Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

DOMINATING ALL ELSE on the British national scene in 1984 was the strike by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), begun in March, over the right of the National Coal Board to close uneconomic pits. Despite the refusal of the Nottinghamshire miners—approximately 20 percent of the industry's work force—to join the strike, and a lack of support from other labor sectors and the general public, the strike was still in force at year's end.

While the strike had only minor repercussions economically, politically it proved a serious embarrassment to the Labor party, particularly to Labor leader Neil Kinnock. His failure to take a clear position weakened his standing with all sides. Conversely, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's determination to stand up to the most powerful union in Great Britain won widespread support.

The Irish Republican Army's campaign of violence found new targets during the year. A bomb exploded in October in the Grand Hotel, Brighton, where ministerial delegates to the Conservative conference were staying, including the prime minister and her husband. Five senior Conservative party members were killed and many more were seriously injured.

A government White Paper published in February sought to deter extremist candidates from running in future parliamentary elections by raising the deposit for candidature from £150 to £1,000. The measure's effectiveness was weakened, however, by its lowering of the percentage of votes required to qualify from 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 5.

Activities of the extreme right-wing National Front (NF) included a march and rally in Stoke-on-Trent, in April, prior to local elections, and a march and rally in Brighton, in September, protesting kosher slaughter. Permission to hold demonstrations in Birmingham and Salford was refused by local authorities. Demonstrations at North London Polytechnic, by left-wing students against NF student organizer Patrick Harrington, resulted in legal action against the pickets themselves. In November Harrington was elected to the NF's directorate.

In October Jacob Gewirtz, executive director of the defense and group relations committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, reported that while antisemitic
incidents had increased since 1979, most did not involve violence, nor were they on
the scale of racist attacks directed against the Asian community. Five Jews had been
assaulted, two seriously, in antisemitic attacks in the previous four months, board
figures showed.

An average of 20–25 antisemitic incidents a month had been fomented by extreme
right-wing groups during the previous two years, according to "Racial Harassment
in London," a report published in May by the Greater London Council's (GLC)
police committee. The report was the work of a panel of inquiry that had been set
up in August 1982.

In January a fire attributed to arson destroyed Auschwitz relics that were on
exhibit in Birmingham. In the same month, fire damaged a North London office
building owned by the Central Council for Jewish Social Services. In May arson was
thought to be responsible for damage to the North Manchester Synagogue. A fire
that totally destroyed West Ham and Upton Park Synagogue, however, was at-
tributed to an electrical fault.

Relations with Israel

A certain amount of strain was evident throughout the year, arising from the
government's efforts to maintain good relations with both Israel and the Arabs. In
January Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, visiting in Saudi Arabia, criticized Is-
rael's West Bank policy. His remarks, which coincided with reports of projected
British arms sales to Middle East countries, were criticized by the Board of Deputies
and the Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI), as well as by Yehuda Avner, the Israeli
ambassador in London. In response, Howe claimed that his comments reflected the
same "balanced" approach adopted by the government in the June 1980 Venice
declaration of the European Economic Community (EEC). He went on to urge the
Palestinians to give unequivocal recognition to Israel's right to a secure existence.

Tension was created by Queen Elizabeth's visit to Amman in March, during
which she praised King Hussein's "efforts to obtain a negotiated settlement" in the
Middle East and made other remarks judged favorable to the Arabs. A visit to Great
Britain by Israeli president Chaim Herzog later the same month, during which he
met with the queen and other prominent personalities, helped to clear the atmo-
sphere. In June the government welcomed Israel's assurance that it did not intend
to retain territory in Lebanon, but took the opportunity to repeat its earlier condem-
nation of the 1982 invasion. In July Foreign Office official Richard Luce said that
"a clear statement by the PLO of Israel's right to exist within secure boundaries,
and a clear renunciation of terrorism" would help the peace process.

In October Foreign Secretary Howe, on a visit to Israel, reiterated his govern-
ment's "unwavering support for Israel's rights and security," while at the same time
stating that "the basic insight of EEC's Venice declaration remained as relevant as
ever." Howe regarded Prime Minister Shimon Peres's offer to negotiate with Jordan
as a step in the right direction, but asked Israel for more concrete demonstrations
of goodwill, including a freeze on new West Bank settlements and an easing of restrictions on West Bank Palestinians. On the subject of the Palestinian right to self-determination, Howe said that while it was not for others to tell the Palestinians whom to choose to represent them, these representatives "would have to commit themselves to finding a solution not by violence, but by peaceful means."

In October Defense Secretary Michael Heseltine visited Jordan and Egypt for talks about the sale of British defense equipment and—with Egypt—about possible collaboration in military production.

In July Prime Minister Thatcher accepted the presidency of CFI's North London Area Council, evoking sharp protest from the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding. In October CFI director Michael Fidler reported that his group was the largest special-interest group in Parliament, with 155 MPs, including eight cabinet ministers, and a total of 222 parliamentarians, including peers and members of the European Parliament. A planned mission to Israel in November, under CFI auspices, had to be canceled when over half the scheduled participants became victims of the Brighton bombing. In December a chair in chemistry at the Weizmann Institute was endowed in Prime Minister Thatcher's name.

