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RFE NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE - EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SECTION

Background Report
(Hungar. Research)

POSITION OF THE JEWISH CHURCH IN HUNGARY
SINCE THE REVOLUTION *

During the revolution Hungarian Jews regained their religious freedom and greeted revolutionary achievements with enthusiasm. The religious communities set up provisional revolutionary councils which took charge of the direction of religious life (Hungarian Monitoring, 2 November 1956, p.174).

Due to mass hysteria brought about by the defeat of the revolution a large number of Hungarian Jews left the country. Some religious communities simply ceased to exist. According to foreign reports 17,000 Jews left Hungary ("Uj Elet", organ of Hungarian Jews, April/May 1957).

Owing to large-scale emigration the government showed little concern about re-establishing the relationship between the State and the Jewish Church. The national representatives of the Hungarian Jews held their first conference as late as July 1957 at which they elected a new board. In the resolution passed by them they acknowledged the KADAR government. It said:

Hungarian Jews look with confidence to the good work performed by the revolutionary worker-peasant government and support the realization of its program.

End

* See also Background Reports of September 9 (Position of the Roman Catholic Church) and September 12 (Position of the Reformed Church).