;
- b/ Born from marriages of people of one Jewish and one of another religion if the marriage was performed according to the Jewish ritual;
- c/ When the baptism or the formal adoption of any other religion in marriages similar to b/ but not celebrated with the Jewish ritual, was not performed in the first year after they were born;
- d/ Infants registered in the list of the Jewish communities before being baptised or given a new religion.

Article 9. Persons not having made an application in accordance with Article 16 of the Law for National Defense, but having declared in official papers before or after the 23rd of January, 1941 that they are Jews, are treated as such till they can prove that they are not of Jewish descent. Whatever his citizenship or

origin every person is considered Jewish who was of Jewish religion or converted to it on or about the 1st of September, 1942.

Article 10. Not considered of Jewish descent are persons born or who may be born from marriages of persons of Jewish descent, Bulgarian citizens with persons of Bulgarian descent under the following condition:

- a/ If the marriage took place before September 1, 1940;
- b/ If the marriage was celebrated according to the Christian ritual;
- c/ If the parent of Jewish descent had become a Christian before the 23rd of January, 1941;

Remark: Point c/ is not taken into consideration if the parent of Jewish descent died before September the 1st, 1940

- d/ If the parents have been baptized or are baptized later;
- e/ If the parents were converted to the Christian religion and did not return to the Jewish faith.

Article 11. Persons not considered as Jews by the former laws but considered as such by the new decrees are obliged to declare their Jewish descent one month after the publication of the new decrees in accordance with Article 16 of the Law of National Defense. They will be punished by same article if they do not comply with the order. If it is doubtful whether someone is a Jew or a Bulgarian, the Commissioner will settle the question after having consulted with the department's council. The way to decide what peoples' origins are will be fixed by the Commissioner after consultations with the department's council, and being approved by the Minister of Interior.

CHAPTER III

Restrictions Enforced on Jews

Article 12. Declaration of origin in accordance with article 16 of the Law for National Defense is obligatory for all Jews privileged by Article 23 of the Law for National Defense. The declaration of origin is obligatory for Jews who have become Bulgarian citizens by naturalization or who may become with foreign citizenship who have come to Bulgaria. The declaration will be required when registering at the police.

Article 13. Jews are not allowed to have Bulgarian given names or family names or a name with a Bulgarian suffix such as ov, ev, loh, sky, et, cet. Non-converted Jews are not allowed to have Christian first names. The prohibited names are to be

erased from all registers. Forbidden family names are to be exchanged with the grandfather's name. If, up to the 1st of November, 1942 Jews with forbidden names have not declared their Jewish names, they will be given the name of their grandfather or some other name. The new names will be registered. The names will be chosen from a list made up by the Department for Jewish Affairs.

Article 14. All Jews must wear a special badge. Exception are:

- a/ Children under 10 years of age.
- b/ Jews privileged by article 33 paragraph 1 of the Law for National Defense.
- c/ Jews who are foreign citizens, passing through Bulgaria with transit visas.

Article 15. Jews privileged by Article 33 paragraph 1 of the Law for National Defense, as well as Jews who are foreign citizens staying in the country for one month are to wear on the left side of their chest a special round badge 2 centimeters of a bright yellow color, with the approval of the Department for Jewish Affairs. The badge must be worn on the coat and the overcoat. People walking in the streets in shirts, pullover, et cetera, have to wear their badges on the shirts and pullovers.

Article 16. All other Jews not mentioned in Articles 14-15 must wear on the left side of their chest a six cornered star at 3 centimeters in diameter of yellow color, approved by the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs.

Article 17. The wearing of badges is obligatory one month after the publication of this order.

Article 18. All Jews, Bulgarian citizens, wearing badges, will be given special identity cards/pink color/.

Article 19. Owners of establishments, /that is, restaurants, hotels, cafes, et cetera/, who are of Bulgarian or related origin, as well as the members of the department for Jewish Affairs and the police, may forbid to Jews wearing badges entrance to the above mentioned places.

Article 20. Jews not enjoying privileges of Article 33, paragraph 1 of the Law for National Defense are not allowed to live in a flat or share with Bulgarian or related origin unless they are relatives.

Article 21. Jews are not allowed to live in hotels except in those approved by the department and only for a period of 10 days within six months.

Article 22. Jews must from September 15, 1942 have over the

entrance door of their flat a special plate approved by the Department for Jewish Affairs, "Jewish House."

From the same date all the Jewish shops and offices should have on their entrances special plates "Jewish business" written on all their letter heads, products, et cetera. The same is required of every business in which capital is employed in whatever amount.

Article 23. Jews are not allowed to own cars, radios, and telephones. The Department for Jewish Affairs may allow some Jews to have a telephone.