The British labor movement continued to be divided about the issue of the Israel-Arab conflict. In April the Association of Cinematograph, Television, and Allied Technicians approved a resolution condemning Israel. In August Trade Union Friends of Palestine invited Rev. Jesse Jackson to participate in a London seminar organized in conjunction with the Palestine Trade Union Federation and the PLO. By contrast, in September nearly two hundred trade-union leaders attended a Trade Union Friends of Israel (TUF1) meeting at which strong support for the Histadrut, Israel's labor federation, was expressed. By October six major unions were affiliated with TUF1.

Controversy surrounded the Labor-led Greater London Council (GLC). On the one hand, the council provided funds to several Jewish groups, including Agudath Israel, the Jewish Association for the Physically Handicapped, the Jewish Social Responsibility Council, the Lubavitch Foundation, and the Jewish Museum. In addition, it aided the Jewish Socialists Group in launching its Jewish Cultural and Anti-Racist Project. In September the GLC reported that it was financing a £15,000 survey into the needs of London's Hackney Orthodox community. On the other hand, GLC members continually angered the Jewish community with allegedly anti-Zionist remarks, and GLC leader Ken Livingstone—"Red Ken"—persisted in making a distinction between "anti-Zionism" and "antisemitism." The GLC's funding of a Palestine Solidarity Campaign conference on the theme of anti-Arab racism, in October, brought the controversy to a head. The Board of Deputies asked GLC's auditor to examine what it described as a "misuse" of GLC money, which, it claimed, was being used to foment prejudice against London's Jewish community. In December the board protested the use of GLC's County Hall for a miners' rally that featured a PLO representative.
Demography

The Jewish population of Great Britain was estimated to be 350,000. Leading Jewish population centers were London, Manchester, Leeds, and Glasgow.

According to the annual report of the Board of Deputies' research unit, 1,180 synagogue marriages took place in 1983, up slightly from the 1,110 recorded in 1982. Of the total, 772 were under modern-Orthodox auspices; 188 were Reform, 104 were traditionalist-Orthodox, 71 were Liberal, and 45 were Sephardi. A slight increase over the previous two years in the number of people married in London suggested that the movement of young people to the London area and the Home Counties was continuing. The number of burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices (4,715) was about the same as in 1982 (4,846).

Some 400 Jewish couples divorced in 1983, according to "Children and Family Break-Up in Anglo-Jewry," published in September by the West Central Counseling and Communal Research Organization, in conjunction with the Anglo-Jewish Divorce and Conciliation Project.

Communal Activities

"The Anglo-Jewish Research Report," issued in December, concluded that communal fund-raising priorities needed immediate adjustment in favor of domestic concerns. The report, which had been commissioned by seven leading communal figures, showed that domestic needs accounted for only 40 percent of the £40 million raised annually, while the remainder went to Israel. The major problem areas, according to Melvyn Carlowe, Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) executive director, were the increasingly aged community (by the year 2000, Carlowe estimated, one in five British Jews would be over 65) and the heavy dependence on government aid, with no alternative provision if it ceased. Of the £20 million currently spent each year on social services to Jews, £13.1 million came in the form of direct government grants, subsidized rents, and statutory payments, while the Jewish community provided the balance of £6.6 million. Following up on the fund-raising report, Carlowe announced in June that the four leading social-service agencies, backed by the Central Council for Jewish Social Service, would cooperate in researching community needs, establishing priorities, and developing machinery for the delivery of services.

As of July, communal housing-association waiting lists contained over 500 names. Westlon opened its second project in July—Deborah Rayne House in Hendon, North London—and began work on a third, in Ealing, West London, to accommodate 34 elderly Jews. In August representatives of seven Orthodox, Reform, and Liberal synagogues in the South-West London region formed a housing society to plan sheltered accommodation for the elderly. In December the Industrial
Dwellings Society opened a building of sheltered flatlets in Grants Hill, Essex, its first project.

The Jewish Blind Society (JBS), which announced plans in April to expand services in the provinces, later in the year joined with the Manchester JBS in sponsoring a £250,000-appeal for a new day center in that city for the visually handicapped and elderly. In the course of the year, with a budget of almost £2 million, JBS assisted some 2,000 people.

Ravenswood entered the field of community care for the mentally handicapped, adopting a program, in conjunction with the Jewish Society for the Mentally Handicapped, to open sheltered hostels for young adults in areas with large Jewish populations. Haven Foundation announced the imminent opening of its own second group home for mentally handicapped individuals.

The Jewish Marriage Council (JMC) moved to new North London premises in November, primarily in order to accommodate its growing marriage-counseling service.

**Soviet Jewry**

Major efforts were directed toward obtaining the release of prisoner of conscience Anatoly Shcharansky. In February a group of 41 leading British doctors signed a letter to Soviet party chief Yuri Andropov expressing concern over Shcharansky’s failing health. Also in February children at Ilford Jewish Primary School celebrated Shcharansky’s birthday. In March a group of 87 MPs from all parties wrote to Soviet ambassador Viktor Popov asking for a meeting to discuss Shcharansky’s case. In July two seats at the Manchester Jewish Museum, which had opened in March, were dedicated in the names of Avital and Anatoly Shcharansky. In October Prime Minister Thatcher, in a statement expressing concern for the difficulties facing the Jewish community in the Soviet Union, reminded Russian leaders of their obligations under the Helsinki accords. In July Foreign Secretary Howe, visiting Moscow, made particular mention of Shcharansky as exemplifying Soviet Jewry’s plight.

