

# Central and Eastern Europe

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## Germany

### *National Affairs*

**H**ALFWAY THROUGH Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's four-year term it was clear that his Red-Green coalition—his own Social Democratic Party (SPD) together with the environmentalist Greens—had succeeded in co-opting the traditional agenda of the opposition Christian Democrats (CDU), leaving the opposition without a substantial issue. The government accomplished this by moving to the political center, primarily through a set of pro-business tax cuts that were expected to spur the economy.

The conservative opposition was also handicapped by scandal. Former chancellor Helmut Kohl shocked the nation at the end of 1999 by refusing to clarify his role in the CDU's financial irregularities, and in January 2000 he resigned as honorary chairman of the party. The affair continued to get headlines throughout 2000 as more illegal payments during the Kohl years came to light. All that Kohl himself would acknowledge was his personal receipt of some \$1 million not accounted for in the party's financial records, but he refused to name the donors. Considering his "word of honor" not to divulge the source of the money more important than the German law requiring him to do so, he compared his treatment by the German mass media to the Nazi boycott of Jewish stores during the Hitler regime. Most observers believed that Kohl would end up paying a fine and would not serve any jail time.

The Kohl scandal triggered an internal party upheaval. Wolfgang Schäuble, Kohl's successor as CDU leader, admitted in February that he too had taken unreported campaign contributions, and was forced to resign. He was replaced in April by Angela Merkel, who had grown up in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR)—Communist East Germany—and considered Kohl her political mentor. She was the first woman to lead a major German party.

Charges similar to those against Kohl were also made against the local CDU in the state of Hesse, which was discovered to have its own unreported slush fund. Party officials there imaginatively attributed the money to a gift from grateful expatriate German Jews.

Strains developed in relations with the United States. The German political establishment, including parts of the conservative opposition, made little secret of its preference for Al Gore in the American presidential election, considering him by far the more experienced candidate in the area of foreign affairs. In May, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer called for changes in the structure of the European Union that would ultimately lead to a European federal state, but he also stressed that the U.S. presence was both welcome and necessary in Germany and in Europe. German leaders criticized the plan for a U.S. national missile-defense shield supported by Republican candidate George W. Bush, criticism that increased in December when it became clear that Bush would be the next president. Many Germans also questioned the effectiveness of U.S. embargoes against Cuba and Iraq, while the U.S. government maintained serious reservations about Germany's policy of "open dialogue" with Iran.

Landmark provisions liberalizing German citizenship rules went into effect on January 1. They replaced the old principle of determining citizenship on the basis of German lineage (*jus sanguinis*), which went back to 1913, with the criterion of place of birth. Under the new regulations, anyone born in Germany received automatic German citizenship provided that at least one parent had been living in the country for at least eight years. Such children could also maintain their parents' nationality until age 23, when they would have to choose which passport to keep. In addition, foreigners residing in Germany gained easier access to citizenship through a reduction of the residency requirement for naturalization from fifteen years to eight. At the end of 2000 Germany was home to around 7.3 million foreigners. The largest group, the country's two-million-strong Turkish (and Kurdish) community, about 40,000 of whom held German passports, particularly welcomed the changes in the law.

Yet despite the easing of the naturalization procedures, there was only a slight upturn in the number of foreign residents applying for citizenship during 2000. It was believed that the substantial processing fees for each person—which could amount to a considerable sum for large families—acted as a deterrent, and also that a good number of the foreign residents were conflicted about whether they really wanted to take on a German identity.

As part of his pro-business thrust, Chancellor Schröder pleased German industry by making available 20,000 temporary visas to foreign computer specialists who would be allowed to stay and work in the country for from three to five years. By the end of 2000, however, only about 4,400 of these visas had been issued, perhaps because the visas were only for a limited stay in Germany and not an invitation to immigrate, or, conversely, because potential applicants feared being subjected to antiforeigner sentiment in Germany.

It was clear, though, that the issue of immigration was not going to disappear. In a report issued in November, the German Institute for Economic Research calculated that current rates of immigration from outside the European Union would have to increase drastically in order to keep the size of the labor force from

shrinking as the German population aged. To examine the immigration issue in greater depth the Bundestag—the lower house of the German Parliament—set up a blue-ribbon commission led by Rita Süßmuth, a prominent CDU member. Its recommendations, due to be announced toward the middle of 2001, were expected to lead to new immigration laws.

The CDU sought to make political capital out of the immigration issue. In November, Friedrich Merz of the CDU, minority whip of the Bundestag, asserted that foreigners settling in Germany should be expected to accept *Deutsche Leitkultur*, the primacy of German culture, and other CDU leaders suggested that the chancellor's Social Democratic Party was somehow deficient in German patriotism. Many political observers saw this thrust as a conservative rejection of the increasingly multicultural nature of German society. In the wake of a number of violent incidents perpetrated by extreme right-wingers and just a few days after a large neo-Nazi demonstration in Berlin, Paul Spiegel, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (CCJG), responded to Merz. Speaking on November 9—the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the so-called “night of the broken glass” when synagogues and other Jewish-owned buildings in Germany had been torched and wrecked in 1938—Spiegel asked if it was also a hallmark of German *Leitkultur* to harass refugees and burn synagogues.

In February, when Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) became part of the ruling coalition in neighboring German-speaking Austria, Andreas Nachama, president of the Berlin Jewish Community, voiced the concern of many Germans when he cautioned that this step “removes the taboo from the right-extremist position within Austrian society, encourages supporters in Germany and in other countries to present themselves more self-confidently, and influences the European right-spectrum on the whole.” Germany, in fact, was one of the leading voices within the EU calling for the imposition of sanctions against Austria to protest the Freedom Party's inclusion (see below, pp. 397–98). However once the EU dropped its sanctions in the fall, the issue faded away.

### *Israel and the Middle East*

The year began with two firsts in the history of German-Israeli relations.

On January 28 Berlin welcomed the first Israeli embassy located in the post-Bonn capital. Israeli architect Orit Willenberg-Giladi, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, was present at the topping-out ceremony for the building in the Wilmersdorf residential district, a center of Jewish life in prewar Berlin. The embassy staff had moved from Bonn into the finished building in December 1999.

On February 16 Johannes Rau, president of Germany since May 1999 and a long-time friend of Israel, became the first German president to address the Knesset—and the first person to speak before the Israeli parliament in German. He said: “In the presence of the people of Israel I bow in humility before the murdered who have no graves at which I could ask them for forgiveness. I ask for for-

giveness for what Germans did, for myself and my generation, for the sake of our children and children's children, whose future I would like to see at the side of the children of Israel." The statement appeared to be in response to the words of Elie Wiesel, who, during a January 27 speech in the German Bundestag, had issued a plea to the president to ask the Jewish people directly, in the name of the Germans, for forgiveness.

Rau's Israel trip was the beginning of an 11-day diplomatic mission to the Middle East that included meetings with Israeli president Ezer Weizman, Palestinian Authority chairman Yasir Arafat, and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Rau, representing Germany, was just as welcome a presence to the Arabs as he was to the Israelis. In 1994 Germany had been the first European country to open an office in the territories under Palestinian control, and since then, encouraged by Israeli officials, Germany had fortified its political support of the peace process. This included significant financial assistance to the Palestinians. Since 1996, Germany had allotted DM 140 million (\$70 million) annually for cooperative projects geared toward improving the infrastructure—mainly water and sewage management—in the Palestinian areas. On a per capita basis, in fact, the Palestinians were the recipients of more German foreign aid than any other country, and Germany was the largest contributor to the region of all the EU countries.

Israel also received concrete support from Germany during the year. The third and final German-built Dolphin-class submarine was delivered to the Israeli navy in October. Once the vessels could be outfitted with Israeli-made warheads, the country would possess a formidable military deterrent, a third pillar of nuclear defense—after land and air capabilities—and the ability to strike back from the sea even after a nonconventional attack. After the Gulf War of 1991, when it was revealed that the Iraqi missiles used against Israel had been partially developed by German companies, the Kohl administration had offered to cover the costs (approximately \$300 million each) for two of the three subs.

In early June, Foreign Minister Fischer spent two days in Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories. To help ease tensions in the area he agreed that Germany would provide political asylum for 400 members of the SLA (South Lebanese Army), the Israel-backed militia in Lebanon that had ceased to exist with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon (see below, p. 482). His Israeli counterpart, David Levy, thanked Fischer for Germany's support of Israel's membership in WEOG (Western European and Others Group) at the UN, which would make Israel eligible to serve on the Security Council and other UN bodies.

During the summer, Rudolf Dressler, designated to take over the post of German ambassador to Israel, was the target of harsh criticism from across the political spectrum for comments he made favoring the placement of the city of Jerusalem under international administration. An expert on social issues, Dressler was new to the international diplomatic scene. He quickly explained that he had misspoken, and it did not appear that any lasting damage was done.

Reacting to the outbreak of violence between Israelis and Palestinians at the end of September, Chancellor Schröder travelled to the Middle East in late October for high-level talks, first with the key Arab nations—Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. In each country he remained unwavering in his message: the violence between Israelis and Palestinians must end, the parties must return to the negotiating table, and U.S. president Bill Clinton remained the only viable diplomatic broker. Upon Schröder's subsequent arrival in Israel, his first visit there as chancellor, Prime Minister Barak personally appealed him to take on a greater role as mediator in the conflict. Schröder declined; he felt that Germany was neither politically nor historically suited for this overwhelming task. He stressed once again that neither Germany nor the EU could replace the United States as primary facilitator. Schröder did promise Barak help in obtaining the release of three Israeli soldiers held hostage in Lebanon. In talks with the Palestinians, Schröder gave assurances of continued German financial assistance and also offered to bring 50 Palestinians injured in the conflict with Israel to Germany for medical treatment. Finally, Schröder warned both sides against unilateral measures, specifically mentioning the dangers of a Palestinian declaration of statehood.

In Germany, meanwhile, the Assembly of Representatives of the Berlin Jewish Community issued a resolution critical of the German media's "one-sided presentation" of Israel as the aggressor in the renewed Middle East conflict. Though media reporting was less aggressively pro-Arab in Germany than elsewhere in Europe, there were numerous feature articles on the plight of the Palestinians and few reports presenting the Israeli perspective. Many Jews in Germany were particularly upset that the role of the anti-Israel and sometimes anti-Semitic press in the Palestinian territories did not get sufficient coverage.

Germany had been without an Israeli ambassador since Avi Primor was recalled in the summer of 1999 (see AJYB 2000, pp. 339–40). Early in 2000, Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Levy suggested the appointment of Knesset member Yossi Katz, but the nomination fell through. Mordechai Levy became Israel's *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin in September. The new ambassador, Shimon Stein, was to take up his post in January 2001.

Outside of the political arena, in March Germany and Israel celebrated 25 years of government-sponsored cooperative research in the sciences. According to Germany's minister of education, Edelgard Bulmahn, "Germany maintains closer scientific relations with Israel than with any other country." Later that month, the Technion in Haifa awarded President Rau an honorary doctorate for his efforts on behalf of that institution. The award ceremony was held at Berlin's Technical University.

A brand new connection between German and Israeli youth was established in 2000 at the third annual "Miza'ad Ha-ahava" (Hebrew for "Love Parade"). More than 300,000 "techno" music fans from around the world danced along Tel Aviv's beach promenade on November 10; their motto: "You Can't Stop the Love." "Dr. Motte," initiator of the tremendously successful event held annually in Berlin

since 1989, called for “ravers” from Germany and the rest of Europe to attend what turned out to be—despite security concerns—a true festival of peace.

Germany made diplomatic efforts throughout the year aimed at the release of the 13 Jews jailed in Iran, efforts that Israel gratefully acknowledged. The Berlin Jewish Community protested against the visit of Iranian president Mohammed Khatami in May. In October the German economics minister traveled to Iran with a delegation of German corporate executives. Germany seemed intent on continuing its policy of cautiously improving trade and cultural relations with Iran despite the trial and imprisonment of numerous Iranian intellectuals for attending a conference in Berlin in April sponsored by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Greens.

### *Right-Wing Extremism and Xenophobia*

For the first time ever, a German president, Johannes Rau, included mention of the victims of racism and hatred in his speech on Germany’s Memorial Day, November 19.

Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (FOCI) statistics registered 10,997 crimes committed by right-wing extremists in 2000—not including specifically anti-Semitic acts—as compared with 6,937 cases reported the previous year, a colossal increase of 58.2 percent, though, as explained below, much of the rise could be attributed to more accurate reporting. The number of crimes categorized as xenophobic rose from 2,283 in 1999 to 3,594 in 2000, a 57.4-percent increase. Of the year 2000 total, 641 of the incidents were of a violent nature, a 42.1-percent increase from the 451 incidents in 1999. There were an estimated 10,000 violence-prone neo-Nazis and skinheads in Germany, about a thousand more than there had been the year before. The number of German right-wing extremist home pages on the Internet jumped from 330 in 1999 to 800 in 2000.

Although the number of skinhead concerts dropped from 109 in 1999 to 76 in 2000, participants demonstrated with far greater aggressiveness when police sought to shut the concerts down than they ever had before. Interior Minister Otto Schily (SPD) announced a ban on performances by Blood & Honour Deutschland in September; this 250-member group, a mainstay of the extreme-right scene in Germany, had played a key role in the organization of skinhead concerts throughout the country.

Far-right crimes became the focus of a national debate during the summer after a bomb explosion in Düsseldorf critically injured a group of mostly Jewish immigrants, and, in a separate incident, Alberto Adriano, a father of three from Mozambique, was brutally murdered by skinheads in Dessau. In addition, allegations—later dropped—that neo-Nazis in Sebnitz had drowned six-year-old Joseph Kantelberg-Abdulla in broad daylight while bystanders stood passively nearby were also being investigated at the time. Reflecting a widespread feeling that right-wing extremism could no longer be dismissed as an isolated phenom-

enon confined to fringe groups, Wolfgang Thierse, president of the Bundestag, went so far as to state that such extremism had become a serious threat to “the core of [German] society.”

The events of the summer triggered a closer look at the accuracy of statistics on extremist activities, and calls for “truth in crime reporting” became common. After journalists from two papers—*Tagesspiegel* and *Frankfurter Rundschau*—discovered that official statistics listed only 26 of the 93 persons murdered by right-wing extremists since German unification in 1990, Interior Minister Schily lamented bureaucratic “registration deficits” and the blurred criteria used for defining “extremist crimes” at local offices of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation. The dramatic rise in the figures for crimes by extremists for the year 2000 was undoubtedly due, in part, to the new interest in getting the facts right, and thus the 2000 data were probably the first ever accurately to reflect the incidence of right-wing hate crimes.

As was the case in 1999, about half the crimes took place in the new federal states of the former GDR (the old East Germany), where slightly more than one-fifth of the country’s population, and a much smaller proportion of foreigners, resided. “The regional emphasis of the violence is clearly East Germany, including Berlin,” said Schily in an interview with *Die Woche*. He also commented that the perpetrators in the east were more militant and younger than their western counterparts: two-thirds of the culprits in the east were under 21.

A new Forsa Institute/*MAX* magazine study of attitudes toward foreigners was released in August, based on a representative sample of Germans aged 18–49. Whereas two-thirds of the respondents considered foreigners a positive addition to a modern society, 40 percent (37 percent from the west, 51 percent from the east) nonetheless believed that there were too many foreigners in Germany. Every sixth person (16 percent) thought that resident foreigners took advantage of native Germans. Three-fourths of the sample said they would not come to the aid of a foreigner under attack, though they would summon help. Every fifth person (22 percent) said that he or she would risk personal harm and assist directly; and only 2 percent would do nothing to help. The study showed that xenophobic attitudes ran highest among women, people from the former East Germany, those with low levels of education, and members of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) and CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union). On a positive note, a large majority, 85 percent, felt that the government ought to take a significantly tougher stance against right-wing extremism.

Intellectuals and politicians concerned about the high level of extremism in the eastern part of the country debated the question of whether this had some connection to the way the memory of the Holocaust had been treated in East Germany, where the schools, under the Communist regime, had taught about the period from the perspective of a struggle between socialism and monopoly capitalism, neglecting the fate of the Jews and other minorities under Nazism. Recognizing the need to provide schools in the east with updated educational ma-

terials on the Holocaust and, in particular, on what happened to the Jews, German educational authorities approached the United States embassy for information about American programs that fostered tolerance education.

The far-right National Democratic Party (NPD) held a demonstration on January 29, the day before the anniversary of Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. Hundreds of young neo-Nazis marched toward the Brandenburg Gate for the first time since World War II, protesting the planned monument honoring the European Jews murdered by the Third Reich (see below, pp. 383–84). Though a legal injunction kept the group from marching through the gate, on March 12 the NPD held another demonstration at the gate as a sign of “national solidarity with Vienna”—March 12 was the anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Austria in 1938. Again, on November 4, a few days before Kristallnacht, 1,000 neo-Nazis and NPD members took to the streets of Berlin for a rally. Stung by voices of outrage from around the world, Chancellor Schröder supported calls for a ban on the NPD. The suggestion received considerable support in both houses of Parliament, though some believed that driving the party—whose political strength was negligible—underground would only enhance its attractiveness to fringe elements. In any case, such a ban could not be ordered by the Parliament; it would have to be issued by the Federal Constitutional Court.

Toward the end of the year, online booksellers Amazon and Barnes and Noble complied with a German Department of Justice request to halt the sale of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to customers in Germany. Sale of “hate literature” was illegal in Germany, but orders sent over the Internet for English-language editions from the U.S. evaded the German ban, and the book was one of the most popular titles in Germany for these companies. The decision to halt the book's sale came after strong protests by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Some new public and private initiatives against extremism were started in Germany during 2000, including the government-funded Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance—Against Extremism and Violence ([www.bmi.bund.de/demotol](http://www.bmi.bund.de/demotol)); Show Your Face ([www.gesichtzeigen.de](http://www.gesichtzeigen.de)); and NAIIN—No Abuse in Internet ([www.naiin.org](http://www.naiin.org)). In addition, several large German Internet providers came together to create an index where sites with hate content could be registered.

### *Anti-Semitism*

The Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (FOCI) registered a 68.7-percent increase in anti-Semitic activity during 2000, 1,378 crimes as compared with 817 in 1999. In 26 cases the crimes resulted in bodily harm, an 81.2-percent rise over the previous year's figure of 16.

Numerous Jewish cemeteries across the country were desecrated during the year, particularly in the months of February, March, July, and August. The synagogue in Erfurt was the target of an arson attack on Hitler's birthday in April. Ten immigrants (seven of them Jewish) from the former Soviet Union were seri-

ously injured by a hand-grenade explosion in Düsseldorf in July, and in August right-wing extremists attempted to blow up a Bamberg apartment building where Jews were known to live.

Anti-Semites perpetrated a wave of attacks on and around October 3, the tenth anniversary of German reunification. Kurt Biedenkopf, Saxony's state premier, made no mention, at official "Day of German Unity" celebrations in Dresden, of two outrages that took place the evening before—a Molotov cocktail hurled at the Düsseldorf synagogue and the desecration of memorial sites at Buchenwald. Shortly thereafter, windows at Berlin's Fraenkelufer synagogue were damaged and the Jewish cemetery in Potsdam was vandalized.

Two thousand people took to the streets to protest the Düsseldorf synagogue attack. This was soon after 10,000 dog lovers—some of whom had wanted to adorn their pets with Stars of David with the word *Hund* (dog) instead of *Jude*—had marched against new measures aimed at restraining pit bulls and other dangerous fighting dogs. Michel Friedman, vice president of the CCJG, could not resist the irony, noting that Germans were more apt "to demonstrate for the rights of dogs than for the dignity of human beings."

After visiting the damaged synagogue in Düsseldorf, Chancellor Schröder called for a nationwide *Aufstand der Anständigen* (revolt of all decent people) against right-wing extremism, xenophobia, and intolerance. That same week a group of high-ranking politicians expressed solidarity with Germany's Jewish community by attending Sabbath services at Berlin's Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue. Andreas Nachama, president of the Berlin Jewish Community, received a petition against extremism and anti-Semitism signed by 1,600 pupils entitled "We've had enough!"

On November 9, the 62nd anniversary of Kristallnacht, a march against racism and for tolerance in Berlin drew some 250,000 people from across the nation. Speakers included President Rau and CCJG president Spiegel. In December German police arrested two young men and charged them with the arson attack on the Düsseldorf synagogue. The culprits, 19 and 20 years old, one a native Moroccan and the other a Palestinian from Jordan, confessed to attacking the synagogue in retaliation against Israeli policies toward the Palestinians. Anti-Semitic and extreme right-wing literature was confiscated from their apartment.