Article 24. Article 21, paragraph 1, points /f/ and /a/ of the Law for National Defense are changed in the following cases:

/f/ To have sexual relations with or to marry persons of Bulgarian or related origin; marriages of this kind will be considered as non-existent after the publication of the law.

Remarks: The same applies to Gypsies marrying Bulgarians.

/g/ Jews are forbidden to have any servants of Bulgarian or related origin. They should be discharged in 15 days.

CHAPTER IV

Concerning the Place of Residence and Deportation of Jews

Article 25. Jewish families consisting of two persons are allowed to live in one room only. Families of 3-4 persons are allowed to live in two rooms. 5-6 persons in three rooms, more than 6 persons in 4 rooms. Kitchens, halls, et cetera are not counted as rooms. One month after this law enters into force Jews living in more rooms than they are allowed to live in must either change them or let the extra rooms to other Jews. If these changes do not take place, a commission consisting of a Jewish official, a police representative, a representative of the Mayor and the representative of the Jewish community will settle the question.

Article 26. The Commissioner for Jewish Affairs decided when and under what conditions Jews can be let or can let rooms. Contracts for rents, et cetera, for Jews are valid. If they do not contravene any of the decrees published by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs.

Article 27. After having taken due advice of the council, the Commissioner can decide what streets are prohibited for the Jews to live in as well as the dates and conditions in which the

Jews must leave the above mentioned streets.

Article 28. Jews cannot leave the town they live in without permission of the police.

Remarks: Villages considered to be on the outskirts of any town are not regarded as a part of the town. The police has detailed registers on these subjects and every month a copy is sent to the Department for Jewish Questions. Permission to live in other towns is delivered by the department.

Article 29. Jews living in Sofia are subjected to deportation to the provinces or outside the country. In any case, by November 1, 1942, all Jews living in Sofia who are unemployed in accordance with the Law for National Defense or in accordance with the present decree, and who have no other occupation, must be deported.

CHAPTER V

Economic Activities of People of Jewish Descent:

Article 30. Jews who are not allowed to engage in commerce or industry cannot under any circumstances invest their capital in commercial or industrial enterprises.

Article 31. All Jews without any exception are not allowed to start any new businesses.

Article 32. Jews who have retained their occupational rights are not allowed:

- a/ To have more than a job.
- b/ To enlarge their business by trading in new articles or by increasing their capital.
- c/ To contract business outside their regular branch.
- d/ To invest more than 300,000 Leva from their capital, in their work, and to use credits higher than their capital. If they hold shares in several enterprises, they must retain shares only in one enterprise not above 500,000 Leva, and liquidate all the others.

Article 33. In Article 27 of the Law for National Defense, Paragraph /f/ has undergone a change and the paragraph /g/ and /h/ have been added as follows:

- /f/ Jews are debarred for production of or trade in medicines, sanitary materials, surgical instruments, optical instruments, and chemicals. They cannot own pharmacies, drug-

stores, clinics, et cetera.

/g/ Jews are disbarred from industries, mines trade in agricultural products, import and export, shipping transport, commissioner agent's business.

/h/ Jews holding shares in the above-mentioned enterprises must liquidate their shares in two months time if the cabinets does not issue an order for quicker liquidation.

Article 34. Restrictions of the Law for National Defense Article 27 are applied to all Jews.

Article 35. Jewish craftsmen are allowed to continue working in their branch provided they work themselves, and their capital does not exceed 200,000 Leva. They must credit exceeding 200,000 Leva. Jewish craftsmen are not allowed to have their work done outside of their workshops. Peddlars may retain their business, but the Commissioner for Jewish Questions may restrict or stop peddlars work, depending upon the local conditions.

Article 36. Jews with professions who are not allowed to practice because of this law are compelled according to the law to liquidate their business or to transfer it to someone else by September, 1942, in case this restriction is due to already existing laws. If it is due to the new Jewish law they must liquidate their business in two months time.

Jews barred from commerce and industry must deposit all their shares in the National Bank two weeks after the publication of the decree. The department sells out these shares and the money goes to the fund for "Jewish Communities," exception being made of the percentage due to the department. All Jews from liberated territories without exceptions are barred from commerce, industry, and free professions. If they have not already liquidated their business they must do so in two weeks time.

Article 37. Liquidation of Jewish business is to take place under the supervision of a commission from the department consisting of a judge appointed by the President of the District Court and two members appointed by the Commission for Jewish Questions. For the liquidation of Jewish business with capital exceeding 600,000 Leva two more members to the commission will be appointed, that is, a representative of finance minister and a representative of the Minister of Commerce. The decisions agreed upon by the commission must have the Commissioner's approval. The liquidation of Jewish business after the 1st of September, 1942 will be carried out by the department in the above mentioned manner. The department will appoint persons for the temporary administration of the business, or for its liquidation. The former Jewish owner

may liquidate his own business in the best way possible, but if he fails to do so he is liable to 10 years in imprisonment and 2,000,000 Leva maximum fine; money owed to the business or from the business will be paid as usual after September 1st.