Members of all parties assisted the campaign on behalf of Soviet Jews. In January Liberal leader David Steel agreed to raise the issue of Soviet Jewry in general, and Shcharansky in particular, when visiting the Soviet Union as a guest of the parliamentary group of the Supreme Soviet. In February a plea on behalf of refusenik Yosif Begun was sent to Ambassador Popov by 27 members of the GLC, including leader Ken Livingstone. In April several MPs met refusenik leaders in Moscow, the first time a group of MPs had been granted visas to enter Russia for such a purpose. In December Labor leader Neil Kinnock undertook to raise the question of human rights with Soviet leader Gorbachev, who was visiting London.

At the first meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Soviet Jewry, held in London in June, a group of 75 parliamentarians from 15 European countries agreed to step up their campaign in support of rights for Soviet Jews.
Religion

Recommendations for upgrading the status of rabbis, approved by the honorary officers of the United Synagogue (US) and by the Council of Ministers, were placed before the US council for consideration. The proposals called for higher salaries, greater participation by rabbis in communal affairs, a regular review of placements, and the awarding of tenure within the US after the first review.

In November newly elected US president Victor Lucas articulated what he saw as the major tasks facing the organization: improving communications between the various US communal bodies; developing a first-class Jewish civil service with competitive salary scales and working conditions; and promoting greater public awareness of the role played by the US in the community. He also called for measures to meet the needs of the large numbers of families who had moved to outlying London areas, such as Borehamwood, Bushey, Belmont, Chigwell, and Newbury Park.

One of London's oldest synagogues, the Bayswater and Maida Vale, closed in December. At the same time, the US council approved a grant for a new synagogue at Borehamwood and Elstree and agreed to purchase property for the future development of the Pinner Synagogue.

The executive director of the chief rabbi's office, Moshe Davis, resigned in May, after 11 years in his post, for reasons of ill health. In August Rabbi Maurice Untermann became special adviser to the chief rabbi's office, assigned to liaison with the US president and honorary officers. Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu was appointed head of the London Beth Din.

In December Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits urged rabbis not to sanction activities which could be construed as according legitimacy to "nontraditional" Judaism. He also advised the US council that the Board of Deputies, as the representative body of Anglo-Jewry, should not be permitted to serve as a vehicle for the expression of minority views that violated the halakhic norms of the majority, as defined by the board's ecclesiastical authorities. In December the board increased the power of these ecclesiastical authorities by making their guidelines mandatory.

The new headquarters of the Reform Synagogue of Great Britain (RSGB) and affiliated institutions had its official opening in June, in London's East Finchley, in the presence of Prime Minister Thatcher. The "Sternberg Center for Judaism," named for benefactor Sir Sigmund Sternberg, housed, in addition to the RSGB, the Leo Baeck College, the postgraduate training school for Progressive rabbis; the Akiva School, Britain's first Progressive primary day school; the independent New North London Synagogue; the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation; and the Jewish East End Museum and Research Center. A program to train doctors as mohelim had been introduced because of the Initiation Society's reluctance to circumcise children of Progressive converts.

A program for reaching British Jews who were unaffiliated with any religious movement—approximately 20 percent of Anglo-Jewry—was proposed in December
by RSGB chairman Maurice Michaels. The movement's 32 synagogues and 5 associate congregations had 38,000–40,000 members, only 15 percent of the total Jewish religious population. Michaels indicated, however, that while Anglo-Jewry as a whole was declining by some 2,000 individuals a year, the Reform movement was growing at an annual rate of 2 ½ percent.

In April RSGB's largest congregation, located at Edgware, Middlesex, insisted that any association with the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS) be made conditional on the ULPS's acceptance of minimum RSGB halakhic standards.

Britain's first Conservative synagogue opened in November in Stanmore, Middlesex.

Declining sales of kosher meat were the subject of February meetings of both the London Board for Shechita and the Licensed Retail Kosher Butchers' Association. The number of kosher butcher shops in London, it was reported, had dropped from some 300 in the mid-1950s to the present 50. Kedassia, the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations' shehitah body, reported that sales in the six shops it maintained had dropped during the previous six or seven years by 11 percent. In an effort to increase competition among kosher meat retailers and thus benefit consumers, the London Board for Shechita licensed a new wholesaler to operate from an abattoir at Waltham Abbey.

It was announced in December that the Kashrus Commission would move to the same premises as the London Beth Din, of which it would henceforth be a division.

Jewish Education

Of the estimated 55,000 Jewish children of school age in Great Britain, reported the Jewish Chronicle, 14,500 were currently attending Jewish nursery, primary, or secondary schools. Some 13,000 children were enrolled in part-time religion classes, while 2,500 were in released-time classes or receiving private instruction. It appeared that around 10,000 young people had stopped their Jewish education with bar or bat mitzvah; 15,000 children received no Jewish education at all.