Morale in the Jewish community dropped to an all-time low over the course of the year, and Jewish leaders, fearful about the personal safety of German Jews, voiced growing consternation. Paul Spiegel, who had begun his term as president of the CCGJ on an optimistic note in January, questioned, toward the end of the year, whether Jews should have settled in postwar Germany at all. And as new bloodshed took place in Israel and the territories, the German Jewish community became increasingly concerned that hard-core racist Germans, who maintained that Germany should be free of all foreigners, might bend their principles and create an informal anti-Semitic and anti-Israel alliance together with Arabs and Muslims living in the country.

## *Holocaust-Related Matters*

Chancellor Schröder and State Minister for Culture Michael Naumann participated in the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in January.

Dani Karavan, a Paris-based Israeli, designed a memorial dedicated to the estimated 500,000 Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) murdered by the Nazi regime. The memorial will eventually be located in Berlin's Mitte district, between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag building.

Ottmar Kagerer became the first recipient of the Obermayer German Jewish History Award, established by Arthur Obermayer, a native of Fürth who now lived in the U.S. Kagerer was a non-Jewish stone mason who had agreed to help repair—free of charge—the 103 gravestones at Berlin's Weissensee cemetery that had been damaged by neo-Nazis in 1999 (see AJYB 2000, p. 345). He subsequently received death threats and his workshop was ransacked, with the damage—not covered by insurance—exceeding DM 80,000 (\$40,000).

In September Germany returned 80 pieces of artwork stolen by the Nazis to their rightful owners, the largest number of such items ever given back at one time.

Julius Viel, 82, likely to be one of the last German war-crimes suspects to face justice, went on trial in December. A former SS officer, retired journalist, and recipient of the German Officers Cross of Merit for his books on hiking, Viel was accused of shooting seven concentration camp inmates at Theresienstadt during the spring of 1945. A verdict was not expected until 2001.

### MEMORIALIZING EUROPE'S MURDERED JEWS

A "prededication" ceremony for the \$26-million Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe took place on a site just south of the Brandenburg Gate on January 27—the 56th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the sixth annual German Holocaust Memorial Day. Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen (CDU), demonstrating his continued dissent from the project, did not join Chancellor Schröder, President Rau, Bundestag president Thierse, and Elie Wiesel in attending the symbolic start of the memorial's construction. Actual construction was expected to begin in the fall of 2001 and the project was scheduled for completion sometime in 2003.

More than ten years had passed since Lea Rosh, a German journalist, began the citizen's initiative that led to the 1999 parliamentary resolution favoring construction of a national memorial commemorating the Holocaust. "The Memorial" received less public attention during 2000 than in previous years (see AJYB 2000, pp. 347–48), as the intense nationwide debate surrounding the decision of whether or not to build it subsided and was replaced by quiet, behind-the-scenes efforts to bring U.S. architect Peter Eisenman's field of some 2,700 stone pillars and an information center to fruition. The information center would house a "room of silence" where visitors might meditate and reflect. A "room of names"

would provide computer access to the roughly 3.5 million recorded names of Holocaust victims, marking the first time that Yad Vashem had agreed to share its lists with another memorial site. The lives and experiences of representative families from each of the 18 countries whose Jews were murdered would be presented as exhibits in the "room of fates," and the "room of places" would provide detailed information on the Nazi death camps.

Michael Naumann, the minister for culture who had been a key figure in planning the central memorial, announced, before resigning his cabinet post later in the year, that government funding for Holocaust memorials "at authentic locations" would increase from \$16 million in 2000 to \$27 million by 2003.

#### WEHRMACHT EXHIBIT

The highly controversial exhibit, "War of Extermination: Wehrmacht Crimes 1941–1944," which had been seen by more than 82,000 people in twenty-seven German cities and six Austrian cities from 1995 through 1999, was scheduled to open in New York in late 1999. This was the first photo exhibition ever to document the participation of the German army in the murder of millions of people in Eastern Europe during World War II. However, in response to harsh criticism from those who felt that it was unfair to the Wehrmacht, the organizers finally had no recourse but to postpone its display in New York and commission an independent panel of eminent historians to investigate its content (see AJYB 2000, pp. 348–49). The panel indeed found a number of factual errors, but unanimously confirmed the accuracy of the overall presentation: "The Wehrmacht was not only peripherally involved in the murder of Jews in the Soviet Union, the crimes committed against Soviet prisoners of war, and the onslaught against the population at large." A new director was hired to overhaul the exhibit, which was expected to be ready in late 2001.

#### RESTITUTION

Eighteen months of strained negotiations concluded on July 17 in Berlin, with Germany signing a historic agreement to compensate nearly one million Nazi-era slave laborers and forced laborers. Months earlier, the German government and German industry had each agreed to contribute half of the required funds. Foreign Minister Fischer declared that this initiative was "above all a gesture of moral responsibility." Though hopes ran high that payments from the 10-billion-mark fund would commence before the end of the year, that turned out to be an overly optimistic expectation.

Among those at the signing in Berlin that day were the cochairs of the negotiations—Stuart Eizenstat, the U.S. deputy treasury secretary; Otto Graf Lambsdorff, the former economics minister who represented the German govern-

ment; and Daimler Chrysler executive Manfred Gentz, who spoke for the industrialists. Also participating were representatives from the governments of Belarus, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine, as well as officials and lawyers from the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference).

An essential element of the complex agreement was an executive order from President Clinton recommending that federal judges dismiss pending class-action lawsuits against German firms, complemented by a German law passed in August stipulating that payments to survivors might begin once Parliament determined that a state of "legal peace"—no more class-action suits—had been achieved.

The fund provided for payments of up to 15,000 DM (\$7,500) to approximately 240,000 surviving slave laborers—concentration camp prisoners, primarily Jews, whom the Nazis intended to exterminate through work. Payments of up to 5,000 DM (\$2,500) per person were made available for the more than one million surviving forced laborers, those, mostly non-Jews, seized from their home countries and deported to Germany or other parts of the Nazi Reich to work under brutal conditions. Since there were far more survivors of forced labor than of slave labor, it turned out that only some 30 percent of the money was going to Jews. Seven compensation-fund partner organizations would review applicant documentation and administer payment; the Claims Conference was to do this for most of the Jewish claimants.

Money was also set aside for distribution to formerly Communist countries for payments to survivors, mostly non-Jews but also Jews, who had received no previous compensation because their Communist governments had not participated in earlier negotiations.

It was expected that once these payments were underway, public attention would turn to another provision of the agreement, the 700 million DM (\$350 million) from the fund that was set aside for "Remembrance and the Future." According to a law approved by the German Parliament, this money would support projects that promote "international coexistence, social justice, youth exchange, the memory of the threat posed by totalitarian systems and tyranny, and international cooperation in areas of humanitarian projects. In the memory of and in honor of those victims of National Socialist injustice who did not survive, it should also support projects in the interests of their heirs." In December the Lawrence and Lee Ramer Center for German-Jewish Relations of the American Jewish Committee, in Berlin, sponsored a workshop bringing together more than 70 leading figures from German government, industry, and nonprofit organizations, historians, and others to discuss viable "Future Fund" concepts.

By the end of 2000 German industry had collected only 3.6 billion of the 5 billion marks it had pledged to contribute. Hundreds of German companies founded after World War II paid into the fund as a show of shared civic responsibility. Nonetheless, the majority of midsized businesses, viewing participation not as a

demonstration of solidarity but as an admission of guilt, refused. As 2000 drew to a close, “legal peace” had not yet been established or declared since there were still class-action suits pending in the U.S., and therefore not one of the elderly survivors had been compensated.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Demography*

During 2000 the Jewish community in Germany continued to grow at a faster pace than any other in the world. The arrival of 6,026 Jewish newcomers, primarily from the former Soviet Union, raised the total number of Jews affiliated with the 82 communities from 81,730 to 87,756. The numbers of affiliated Jews in the largest communities, with 1999 figures as the basis for comparison, were as follows: Berlin, 11,250 (up from 11,190); Frankfurt, 6,736 (up from 6,602); Munich, 7,858 (up from 7,219); Hamburg, 4,540 (up from 4,270); and Cologne, 3,896 (up from 3,654).

### *Communal Affairs*

Paul Spiegel, 62, a child-survivor of the Holocaust, was elected to succeed the deceased Ignatz Bubis as president of the CCJG on January 9. A journalist and founding director of a Düsseldorf talent agency, Spiegel had previously served as chairman of the Central Welfare Administration of Jews in Germany (CWA) for 11 years.

Spiegel's competitors for the CCJG's highest office, Charlotte Knobloch of Munich and Michel Friedman of Frankfurt, were elected vice presidents. Stefan Kramer, 31, was hired as the new managing director of the CCJG Berlin office on March 1. Abraham Lehrer followed in Spiegel's footsteps as the new chairman of CWA, and—celebrating 20 years of service to the CWA—Bennie Bloch continued as its managing director.

The CCJG commemorated the 50th anniversary of its founding in July. Earlier in the year, at the second annual CCJG meeting of Jewish communities from across Germany, President Spiegel described the year 2000 as the beginning of a “completely new epoch in the history of the Central Council.” He said that while immigration from the former Soviet Union and the addition of Jewish communities from the former East Germany had been the hallmarks of the 1990s, a period of consolidation had now begun.

Integration of Soviet Jews and stabilization of fledgling Jewish communities remained high on the agenda. Between 1990 and 1999, the registered Jewish population had grown from 30,000 to more than 80,000. Since 1990, the federal government received more than 203,000 applications from Jews in the former Soviet

Union, and 125,000 had emigrated thus far. Approximately 30,000 immigrants were expected to continue to swell communal ranks over the next few years.

New programs implemented included a pilot leadership seminar, cosponsored by the CWA and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for 220 board members from 12 communities located in the former East Germany. A "how-to" community handbook was being developed as a guide to organizational, legal, and community-relations procedures. Another CWA initiative enabled young religious Israelis who opted to do community service instead of going into the army to teach religion and Jewish tradition to Soviet immigrants in German communities.

A study conducted by the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam demonstrated that the greatest difficulty facing Soviet Jewish immigrants in Germany were the complicated and onerous legal rulings that denied them recognition for their previous qualifications and work experience. This made it nearly impossible for older immigrants to begin their careers anew.

In happy contrast to the widespread stereotype that immigrants from the FSU did not involve themselves in Jewish life once they got to Germany, six elderly couples, all married for more than 50 years, gathered in Düsseldorf in July to affirm their commitment to Judaism and set examples for their families. Since they had not had the opportunity to marry Jewishly in the Soviet Union, together they now celebrated a belated joyous event—a traditional Jewish wedding complete with rabbi, *huppah* (wedding canopy), and *ketubot* (marriage contracts).

New centers of Jewish life were established throughout the year and old ones expanded their activities. Chemnitz's Jewish community laid the foundation stone, in March, for the first synagogue to be built in the former East Germany since the end of the Communist regime. The new synagogue in Kassel was dedicated in late May, and construction of a new synagogue in Dresden began in June. The Jewish community of Bremerhaven was officially founded in September, and Synagogue Hüttenweg, which had been part of the community chapel for the U.S. army in Berlin, was reactivated in October. Braunschweig, in June, and Hammeln, in September, welcomed the addition of sacred Torah scrolls into their houses of prayer. In August, one year after the death of Ignatz Bubis, the long-time president of the CCJG, the Jewish community center in Frankfurt am Main was renamed in his memory.

## BERLIN

The passing of senior cantor Estrongo Nachama on January 13 deeply saddened the Jews of Berlin. Born in 1918 in Thessaloniki, Greece, the "singer of Auschwitz" came to Berlin after his family was killed in the Holocaust, and he served as a pillar of postwar Jewish life there for more than 50 years. Nachama was known throughout Germany for his weekly Shabbat program on RIAS (Radio in the American Sector), his support of the small Jewish community in

East Berlin during the Communist years, and his untiring efforts in the cause of interfaith understanding. Berlin's Pestalozzistrasse congregation had been his home synagogue.

To the chagrin of not a few community members, Walter Rothschild, Berlin's outspoken Liberal rabbi, was unceremoniously fired in February, more than a year before the end of his three-year contract. Rothschild, who had responsibility for four separate and highly variegated non-Orthodox congregations, had a vision of Liberal Judaism that was far more innovative than that of many of his congregants, especially those who frequented the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue (see AJYB 2000, p. 356). An agreement was later reached that permitted him to serve in the other three synagogues, Oranienburger, Ryke, and Fraenkelufer, through December. For his part, Rabbi Rothschild lamented the damage his abrupt termination had done to Berlin's Liberal rabbinate, which had been vacant for three years before he was hired in 1998, and expressed doubt that other German-speaking rabbis would be drawn to Berlin. He planned to run for a place in the Berlin Jewish Community's Representative Assembly on a platform stressing Jewish education, in elections scheduled for March 2001.

Chaim Rozwaski, a Holocaust survivor and rabbi with Orthodox training who had become well-known in Berlin as founding director of the Lauder Jüdisches Lehrhaus, was hired to fill the Pestalozzistrasse's empty pulpit for one year.

Andreas Nachama, president of the Berlin Jewish Community, announced in February that Berlin's local government had agreed to provide DM 2.5 million for security measures for the Jewish community, including the hiring of highly trained Israeli security guards to be posted inside its buildings. Julius Schoeps, director of the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam and a member of the community's Representative Assembly, protested against the agreement on national television. He argued that the presence of Israeli guards, as opposed to the German police who guarded the exteriors of the buildings, transformed the Berlin Jewish Community into an "extraterritorial zone."

Berlin's Jüdischer Kulturverein (Jewish Culture Association) celebrated its tenth anniversary. Directed by Irene Runge, the organization had sponsored more than two thousand events aimed at the transmission of Jewish culture and tradition, and the integration of Russian immigrants within Berlin Jewish society.

### *Religion and Education*

At a milestone event in June, Berlin's Jüdische Obershule on Grosse Hamburger Strasse awarded diplomas to the first group of young Jews since the Holocaust to graduate from the high school of a German Jewish day school. No one knew at the time, however, that this event would set the scene for an embarrassing conflict between the Berlin Jewish Community and the Lauder Foundation over the question of how to define Jewishness in postwar Germany. One of 19 graduates of the Jüdische Obershule, Jonathan Marcus, a top-notch stu-

dent, became the first-ever Jewish student in postwar Germany to attend Jewish day school from kindergarten through grade 13. Marcus—whose family was respected as one of the pillars of Berlin Jewish life—then opted to study at the yearlong intensive bet-midrash program for men at the Lauder Foundation's Jüdisches Lehrhaus.

A shock wave swept the community in early autumn when Marcus was barred from being counted toward the program's prayer quorum (minyan). Josh Spinner, the young German- and Russian-speaking Canadian-born rabbi who was in charge, questioned Marcus's status as a Jew according to halakhic standards. Marcus's grandmother and mother had been converted in 1965 by the Berlin Jewish Community's rabbinical court, under the supervision of the Conference of German Rabbis. The rabbi serving at Berlin's Liberal Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue at that time was a member of that court, but it had previously been assumed—until Spinner's intervention—that his Orthodox rabbinical ordination qualified him for involvement in conversions despite his non-Orthodox synagogue affiliation.

Toward the end of the year, the Berlin Jewish Community formulated a response. While going on record in favor of continued cooperation with the Lauder Foundation, the community insisted that the foundation make all of its programs accessible to all members of the Berlin community, including not just young men like Jonathan Marcus, but also women.

The role of women in religious life was, in fact, the subject of a panel discussion in Berlin in May, on the question, "Do women really have nothing to say in the Jewish community?" One speaker, Rabbi Bea Wyler, a native of Switzerland and a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, was the only female rabbi in Germany. Rabbi of the Oldenburg and Delmenhorst Jewish communities, Wyler charged that her application to join the Conference of German Rabbis had been rejected "on pretense." The year 2000 saw former synagogue choir member Avital Gerstetter, 28, of Berlin, on her way to becoming the country's first German-born female cantor. Cantor Rebecca Garfein of New York had heard Gerstetter sing at Berlin's Jewish Culture Days in 1997 and 1998, and had encouraged her to prepare for the cantorate. Germany's first gathering of "Women Rabbis, Cantors, Scholars, and all Spiritually Interested Women and Men—Bet Debora" took place in May 1999. A second conference was planned for June 2001.

Rabbi Yitzhak Ehrenberg, hired by the Berlin Jewish Community in 1997 as the city's Orthodox rabbi, opened a Talmud-Torah school in April for all interested community members. Under the leadership of Yehuda Teichtal, a Brooklyn-born rabbi, Chabad-Lubavitch of Berlin offered ample opportunity for study and celebration throughout the year. Meanwhile, the flourishing egalitarian congregation at the Oranienburger Synagogue announced plans for a regular Shabbat service for children, a novelty in Germany.

Friction between the CCJG's system of *Einheitsgemeinden*—congregations

of different denominations coexisting under one administrative roof in each locality—and the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) escalated during 2000. In 1999 the WUPJ had sought to strengthen non-Orthodox communities in Germany by seeking separate funding from the government on the grounds that the existing system discriminated against progressive Judaism. Prompted by Moishe Waks, the Berlin Jewish Community retaliated by putting on its agenda the suspension of its long-standing membership in the WUPJ. There was supposed to have been a meeting on January 19, 2000, where Rabbi Richard Block, president of the WUPJ, would explain his organization's position, but Block failed to attend. Still, the Berlin Jewish Community took no action. In late spring the WUPJ and the Council of European Rabbis established an office in Berlin.

Rabbi Walter Homolka had played a prominent role in the controversy during the previous year (see AJYB 2000, pp. 355–56). In 2000 Homolka resigned as vice chairman of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (UPJGAS), an association of non-Orthodox communities affiliated with the WUPJ, that he had helped found in 1997. At the end of the year the UPJGAS consisted of 13 member communities that represented an estimated 2,000 individuals Jews. As CWA services were only available to member communities of the CCJG, the UPJGAS had, on its own, to organize and pay for the two Jewish religious retreats it held during the year. Nevertheless, an important precedent was set in the city of Hannover when the state of Lower Saxony for the first time made funding available to seven congregations that operated outside the orbit of the CCJG, six of them Liberal and one Conservative.

In 2000 the UPJGAS, in cooperation with the University of Potsdam and the Moses Mendelssohn Center, established the first rabbinical seminary in Germany since the Holocaust—Abraham Geiger College, named after the great 19th-century German Reform thinker. Opening ceremonies were held amid much festivity in Potsdam in November. Susannah Heschel, an American Jewish theologian, was honored for her book, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*. The seminary, as yet unaccredited, planned to train male and female rabbis, cantors, and religious educators to work in Liberal Jewish communities throughout Europe. The first class, expected to have between three and five students, was scheduled to begin its studies in the fall of 2001. Russian language studies would be a mandatory component of the curriculum.

Meanwhile, the CCJG announced plans to initiate its own rabbinical training program, also scheduled to begin in the fall of 2001, based at the University of Heidelberg.

In June a Liberal Bet Din (religious court) was established in Halberstadt, near Magdeburg, under the auspices of Rabbi Rodney Mariner of London.

Finally, a new Jewish publishing house, Jüdische Verlagsanstalt Berlin (JVB), was founded by Rabbi Walter Homolka, Julius Schoeps, and Jochen Böckler. Its goal was to issue both classic and new German Jewish publications, as well as to produce German translations of important texts of Jewish interest.

## *Interreligious Relations*

German Jews and Christians involved in religious dialogue generally applauded Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Israel in March, but many viewed *Dominus Iesus*, the declaration issued by the Vatican in August—primarily the work of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—as a provocative step backward because it appeared to deny the spiritual validity of non-Christian faiths (see above, pp. 361–62). Joel Berger, spokesman for the Conference of German Rabbis and chief rabbi of the Württemberg region, deemed the document a “slap in the face.” But this negative assessment was not universal in the Jewish community. Ernst Ehrlich, for example, a German-born Jew and former European director of B'nai B'rith who had taught Jewish studies in Germany and Switzerland, argued that *Dominus Iesus* was addressing religious issues relevant to Christian ecumenical activity, and had not been meant to denigrate Judaism.

The theme of the 50th annual Brotherhood Week sponsored by the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (SCJC) was “The World Rests on Three Pillars: Justice, Truth, and Freedom.” The organization presented President Rau its Buber-Rosenzweig medal for decades of dedication to Jewish-Christian and German-Israeli relations. The SCJC also joined, in September, with the Evangelical Academy of Berlin-Brandenburg and the Berlin office of the American Jewish Committee for a conference in Berlin on the sensitive issue of continued proselytization of Jews—many of them newcomers from the FSU—in Germany.