Jewish industrial enterprises will only change proprietors; they will rarely be wold out.

Article 38. Jews who fail to carry out the terms stated in Article 36 and people helping them to break the law will be punished by a maximum of 5 years imprisonment and fined twice as great as the capital or shares in question. The business, capital or the shares will be confiscated for the benefit of the fund for "Social Help" in accordance with orders issued by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs.

Article 39. Jews without a job are not allowed to start working again without having first the consent of the respective labor organization and of the Department for Jewish Affairs.

Article 40. The staff in Jewish enterprises, working only with the Jews have to be entirely Jewish. In all the other enterprises where the Jews are allowed to work in accordance with Article 27 of the Law for National Defense their number must not exceed one-fourth of the total of the personnel, and must not exceed the number of Bulgarian employees. In enterprises not entirely working on Jewish capital Jews are not allowed to be managers, directors, legal counsels, commercial agents, bookkeepers, cashiers, technical advisers, specialists, et cetera. This order should be carried out in two months; it does not concern manuel workers.

Article 41. Decrees of the Law for National Defense and these decrees concerning Jews are applied to enterprises working almost entirely with Jewish capital as long as there is no essential change in existing conditions.

CHAPTER VI

Jewish Properties and Capital

Article 42. Article 26 of the Law for National Defense has been altered as follows: within one month following the publication of the Law for National Defense all Jews owning immovable property in Bulgaria have to declare it to the National Bank. They are required, if asked by the Bank, to declare in what state the property is and the amount of their personal expenditures.

Jews leaving the country must give a detailed account to the National Bank of the amount of money they derived from the sale of their property and how they spent the money. Persons administerin

Jewish property not yet liquidated belonging to Jews who have left or are about to leave the country must give a detailed report to the National Bank. People transgressing this article as well as article 38 and 47 of the law for National Defense will be persecuted for trading with money coming from outside and will be punished by the law. Concealed or undeclared property, money, jewels are confiscated for the benefit of the fund for "Social Help" by order of the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs. The confiscated money is returned only if the tribunal finds that it had been previously declared or that a special declaration was not needed. Confiscated things can be bought back, if their value does not exceed 10,000 Leva.

Article 43. In all cases of confiscation of shares and securities, after the publication of this decree in Durzhaven Vestnik, the government assumes the owners rights without all the procedure formerly used in similar cases.

Article 44. Jews cannot dispose of their movable properties without permission of the department with the following exceptions:

- a/ Money received for living expenses
- b/ Salaries, wages and bonuses
- c/ Articles for personal and household use not exceeding in value of 10,000 Leva, otherwise a special permission from the department is required.
- d/ Goods, capital, et cetera connected with the business of Jews who have the right to keep their business or to engage in the practice of free occupations, that is occupation to Jews.

Article 45. Jews must deposit all their money, savings, et cetera in the local Bulgarian bank or in the National Bank in a blocked account including all available cash, shares held for them by others and invested in business by other persons, savings accounts, sums received from insurance gifts, inheritances, money collected from non-business sources, sums received from the sale of properties, indemnities for seized property, except as mentioned in Article 44.

Also there must be deposited in the National Bank all shares and stocks which persons of Jewish descent own, corporations, companies of limited responsibilities, and likewise all stocks, bonds, et cetera and valuables, that is, jewels, gold, and silver ornaments, et cetera, with the exception of those mentioned in Article 44. The Commissioner will sell all such shares, stocks, bonds, valuables, et cetera and deposit the amounts received in the blocked account of the owners.

From the sums paid under this article in blocked accounts from

5% to 12% will be turned over to the "Fund for Jewish Communities" in accordance with point 6.

Article 46. Drawing money from blocked accounts is only possible with the permission of the Department for Jewish Affairs. Permission is given in order to pay off debts contracted by Jews of the blocked accounts and to provide for their expenses.

The department permits the drawing of money to pay:

- a/ Debts contracted to the government, municipality or other government institutions.
- b/ Commercial debts, provided they are confirmed by official documents or a court judgement.
- c/ Debts contracted toward private persons, before July 21, 1941 and if they are confirmed by official documents.
- d/ Monthly expenses incurred to pay rents and salaries to the personnel of the business in liquidation. The expenses should not exceed the monthly expenses incurred till February 23rd, 1942.
If increases in salaries have occurred after the 23rd of February, 1942 as per law concerning such increases, expenses can be increased.
- e/ Private debts approved by a special commission dealing with the settlement of Jewish debts.
- f/ To provide for the private needs of the Jewish owner and his family if he has no other income. The amount of money given will depend upon the number of persons in the family and the place they live in. The amount must not exceed 5,000 Leva per month.