In September the London Board for Jewish Religious Education reported that nearly half the headmasters in its program of religion classes had been replaced over the preceding two and a half years. The changes had affected such major centers as Stanmore (about 400 pupils), Borehamwood (300), Bushey (over 200), and Essex Regional (over 220).

To help improve teaching standards, intensified training courses were inaugurated by the new Institute of Jewish Education at Jews' College. The institute was run cooperatively by the Board for Jewish Religious Education, the Torah Department of the World Zionist Organization, Jews' College, and the Jewish Educational Development Trust.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was appointed principal and Irving Jacobs named dean of Jews' College, which moved to new premises in Hendon, North London, in October.
In addition to preparing students for semikhah, the college offered B.A. and B.Ed. courses, part-time courses in Jewish studies, and training programs for teachers and communal leaders.

In November it was announced that the future of London's Hillel House, threatened with closure in 1983, was, for the time being, secure.

**Publications**

The Harold H. Wingate Prize for a book of broad Jewish interest was awarded to Naomi Shepherd for *Wilfred Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador*.

Ownership of the *Jewish Chronicle* was transferred from private hands to the Kessler Foundation in November. The move was designed to secure the newspaper's future independence and integrity.


The category of autobiography and biography included *Begin: A Biography* by Eric Silver; *Josephus* by Tessa Rajak; *Barnett Janner* by Elsie Janner; and two works of Rothschild reminiscences, *Random Variables* by Lord Rothschild and *Milady Vine: The Autobiography of Philippe de Rothschild* by Joan Littlewood. The publication of *Sir Moses Montefiore: A Symposium,* lectures given at the Oxford Center for Post-graduate Hebrew Studies, edited by Vivian D. Lipman, was pegged to the upcoming commemoration of the centennial of Montefiore's death. Two volumes of women's reminiscences were *You'd Prefer Me Not to Mention It* by the Jewish Women's History Group and *Heritage of the Kaiser's Children: An Autobiography* by Ruth Michaelis-Jena.

Works of fiction included *Rose of Jericho* by Rosemary Friedman, a sequel to her *Proofs of Affection; A Sense of Place* by Maisie Mosco; *Something Out There* by Nadine Gordimer; *The Border* by Elaine Feinstein; *Peeping Tom* by Howard Jacobson; *The Devil in Texas* by Wolf Mankowitz; and *Dancing Bear* by Chaim Bermant.
Among new poetic works were two collections by Ruth Fainlight, *Fifteen to Infinity* and *Climates; Years at the Ending: Poems, 1892–1982* by Joseph Leftwich; *A Lifelong House* by Lottie Kramer; and *Selected Poems* and *Chapter and Verse* by Laurence Lerner. The *Poetry of Danny Abse*, edited by Joseph Cohen, was a festschrift; *God and the Poets* contained David Daiches’ Gifford lectures. Michael Horovits published *Frances Horovits: A Celebration*, in memory of the poet who had died the previous year.

Of great interest was Roman Vishniac’s masterly collection of pre-World War II photographs, *A Vanished World*.

**Personalia**

Argentine-born Cesar Milstein, a Cambridge University molecular biologist, was co-winner of the 1984 Nobel Prize in medicine.

Knighthoods went to David Wolfson for political service; Raymond Hoffenberg, president of the Royal College of Physicians; Geoffrey Finsberg, MP, for political and public service; Arthur Abraham Gold, president of the European Athletics Association, for service to sports; and Eric Sharp, chairman and chief executive of Cable and Wireless.

Among British Jews who died in 1984 were Alfred Woolf, former United Synagogue president, in January, aged 86; Harris Shoerats, Britain’s oldest man, in February, aged 111; Leslie Edgar, emeritus rabbi of London’s Liberal Jewish Synagogue, in February, aged 78; Solomon Schonfeld, founder of the Jewish secondary-school movement and noted rabbinic scholar, in February, aged 72; Bernard Schlesinger, pediatrician, in February, aged 87; Lewis Olsover, local historian, in February, aged 81; Joseph Asulay, rabbi of Southend and Westcliff, in February, aged 84; Joyce Weiner, distinguished literary agent, in February; Lionel Land, Kashrus Commission secretary for 30 years, in February, aged 67; Marcus M. Kaye, pilot, engineer, judo expert, and sculptor, in March, aged 85; Joel Slutsky, communal leader, in March, aged 87; Lou Simmons, band leader, in March, aged 77; Samuel Weiser, Zionist-Revisionist leader, in March, aged 81; David Mellsow, youth organizer and for 23 years secretary of the London Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Congregation, in March, aged 73; Zalman Plitnick, former Liverpool communal rabbi, in March, aged 90; Janus Cohen, Zionist leader, in April, aged 84; Clive Gaventa, communal worker and chairman of British Herut, in April, aged 55; Celina Sokolow, daughter of Nahum Sokolow, in May, aged 97; George Silver, Oxford communal figure, film star, and restaurateur, in June, aged 67; Anna Mayerson, artist, in June, aged 77; Arnold Shaw, Labor politician, in June, aged 74; Maurice Levinson, author, in June, aged 73; Jacob Sonntag, writer and translator, founder-editor of the *Jewish Quarterly*, in July, aged 79; Flora Solomon, communal worker, in July, aged 89; Bernard King, journalist and *Jewish Chronicle* art editor, in July, aged 92; Ralph Yablon, financier and philanthropist, in July, aged 78; Harry Bidney, founder of the antifascist “43 group,” in August, aged 62; Aida Foster,
theater school director, in August, aged 89; Yakov Maitlis, historian, folklorist, and Yiddishist, in August, aged 84; Solomon Wald, noted physician, in September, aged 85; Louis Saipe, historian, lecturer, and Leeds communal worker, in October, aged 87; Benno Schotz, the queen’s Sculptor in Ordinary for Scotland, in October, aged 93; Gabriella Gros-Galliner, glass expert and singer, in October, aged 61; Helen Rosenau, art historian, in November, aged 84; Gerald I. Ronson, industrialist and philanthropist, in November; Louis Rosenhead, emeritus professor of mathematics, Liverpool University, Zionist and communal worker, in November, aged 78; Ivor Montagu, third son of the second Lord Swaythling, in November, aged 80; Peter Brent, author and playwright, in December, aged 53; Leonard Goss, communal worker, in December, aged 59; Nathan Barnett, journalist, in December, aged 90; Oswald M. Stroud, Bradford industrialist and communal benefactor, in December, aged 87.