The Oberammergau Passion Play, enacted once every ten years since 1634, had its 40th presentation on May 21, 2000. Intensive discussions between representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the directors of this year's play—Otto Huber and Christian Stückl—led to the incorporation of a number of changes aimed at depicting the Jews of Jesus's time in less derogatory terms and providing a more accurate portrayal of the Jewish religious context in which Jesus lived. Thus the play did away with the horned costumes worn by Jewish priests, the implication that Jesus was not Jewish, and the traditional charge of eternal Jewish guilt for his death. The Last Supper was depicted, for the first time, as a Passover seder, the actor playing Jesus said the prayer over wine in Hebrew, and his disciples addressed him as “rabbi.” Also, for the first time in the history of the pageant, the performance was followed by a private interfaith discussion led by the town's mayor.

Micha Brumlik, one of Germany's leading Jewish thinkers, made a plea on the front page of the *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* (June 8) for intensified dialogue between Germany's Jews and Muslims, referring to the Muslim community as “my brother Ishmael.” Although Brumlik acknowledged the theological differences separating the two minority faiths, he also noted points of mutual interest. For example, given the predominance of Christian religious education in German public schools and state-run universities, both Jews and Muslims had a common interest in securing greater input into the development of curricula.

## Culture

Some Jewish critics bemoaned the unusually meager showing of films of Jewish interest at Berlin's 50th annual international film festival, the Berlinale, in February. All three of the feature films and one of the three documentaries containing Jewish content came from the former Soviet bloc. The features were Karel Kachina's *Hanele; Glamour*, directed by Frigyes Gödrös; and Milan Cieslar's *Lebensborn*. Georgiers A. Rechwiaschwili's documentary, *The Promised Land: The Return*, explored Eastern European fascination with Zionism, using previously unpublished film from Russian archives.

Berlinale films dealing with the Holocaust included the German film *Pardon Me, I'm Alive*, and *Martin*, a documentary about Martin Zaidenstadt—the Polish survivor of Dachau who now spends his days telling visitors to the concentration camp his version of what happened there. In *Paragraph 175*, American directors Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman portrayed survivors of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals.

The city of Düsseldorf initiated an annual Jewish film festival in May, offering 17 films depicting Jewish life in Europe, the United States, and Israel.

The theme of the sixth annual Berlin Jewish Film Festival in June was “Departure into the New Millennium: Visions, Utopias and Realities.”

A notable television production investigated the Shoah. Guido Knopp's six-part prime-time series “Holokaust” began airing on October 17. An award-winning journalist and ZDF-television's program director for contemporary history, Knopp replaced the “c” of the word Holocaust with the Germanic “k” as a “symbolic act of owning one's own history.” He explained that he was going out of his way to do this in order to show where he stood on the Walser-Bubis debate that had shaken Germany in 1998, when the writer Martin Walser had called for an end to the “incessant presentation of our disgrace.” The series, produced by an international team, used new documentation that had been discovered primarily in postcommunist Eastern Europe.

Another important television series was “Juden in Deutschland nach 1945” (Jews in Germany after 1945), a three-part documentary covering postwar Jewish history, which aired for the first time in March. It was written, directed, and produced by Richard Chaim Schneider, a son of Hungarian Jews who was born in Munich in 1957.

Photo-designer Peter Liedtke produced a slide-show installation, in cooperation with the Heinrich Böll Foundation, commemorating the deportation of Germany's Jews. The presentation consisted of pictures Liedtke took at Auschwitz as well as documentation of the deportations from Postdam, Rostock, Halle, and Weimar. In each of these cities, for weeks at a time between January and April, a total of 80 slides were projected in succession onto the face of a public structure or building after the onset of twilight.

Between its opening in August 1999 and its temporary closing in June 2000,

more than 300,000 visitors took architectural tours of Daniel Liebeskind's empty building that would ultimately house the Berlin Jewish Museum. Under the directorship of W. Michael Blumenthal—a German Jew who fled the Nazis and later became U.S. secretary of the treasury under President Jimmy Carter—the museum was scheduled to reopen to the public in September 2001. Its theme is the 2000-year history of the Jews in Germany, from Roman times through the reawakening of Jewish life after the Holocaust. For 12 nights in June, right before it closed, the structure's empty rooms became the backdrop for Adriana Altaras's production *Heaven's Realm*, based on stories by I.B. Singer. Tom Freudenheim, a Berlin-born American Jew, opted not to renew his contract as assistant director of the museum after June.

Chancellor Schröder attended the opening of the exhibit, "Jews in Berlin 1938–1945," on May 8 at Berlin's Centrum Judaicum. The event commemorated the 55th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Shocked by an attack against the Lübeck synagogue in 1994, a concerned group of students from Darmstadt's Technical University used CAD (Computer Aided Design) technology to bring 14 synagogues destroyed by the Nazis on Kristallnacht in 1938 "back to life." The result, six years later, was an exhibit, "Synagogues in Germany—A Virtual Reconstruction," which premiered at Bonn's Kunst-und-Austellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland for two months beginning in May.

In September, despite the rain and cold, 8,000 people visited the fourth annual Jewish Street Festival in Berlin, put on by the Jewish Students Club.

Berlin's 14th annual Jewish Culture Days in November focused on "Piazza Italia," Italian Jewry, the oldest in Europe, and on St. Petersburg, "The Venice of the North."

"Symbols of Everyday Life" were showcased in Fürth in a show entitled "x:hibit" from November 21, 1999 through early 2000. This pop-quiz-style exhibit on Jewish life challenged visitors with questions ranging from what city Germany's only female rabbi lived in, to which conventional medications were kosher, and then provided the answers.

In December, 86-year-old Heinz Berggruen permanently signed over his priceless collection of Picassos and other artwork to the city of Berlin as a sign of "reconciliation after the Holocaust." The Jewish art dealer had escaped Nazi Germany in 1936 and fled to the United States. Berggruen brought his collection to Berlin in 1995 where it became a fixture of the cultural landscape; he was awarded the National Prize in 1999.

## *Publications*

In *Deutscher Geist und Judenhass—Das Verhältnis des philosophischen Idealismus zum Judentum* (The German Mind and anti-Semitism—The Relationship of Philosophical Idealism to the Jews), Micha Brumlik, the noted Heidelberg pro-

fessor of education, explored the complex relationship to Jews and Judaism—ranging from hate to respect—of such great German minds as Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Schelling, and Marx.

In *Holokaust*, the 400-page book designed to accompany his television documentary series of the same name, Guido Knopp conveyed a precise and moving picture of the Holocaust based on years of research and investigation. Some of the material had never been published before. Simon Wiesenthal called this book “the legacy of millions of Shoah victims.”

There were also numerous survivor testimonies published during the year. These included Ruth Zucker’s biography, *Meine sieben Leben* (My Seven Lives); a German translation of Walter Laqueur’s autobiography detailing the exodus of Jewish youth from Germany after 1933, *Geboren in Deutschland* (Born in Germany); and Herbert Z. Kessler’s *Der Weg ins Ungewisse — Von Berlin nach Holland und Belgien* (Into the Unknown—From Berlin to Holland and Belgium), a record of the author’s childhood memories and refugee experiences between 1928 and 1945.

Concentrating on the country ruled by Nazi Germany’s fiercest opponent, Arno Lustiger published *Rotbuch: Stalin und die Juden* (Redbook: Stalin and the Jews), an investigation of the tragic history of the Jewish Antifascist Committee during the war and the fate of Soviet Jewry until Stalin’s death.

A major theme in contemporary German Jewish affairs was tackled by Julius Schoeps and W. Jasper in their collection of essays on how Jews from the former Soviet Union were faring in Germany, *Ein Neues Judentum in Deutschland?* (A New Jewry in Germany?). Richard Chaim Schneider widened the picture of post-war Jewish life in the country with *Wir sind da! Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis heute* (We’re Here! The History of the Jews in Germany from 1945 through the Present), a supplement to the three-part television documentary of the same name. The book included extensive interviews with 34 of Germany’s leading Jewish figures. Adolf Diamant examined one type of anti-Semitic hate crime in *Geschändete jüdische Friedhöfe in Deutschland 1945 bis 1999* (Desecrated Jewish Cemeteries in Germany, 1945 to 1999). Diamant found that approximately 1,000 Jewish cemeteries in Germany had been desecrated since the end of World War II, with a disproportionate increase in such incidents since German unification.

The new *Metzler Lexikon der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur* (Metzler Dictionary of German-Jewish Literature) gave detailed information about German-language Jewish literature from the Enlightenment of the 18th century to the present, with 270 entries arranged alphabetically, “from Adler to Zuckerman.”

New releases by contemporary Jewish authors from Germany included Maxim Biller’s *Die Tochter* (The Daughter); Barbara Honigmann’s *Alles, Alles Liebe* (All My Love); and Ralph Giordano’s *Morris. Die Fischmanns* (The Fischmanns) and *Schlossgasse 21* (Schloss Street 21) were two long-awaited rereleases, in paperback, of books by H.W. Katz. Popular Israeli novels published in German translation

included Zaruya Shalev's *LiebesLeben* (LoveLife) and Dorit Rabinyan's *Unsere Hochzeiten* (Our Weddings).

The need for updated and authoritative German-language material on Jewish religion, culture, history, and customs was met by two new books, Julius Schoeps's *Neues Lexikon des Judentums* (The New Jewish Lexicon), and *Das Judentum hat viele Gesichter* (The Many Faces of Judaism) by Rabbis Walter Homolka and Gilbert S. Rosenthal. The new publishing house Jüdische Verlagsanstalt Berlin (JVB) rereleased *Liberales Judentum* (Liberal Judaism), Max Dienemann's classic work of the 1930s, as well as *Die Tora*, a careful adaptation into modern German of the first Jewish translation of the Torah into High German, done by Moses Mendelssohn more than 200 years before.

The Munich-based publisher Piper-Verlag came under strong criticism during the fall for its plans to publish, in February 2001, a German-language edition of Norman Finkelstein's controversial book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, which accused Jewish organizations and the State of Israel of using the Holocaust for their own aggrandizement. Some German observers, Jewish and non-Jewish, feared that the book would be used to justify anti-Semitism and, in the words of Frankfurt Jewish community leader and CCJG member Solomon Korn, "garner applause from the wrong side" (for evidence that these fears were justified, see above, pp. 18–20). Piper, however, insisted on the "necessity of publishing a German-language edition as a basis for political discussion" and said it would invite Finkelstein to Germany in 2001.

### Personalia

In August, one year after the death of Ignatz Bubis, the former president of the CCGJ, the city of Frankfurt am Main renamed its Obermain Bridge, built in 1872, in his honor.

Else and Berthold Beitz, both octogenarians, received the CCJG's 1999 Leo Baeck Prize, awarded on February 10, 2000. Ignatz Bubis had nominated them before his death. As manager of a German oil company in occupied Poland, Mr. Beitz, with the help of his wife, had saved Jews—among them Bubis's brother-in-law and his wife—from deportation to extermination camps by having them work for his company or hiding them in his home. Friede Springer, wife of deceased German publisher Axel Springer, received the 2000 Leo Baeck Prize in November.

On the order of French president Jacques Chirac, the Officer's Insignia of the Legion of Honor, the highest French honor, was presented to CCJG president Paul Spiegel (in September) and CCJG vice president Michel Friedman (in November), in recognition of their efforts to promote understanding between Jews and non-Jews.

The New York German-language newspaper *Aufbau* awarded Frankfurt author Arno Lustiger its *Aufbau* Cultural Prize on February 29, for his work on the his-

tory of Jewish resistance against the Nazis. Barbara Honigmann, a Strasbourg resident born and raised in East Berlin, received the Kleist Prize in Berlin.

American Jews decorated in Germany included Israel Singer, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress, recipient of the Heinz Galinski Prize, and W. Michael Blumenthal, director of the Berlin Jewish Museum, named honorary citizen of his hometown, Oranienburg. Robert B. Goldmann, journalist and European representative of the Anti-Defamation League, had an academic scholarship named after him by the city of Reinheim, his childhood home.

Among the prominent Jews who passed away during 2000 were Cantor Estrongo Nachama, 82 (see above, pp. 387–88); Alphons Silbermann, 90, renowned sociologist, musicologist, and author; Gisele Freund, 82, photographer and Berlin native; and Rabbi Benjamin Gelles, 84, one of the last representatives of the pre-war German-Jewish rabbinate, and most recently rabbi of the Cologne Jewish community, 1984–1992.

WENDY KLOKE

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

The reference to Prof. Dr. Michael Wolffsohn that appeared in the 1997 AJYB stated that he was “labeled positively” as “nationally oriented” by the neo-Nazi publication *Wer ist wer im Judentum?* In fact the neo-Nazi publication says that Prof. Dr. Wolffsohn is “hostile to the National Right in Germany.”

## Austria

### *National Affairs*

**T**HE NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF October 3, 1999, dramatically shifted the country's balance of political power. The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), which had, until then, been excluded from sharing power at the national level, emerged as a major force, winning an unprecedented 27.2 percent of the vote and edging out the People's Party (ÖVP) for second place. The latter, which for 13 years had shared power as the junior partner in coalition with the dominant left-of-center Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), was now relegated to third place with 26.9 percent.

After the election, President Thomas Klestil ignored the electoral gains of the FPÖ and invited Chancellor Viktor Klima, the leaders of the Social Democrats, and Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel, head of the People's Party, to form a new government and reconstitute their long-standing coalition. In pursuing this course, President Klestil sought to prevent the Freedom Party and its charismatic leader, Jörg Haider, from attaining political power at the federal level. Haider, who had taken control of the FPÖ in 1986, had made it a major party by playing on racism and xenophobia. However the president's political maneuvering did not succeed because the leaders of the Social Democrats and the People's Party could not agree on a joint program for ruling the country. Left with no other alternative, President Klestil called on the ÖVP's Schüssel to form a coalition government with the Freedom Party. Under the agreement they reached, the Freedom Party would have three important cabinet portfolios: finance, defense, and interior. Haider himself would not enter the cabinet, but would stay on in his post as governor of the province of Carinthia, where his party had attained power the previous year. Despite his apparent withdrawal from the national political scene, there was little doubt that Haider's views would determine the actions and positions of his party.

The response, both at home and abroad, came quickly. A huge crowd of about 150,000 crammed a historic Vienna square to protest the inclusion of the Freedom Party in the government. No sooner had the government taken office than it found itself on a collision course with the other 14 members of the European Union. Within days, these countries—acting individually, since Austria had broken no EU rules—announced measures to isolate Austria diplomatically. They scaled back diplomatic ties to Vienna, refused to endorse Austrians for European Union and other international posts, and adopted other, largely symbolic, measures to show their displeasure.

This sudden, unprecedented action by the other EU members appeared to be motivated by several factors. One was genuine concern about the racist and xenophobic views of Haider and many of his supporters, which were viewed as incompatible with European values. In speech after speech, the leader of the Freedom Party had virulently attacked foreigners, charging them with causing much of the crime in Austria. In several speeches he singled out Africans for drug trafficking. Immigrants, he darkly warned, were a threat to the nation's economy, taking jobs away from native Austrians and forcing many onto the welfare rolls. The Europeans were also deeply troubled by past statements of Haider expressing admiration for certain aspects of Nazism. For example, he once praised Hitler's "orderly labor policy," though he later apologized. There was, in addition, a pragmatic political reason, never explicitly articulated, for the actions against Austria. This was the fear that the presence of the Freedom Party in the Austrian national government might boost the political prospects of similar right-wing extremist parties in other countries. France and Belgium, two countries with strong far-right parties, were the most vociferous supporters of the EU sanctions.

In an apparent effort to bring an end to the sanctions, Haider announced in May that he was giving up the leadership of the party, which would pass into the hands of Vice Chancellor Susanne Riess-Passer. Few doubted, however, that Haider continued to pull the strings. Soon there was growing uneasiness about the sanctions among some of the EU states, notably Denmark, Finland, and other small countries, which feared the appearance of being dominated by such larger powers as France and Germany. Enthusiasm for the sanctions also cooled when it became clear that Austria's coalition government was not about to impair the rights of foreigners or adopt other undemocratic measures. For their part, Austrians were becoming increasingly resentful toward the EU, which they accused of meddling in their country's internal affairs. Nothing in the EU constitution, critics said, barred members from including extreme nationalists in their governments, so long as they remained democratic and acted within the law. These views found an increasingly receptive audience in the other EU countries.

To escape from an embarrassing situation, the EU appointed a panel of three "wise men" to review the political situation in Austria and determine whether sanctions should be lifted. In a report submitted in September, the panel recommended an end to the sanctions, which, it stated, had become "counterproductive." The report found that Austria was "respectful of common European values" and had continued to uphold the rights of immigrants, refugees, and minorities. A week after receiving the report, the EU members agreed to lift the sanctions and resume normal diplomatic ties with Austria. Israel, however, roundly condemned the decision and refused to return its ambassador to Vienna.

Despite the EU's favorable action, many Austrians, unhappy over the diplomatic sanctions, had second thoughts about remaining in the union. More than 100,000 Austrians signed a petition calling for a referendum on whether to quit the European Union, and this obliged Parliament to discuss the issue within six

months. The petition charged the EU with stripping Austria of its sovereignty, undermining its agriculture, and threatening its neutrality. Austria had joined the European Union in 1995 after 75 percent of the voters favored it in a referendum, but recent polls had shown a drastic decline of support for continued Austrian membership.

In its first test of strength since entering the national coalition, the Freedom Party suffered a stunning defeat in the October 15 election in the southeastern province of Styria, winning only 12.7 percent of the vote. This was down 4.7 points from the party's performance in the Styrian election of 1995, and less than half of the 27 percent the party had racked up there in the 1999 general election. The Freedom Party continued on a downward spiral, finishing a distant third in the provincial election in Burgenland, Austria's poorest province, with only 12.6 percent of the vote. This showing was nearly two percentage points lower than in the previous provincial election four years earlier, and, more significantly, a drop of 9 percent from what the party received in the province in the federal election of 1999. In fact, the results in Styria and Burgenland confirmed the findings of public-opinion polls that showed a fall in the party's popularity since it joined the ruling coalition.

Many observers viewed the downturn in Freedom Party fortunes as the inevitable price it had to pay for transforming itself from a party of protesting "outsiders" into a party of government "insiders." As the junior partner in the coalition, and hampered, furthermore, by the charismatic Haider's absence from the national scene, the party alienated its natural constituency by supporting painful spending cuts, tax increases, and public-sector job losses, unpopular fiscal measures instituted by the government in the hope of balancing the budget by 2002. The party's image as defender of the interests of the "ordinary man" was seriously tarnished.

The FPÖ was also hurt by allegations that Haider's allies in the Austrian national police had illegally given the party confidential information about politicians, journalists, artists, and others from classified police intelligence files. In addition, Freedom Party ministers in the government attacked official investigations into the conduct of Haider and some party associates. Justice Minister Dieter Böhmdorfer, for example, who had been Haider's personal lawyer until his appointment to the cabinet, seemingly prejudged the outcome of an independent investigation when he stated that Haider was "above all suspicion." It was in this context that 1,300 judges and public prosecutors issued an open letter in December addressed to President Klestil and members of the governing coalition urging politicians to respect the rule of law and not to try to use the judicial system for political purposes. The judiciary's "independence" as well as "the separation of powers," the letter said, "are in danger if blatant political pressure is applied to influence current investigations." The letter did not mention the Freedom Party or any of its officials by name, but was quite clearly aimed at them.

In an apparent effort to stem his party's declining fortunes, Haider returned

to his familiar xenophobic theme, denouncing the presence of immigrants in Austria. In a rabble-rousing speech to party faithful in Vienna on October 22, he said: "There are too many illegals, far too many drug dealers . . . and it must be our job to bring about a thorough getting rid of [them]." Controversy swirled around Haider again in December over his trip to the Vatican, where he presented a Christmas tree from Carinthia, where he was governor, to Pope John Paul II. World War II resistance fighters, the secretary of the Italian Communist Party, and the president of Rome's Jewish community signed a protest statement against the Haider visit, while Israel condemned it as a cause of "considerable disappointment and displeasure to the government of Israel." In response, Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Angelo Sodano said: "The Holy See is open to everyone—no one should be surprised by that."

### *Israel and the Middle East*

Relations between Israel and Austria were frozen following the formation of the new coalition on February 4. Jerusalem made good on its threat to withdraw its ambassador in the event the Freedom Party became part of the new government. The Austrian government, in contrast, kept its ambassador, Wolfgang Paul, in Tel Aviv. Significantly, Israel's withdrawal of its ambassador provoked no reaction in the Austrian media nor did it lead to a political debate in the country. High government officials stated on several occasions that the door remained open for the resumption of normal ties between the two countries. Ilan Ben Dov, the chargé d'affaires ad interim, represented Israeli interests in Austria and maintained contact with government ministries. Similarly, Ambassador Paul was afforded full access to Israeli government offices. High-level political contacts between the two countries, however, remained suspended. Despite the political constraints, trade between the two countries grew, with Austrian exports to Israel rising 13.8 percent. The mayor of Vienna, Michael Häupl, visited Jerusalem in September and was received by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Minister of Justice Yossi Beilin. Three groups of teachers and educators visited Israel in August and November as part of the Austrian-Israel exchange program.

