Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

The year began badly for the Labor government when Prime Minister Tony Blair’s personal poll rating briefly fell from 62 to 49 percent, largely due to popular dissatisfaction with problems in the National Health Service, intensified by a flu epidemic. Labor’s image deteriorated further when the party was unable to prevent the election of Ken Livingstone, a maverick independent left-wing MP, as the first directly elected mayor of London. Blair’s warning that Livingstone’s election would be “ruinous” for London did not prevent the decisive defeat of Labor’s official candidate for the mayoralty. This was followed by Labor defeats in the local council elections, and in June a keynote speech by Premier Blair at a conference of the Women’s Institute movement was met by a “slow handclapping.” The government recovered some of its poise in July when it announced a program of public investment in transport, education, and the health service. This expenditure, it was proclaimed, was made possible by the government’s prudent handling of the economy. In this way the government sought to make good what many critics considered to be its initial mistake in retaining the spending targets of the last Conservative government.

In the meantime, the Conservative opposition, led by William Hague, turned to the right, campaigning against “bogus asylum seekers,” taking a hardline policy in Europe, and opposing the single EU currency. The Tories received a real boost in September when farmers and haulers blockaded a number of oil refineries in a peaceful protest of the high price of gasoline. This rapidly escalated into a nationwide protest. Panic buying by the public ensued, and 90 percent of gas stations ran out of fuel within a few days. Hospitals and emergency services were endangered before the government intervened. Public dissatisfaction with Labor’s tardy response was demonstrated in a poll that, for the first time since 1992, showed the Conservatives ahead of Labor by 38 percent to 36.

This trend, however, did not last long. In November the government won three by-elections (although on a low turnout), and maintained its record — unlike any other government in the last 40 years — of not losing a single by-election.
cellor Gordon Brown reinforced Labor's position by promising a reduction in the fuel tax, and by the end of the year Labor was again about ten points ahead in the polls. Opposition leader William Hague, however, had tasted blood, and continued to hammer away at the government's record on crime, deficiencies in the National Health Service, and education. Likewise, his skeptical line on Europe seemed to resonate with the public; a poll carried out for the European Commission in April showed that of all member countries, Britain was least supportive of the European Union, its policies, and its institutions.

Israel and the Middle East

With its historic links to the Middle East and its close relationship to all parties in the peace process, Britain could play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the negotiations, said Foreign Office minister Peter Hain in April. Lord Levy of Mill Hill, the government's special envoy, pursued this role unremittingly throughout the year. In January, Foreign Minister Robin Cook, in Amman and Cairo to discuss the peace process and bilateral ties with King Abdullah of Jordan and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, called on moderate Arab countries to back Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat in any far-reaching concessions he might make to clinch a final peace agreement with Israel. The same month, Levy, at the center of British efforts to revive the stalled talks between Israel and Syria, visited Damascus and Beirut. In April, Hain went on his first official visit to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority, where he spoke with Arafat, stressing Britain's readiness to back an independent Palestinian state provided it was committed to democracy and recognized Israel's security concerns. Hain said that Britain was prepared to work with Palestinian leaders to create a national constitution that "entrenched" democratic values and "solid institutions to guarantee the rule of law, transparency and accountability." London, he said on his return, was "working with feverish energy" on both the Syrian and Palestinian fronts to assist any agreement.

Levy was back in the area in August, charged, according to Foreign Office sources, with encouraging both sides to "pursue their negotiations and redouble their efforts to reach agreement" after the failure of Camp David. Blair, in September, told a conference in Brighton, Sussex, sponsored by Labor Friends of Israel, that Arafat had to match Israeli premier Ehud Barak's risk-taking for peace. Blair held talks with both men at the United Nations millennium summit. The talks, said Hain, back in London after similar meetings in the Middle East, were part of Britain's efforts to encourage the two sides to grapple with the issue of the future of Jerusalem's holy sites. In October, Cook and Levy sought an end to violence through talks with Arafat in Gaza and Barak in Jerusalem. Britain, said Cook, was determined to persuade the leaders to "get back to the negotiating table and not let the peace process die."
Not all these efforts met with universal approval. Hain aroused protests from British Jewish organizations in September when he expressed support for Palestinian refugees' right of return to Israel. Hain explained that, in his view, a just solution to the plight of these refugees was at the heart of the search for peace. There was also an ongoing campaign to undermine the position of Lord Levy. Criticism surfaced in the House of Commons in February, when it was recalled that he had been the Labor Party's main fund-raiser in the 1997 general election. In April, Shadow Foreign Secretary Francis Maude expressed the main Tory concern that Levy was not accountable to Parliament. In June, the press carried a leaked report that millionaire Levy paid only £5,000 of income tax in 1999; in July it was reported that the Inland Revenue, the tax authority, had handed the results of investigations into the "dirty tricks" campaign against Levy to the director of public prosecutions. In December, the Islamic Human Rights Commission was purportedly behind a letter campaign targeted at Foreign Secretary Cook demanding Levy's removal from his post. He was, said the commission, an unashamed Zionist, and, accordingly, a staunch supporter of Israel.

A hiccup in Britain's generally good relationship with Israel came in May when Israeli tank fire killed BBC driver Abed Takoush on the eve of Israel's troop withdrawal from southern Lebanon, and in August the BBC presented Israel's Defense Ministry with a claim for compensation. In December Britain demanded an explanation from Israel for an attack by Jewish settlers brandishing weapons on the British consul's official car, which had been carrying official license plates and flying the Union Jack. Troops stationed nearby did not intervene, claimed an embassy official.

Solidarity missions from various sectors of the Anglo-Jewish community visited Israel in the last quarter of 2000 in response to the upsurge of violence. The United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) came in November, and the Maccabi Union of Great Britain in December. In December too, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks led a press mission to Israel in an attempt to rectify unsympathetic media coverage, and he also organized a three-day tour for some 50 Orthodox rabbis.

Great Britain's policy toward Iran had to take account of its arrest and trial of 13 Jews accused of espionage. In January MPs and Jewish communal leaders demonstrated outside Downing Street, where Prime Minister Blair talked with Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi of Iran, on behalf of the jailed Iranian Jews. MP Gillian Shepherd, chairman of Conservative Friends of Israel, castigated the government for upgrading ties with an Iranian regime that supported terrorism and violated human rights. In April a Foreign Office spokesman said that the government was maintaining pressure on the Iranian authorities to fulfill their undertaking that the trial of the 13 would be open and transparent. In May Israel's ambassador in London, Dror Zeiger, met Foreign Office minister Hain to voice Israel's concern about Britain's expansion of trade and diplomatic ties with Iran, and Jewish leaders appealed to the government to freeze con-
tacts with Iran until the 13 were freed. Foreign Secretary Cook's pledge to raise their plight when he visited Iran in July came to naught when his visit was first postponed and then canceled.

After ten of the Iranian Jews were found guilty, a British government statement expressed "deep concern" at the closed-door trial and the sentences, and Hain told Iran's London ambassador that he expected the appeals process against the convictions and the sentences "to be given due weight." He said, nevertheless, that isolating Iran was not the right policy. In September, when an Iranian appeals court reduced the prison sentences of the ten convicted Jews, a top-level conference was held in London aimed at boosting Britain's trade links with Iran. "I firmly believe that potentially Iran can be a major business partner for Britain," said Department of Trade and Industry minister Richard Caborn, announcing plans to visit Iran in October. In September, when a House of Commons foreign affairs select committee launched an inquiry into Britain's relations with Iran, a spokesman for the Board of Deputies of British Jews said that British Jewry found it "abhorrent" that the country was striving to boost trade when Tehran's human-rights record was under scrutiny.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

Some 270 acts of anti-Semitism were reported in 1999, a rise of 16 percent over the previous year, according to Community Security Trust (CST) statistics issued in March. The 1999 total included 33 physical assaults (up 50 percent over 1998), two of them on rabbis; 31 cases of threats on community members; 8 hoax bomb threats, 5 of them against Jewish schools; and 25 incidents involving desecration of property, almost one-third of them in Manchester. The CST was particularly concerned that a number of Jewish institutions were coming under surveillance by people using cameras and videos. "There is no doubt that people are trying to collect information on the community," a CST spokesman told the Jewish Chronicle.

In April the Black-Jewish Forum criticized the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Three Faith Forum for awarding its Responsible Society Award to Home Secretary Jack Straw, at a time when new regulations were making conditions more difficult for asylum-seekers. Board director-general Neville Nagler explained that Straw had done much to promote racial and religious tolerance, including introducing Holocaust Day and strengthening race-relations laws. Nevertheless, Board of Deputies president Eldred Tabachnik led an interfaith delegation to meet with Straw and voice concern at the new regulations, and also at inflammatory language being heard in the media and in Parliament regarding asylum-seekers, which, it was feared, would fuel the campaign of the extreme right-wing British National Party (BNP). A CST spokesman, in fact, pointed to a far-right demonstration in Margate, Kent, where hundreds cheered as members
of the right-wing National Front chanted anti-refugee slogans. In the London mayoral elections in May, BNP treasurer and spokesman Michael Newland played openly on fears surrounding immigration and bogus asylum-seekers to take enough votes to save his deposit. In local council elections, far-right candidates won an average of 10 percent of the vote in the few seats they contested. Concern about a far-right resurgence mounted when the BNP won 26 percent of the vote in a council by-election in May in Bexley, South London, thereby pushing the Tories into third place.

Scotland Yard's intelligence activities against the far right could not be restricted to London, said Assistant Commissioner David Veness in July; cooperation was necessary with other British, European, and American law-enforcement agencies. Warning of the threat of future attacks on minority communities following the trial of former BNP member David Copeland, sentenced to life for nail-bomb attacks in London in 1999, Veness said that the police had beefed up its racial-and-violent-crime task force. It was also establishing community safety patrols as well as working with a range of voluntary agencies, such as the CST. By November fears of a far-right revival faded when its candidates attracted little support in two parliamentary by-elections: BNP chairman Nick Griffin received only 794 votes, 4 percent of the total, at West Bromwich; and BNP got 229 votes, 1 percent, at Preston.

With the outbreak of new violence in Israel at the end of September, the focus and intensity of racist outbreaks shifted sharply. Jewish institutions were placed on high alert as London-based radical Muslim groups, such as the extremist Islamist organization Al-Muhajiroun, issued fiery statements warning British Jews that backing Israel could make them “targets” for Muslims. Under the banner of the Kalifah Association, Al-Muhajiroun was also active at meetings on university campuses in London, Manchester, and Birmingham as the academic year began. During the High Holy Days, the CST’s Mike Whine reported anti-Semitic incidents at some 50 synagogues, with protesters in London, Manchester, and Birmingham burning Israeli flags. In Stamford Hill, North London, a 20-year-old yeshivah student was stabbed, and fireworks were thrown at a Jewish-owned business in Stanmore, Middlesex. The Israeli government’s tourist office in London protested against the Foreign Office’s warning against vacation or other non-essential travel to Jerusalem. Officials of Britain’s main Jewish organizations formed an emergency coordinating group, chaired by UJIA president Brian Kerner, to plan solidarity missions to Israel, to prepare briefings for the community and its institutions, and to counter slanted media coverage. Police surveillance units stepped up patrols in predominantly Jewish areas, and Home Secretary Straw assured a Jewish delegation that “the law would be vigorously enforced” to prevent violence and the dissemination of racist propaganda. “We do not want community relations poisoned by the spreading here of this conflict,” Foreign Office minister Hain added.
Between October and December the number of anti-Semitic attacks, including physical assault, rose some 400–500 percent as compared to the same period in 1999, the CST reported in December. More than 100 incidents were recorded in October and November, including attacks leaving victims requiring hospitalization. Synagogues and other Jewish institutions were defaced with graffiti, Jews were subjected to verbal abuse, and anti-Jewish posters and leaflets were distributed. "We have real and valid concern that attempts are being made to transform the conflict in the Middle East into a religious war against the Jews," said a CST spokesman, but, he added, the situation in Britain was incomparably better than in some other countries, partly due to the police's efforts at protecting Jews.

In December, Home Office minister Lord Bassam told the House of Lords that the government would allocate £25m to the police over the next three years to counter the use of the Internet for racist or anti-Semitic propaganda; the money would be used to formulate a national high-tech strategy to track down and prosecute those behind the more-than 2,000 racist Web sites.

Holocaust-Related Matters

At the beginning of the year, Prime Minister Blair told the House of Commons that Britain's first Holocaust Day would be on January 27, 2001, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This, he said, reflected Britain's continuing commitment to opposing racism, anti-Semitism, and genocide. In June it was reported that the Holocaust Education Trust would honor two people, Home Secretary Jack Straw for his leading role in instituting Holocaust Day, and American academic Deborah Lipstadt for her successful legal battle against Holocaust revisionist David Irving. Irving's libel action against Lipstadt, professor of modern Jewish and Holocaust studies at Emory University, Atlanta, and her publisher, Penguin Books, claimed that her book, *Denying the Holocaust*, falsely alleged that he deliberately distorted history. At the end of a three-month, highly publicized trial before the High Court, which heard evidence from leading historians, Mr. Justice Charles Gray found against Irving. He was, the judge concluded, an anti-Semite and Holocaust denier, who had "persistently and deliberately manipulated historical evidence." portraying Hitler favorably for ideological reasons.

In June a permanent Holocaust exhibition was officially opened at London's Imperial War Museum. Then, in July, the largest ever "Remembering for the Future" Holocaust conference was held in London and Oxford.

More than 350 works of art looted by the Nazis could be in British national collections, according to a 200-page report, "Spoilation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II Period," published in February following a year-long investigation by the National Museum Directors' Conference, headed by Tate Gallery director Sir Nicholas Serota. The same month retired lord justice of appeal Sir David Hirst was named to lead an 11-person government panel to help
resolve Holocaust survivors' claims to such works. Pressure by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and leading art experts for a government commitment to return the actual artworks and not just to offer financial compensation, was partially satisfied in October when a government committee on the return of illicitly traded cultural property recommended new legislation to make this possible in certain narrowly defined circumstances.

In February the government announced that more than £1.5m had been paid out to victims of Nazi persecution whose property in the United Kingdom had been confiscated during the war. The payments were instituted under a Department of Trade and Industry decision to settle outstanding claims from those whose assets were seized under legislation against trading with the enemy that came into force in 1939. Lord Archer of Sandwell had chaired a panel that assessed 948 claims from victims or their relatives.

By June "Restore UK," launched in May by the British Bankers' Association in a collaborative effort to help Holocaust victims' families reclaim assets deposited in Britain before World War II, was considering 60 claims. These had been submitted after the publication of lists of some 13,000 account-holders.

**Nazi War Criminals**

In January it appeared that Britain was slowing down its drive to prosecute suspected Nazi war criminals living in the country. A statement by a Crown Prosecution Service spokesman that "after careful and thorough consideration" the service believed that there was "insufficient evidence" to prosecute any of the remaining subjects in connection with murders in Nazi-occupied Europe, signaled that the investigation into some 380 people was being wound up. The operation, which had cost some £12m, was conducted by Scotland Yard's war-crimes unit, established to implement the 1991 War Crimes Act under which suspected Nazi war criminals could be tried in British courts for offences committed abroad. Some suspects had died, while the passage of time made the investigations complex, the statement explained. It was stressed, however, that if any new cases came to light they would be fully investigated.

In February, Anthony Sawoniuk, Britain's only convicted war criminal, lost his appeal against the double life sentence imposed at his Old Bailey trial in 1999 for the murder of Jews in Belarus. In June he was refused leave to appeal against the February decision. Also in February, the head of Scotland Yard's war-crimes unit attended a two-day conference in Riga, organized by the Latvian government, to discuss action against alleged war criminal Konrad Kalejs. Suspected of involvement in a Nazi death squad that killed some 30,000 Latvian Jews, Kalejs was discovered living in Britain in 1999, but allowed to leave the country in the absence of sufficient evidence to prosecute. In December Kalejs, who had become an Australian citizen, was arrested in Melbourne, the Latvian government having requested his extradition through its Australian embassy.
**Demography**

The number of marriages performed under Jewish religious auspices rose from 921 in 1998 to 1,017 in 1999, for an annual average of 927 over the 1994–99 period, with all synagogue groupings showing increases, according to statistics published by the community research unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Numbers of gittin (religious divorces) completed also rose, from 233 in 1998 to 259 in 1999. On the other hand, burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices fell to 3,772 in 1999 from a revised figure of 3,938 in 1998, while birth statistics, based on figures for circumcision, showed only a small rise in 1998 to 2,673, from 2,663 in 1997. In November the Initiation Society, an organization of Orthodox *mohelim* (ritual circumcisers), launched an “audit” of religious circumcision to create a database of 1,500 cases and find out, among other things, parents’ reactions to the *mohel* they engaged and the quality of his aftercare. Arguments against circumcision had appeared in the *British Medical Journal*, and the *Jewish Chronicle* had carried correspondence on the subject for seven weeks. Dr. Morris Sifman, the society’s medical director, said: “We need information to defend Brit Milah [ritual circumcision] against the vehement opposition we have been experiencing.” Advertisements for “medical” and “painless” circumcision not performed under Orthodox auspices had to be taken seriously, he added.

A report issued by the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB), published in February, showed that 112 applications for conversion to Judaism were received in 1999, nearly double the 1998 figure of 67. “We are continuing our policy of welcoming genuine converts and doing all we can to facilitate their entry into our faith,” said Rabbi Rodney Mariner, convenor of the RSGB Bet Din (religious court). RSGB received 208 requests for circumcision in 1999, compared with 149 in 1998.