LIONEL AND MIRIAM KOCHAN
France

National Affairs

In 1984—the halfway mark of President François Mitterrand's seven-year term of office—there was a continued decline in the popularity of the Socialist regime, primarily due to dissatisfaction over the economy. It was a year that also saw growing support for the extreme-right National Front movement; further losses for the Communists; a change of prime minister; unrest over a proposed schooling bill; continued racial violence; and a lessening of anti-Israel sentiment.

The loss of support for the Left was evidenced dramatically in the June election of representatives to the European Parliament, in which the Socialists won only 20.8 percent of the vote (down from 37.5 percent in the 1981 legislative elections), and the Communists (who had polled 14 percent in 1981) attracted only 11 percent—their lowest in half a century. The one group that showed a significant gain in strength was the extreme-right National Front movement, which received almost the same percentage as the Communists—this, for a group whose influence had been negligible when Mitterrand came to power in 1981. The National Front's campaign, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, focused mainly on the problem of immigrant workers, who were blamed for France's economic woes. The National Front advocated the expulsion of the immigrants.

The Socialists' weak showing in the European Parliament election was seen as a poor omen for their prospects in the 1986 elections to the National Assembly. It came as no surprise, therefore, when Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy and his cabinet resigned on July 17. Shortly thereafter the Communists announced their withdrawal from the government. President Mitterrand appointed as Mauroy's successor 38-year-old Laurent Fabius, who had been budget minister, and then industry minister, in the previous government. (Fabius was the son of a well-to-do Jewish family that had converted to Christianity after World War II. His wife was Jewish and he was considered to be friendly to Israel.)

The appointment of Fabius signaled to many observers the end of one phase in Mitterrand's presidential career and the start of another. Whereas Mitterrand, in coming into office, had pledged to carry out a program of socialist reform, economic necessity forced a gradual retreat from that position. An austerity plan introduced in 1983 had entailed severe budget cutbacks, higher taxes, and the closing down of unproductive industries, leading to widespread job layoffs. To the Communists, a policy carried out at the expense of workers had become increasingly untenable. The same applied to Mauroy, who was identified with the old-style Left. Fabius, who appeared more committed to pragmatism than to ideology, was considered by many
observers to embody the shift in the Mitterrand approach away from orthodox socialism and toward a moderate social-democratic outlook. Early evidence of this was the announcement of tax cuts aimed at the middle class and business and measures seeking to encourage investment and high-tech industry, moves likely to broaden the base of Mitterrand’s support. At the same time, while the Communists were out of the government, their control of several unions, including the country's largest, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT, General Confederation of Labor), meant that they would continue to play a crucial role in the political and economic spheres.

Even before the change in government, Mitterrand had already conceded defeat on an issue that had been a cornerstone of his original electoral program. This was a measure to place “free” parochial and private schools under state control—a measure that was viewed by many French citizens as an infringement of basic freedoms. Following a spate of protest demonstrations—including one in Paris that was described as the largest since the liberation of France in 1945—the president announced the bill's withdrawal.

With the prospect of an opposition victory in 1986 looming as a very real possibility, political circles were already concerned about the issue of “cohabitation”: how would a National Assembly dominated by the Right get along with a left-wing president for the two years until the 1988 presidential election? Such a division of power was permitted by the constitution but had never occurred since Charles de Gaulle ushered in the Fifth Republic in 1958. Many Frenchmen feared that “cohabitation” would condemn the country to a period of weak parliamentary democracy and a succession of short-lived coalitions.

Controversy continued over the volatile situation in New Caledonia, a French territory in the South Pacific. Mitterrand had been advocating a policy of gradual progress toward self-determination for the territory. When the largely Socialist separatist movement there carried out an insurrection in November, establishing a provisional government, Mitterrand was accused by Gaullists of betraying the 37 percent of New Caledonians who are European, most of whom opposed independence.