On the international scene, the European Union nations split over a United Nations General Assembly resolution, on October 20, condemning Israel for using excessive force in its attempt to put down the violence in the West Bank and Gaza. Austria was one of the eight EU members supporting the resolution (the other seven abstained).

Austria was reported, in December, to be involved in secret efforts to facilitate a prisoner exchange between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah militia. An Austrian defense official confirmed Austrian and Israeli press reports that Defense Minister Herbert Scheibner, a member of the far-right Freedom Party, had been in the Middle East where he met with representatives of the two sides. According to the Vienna daily *Die Presse*, Scheibner met with Israeli deputy defense min-

ister Ephraim Sneh in early November as part of an effort to secure the release of three Israeli soldiers abducted by Hezbollah in October. In exchange, the Lebanese wanted the release of 19 Lebanese men imprisoned in Israel.

## *Holocaust-Related Developments*

### WAR CRIMINALS

Dr. Heinrich Gross, an 84-year-old former Nazi doctor, had been put on trial in March 1999 for acting as an accessory to the murder of nine disabled children at Vienna's Spiegelgrund clinic in 1944. He denied the charges. The trial was suspended when the court heard from an Austrian psychiatrist that Gross was suffering from dementia. Gross had become a leading neurologist in postwar Austria despite several attempts to bring him to trial (see AJYB 2000, pp. 367–68). In 2000 the state prosecutor asked for a new medical evaluation after Gross gave a television interview in which he appeared normal and alert. However, a new medical report, this time by a Swiss psychiatrist, stated that Gross would be unable to follow court proceedings. An official of the Vienna district court announced that the trial would be suspended for another six months while the prosecutor decided whether to order yet another medical examination.

### COMPENSATION

Under the skillful negotiating hand of Stuart Eizenstat, deputy treasury secretary of the United States, the signing of a wide-ranging deal to compensate Austrian Holocaust victims was close at hand at year's end. The Austrian negotiators, headed by Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa, director of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy, made a detailed offer on December 21 in what appeared to be a final bid to settle outstanding Jewish claims. The proposals were complex and covered several different areas. Total payments offered came to \$950 million, with an additional amount to be paid in settlement of claims for looted assets.

Included in the sum were \$150 million in "immediate compensation" for survivors originating from or living in Austria, to cover the loss of apartment and office leases, household property, and personal valuables. Such payment had been recommended by the Historiker Kommission (Historical Commission), created in September 1998 to examine instances of property confiscation during the Nazi period and to determine what had been done after the war to restore such property to rightful owners or heirs or to compensate them (see AJYB 2000, p. 368). The commission issued a report in October 2000 stating that Austria had failed to compensate Jewish survivors of the Holocaust for being thrown out of their homes. Austria never passed legislation enabling Jews to return to their homes after World War II, according to the panel of historians, mainly because

lawmakers knew that doing so would have angered former Nazis who made up a large segment of the country's voters. Clemens Jabloner, the commission chairman, declined to say what sum would be appropriate to compensate the 23,000 tenants alive today. Some 60,000 rented homes occupied by Jewish families in Vienna were cleared of their inhabitants shortly after Austria was annexed to Hitler's Third Reich in 1938. The "clearances" were initially spontaneous acts by armed members of the Nazi party. Susan Kowarc, one of the historians who wrote the report, said at a news conference: "This happened in part with the collaboration of the Austrian public."

The proposed sum also included \$45 million which Bank Austria, the largest bank in the country, agreed to pay for its role in confiscating Jewish assets. Austria also said it would pass legislation to pay about \$65 million over a period of ten years for health benefits to Holocaust survivors living outside Austria. The government had already, in May, signed an agreement to compensate wartime victims of Nazi forced and slave labor. Under this accord, Austria would set up a \$415-million fund to compensate the estimated 150,000 survivors who were obliged by the Nazis to toil under horrendous conditions in industry and agriculture. Most of them were non-Jews from many different European countries. While Jewish groups endorsed the Bank Austria settlement and expressed satisfaction with the payment to slave laborers, they noted that a number of issues were still outstanding, such as how unpaid claims against Austrian insurers should be settled and how funds should be distributed among needy survivors. Further negotiations to finalize the agreement were planned for January 2001 in Vienna and Washington.

The Nationalfond, established by the Austrian government in June 1995, was the special fund "for the victims of national socialism." It was to help compensate anyone, Jew or non-Jew, who had been persecuted because of political beliefs, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or whom the Nazis considered "asocial," as well as anyone forced to flee Austria to escape persecution. By 2000, the fund—headed by Hannah Lessing, who was also a member of the Austrian team negotiating terms of compensation to Jewish Holocaust survivors—had contacted over 31,000 persons it considered eligible to receive payment. By the end of 2000, payments had been made to over 28,000 people in 65 countries. The country with the largest number of recipients was the United States, followed by Austria, Israel, and Australia. The amount paid to each beneficiary was fixed at 70,000 shillings (\$4,800), though in special cases this could be as much as tripled.

As Austria accelerated the pace of negotiations to settle outstanding compensation issues for Jewish survivors, the Nationalfond was increasingly assigned administrative and other responsibilities for handling looted, heirless Jewish assets and using them to fund projects. At the London meeting of the Tripartite Gold Commission in December 1997, which dealt with monetary gold looted by the

Nazis, Austria had agreed to relinquish its rights to the 860 kilograms of gold owed to it and hand over the monetary value of this gold—then valued at approximately \$8.5 million—to the Nationalfond for distribution to needy Holocaust survivors and to other worthwhile causes (AJYB 1999, p. 360). Only a few payments were subsequently made to individuals, as most of the money was earmarked for projects in Eastern European countries. Two examples in 2000 were the updating of the X-ray facilities of the Jewish Hospital in Budapest and the funding of the Vilnius International Forum on Holocaust-Era Looted Cultural Assets, held in the Lithuanian capital October 3–5.

Building on a 1999 initiative by the Federation of Jewish Communities in Austria, on September 15 four organizations—the federation, the Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria, the Council of Jews from Austria in Israel, and the American Council for Equal Compensation of Nazi Victims from Austria, Inc. (ACOA)—joined to form an international steering committee to promote the interests of Jewish Holocaust victims in and from Austria. The committee established a Holocaust Victims' Information and Support Center (HVISC, "Anlaufstelle") with a ten-person staff, which would register the names and assets of the Jewish victims, along with archival and other relevant material, and thereby create a continually updated database for claims to possible restitution or compensation in the future. Cases were organized both by names of individuals and by types of loss: business assets, real estate, capital assets, insurance policies, moveable assets (personal effects, household furnishings, artworks, jewelry), as well as compensation for the termination of tenant rights, dismissal from a profession or academic institution and the resultant loss of legal and/or pension rights, and compensation for discriminatory taxes and charges ("Reich Flight Tax," "Jewish Atonement Payment"). The HVISC sent out a questionnaire to approximately 12,000 Holocaust survivors in different countries to gather information. At regular intervals the data, in the form of "dossiers," was to be submitted to the parent body, the international steering committee.

#### LOOTED JEWISH ARTWORK

A federal judge in New York ruled in December that the U.S. government could renew its effort to force an Austrian museum to forfeit an Egon Schiele painting stolen by the Nazis from a Jewish family during World War II (see AJYB 2000, pp. 370–71). U.S. District Judge Michael Mukasey, who dismissed the government's original case in July, now ruled that federal prosecutors could file an amended lawsuit setting forth new arguments. The government was seeking the surrender of the painting *Portrait of Wally*, which had been loaned to New York's Museum of Modern Art by Austria's Leopold Museum Privatstiftung. The portrait had been in the possession of a Viennese Jewish art-gallery owner in Vienna before the war. After the Nazis came to power they forced the owner, Lea Bondi

Jaray, to surrender *Wally*, which was part of her private collection. After the war, the painting was erroneously placed in the collection of a private person, who eventually sold it to the Leopold. Jaray's heirs were now seeking its return.

The judge had found in July that the Leopold could not be considered the holder of stolen property because the painting had been recovered by the U.S. armed forces before the museum bought it. This recovery, he ruled, . . . purged the painting of the taint it had." In the December decision, however, the judge recognized that the government now wanted to argue that paintings seized during and after the war were not held by the armed forces for the purpose of returning them to their true owners, and therefore the "taint" may not have been removed. In allowing the amendment to the original suit, Judge Mukasey said: "This case involves substantial issues of public policy relating to property stolen during World War Two as part of a program implemented by the German government."

#### COMMEMORATION AND EDUCATION

To mark the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performed a concert at the site of the camp on May 5. Several years earlier the Austrian Parliament had proclaimed this day as the nation's "Memorial Day Against Violence and Racism in Memory of the Victims of National Socialism."

A special exhibition, held in the Depot of Movables in Vienna's seventh district on September 7–19, was about "The Looting of Furniture from Jewish Households." It showed examples of the various household objects, such as furniture, cutlery, and photographs, which were aryanized, seized by the Nazis, after the German annexation of Austria in March 1938. The starting point of the exhibition showed a file listing the "Judenmobil"—Jewish moveable property—of eight Viennese Jewish families that was confiscated and stored in the state-owned Depot of Movables, a huge storage facility built in the reign of Maria Theresa. Attached to the file was a receipt stating: "Seized for the benefit of the Austrian state." In 1938 a total of about 5,000 looted objects were listed, and of these about 600 were inventoried, thereby becoming state property. Furniture and other household objects were lent to Nazi government offices and other borrowers. Few of the objects were restored to their owners after the war, and, until recently, they were still being used in government offices or Austrian embassies abroad, with the users generally unaware of their origins. Recent research on the original ownership of these objects had led to the return of items when the families were traceable.

On October 25 (the eve of the Austrian National Day), President Klestil formally dedicated Vienna's memorial for the 65,000 Austrian victims of the Shoah, the idea for which had been first proposed by famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal. The memorial itself, based on a design by the British architect Rachel

Whitread, was a reinforced concrete cube standing 32 feet by 23 feet, and 12 feet high. The outer sides were in the form of shelves of books with their spines turned inward, enclosing an area made inaccessible by a locked door. "It's about not being able to enter," said Whitread. "It is an abstract library because you obviously can't read the books and have no idea what the spines of the books might be," and the empty space inside symbolized the many readers of the library who did not live. The names of the concentration camps to which Austrian Jews were sent are engraved around the base of the monument, and the names of the murdered Jews and other information are available nearby. Located on the Judenplatz (old Jewish street), the memorial was at the site of an underground medieval synagogue, excavated by archeologists, and an adjoining Museum on Medieval Jewish Life, which featured, as a permanent exhibit, a multimedia presentation on the religious, cultural, and social life of the Viennese Jewish community in the Middle Ages until its end in the persecutions of 1420–21.

Austria applied in December for membership in the nine-nation Task Force for International Cooperation in Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Interest in the Holocaust and compensation issues prompted the University of Vienna to organize a series of symposia, from October 9, 2000 to January 15, 2001, on "The Political Economy of the Holocaust."

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Demography*

About 6,600 Jews were registered with the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG), but knowledgeable observers claimed that the actual number of Jews was at least twice as large. One hundred new members were signed up during the year as a result of an IKG campaign offering financial incentives to parents to register newborn children with the community. Continuing a long-established pattern, the overwhelming majority of Jews were concentrated in Vienna, with only about 500–600 making their homes elsewhere, primarily in the large provincial cities of Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, and Linz.

The Jewish community—heavily dependent on an influx of immigrants—has continued to shrink in numbers, due to a small but steady trickle of emigration and the virtual absence of new immigrants. Several hundred Jews, many of whom had come from the former Soviet republic of Georgia, emigrated in search of better economic opportunities, mainly in Eastern Europe. These Georgians, and other Sephardi Jews as well, were concentrated in the garment and shoe trades, which were undergoing a severe depression. To offset this outflow, the IKG has requested the government to waive certain provisions of the country's highly restrictive immigration laws so as to allow in the same number of Jews who had left. The government had yet to act on the request.

## *Communal Affairs*

On November 9, the 62nd anniversary of Kristallnacht, a new synagogue was dedicated in Graz on the same site as the old one, constructed in 1892, that went up in flames during the Kristallnacht pogrom. Among those present at the inaugural ceremony were President Klestil, Alfred Stingl, the mayor of Graz, Ilan Ben Dov, Israeli chargé d'affaires, Paul Chaim Eisenberg, the chief rabbi of Austria, Ariel Muzicant, president of the Austrian Jewish community, and Kurt David Bruhl, president of the Graz Jewish community. The initiative and financial support for constructing the new synagogue came from the Graz municipal government and the provincial government of Styria, which said they wanted to right the historical wrong committed against the Jewish community of Graz. At the time of Kristallnacht, there were 1,700 Jews living in the city; now, the mostly elderly Jewish populace numbered 120. For years following the war, the local government took no action to invite the city's Holocaust survivors back, and few returned on their own.

The European regional office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which opened in Vienna in August 1997 under the direction of journalist Marta Halpert, expanded its effort to combat prejudice and xenophobia in schools and in government ministries. In response to a request from the Austrian federal government to develop an antibias project for the ministries of Education, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, the ADL office prepared three-year contracts with each of these ministries to train people to train others to combat prejudice. The programs were based on the principles and techniques of the ADL's New York-based "A World of Difference" project. Officials of these ministries were invited to attend the training seminars. The first phase of the project was completed in August, when a group of eight trainers participated in an eight-day "train the trainer" workshop in Chicago and New York, cosponsored by the ADL, the United States embassy in Vienna, and AUA, the Austrian national airline. This was followed by a series of workshops attended by officials from government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and opinion leaders.

The Third International Theodor Herzl Symposium was held March 13–15 at the Vienna City Hall. The lectures and panel discussions focused mainly on the Middle East peace process. Austrian president Thomas Klestil opened the symposium with an address to the delegates. Other well-known speakers were Helmut Zilk, the former mayor of Vienna, and Cardinal Franz König.

The Jewish Cultural Weeks festival, running from October 26 through November 29, provided a wide array of cultural events, including cantorial concerts, films, and plays. A special feature of the festival was a two-day symposium at the Jewish Museum on the topic, "Walled Cities and the Building of Communities: The European Ghetto as an Urban Space."

Among the exhibitions mounted by the Jewish Museum of Vienna in 2000, one attracted special attention. This was "Between East and West: The Jews of Gali-

cia and Vienna,' which opened on November 7. The exhibition, scheduled to run through February 18, 2001, presented the works of different artists depicting the life of Jews in Vienna who had come from Galicia, the most northerly crown land of the Habsburg Empire. More than 10 percent of the population of turn-of-the-century Galicia, which today is divided between Poland and Ukraine, was Jewish, and a great many Galician Jews, popularly called Ostjuden (Eastern Jews), fled to Vienna during World War I as the ravages of the war spread to this Habsburg province. The exhibition looked at the multifaceted relationship between Galicia and Vienna and the fundamental conflict it embodied, that between western and eastern forms of Judaism, which was manifested in the contrasting images and myths on the two sides.

MURRAY GORDON

## East-Central Europe

C ONTINUING THE PATTERN SET over the preceding decade, postcommunist countries developed and integrated into Europe at different rates, based largely on their economic progress. Concern persisted over ongoing manifestations of racism—directed primarily against Roma (Gypsies)—and anti-Semitism. These issues became more acute after the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) entered the Austrian government in February. Skinhead groups operated in various countries, and xenophobic and/or nationalist parties or political figures were outspoken in some places. The publication of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in several countries caused alarm. At the same time, however, liberal political forces also achieved electoral successes, and the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia gave rise to hopes for improved stability in the Balkans.

In much the same way as the nations of which they were part, Jewish communities, institutions, and individuals also continued the process of integration and cooperation on regional and international levels at various rates of speed. Many communities and institutions set up or enlarged Web sites and Internet links. Several countries in the region took part in the European Day of Jewish Culture on September 3, a continent-wide initiative that saw hundreds of Jewish heritage sites in 16 countries opened to the public. Arachim, a seminar on Jewish education organized by the European Council of Jewish Communities and held in Budapest in November, drew more than 200 Jewish educators from all over Europe.

Internally, many Jewish communities confronted a crisis of leadership, both lay and rabbinic. Also, Jewish communities divided over the questions of “Who is a Jew?” and “How can one become a Jew?”—that is, whether criteria for conversion and membership in the Jewish community should be according to Halakhah or according to the Israeli Law of Return. The rift over these matters tended to coincide with the split between the Orthodox, on the one hand, and liberal and secular Jews, on the other. In August the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) appointed Rabbi Menachem Hacohen, an Israel-based rabbi also serving as chief rabbi in Romania, as its adviser on rabbinical affairs for worldwide programs, to assess these issues, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe.

### *Bosnia-Herzegovina*

In February Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic assumed the rotating chair of Bosnia's joint presidency, replacing the Croat Ante Jelavic. Nationalist parties made strong showings in the November elections. The estimated GDP growth in 2000 was 15 percent, but this still left the GDP at a level one-third of what it was

before the Bosnian war of the 1990s. Unemployment was estimated at about 45 percent, and there was an enormous trade deficit, with exports covering only about 30 percent of imports. Inflation, however, was low, about 3 percent over the year.

Some 700 Jews lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina, most of them in the capital, Sarajevo. Jews in Bosnia were active in both local and international interfaith initiatives. Jakob Finci, president of the Jewish community, was a member of the Bosnian Interfaith Council, whose members also included the head of the local Muslim clerics, the Roman Catholic archbishop, and the Serbian Orthodox metropolitan. A Women's European Interfaith Conference was held in Sarajevo in mid-September. Cosponsored by the International Council of Jewish Women, the meeting drew Jewish, Muslim, and Christian women from several countries. The aim was to see how both sisterhood and common religious values could be used to foster peace initiatives and international understanding.

La Benevolencija, the Jewish cultural, educational, and humanitarian aid organization of Sarajevo, carried out a nonsectarian home-care program serving 540 needy, elderly residents of the city. All the beneficiaries were over 65, had a monthly income of less than \$100, were chronically ill, and lived alone, with no children in Sarajevo to help them. More than 180 were Jews—all Holocaust survivors—but the majority consisted of Muslims, Serbs, Croats, Roma (Gypsies), and others.

On the eve of Bosnian elections in November, vandals overturned about 30 tombstones in Sarajevo's historic Jewish cemetery. Local officials and representatives of the UN went to the cemetery as a demonstration of solidarity with the Jewish community. Police detained four teenagers who confessed to the desecration. The cemetery, founded in the 16th century, had been heavily damaged during the 1992–95 Bosnian war, and just a few weeks before the desecration, in October, the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad presented \$40,000 to officials in Sarajevo—matching funds raised by the city and canton of Sarajevo—to aid in its restoration. This was the first installment of a total of \$100,000 appropriated by the U.S. government for this purpose.

## *Bulgaria*

In January President Petar Stoyanov made a four-day official visit to Israel. He met with Prime Minister Barak and told Israeli businessmen that Bulgaria wanted to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with Israel, matching Bulgaria's supply of cheap labor with Israeli know-how in agriculture, technology, and the defense industry. Bulgarian and Israeli officials signed agreements on avoiding double taxation and on agricultural cooperation. Stoyanov dedicated a "Bulgaria Square" in Jerusalem honoring Bulgaria's refusal to deport its 50,000 Jews during the Holocaust. He visited Yad Vashem and paid "deep respect" to Jewish Holocaust victims, including the 14,000 Jews who were deported from Thrace and

Macedonia, Bulgarian-occupied parts of Greece. Stoyanov also met in Bethlehem with Palestinian Authority chairman Yasir Arafat, who thanked him for Bulgaria's "long-standing support for the Palestinian cause and of the Palestinian people."

Bulgaria's role during the Shoah remained a touchy issue. Less than two weeks after his trip to Israel, Stoyanov told delegates to a high-level international conference on the Holocaust in Stockholm that Bulgaria was proud that it had saved its 50,000 Jews from deportation. But protests from leaders of the Greek Jewish community, who noted that the Bulgarians had deported the 14,000 Jews from the parts of Greece it had occupied, convinced the conference to omit any special recognition of Bulgaria from its final declaration. Nevertheless in March, Bulgarian foreign minister Nadia Michaelova was honored in Washington by B'nai B'rith International for Bulgaria's "rescuing its Jewish population during the Holocaust and for its continuing display of tolerance and ethnic coexistence in the Balkans." At least two documentary films on Bulgaria's wartime role were in preparation.