**Communal Affairs**

British Jewry is too diverse for one organization or leader to speak for it, declared the report of the Commission on the Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community, launched by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in 1998. Entitled *A Community of Communities* and published in March 2000, the report found that over 100 organizations were representing British Jews in various capacities. It recommended that British Jewry regard itself as an “ethnic group” for purposes of representation to non-Jewish bodies, such as national and local government agencies, other religious faiths, and the media, and should establish “an independent, cross-communal coordinating structure” to discuss collective responses when required. Commission chairman Michael Webber, who succeeded the original chairman Clinton Silver in 1999, re-
signed on the eve of the report's publication. Webber made no public comment explaining his resignation, but told JPR director Barry Kosmin of his dissatisfaction with the report.

In July Jo Wagerman was elected president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Formerly the headmistress of London's Jewish Free School, Wagerman became the first female president in the board's 240-year history.

In February Jewish Care, Britain's largest charitable organization, announced the closure of Sarah Tunkel House, its 60-bed residential home in Highbury, North London. Occupancy had dropped below 75 percent for the previous two years and was continuing to fall. In June the Otto Schiff Housing Association (OSHA), part of the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), announced a merger with Jewish Care. AJR already had financial problems, said OSHA chairman Ashley Mitchell, and it would have to go out of business if it did not sell its Heinrich Stahl House. As the year ended, it remained unsold.

Religion

The plight of the *agunah*, the "chained" wife refused a religious divorce (get) by her ex-husband, continued to be an important issue. Several organizations worked on her behalf, including Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks's long-promised Agunah/Get Task Force, unveiled in June. Judy Nagler, wife of Board of Deputies director-general Neville Nagler, was appointed to coordinate a team of rabbis, *dayanim* (judges of Jewish religious courts), lay leaders, mediators, and legal experts, under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi's Office. But supporters of the Agunah Campaign, an already functioning group with the same aim, were disappointed when Sacks neither attended nor sent a rabbinical representative to its November forum at University College, London.

Attempts to solve the problem through legislation failed when the Divorce (Religious Marriages) Bill—inspired by yet another body, the Board of Deputies cross-communal working group—ran out of time in the House of Commons in July, despite receiving all-party support and government approval. The bill had been introduced by Jewish Liberal Democrat MP Lord Lester of Herne Hill, and received its first reading in the House of Lords in May. If passed it would have given judges the option to require that a marriage be dissolved according to Jewish law before granting a civil divorce. In December Rabbi Pini Dunner of the independent Saatchi Synagogue was naming and shaming husbands who refused their wives a get, in large advertisements in London's *Jewish Chronicle*, the main organ of British Jewry.

The United Synagogue (US), Britain's largest synagogue grouping, was in its best financial state in many years, according to president Peter Sheldon. Its projected end-of-year surplus of £87,000 partly came from the £750,000 raised by the auction, held in November in New York, of recovered books and manuscripts stolen from the London Bet Din by former *dayan* Rabbi Casriel Kaplin.
Leo Baeck College, the Progressive rabbinical training institution, purchased 45 of the 150 items offered. On the other hand, the US lost money on the first two issues of its new magazine, *People Like US*, launched in April.

In June a meeting organized by the US's community development department formed the Hertfordshire Forum for ministers and leaders of the US's five Hertfordshire synagogues to meet regularly and share ideas and information. "The forum is an opportunity for all the major synagogues to help the smaller communities in Hertfordshire to thrive and survive," said Borehamwood's rabbi, Alan Plancey. This meeting was one of a series enabling the chief rabbi to meet leaders of US congregations. In June, too, the US announced that women might hold positions as honorary officers in US constituent synagogues, though not to serve as synagogue chairmen.

In other communal news, it was reported in February that technical difficulties were delaying the North-West London eruv (symbolic boundary enabling carrying on the Sabbath) that was to have been operating by the end of 1999. In April the Charity Commissioners' investigation into the affairs of the L'Chaim Society revealed that its trustees failed to "exercise proper control" and that "excessive payments" had been made to its founder, Rabbi Shmuel Boteach, and his wife. In November, committal proceedings for the six men and six women charged with conspiracy to defraud in connection with irregularities at US's Waltham Abbey (Essex) cemetery in 1998, were set for late January 2001. The US allegedly lost £1.5m through their activities.

There were a number of developments in the area of kashrut. In April, after more than nine years of negotiation, the London Board for Shechita (LBS) and the Manchester Kashrut Authority signed an accord on the "mutual" certification of meat. "Fifty percent of the London Board's requirements come from the Manchester abattoir," said LBS administrator Michael Kester. "It makes sense to rationalize and streamline our overheads." In December the two groups took over Liffey Meats' idle plant in Ballyjamesduff, outside Dublin. Liffey had exported kosher meat to Israel for 15 years, till the importer switched to South American meat in 1999, leaving the plant underused. Reports that the Israeli restaurant chain El Gaucho planned to open a branch in Golders Green (North-West London) that would serve imported hindquarter meat aroused controversy. In June LBS ruled against the sale of hindquarter meat, but its vice president, Alan Kennard, said that talks would continue to investigate the possibility of introducing a centralized and uniform procedure for porging (removing the prohibited sciatic nerve) acceptable to the dayanim. The new restaurant opened in May, serving imported forequarter meat only, under Sephardi supervision. But in September the board of elders of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation supported Dayan Toledano's efforts to reintroduce hindquarter meat to Britain's kosher market.

The Assembly of Masorti Synagogues (roughly equivalent to the American Conservative movement) expanded its youth involvement in October by ap-
pointing two full-time student fieldworkers and creating a department to coordinate its youth initiatives. Rabbi Louis Jacobs, whose break with the religious establishment in 1962 eventually led to the birth of the British Masorti movement, retired in July from the New London Synagogue, St. John's Wood, North-West London, that had been founded at that time. Jacobs—an eminent scholar, theologian, and author—was succeeded by Chaim Weiner, an American rabbi, who had served the Masorti synagogue in Edgware, Middlesex, from 1991 to 1998. Edgware's continuing dispute over women's role in religious services led to the formation of a breakaway egalitarian congregation. In December Dr. Harry Freedman, about to resign as director of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, announced that the 11 synagogues making up the organization had a total membership of 4,000.

A number of rabbis took new positions during the year: Reform rabbi Jeremy Collick was appointed to the original Edgware Masorti congregation; Rabbi Paul Glantz of Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue went to St. Albans Masorti; and the American-born Rabbi Neil Kraft of South London Liberal Synagogue was named director of education at Reform's West London Synagogue. The Reform movement, which, in May, launched its five-year, £4m "Living Judaism" program—a vigorous campaign to involve new members in synagogue life—ended the year with a financial deficit. Fund-raising for the "exciting projects" involved was taking "longer than expected," said Michael Frankl, deputy chief of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain. A report issued in July by Leo Baeck College on the Reform and Liberal rabbinate found that women rabbis continued to suffer discrimination, none holding senior positions in major congregations. Also in July, Finchley Reform Synagogue (North London) restarted a selection procedure for a new minister after rejecting, amid considerable controversy, the appointment of Rabbi Melinda Carr, a lesbian, in May.

Education

The number of Jewish day schools in Britain stood at 134 in 1999–2000, up from 116 in 1998–99 and 96 in 1992–93, according to figures released by the community research unit. The number of students were 22,620 in 1999–2000, 20,580 the previous year, and 14,650 in 1992–93, with 72 percent of all current pupils going to school in Greater London. The figures included nurseries as well as primary and secondary schools, and institutions for children with special needs. The report pointed out, however, that only Greater London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Gateshead offered the full range of Jewish day-school opportunities for all ages. Illustrating the upward trend was the official opening, in June, of the £4.5m Clore Tikva primary school in Barkingside (Essex), the second school—with the Clore Shalom in Shenley (Herts)—under the pluralist umbrella of the Jewish Community Day School Advisory Board. In July the £3m state-aided Hertsmere Jewish primary school was officially opened.
In February, as part of its strategy "to develop a new educational policy," the United Jewish Israel Appeal appointed a team to work with Jewish students, mainly to ensure implementation of the recommendations of "Every Student Matters," a review commissioned in 1998. It was reported in March that the UJIA planned to spend an extra 9 percent of its 1999 budget on youth and education programs, and in June UJIA launched a five-year, £500,000 scholarship program, funded by philanthropist Stanley Cohen, to train 100 new Jewish educators.

In April the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS, the former Jews' College) appointed Rabbi Dr. Abner Weiss as principal. Born in South Africa and based, before moving to London, in Los Angeles, Weiss would serve concurrently as minister at the Western Marble Arch Synagogue, Central London. In July Weiss introduced a new plan to train LSJS students for the Orthodox rabbinate, awarding the same rabbinic ordination as that granted by Israel's chief rabbis. "We are going to produce modern Orthodox rabbis," said Weiss, "with internationally respected qualifications."

In November the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies opened a £750,000 teaching and research unit, representing, according to Peter Oppenheimer, its president, "a big step toward full membership of Oxford University." In February Leeds University's Center for Jewish Studies launched its first full-time degree course, entitled "Jewish Civilization." Also in February a Jewish music institute was established in conjunction with London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. In June it was announced that Britain's first specialist master's degree in Israeli studies would be launched at University College, London, in September. In July the Arts and Humanities Research Board announced a grant to Southampton University's Parkes Center to undertake five new research projects, mainly with Jewish themes.

**Overseas Aid**

In February the Jewish Emergency Aid Coalition (JEAC) launched an appeal on behalf of the victims of flood-ravaged Mozambique. Its fund-raising campaign was spearheaded by the United Kingdom Jewish Aid and International Development (UKJaid), which in 1999 raised £250,000 on the coalition's behalf. Some of the money went to the Albanian Education Development Project to help fund the first school for Kosovo refugees and local children in Albania after the crisis there. UKJaid also opened, on its own, another rebuilt school in Kosovo.

Jewish organizations continued to help communities in the former Soviet Union. In August the North-Western Reform Synagogue in London's Golders Green presented a Torah scroll to its twin congregation in Kerch, Ukraine; in September a new technology center in Dniepropetrovsk, created through a partnership between London's Lubavitch community and World ORT, was one of five Ukrainian centers opened during a six-day ORT mission; and World Jewish Re-
lief (WJR) opened the Sunflower Center at Kiev's Solomon Jewish University, part of WJR's campaign to establish ten Jewish communal centers in the Ukraine. In June the New North London Synagogue hosted a party for Jewish children from Mogilev, Belarus, brought to Britain for medical reasons. In September London's Central Synagogue became the first United Synagogue congregation to twin with a community in Belarus, linking up with Minsk. In October the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB) sponsored the production of a video of a Friday evening synagogue service for 90 Progressive synagogues in the former Soviet Union, as part of Exodus 2000, RSGB's support group for Progressive Jews in the region.

Publications

The 2000 Jewish Quarterly-Wingate award for fiction went to Howard Jacobson for The Mighty Walzer; and the award for nonfiction to Wladislaw Szpilman for The Pianist. The 1997 prize for nonfiction, given to Benjaman Wilkomirski's Fragments, Memories of a Childhood, 1939–1948, was now withdrawn, the book having been exposed as fictional. Jewish readers voted The Diary of Anne Frank the book of the century, with Primo Levi's If This Is A Man in second place and Chaim Potok's The Chosen in third.

Fiction published during the year included Dark Inheritance by Elaine Feinstein, whose poetic work, Gold, also appeared in 2000; Faith, a thriller by Peter James; His Mistress’s Voice by Gillian Freeman; When I Lived in Modern Times by Linda Grant; Depth of Field by Sue Hubbard; Only Human: A Comedy by Jenny Diski; The Last Survivor by Timothy W. Ryback; How the Dead Live by Will Self; Triad: The Physicists, the Analysts, the Kabbalists by Tom Keve, a mixture of fact and fiction; and Barcelona Plates by Alexei Sayle, a collection of short stories. Poetry included From Soho to Jerusalem by Chaim Lewis; Not Too Late for Loving by Graham Tayar; The Budapest File by George Szirtes; and Against Perfection by Richard Burns.

Books on religion included For the Shabbat Table by Rabbi Chaim Wilschanski; Celebrating Life, short essays on such subjects as faith, happiness, and marriage, by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; In Taking up the Timbrel, edited by Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild and Sybil Sheridan, describing how women rabbis create rituals for Jewish women; The Changing Face of Jesus by Geza Vermes; The People's Bible: Genesis, translated by Sidney Brichto; The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of I and II Samuel by Robert Alter; and The Lost Synagogues of London by Peter Renton.

Local history was represented by Elliot Oppel’s book on the history of Hull’s Orthodox synagogues; The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940–1945 by David Fraser; The Lost Jews of Cornwall edited by Keith Pearce, Helen Fry, and Godfrey Simmons; and The East End: Four Centuries of London Life by Alan Palmer. Three books appeared on the history of institutions: Lord
Rothschild and the Barber: The Struggle to Establish the London Jewish Hospital by Gerry Black; The Ajax Chronicles by Ajax vice president Henry Morris; and the anniversary volume of the Jewish Memorial Council by Alexander Rosenzweig.

Works of history included Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia by Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro; Sunlight and Shadow, a short history of Jews in Muslim countries, by Lucien Gubbay; Web of Gold by Guy Patton and Robin Mackness; The Cliveden Set by Norman Rose; Motya: Unearthing a Lost Civilisation by Gaia Servadio; The Jewish Self-Image: American and British Perspectives, 1881–1939 by Michael Berkowitz; One Day in September (the day of the 1972 Olympic Games massacre) by Simon Reeve. Whitehall and the Jews, 1933–1948 by Louise London; Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain’s Fascist Movement, 1923–1945 by Julie Gottlieb; Hitler’s Gift (the brilliant academics from Nazi Germany who settled in Britain and the U.S.) by Jean Medawar and David Pyke; and Pack of Thieves by Richard Z. Chesnoff (the story of Nazi wartime art thefts) all concern the Nazi period.

Autobiographical and biographical works included Shalom Bomb: Scenes From My Life by poet and playwright Bernard Kops, who also published Grandchildren and Other Poems; Fellatio, Masochism, Politics and Love by Leo Abse; Botchki by David Zagier; Paddling to Jerusalem by David Aaronovitch; Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin by Simon Sebag Montefiore; The Pharaoh’s Shadow by Anthony Sattin (travels in ancient and modern Egypt); Between the Yeshivah World and Modern Orthodoxy—The Life and Works of Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg, 1884–1966 by Marc B. Shapiro; An Unlikely Heroine by Asher Calingold (about pioneer Zionist Esther Calingold). Where Did It All Go Right? by A. Alvarez was matched by a festschrift for his 70th birthday: The Mind Has Mountains, edited by Frank Kermode and Anthony Holden.

Holocaust studies included Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers by Christopher Browning; Making Memory: Creating Britain’s First Holocaust Centre by Stephen D. Smith; Holocaust Literature: Schultz, Levi, Spiegelman and the Memory of the Offence by Gillian Banner; Shadows of the Shoah: Jewish Identity and Belonging by Victor Seidler; Double Jeopardy: Gender and Holocaust edited by Judith Tydor Baumel; Never Again: A History of the Holocaust by Martin Gilbert; The Past in Hiding (the story of Marianne Strauss, who lived underground in Nazi Germany) by Mark Roseman; When the Grey Beetles Took Over Baghdad by Mona Yahia; and The Nazi Officer’s Wife by Edith Hahn Ber with Susan Dworkin.

Books specifically devoted to Israel were Israel’s Wars by Ahron Bregman; Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999 by Benny Morris; A Blood-Dimmed Tide by Amos Elon; The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel’s Soul by Yoram Hazony; and Fabricating Israeli History: The “New Historians” by Efraim Karsh.

Three books gathering the writings of deceased personalities were Chasing
Shadows by Hugo Gryn with Naomi Gryn; The Power of Ideas: Isaiah Berlin edited by Henry Hardy; and On the Other Hand by Chaim Bermant.

Other notable publications were A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo—The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection by Stefan C. Reif; The Cricklewood Tapestry, a collection of humorous essays by Alan Coren; Random Harvest: The Novellas of Bialik, translated by David Patterson and Ezra Spichehandler; and The Jewish Year Book 2000 edited by Stephen W. Massil.

Personalia

Honors conferred on British Jews in 2000 included life peerages to Sally Green gross, Age Concern director; former European Commission vice president Sir Leon Brittan; and Oxfam chairman Joel Joffe. Labor appointments to the new list of 33 working peers included Parry Mitchell, information-technology adviser to the Labor Party; Professor Sir Leslie Turnberg, chairman of the board of the Public Health Laboratory Service; and Alex Bernstein, president of Old Vic Theatre Trust. Knighthoods went to real-estate developer Stuart Lipton, Stanhope’s chief executive; to Bernard Schreier, for his contribution to developing trade between the UK and Hungary; to George Alberti in recognition of his work for medical services for diabetics; to Martin Sorrell, advertising mogul; and to Alan Sugar, computer entrepreneur. Vivien Duffield, chairperson of the Clore Foundation, was created a Dame for services to the arts; and filmmaker Steven Spielberg was named a Knight Commander of the British Empire for his contribution to the entertainment world, particularly the British movie industry.