Mitterrand made several visits to foreign countries during the year, the most important being: to the United States, March 21–28; to the USSR, where he publicly discussed the case of Andrei Sakharov, June 20–23; to Jordan, July 9–11; and to Syria, November 26–28. Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres paid an official visit to France during the first week in December.

A two-hour television documentary shown on national television in November revived the controversy surrounding Marshal Philippe Pétain, the wartime leader of Vichy France, who was later convicted of collaborating with the Nazis. The previous summer, Pétain's lawyer, Jacques Isorni, had placed a full-page advertisement in Le Monde arguing that “Pétain [had] accepted the bad in order to avoid the worse,” i.e., to lessen the harshness of Nazi rule. A response placed in the paper a few days later by the Association of Sons and Daughters of Deported French Jews
refuted Isorni's claims, describing the persecution of Jews in Vichy France and the mass deportations to Auschwitz.

**Attitudes Toward Israel**

The harsh anti-Israel atmosphere that had prevailed in the country following the war in Lebanon lost considerable force during 1984. Contributing to the change of attitude were divisions within the Arab world, the war between Iran and Iraq, dissidence within the PLO, and Yasir Arafat's loss of prestige after his expulsion from Lebanon. French pro-Arab agitators, such as the France-Pays Arabes (France-Arab Nations) group, found themselves unable to function effectively due to internecine conflicts. Two positive results of the confusion were a lessening of pro-Palestinian agitation in high schools and universities and a marked reduction in the painting of anti-Israel graffiti on Paris walls and subways.

Jewish leftist supporters of the Palestinian cause, such as Trotskyist Alain Krivine—who had called for the destruction of the Zionist regime in Israel—and Maoist Alain Geismar—one of the first people to use the term “Nazi” in connection with Zionism—greatly toned down their rhetoric. Indeed, Geismar displayed a repentant attitude.

There was a noticeable difference in the tone of news reports and feature articles about Israel in the major newspapers and periodicals, with expressions of overt hostility generally being abandoned. This was certainly true of *Le Monde*, despite the long-standing hostility of its Jerusalem correspondent to the Israeli Right.

Seeking to gain political advantage from these developments, the opposition parties, led by the very popular Simone Veil, a Jew, assumed strongly pro-Israel positions. According to an authoritative source, the opposition groups planned to close the PLO's Paris office if they came to power in the 1986 elections.

**Racism and Antisemitism**

Racism was on the rise in France, though this fact was rarely acknowledged even in sympathetic “new Right” circles. The victims of racist abuse were mostly immigrant workers, especially Arabs and Kabyles from North Africa, and, less frequently, blacks. North Africans who were arrested and interrogated by the police were often beaten; many were wounded and some even killed. Indeed, anti-Arab prejudice was widespread in the police force, especially among those who had fought in the Algerian war. The same kind of racism could be found among the poorer elements of the working class, who lived in squalid conditions in the industrial centers.

Many incidents, some of them dramatic, highlighted the critical situation and made it the subject of continuing debate. Most shocking were murders motivated purely by racism, such as the killing of an Algerian citizen by several French youths; the Algerian was killed in a railroad train compartment and thrown out the window.
Some time after this act of racist savagery, an elderly Jewish woman in Cannes was killed by a young man whom she had befriended; he turned out to be an avid reader of Nazi literature.

The National Front's relative success at the polls was unquestionably attributable to its campaign of xenophobia. In the suburbs of larger cities, for example, Le Pen attracted low-income French families who resented the growing numbers of foreign pupils attending elementary schools—children who were seen as lowering the quality of education.

Meanwhile, a new generation of rootless people had come into being, as young North Africans born in France became adults. While legally French citizens, they were not really viewed as such by the authorities, by other Frenchmen, or even by themselves. The most gifted and most intellectual of the North Africans refused to assimilate, thereby arousing widespread hostility, since France lacks any tradition of cultural pluralism.

In the winter of 1984, North Africans staged a mass protest march on foot, with banners flying, from the south all the way to Paris, where a delegation was received by President Mitterrand. Among those who joined the protesters along the route—out of sympathy and feelings of solidarity—were groups of young Jews. They soon realized, however, that not a few of the demonstrators were ostentatiously wearing Palestinian headdresses as a sign of identification with the PLO.

Overt incidents of antisemitism were relatively few and minor in 1984. In Lille, for example, a city in northern France, a Communist municipal councilman was fined for making defamatory remarks about Jews. Two organizations devoted to the struggle against antisemitism—the pro-Zionist Ligue Internationale Contre l'Antisémitisme et Racisme (LICRA, League Against Antisemitism and Racism) and the Communist-influenced Mouvement Contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié des Peuples (MRAP, Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples)—were active on the legal front in bringing suit over such incidents as the refusal by owners of cafés and restaurants to serve Arabs, racist slurs, and discrimination in employment. However, even when sentences were handed down for violating laws against racial or religious discrimination, they were considered too light to serve as a deterrent.