Article 47. In accordance to Article 37 the sales of Jewish properties by the Department for Jewish Affairs is carried out by action.

When business enterprises and shares change owners, the change must be approved by the Cabinet. The Commissioner for Jewish Questions sends in a report to the Cabinet after having heard the reports of the Minister of Justice, Finance, and Commerce. The Cabinet decides after having taken into consideration the interests of the business to appoint a certain person to take over the administration of the business. Preference is given to previous owners of Bulgarian origin. If the money raised from the auction sales exceeds the sum declared by the Jewish owner, the difference is considered to be the government's benefit.

Article 48. Jews having failed to fulfill their obligation in accordance to Article 45 in two weeks time after the publication of the decree, will be punishable by imprisonment and a maximum fine of 1,000,000 Leva. If the amount of money not deposited in the bank does not exceed 5,000 Leva the fine will be 3,000 Leva.

and the confiscation of the amount not deposited will go to the fund "Social Help" by order of the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs.

Article 49. The Jews' creditors must acknowledge their claim to the Department for Jewish Affairs within two months following the publication of this decree.

Article 50. When Jews do not make proper effort to collect sums due them, the Department for Jewish Affairs will make collection in accordance with paragraph 11 of the regulations for the application of the Law for National Defense. The money collected will be deposited in the National Bank as mentioned in Article 45. This does not apply to money owed to Jews for professional services.

Article 51. Jews may have insurance if the premium does not exceed 700 leva a month. The premium is paid in accordance with Article 46. All other insurance should be liquidated in two months time.

The amount derived from the liquidation is deposited in the blocked account in accordance to Article 45.

CHAPTER VII

Alteration of the Law for National Defense

Article 52. Article 33 of the Law for National Defense has been changed in the following manner:

Persons of Jewish descent who are Bulgarian citizens wedded in a church before the 1st of September, 1940 to Bulgarians, and who were baptized before January 23, 1941, are exempted from all the restrictions regarding Jews if above-mentioned decree is not contradicted by other laws. In divorce cases without living children, the privilege ceased. In cases of competition between Jews, the following categories of Jews are preferred:

- a/ Owners of medals for military valor if the owners have shown appreciation of their medals up to March 17, 1942.
- b/ War invalid having right to pension.
- c/ War orphans.
- d/ War widows who have not married again.
- e/ Widows and children of veterans of the War of Liberation 1877-1878.

All privileges are cancelled in cases of criminal charges, speculation charges, communist or anti-government tendencies. The same applies to Jews leaving the country. Jews who want to enjoy privileges must send an application to the Department for Jewish Affairs by October 1, 1942 together with all necessary documents.

A special commission will decide on the application and must be approved from the Commissioner.

Article 53. Privileges enjoyed in accordance with Article 33 paragraph 1 point /a/ of the Law for National Defense cease to exist. Persons who enjoyed these privileges will lose them two months after the published of this decree.

Article 54. Privileges accorded by Article 33, paragraph 1, point /b/ and paragraph 11 and 111 of the Law of National Defense cease altogether a month following the publication of this decree if the application in accordance with Article 52 is not sent in time, or if the Commissioner decides otherwise.

CHAPTER VIII

Special Decrees

Article 56. Article 36, paragraph 111 of the Law for National Defense has been altered thus: "For failure to comply with these decrees, offenders will be punished in accordance with Article 26 paragraph 11 of the Law for National Defense. By order of the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, property not declared will be confiscated for the benefit of the Fund "Social Help" !

Article 57. For failure to comply with the terms of the Law for National Defense and of this decree, offenders will be punished with imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 Leva if there are no other penalties required by other law.

Article 58. This decree cancels all other contradicting laws.

Article 59. This decree will be published by the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs after consulting with the department council and after the Minister of Interior has approved them.

APPENDIX C

Notation on Sources

All of the original documents used for the writing of this thesis can be found in the form of microfilms or photostats, in the Bulgarian Documents' Collection of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Library, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Yad Vashem documents in this collection have a uniform identification system given to them by Yad Vashem and can be easily located within the collection.

The documents received from the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine of Paris, France have no uniform system of identification. Many of them can be identified by their original markings given to them by the German office that issued them, be it the Foreign Ministry or the Gestapo. To make reference to these documents possible without a substantial loss of time to the reader, I have inclosed to this particular microfilm a table of contents identifying the documents as found in their order of appearance in the film.

The photostats of the documents served by the Attorney General of Israel at the Adolph Eichmann Trial were received from the Israeli Police at a time when the greater part of this thesis was completed, and for that reason no reference to these documents was possible. They are, however, also a part of the collection at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Library and are available for reference.

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