Prominent British Jews who died in 2000 included: Judge Henry Lazarus Lachs, prominent member of Liverpool’s Jewish community, in Liverpool, in January, aged 72; Norma Marion Blausten, communal worker, in London, in January, aged 75; Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Yehudah Wiesenberg, Jewish scholar, in London, in January, aged 90; Sophie Noble, WIZO stalwart, in London, in January, aged 95; Hazel Alexander, sculptress, in London, in February, aged 87; Vera Braynis, communal personality, in London, in February, aged 88; Josef Herman, artist, in London, in February, aged 89; Barry Fealdman, patron of Anglo-Jewish art, in London, in March, aged 86; Rosser Chinn, major communal leader and charity fund-raiser, in London, in March, aged 93; Edward Conway, headmaster of the Jewish Free School, 1958–76, in London, in April, aged 89; Rita Levy, active in Zionist, Jewish, and civic organizations, in London, in April, aged 85; David Spanier, journalist, in London, in April, aged 67; André Deutsch, publisher, in London, in April, aged 82; Michael Leigh, rabbi at Edgware Reform Synagogue, 1963–93, in London, in May, aged 72; Doreen Stanfield, musician, in London, in May, aged 71; Victor Dortheimer, Schindler survivor, in London, in May, aged 81; Dr. John Cohen, founder of the Association of Reform and Liberal Mohe lim, in London, in June, aged 63; Rabbi Faivish Schneebalg, founder of the Vizhnitz Synagogue in Stamford Hill, North London, in London, in June, aged 71;
Harry Cohen, for 40 years headmaster of a Jewish-approved school for boys at Weybridge, Surrey, in Weybridge, in June, aged 87; Sir John Balcombe, appeals judge, in London, in June, aged 74; Harry Landy, communal activist, in London, in July, aged 89; Fred Balcombe, Manchester civic and Jewish activist, in Manchester, in July, aged 88; philosophy professor Stephan Körner in Bristol, in August, aged 86; Dayan Chanoch Padwa, principal rabbinic authority of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (the Adath) for 45 years, in London, in August, aged 91; Michael Meyer, writer and translator, in London, in August, aged 79; Desmond Wilcox, broadcaster and filmmaker, in London, in September, aged 69; Basil Bernstein, educator, in London, in September, aged 75; Rabbi Meir Zvi Ehrentreu, outstanding scholar of Jewish law, in Manchester, in September, aged 70; Alf Bush (Abraham Isaac Shimansky), first honorary president of Cambridge’s Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue, in Cambridge, in September, aged 87; Dr. Douglas Woolf, rheumatologist, in London, in October, aged 81; Rabbi Maurice Unterman, leading United Synagogue rabbi, in London, in October, aged 83; David Rubio, musical-instrument maker, in Cambridge, in October, aged 65; Mollie Brandl-Bowen, author and antiracist activist, in Brighton, in October, aged 69; Jack Lowy, scientist, in Oxford, in October, aged 78; Ruth Lowy, artist, in Oxford, in October, aged 79; Shulamith Shafir, concert pianist, in London, in November, aged 77; Carole Rosen, singer and writer, in London, in November, aged 66; Barbara Harding, stalwart of British WIZO, in London, in November, aged 57; and Simon Livingstone, photographer and philanthropist, in Birmingham, in December, aged 59.

Miriam & Lionel Kochan
France

National Affairs

The year 2000 was a year of waiting, as a president of the right, Jacques Chirac, had to work with a socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, who was supported by a left-of-center majority in the National Assembly. Both had their sights set on the next presidential election, scheduled for 2002. Although neither had officially announced his candidacy, it seemed clear that Chirac would seek a second term and that Jospin would run against him.

Thus two potential adversaries were forced to cooperate to make the nation's institutions run smoothly as well as to conduct foreign affairs, an area traditionally managed by agreement between the president and the prime minister. The cabinet met each week in Paris at the Élysée Palace with President Chirac presiding, and adopted measures conforming to the views of Jospin.

This strange state of "cohabitation" was not without its intrigues, low blows, pointed leaks to the press, and damaging statements made with a view to destabilizing the other party. Yet each side knew that whoever initiated a major right-left confrontation would quickly feel the wrath of the public for disturbing the workings of democracy and violating the spirit of the constitution, according to which the president presides while the head-of-government governs. Thus Chirac and Jospin played out a parody of the classic final scene from an old American western movie: they moved toward one another at an agonizingly slow pace, guns in their holsters, arms by their sides, staring straight ahead. The audience knows that the confrontation will finally come. It is just a question of time.

Convinced that the center was key to winning the next election, both of the chief players were risk-averse, avoiding any initiative or statement that might alienate a segment of the electorate. In any case, the differences between the two blocs were minimal. The Rally for the Republic (RPR), Chirac's party, along with its allies (and sometimes competitors) from the Union for French Democracy (UDF), represented a moderate right that advocated both free trade and social justice, the free market and Europe, national honor and minority rights. Jospin's Socialist Party simply reversed the order of these elements: social justice and free trade, etc. The differences related to priorities, emphasis, and style.

In previous times, the absence of any real difference between the right and the left might have benefited the political extremes. But the healthy French economy throughout the year, which led to lower unemployment, quieted public discontent, weakening both the far right and the far left.

The far right had long based its policies on linking immigration with unem-
ployment and urban violence. But unemployment and violence, while not completely eradicated, were considerably less visible in 2000. In addition, the far right still suffered from the schism that arose in 1999 between Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front and the National Republican Movement, led by former National Front second-in-command Bruno Mégret (see AJYB 2000, p. 304). These two rival factions remained locked in a ferocious battle that had much to do with personal animosities. In by-elections, far-right candidates continued to obtain a significant share of the vote. But though many in France still worried about security and national identity—the issues of the far right—the dynamism that used to characterize Le Pen and his movement in his heyday was no longer in evidence.

Problems on the far left were different. The Communist Party, which was France's largest party for many years (in the years following World War II, one voter in four supported it), had fallen onto hard times. The fall of the Soviet Union dealt a serious blow to its prestige, and its participation in the Socialist-led government made it look like a mere appendage of the social democracy that Communist leaders had spent years denouncing. Attempts to reestablish the party's activist base proved unsuccessful. The party's daily newspaper, L'Huma-nité, continued to lose readers and frequently warned of its own impending demise.

Some proposed changing the name of the party or transforming it into a social democratic party, as occurred with its Italian counterpart, but the fact that a strong socialist party already existed in France made this unlikely. Others sought to emphasize the party's working-class orientation so as to gain recruits among the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, especially immigrant workers from North Africa. However, any such strategy had to take account of Trotskyist groups, which, though attracting few followers, were coming to represent an increasing portion of the far left.

The Green Party occupied its own segment of the left-wing landscape. This environmental party was part of the majority coalition, along with the Socialists and Communists, supporting Jospin. Its lack of an ideological tradition sometimes led it to take surprising positions on issues not directly related to the environment, and at times it was the object of infiltration efforts by neo-fascist, anti-Semitic, or rabidly anti-Israel elements. While organization on the local level has helped overcome these growing pains, some people continued to view the party with a degree of suspicion.

Israel and the Middle East

On February 23, 2000, Prime Minister Jospin arrived in Israel, hoping to demonstrate friendship toward Prime Minister Ehud Barak and help restart the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. (Employees of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been told to display flags with France's colors—blue, white, and red—but they mistakenly reversed the colors so that Jospin was welcomed by the flag of the Netherlands. There were no hard feelings.)
The next day, Jospin inaugurated the new French cultural center in Jerusalem bearing the name of Romain Gary, a great French writer of Jewish origin who died in 1980. This center was a very important symbolic gesture since France, like many other countries, maintained a consulate in East Jerusalem that reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not to the French embassy in Tel Aviv. This consulate, widely considered a sort of embassy to the Palestinians, maintained its own cultural activities from which Israelis had felt excluded. Until 1999, a branch of the Alliance Francaise (a nongovernmental cultural organization linked to French authorities) operated in a Jewish neighborhood, and it was managed and frequented by Jewish Israelis. But the center had to close its doors, primarily for financial reasons. In the circumstances, the new center inaugurated by Jospin did more than just fill a cultural gap. Unlike its predecessor, this center was directly responsible to the French embassy, and thus represented an official French presence for the Jews of Jerusalem.

Jospin's next move in Israel had less predictable consequences. At a press conference, the prime minister stressed that he had found the government "available" for peace negotiations with the Arabs, while he deplored Syria's "rigidity" regarding southern Lebanon, which at that point Israel had not yet evacuated. He also condemned the Islamic militants of Hezbollah for their "terrorist" actions. It was this last word that provoked strong reaction, both in the Middle East and at home. On February 26, when Jospin visited Bir Zeit University, Palestinian students threw rocks at him. Jospin met with Yasir Arafat as planned, but then cut his trip short and returned to Paris. In France, meanwhile, President Chirac publicly criticized Jospin's comments, saying that they broke France's tradition of "neutrality."

The incident quickly blossomed into a small political crisis. Chirac's inner circle had long been known to be more pro-Arab than Jospin's, and back at the Élysée Palace there was much gnashing of teeth over the prime minister's press conference in Jerusalem. All of this had at least as much to do with internal French politics as with Israel. At home, Jospin's statements represented not just a show of support for his friend Ehud Barak, but also an attempt to encroach on the president's role, further diminishing Chirac's stature as the 2002 election approached.

Chirac tried to regain the psychological advantage by calling on Jospin to explain himself. Jospin ignored the summons. As with previous clashes between them, this affair ended with newspaper articles more or less "inspired" by those close to the two antagonists. In the final analysis, Jospin appeared to have come out somewhat weakened, receiving criticism for taking the initiative on a matter of foreign affairs without appropriate consultation. Even worse, by becoming a target for rock throwers, he bore the brunt of an attack on France's image.

The Israeli-Arab conflict once again took over French politics toward the end of the year, this time in a much more dramatic way. On October 4, following the initial clashes between Israelis and Palestinians, Ehud Barak and Yasir Arafat met at the American embassy in Paris under the auspices of U.S. Secretary of State
Madeleine Albright. Apparently the two sides were very close to reaching an agreement, which was to be signed that night and then ratified the next day at Sharm el-Sheikh. At the last minute Arafat refused to sign, and as a result Barak refused to go to Sharm el-Sheikh.

Barak’s people pointed an accusing finger at Jacques Chirac. According to them, the French president not only behaved badly toward the Israeli prime minister, but also encouraged Arafat to refuse to sign the document prepared by Madeleine Albright. Still according to Israeli sources, Chirac, mortified that international negotiations were taking place in Paris without his involvement, supported Arafat by calling for an international inquiry into the events of the previous days as a way to gain recognition for France’s role in the process. Those who accompanied Barak also reported that the French president’s manner toward the Israeli prime minister was less than diplomatic, and that he criticized the Israeli army’s behavior on the basis of what he had seen “on television.”

The Élysée Palace denied these accusations. The palace stated—and journalists close to the president wrote—that France had consistently encouraged an Israeli-Palestinian agreement and had called for a return to calm. But whatever role Chirac actually played, the widespread impression in Israel that France had been less than helpful was underscored by the anti-Israel position taken by most of the French media.

On September 30 a public television station, France 2, showed the killing of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy who had been caught with his father in a cross fire between Israelis and Palestinians at Netzarim junction. These images and others like them, widely broadcast, elicited strong indignation from the public, to whom no one had explained the background or the political context surrounding the clashes. On October 7 several far-left groups organized a demonstration in Paris, with participation from Arab groups. During the demonstration cries of “Jewish assassins” and “death to the Jews” could be heard. It would take several days for the organizers to issue a public condemnation of such slogans.

The degree to which France had become the battleground for an unprecedented crisis in relations between the Jews and the Arab-Muslim community was already evident earlier in the year in the treatment of the Jewish singer Enrico Macias. Following a long and brilliant career in popular music, the singer revisited the style of his youth: Judeo-Arab-Andalusian music. Accompanied by an orchestra of Muslim Algerians, Macias hoped to help bring reconciliation between the communities (see AJYB 2000, p. 312). A triumphal concert at Espace Rachi, a Jewish center in Paris, aroused great hopes, and Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika invited Macias to give a series of concerts around the country in March 2000. A delegation of Algerian Jews was prepared to accompany him, many of them hoping that this would lead to a renewal of relations that would have an impact at the international (Israel-Algeria) level. But Muslim groups in Algeria orchestrated a protest against the “Zionist” Macias, and the trip was canceled (officially “put off sine die”) at the last minute.

In late November, with the violent Israeli-Palestinian confrontation already in
its second month, Macias was scheduled to perform in Roubaix, a city in northern France with a significant Algerian immigrant population. In an effort to have the concert canceled, some residents launched a demonstration ostensibly in defense of the Palestinian people and against the pro-Israel Macias. Journalists who were there heard protests against "the Jew who sings in Arabic." Emotions ran high, but in the end the concert did take place, with the usual Algerian orchestra, in a jam-packed hall—and under the protection of 2,000 police officers.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

**MIDDLE-EAST Fallout**

According to a nationwide poll by the BVA Institute published in October 2000 by *Télérama* (a weekly paper that reports on cultural news and belongs to a large Catholic newspaper chain), 71 percent of the French population believed that "the confrontations in the Middle East could revive anti-Semitism in France" and 77 percent believed that events in the Middle East could "lead to violent clashes between Jews and Arabs in France." The wording of the poll, however, was far from reality. There were hardly any "violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs"—the attacks were almost exclusively one-way.

Starting in early October, dozens of anti-Jewish incidents were reported. According to statistics compiled by the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for the national police, 43 synagogues were attacked, three cemeteries were desecrated, and in nine cases Jewish schools, teachers, students, or the buses transporting them were the targets of violence. Thirty-nine attacks were directed at people coming out of a synagogue, Jews at home, or property belonging to Jews. Eleven businesses were vandalized (in at least one case, the owner—a baker in Strasbourg named Blum who was not Jewish—was a victim of mistaken identity). Other attacks were directed at police standing guard at Jewish sites, or their vehicles. The count included 44 attempted arson attacks (carried out mostly with Molotov cocktails); 33 cases of damage in which shots were fired, rocks were thrown, or windows were broken; and 33 personal attacks, which left 11 wounded. In the most spectacular of these attacks, on October 10 three Molotov cocktails were thrown into a synagogue in Les Ulis, a Paris suburb. The synagogue suffered some fire damage, but the rabbi, who was on the scene, was unhurt. These attacks generated a feeling of insecurity in the Jewish community.

There were a couple of instances of far-right agitators trying to benefit from the situation. Members of a small neo-Nazi organization called the Union Defense Group (GUD) created a disturbance on October 11 in a Paris university, burning an Israeli flag and throwing around pamphlets entitled "Zionists, out of the faculties!" which concluded with the slogan, "In Paris as in Gaza, Intifada!" The only other anti-Semitic act claimed by the far right during this period was the attempted burning of a university building outside Paris on October 19.

Apart from these two incidents, all the attacks seemed to have come from
young Muslim Arab immigrants. Living in neighborhoods rife with social problems where violence and petty crimes were part of daily life, they allowed the events in the Middle East to direct their aggression toward their Jewish neighbors. There was nothing to suggest that they belonged to any organized political or religious organizations or that their actions were coordinated. A certain amount of latent anger had been accumulating for years, sustained primarily by watching the Jewish community’s steady economic success. Now it was inflamed by identification with the Palestinians, both on national (Arab) and religious (Muslim) grounds. The sensationalism and lack of balance in French media coverage of developments in the Middle East probably also played a role in encouraging these acts.

Police officials, taken by surprise, initially adopted a measured approach, in accordance with their general policy of keeping a low profile in “problem” neighborhoods. But the authorities soon realized that what had originally appeared to be local conflicts could potentially spark a larger and more dangerous movement. Jewish communal officials appealed successfully to national leaders. President Chirac declared that acts of violence against Jewish citizens were “unacceptable,” and Prime Minister Jospin announced that the government would act firmly and use all necessary means to control the violence. The police began to arrest young people suspected of participating in arson attacks on Jews. These arrests had the immediate effect of reducing the number of incidents, in turn confirming the theory that they were individual and not organized actions.

Tensions decreased considerably after France’s highest-ranking religious leaders—Joseph Sitruk, the chief rabbi; Dalil Boubakeur, director of the Muslim Institute of the Grand Mosque of Paris; Jean-Arnold de Clermont, president of the Protestant Federation of France; and Louis-Marie Billé, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference—made a solemn appeal “to maintain an atmosphere of calm and peace.” Local leaders worked to calm emotions within the Muslim communities. While Jewish-Muslim relations were certainly not repaired, at least the attacks and threats against Jews subsided and were no longer daily occurrences by the end of the year.

In its annual report for 2000, the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (an advisory body under the aegis of the prime minister’s office) published comments from the Ministry of the Interior about the anti-Jewish attacks that took place in the last quarter of the year. Highlighting the point that “the far right claimed responsibility for only two of these incidents,” the report affirmed that “the violence that marked the last quarter of the year essentially came from the immigrant population which found a target for its resentment and sense of exclusion.” The 42 interrogations conducted by police showed that none of the suspects “are known for an Islamic-militant profile.” Rather, “most of the individuals implicated are just involved in criminal activities and do not claim affiliation with any particular ideology. Adolescents and unemployed adults for the most part, the perpetrators nevertheless appear animated by a general hostility
toward Israel, exacerbated by media reports of confrontation, leading to their projection into a conflict that in their eyes mirrors the dynamics of exclusion and failure of which they see themselves as victims in France." The incidents were, in fact, highly concentrated in specific locations, which the Ministry of the Interior delicately defined as "places containing an outpouring of urban violence."