Israeli investors maintained a high-profile presence in Bulgaria. Israeli Gad Zeevi owned a 75-percent share in Bulgaria's Balkan Airlines, whose pilots went on strike in May. Zeevi threatened to pull his money out if the government could not end the strike. In December three Israeli investors announced that they were buying Mobitel, Bulgaria's only mobile telephone company.

About 5,000 Jews lived in Bulgaria, mainly in the capital, Sofia, and in Plovdiv. In March a Jewish nursing home opened in Sofia. The \$600,000 facility, designed to serve 40 patients, was a joint venture involving the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Claims Conference, and Shalom, the umbrella organization of Bulgarian Jewry. In the summer, Esperansa, a festival of Ladino culture, took place for the second time, near Sofia. In August Hashomer Hatzair sponsored an international seminar for more than 100 European Jewish teenagers at Batak, about 120 miles from Sofia. In December Bulgaria's Jewish community protested against the publication of what was advertised as "the first unabridged Bulgarian version" of *Mein Kampf*, and called for a ban on its sale.

## Croatia

Croatia entered a new era following the death, in December 1999, of the long-time strongman, President Franjo Tudjman. The first few weeks of the year 2000 saw what amounted to a political revolution. In parliamentary elections on January 3, the center-left parties defeated Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). Ivica Racan, a 55-year-old former Communist, became prime minister at the head of a six-party coalition. On February 7 populist Stipe Mesic, 65, was elected Croatian president and vowed to overturn Tudjman's nationalistic policies. Though Croatia's 2,000-strong Jewish community did not take an official stand on the elections, Croatian Jews warmly welcomed the changes and expressed the hope that they would facilitate the nation's integration into Europe.

That is indeed what ensued. In May Croatia was invited to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program. In July the EU's commissioner for foreign affairs announced that talks would soon begin over the terms of a stabilization and association agreement. Then in November, Parliament voted to amend the constitution so as to reduce the powers of the presidency, moving Croatia further in the direction of parliamentary democracy.

Ties with Israel and the United States became closer under the new government. Deputy Prime Minister Goran Granic visited Israel during the summer and signed agreements on trade and economic cooperation, including an end to the visa requirements for Croatians visiting Israel. Israel and Croatia also set up a joint committee to explore possible arms deals. A top Croatian delegation, including President Mesic and Prime Minister Racan, met with B'nai B'rith and American Jewish Committee leaders during a visit to Washington in August. Mesic said he wanted to correct injustices concerning Holocaust-era restitution claims.

In October Croatia's supreme court rejected an appeal from Dinko Sakic, the commander of the Jasenovac World War II concentration camp, who, in 1999, was sentenced to 20 years in jail for wartime crimes. In December the Zagreb city council voted to change the name of the Square of Croatian Heroes back to the Square of the Victims of Fascism. The name had been changed in the early 1990s as part of Tudjman's nationalist policy.

In the spring, the Zagreb Jewish community announced plans to build a cultural and religious center, including a Holocaust memorial and Jewish museum, on the site of the city's main synagogue, which had been destroyed in World War II. In late summer plans were also announced for a museum to be established next to the medieval synagogue in Dubrovnik that would house precious items of Judaica. In September so-called "middle-generation," or adult, Jews from all over the former Yugoslavia met at Brac, on the Croatian Adriatic coast. In November a plaque commemorating 165 Jewish youths killed in Croatia during World War II was unveiled at the offices of the Jewish community in Zagreb.

### *Czech Republic*

On January 24 the cabinet approved a draft law on Jewish property restitution covering land and other property confiscated from individuals and organizations during World War II and subsequently not returned because of the Communist takeover in 1948. Parliament passed the law in June. The government set aside the equivalent of more than \$8 million — the money going into a fund established by the Czech Jewish community — to compensate owners for property that could not be returned. The commission set up by the government for compensating Holocaust victims announced that about 2,500 items currently in Czech state museums had been confiscated from Czech Jews by the Nazis.

When Israeli foreign minister David Levy visited Prague in late January, he praised the Czech government's decision to go ahead with the restitution law and also its efforts to counter anti-Semitism. Levy and President Václav Havel met at

Prague Castle with Holocaust survivors on January 27 to mark the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Havel voiced support for recognizing January 27 as a “day for victims of Nazism . . . and the fight against racism.” In February a gala celebration was held in Prague to mark the tenth anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel, which followed the fall of Communism. Czech foreign minister Jan Kavan, whose father was Jewish, visited Israel in July. At Yad Vashem, Kavan discovered his grandmother’s name in a database of Czech Jews who died in the Shoah, and learned that she had perished in Buchenwald. In May Israeli ambassador Erella Hadar honored four families in the village of Trstice for helping Jews during World War II. In the fall, Olga Fierz, a Swiss-born woman who helped Czech Jews during World War II and who died in 1990, was honored posthumously by President Havel. In December Czech officials presented the Dutch state archives with newly discovered Jewish documents that the Nazis had stolen from Amsterdam and transported to Prague.

Xenophobia, racism, and hate crimes, particularly against Roma (Gypsies), continued to raise concern throughout the year. There were also manifestations of anti-Semitism from the far right, and an estimated 5,000 skinheads were active around the country. Results of a poll conducted among 1,124 respondents and released in January showed that only 17 percent could be described as “tolerant.” During the year several international organizations—including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Amnesty International, and the Council of Europe—issued reports criticizing or raising alarm about discrimination and violence against Roma and others.

Attempts to take legal steps against extremists accomplished little. In January a court in the town of Jeseník sentenced Jiri Tuma to ten months in prison for fostering a pro-Nazi movement. But also in January, a Prague district prosecutor dropped charges against Vladimir Skoupy, leader of the far-right National Alliance, who had been accused of defamation of a people and inciting racial hatred for publicly questioning whether the Holocaust had taken place. In the wake of this, Czech Jewish leader Tomas Kraus called for Holocaust denial to be made a crime. In February, despite a police ban, Skoupy led a demonstration on Prague’s Wenceslas Square in support of Austrian far-right leader Jörg Haider. About 120 demonstrators, mostly skinheads, shouted slogans against “U.S.-Israel dictates” and against President Havel. Separated from the skinheads by police, about 50 left-wing youths staged a counterdemonstration against Haider and against racism. Skoupy, rearrested later in February after another illegal demonstration, was released in June, less than a month after being sentenced to one year in jail for propagating Nazism and inciting racial hatred. At the end of March the Czech interior minister issued an order disbanding the National Alliance.

The release of a Czech translation of *Mein Kampf* by the Prague-based Otakar II publishing house provoked controversy. Jewish and Romany groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others protested the publication, which

ran without footnotes or explanatory introduction, unlike a 1993 Czech edition of the book, which included explanatory notes. The new edition's first print run of 4,000 sold out in three days. In May a survey reported that 39 percent of Czechs opposed the sale of a Czech-language edition of Hitler's book, while 30 percent did not mind. Among those who approved the sale, 49 percent said they opposed any form of censorship, 28 percent believed that the book provided a lesson about the dangers of Nazism, and 12 percent said it was "part of history." At the beginning of June police charged Michal Zitko, owner of the publishing house, with supporting a movement aimed at suppressing minorities, and, in a police raid on June 5, 300 copies of the book were confiscated. This move was criticized on June 14 by two groups, the Committee for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and the Syndicate of Czech Journalists. In December Zitko received a three-year suspended sentence for promoting Nazism, and was ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine. He appealed the verdict. Also in December, Czech state prosecutors brought charges against Vit Varak, owner of an Internet site selling Czech translations of *Mein Kampf* on-line. Varak was accused of promoting movements that seek to suppress human rights.

In March Jan Kasl, the mayor of Prague, unveiled three bronze plaques in Czech, English, and Hebrew on a 17th-century statue of Christ on Prague's Charles Bridge. The statue has a gilded Hebrew inscription, "kadosh kadosh kadosh" (holy holy holy), put there in 1696 and paid for from a fine imposed on a Prague Jew who allegedly mocked the cross. The new plaques explained this historical background. Members of the Czech Jewish community, the U.S. ambassador, and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church attended the unveiling. In April the Prague city council renamed a square in Prague's Old Town after the great Jewish writer Franz Kafka. The square, located just off the Old Town Square, is where Kafka was born in 1883. A Kafka museum already stands on the site of the house where he was born. In October an 11-member panel chose a massive statue designed by sculptor Jaroslav Ron to serve as a monument to Kafka. The statue—of a suit walking without a body in it—was to be placed near the Spanish synagogue.

#### JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were approximately 3,000 registered members of Jewish communities in the Czech Republic. About half lived in Prague, but Jewish leaders estimated that there were 10,000–15,000, or even more unaffiliated Jews in the country. The officially recognized Jewish communities and a number of secular Jewish institutions came under the aegis of the Federation of Jewish Communities. Among these organizations were Bejt Praha, a non-Orthodox congregation in Prague that attracted expatriate Americans and other foreigners as well as Czechs, the Union of Jewish Youth, the Maccabi and Hakoach sports clubs, the Women's Zionist Organization (WIZO), and the Terezin Initiative, a group of Czech Holocaust sur-

vivors. Jewish organizations functioning outside the federation umbrella included Bejt Simcha, an independent group that maintained links with Progressive Judaism and attracted people who were not Jewish according to Halakhah, and Chabad-Lubavitch. The Web site [www.chaverim.sk](http://www.chaverim.sk) provided extensive information about the Jewish communities in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

While the official community was Orthodox, only a few dozen Czech Jews were believed to be strict observers of *kashrut*. Some smaller communities in provincial cities were increasingly aligning themselves with non-Orthodox forms of Judaism, and a new Liberal Union was established in 2000. On February 13 about 200 Czech and Slovak Jews attended a seminar in Brno on the status of Orthodoxy and Liberal Judaism in the Czech and Slovak Republics. One of the speakers, Czech chief rabbi Karol Sidon, himself Orthodox, said that adopting a liberal communal orientation not only threatened "the Jewish character" of the communities, but also portended disunity. Income from restituted property enabled the Jewish communities in the Czech Republic to finance the welfare needs of their members as well as to handle other costs. Among other institutions, the community maintained a summer camp for Czech Jewish youngsters and a home for the aged. A new Jewish club opened in September in the spa town of Karlovy Vary, where about 90 Jews lived.

Controversy continued to rage over the medieval Jewish cemetery discovered in 1999 during construction of an insurance building in downtown Prague, pitting Czech Jews against Orthodox groups from abroad and also against the Czech government (see AJYB 2000, pp. 379–80). Dating to the 13th century and voluntarily relinquished by Prague's Jewish community in the 15th century, the cemetery had been built over ever since. It came to light in 1999, when a Czech insurance company began preparations for the construction of a high-rise apartment block and underground garage on the site. In November 1999 Rabbi Sidon had reached a compromise with the insurance company, Pojistovna, that called for excavating the ground beneath the existing level of burial remains, encasing the existing remains in concrete, and then sinking these remains to a deeper level, which would remain undisturbed by any future development on the site. This solution, however, was decisively rejected by many Orthodox groups around the world, which issued statements, held street protests in Prague and outside Czech consulates abroad, and carried on an e-mail campaign. In January 2000 the chief rabbinate of Israel issued an opinion that the site should remain sacred with no further construction on it, and Prague's Jewish community withdrew its assent to the November agreement with Pojistovna. In March the Czech cabinet reached an agreement with the Prague Jewish community and the insurance company for a compromise, mediated by the U.S. embassy, whereby the foundations of the office block would be built around the cemetery site, which itself would be encased in concrete, preserving the remains. The Czech government agreed to contribute more than \$1 million to enable the plan to be carried out.

Though the agreement was praised by a number of Jewish leaders at home and

abroad, some Orthodox Jews outside the country continued to protest, much to the chagrin of local Jews. In June police broke up several protests by Orthodox Jews who physically attempted to halt construction. In August an Orthodox group called the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries filed a complaint against the Czech government at the European Court of Human Rights, and various foreign representatives cautioned the Czech government on the matter. Czech culture minister Pavel Dostal, meanwhile, sparked outrage with a sarcastic newspaper editorial that was bitterly scornful of certain Jewish individuals involved in the affair and the positions they took. In September the Jewish community reburied the remains of some 160 people found at the medieval site in another Prague Jewish cemetery, "where all related religious rules can be complied with without problems."

There were numerous cultural, educational, and scholarly events throughout the year. Prague's Spanish Synagogue hosted a series of concerts. In February a memorial evening was held in Prague in memory of Charles Jordan, vice chairman of the JDC, who died under mysterious circumstances in Prague in 1967 (see AJYB 1968, p. 510). In March the Jewish Museum of Prague hosted the annual meeting of the Association of European Jewish Museums, with 40 representatives of Jewish museums from a dozen countries attending. In May a concert was held at Terezin of music composed by Jewish musicians who were held prisoner at the Terezin ghetto during the Holocaust and died in Nazi death camps. A plaque was unveiled at the concert dedicated to these musicians, and a Japanese pianist performed on a \$25,000 grand piano donated to the town of Terezin by nearly 900 Japanese citizens. In June a Polish klezmer group, Kroke, headlined a festival of ethnic music at Prague Castle. In October the town of Jihlava held a three-day festival celebrating the 140th anniversary of the birth of composer Gustav Mahler. December saw the opening of "Jewish Moravia, Jewish Brno," a festival to last several months featuring concerts, films, theater productions, and exhibitions, organized by the Czech-based Association for Culture and Dialogue. Relaying a message from Pope John Paul II at the start of the festival, Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Dialogue with the Jews, said the pope wanted to encourage Jews, Christians, and all others to work together for the good of the world.

The Prague Jewish Museum issued a number of publications and other material, including a CD-ROM on the history of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia. Early in the year the Prague Jewish Museum Education Center, in cooperation with the Terezin Memorial, the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno, and the Czech Ministry of Education, launched a seminar for primary- and secondary-school teachers on how to teach about the Holocaust. More than 500 teachers applied to take part. The museum center also sponsored various other education projects, including "Workshop 2000," aimed at promoting cultural tolerance among primary-school pupils. The Office of the President of the Czech Republic was among the sponsors of the "Lost Neighbors" project, aimed at making teenagers aware of

the fate of those from their own neighborhoods who were killed or deported during World War II. In November a three-day international conference on the Nazis' seizure of the property of Czech Jews during the war was held in Prague. In December a number of events were held in Prague to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Czech Jewish actor Hugo Haas, who died in 1969.

There were many initiatives taken to preserve Jewish heritage sites. In the late summer, the Czech Ministry of Culture nominated the former Jewish quarter in the Moravian town of Trebic for inclusion in UNESCO's list of world heritage sites. On September 5, after three years of reconstruction, the synagogue in the town of Polna opened as a regional Jewish museum. It included an exhibit on the so-called Hilsner affair, a blood-libel case that took place in Polna in 1899, when a 22-year-old Jew, Leopold Hilsner, was sentenced to death for the murder of a young woman amid accusations that he had killed her to use her blood for Jewish ritual purposes. He was pardoned in 1918 and died in Vienna. In June 2000 his newly restored grave was unveiled. In September Israeli ambassador Erella Hadar unveiled a memorial plaque to local Holocaust victims in the newly restored synagogue in Breclav. In October, after years of restoration work, the synagogue in Ledec opened as a Jewish museum, exhibition center, and memorial to the town's Jews. In November a new synagogue was dedicated within a Jewish cultural complex built on the site of the prewar synagogue in Liberec, which was destroyed in 1938 on Kristallnacht.

The writer Eduard Goldstücker, who also served as the first Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel, died in Prague in the autumn at the age of 87. Goldstücker was a prominent intellectual and champion of the work of Franz Kafka.

## *Hungary*

Jews were concerned throughout the year about what they perceived as far-right influence on the government, and a creeping, if ambiguous, form of political anti-Semitism. There was a perception among some observers that Prime Minister Viktor Orban welcomed parliamentary support from the notorious right-wing nationalist István Csurka and his Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), which had entered parliament in 1998 with about 5 percent of the vote and 14 seats in the 386-seat body. MIEP's newspaper, *Magyar Forum*, frequently ran articles that were patently anti-Semitic, even if they used code words and indirect references in place of the word "Jew."

On January 16 Budapest's St. Stephen's Basilica was almost filled for a mass organized by MIEP in memory of Laszlo Bardossy, the World War II prime minister who declared war on the Allies, instituted tough anti-Semitic legislation, and was executed for war crimes in 1946. Csurka and MIEP welcomed the entry of Jörg Haider's Freedom Party into the Austrian government and predicted that it would boost the far right in Hungary. On February 13 about 1,000 people demonstrated in support of Haider outside the Austrian embassy in a rally organized by MIEP's youth section. On the same day, however, President Árpád Goncz and

former Prime Minister Gyula Horn of the opposition Socialist Party joined an estimated 10,000 people at a rally denouncing fascism and hate-mongering. (Upon completion of his second term in August, the popular Goncz was succeeded as president by Ferenc Madl, a conservative legal scholar). Although Prime Minister Orbán and his government reacted coolly to Haider's success, Austrian foreign minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner visited Hungary soon after the new Austrian coalition came to power in February, and Orbán gave a warm welcome to Austrian prime minister Wolfgang Schäussel in Budapest in April.

In March the Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance criticized "latent anti-Semitism" in Hungarian society and some of its media, as well as the situation of Hungary's Roma population. It said that "elements in the parliament" were using overtly nationalist slogans, including some "coded" anti-Semitic and xenophobic statements. At a meeting of the executive committee of the European Jewish Congress held in Strasbourg in March, the executive director of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, Gusztav Zoltai, accused the Hungarian cabinet of not distancing itself from anti-Semitic groups. His implication, that anti-Semitism was becoming institutionalized in Hungary, was rejected by Prime Minister Orbán. In May a conference on the future of Jewry in Europe and promoting Christian-Jewish dialogue was held in Debrecen. Jozsef Torgyan, the minister of agriculture and development, told the conference that "there can be no Europe without Hungarians, and there can be no Hungarians without Jews," adding that incitement to hatred must be "stifled at [its] source" no matter whom it is directed against. In August Orbán sent a letter to Jewish leaders on the occasion of ceremonies marking Hungary's 1,000th anniversary. The letter said that Hungary needed "the contribution, the belief, and the spiritual and emotional strength of Hungarian Jewry." Still, Jewish leaders voiced their concern about the rise of far-right forces in Hungary to U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright when they met with her during her one-day trip to Hungary in December. Albright also visited the main Dohány Street Synagogue and paid tribute to the hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

As in other countries, there was concern over anti-Semitism and racism at soccer matches. Anti-Semitic taunts were aimed particularly at the soccer club MTK, which in the past had been owned by Jews. In the spring Foreign Ministry state secretary Zsolt Nemeth met with the Israeli ambassador and pledged to deal with the issue, and after the meeting the Foreign Ministry publicly called for a crackdown. Later, in May, the Central and East European office of the ADL sent a letter to Orbán urging the government to take strong legal measures against the offenders, saying that existing legislation had been applied "ineffectively or too leniently."

On April 16, the anniversary of the beginning of the deportation of the country's Jews in 1944, Hungary held its first Holocaust Remembrance Day. It was low-key, and one Hungarian Jewish journalist said it was "barely noticed" in the media. In May the American Jewish Committee released its analysis of how Hun-

garian high-school textbooks dealt with Jewish-related issues. There were, it turned out, scant references to Jews except as the forebears of Christianity and victims of the Holocaust. Even in regard to the Holocaust, none of the texts portrayed the magnitude of the slaughter, let alone the importance of Jews in pre-war Hungarian intellectual life, and some of the references to Jews were highly negative. In July UN secretary general Kofi Annan and his wife joined Budapest's mayor, diplomats, other dignitaries, and local Jews at a ceremony paying tribute to Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation in the last year of the war.

There were a number of reports of cemetery desecrations. In March the cemeteries in Tiszafured and Nagyatad were vandalized. In September vandals toppled more than a dozen tombstones in the Jewish cemetery in Szombathely. On November 2 some 30 tombstones were vandalized in Budapest's main Jewish cemetery. The damage was reportedly put at the equivalent of \$16,000. Christian groups expressed solidarity with Jews for the damage. At the same time, initiatives were begun to restore several synagogues, including the baroque synagogue in Mad, northern Hungary, which received financial support from the Hungarian government and from the World Monuments Fund's Jewish heritage program. In the fall the Hungarian and Israeli post offices collaborated in issuing stamps showing the Dohany Street Synagogue, with the Israeli stamp showing the interior and the Hungarian stamp the exterior. The government's recognition of the importance of Jewish heritage figured in an agreement regulating relations between the state and the Jewish community that was signed in December by Culture Minister Zoltan Rockenbauer and representatives of the Hungarian Federation of Jewish Communities. In this document, the government said it "highly appreciates" the traditions of the Jewish faith and the community's contribution to "the moral and intellectual progress" of Hungary, as well as its participation in Hungarian "freedom struggles," and promised to support efforts for the dissemination of knowledge about the Holocaust in educational institutions and to provide assistance for the preservation of Jewish memorial sites. The agreement was similar to accords concluded with the Calvinist, Lutheran, Baptist, and Serbian Orthodox communities in Hungary.