In 1984 it seemed unlikely that large numbers of French citizens could be mobilized to fight against racism. LICRA did organize several important protest demonstrations, but the participants were mostly Jews, chiefly concerned about antisemitism. The MRAP recruited participants for its intermittent demonstrations from Communist groups and the Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor. The antiracist movement was hampered both by intellectual and organizational confusion, however. The General Confederation of Labor, for example, viewed racism as purely a "fascist" phenomenon, but the definition of fascism varied with events and the Communist party's tactics of the day. Under some circumstances, conservatives and moderate liberals were labeled fascists; at other times, when relations between the Communists and Socialists were especially tense, the
Socialists were so designated. Because the antiracism movement consisted of a loose coalition of special-interest groups, confusion of aims was often in evidence. Arabs, for example, were perfectly capable of marching in demonstrations against anti-semitism, holding banners that proclaimed “Jews and Arabs, the same struggle,” yet at the same time shouting “antiracist” slogans against Israel, Zionism, and, by extension, all Jews.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of France was estimated to be 530,000. Leading Jewish population centers were Paris, Marseilles, Nice, Lyons, and Toulouse.

Communal Activities

There continued to be a small but perceptible increase in the number of Jews from assimilated or dejudaized backgrounds who were “searching for their roots” and seeking some form of identification with authentic Judaism. This trend only partially compensated, however, for the decline of Jewishness among Jews who were assimilating “unconsciously”—without being assimilationists on principle—and losses through intermarriage.

Membership in the Consistory, the organized religious body of French Jewry, remained shockingly low, considering the size of the Jewish population. (The Paris Consistory, for example, had only 9,000 members.) However, these figures were not a wholly reliable estimate of the number of religiously affiliated Jews in France, since many synagogues and communities, mostly Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, did not belong to the Consistory.

In principle, Consistory synagogues were Conservative—what is called “Liberal” in other European countries, especially Germany—but in recent years there has been an “orthodoxization” of the Consistory constituency. This development was strongly influenced by the arrival of large numbers of religious Jews from North Africa, Jews who had never been identified with an Orthodox movement as such but who were decidedly traditionalist in their observance. What some referred to as the “radicalization” of Jewish religious life in France was attributed to the leadership of Chief Rabbi René Samuel Sirat, who, since his election in 1980, had been pressing for a more committed and energetic Judaism. (Rabbi Sirat came to France from Algeria in 1948, before the mass influx of North Africans in the 1950s and 1960s. He was ordained at the Séminaire Israélite de France, and earned a doctorate at the University of Strasbourg.) Rabbi Sirat’s efforts were ably assisted by the Consistory’s new president, Emile Touati, also from North Africa.
During the year several new Consistory synagogues were organized in the suburbs and the provinces, and courses in religion were offered by a number of institutions. In addition, stricter controls were instituted over the granting of kashrut certificates to butcher shops and restaurants.

Five old synagogues were declared "monuments of national historic importance" by the French Ministry for Cultural Affairs. This meant that while the buildings could not be altered, they were eligible to receive government help for restoration. The synagogues were located in Nancy, Mulhouse, Soultz, Colmar, and Guebwiller.

Pressure exerted by religious groups on the social and cultural body of French Jewry, the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU, United Jewish Philanthropic Fund), to place greater emphasis on religious activities, provoked considerable controversy. While secularists argued for the exclusion of religion from the organization's programs, their opponents charged that this omission was incompatible with the very nature of Jewish existence. Professor Ady Steg, an eminent French Jew who favored a religious emphasis in all Jewish social and educational activities, resigned as a director of the FSJU at the end of the year.

In April French Jewry celebrated the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF, Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions), the quasi-official umbrella organization of French Jewry comprising 50 major Jewish groups. The council was created by members of the Jewish underground in German-occupied France in 1944 as a symbol of their determination to survive and to rebuild the Jewish institutions destroyed by the Nazis. The principal ceremonies were held in Lyons, where Klaus Barbie, the wartime Gestapo chief there, was in prison awaiting trial for crimes against humanity. The festivities were attended by, among others, Cardinal Albert Decourtray, the archbishop of Lyons, and Defense Minister Charles Hernu. There were also ceremonies in the village of Izieu where, in 1944, 44 Jewish children were arrested for deportation on Barbie's orders.

CRIF intervened on several occasions with government officials, primarily in connection with the plight of Soviet refuseniks and prisoners. CRIF president Théo Klein accompanied President Mitterrand to Moscow, where Klein attended synagogue services and presented a prayer book to the rabbi. The next day, a Saturday, he flew to the Crimea, for which he was sharply criticized in Jewish religious circles in Paris.

Two Jewish political groups, espousing different viewpoints, sought to gain support in the community. Socialisme et Judaïsme (Socialism and Judaism) supported the Mitterrand regime, while Judaïsme et Liberté (Judaism and Freedom), which advocated the policies of the opposition, was supported by Jewish deputies Claude-Girard Marcus and Simone Veil. Though both groups stressed their Jewish character, quoting traditional sources to validate their views, it became all too obvious that they were merely propaganda conduits for the respective parties they supported.

On the Zionist front, Youth Aliyah had a successful year, thanks to the Israeli emissary of the Jewish Agency, Elie Cohen, who demonstrated verve and
intelligence in his work and succeeded in attracting a sizeable number of young people to the Youth Aliyah program. Overall, however, Israel's difficult economic situation negatively affected aliya from France.