For the year 2000 the Ministry of the Interior recorded 146 "violent racist and anti-Semitic acts," a category including acts against any minority group. Not only was this the highest figure since 1990, but it marked a whopping 265-percent jump since the year before, when there were 40 such acts. This rise was entirely attributable to anti-Semitism, as 116 of the 146 "violent racist and anti-Semitic acts" in 2000—close to 80 percent—were against Jews, and violence against members of other groups remained stable. There had already been a slight rise in anti-Semitic incidents in 1999 to nine, 22 percent of the total. Before that, only one such act was recorded in 1998, three in 1997, one in 1996 and two, including one isolated case involving a death, in 1995. Clearly, the explosion of violence did not occur in a vacuum: France experienced the crisis sparked by events in the Middle East as a catastrophe threatening intergroup relations in the country.

The chronology of anti-Semitic violence in 2000 was highly significant. Only five incidents were reported between January and September, a number corresponding to the previous year's level. There were 77 incidents between the end of September and mid-October; then the number decreased to 26 in the second half of October and to seven in November; in December, only one case of anti-Semitic violence was noted. Thus two-thirds of the recorded violent anti-Semitic acts during 2000—representing more than half of all violent racist incidents for the entire year—took place in the first half of October, the two weeks immediately following the outbreak of violence in Israel and the territories.

These statistics indicated that anti-Semitic violence in 2000 was an unprecedented phenomenon, tied to exceptional circumstances. Even calling the incidents anti-Semitic is somewhat misleading since the perpetrators did not seem to have any connection with an anti-Semitic movement in the classic sense of the term. And yet a recurrence could not be ruled out. As the Ministry of the Interior's report noted, "Rapidly settling down in the final days of the year, this blaze of concentrated attacks against Jews and their property could flare up again depending on how the situation in the Middle East evolves."

Besides the data on acts of violence, the Ministry of the Interior also reported statistics on racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic "threats," that is, "threatening words or gestures, graffiti, pamphlets, lesser incidents of violence." Here too, the statistics for 2000 stood out in comparison with those of previous years. Between 1997 and 1999, the ministry recorded a yearly average of 173 such "threats"—73 anti-Semitic threats and 100 other racially motivated threats, of which 70 were directed at people of North African origin. The high proportion of reported anti-Semitic threats reflected, to some extent, the fact that Jews were more likely than
others to register complaints in such cases and also their greater familiarity with the process for doing so.

In the year 2000 the numbers of incidents and the proportion of the victimized groups changed radically. The Ministry of the Interior counted a total of 722 "threats," meaning that the number of threats had more than quadrupled, reaching—as with the number of violent incidents—a new record. Of the "threats," 603 were anti-Semitic and 119 were "other" racist threats (65 of which were against people of North African origin). While the number of "other" threats was similar to that of earlier years, the number of anti-Semitic threats multiplied eightfold and represented more than 80 percent of all racially motivated threats.

During the year police charged some 60 people for making anti-Semitic threats. Of this number, only five espoused the ideas of the far right; the others belonged to pro-Palestinian circles—although the Ministry of the Interior would not put it in these terms. Compared with the 603 anti-Semitic actions, the police noted 11 that were made "in retaliation" against the Arab community. Most of these were claimed in the name of activist Jewish groups," but the claims of responsibility were not confirmed in every case.

**Tracking Racism and Anti-Semitism**

The 2000 report of the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights contained results of a public-opinion poll entitled "Xenophobia, Racism and Antiracism in France—Attitudes and Perceptions." This poll, conducted between October 2 and 14, 2000, by the Louis Harris Institute, was one in a series on this topic sponsored by the commission since the early 1990s. The clear message of the poll was that the French want minority groups to assimilate into the rest of society. This reflected the long-standing French tradition of rejecting foreigners who keep their identity of origin but accepting them once they identify with the rest of French society.

Asked which they prefer—having people of different origins (Europeans, Africans, North Africans, Asians) live in their own separate communities or integrate with the population as a whole, 68 percent chose the path of integration, while 26 percent expressed a preference for separate communities. To the question, "Do you believe that there are groups in France who live separately?" 64 percent said yes. This referred primarily to immigrants; only 3 percent of those expressing this sentiment identified "Jews" as one of the groups in question. A more "classic" form of racism persisted among a minority of respondents: the belief that "some races are inferior to others" was approved without reservation by 6 percent, and another 16 percent "somewhat" agreed. There exists, then, an irreducible core, 20–25 percent of the French population, that believes efforts to integrate are destined to fail.

Respondents were pessimistic about the evolution of French society over the next 20 years. Only 10 percent thought that people of European origin would "live
together in harmony” with those from other regions of the world; 50 percent thought that they would “live together but with tensions”; 9 percent that they would “live separately but without tensions”; and 27 percent that they would “live separately but with tensions.” These numbers were almost identical to those of the previous year, indicating that the anti-Jewish violence connected with events in the Middle East, taking place at the moment the poll was being taken, had no effect on the answers.

According to the poll, 62 percent of the French believed that racism in their country was “somewhat widespread,” while 29 percent believed that it was “very widespread.” Only 19 percent identified Jews as one of the targets of such racism, while 75 percent mentioned North Africans. In terms of their own attitudes, 43 percent said they were “a little bit racist” or “somewhat racist,” compared to 54 percent who said they were not. The responses showed some contradictions: a majority (54 percent) said that France today had “too many foreigners,” and 63 percent agreed with the statement that “most of the immigrants have a culture and way of life that is too different for them to integrate in France.” But a similar majority (62 percent) agreed with the statement that “a democracy is also judged according to its ability to integrate foreigners,” and 64 percent found the presence of people who came from non-European countries “not very disturbing.”

Once the questions moved from theory to concrete practice, French attitudes were far more liberal. Racial discrimination in the workplace, for example, was strongly condemned: 81 percent considered a refusal to hire a qualified black or North African wrong (only 4 percent considered this situation “not wrong at all”). The same was true in regard to the right to housing: 66 percent of French people judged refusing to rent to a black or North African wrong. More remarkably, 57 percent considered it wrong to oppose a child’s marriage to a black or a North African, while just 13 percent considered such a stance “not wrong at all.”

Generally speaking, these surveys have shown a decline in prejudice since the early 1990s, which may be due to higher levels of education (there has always been a strong correlation between lower levels of education and racist beliefs) and an improvement in social and economic conditions. In 1999 and 2000, however, this trend stopped and even reversed, with the indicators of racism rising, albeit not to their previous levels. In the case of Jews, for example, 21 percent of the French felt there were “too many” of them in 1991, a figure that dropped to 14 percent by 1998, only to rise to 21 percent in 1999 and 19 percent in 2000. Similar patterns held for attitudes toward Arabs and blacks, though not for Asians, for whom the level of rejection has continued to decline.

There were also other worrisome findings in the 2000 survey. While the proportion of respondents who felt there were “too many” Jews remained under 20 percent, the statement that “Jews are French people like the rest” was affirmed by only 70 percent (23 percent rejected the statement and 7 percent did not respond). The assertion that “Jews have too much power in France” was approved by 34 percent (54 percent rejected it and 12 percent did not answer). The year be-
fore, 31 percent had approved the view that "Jews have too much power in France," with 56 percent rejecting it and 13 percent declining to answer.

Political scientists Nonna Mayer and Guy Michelat, analyzing these findings, noted that the question of the Jews' power in France ("a classic question . . . in the tradition of the famous forgery created by the tsarist police, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion") had been asked years earlier, in polls taken in 1988 and 1991. Then, only 20 percent of respondents agreed that "the Jews have too much power in France." Did the jump, over the course of a decade, from 20 percent to 34 percent of the French agreeing that Jews had too much power indicate a giant leap in anti-Semitism? Mayer and Michelat did not think so, pointing out that the percentage of those with "no response" had declined by 15 points during the same period. These "latent" anti-Semites, unwilling to admit their prejudices earlier, were doing so now. In other words, there were not more anti-Semites in France, just fewer embarrassed anti-Semites.

In their analysis of the 2000 sample's subgroups, Mayer and Michelat found that animosity toward Jews was most likely to be found "among the working class and those with little education, older people, those with a right-wing orientation, those who are more authoritarian and those who are more worried about their future . . . But they also emphasized that "this anti-Semitism is breaking all records among two groups—the Gaullist right and regularly practicing Catholics." These two minority groups—11.6 percent of respondents said they were Gaullists while 7.8 percent said they were devout Catholics—must have been strongly moved by recent events.

The Gaullists were shocked by the trial of Maurice Papon, a sub-prefect under the wartime Vichy regime and subsequently a Gaullist minister, condemned to ten years in prison for "complicity in crimes against humanity." Without a doubt, the charge against someone who had served General de Gaulle for crimes he once committed against the Jews, and the presence throughout the trial of Jewish associations and individual Jews, convinced a number of RPR supporters that the Jews had too much power in France. Furthermore, President Chirac's solemn recognition in 1995 of France's responsibility for the persecution of Jews during the German occupation was not welcomed by many of the elderly, for whom the Gaullist myth of a France in "total resistance" and innocent of the crimes of Vichy was part of their national history.

Among faithful Catholics, the event that probably played a similar role in cementing the notion of Jewish power was the "declaration of repentance" pronounced by the bishops of France in 1997 at Drancy, where Jews were interned before being deported to Auschwitz. Many Catholics protested this confession by the church, one that many Jews exerted pressure to extract. Also, as Mayer and Michelat noted, the 2000 poll was taken as the situation was deteriorating in the Middle East, and therefore "uncertainties about the status of Jerusalem could have worried the most religious of the Catholic community and brought to the surface an old well of Christian anti-Semitism."
OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Around the edges of these broad trends, some more localized incidents in 2000 deserve mention. The first is what quickly become known as the Renaud Camus affair. Camus (no relation to Albert Camus) was not well-known to the general public, but had a strong following in certain intellectual circles. His method of writing was to keep a regular journal and then publish it in book form. It was his 1994 journal, published in early 2000 and called *La campagne de France* (*campagne* is a double entendre, meaning both “countryside” and military “campaign”), that led to scandal. In one of his journal entries, Camus mentioned a radio program he had heard called “Panorama” (no longer on the air) on France Culture, the cultural station of France’s public radio. Camus noted, “Five participants, and what proportion of non-Jews among them? Infinitesimal, if not nonexistent.” He then asked himself, in his personal diary, whether he was an anti-Semite. No, he answered himself. He admired the Jews’ contributions to humanity and he considered the Holocaust an abomination. But he considered it wrong to have only Jews as commentators on a public radio program about subjects of general interest, and complained that the Jews had frequently brought up subjects relating specifically to Jewish culture, the Holocaust, and Israel (as in fact they had). He suggested, in conclusion, that only someone with deep French roots could really understand things touching the essence of the country’s life, *la vie profonde*. A son or daughter of Jewish immigrants, in his view, would always suffer from not being completely integrated into national history and geography.

Though these thoughts appeared in Camus’s journal in the context of many other remarks about a wide variety of subjects, they stood out and shocked readers. Already, Camus’s regular publisher, P.O.L., had refused to publish the book because of them. At Fayard, the large publishing house that did release the book, there had been an internal debate at the highest levels, with some senior staff saying that had they been informed about the offending passages in advance they would have refused to print them. All the major French media outlets—dailies, weeklies, monthly magazines, radio, and television—covered the issue. Renaud Camus insisted that his words contained no anti-Semitism, and several of his Jewish friends agreed. But many people alarmed by the book denounced his “myth of origins” and warned that it could lead to serious consequences. In the end the book was recalled in April 2000 and then republished—with the offending passages, but with a preface by Claude Durand, director general of Fayard, in which he protested what he called a media cabal against Camus.

A quarrel of a completely different sort began with the lawsuit brought by the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) and the Union of Jewish Students of France (UEJF) against Yahoo! for giving Internet access to the auctioning of objects that are outlawed in France—Nazi insignias, anti-Semitic books, and the like. Although Yahoo!’s French affiliate obeyed French law in that its screens were free of all Nazi propaganda, access through
the French Yahoo! to sites managed by the American parent company violated the law.

The judge in the case ruled that the forbidden text and images on a French computer in France were unlawful. But since the court could not force Yahoo!'s American management to censor its own sites, the only possible solution was to "filter" access by French citizens so that the outlawed contents would not be available to them. The underlying issue—freedom of expression versus antiracism—became intertwined with a technical debate about the feasibility of such a filtering system. After months of legal proceedings and testimony from experts and counter-experts, the court ordered the filtering solution. But the difference between the approaches of countries like the U.S., where free expression had priority, and countries like France, where the expression of racism, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust denial were illegal, as well as the difficulties in monitoring messages in cyberspace, made more such disputes likely.

As was the case in other European countries, there was also anti-Semitism on the soccer field. The team in Strasbourg, in the eastern part of France, lost match after match, and the local fans blamed the coach, Claude Le Roy. Soon slogans like "Le Roy, dirty Jew" appeared on the stadium benches and in the streets of the city, apparently the work of a small group. Other Strasbourg residents, concerned about the effect such slogans might have on the reputation of a city considered the capital of Europe, came to the stadium with a banner marked "Fâchés mais pas fascistes" ("angry, but not fascist"). Le Roy was replaced by another coach, but the performance of the team did not improve. Ironically, Claude Le Roy was not Jewish, but he declined to point this out when the anti-Semitic insults against him began, not wanting to appear, even indirectly, to justify anti-Semitism.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

**Holocaust Denial**

Holocaust denial was not only forbidden under French law but also severely punished by the courts. As a result, the main French deniers, or négationnistes (a term that has become enshrined in the French political vocabulary; only the deniers themselves continue to use the word révisionnistes), such as Robert Faurisson and Roger Garaudy, have had little opportunity to express themselves in their own country. There have, however, been plenty of court cases, with penalties for denial taking the form of fines or, sometimes, suspended prison sentences.

Thus, Jean Plantin appeared in court in Lyon for having published advertisements for négationniste books in his magazine Akribeia; a teacher, Jean-Louis Berger, was put on trial in Metz for having brought up négationniste ideas in his classroom; and a Moroccan living in Sweden, Ahmed Rami, failed to appear in court in Paris and was found guilty of disseminating an anti-Semitic denial tract
on his Internet site. Henri Lewkowicz, who claimed Jewish origins through his father, called in to a radio talk show and said that the gas chambers were a fabrication; the court in Paris not only fined him but also ordered that he undergo psychiatric treatment. Finally, a sociologist, Serge Thion, was dismissed on October 4, 2000, from his position with the CNRS, the National Scientific Research Center (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). This came as a result of his numerous activities furthering the négationniste cause, in the service of which he had used his friendship with the American academic Noam Chomsky. The CNRS's decision-making bodies, made up of scholars known for their commitment to freedom of expression, determined that in this case Thion's négationniste activism impaired his scientific work and damaged the institution's reputation.

**OTHER HOLOCAUST-RELATED MATTERS**

Both houses of Parliament unanimously passed an act establishing a "national day to remember the victims of the racist and anti-Semitic crimes of the État français [the Vichy collaborationist regime led by Philippe Pétain between 1940 and 1944] and to honor the 'Justes' [righteous people] of France." This law essentially repeated the substance of an order signed in 1993 by President François Mitterrand, which required authorities in every department in France to organize a commemorative event on July 16. (This was the anniversary of the roundup of 13,000 Jews in Paris, the so-called "Vél d'Hiv roundup," carried out by French police in 1942 on behalf of the Germans. Actually, the commemoration was to be on July 16 only if it was a Sunday; otherwise it would take place on the nearest Sunday.) What Parliament's action accomplished, however, was to strengthen the impact of the presidential order by giving it the force of law. In addition, Mitterand's order had not mentioned the Justes, who had protected or defended Jews. Finally, the law's reference to the "the racist and anti-Semitic crimes of the État français" was more precise and forceful than the one in the earlier presidential order: "racist and anti-Semitic persecutions committed by the de facto authority called the 'gouvernement de l'État français.'"

At almost exactly the same time, legal proceedings were launched against 84-year-old Michel Junot, who had been sub-prefect of Pithiviers, south of Paris, during the German occupation. These were undertaken after a complaint was filed by Marc Korenbajzer, whose half-sister Aline was arrested by French police on July 16, 1942, interned in a French camp, and then deported by the Germans to Auschwitz where she was killed at the age of three. Korenbajzer maintained that he had proof Michel Junot was performing the duties of sub-prefect at the time when Jewish families—primarily women and children—were interned in camps in the Pithiviers region. He also maintained that Junot had direct authority over the camps, which made him an accomplice in crimes against humanity, something for which there was no statute of limitations under French law.

Junot, however, stated that he took up his duties only on August 26, 1942,
which time the Jews interned in Pithiviers and the surrounding region had already been transferred. In some respects, this controversy was similar to the case of Maurice Papon (see AJYB 2000, pp. 309–10). Like Papon, Junot maintained that he was a double agent working for the Gaullist resistance, and, like Papon, he became a civil servant and then a politician after the war (he was assistant to the mayor of Paris, then a member of the National Assembly representing the right). And finally, as Papon did when he was accused, Junot launched a defamation suit against his accuser. The official inquiry was still in progress as the year ended.

On the subject of Papon, who was sentenced to ten years in prison for “complicity in crimes against humanity” as a result of his activities as sub-prefect in Bordeaux under the German occupation, his lawyers made repeated requests for his freedom on grounds of poor health. Although he had launched a protest in the European Court of Human Rights against both the conduct of his trial and the conditions of his detention, Papon was still in prison at the end of 2000.