In February 48-year-old Yehudit Varnai-Sorer became the first woman and the first sabra (native-born Israeli) to serve as Israel's ambassador to Hungary. All three previous ambassadors were born in Hungary. Ms. Varnai-Sorer, the child of Hungarian parents, was fluent in Hungarian.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

Estimates of the number of Jews in Hungary ranged from 54,000 to 130,000, or even more. About 90 percent of Hungary's Jews lived in Budapest, the vast majority of them nonobservant, secular, disaffected, or totally unaffiliated. Only 6,000 or so were formally registered with the Jewish community, and about 20,000

had some sort of affiliation with Jewish organizations or institutions. Throughout the year the independent Jewish monthly *Szombat* wrote critically about the operation of Jewish communal bodies, reporting particularly on charges of autocratic leadership and suspected financial irregularities. Reports about personal and political feuding among both the lay and the religious leadership also circulated within the community.

The dominant religious affiliation was Neolog, similar to Conservative Judaism in the United States. There was a very small Orthodox community made up of both modern Orthodox and Hassidim. Neolog communities were grouped in the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary, while the Orthodox operated as the Autonomous Orthodox Community. Rabbi Jozsef Schweitzer, who was in his 80s, resigned as the Neolog chief rabbi in the fall. Sim Shalom, a 50-family Reform congregation established in Budapest in 1992, which functioned outside these official umbrella structures, associated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism and was led by a female rabbi. There was also an active Chabad-Lubavitch presence. Chabad ran a yeshivah and other educational programs, held Friday-night dinners for worshipers after services in its synagogue, and its newsletter went to what was reputed to be the largest Hungarian Jewish mailing list. Chabad rabbi Baruch Oberlander oversaw publication of a detailed Passover Haggadah with Hungarian translation, which included a "who's who" of the personalities quoted or mentioned in the Passover seder.

Three Jewish day schools and several kindergartens operated in Budapest. The city also had a rabbinical seminary and a teacher-training college, which together were called the Jewish University. Total enrollment in all these educational institutions was about 1,800. In late August some 350 young Jews from 32 countries took part in the annual summer university held by the European Union of Jewish Students, a weeklong program that took place in Budapest and at the JDC/Lauder Foundation Jewish camp at Szarvas, in southern Hungary. In November Budapest was the site of Arachim, a conference on Jewish education sponsored by the European Council of Jewish Communities, which drew more than 200 Jewish educators from all over Europe.

In the spring, the first results of an in-depth survey of Hungary's Jewish community, carried out in 1999, were made public. The survey, the first such study in any postcommunist state, was directed by Budapest sociologist Andras Kovács, and it aimed to provide the first full-scale postwar demographic portrait of the community, probing social, political, and religious attitudes, as well as lifestyle, identity, and behavioral patterns. The survey found that Hungary's Jews were well-educated, well-off, and well-integrated into the social mainstream, but highly ambivalent about their Jewish identity and rather detached from Jewish communal life. Though young Jews were trying to reconnect with Jewish traditions, memory of the Holocaust and anti-Semitic persecution appeared to be the most important factors, overall, in Hungarian Jews' sense of what it meant to be a Jew.

In June, Keren Hayesod had its 80th-anniversary convention in Budapest and

announced that it was reopening its offices there after a 60-year hiatus. Hungarian foreign minister Janos Martonyi, addressing the convention, said the government was "deeply ashamed" of Hungary's role in the Holocaust. He pledged to fight against "all sorts of anti-Semitism in whatever form it might appear." Jews, meanwhile, expressed anger at Hungary's Holocaust compensation law and demanded it be changed. The 1997 law mandated a payment of about \$100 for each parent killed in the Holocaust, and about \$16 for each sibling. This was in contrast to a 1992 law that provided about \$3,300 in compensation for relatives killed in the Stalinist show trials of the 1950s. By October more than 360 people had returned their payments in protest, and Jozsef Schweitzer, the Neolog chief rabbi, told a government representative that the Holocaust compensation law was "unlawful and discriminatory."

Also in October, after a trial lasting almost a year, Martha Nierenberg of Armonk, New York, was recognized as the rightful owner of artworks looted by Nazi SS commander Adolf Eichmann in 1944 from her grandfather, a wealthy Jewish baron and art collector. A Budapest court ruled that all but two of the 12 disputed paintings, which for decades had been displayed in Hungarian museums, should be returned to Nierenberg. In November the government said it would appeal the ruling.

There were numerous cultural events with Jewish themes throughout the year. An exhibition of paintings of Laszlo Feher, a Jewish painter, took place in March, and the third annual festival of Jewish culture, at the end of August, drew thousands of people to concerts, exhibitions, performances, and other events in Budapest and several other cities. Festival sponsors included the Budapest municipality, the Cultural Heritage Ministry, and an Israeli investor. Various local klezmer groups performed concerts and issued CDs, and in December there was a "klezmer and literature" concert in Budapest that combined music and readings, with Laszlo Fekete, the chief cantor at the Dohany Street Synagogue, performing with one of the local Budapest klezmer bands. The Balint Jewish Community Center sponsored a full roster of events, including lectures, concerts, classes, clubs, and performances.

Two major motion pictures addressed the theme of Hungarian Jewish identity. One, *Sunshine*, was directed by István Szabo and starred Ralph Fiennes. The film was an epic family saga showing how a Jewish family assimilates into Hungarian society over the course of a century. Fiennes himself portrayed three generations of the family: a Jewishly observant lawyer during the waning days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; his son, an Olympic fencing champion who converts to Catholicism but is killed by the Nazis; and his politically active grandson. *Sunshine* sparked a debate over the validity of assimilation and over Jewish/Hungarian identity. The other film, *Glamour*, recounted the story of the family of the director, Frigyes Gödrös. Meanwhile, filming began in Hungary on a documentary about the life of Carl Lutz, a Swiss diplomat instrumental in saving thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II.

## *Macedonia*

Macedonia's government was weak, plagued by corruption and internal conflict. Local elections in September were marred by ballot-stuffing, intimidation, and shoot-outs in which one person was killed and several injured. The voting was so chaotic that official results had not been released as the year ended. Simmering tensions between the large ethnic Albanian minority and the Slav majority also created problems. Ethnic Albanians made up 25–30 percent of the 2.5-million population.

About 200 Jews lived in Macedonia, virtually all of them in the capital, Skopje. In March Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski, other senior officials, religious leaders, and diplomats joined Macedonia's Jews for commemorative events marking the 57th anniversary of the deportation of more than 7,000 Macedonian Jews to Treblinka. Featured on the program were a gala concert by Cantor Joseph Malovany of New York and a Holocaust commemoration and Jewish history exhibition in the town of Bitola. The occasion also saw the inauguration of what was apparently the first new synagogue to be built in the Balkans since the end of World War II, called *Bet Yaakov*, located on the top floor of the Jewish community center in Skopje. Construction was funded primarily by the members of Congregation Beth Israel of Phoenix, Arizona. Rabbi Yitzhak Asiel, the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia, traveled from Belgrade to conduct the first synagogue services to be held in Skopje in half a century, and to affix a mezuzah to the door. Jews from neighboring Balkan countries and from Israel, the United States, and Canada also attended, as did U.S. ambassador Michael Einik and his Israeli-born wife. Two Torah scrolls, one donated by the Jewish community of Bulgaria and the other by the Pasadena Jewish Center and Temple in California, were placed in the new ark. Local television filmed the start of services.

Visiting Jewish representatives from a half-dozen Balkan countries took advantage of the Skopje events to meet together and discuss the possibility of founding a Southeastern Europe regional Jewish association. There were several key areas of common interest, including fighting assimilation, gaining access to resources through restitution and compensation, promoting cultural and religious education among a Jewish population that is mostly secular, and facilitating conversion—a vital problem in communities whose members were overwhelmingly partners in, or children of, mixed marriages.

Prime Minister Georgievski, in meetings with Macedonian Jewish leaders and visiting representatives of the JDC and the American Jewish Committee, renewed his pledge to finance construction of a Holocaust museum and educational center on the site of Skopje's former Jewish quarter. Macedonian Jews continued the work of the aid organization *Dobre Volje* (Good Will), founded in 1999. Closely coordinated with the JDC, it was dedicated to channeling nonsectarian humanitarian aid to Albanian, Serbian, and Romany (Gypsy) refugees who fled to Macedonia during and after the Kosovo conflict. In September young Jews

from Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Croatia, and Israel met in Bitola where, during a weeklong seminar called David 2000, they did restoration work on the Jewish cemetery.

### *Poland*

Aleksander Kwasniewski was decisively reelected president of Poland in October. During the campaign, several marginal candidates tried to exploit anti-Semitism, but they won little support. Still, events through the year demonstrated a continuing ambiguity in Polish attitudes toward Jews. There were many positive developments, including events commemorating the Holocaust and its victims, but there were also incidents that were, or were at least perceived to be, anti-Semitic, that also tended to focus on Holocaust memory.

Relations with Israel continued to expand. Israel's overall annual investment in the Polish market economy amounted to at least \$1 billion, and economic relations between the two countries grew, especially in the high-tech and agricultural sectors. In January the Israeli son of Polish Holocaust survivors opened an Israeli-Jewish restaurant, Warszawa-Jerozolima (Warsaw-Jerusalem), in the neighborhood that had been Warsaw's prewar Jewish quarter and the wartime Warsaw Ghetto. Israeli ambassador Yigal Antebi completed his tour of duty in the fall and was replaced by Shevach Weiss, a Holocaust survivor from Poland and former speaker of the Knesset. President Kwasniewski visited Israel in May. He held meetings with President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, where the topics included how to increase Poland's exports to Israel—then estimated at \$40 million—and to encourage more Israeli investment in Poland. He also discussed cooperation between the Polish and Israeli arms industries.

In June Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, 78, was appointed foreign minister. An Auschwitz survivor, designated "Righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem for saving Jews during the Holocaust, and chairman of the Poland-Israel Friendship Association, Bartoszewski replaced the highly respected Bronislaw Geremek (who was of Jewish origin) after members of Geremek's Freedom Union party pulled out of the ruling coalition. The next month Bartoszewski appointed Wojciech Adamiecki, a journalist and former Polish ambassador to Israel, to be the new ambassador to the Jewish Diaspora in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accompanied by some of Poland's Jewish leaders, Bartoszewski visited Israel in early December to mark the tenth anniversary of the restoration of full diplomatic relations between Israel and Poland.

In January Marek Edelman, the only surviving leader of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and a longtime human rights activist, was named 1999 Man of the Year in the central Polish city Lodz, where he lives. In March, however, vandals scrawled anti-Semitic slogans on the walls of Edelman's home there and also on the local synagogue. Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek and President Kwasniewski sent strong letters of support and apology to Edelman, and the Polish media ex-

pressed indignation. The vandalism occurred just after thousands of volunteers in Lodz, in a day-long initiative dubbed "Action Colorful Tolerance," cleaned up city walls that had long been defaced by racist and anti-Semitic graffiti. Cosponsored by the newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the cleanup involved thousands of volunteers, including city authorities, the Union of Jewish Students, the Catholic Youth Association, and other groups. Lodz was, in fact, infamous for its anti-Semitic graffiti, much of it, as in several other countries, scrawled by fanatical local soccer fans, sometimes linked to skinhead groups, and directed against opposing teams. In April Prime Minister Buzek marked the 57th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising by paying public tribute to the "heroic struggle."

In April leaders of the Open Republic Association Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia met with Buzek, who promised to crack down on anti-Semitic publications that were being sold openly at Polish newsstands. These included the periodical *Teraz Polska*, edited by Leszek Bubel, who was well known for his anti-Semitic views and was an associate of Kazimierz Switon, the anti-Semitic extremist who was behind the movement to set up crosses at the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in 1998–99. An opinion poll published in the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* in July showed that three-quarters of Polish citizens favored some sort of punishment for anti-Semitic activities.

A number of such cases came up during the year. In January a court in Oświęcim (Auschwitz) fined Switon the equivalent of \$98 and gave him a six-month suspended sentence—provided that he committed no other similar crime over the next two years—for inciting hatred toward Jews and others by rallying supporters to erect the hundreds of crosses. In June an appeals court upheld the conviction but reduced the six-month suspended term to a fine of \$313, and then forgave the fine. In February the senate of the Catholic University in Lublin initiated disciplinary procedures against Professor Ryszard Bender, who, in January, had said, on the radical Catholic station Radio Maryja, that Auschwitz was not a death camp but a labor camp for Jews and others. In April the state-run University of Opole fired Dariusz Ratajczak, a professor who was tried but not punished in 1999 for spreading Holocaust revisionism, and he was banned from teaching elsewhere in Poland for three years. The university said that Ratajczak had violated ethical standards with the publication of his book *Dangerous Topics*, which took a sympathetic approach toward published material that denied the Holocaust. Ratajczak, 37, said he would appeal the decision. On November 11 about 400 extremists, including many skinheads, staged a demonstration in Katowice during which they chanted anti-Semitic slogans and burned the EU and Israeli flags.

On the other hand, there were many attempts to promote dialogue between Catholics and Jews. In January Poland's Roman Catholic Church marked its third annual Day of Judaism. Leaders of the Polish Jewish community joined Catholic priests and scholars for discussions, lectures, conferences, and other activities in several major cities. In June the Polish Council of Christians and Jews

presented its Figure of Reconciliation award to a German priest, Rev. Manfred Deselaers, who lived for the previous decade near Auschwitz, where he fostered programs aimed at dialogue among Jews, Christian Poles, and Germans. At an outdoor Mass in Warsaw, in May, celebrating two millennia of Christianity, the Polish Roman Catholic primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, apologized for lingering anti-Semitism among Polish priests. Then in August, Polish bishops issued a sweeping letter, read out in parishes around the country, asking forgiveness for the Catholic Church's toleration of anti-Semitism and other forms of religious discrimination. The bishops' letter acknowledged that some Poles were guilty of indifference and even enmity toward Jews during the Holocaust. This series of apologies was part of the Catholic Church's millennium-year agenda of self-examination, apology, and penitence, and the bishops' letter in particular was seen as going further than a similar letter they had issued in 1991. There had apparently been intense debate within the hierarchy over the new letter, with some viewing it as unnecessary and others feeling that it did not go far enough. In August, for example, Father Stanislaw Musial, a leading Polish Jesuit, wrote a series of articles in *Gazeta Wyborcza* urging the removal of eight 18th-century paintings from churches in Sandomierz that portrayed the blood-libel accusation.

The official apologies were followed by a number of public events. At an interfaith ceremony in Lublin in September, Jews—some of them Holocaust survivors—and Catholics planted grapevines in shared soil. Lublin was also the site of an interfaith conference in November, at which the city's Catholic University granted an honorary degree to Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff. An impressive commemoration ceremony was held at the site of the Majdanek death camp, near Lublin. Guests included 5,000 local schoolchildren and representatives of five religious denominations—Jews, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Protestants, and Muslims—who offered prayers. As part of the ceremony, all participants left fingertip marks on clay that was mixed with soil from the camp. In the fall, the influential daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* published a Polish translation of "Dabru Emet," a statement by leading Jewish thinkers on Christians and Christianity, along with a commentary by Stanislaw Krajewski, a Polish Jewish leader involved in interfaith activities.

A new and very emotional debate over Poland's role in the Holocaust was sparked by the publication, in Polish, of *Neighbors*, by Jan T. Gross, a Polish-born American scholar with Jewish roots. The book described the massacre of 1,600 Jews in the village of Jedwabne by local Poles on June 10, 1941. According to Gross's reconstruction of the events, the Jews were first clubbed and stoned, and those still alive were forced into a barn that was set on fire. At the time, the town was under German occupation, but the Germans did not take part in the massacre. During the period of Communist rule in Poland, the massacre was blamed on Nazi collaborators, and a plaque to that effect was erected. The book had an immediate impact. On July 10, 2000, the anniversary of the massacre, local authorities in Jedwabne for the first time laid wreaths at the site of the massacre.

There was considerable public debate and much media attention, and production was underway on a film about the Jedwabne affair.

In November, in the first such case in more than 25 years, a Polish man identified only as 77-year-old Henry M. was charged in Poznan of collaborating with the Nazis in carrying out genocide at the Chelmno death camp.

Auschwitz was in the news throughout the year. In early January the German government pledged \$5 million for the upkeep of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial museum. On January 27 President Kwasniewski took part in official ceremonies marking the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and prayers were recited by representatives of Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Afterwards, Kwasniewski and a Buddhist teacher from New York who initiated the project, Bernard Glassman, inaugurated a hospice for the terminally ill in Oświęcim. There was also a concert in an Oświęcim church by a 100-person choir from a Catholic school in Berlin.

In May Kwasniewski and Israeli president Weizman led 6,000 participants in the annual March of the Living in their walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau. The next day some of the teenagers from around the world participating in the march were taunted by youths when they visited Majdanek. Prime Minister Buzek apologized for the incident and for the fact that anti-Semitic graffiti were visible near Majdanek. This year there was an effort to broaden the scope of the March of the Living and show the positive developments that had occurred in Poland since the fall of Communism, including the revival of Jewish life. For the first time, there were non-Jewish participants—some 800, including about 750 Poles.

During the summer, a furor erupted over the establishment of a discotheque in a building about a mile from the Auschwitz death camp, on the site of a former tannery where slave laborers from Auschwitz worked and died. Protests came from Jewish and survivor groups, as well as from the Polish government, which urged the disco to relocate even though it was not situated within an officially "protected" zone where activities that could be offensive to the memory of victims are prohibited. This disco controversy was just the latest of several similar conflicts over the commercial use of sites associated with Holocaust suffering. In August Poland's Ministry of Internal Affairs lifted a ban on building a controversial shopping center across the street from the Auschwitz camp. The president of the company developing the project was quoted as saying that plans for the center would be changed so that it would now serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of people who visited Auschwitz each year.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center—a place for prayer and study honoring Jewish life—opened in the reconstructed synagogue of Oświęcim in September. Prince Hassan of Jordan joined Polish, U.S., and Israeli officials, Roman Catholic clergy, Holocaust survivors, and local Jews in an emotional dedication ceremony. Besides facilities for prayer and study, the \$10-million complex included educational and exhibition facilities. Encompassing Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot, the only surviving synagogue in the town, the center would be the only active Jewish institution

in the Auschwitz area. The project was conceived and sponsored by the New York-based Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation, established in 1995 by philanthropist and businessman Fred Schwartz. Participants in the inaugural ceremony paid tribute to Shimshon Kluger, the last Jew living in Oświęcim, who died in the spring at the age of 72. Kluger was given a halakhic funeral and was buried in Oświęcim's Jewish cemetery by Rabbi Sasha Pecaric, the Lauder Foundation director in Kraków, aided by 34 high-school students from the Ramaz School in New York City who happened to be in Poland on a Holocaust-and-Jewish-heritage educational tour.

In September President Kwasniewski awarded the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the highest honor the nation could give to a noncitizen, to Michael Lewan, chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, for his contributions to cultural understanding among Poles, Jews, and Americans. Lewan was a Roman Catholic with Polish roots, and the commission he chaired played a major role in documenting, restoring, and preserving sites in Eastern and Central Europe that were important to Americans, including old Jewish cemeteries. Kwasniewski said: "The Jewish people for many long centuries found hospitality on Polish land. It is our wish that material proof of the centuries-old community of our history be maintained. We desire that places of the martyrdom of the Jews be the subject of care and respect, that the memory of the tragedy they encountered be a warning to all."

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

Estimates of the number of Jews in Poland ranged widely, from the 7,000–8,000 officially registered with the community or receiving aid from the JDC, to the 10,000–15,000 people of Jewish ancestry who showed interest in rediscovering their heritage, to as many as 30,000–40,000 people thought to have some Jewish ancestry. The Web site [www.jewish.org.pl](http://www.jewish.org.pl) provided extensive information on the Jewish community in Poland. The Lauder Foundation ran the country's most extensive Jewish educational programs, and the JDC, which provided social welfare aid, continued to refocus its activities on education and leadership training. Rabbi Michael Schudrich, an American who had directed the Lauder Foundation's activities in Poland for nearly a decade before returning to the United States in 1998, was hired as rabbi of the Warsaw Jewish community in the summer. He divided his time between New York and Warsaw, and provided his own funding. The fact that he spent only part of his time in Warsaw was regarded by some as a potential problem.