**Education and Culture**

An estimated 8,000 youngsters, 8 percent of the Jewish school-age population, attended Jewish schools full time. Other students were enrolled in ORT technical schools and in one-day-a-week religious classes that met on Wednesdays, when French schools were closed. While both the absolute number and the percentage of students receiving full-time Jewish education were low compared with figures for other Western European countries—e.g., Italy—they actually represented an increase over previous years, when such enrollment stood at only 5 percent. Parental indifference was undoubtedly a factor, but many families who wanted to place their children in full-time Jewish schools were unable to do so because of a shortage of schools and qualified teachers. One of the reasons for the school shortage was financial—government subsidies covered only a small part of private school expenses, with parents' associations required to cover the rest.

Jewish cultural activities of varying quality were offered during the year. These included radio and television programs devoted to various aspects of Jewish life and tradition: folk songs, ritual chants, historical sketches, the Israeli scene, and food. There was even a matchmaking program for people seeking to meet prospective mates. Significant broadcast time was devoted to political news and comment as well. A TV program that continued to attract millions of Jewish and non-Jewish viewers was presented by Rabbi Josy Eisenberg. The program dealt with both traditional teachings and contemporary topics of interest.

There were several groups engaged in serious basic study of Talmud and, even more, of Kabbalah. An important intellectual trend was the growing interest in religious rationalism, a philosophy based largely on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, a Lithuanian-born “post-phenomenologist” and talmudist, a retired Sorbonne professor who remained active as a writer and lecturer. Levinas had attracted many ardent disciples, including non-Jews among the French intelligentsia; his writings brought Judaism unprecedented prestige among French philosophers.

Despite the impressive variety of Jewish cultural and educational activities offered throughout the country, the number of Jews taking advantage of them remained relatively small.

**Books**

Among new novels with Jewish characters or themes, the best were translations from other languages. Of these, the most noteworthy was *Il fait beau aujourd'hui à Paris* ("The Weather in Paris Is Beautiful Today," Stock) by Fred Uhlman, a British Jew of German origin. The translation of one of his earlier books, *L'ami*

A notable new nonfiction work was L’antisémitisme français aujourd’hui et demain (“French Antisemitism Today and Tomorrow,” Laffont) by Simon Epstein, a French Jew living in Israel. The Jewish press paid almost no attention to this book, which criticized the Jewish community leadership of France for underestimating the problem of antisemitism and fostering the view that propaganda alone can alleviate it.

A book characterized by uncompromising views was Le Retour d’Israel (“Israel’s Return,” Du Rocher/Monaco) by Abraham Livni, a French Christian convert to Judaism who had been living in Israel for many years. The volume is a vigorous political and theological defense of the mystical nationalism of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, Livni’s mentor. Reviewers contrasted Livni’s position with the conciliatory outlook of Amitiés Judeo-Chrétiennes (“Jewish-Christian Friendship Group”).

The Verdier publishing house continued to earn praise for its editions of Jewish classical texts translated from Hebrew and Aramaic into French by Charles Mopsik, a learned young translator. Mopsik’s most recent publication was an anthology based on the Babylonian Talmud.

Another new nonfiction work deserving of mention was L’humour juif dans la littérature: de Job à Woody Allen (“Jewish Humor in Literature: From Job to Woody Allen,” Presses Universitaires) by Judith Storo-Sandor.

Personalia

Manès Sperber, famous as a novelist and memoirist, and also as a psychologist who had been an assistant to Alfred Adler, died in Paris on February 4, aged 78. Born in eastern Galicia and raised in Vienna, he had lived in Berlin for many years before coming to France, where he wrote in both German and French. His lovely Qu’une larme dans l’océan (“A Tear in the Ocean,” Calmann-Levy) won him special praise in Jewish literary circles. Sperber, a friend of Arthur Koestler, spent a good part of his life in the Communist movement, which he left at the beginning of World War II. He became a French citizen, served as editor of foreign books for Calmann-Levy, and became a friend of André Malraux and Raymond Aron. Sperber eventually returned to Jewish life and in the end became an effective defender of the State of Israel.

France’s highest award, the infrequently given Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, was bestowed on two prominent French Jews: Léo Hamon, a former cabinet minister and law professor, and Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, dean of France’s advertising and broadcasting industries. Hamon, 76, a professor of law at the Paris Sorbonne, served as minister of information under the late president Georges Pompidou and was a personal aide to Gen. Charles de Gaulle during World War II. He
led a pro-Socialist Gaullist party that backed Mitterrand in the 1981 presidential elections.

Bleustein-Blanchet, 78, headed "Publicis," the country's largest privately owned advertising agency. He pioneered radio broadcasting in France in the early 1920s by creating the private company "Radio Paris." He was active in Jewish affairs and a generous contributor to local Jewish charities.

The rank of Commander in the Legion of Honor was awarded to Jules Braunschvig, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Rabbi Josy Eisenberg, 52, France's "TV rabbi," was named to the Legion of Honor for "improving relations between Jews and Christians." Bulgarian-born concert pianist Alexis Weisenberg was named to the Legion of Honor for his contribution to France's musical life.

ARNOLD MANDEL