Prime Minister Jospin headed the large French delegation to the international conference on the Holocaust held in Stockholm in late January 2000. As a concrete result of French participation in this conference, a book about the Holocaust by two Swedish historians was translated and distributed free in French schools.

During a conference on the Judeo-Spanish heritage held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in mid-April, an interesting point about the Holocaust came up. Although plaques in 19 different languages had been placed at Auschwitz-Birkenau to commemorate the victims, there is no plaque in Judeo-Spanish, the mother tongue of Europe’s Sephardi Jews. Professor Haim-Vidal Sephiha, who pioneered the teaching of that language at the University of Paris and taught it there for many years, started a petition to add a plaque in Judeo-Spanish. The petition was widely distributed during 2000, but its demand had not yet been put into effect at the end of the year.

RESTITUTION

On April 17, 2000, the “study commission on the plundering of the Jews of France” submitted its final report. Established in February 1997 by then-prime minister Alain Juppé and confirmed in October of the same year by his successor, Lionel Jospin, its main task was to determine the scope of the theft of Jewish property between 1940 and 1944 by the German occupiers and the Vichy collaborationist regime for which there had been no restitution after the war. Jean Matteoli chaired the commission, and Professor Ady Steg, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, was its guiding force. With the help of historians, archivists and senior civil servants placed at its disposal, it examined all the documents relating to the period.

The conclusions reached were first and foremost moral. “Plundering and pillage,” it said in its 3,000-page report, which was published by the prime minis-
ter's office and was the subject of much comment in the press, "are intimately tied into the process of the destruction of the Jews of France . . . . Because we had to assess the scope of the plunder for which there had been no reparation or indemnity, we had to calculate, and sometimes to adopt the cold mathematical reasoning involved in keeping accounts. But what is irreparable in the Holocaust is the murder of men, women and children, the agony of a portion of Judaism."

The report described in detail the ways in which Jewish property was plundered: bank accounts were frozen; businesses were aryenized; furniture and real estate were seized; and banknotes, jewels, and other objects were taken from Jews when they were interned in the camps from which they were subsequently deported to Auschwitz.

After the war, restitution was made for the vast majority of the goods plundered in these ways. For some goods, however, there had been neither restitution nor reimbursement, either because their owners had been killed and no heirs had come forward, or because the survivors had not wanted to undertake proceedings. Most of the Jews in France who were victims of the Holocaust (about 78,000 people, 25 percent of the Jews living in France at the time) were recent immigrants, and many were very poor. While taken individually the goods they left behind did not amount to much, in total, however, the Matteoli Commission's experts calculated that the unclaimed goods, along with heirless bank accounts and aryanizations for which there was no restitution, had a total current value of 2.4 billion francs.

Even before it submitted its final report, the Matteoli Commission made three recommendations, all of which were adopted by the government. The first dealt with the establishment of a special commission to examine individual restitution claims that had not yet been satisfied. This was set up in late 1999 with Pierre Drai—a Jew of Algerian origin and former president of the Court of Cassation, the highest position in the French justice system—as chair. In studying the files it has generally been favorably disposed toward claims for restitution, taking account of the fact that after more than 55 years written proof that property was plundered was often no longer available. Through an extraordinary government ruling, the Drai Commission's decisions would be binding on public authorities, and restitution would be paid out of the government's budget.

The second recommendation concerned Jewish orphans whose parents were deported. The surviving orphans, now retired, would receive special compensation in the form of a pension because, unlike other orphans who lost their parents during the war, they were themselves victims of discriminatory measures that made their reintegration into society after liberation more difficult. The government adopted this recommendation in July 2000 and began to implement it. This preferential treatment for Jewish orphans was challenged, notably by organizations representing those who were deported for acts of resistance (some of them were also Jewish). These organizations did not demand cancellation of the new measure, but that it should be extended to all categories of victims. The government
rejected their demand, and early in 2001 the State Council, the highest court with
authority for administrative matters, upheld the government’s decision, endors-
ing the Mattéoli Commission’s argument that the dual persecution in the case of
the Jews justified unequal treatment.

The commission’s third recommendation was for the creation of a Remem-
brane Foundation. Its initial endowment would come from the government in
the amount of the plundered property that could not be restored to private in-
dividuals, a total of more than 2 billion francs. This endowment would be aug-
mented by contributions from the major French banks, and eventually from other
sources. The foundation, to be established during 2001, would be chaired by Si-
none Veil—a prominent Jewish political figure, former cabinet minister, and
member of the Constitutional Council (the college of magistrates responsible for
ensuring that the constitution is respected). She had been deported to Auschwitz
as a teenager. The foundation’s decision-making bodies were to be made up in
large part of representatives of the major French Jewish organizations. Its main
goal, as expressed by Prime Minister Jospin when he met with leaders of CRIF,
the Conseil Réprsentatif des Institutions Juives de France (Representative Coun-
cil of Jewish Institutions of France), on November 4, 2000, was “to develop re-
search and disseminate knowledge about the anti-Semitic persecutions and at-
tacks on the rights of the human person perpetrated during the Second World
War, as well as about the victims of these persecutions.” The foundation was also
supposed to support initiatives taken by associations helping victims of perse-
cution, keep track of efforts to restore goods plundered by the Nazis, and con-
tribute to the education of French children about this period of history.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Education

There were about 100 Jewish schools offering full-time instruction. Private
schools remained a minority phenomenon in France. Most French children
were educated in public schools, and the Ministry of National Education was
directly responsible for all aspects of the curriculum of these schools. Only 16
percent of children attended private schools, the vast majority of which—about
80 percent—were Catholic.

Most of the Jewish schools operated under contract with the Ministry of Na-
tional Education and followed the rules laid down by the 1959 act that governs
“free schools,” that is private schools. A small number of private schools were not
under contract, and thus could determine their own curricula. However under leg-
islation governing compulsory education to the age of 16, authorities had over-
sight over the content of these curricula to ensure that each student received suf-
ficient instruction so that he or she could later transfer to a school under contract
with the ministry. The "without-contract" formula existed mostly at the primary level; at higher levels of education the "under-contract" formula was more widespread. (To make things more complex, the government limited the number of new classes under contract so as not to disturb the balance of budgetary allocations between public and private education, and this meant that there could be classes under contract and classes without contracts in the same private school.)

The so-called "association" contract, the kind most frequently used in Jewish schools, distinguished between the subjects also taught in the public schools and those specific to the special mission of the private school, in this case Jewish studies. For the general subjects, a private school under contract had to follow the program and the number of hours allotted per week as determined by the ministry. The government paid the salaries of teachers of general subjects directly, and also made a lump-sum payment toward the cost of running the school. Other costs, notably salaries for Jewish-studies teachers, were the responsibility of the school, which passed them on to the parents in the form of tuition fees.

A growing number of Jewish families, eager to instill Jewish identity in their children and also aware of the declining educational level of many of the public schools, were willing to make the financial sacrifice. In 2000 there were about 24,000 students in Jewish schools that had at least some classes operating under contract with the Ministry of National Education, as compared to 16,500 students ten years earlier. A little over 80 percent studied in classes under contract, and the rest in classes without contracts. The number of students in Jewish schools operating entirely without contracts was estimated at 2,000–2,500, so that, in all, there were more than 26,000 students in Jewish day schools. On the basis of prevailing assumptions about the Jewish population of France and its demographic structure, that would represent some 20–25 percent of the relevant age group.

In a sense, the Jewish school system in France was growing too fast, without the resources to match its numerical strength. The quality of the 500–600 teachers specializing in Jewish subjects was uneven. Their training was in some cases inadequate, and their lack of real status put them at the mercy of all-powerful principals, a situation that did not encourage innovation. Furthermore, the fragmentation of the system made it hard to develop standard textbooks and other materials for Jewish education.

**Communal Affairs**

On June 25 Jean Kahn was reelected president of the Central Consistory of France, the organization responsible for the administration of Jewish religious affairs in the country, with 70 percent of the vote.

In Paris, the year 2000 was marked by the dedication of a number of public spaces to the memory of Jewish figures. Place Jacob Kaplan, named after the former chief rabbi of France, was inaugurated near Paris's most important syna-
gogue, the Synagogue de la Victoire. A garden in one of the city's new green spaces was named Jardin Itzhak Rabin. And finally, those who had helped save Jews during the Holocaust were honored when a street near the Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr, in central Paris near the banks of the Seine, was given the name Allée des Justes.

Kosher Slaughter

An interesting legal case concerning kosher slaughter concluded in 2000. For years, Chaare Shalom VeTsedek, a Jewish association, had fought the French government for the authority to carry out ritual slaughter. Regulations in France, as in a number of other European countries, provide that animals have to be immobilized and stunned—that is, rendered unconscious—before being put to death. An exception is made for the Jewish religion to allow kosher slaughter, but only if the slaughterer has certification from the "intercommunity rabbinical commission" recognized by the French government (more precisely, by the Ministry of Agriculture, acting on the recommendation of the Ministry of the Interior). This commission, in turn, is under the authority of the Paris Consistory—which in legal terms is the representative of the Central Consistory, the body that, since the time of Napoleon I, has been the government's partner of choice for everything related to the Jewish religion.

In practice, the Paris Consistory allowed a number of other religious organizations to be represented on the commission, thus delegating some of its authority in this area to these organizations, which represented "strictly observant" groups, some of which had their own kashrut labels. However some certified slaughterers seceded from the consistory entirely and provided kosher meat independently. This was the origin of the Chaare Shalom VeTsedek association, which provided meat to some 20 butcher shops and ten restaurants in the Paris region, and frozen meat to several dozen stores outside Paris, for sale to consumers. Chaare Shalom VeTsedek was actually slaughtering animals illegally, since only the commission run by the Paris Consistory could certify ritual slaughterers. It was against this state of affairs that the association brought its complaint, claiming that the consistory's monopoly violated French law as well as international agreements to which France was a signatory.

There was more at stake here than met the eye. Jewish religious organizations in France were financially dependent on revenue from services provided to religious Jews, especially the tax levied for placing the "kosher" label on food products. The Paris Consistory charged a slaughtering tax of about eight francs per kilogram of meat ready for sale, and this alone made up half of the consistory's revenue. Chaare Shalom VeTsedek's tax was half that, four francs per kilogram. Not surprisingly, the consistory made every effort to retain its monopoly.

The French government preferred the monopoly principle as well, for its own reasons. It has traditionally taken a dim view of the proliferation of religious
groups, fearing a drift toward sectarianism that could pose a threat to public order. It wanted to abide by the Napoleonic concept of having a single interlocutor for each recognized religion, and thus the Ministry of the Interior backed the consistory’s monopoly.

A more complicated problem looming behind the Jewish case was its possible implications for Islam. In 2000 there were more than three million Muslims in France, making them the second largest religious group in the country (behind the Catholics, of course, but well ahead of the roughly one million Protestants). Since a large majority of Muslims were immigrants or the children of immigrants, the mosques and Islamic schools had a distinctively foreign ambience. On the understanding that Islam would have to become culturally French before it could be integrated into French society and that some unified Muslim body was the best protection against the emergence of militant Islam, the government had already circulated proposals, in draft form, for the creation of a federation of French Muslims with its own institutions and training centers. In a word, the government would do everything it could to encourage the emergence of an Islamic interlocutor that would be the equivalent of the Jewish consistory. A first step would be to have one Muslim authority dealing with the provision of halal meat, the Islamic equivalent of kosher meat, instead of the several that were handling it. To accomplish this it was necessary to forestall the precedent that legal recognition of institutional pluralism in the area of kosher slaughtering would represent.

Initially, it was the consistory that had opened hostilities, accusing Chaare Shalom VeTsedek of “misrepresenting merchandise” when it placed a kosher label on meat sold in its butcher shops. However a court decided in 1987 that separation of church and state did not allow it to intervene in this area. The same year, Chaare Shalom VeTsedek appealed to public authorities, asking for certification to practice ritual slaughtering legally. The Ministry of the Interior opposed the request, maintaining that Chaare Shalom VeTsedek was not a “representative religious group.” The affair then went before the Paris administrative tribunal (in France cases concerning the operations of the state are brought before special courts), which decided in favor of the government in 1989 because the association did not carry out activities relating to “the public exercise of the Israelite religion.” The State Council, the appeals court that hears cases from the administrative tribunal, upheld this decision in 1994.

Chaare Shalom VeTsedek had only one legal recourse left: the European Court of Human Rights, sitting in Strasbourg, which heard complaints brought against European states. The association filed its complaint in 1995 and the hearing was held in December 1999. Chaare Shalom VeTsedek accused the French government of violating its members’ religious freedom. The 17 judges, representing a variety of European nations, rendered their decision on May 31, 2000, and made it public on June 27. A majority agreed with the French government that there had been no violation of religious freedom. However seven of the judges dissented, arguing that the principle of religious freedom implied respect for pluralism, and
that the state should not grant a monopoly to an organization. That minority opinion, should it ever prevail, would threaten the entire relationship between government and religion in France, and have a profound impact on the future of Islam in the country.

Publications

Among the books of Jewish significance published in France during 2000 were: Marc Weitzmann’s Mariage mixte (Mixed Marriage); Walter Appel’s L’histoire véridique d’Antôn Fiddler et autres récits (The True Story of Antôn Fiddler and Other Stories); Michèle Hechter’s M. et M. (M. and M.); Michèle Kahn’s La pourpre et le jasmin (Purple and Jasmine); La liberté n’est à personne (Freedom Belongs to No One), poems by Jacques Givet; Juste une petite valse (Just a Little Waltz), short stories by Cyrille Fleischman; Alain Jomy’s Heureux comme à Monterey (Happy as in Monterey); Jacques Lanzmann’s Imagine la Terre promise (Imagine the Promised Land); Sylvie Weil’s Les vendanges de Rachi (Rashi’s Vintages); Actes de présence (Acts of Presence), poems by Alain Suied; and Marc Petit’s L’utopie du docteur Kakerlak (Doctor Kakerlak’s Utopia). In the realm of ideas: Henri Meschonnic’s Poétique du traduire (The Poetics of Translation); Jacquot Grunewald’s Chalom, Jésus! (Shalom, Jesus!); Gérard Bensussan’s Franz Rosenzweig, existence et philosophie (Franz Rosenzweig, Existence and Philosophy); George-Elia Sarfati’s Le Vatican et la Shoah (The Vatican and the Holocaust); Albert Memmi’s Le nomade immobile (The Immobile Nomad); Shmuel Trigano’s Le monotheisme est un humanisme (Montheism Is a Form of Humanism); Alain Finkielkraut’s Une voix vient de l’autre rive (A Voice Comes from the Other Shore); and Bernard-Henri Lévy’s Le siècle de Sartre (Sartre’s Century).

Personalia

Jean Kahn, president of the Central Consistory of France, was named a commander of the Legion of Honor; and Serge Klarsfeld, lawyer and historian, was named an officer of the Legion of Honor.

Among prominent Jews who died in 2000 were Jacques Cypel, publisher until 1996 of the Yiddish daily Unzer Wort, 88, on January 5; Moshé Zalcmann, a former Communist who wrote a book about his life under Stalin that was translated from Yiddish into French, 92, on March 7; Lilly Scherr, academician and a leading figure in French Jewish cultural circles, 73, on March 30; Gisèle Freund, photographer born in Germany, 91, on March 31; Eliahu Ben-Elissar, Israel’s ambassador to France, 68, on August 12; Serge Lebovici, psychoanalyst, 85, on August 12.

Meir Waintrater
The Netherlands

National Affairs

The Netherlands remained the most densely populated country in Europe. Its population at the end of 2000 was nearly 16 million, about 140,000 more than a year before and one million more than at the end of 1990. The increase was due partly to natural increase and partly to immigration, mainly from third-world countries. The Dutch, in fact, were increasingly aware that they were living in a multicultural society.

The Netherlands, in 2000, experienced relative political stability and economic prosperity. The government coalition, made up of Labor (PvdA), the Conservative Liberals (VVD), and, as a minor partner, the Centrum-left Democrats 1966 (D'66), had come into office in August 1998 under the leadership of Premier Willem Kok (PvdA). Several public-opinion polls carried out during 2000, culminating in one taken at the very end of the year, showed that had a parliamentary election been held, the three largest parties—the PvdA, the VVD, and the opposition Christian Democrats (CDA)—would each have gained or lost only one seat. However, D'66, which had already lost half of its representation in the 1998 election, would have again lost heavily, and the two extreme left-wing parties—the Green Left, under Paul Rosenmoller, and the Socialist Party (SP) would have made striking gains. Remarkably, only 2.9 percent of the adult population belonged to any political party.

The economy grew at a rate of 3.5 percent, with low inflation. Exports increased by some 20 percent in 2000, in particular to Eastern Europe and the United States, and Dutch companies carried out some 300 takeovers of foreign firms, some in the United States. There was a boom in the building industry, with home prices rising astronomically due to the consumers' greater purchasing power, the shortage of houses for sale, and the relative ease in obtaining mortgages. Beside the full employment that characterized the building trades, hospitals, schools, cafés, and restaurants had great difficulty finding sufficient staff. There were, however, still about 190,000 registered unemployed, mostly people who were considered unemployable, among them many who could hardly speak Dutch.

For the first time in many years the government budget showed a surplus, amounting to some 2 percent, due to higher revenue from taxes and a reduction of government payments to the declining number of unemployed. A difference of opinion arose over what to do with this surplus, the VVD wanting to reduce the size of the considerable state debt, and the PvdA and D'66 preferring to use
it for education and health care. A compromise was reached, and the money was
divided to reflect the priorities of both political blocs.