Internal divisions continued to plague the reviving Jewish community. Beside the religious/secular and Orthodox/liberal tensions, there was also competition among the numerous Jewish organizations, some of which did not belong to the community's umbrella body, the Union of Jewish Congregations in Poland. The

status of the Jewish community in Gdansk continued to be a source of problems. Jakub Szadaj, the former chairman, had been accused of financial irregularities by the Union of Polish Jewish Communities and stripped of his position in 1999. In 2000 he broke away and, after obtaining the requisite 100+ signatures, registered his own rival Independent Union of Jewish Communities, based in Gdansk. Szadaj also remained president of the local chapter of the Social-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKZ), a nationwide secular body. Some speculated that Szadaj had set up his own organization in order to obtain restituted properties, which, by law, can only be returned to Polish Jewish communal bodies. At the end of the year the influential daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article highly critical of Szadaj's methods.

During the summer and early fall a group of Polish and American expatriate Jews in Warsaw formed a liberal group, Beit Warszawa, outside the established Jewish structures. Composed mainly of businesspeople and professionals, the group held monthly Friday evening services in private homes. For the High Holy Days the group brought over Rabbi Cynthia Culpepper from the United States to lead services in a rented theater and to conduct study sessions. This was believed to be the first time that a woman rabbi had ever led High Holy Day services in Poland. Also, for the first High Holy Day season in decades, Jews in Warsaw had a choice of services to attend—the liberal Beit Warszawa services, which drew more than 100 people, or Orthodox services in the Nozyk synagogue, led by Rabbi Schudrich, where the 200-seat sanctuary was filled for evening prayers. The formation of Beit Warszawa caused some initial friction with the established religious community, but the two groups soon began working together on some matters. Beit Warszawa also established contacts with Beit Praha, a similar group in Prague that had been founded several years earlier.

Several milestones of both a communal and personal nature took place during the year. In February a Polish chapter of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists was launched in Warsaw. The sons of two pioneers of the Jewish revival in Poland each became bar mitzvah in the Nozyk synagogue in Warsaw—Gabriel Krajewski, son of mathematician Stanislaw Krajewski, in January, and Szymek Gebert, son of journalist Konstanty Gebert, in November. These lifecycle events symbolized the continuity of the renewed Jewish community, since the two fathers were among the first Jews of the postwar generation to rediscover their Jewish identity. In the late 1970s and early 1980s they were part of the so-called Flying Jewish University, a group of young people who essentially taught themselves Judaism. Since then they have become respected leaders of Poland's Jewish community. At the end of October the daughter of Yale Reisner and Helise Lieberman was bat mitzvah in Warsaw. Both parents worked for the Lauder Foundation, Reisner running its genealogy project and Lieberman serving as principal of the Jewish school in Warsaw, which has an enrollment of over 160. Two Jewish weddings were celebrated during the winter educational retreat sponsored by the Lauder Foundation near Warsaw.

Then in July, the first wedding in a quarter-century took place in the partly restored White Stork synagogue in Wrocław, when two Americans got married there. With about 750 Jews, Wrocław was the second largest Jewish community in Poland, after Warsaw, and it saw the event as a symbol of renewed Jewish life. The couple getting married, journalists who made a documentary film about the Jewish revival in Poland, brought their own Conservative rabbi from New Jersey to perform the ceremony. Local media gave the story extensive coverage.

As in previous years, a great variety of cultural events with Jewish themes took place—scholarly and educational sessions, conferences, performances, and exhibitions. Not only did the annual summer festival of Jewish culture take place in July, but the Jewish Culture Center in Warsaw also sponsored a full roster of events each month, including concerts, readings, and exhibits. Among the most notable were a conference on “The Polish Church and Battling Anti-Semitism: An Exchange of American and Polish Experiences” in June, and an exhibit, in September, of monotype prints of Jewish cemeteries and abandoned synagogues by the American artist Shirley Moskowitz. The annual month-long Bajit Chadasz series of events, organized in cooperation with the Italian Culture Institute and the Goethe Institute in Kraków, was held in October. On September 14 city authorities in Kielce, site of an infamous postwar pogrom, sponsored a conference on the event, with members of the Kielce *landsmanschaft* (organization of Jews hailing from Kielce) in Israel participating, along with local journalists and academics. About 500 people attended. Also in September, at a ceremony in Warsaw attended by several high-ranking political figures, Professor Moshe Rosman of Israel’s Bar-Ilan University was awarded the Milewski Prize by Poland’s Jerzy Milewski Foundation in recognition of his scholarly work on Polish Jewish history. The foundation, which backs liberal social and political initiatives, was also to cosponsor the Polish translation and publication of Rosman’s book, *The Lord’s Jews*. That same month the Ringelblum Archives—the underground archives of the wartime Warsaw Ghetto—were sent to Germany to be exhibited at the Frankfurt Jewish Museum. Warsaw held its third annual Jewish book fair in October. In November the Lauder Foundation organized what it said was Warsaw’s first postwar Jewish women’s seminar, featuring lectures, workshops, meetings, panel discussions, and study sessions. The city hosted a scholarly conference on the Jews of Warsaw in December.

There were a number of developments regarding the interrelated issues of property restitution and preservation of Jewish heritage sites. After many months of sometimes bitter negotiations between the Polish Jewish community and the World Jewish Restitution Organization as to how to divide up reclaimed property and/or compensation payments, an agreement was reached in June to establish a joint foundation to submit the formal applications to the Polish government for restitution of Jewish communal property and for the authority to manage returned property and proceeds. Estimates of the number of properties that might

be subject to restitution ranged from 2,000 to 6,000. The deadline for submitting claims was May 2002.

In July, at the close of the annual Kraków festival of Jewish culture, the Israeli embassy honored seven Polish gentiles for their volunteer work in caring for and preserving the Polish Jewish heritage. This was the third year that such awards were presented. Also in Kraków, after nearly a decade, work was completed on the full-scale restoration of the 19th-century Tempel Synagogue. During the summer, a priest in the village of Krasieczyn organized young people to clean up the abandoned Jewish cemetery. When the work was done, Catholic and Orthodox clergy attended a memorial ceremony at the site where a rabbi recited kaddish. Jan Karski—the World War II resistance hero who risked his life to bring eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust to the West and remained a powerful moral voice for postwar Poles—died in Washington on July 13, at the age of 86. In Warsaw, Polish Jews held a memorial ceremony in the Nozyk Synagogue attended by some 200 people, including representatives of the government and the Roman Catholic Church. Rabbi Chaskiel Besser, the New York-based director of Central European programs for the Lauder Foundation, praised Karski's courage and moral integrity, and recounted their decades of friendship. Karski had requested in his will that Rabbi Besser say kaddish over his grave.

Scholar Maurycy Horn, a former director of the Jewish Historical Institute, died in Warsaw in November, aged 83.

### *Romania*

Romania began accession talks with the EU in 2000, but was the poorest of the 12 candidates. Some 44 percent of the population lived on an average of \$4.30 a day, with many subsisting on much less. The annual inflation rate was over 40 percent, the highest in East-Central Europe.

President Emil Constantinescu visited Israel at the beginning of January, where he publicly suggested that Romania, Israel, and Turkey set up a "strategic partnership." Constantinescu raised with Israeli authorities the complaints he had received from some of the 50,000 Romanians working in Israel about discrimination and poor living conditions. He also met with Israeli businessmen. During a visit to Yad Vashem, the Romanian president expressed "profound regret" for Jewish suffering in Romania during World War II under the regime of Ion Antonescu. He denied, however, that anti-Semitism played any significant role in contemporary Romania, saying it was an "isolated and marginalized" phenomenon. He admitted, though, that certain Romanian factions, such as Corneliu Vadim Tudor's Greater Romania Party, had adopted anti-Semitic positions, and that other political groups "openly or covertly collaborate with [such parties] out of electoral considerations or considerations linked with the struggle for power." During his visit Constantinescu also met in Bethlehem with Yasir Arafat, invited him to visit Romania, and agreed to examine ways of increasing cooperation with

the Palestinian Authority. In Jericho he met with Patriarch Teoctist of the Orthodox Church. Together they laid the cornerstone of a Romanian religious establishment and joined representatives from 14 Orthodox churches for celebrations marking the 2,000th anniversary of Christianity. Defense Minister Victor Babiuc, who accompanied the president, met with Ephraim Sneh, Israel's deputy defense minister, and the two agreed to boost military cooperation between their countries.

Despite Constantinescu's disavowal of anti-Semitism and of the Antonescu regime there were a number of attempts during the year to honor or rehabilitate Antonescu and other wartime leaders, and these caused great concern. In January the Supreme Court of Justice rehabilitated Netta Gheron, who had served as finance minister in Antonescu's government and was jailed by the postwar Communist regime for "crimes against peace." Municipal authorities in Cluj began construction in March for a planned statue of Antonescu. In April Romanian Jewish leaders called on the government to act against the revival by extremists of the wartime fascist movement known as the Legionaires. In June the Iasi branch of the Union of War Veterans unveiled a statue of Antonescu in the town's military cemetery.

There were several reported episodes of anti-Semitism. In February vandals daubed swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti on city walls and trams in Timisoara, apparently in connection with the entry of the Freedom Party into the Austrian government. In May a Bucharest court gave journalist Mihai Bogdan Antonescu nothing more than a two-year suspended prison sentence for "nationalist propaganda," including anti-Semitic articles. Matters came to a head in the fall elections. Economic and social instability as well as widespread corruption and political bickering led to the stunning defeat of the centrist government that had held power since 1996. In the first round of the presidential election, the extreme nationalist Corneliu Vadim Tudor, leader of the Greater Romania Party, came in second to Ion Iliescu, a former Communist who had served as Romania's president in 1990-96. Before the two faced each other in a run-off, the Romanian Jewish Federation issued a statement saying that Tudor had been "a staunch enemy of the Jews" in Romania for many years and had repeatedly expressed anti-Semitism. The statement also condemned Tudor's "aggressive stance" against other minorities, the Hungarian and Roma ethnic groups. Though Iliescu scored a two-to-one victory over Tudor in the second round, the strength of support for Tudor and the Greater Romania Party caused widespread alarm: that party, having garnered about 20 percent of the vote, was now the second largest in Parliament.

A serious anti-Semitic incident took place at the end of December when two men smashed windows, threw objects, and punched and choked a guard at the Jewish Museum in Bucharest. The intruders demanded to know where there was "soap made of human fat." To dramatize the seriousness of anti-Jewish feeling in the country, Canadian-Israeli documentary filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici, in

December, placed an unauthorized plaque commemorating Holocaust victims on a wall at the police station in Iasi. He charged that Holocaust denial in Romania had come to represent mainstream opinion.

#### JEWISH COMMUNITY

Between 11,000 and 16,000 Jews were believed to be living in Romania, about half of them in the capital, Bucharest. Most Romanian Jews were elderly. Only about 800 were between the ages of 15 and 35. Educational, religious, and welfare programs were carried out by the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities (FEDROM), which was funded by the JDC. The Lauder Foundation ran the Lauder Reut Kindergarten and Lower School in Bucharest. The Jewish publishing house HaSefer issued books on Jewish themes, and a biweekly Jewish newspaper, *Realitatea Evreiasca*, included pages in Hebrew and English as well as Romanian. In October the Moshe Carmilly Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj held its annual conference on Jewish studies. The director of the institute, Ladislau Gyemant, was also serving as coordinator for a comprehensive inventory of Jewish cemeteries in Romania, being carried out under the auspices of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The year 2000 brought the implementation of an ambitious and unprecedented program of Jewish outreach and leadership development, a dramatic change in communal policy. Approved by FEDROM at the end of 1999, the program entailed revamping the educational system, developing a network of youth clubs and activities for children, and reaching out to unaffiliated adults, particularly those of the so-called "middle generation." For decades the pattern of Jewish life in Romania had been to encourage young people to immigrate to Israel and, with the support of the JDC, to make sure that the elderly who stayed behind lived out their lives in dignity. Even after the fall of Communism, little had been done to break this pattern.

By August youth clubs had been established in seven Romanian cities, and, in October, 81 young people from 25 Jewish communities took part in the first seminar to train youth-club leaders and activists so that they might plan and execute programs. In the fall members of the newly created Jewish Youth Organization (OTER) published their own siddur in Hebrew, Hebrew transliterated, and Romanian, also including annotations and teaching instructions for prayers and holiday observances. OTER also began the publication of a newspaper for youth. Jewish Education through the Mail (JEM) courses also proved popular, as more than 400 Jews, mostly young people, in 37 cities and towns signed up for long-distance study. Yosef Hirsch, a young American serving as a JDC volunteer in Romania, designed the courses, and Hirsch also compiled a database of names and contact numbers of young Romanian Jews. In addition, Jodi Guralnick, the JDC Ralph Goldman Fellow in Romania for 1999–2000, carried out

an unprecedented survey of the “missing middle generation” of Romanian Jews to ascertain numbers, attitudes, and potential for community involvement and leadership training.

### *Slovakia*

At the International Conference on the Holocaust held in Stockholm in January, President Rudolf Schuster of Slovakia condemned the pro-Nazi government of the wartime independent Slovak state, led by Father Jozef Tiso. In February Schuster became the first Slovak head-of-state ever to visit Israel, going on a four-day trip. Emerging from Yad Vashem, he apologized for Slovakia's role during the Holocaust and called for changes in the Slovak school curriculum so that young people might learn about that “dark chapter” of their country's history. He called for September 9—the anniversary of the date on which the wartime Slovak government introduced anti-Semitic legislation—to be declared the annual Holocaust memorial day in Slovakia. This was approved later in the year. While in Israel Schuster praised the Jewish state's decision to withdraw its ambassador from Vienna in protest of the Freedom Party's entry into the Austrian government, and urged Israel to relocate its regional embassy to the Slovak capital. In Bratislava, however, the extremist Slovak National Party congratulated Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider and Austrian chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel. The mainstream Christian Democratic Party congratulated only Schüssel.

In February and early March controversy erupted over a decision by the municipal council of the town of Zilina to erect a plaque honoring Tiso. Zilina's plan to unveil the plaque on March 14, the 61st anniversary of the establishment of the wartime puppet state, was spearheaded by Mayor Jan Slota, leader of the Slovak National Party, which supported the rehabilitation of Tiso and regarded him as a national hero. Following protests by Slovak government leaders and Jewish groups at home and abroad, plans for the plaque were canceled. Still, about 200 pro-Tiso demonstrators gathered outside the presidential palace in Bratislava on March 14 to mark the anniversary. In August the Slovak National Bank reversed an earlier decision to issue a commemorative coin honoring children's author Ludo Ondrejov. The reversal was due to Ondrejov's “aryanization” activities during World War II. In the autumn Jews protested the Vatican's plan to canonize an anticommunist Slovak bishop, Jan Vojtassak, who died in 1965. Vojtassak was jailed for 13 years after a Communist purge of church officials in 1950. But five Israeli historians said, in October, that they had found evidence that Vojtassak had been vice chairman of the pro-Nazi Slovak State Council in 1942, when the council agreed to deport thousands of Slovak Jews. In December the first Slovak translation of *Mein Kampf* went on sale. Some 5,000 copies were printed. The translation included a 30-page commentary stressing the book's racism, anti-Semitism, and violent nature. Even so, the Slovak Jewish community and the deputy premier in charge of human rights criticized the publication.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

Fewer than 4,000 Jews were believed to be living in Slovakia. The main communities were the capital city of Bratislava and Košice, in eastern Slovakia, each with about 500 Jews. As in other postcommunist states, Jewish life had flowered after the fall of communism, with regular classes and clubs, seminars, cultural events, and other activities, including a kindergarten and an annual two-week summer camp in Bratislava cosponsored by the Lauder Foundation and Chabad. The Federation of Jewish Communities ran a kosher restaurant and a pension, *Chez David*, in Bratislava, plus the Jewish old-age home *Ohel David*, and a Holocaust-documentation center. There were Jewish museums in Bratislava and Presov and an Institute of Jewish Studies in Bratislava. Košice also had a kosher restaurant, Jewish clubs, and other activities. In October, there was a weeklong series of cultural events in Bratislava devoted to Prague-born Jewish writer Franz Kafka, organized by the Czech Center, the Goethe Institute, the Austrian Culture Center, and the Museum of Jewish Culture in Slovakia.

The Ester Association, a local affiliate of the International Council of Jewish Women, was active in Košice. In September it organized a three-day meeting of women from the postcommunist nations of Europe. After a memorial service at the Jewish cemetery, there was a solemn Holocaust commemoration in Košice's state theater, held under the auspices of President Schuster, a former mayor of the city. There was a concert as well as personal testimony by Jews from several countries. The event coincided with the European Day of Jewish Culture, September 3, when hundreds of Jewish-heritage sites in 16 countries across the continent were opened to the public in order to promote knowledge of Jewish culture and tradition, and it reflected President Schuster's desire to make September 9 Holocaust memorial day in Slovakia.

Jewish community headquarters in Bratislava inaugurated a new kosher kitchen and dining room in 2000 that served hot lunches every day and provided meals-on-wheels to homebound members. Rabbi Baruch Myers, an American-born adherent of Chabad, served the religious needs of Bratislava Jews. Jewish holidays were celebrated with communal events, some of which drew well over 100 people. On the holiday of Lag b'Omer, in May, some 75 people joined Myers on an hour-long boat ride on the Danube with refreshments, some teaching, and entertainment. During the year, *mohelim* were brought in from abroad to perform circumcisions. In January a spacious new Jewish-education center opened in Bratislava, under Chabad auspices. It was not officially inaugurated, however, till December, with a ceremony attended by local Jews, government figures, and representatives of international Jewish organizations.

Rabbi Myers's strict Orthodoxy was not in tune with large sectors of this primarily secular, liberal community. Also, the implicit contradiction between his position as rabbi of the entire community and his role as *shaliach* (representative) of the Chabad movement raised concern. A key issue was Myers's insistence on

the Halakhah as the standard for Jewish identity, and his reluctance to facilitate conversions to Judaism. His stand on this matter evoked complaints in a community whose members included many mixed-married families as well as children of mixed marriages who had long considered themselves Jewish. Children of non-Jewish mothers, for example, were excluded from the kindergarten, so that the kindergarten had only nine pupils.

In mid-March the 22nd annual International Conference of European Rabbis took place in Bratislava. It was originally to have taken place in Vienna, but the venue was changed to protest the entry of the Freedom Party into the Austrian government. President Schuster and Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda attended the opening reception.

In June unidentified vandals desecrated the Jewish cemetery in the town of Dunajska Streda. During the summer 40 young people from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Israel went to work restoring one of Slovakia's oldest Jewish cemeteries, in Nitrianske Rudno. The project was part of the annual summer camp run by the Slovak Union of Jewish Youth. In October Slovak Jews sued Germany for the return of funds paid by Slovakia's wartime fascist government to cover the costs of deporting nearly 58,000 Slovakian Jews in 1942. The Slovak regime, the only Nazi puppet state to have made such payments, gave Germany 500 marks for each Jew deported.

### *Yugoslavia*

The ouster of strongman Slobodan Milosevic marked a political revolution in Yugoslavia. Milosevic lost the September 24 election to opposition leader Vojislav Kostunica, but refused to accept the results. Only after hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters marched on Belgrade and stormed parliament on October 5 did Milosevic finally concede defeat. Kostunica initiated democratic changes aimed at ending Yugoslavia's isolation and dire economic situation. In December Kostunica's supporters crushed Milosevic forces in elections for the Serbian parliament.

Yugoslavia's 3,000 Jews, about half of whom lived in Belgrade, were highly integrated into the broader society, mostly secular, and, often, intermarried. Jews welcomed the ouster of Milosevic, and many took part—as individuals—in the street demonstrations. However the Federation of Jewish Communities, the Jewish umbrella organization, had maintained an official policy of political neutrality throughout the Milosevic regime. Although this neutrality was intended to prevent political manipulation or exploitation and to stress the federation's non-political nature, some Jews feared that neutrality in the face of Milosevic's policies might be interpreted as *de facto* acquiescence. In fact the 200-member Jewish community in Subotica, the country's third largest Jewish community, attempted to demonstrate opposition to Milosevic through nonpolitical means, contributing to the nonsectarian humanitarian organization *La Benevolencija*, which was

modeled on the organization of the same name in Sarajevo, and aiding Roma (Gypsies) and other refugees, particularly in Montenegro.

The JDC distributed medication and aid packages, and opened soup kitchens in Belgrade and six other Jewish communities which served a total of more than 700 hot lunches a day, five days a week. The economic crisis jeopardized the community's social-welfare programs. In October suppliers for soup kitchens in several towns said that without financial assistance they could no longer provide meals at prices low enough to be covered by local Jewish-community budgets, and Jewish leaders said the communities might need emergency financial aid on a long-term basis.