In November, by a large majority, the Second Chamber of Parliament ap-
proved the practice of euthanasia so long as the patient has requested it, the phys-
ical suffering is unbearable and cannot be ameliorated, and the doctor’s assess-
ment is supported by a second opinion. There was severe criticism from abroad,
in particular from the Vatican. In another controversial decision and with a sim-
ilar strong majority, the Second Chamber legalized the official registration of
marriage between two men or between two women. Such couples would also have
the right to adopt a child, though contrary regulations in other countries would
largely limit this to the adoption of Dutch children.

The number of applicants for political asylum rose from some 40,000 in 1999
to roughly 45,000 in 2000, or some 700 a week, and the shortage of space to house
them necessitated the construction of additional special centers; there were four
of these centers in Amsterdam alone. The majority of the asylum-seekers came
from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia, and it was often difficult to deter-
mine whether applicants were fleeing political persecution or had economic rea-
sons for coming. As each case had to be judged individually, and as rejected ap-
plicants had the right to appeal—a process that could drag on for years—many
of these centers remained full as the year ended, and some 53,000 cases remained
unresolved. Further complicating matters, even applicants who lost their cases
sometimes refused to return to their country of origin, were refused admission
by that country, or claimed to have lost their identity papers. Another contro-
versial group consisted of some 550 arrivals each month who were unaccompa-
nied minors, or persons claiming to be minors, and who, according to interna-
tional agreements, could not be returned to their countries of origin. In the
expectation that asylum applications would rise drastically in 2001 due to the
more stringent regulations for admission issued by neighboring Germany, Par-
liament voted, on December 11, to streamline the investigation process over a five-
year period.

Immigrants from third-world countries and their children born in the Nether-
lands (the two largest groups were Moroccan and Turkish), were becoming an in-
creasingly visible presence. Though the opening of the first Buddhist and Hindu
temples in Amsterdam indicated the diverse origins of this migration, Muslims
were far more numerous. Over half of them lived in the country’s four largest
cities, and it was estimated that within four years they would constitute 50 per-
cent of the population in those cities. Already, non-Europeans made up the ma-
jority of students at many of the nation’s elementary schools. The unemployment
rate among these families was far higher than in the general population, and there
was resentment at the strong links many of them maintained to their countries
of origin.

There were some 50 Muslim elementary schools in the country, where, in ad-
dition to the standard Dutch curriculum, pupils were taught Islam and started
the day with Muslim prayers. Like other denominational schools, they were largely financed by the government. In September, the first Muslim secondary school opened, in Rotterdam, with some 350 pupils, though it soon ran into difficulties enforcing its stringent dress code, and government inspectors found that the curriculum did not meet national standards. The year before, an Islamic University had opened in Rotterdam to train imams for the Dutch Muslim community. In Utrecht, performance of the play *Aysha*, about the wife of the Prophet Mohammed, was discontinued after Muslim protests. There was a common perception that an increasing number of young Muslims were fasting during the month of Ramadan, and a public-opinion poll showed that some 90 percent of Muslim young people intended to follow the religion of their parents, as compared to 27 percent for both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

**Israel and the Middle East**

Holland generally conformed to the European Union’s Middle East policy. A nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council in the second half of 2000, the Netherlands was consistently critical of Israeli policy in the territories, and voted for the October 7 Security Council resolution (passed 14-0, with the U.S. abstaining) criticizing Israel. It abstained, though, along with six other EU states, from the October 20 General Assembly vote that blamed Israel for the upsurge in violence.

Premier Kok visited Israel and the Palestinian autonomous areas in April. He placed a wreath at Yad Vashem, met with President Weizman and Prime Minister Barak, and spoke at length with Platform Israel, an organization of Dutch-born Israeli Jews, about the restitution of Holocaust-era assets. In Bethlehem, Yasir Arafat presented Kok with a medal. A Dutch trade delegation, led by the minister of trade and industry, visited Israel in May. Throughout the year the Dutch Foreign Ministry sought to use its influence to help the Iranian Jews imprisoned in that country.

Pro-Palestinian circles in the Netherlands took steps to upgrade their public relations. In Rotterdam, the Al Aqsa Foundation was established with the aim of promoting understanding for the Palestinian cause. Another new body was the Palestinian Information Center, set up to counter the work of the pro-Israel Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI). A Palestinian tourist office was also launched to promote tourism to the Palestinian areas. Heightened Dutch sensitivity to Palestinian opinion became evident at the end of May, when the Pritzker Prize for architecture was presented to the (non-Jewish) Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, with a representative of the Dutch embassy present. Palestinians immediately protested that the wall was occupied Palestinian territory. Not only did the government of the Netherlands apologize, but Koolhaas himself visited the West Bank hoping to make amends.

The outbreak of violence in Israel and the territories that broke out at the end
of September received enormous attention in the Dutch news media, much of it sympathetic to the Palestinians. In addition to regular reports from Dutch correspondents in Israel, there was considerable coverage of the views of Dutch-born children of Palestinians and Dutch women or men whose Palestinian spouses were living in the Palestinian areas. Soon after the violence began, Moroccan youths demonstrated in Amsterdam against Israel and against Jews, shouting, "Hamas, Hamas, all Jews to the gas." At the annual national commemoration of Kristallnacht on November 10, where the theme was to have been opposition to racism and anti-Semitism, Abdou Menehbi, chairman of the Committee of Moroccan Workers in the Netherlands (KMAN) and of the newly established Society of Moroccans in Amsterdam, attacked Israel and advocated a Palestinian state. When some of the Jewish organizers objected, they were accused of stifling free speech. The pro-Palestinian InterChurch Broadcasting Company Netherlands (IKON) sent a group of young people to spend three weeks in Palestinian-controlled areas so that, on their return, they could inform the public of the Palestinian viewpoint. Liesbeth Cottof, after a visit to Gaza, wrote and produced a play for children, The Day My Father Wept, on the suffering of the Palestinians. In November, Dutch insurance companies announced that they would no longer cover travelers to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, with the exception of the southern port of Eilat.

Most disturbing, an advertisement titled "A Different Jewish Voice" appeared in Dutch newspapers on October 26 and 27. Signed by 100 Jews and persons of Jewish origin, it protested Israel's allegedly violent and arrogant behavior toward the Palestinians. The initiator of the ad was Anneke Mouthaan, an elderly woman, one of whose parents was Jewish, who had lived for a long time in the Dutch East Indies and was a leading voice in SIVMO, the Foundation for Peace in the Middle East.

Pro-Israel voices tended to be weaker. With the outbreak of the fighting, the country's Orthodox rabbis called on the Jewish community to support Israel. At the end of October, 20 Christian organizations organized a "Christians for Israel" solidarity demonstration in Amersfoort. In early November Ephraim Sneh, Israel's deputy minister of defense, visited Holland to explain the Israeli point of view, but he drew little attention. On the other hand, a meeting with Shimon Peres later that month, organized by the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) in The Hague, attracted a capacity audience despite the lack of advance publicity. Mr. Peres was also received by Premier Kok.

The specter of the 1992 crash of an El Al 747 cargo plane over the Bijlmer area in the southeastern tip of Amsterdam still haunted the country's relations with Israel. A parliamentary inquiry into the matter, whose proceedings were televised, gave much attention to the possibility that the cargo contained poisonous materials, perhaps of a secret military character, and that the health of the local residents and those who had helped them deal with the crash might have been damaged. The fact that the plane's voice recorder was never found added to the suspicions, as did Israel's reluctance to hand over some relevant documents.
The commission finally presented its report on April 21, 2000, and it was less unfavorable to Israel and to El Al than had been feared. It found no evidence of any conspiracy to cover up the truth, though it did give credence to some of the complaints of those who had been near the crash site that their health had been affected. The Second Chamber of Parliament discussed the report in May, and decided that the government should pay for medical examinations of all those who had physical complaints that might be related to the Bijlmer disaster. The small original number rose to 38 after a personal-injury lawyer went around collecting names, and by the end of the year there were about 5,000 people seeking the financial compensation made available to those with proof that a health problem was related to the crash. Most hospitals, arguing that too much time had passed to determine the health effects of the crash, refused to conduct examinations, so that in the end only two Amsterdam hospitals performed them. As it turned out, only a small number of those who had originally registered for the exams kept their appointments, and even so, the exams were not completed by the end of the year. Evidence of declining popular interest in the case came on October 4, when the annual commemoration of the crash drew only a few hundred people.

**Anti-Semitism and Extremism**

In contrast to the situation in Belgium and France, no extreme right-wing political party was represented in the Dutch Parliament. The Center Democrats (CD), who had lost their only seat in the Second Chamber of Parliament in 1998, were insignificant, and the even more extreme Nederlandse Volks Unie had dwindled down to a few diehards. There was apparently a very strong social taboo against anti-Semitism, indeed, against racism generally, which was all the more remarkable in light of the large number of immigrants from third-world countries. Indeed, such immigrants and their Dutch-born children were represented in the Second Chamber of Parliament and in several municipal councils. Despite an alarming increase in the crime rate, few incidents were of a racial or anti-Semitic nature. The theme of the annual pop festival north of Amsterdam that drew tens of thousands of young people was "Racism—Beat It," though the participants were surely more attracted by the music than by the theme.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

The renovated Anne Frank House in Amsterdam was officially reopened on April 24 by Prime Minister Kok, and it sponsored an exhibit on "The Seductions of Nationalism." The Holocaust was also commemorated during the year with ceremonies at a number of other places: Schoorl, near Alkmaar, which in 1941 served for some months as a concentration camp from where the inmates were deported to Mauthausen; Rotterdam, near the former Shed 24, from which the first Jews were deported on July 24, 1942; Hollandse Schouwburg, the disused Amsterdam theater which served as the collecting point for Jews to be deported
to Westerbork from 1942 till 1944; and Buitenveldert, the new southern suburb of Amsterdam, where a modest monument was unveiled depicting a Jewish child guided to a hiding place by a non-Jewish man.

The appearance of a Dutch translation of Norman Finkelstein’s controversial book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, which accused Jewish organizations of using the Holocaust for their own ends, received considerable publicity, and several interviews with Finkelstein appeared in the Dutch media. He delivered a lecture in Amsterdam to a capacity audience, and, in reply to a question, said that he knew nothing about the Holocaust in Holland. In May, the Amsterdam Higher Court of Justice fined the French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson for publicly declaring that Anne Frank’s diary was a forgery.

Interest grew about the postwar indifference with which non-Jewish individuals and institutions treated the Jews who emerged from hiding or returned from the camps. A new foundation, SOTO, was established, under the auspices of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), to have some 40 young people interview survivors about their experiences. The plan was to publish these interviews in book form in 2001.

The determination of the amount of the “gold pool” and its first distributions were made in 2000. This was monetary gold, most of it originally held by the Netherlands State Bank (DNB), that the Germans had taken during the Nazi occupation and transferred to Switzerland, which had not returned it to the Netherlands till April 1999. This gold could not be proven to belong to the Jewish community or to individual Jews. The Kordes commission, set up by the government, had decided that Fl. 19 million should go to the Dutch Jewish community for cultural projects, and a much smaller amount for the Dutch victims of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies.

The distribution of the Jewish share was determined by a second commission, headed by Dick Dolman, a former chairman of the Second Chamber of Parliament and of the Netherlands-Israel Society, and whose other members represented the Committee of Jewish Organizations on External Matters (CJOEB). This body had been set up in 1997, before the problem of Jewish assets arose, to provide a common Jewish representation to the outside world, and to the Dutch government in particular. The six members of the CJOEB represented the three national Jewish congregations, the Federation of Dutch Zionists (FNZ), which existed mainly on paper, the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), and the Jewish Social Welfare Board (JMW). A considerable amount of the money was given to the newly established Crescas Foundation, which would provide popular courses on subjects of Jewish interests in communities throughout the country. Other beneficiaries were the Etz Haim Library, the weekly *Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad* (NIW), the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana for repair of books and manuscripts, and a project to compile a biographical lexicon of Jews or persons of Jewish origin who contributed significantly to 20th-century Dutch life.

The three other Dutch commissions appointed to investigate aspects of the
restitution issue published their final reports in December 1999 and January 2000. These were the Van Kemenade Commission, which dealt with the general question of compensation, the Scholten Commission, dealing with Jewish assets held by banks and insurance companies, and the Ekkart Commission, which focused on artworks in Dutch museums that had been confiscated from Jews.

Claims of individual Dutch Jews who had lived in the Netherlands at any time between May 10, 1940 and May 8, 1945 (and their heirs) against the government, insurance companies, and banks, were coordinated for the Jewish community by the CJOEB. A key role on the Jewish side of the negotiations was also played by Awraham Roet of Tel Aviv, the Dutch-born representative of Platform Israel, an ad hoc organization representing the interests of Jews of Dutch origin in Israel. The World Jewish Congress (WJC), headquartered in New York, was involved as well, though the aggressive nature of its intervention alienated many Dutch Jews.

When the government, the banks, and the insurance companies originally balked at paying the sums demanded by the CJOEB, the American state of Minnesota threatened to block the takeover by the Dutch bank ING of Reliastar in Minneapolis, and the WJC threatened to prevent the Dutch insurance company AEGON from setting up an office in the United States. The CJOEB was eventually satisfied with the solution offered by AEGON, by which some 95 percent of all life-insurance policies taken over from defunct companies whose beneficiaries could not be traced must be paid to Jewish survivors or their “deputies.” AEGON had, in fact, already honored all policies whose beneficiaries could be located. In the end, all the insurance companies together agreed to pay Fl. 50 million. Of this, Fl. 20 million would go for individual claims that might be submitted thereafter, Fl. 25 million to a foundation to be decided on by the Jewish community, and Fl. 5 million for a monument commemorating the Jews who perished.

Negotiations with the government and the banks were much more difficult. The banks pointed out that in 1953, after much litigation, they had paid back 90 percent of the value of shares confiscated from Jewish shareholders or their heirs. The CJOEB, however, wanted the remaining amount multiplied by 22 to compensate for the accrued interest. The government made a tentative offer of Fl. 250 million, later increased to Fl. 400 million, and the banks offered Fl. 314 million. Together with the insurance companies’ Fl. 50 million, the total would come to Fl. 764 million. Of that amount, Fl. 639 million would go to individual Jews or their heirs—including non-Jewish spouses and children of mixed marriages who were not Jews according to Halakhah, and who, it turned out, were almost half of the recipients—and the rest to Jewish institutions. Individuals qualifying for payments would receive about Fl. 14,000 ($5,600). Children of deceased persons who qualified for payment would have to share the sum allotted to the parent. Each person could receive only one payment, including survivors who were also heirs of survivors who died after 1945. Payments were exempt from income tax, and the amount would not count in calculating old-age pensions and other government payments.

The CJOEB and Platform Israel were generally satisfied with the settlement.
Strong criticism, however, came from the Association of Victims of Persecution (VBV), which complained that the CJOEB was unrepresentative of the Jewish community since it encompassed only the religious congregations and the Zionist organization, and charged that no money should go to Jews already married to non-Jews during the war and their children, since few of them were deported. Eight VBV members asked the president of the Amsterdam Court of Justice to set aside the settlement, but were turned down. An appeal to the Higher Court of Justice was pending as the year ended.

Advertisements were placed in the local and foreign press giving information about applying for the payments. Some 8,000 applications had been made by the end of 2000, and, on the last day of the year, the first 80 payments were made, all to persons over the age of 75. This settlement created bad feeling among other victimized groups. Those interned or used for slave labor by the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies, of whom 144,000 were still alive, resented the fact that their compensation was far less per person than that received by the Jews, and some 200 Dutch-Jewish immigrants in Israel who, or whose parents had, lived in the Dutch East Indies during the war were upset that they were treated like the other victims of the Japanese and not like the Jewish victims of the Nazis.

The Ekkart Commission concluded that few objects held by Dutch museums were of dubious origin. Those that were had been acquired at auctions during the war years, and there was no way, today, of ascertaining how those who offered them for auction had acquired them. The policy already adopted by the museums was to return the items to anyone who could prove that he or she was the original owner. The case of the Goudstikker collection, housed in a number of Dutch museums, (see AJYB 1998, pp. 276–77, 1999 pp. 313–14) dragged on. A Hague court had decided in 1999 that, by accepting a cash settlement in 1952, the widow of art dealer Jacques Goudstikker had waived all further claims to the collection. Meanwhile, both she and her only son had died, and her non-Jewish daughter-in-law, Meryl Von Saher, and her two daughters, living in New York, challenged the court decision. Russia, for its part, still refused to return archives and art objects removed from Holland by the Germans and transferred to Moscow by the Soviet army.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The results of a demographic survey of the Jews in the Netherlands, carried out by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) at the request of the Jewish Social Welfare Board (JMV), were published in October 2000. This was the first such survey in 35 years. It found a total of 45,000 Jews living in the Netherlands, of whom 7,000 had come from Israel and another 2,000 from other countries. Of the 36,000 Jews who had Dutch citizenship, nearly half were
children of mixed marriages. Though clearly a result of the trend towards assimilation, the fact that, during the German occupation, Jews married to non-Jews and their children were generally exempt from deportation, contributed to the relatively high percentage of these survivors. Only some 26 percent of Jews belonged to a Jewish congregation, 16.5 percent to the Ashkenazi Congregation (NIK), 7.5 percent to the Liberal Jewish Congregation, and 2 percent to the Sephardi Congregation. Just 7 percent of Dutch Jews said they kept kosher. Of the members of the largest religious group, the Ashkenazi Congregation, two-thirds lived in the four largest urban areas—with Amsterdam and its suburb Amstelveen having the highest number—19 percent resided in middle-sized municipalities, and 15 percent in small towns and villages.

Communal Affairs

The NIK appointed Yehuda Vorst, a son of Rabbi Isaac Vorst of Amsterdam, as a pastoral worker in Rotterdam. Both father and son belonged to Chabad-Lubavitch. The government considerably increased the allotment of radio and television broadcasting time to the NIK.

The Sephardi Congregation, whose declining numbers were concentrated in the Amsterdam area, lacked sufficient revenues to maintain its autonomous institutions. Thus the monthly Habinjan of the Amsterdam Sephardi Congregation, which had existed since 1946, now shrunk to a four-page insert in Hakehiloth, the quarterly published by the NIK. Part of the Sephardi congregation of Amsterdam held its Sabbath services in a house in Amstelveen, as their old synagogue in the center of Amsterdam was too far to walk. The Sephardim, however, declined to amalgamate with the Amstelveen Ashkenazi synagogue since they wanted to adhere to their own liturgy. The Sephardim had no full-time rabbi, though Awraham Rosenberg, the keeper of the community's Etz Haim Library, served as rabbinical assistant, and a Sephardi rabbi from London would occasionally visit.

The restoration of the Etz Haim Library was completed with money from the government gold pool (see above, p. 346). The many old books and manuscripts that had been transferred in 1967 to the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem on loan so as to prevent their deterioration were returned to Etz Haim in the autumn of 2000, and the collection was made accessible to the public. Also restored, through the assistance of volunteers, were several tombstones in the nearly 400-year-old Sephardi burial ground, Beth Haim, at Ouderkerk-on-the-Amstel, southeast of Amsterdam.

The Liberal Jewish Congregation (LJG), which received $700,000 from the gold pool, now consisted of eight local congregations, though not all of them held a service every Sabbath. The congregation of Tilburg, in the province of Noord-Brabant, restored and took over the former Ashkenazi synagogue there. At its inauguration ceremony, a number of non-Jews who had studied for conversion were officially admitted as Jews. After many years of preparation, the LJG issued a
new prayer book, compiled by the country’s six Liberal rabbis. Beside the original Hebrew text, it also contained translations from American Conservative and Reform prayer books, along with translations of modern Hebrew poems. The first edition sold out even before publication.

Culture

A number of Jewish periodicals continued to appear in the Netherlands. The Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad (NIW), founded in 1862, was the only Jewish weekly in the country. Joods Journaal was a glossy bimonthly color magazine directed at “yuppies.” The Netherlands Society for Jewish Genealogy put out the quarterly Misjopge. Studia Rosenthaliana, the biannual publication of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, was taken over by a new publisher and was now entirely in English. In the fall of 2000, the first issue of Di Grine Medine appeared, published by the recently founded Society for the Promotion of Yiddish in the Netherlands. This was the country’s first Yiddish periodical in two centuries.

Two extensive private libraries were opened to the public. One was the Yiddish library of Mira Rafalowicz, who passed away in 1998, which would now be housed in the building of the Liberal Jewish Congregation in Amsterdam. The other was the library of the late Leo Fuks, keeper of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam, which he had willed to the provincial library of Friesland, in Leeuwarden, in gratitude for the help that many residents of this province gave Jews during the German occupation. Very few Jews now live there.

Several symposia on Jewish culture took place. The Maatschappij tot Nut der Israelieten (Society for the Benefit of the Jews), which helps support Jewish institutions, celebrated its 150th anniversary in January with a symposium on the Jewish future. On March 21 there was a symposium in Amsterdam on the subject of Turkish Jewry, arranged with the cooperation of the Turkish embassy. On May 7, a symposium was held in Amersfoort on the relations between Jews in the main cities and the provinces. This was to mark the 25-year jubilee of Rabbi Benjamin Jacobs as rabbi of the NIK for Jews outside the country’s three main cities. An international Sephardi conference, attended mostly by scholars, was held in Amsterdam on October 25–27.

In other cultural news, the JMW (Jewish Social Welfare Board) held a meeting on May 22 for persons of Jewish origin who had been brought up as Christians. Half of the 34 participants had been baptized before 1940. The JMW also released “The Jewish Caravan” consisting of “cultural kits” on Jewish literature, Jewish cooking, and Jewish folk music. In August, the Amsterdam Summer University offered a course in English on the kabbalah and Jewish mysticism, which was very well attended. The lecturers and most of the students came from abroad. The annual Jewish Book Week, held in October in Amsterdam, was devoted to the work of the American novelist Philip Roth. Two important CDs appeared, one featuring the compositions of the Dutch-Jewish composer Leo Smit, who per-
ished in 1943, and the other containing the Ashkenazi liturgy for the High Holy Days, performed by the prewar choir of the Amsterdam Great Synagogue and conducted by the late S. H. Englander.

A number of Jewish art exhibits were held. A special exhibit for children at the Jewish Historical Museum (JHM) in Amsterdam, open until the end of the year 2001, provided basic information about Jewish life and practices. There, and in the museum in Groningen, where he was born, there were simultaneous exhibitions of the work of the Dutch-Jewish painter Joseph Israels (1844–1911). The JHM also featured an exhibition of the work of the Dutch-Jewish photographer Sem Presser (1917–1986). During the summer, the Israeli embassy in The Hague exhibited 43 miniatures of buildings in Israel at the miniature village of Madurodam in Scheveningen.

Publications

Important publications included: a revised and augmented edition of *Pinkas, a Survey of the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, by Dan Michman, Joseph Michman, and Hartog Beem, with a new chapter on recent developments by Johan Sanders; two anthologies of stories by Jewish authors—Daphne Meijer, ed., *Levi in de Lage Landen* (Levi in the Low Countries) and Maarten Verhoef and Thijs Wierema, *Aggenebbis* (Anthology); Michal Citroen, *U wordt door niemand Verwacht* (You Are Not Expected by Anybody), on the chilling reception of Jews emerging from hiding or returning from the camps in 1945; Dienke Hondius, *Terugkeer naar Nederland* (Return to The Netherlands); Peter den Hollander, *De Zaak Goudstikker* (The Goudstikker Affair); Frans Van Der Straaten, *Palestinian pioneers in Nederland*, on training centers for halutzim in the Netherlands until 1940; I.J. van Creveld, *Jewish Artists in The Hague*, with many illustrations; *Keur van Grastenen*, a reprint of D. Henriques de Castro, *op de Portugese Begraafplaats te Ouderkerk-aan de Amstel* (Tombstones at the Sephardi Burial Ground at Ouderkerk-on-the Amstel); J.W. Stutje, *De man die de Weg wees* (The Man Who Showed the Way), a biography of the Jewish Communist leader Paul de Groot; M. Poorthuis and Theo Salemink, *Op zoek naar de Blauwe Ruiter*, a biography of Sophie (Francisca) van Leer, who converted to Catholicism and worked for better understanding between Catholics and Jews; Edith Samuel, ed., *Rose Jacobs, een roos die nooit bloeide* (A Rose that Never Flourished), the diary of the editor's sister who remained in hiding through the war and was killed by an allied bomb on the first day of the liberation of Nijmegen; and Ed van Thijn (a former mayor of Amsterdam), *Het Verhaal* (The Story), an autobiography.

Personalia

Professor Job Cohen was appointed to a six-year term as mayor of Amsterdam by a unanimous vote of the cabinet in December 2000. Cohen was the city's
fourth mayor of Jewish origin within the past 35 years. A member of the Labor Party (PvdA), he was not actively engaged in Jewish life.

Author Marga Minco received the Anna Bijns Prize for feminist literature, for her entire oeuvre, including the short novel *The Bitter Herb*.

Bill Minco, chairman of the former resistance group Geuzenverzet, received an award from Germany for his efforts to enhance Dutch-German rapprochement.

Judith Frishman, wife of the Liberal rabbi Edward van Voolen, was appointed professor of the history and literature of rabbinic Judaism at the Roman Catholic University of Utrecht.

Bettina Sanders succeeded Hetty van Emden as chair of the Jewish Women's Society "Deborah."

Baruch Bar Tel was named chair of the Irgun Oleh Holland, the Society of Immigrants from Holland in Israel, succeeding Mirjam Dubi, who retired after eight years of service and was made an officer in the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau.

Tamarah Benima retired as editor-in-chief of the *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* (NIW), and was replaced by Carina Cassuto.

Tom De Swaan succeeded Mrs. Ted Musaph as chair of the board of governors of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, a post she had held for 25 years.

Sem Dresden, professor emeritus in French and general literature at the University of Leyden, received the Joost van de Vondel Prize for his essays.

Sam Behar became chairman of the Genootschap voor de Joodse Wetenschap (Jewish Historical Society), succeeding M. S. Nihom.

Prominent Jews who died were Professor August D. Belinfante, 88, former rector of the University of Amsterdam and professor of administrative law; A. J. Z. Cohen, 90, active in the anti-Nazi resistance and initiator of many Jewish organizations in the Netherlands, in particular the ultra-Orthodox Cheider School; Professor J. W. Cohen, 77, professor of applied mathematics in Delft and then in Utrecht; Benjamin W. De Jongh, 84, in Israel, longtime secretary of the NIK and of the Ashkenazi Congregation of Amsterdam; David Goudsmit, 90, for many years a teacher at the Netherlands Rabbinical Seminary in Amsterdam and a traveling Jewish-studies instructor throughout the Netherlands; actor Lex Goudsmit, 86, known for his portrayal of Tevye; Johan Kaufman, 82, a former Dutch diplomat with the UN; Freddy Marks, 80, for many years Netherlands chair of WIZO; Jacob Parsser, 90, a leader of Amsterdam Orthodox Jewry; S. Slagter, 75, former president of the criminal court of the Amsterdam Court of Justice, who chaired the council in charge of payments on the basis of the Law on Victims of Persecution (WUV); Paula Salomon, 102, gifted singer and singing teacher; Professor Philip van Praag, 85, professor emeritus in demography at the University of Brussels; and Dr. Emanuel A. M. Speyer, 95, a leader of Revisionist Zionism in Holland.

Henriette Boas
Italy and the Vatican

National Affairs

In April, Italian prime minister Massimo D'Alema resigned after center-left candidates received a drubbing in regional elections. Giuliano Amato replaced him.

The interrelated issues of immigration and racism were major themes throughout the year. One catalyst for this was the entry of Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) into the Austrian government in February. Upon the announcement of the inclusion of Haider's party in the ruling coalition, more than 5,000 people demonstrated outside the Austrian embassy in Rome. They included leftist politicians and Jewish leaders, among them the elderly chief rabbi of Rome, Elio Toaff. Italian Jewish leaders warmly backed the European Union's sanctions against Austria.

Haider's ascent had serious local repercussions, since he had long attempted to forge links with right-wing forces in Italy, particularly in the northeastern part of the country that borders Austria's Carinthia region, where he was governor. Indeed, he went so far as to float the idea that parts of northeastern Italy might merge with Carinthia. Italian far-right groups staged several pro-Haider demonstrations. In early February the center-right administration of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region approved a motion of solidarity with Haider and implied that it would invite him to visit the San Sabba Nazi concentration camp outside of Trieste. Israel, in protest, canceled a diplomatic visit to Trieste. On February 9 Amos Luzzatto, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), met with Prime Minister D'Alema to express the Jewish community's concern about possible visits by Haider to Italy. On February 24 Italian president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi made a symbolically important visit to San Sabba where he stated that "nostalgia for ideologies of hate" must be rejected.

Haider did visit Italy several times during the year. In July the mayor of the northern beach resort of Jesolo, a former member of Italy's secessionist Northern League, presented Haider with the keys to the city. About 100 protesters clashed with police. After Haider visited Venice in late July, Italian foreign minister Lamberto Dini protested to Austria, saying that it was "unacceptable" for Haider to come to Italy for "purposes of political propaganda."

Haider visited Rome in mid-December to present the Vatican Christmas tree, a gift from Carinthia, to Pope John Paul II. While many of the protests against him were peaceful, riot police used tear gas and truncheons against hundreds of protesters who tried to march on St. Peter's Square while Haider was taking part
in a tree-lighting ceremony. Comments by Haider before and during the visit, in which he criticized President Ciampi and accused Italy of being soft on illegal immigration, drew a sharp protest from the Italian government and threatened to trigger a diplomatic dispute.

Cardinal Giacomo Biffi of Bologna sparked a furor in September when he issued a pastoral letter warning that Muslim immigration could endanger the country and calling on Italy to “save the identity of the nation.” Describing Muslims as fundamentalists who do not integrate into mainstream European society, he said that Europe would be the loser if it did not reclaim its Christian identity. Controversy over his stand intensified in October when the Northern League demonstrated against the construction of a mosque in the northern town of Lodi.

Israel and the Middle East

Throughout the year there were numerous visits and exchanges between Israel and Italy on all levels: political, commercial, cultural, scholarly, and touristic. Of particular note, many Catholic Italians traveled to Israel on pilgrimages marking the Roman Catholic Holy Year.

In February Israeli deputy defense minister Ephraim Sneh visited Italy, where, among other things, he was guest of honor at a gala event in Milan kicking off the 2000 campaign of Keren Hayesod, which raises money for Israel. That same month, Leah Rabin gave the keynote speech inaugurating the academic year at Roma Tre University. Italian opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi, head of the center-right Freedom Alliance, visited Israel in March. In May the University of Bologna awarded an honorary degree to Aharon Barak, president of Israel’s Supreme Court, during a two-day “Bologna-Jerusalem” seminar on the judiciary. In July Mayor Gabriele Albertini of Milan visited Israel. When Mayor Francesco Rutelli of Rome came to Israel, he accepted a “Righteous among the Nations” award presented posthumously to his grandfather, Mario Gentili, a shopkeeper who saved a Jewish employee during the Shoah.

In August acting Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami visited Italy. Prime Minister Amato told him that Italy, both as a member of the European Union and as a partner of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, would continue to support the peace process and do what it could to foster a solution. Yasir Arafat also visited, meeting with Italian leaders in February.

The upsurge of violence between Israelis and Palestinians that began at the end of September prompted security to be bolstered at synagogues, embassies, Jewish and international schools, and airports. There were no instances of attacks against synagogues or other Jewish sites. A few clashes did take place in Rome, in October, between right-wing extremists demonstrating in favor of Palestinians and young Jewish militants. Italian Jewish leaders blasted what they said was one-sided media coverage that cast blame for the crisis on Israel and inflamed anti-Semitic feelings. Leone Paserman, the head of the Rome Jewish community, ac-
cused the Italian mass media of conducting "a disinformation campaign that nourishes anti-Israel and anti-Jewish hatred." In October, RAI, Italy's state-run television network, pulled out its Jerusalem correspondent, Ricardo Cristiani, after he wrote a letter, published in an Arab newspaper, apologizing to the Palestinian Authority for airing film of the lynching of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah. The Israeli government press office had already suspended the reporter's accreditation. On the diplomatic front, Prime Minister Amato and Foreign Minister Dini met in Rome with former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres during a trip by Peres to several European capitals in October, and offered to host a Middle East peace summit in Rome.

Elsewhere in the region, Italy expanded political and economic ties with Libya, its former colony. In August Dini met with Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi in Tripoli and told him that Italy wanted closer political and economic relations as well as more tourism between the two countries. In December, at a meeting in Rome with Libya's foreign minister, Dini signed a series of agreements furthering such bilateral ties.

Vatican-Mideast Relations

On February 15 the Vatican and the PLO, which had established formal relations in 1994, signed a "Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organization," and Yasir Arafat met privately with Pope John Paul II. The new document governing relations between the two parties touched on bilateral issues, including the status of church institutions in Palestinian-ruled areas. But its preamble gave considerable attention to Jerusalem, calling for an internationally mandated "special statute" for the city. This led Israel to accuse the Vatican of interfering in its negotiations with the Palestinians.

Pope John Paul II's historic visit to the Holy Land, March 21-26, dominated relations between the Vatican and Middle East countries in the early part of the year. (Also see "Jewish-Catholic Relations" below.) The trip marked the realization of his long-held dream of making a pilgrimage to biblical sites to mark the millennium year 2000, which the Church declared a Holy Year. This pilgrimage began February 23 with a "virtual pilgrimage" to Ur, the ancient town in Iraq revered as the birthplace of Abraham. Since plans for an actual papal visit there fell through when Iraqi officials said they could not ensure security or adequately organize the event, the pope presided instead over a ceremony at the Vatican that included readings from the Bible and a film of Ur's desert ruins amid props—including torches, oak trees, and a big boulder representing the stone on which Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac. The next day he flew to Egypt for a three-day visit. He flew around the summit of Mt. Sinai in an Egyptian military plane and prayed at the Monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of the mountain.

Then, in March, he visited Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sites in Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories in what was considered the most politically
and religiously sensitive trip of his pontificate. Some 18,000 Israeli police and 4,000 soldiers were mobilized to maintain order and security. On the final day of the trip, the pope prayed at the Western Wall and inserted, in a crack between the stones, a written plea for forgiveness for centuries of Christian mistreatment of Jews. The visit was hailed as a success, although the run-up to it was marked by controversy in Israel. Leading rabbis asked the pope to postpone a Saturday mass in Nazareth in deference to Shabbat, but he did not. They also voiced concern about Christian evangelical activities targeted at Jews.