A crisis of leadership marked by personal and political infighting affected the Jewish community. The unexpected death from cancer in May of Misha David, vice president of the Federation of Jewish Communities, was a particularly hard blow. David, who was in his late 50s and was regarded as one of the few members of the "younger" generation capable of taking on the job, had been expected to replace 78-year-old Aca Singer as president of the federation. Meanwhile, the Jewish community was hit by a general Yugoslav brain drain: an estimated 300–400 Jews left Yugoslavia in 1999–2000 in the wake of the Kosovo conflict and the NATO bombing, including many, if not most, of the student-age and young-adult generation.

Religious observance was important to only a minority of Yugoslav Jews, and, indeed, the federation officially defined itself as an "ethnic-religious" organization. Rabbi Yitzhak Asiel, who was Orthodox, focused his attention on strengthening religious involvement. He attempted to raise private funds to build a *mikveh* (ritual bath) and a kosher kitchen, and to publish Jewish religious texts.

The federation and local Jewish communities maintained a wide program of cultural and communal activities, which were reported in the monthly *Bilten* newsletter. Jews from Yugoslavia took part in the meeting of Jews from all parts of former Yugoslavia that was held in Brac, Croatia, during the summer.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

## Former Soviet Union

### *National Affairs*

**W**HEN BORIS YELTSIN resigned as president of Russia on December 31, 1999, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin became acting president, pending a new election scheduled for March 26, 2000. Yeltsin left the country almost immediately for a vacation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The visit was described as private, but Israelis and Palestinians treated Yeltsin as a head of state. Putin, meanwhile, as acting president, immediately began replacing the presidential staff, including Pavel Borodin, chief of the Kremlin property management office, and Yuri Skuratov, who, as prosecutor-general, had investigated corruption in the Kremlin.

The presidential campaign began early in the year, with Putin the heavy favorite in an 11-candidate field. Putin won with 53 percent of the vote, averting the need for a run-off with the second-place candidate, the Communist Gennady Zyuganov, who got 29 percent. Grigory Yavlinsky of the Yabloko party won 6 percent, and no other candidate registered more than 3 percent. Whereas Yeltsin, in the previous election, had carried only 57 of the 89 Russian regions, Putin won a majority in all but six regions. Twice during the campaign, state television (ORT) intervened in ways that cast Jews in a negative light. First, it broadcast the charge that Yavlinsky, the leading liberal candidate, was backed by Jews, homosexuals, and foreigners. Then, it showed Vladimir Gusinsky, a wealthy Russian Jewish "oligarch" during the Yeltsin years and now a supporter of Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov for the presidency, attending a banquet with Hassidim who were dressed in their traditional garb.

On May 7 Vladimir Putin was inaugurated as president. He appointed Mikhail Kasyanov, a liberal economist and former deputy prime minister under Putin, as his prime minister. Over the course of the year Putin's plans for Russia's future remained unclear. Some of the government's statements gave the impression of wanting to raise Russia's international visibility and enhance its role in world affairs. Prime examples of this were the announcement that Russia would consider first use of nuclear weapons if attacked by large-scale conventional forces, and a declaration that Russia would increase spending for weapons procurement by 50 percent. However there seemed to be no program to deal with the nation's enormous economic problems.

Putin did appear determined to control the mass media more tightly than had been done during the Yeltsin regime. On January 5, 2000, Putin signed a decree granting the FSB (the federal security service, successor to the KGB) authority

to monitor e-mail and Internet usage. Andrei Babitsky, a reporter for Radio Liberty working in Chechnya, was arrested by Russian forces and then handed over to unidentified Chechen forces. When Babitsky was finally released in March, Putin sharply rebuked him for having reported on alleged Russian atrocities in Chechnya. In June the Federal Security Council approved a new "information doctrine" which warned the media not to "pose a threat to national security." The Duma (lower house of parliament) also approved a law granting the head of state the right to introduce a state of emergency at will. This included the power to close down political parties and censor the media, with approval by the Duma.

The new president moved vigorously to establish central authority in Russia's 89 regions. Putin's followers in the Duma could have formed a coalition without backing from the Communists, who constituted the largest single party in that body. Putin, however, masterminded a deal with the Communists whereby his supporters backed Gennady Seleznyov, a Communist, for reelection as speaker of the Duma, and divided the important committee chairmanships with the Communists. As a result, there was little opposition to the new regime's centralization program.

Under Yeltsin, the autonomous powers of the 89 regional governments had often made it difficult to run the country. Putin now, by presidential decree, consolidated the 89 regions into seven new administrative districts to be overseen by people chosen by him. It did not pass unnoticed that five of the seven new chief administrators turned out to have had military, police, or intelligence backgrounds. (Putin himself, of course, had been a career KGB officer.) The new administrators were charged with overseeing the implementation of federal legislation and ensuring that local laws complied with federal rules. Next, Putin induced the Duma to pass legislation removing the governors of the 89 regions from their seats in the Federation Council, the upper house of the parliament; instead, the regions would be represented there by lower-level officials elected by the voters of each region.

What these changes signified was that the governors would lose their independent authority and immunity from prosecution, and federal appointees would control not only the federal funds flowing into the regions, but also the patronage and control over law enforcement. Boris Berezovsky, one of the most powerful "oligarchs" closely tied to the Yeltsin regime, who, together with Roman Abramovich, the chief owner of Sibneft, a major oil company, had acquired a major share of the Russian aluminum industry at a very favorable price, criticized Putin's administrative changes for reintroducing the dependence of the citizen on the state and its central authorities that had characterized the Soviet era.

Putin moved to curb the power of the "oligarchs" Berezovsky and Gusinsky, both known as Jews. On May 11 FSB agents raided the offices of Media-Most, the large media conglomerate owned by Vladimir Gusinsky. Among Media-Most's holdings were NTV, the major independent television station; Ekho Moskv, a radio station; the daily newspaper *Sevodnya*; and the popular maga-

zine *Itogi*. Gusinsky, who was also president of the Russian Jewish Congress, had opposed Putin's candidacy for president, as had the media under his control. While Putin had not commented about Gusinsky, Kremlin chief-of-staff Alexander Voloshin had severely criticized Media-Most. The FSB justified the raid and the seizure of records, saying that it could provide evidence of illegalities in connection with Gusinsky's acquisitions. Gusinsky himself was arrested on June 13 on suspicion of embezzling \$10 million or more in federal property when he acquired a government-owned television station in 1996. He was held in a Moscow prison with a reputation for harsh conditions.

President Putin, on a trip to Germany at the time, professed surprise at Gusinsky's arrest. He pointed out that Media-Most owed huge sums to Gazprom, Russia's largest gas company, but said that the jailing was "excessive." Mayor Luzhkov of Moscow offered himself as a replacement in jail. Gusinsky's rival, Berezovsky, criticized the jailing, but said that Gusinsky had brought the problem on himself. After four days Gusinsky was released, but Gazprom began to press for repayment of a \$211-million loan. In November Gusinsky left Russia for Spain to avoid arrest. In December authorities raided the offices of ORT television, in which Boris Berezovsky held a 49-percent stake. He too fled the country.

The war in the breakaway region of Chechnya continued to rage. Prime Minister Kasyanov estimated in January that, since the reentry of Russian troops into the region in October 1999, the war had cost Russia \$178 million. With presidential elections scheduled for March, Putin moved in January to crush the Chechens. In February Russian forces captured what remained of the devastated Chechen capital, Grozny, but Chechens mounted guerilla actions south of the city. Committing more troops and munitions, the Russian forces attempted to suppress rebel attacks. Russian television showed troops pillaging and killing civilians, but the Russian public seemed generally to support harsh measures against the Muslim Chechen forces. In June Putin appointed Mufti Akhmed Kadyrov, a Chechen, as governor of Chechnya in a political attempt to blunt renewed Chechen attacks, but in the following month at least 37 Russian soldiers were killed in bombings.

An upturn in the world petroleum market helped the Russian economy. The GDP at the end of September was up 7.3 percent from the same point in 1999, and unemployment steadily declined. Inflation was half of what it had been the year before, and the standard of living rose perceptibly. But corruption was rampant, with an estimated 25 percent of the economy consisting of unreported "shadow" transactions. Two Russian Jewish émigrés pleaded guilty in the United States to laundering billions of dollars from Russia through the Bank of New York, where one of them was employed. The International Monetary Fund said in March that the Ukrainian Central Bank and its Russian counterpart had overstated the amount of currency reserves they held. Ukrainian prime minister Viktor Yushchenko, previously the head of the Ukrainian Central Bank, canceled a visit to the United States, and a former Ukrainian prime minister, Petro Lazarenko, was living in the U.S. while Ukraine and other countries tried to extradite him for absconding with Ukrainian state funds.

On August 12 one of Russia's newest and most formidable submarines, the Kursk, sank in Arctic waters after an explosion. Russian divers and navy personnel were unable to open the submarine, and for four days the government rejected help offered by NATO as unnecessary. President Putin did not interrupt his vacation until it became obvious that this was a major disaster. Norwegian divers finally opened the ship, but there were no survivors. Russian officials tried to blame the disaster on foreign submarines, which were said to have collided with the Kursk. But months later an investigative commission determined that exploding torpedoes had caused the tragedy. Though President Putin was severely criticized in the immediate aftermath of the accident, he soon regained his very high ratings in the opinion polls.

### *Israel and the Middle East*

Israeli foreign minister David Levy visited Russia in December 1999 and expressed understanding for Russia's "fight against terrorism" in Chechnya. He later amplified his statement to express regret over the loss of life and state his hopes for a peaceful solution. Nine months later, in September 2000, Natan Sharansky, who had resigned as Israel's minister of the interior in July, was received by President Putin. The former political prisoner who served a long sentence in a Russian jail when he was known as Anatoly Shcharansky, and the former KGB officer now Russian president, exchanged views on Russian-Israeli relations. Sharansky also visited Uzbekistan and met with President Islam Karimov, who stressed the common Israeli-Uzbekistan interest in fighting Islamic terrorism.

The Russian Duma ratified a Russian-Israeli convention on avoiding dual taxation, something previous Dumas had failed to accomplish over six years.

About ten Israelis with roots in the former Soviet Union were said to be detained for ransom by Chechen rebels. During Sharansky's visit, a teenage Israeli held by the Chechens was released.

### *Anti-Semitism*

Vytautas Sustauskas, the new mayor of Lithuania's second largest city, Kaunas, made a number of public anti-Semitic remarks during the year and accused a "Jewish mafia" of controlling the city. Kaunas's Jewish population was estimated at less than 300. In May a "national-socialist" party, claiming 700 members, was founded in Lithuania that advocated restrictions on immigration and on the importation of foreign goods. It remained unclear, however, whether the authorities would register the party.

In September the Lithuanian Seimas (parliament) resolved to treat as an "act of state" the declaration issued by the "provisional Lithuanian government" on June 23, 1941, which restored Lithuanian independence after its annexation to the USSR the previous year. It was that independent Lithuanian regime that had sent a telegram to Adolf Hitler assuring him that "his genius had spurred the

Lithuanian people to join the victorious crusade to exterminate Judaism." The Seimas's legitimization of the "provisional government" aroused protests, and President Valdas Adamkus criticized the legislators opposed to the act for not having blocked it earlier in the legislative process.

Anti-Semitic acts occurred in several Russian cities. On September 17 a Jewish Sunday school in Ryazan was invaded by 15 neo-Nazis armed with chains, who vandalized the school and terrorized the students, ages six to thirteen, and their teachers. Shouting "Death to the Jews!" and other threats, the gang did not physically injure anyone, but the children were traumatized. Some accused the local media and the Chabad-dominated Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia of ignoring the incident in order not to cast a shadow on the dedication of a new Chabad-Lubavitch community center taking place in Moscow at the same time.

In Nizhni Novgorod vandals destroyed 40 Jewish gravestones. In 1996, 140 had been destroyed in the same cemetery and the perpetrators had never been apprehended. In the Latvian city of Daugavpils two men were charged with desecrating the Jewish cemetery. An anti-Semitic book that included material from the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, and a district court there rejected a libel suit against the publisher. Jewish activists in Belarus pointed out that, though for several years the press had not featured anti-Semitic articles, it was now publishing quite a few, and that people who had published "anti-Zionist" propaganda in the Soviet period were now publishing anti-Jewish material in several newspapers. In Russia, President Putin invited Alexander Prokhanov, editor of the nationalist and anti-Semitic newspaper *Zavtra*, to a meeting he convened of leading editors to discuss his general policy directions. The head of the Department of History at St. Petersburg University, Igor Froyanov, was accused by some students and faculty of spreading anti-Semitic ideas in the classroom and in the department.

### *Holocaust-Related Developments*

Toward the end of World War II, Nazi SS troops drove about 7,000 Jews, mostly women, into the icy Baltic Sea. This atrocity went unmarked until January 2000 when it was acknowledged publicly in the town of Yantarny, Kaliningrad region, and a monument was erected in memory of the victims. In July a Holocaust memorial was dedicated in a public ceremony in Minsk attended by Belarussian president Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Konrad Kalejs, accused of executing Jews and others while a member of the Latvian Arajs Commando during the war, left Great Britain for Australia, where he held citizenship. About 13,000 Latvians had been accused by the Soviet government of "war crimes," and some were pardoned by the post-Soviet Latvian government in the early 1990s. In February Israel honored nine Latvians who had saved Jews as "Righteous among the Nations." With this designation, 71 of the approximately 15,000 people so honored were Latvian.

U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos, a Holocaust survivor, met in January with Lithuanian officials and urged more vigorous prosecution of war criminals. Afterwards, he expressed disappointment with the meetings. However, at an international conference on the Holocaust in Stockholm, Sweden, Lithuanian prime minister Andrius Kubilius and Latvian president Vaira Vike-Freiberga pledged to seek justice in their respective countries and prosecute war criminals. In June a medical commission said the trial in Lithuania of Aleksandras Lileikis, police chief of Vilnius during the Nazi occupation, could resume despite his advanced age (93) and poor health. The trial was indeed resumed, but was halted after a few minutes, and, in July, the case was suspended indefinitely. On September 28 Lileikis died of a heart attack.

Lithuanian officials accused several Jews residing in Israel of participating, as members of the Soviet secret police, in deportations of Lithuanians in the 1940s. Israeli officials refused to assist the Lithuanians in investigating these cases, or the case of Nachman Dushansky, accused of having taken part in the Soviet campaign against Lithuanian nationalists after World War II.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Emigration*

After rising in 1999—probably due to economic difficulties and some manifestations of anti-Semitism—Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union declined somewhat in 2000. Whereas a total of 72,372 Jews had emigrated in 1999, 56,647 did so in 2000, 50,859 of them (nearly 90 percent) going to Israel. Immigration to the United States continued to decline, with only 5,787 immigrants from the FSU. Israeli officials announced that in 1999 a slight majority of the immigrants were not Jews according to Halakhah (Jewish law), but relatives or descendants of Jews; 10 percent of the immigrants had no Jewish spouse or parent, but only a Jewish grandparent. High rates of intermarriage and the shrinking number of Jews in the FSU led Israeli officials to expect a continuing rise in the proportion of non-Jews in the immigration.

### *Communal Affairs*

The 16th seminar of the Association of Jewish Schools and Principals of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Baltic States took place in October, and 50 schools were represented. The chairman of the group is Grigory Lipman, who heads one of Moscow's largest Jewish schools.

There were now 26 Hillel organizations in the former Soviet Union. Serving mostly university-age Jews, Hillel claimed to reach 10,000 people through its Lehrhaus program, in which teachers commit to six weeks of intensive study in Israel followed by a year of Judaica teaching in their FSU localities.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) continued its wide-ranging philanthropic and communal work. In Belarus it was said to be aiding some 18,000–20,000 Jews (30,135 people declared themselves Jews in the 1999 Belarussian census) mainly through local welfare societies (*hasadim*) and the distribution of 70,000 food parcels per year around holiday times. The JDC was criticized by Yuri Dorn, head of the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations in Belarus, for supporting Chabad-Lubavitch, Aish HaTorah, and the Movement for Progressive Judaism, all affiliated with the Union of Jewish Organizations and Communities, while not aiding the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations. The JDC responded that it had provided 17 percent of the latter's budget in 1999.

The biggest conflict in the Jewish communities of the FSU emerged when Vladimir Gusinsky, president of the Russian Jewish Congress, was arrested in June (see above). The very day before Gusinsky's arrest Putin had received in the Kremlin members of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, a Chabad-Lubavitch organization. The next day, as Gusinsky was arrested, the federation announced that it had elected Berel Lazar, the chief Chabad emissary in Russia, to the post of chief rabbi. However, Adolf Shaevich was already chief rabbi of Russia, and Pinchas Goldschmidt chief rabbi of Moscow. But they, along with Zinovy Kogan, head of the Reform movement, as well as many secular Jewish leaders, were on the governing board of the Russian Jewish Congress, presided over by Gusinsky. On June 19 Mikhail Shvydkoi, the Russian minister of culture, signed an agreement of cooperation with the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, whose representatives were Mikhail Gluz, formerly a Jewish theater director, and Rabbi Berel Lazar. It seemed to many observers, domestic and foreign, that Putin was using a willing Chabad to demonstrate that though he was after Gusinsky, he was not anti-Semitic, since he had his own "court Jews."

The September groundbreaking of a Jewish community center in Moscow, sponsored by the Russian Jewish Congress, was postponed indefinitely after invitations had been issued (and Putin was listed as attending). At the very same time the groundbreaking was supposed to take place, Putin instead delivered a speech at the opening of a seven-story, 50-room Chabad community center said to cost \$10 million, most of it contributed by diamond merchant and Chabad supporter Levi Levayev, a Bukharan Jew. The grateful Hassidim gave Putin a *shofar*. Rabbi Shaevich did not attend but Rabbi Goldschmidt did, praising Chabad's work in the FSU but criticizing its federation for being too close to the Kremlin. Apparently spurred by Chabad's successes, Rabbi Shaevich and his supporters made a five-day, five-city tour of smaller Jewish communities in Russia just before Rosh Hashanah. In October armed police spent ten hours searching Moscow's main Choral Synagogue, presided over by Rabbis Shaevich and Goldschmidt, claiming they were looking for Gusinsky's financial records. On November 13 a warrant was issued for the arrest of Gusinsky, who fled to Spain. In December the World Jewish Congress asked Interpol not to arrest Gusinsky be-

cause he was being prosecuted on political, not criminal, grounds. Gusinsky was nevertheless placed under house arrest.

Earlier in the year a Restitution Agency had been formed to channel an expected \$2.5 million in German restitution payments that was to be divided up among about 2,000 Holocaust survivors. Vladimir Gusinsky was appointed chairman of the new body, which included representatives of the JDC, local Jewish organizations, and survivors' groups. Since about 20 percent of the funds were earmarked for educational and communal development, Chabad demanded representation in the agency.

The aggressiveness of the new Chabad-controlled federation and its challenges to the Russian Jewish Congress gave rise to two theories. Some felt that this was nothing more than war over turf. Others thought Chabad was trying to establish a monopoly on Jewish life in the territory it considered its historical home grounds and that it had, in fact, put more effort into building Jewish life in Russia over the years than any other Jewish body, with the exception of the JDC.

### *Religion*

In March Kiev's Great Synagogue, also known as the Brodsky Synagogue, was rededicated in a ceremony attended by Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma. Built in 1898 and financed by Lazar Brodsky, a sugar merchant, the centrally located synagogue was seized by the Soviet government in 1926 and had recently served as a puppet theater. The efforts of Vadim Rabinovich, a controversial Ukrainian Jewish businessman with close ties to the government, facilitated the return of the structure. Because most Ukrainian Jewish organizations and Ukrainian chief rabbi Yaakov Bleich had distanced themselves from Rabinovich, Rabbi Moshe Asman, the Chabad-Lubavitch representative who called himself "chief rabbi" of the country, was installed as the synagogue's leader.

As in Ukraine and Moscow, there were tensions in the Urals city of Ekaterinburg between local Jewish activists, operating as the Jewish Cultural Society, and the local Chabad-Lubavitch. The latter succeeded where the local activists had failed, and obtained land from the city for a synagogue. Rabbi Zelig Ashkenazi of Chabad headed a high school there with some 200 students. Not to be outdone, the Russian Jewish Congress imported a Ukrainian-born rabbi, Moshe Steinberg, from Israel to serve as its Ekaterinburg rabbi. A similar conflict broke out in Novosibirsk, but in the Urals city of Chelyabinsk the local cultural activists and Chabad worked together.