Several times during the year, the pope repeated the long-held Vatican stand that Jerusalem should be placed under international guarantee. In August, for example, after the failure of the Camp David negotiations, Vatican officials reiterated this point to visiting U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright and Israeli acting foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami. And in September, the pope stressed the issue in a message welcoming the new Israeli ambassador, Yosef Lamdan, to the Holy See. "Concerning the delicate question of Jerusalem, what is important is that the way forward be the path of dialogue and agreement, not force and imposition," he said. "What is of special concern to the Holy See is that the unique religious character of the Holy City be preserved by a special, internationally guaranteed statute."

Throughout the year, too, the pope made many statements encouraging the peace process in the Middle East and also backing Palestinian rights. The day after Shimon Peres met with senior Vatican officials in October, the pope issued a strong appeal for peace in the Middle East. In November, as violence escalated there, the pope called on leaders of both sides to return to the negotiating table, saying: "the Israelis as well as the Palestinians have the right to live in their homes with dignity and security." Also in November, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue issued an appeal "to the Jewish and Palestinian people to forego violence and to take up once again that dialogue which is the only way to true peace." In September the Vatican, which has diplomatic relations with both Israel and Iran, said that it had "several times, both directly and indirectly," attempted to intercede with Iranian officials on behalf of ten Jews convicted of spying for Israel.

**Holocaust-Related Developments**

Numerous public events were held in Rome, Milan, and elsewhere to mark the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, which took place January 27, 1945. In mid-January the convention of the Democratic Party of the Left dedicated a session of its meeting to a program in remembrance of the Holocaust. On July 20 a law establishing January 27 as a national "Day of Remembrance" was officially promulgated. Writer Ernesto Galli della Loggia made a widely publicized proposal that Italy adopt the famous photo of the Warsaw ghetto child
with his hands raised as a symbol of man’s inhumanity to man, and display it in
schools and other public places.

On the eve of Passover, the city of Rome named a street after Giorgio Perlasca,
an Italian businessman who masqueraded as a Spanish diplomat during World
War II and saved thousands of Jews in the Budapest ghetto. In the fall, state-run
Italian television began filming a two-part miniseries based on the story of an
Italian police commissioner, Giovanni Palatucci, who saved Jews during the Holo-
caust. Palatucci, who worked in the foreigners’ office in the Adriatic port of
Fiume—now known as Rijeka—that was included in Yugoslavia after World
War II and is now part of Croatia, is believed to have helped some 5,000 Jewish
refugees leave Fiume by ship. Discovered and arrested by the Nazis, he died in
Dachau in 1945.

In 2000 the choice of an essay on the Holocaust was included, for the first time,
in the mandatory state high school graduation (maturity) examination, and 17
percent of those sitting for the exam chose this essay. At a news conference at the
Education Ministry in July, the CD-ROM “Destinazione Auschwitz” (Destina-
tion Auschwitz) was officially introduced. It was to be distributed free of charge
to 10,000 high schools.

On October 16 city officials, the Rome Jewish community, and an association
of World War II deportees dedicated a plaque at the track at Tiburtina Station
from which more than 1,000 Roman Jews were deported to Auschwitz by the Nazi
occupiers on that same date in 1944. Also in October, Mayor Albertini of Milan
headed a large delegation of city officials and Jewish community leaders on an
official visit to Auschwitz. The guide for the trip was Marcello Pezzetti, one of
Italy’s leading experts on the Shoah.

In November the International Commission of Holocaust-era Insurance
Claims approved a settlement resolving all such claims against the Italian insurer
Generali. The settlement was based on an agreement reached in July and, ac-
cording to a statement by Generali, it provided $100 million in payments for in-
surance claims and provision of humanitarian assistance to Holocaust survivors.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

In February Italy’s ministers of interior and sports decided that those in charge
of security at soccer stadiums might halt matches if fans displayed racist ban-
ners. For years, as in other countries, militant fans, sometimes linked to right-wing
extremist skinhead groups, had regularly displayed racist and anti-Semitic ban-
ners directed against opposing teams. In March the presidents of Rome’s two local
soccer teams, Roma and Lazio, paid a joint visit to the Jewish community school
and promised heightened vigilance against stadium racism. In May, in an initia-
tive called “I am not a racist,” the Napoli Junior soccer team cooperated with the
Naples Jewish community and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities to erect
four big photographic panels outside the San Paolo stadium. One showed the famous picture of the child in the Warsaw ghetto with his hands raised, and the caption: "In the Nazi-Fascist extermination camps 1.5 million children were tortured, killed and burned. 1.5 million children equals 30 stadiums full of children.' Another panel showed a group of children at Auschwitz. The other two showed a destroyed Jewish-owned shop in Rome and a scene of refugee children in Rwanda in 1996. The latter bore the caption, "But racism still continues today.'

In June, thanks to a fax and letter-writing campaign sponsored by Italian Jews, the town council of Pesche, in southern Italy, reversed a decision to name a street after Nicola Pende, an Italian scientist who backed Italy's fascist-era anti-Semitic laws. Italian Jews also began a campaign to force the southern port city of Bari to change the name of a street honoring Pende.

In September a high-school teacher in Verona claimed he was roughed up by three masked youths who shouted anti-Semitic slogans at him. The incident made headlines, but it later turned out that the teacher, a practicing Roman Catholic who came from a Jewish family, had made it all up. In November police in Pisa shut down an anti-Semitic Web site on the basis of a 1993 law against promoting racism. Following leads based on material found on the site, police searched the homes of some members of the far-right Forza Nuova and found neo-Nazi material. There were a number of incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism during the year. Among them was an attack coinciding with ceremonies marking the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, on January 27, when vandals spray-painted swastikas, Stars of David, and anti-Semitic slogans on the walls and shutters of some 15 Jewish-owned shops in Rome. The same thing happened in Rome again in December, the perpetrators using silicon to seal the shutters of the shops closed. In March swastikas, slogans, and other anti-Semitic graffiti were scrawled on the outer walls of the former San Sabba death camp near Trieste, the only World War II death camp on Italian soil.

**Jewish Community**

*Demography*

About 26,000 Jews were officially registered as members of Italian Jewish communities, but the actual number of Jews in the country was believed to be between 30,000 and 40,000. Three-quarters of Italy's Jews lived in two cities: Rome, with about 15,000, and Milan, with about 10,000. The rest were scattered in a score of other towns and cities, mostly in northern and central Italy, in communities ranging from a small handful to a thousand or so people. In a ceremony on March 21, 400 years after the Jews were expelled from the city, an organized Jewish community of about 30 people was formally reborn in Brescia, as a Jewish community center and a little synagogue were inaugurated and services held.
Communal Affairs

Italy's Jews were nominally Orthodox—Reform and Conservative streams did not officially exist. Three types of rites were celebrated: Sephardi, Ashkenazi, and Italian, the latter a local rite that evolved from the Jewish community that lived in Italy before the destruction of the Second Temple. Chabad-Lubavitch had a strong and growing presence, particularly in Rome, Milan, and Venice, where the movement ran a yeshivah. Most Italian Jews, however, were not strictly observant, and even observant Jews were highly acculturated, with a strong Italian as well as Jewish identity. Jewish leaders were concerned by what one described as a "spiral of disaffection, estrangement, and assimilation that threatens us." The rate of intermarriage was estimated at 50 percent or more. At the beginning of the year, groups of Jews in Milan and several other cities began working to form an organization of secular Jews, to be called Keshet, which would be associated with the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews. In December 1999 and January 2000, the Italian Zionist Federation sponsored a series of five lectures called "a journey into Judaism," explaining the various streams of Judaism, such as Reform, Conservative, Chabad, and Orthodox, as well as secular Judaism.

To combat intermarriage in Italy and neighboring countries, a number of Jewish singles events were organized. Chabad sponsored one such meeting in June. In July more than 40 Italian Jewish singles took part in an international "Jewish Love Boat" cruise through the Mediterranean. Young Italian Jews also took part in various international get-togethers and exchanges organized by the European Council of Jewish Communities and other groups.

Italian Jews had a well-organized infrastructure of schools, clubs, associations, youth organizations, and other services, including a rabbinical college. The women's organization ADEI-WIZO was particularly active nationwide, sponsoring numerous bazaars, lectures, meetings, and other social, cultural, and fundraising events. Italy was represented by 40 women at WIZO's world conference at the beginning of the year. A large Italian delegation also attended the Arachim conference on Jewish education held in Budapest in November. The conference was organized by the European Council of Jewish Communities, whose president was Cobi Benatoff, from Milan.

Italian Jewish communities retained their traditionally strong links with Israel, with many visits and exchanges. These included a Jewish Agency-sponsored family summer camp in Israel, in August, for Jewish families from Milan, Rome, and Turin. The Jewish Agency also helped organize intensive Hebrew courses in Rome, Florence, and Turin, supplying the two Israeli teachers. About 40 young Italian Jews took part in the program.

In November the board of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities approved a wide-ranging document expressing deep concern over the Italian political situation, specifically calling on Jews to fight against all forms of discrimination,
not just anti-Semitism. Coming after the outbreak of renewed violence in Israel, the document reiterated the centrality of Israel to world Jewry as "one of the principal factors that guarantee our Jewish identity and its development and reinforcement," but added that Italian Jews must avoid becoming "talking crickets" for Israel. It noted strained relations with the Vatican over several matters—includ-  

### Jewish-Catholic Relations

Relations between the Vatican and Jews had their ups and downs, and ended the year on a strained note, leading some observers openly to question the state of Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Various initiatives to promote Catholic-Jewish understanding took place throughout the year in Italy. In April the pope beatified Sister Mary Elisabeth Hesselblad, a Swedish nun who helped save Jews during World War II. In May Brooklyn-born American Jewish conductor Gilbert Levine led the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus in a concert at the Vatican to mark the pope's birthday. Levine, whose mother-in-law was a Holocaust survivor, first met the pope in 1988, when Levine was the conductor of the Kraków Philharmonic. He helped organize the landmark Holocaust commemoration concert at the Vatican in 1994, and was the recipient of a Papal knighthood. In August, the Vatican Museum held an exhibition on Anne Frank, coinciding with the Church's World Youth Day, an event that brought well over a million young Catholics to Rome. The Vatican Council for Culture explained that the exhibition "ideally reinforces the dialogue between Catholics and Jews, which in recent years has made significant steps forward." There was a series of lectures on biblical themes presented jointly by priests and rabbis in Milan in November, cosponsored by the Milan Jewish community and the Office for Ecumenism and Dialogue of the Milan Roman Catholic Diocese. In December there was a seminar in Rome on Pope John XXIII and Jewish-Christian relations.

The Catholic Church designated the year 2000, marking the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity, as a Jubilee or Holy Year. In line with the pope's call to Catholics to ask forgiveness for sins as part of Holy Year observances, leading Catholic figures publicly apologized for anti-Semitism committed by Catholics. In early March the Vatican released a 92-page document, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Errors of the Past*, which reiterated previous Vatican pronouncements, including its 1998 statement of "repentance" for teachings that played a role in making the Holocaust possible (see AJYB 1999, p. 329). Then on March 12, a week before embarking on his historic visit to the Holy Land, a day officially designated the Holy Year's "day of request for forgiveness," the pope personally asked forgiveness for the many past sins of the
Church. In an unprecedented ceremony, the pope and senior cardinals listed seven categories of sins, including the treatment of Jews, heretics, women, and native peoples. In regard to the Jews, they said, “Let us pray that, in recalling the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout history, Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against the people of the Covenant.” The pope added his own words to this: “God of our fathers, you who chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations: We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours [the Jews] to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.” Jewish reaction, both in Italy and abroad, was mixed. Many commentators welcomed the gesture and took note of its significance but registered disappointment at the lack of any specific mention of the Holocaust.

The pope made forgiveness and reconciliation themes of his weeklong trip to Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. He met with Holocaust survivors and made a moving speech at Yad Vashem in which he expressed the sadness of the Roman Catholic Church for what he called “the hatred, acts of persecution, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews by Christians at any time and in any place.” He crowned the trip with an emotional visit to the Western Wall where he prayed and left a written plea, in a crack between the stones, for forgiveness for historic Christian mistreatment of Jews. The note, later turned over to Yad Vashem, bore the words of the prayer the pope had said during the March 12 forgiveness ceremony at the Vatican.

Two developments in September deeply upset Jews. One was the beatification on September 3 of Pope Pius IX, the 19th-century pontiff who was the last to keep the Jews in a ghetto and who was behind the 1858 kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara, a young Jewish boy whose Catholic nurse claimed to have secretly baptized him as a baby. Italian Jews and international Jewish organizations had called on the pope not to go ahead with the beatification, and, at a seminar in Rome in June on Pius IX and the Jews, Italian Jewish leaders had warned that the move could have serious repercussions on Jewish-Catholic relations. Members of the Mortara family, including great-nieces and great-nephews of Edgardo, issued an open letter, published in the Italian media, condemning the move. Even so, the beatification sent mixed signals, since on the same day the pope beatified Pope John XXIII, who died in 1963 and whose five-year reign marked a positive turning point in Jewish-Catholic relations.

The second upsetting incident occurred two days after the double beatification, on September 5, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican’s guardian of orthodoxy, released a new document, *Dominus Iesus,* “The Lord Jesus—On the Unity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church,” which rejected the idea that other faiths were equal to Catholicism. Non-Christians, it stated, were in a “gravely deficient situation” regarding salvation, and other Christian churches had “defects.” Following sharp criticism from Jews
and non-Catholic Christians, the pope and other senior officials, most prominently Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, reiterated a commitment to interfaith dialogue and acknowledged that aspects of the document may have been misinterpreted. Nonetheless, in direct response to the beatification of Pius IX and the Vatican document, two Rome rabbis pulled out of a Vatican-sponsored day of Jewish-Christian dialogue scheduled for October 3.

Another live issue was the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. In October a commission of three Jewish and three Catholic scholars set up in 1999 to examine the 11 published volumes of Vatican wartime documents issued a report posing 47 specific questions about Pius XII's role. Since, the commission noted, the already published material "does not put to rest significant questions about the Vatican during the Holocaust," and therefore "no serious historian" could accept the published, edited volumes as conclusive, it called on the Vatican to offer full access to its World War II archives. As the year drew to an end, the Vatican had not yet responded to the commission.

The pope's meeting with Jörg Haider in December, when the latter presented the Carinthian Christmas tree (see above, pp. 353–54), also rankled. The Israeli government, local Jews, and international Jewish organizations joined Italian leftists in urging the pope not to meet with Haider. The Vatican downplayed the meeting, insisting that it was purely pastoral in nature. The pope limited his private meeting with Haider to two minutes and did not mention him by name when addressing the 250-member Carinthian delegation. The Vatican also gave advance publicity to a message prepared by the pope for the upcoming January 1, 2001, World Peace Day, which strongly condemned racism and xenophobia, and distributed it to Haider and his group.

Culture

Jewish cultural organizations and communal bodies, the Israeli embassy, and non-Jewish organizations and institutions sponsored a wide range of cultural activities with Jewish themes. These included theatrical performances, concerts, film presentations, Jewish music and Jewish culture festivals, conferences, seminars, broadcasts, and publications. Many such events were cosponsored by Jewish organizations together with state or private institutions. Rome's Jewish Culture Center and Il Pitigliani JCC were especially active, sponsoring a wide range of cultural events, clubs, and classes in Rome. In February a roundtable discussion was held at the Chamber of Deputies in Rome on "Religious Minorities and European Culture: Judaism, Protestantism, Islam in the Symbolic Forms of the West." In March a major exhibition of works by the Jewish artist Emanuele Luzzati opened in Milan. Also in March the Western European premier of Cantata for Soprano, Chorus and Orchestra by Leopoldo Bamberini, based on the diary of Anne Frank, took place in Milan. In May a big photographic exhibition on Milan Jews opened at the city's Castello Sforzesco. Il Pitigliani organized its an-
annual Shavuot street fair, cosponsored by the Rome city government. Work on creating a Jewish museum in Milan proceeded throughout the year, as did work on the expansion of exhibition space for the museum in Rome. On June 25–July 2 Milan was the scene of the Davar Jewish culture festival, which drew close to 1,000 people. Also in July, Ancona hosted its fifth annual klezmer music festival. In September the first European Festival of Jewish Choirs was held in Milan. On November 1 the tiny Jewish community in Padova, in collaboration with the Italian Rabbinical College, held a day-long seminar in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the scholar Samuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865), known by the acronym Shadal. That same month, Italian Jewish culture was the theme of the annual Jewish Culture Week in Berlin, and numerous Italian Jews took part. Also in November, the Pitigliani JCC in Rome initiated “Rosh Hodesh,” a monthly series of discussions on the role of women in the Jewish world, which was to last into 2001, and the Jewish community of Pisa held its fourth annual festival of Jewish music, which included a Jewish film series.

One of the most successful Jewish cultural endeavors was Italy’s enthusiastic participation in the European Day of Jewish Culture, on September 3. More than 44,000 people visited synagogues, Jewish museums, Jewish cemeteries, and other Jewish-heritage sites in some 40 towns that were opened to the public for the day. Many of the communities involved hosted special exhibitions, concerts, and performances. The Day of Jewish Culture came under the patronage of President Ciampi, and Giovanna Melandri, the minister of culture, took part in the events in Florence, which drew 5,000 people. Other highlights included a Jewish book fair in Bologna; an open-air concert outside the newly restored synagogue in Senigallia; lectures, concerts, and guided tours in Milan; and exhibitions of modern art and ancient textiles in Urbino. Little more than two weeks later, the newly restored synagogue in Mondovi, near Turin, was inaugurated.

Publications

The main Jewish community periodicals were the Shalom monthly in Rome and the Bollettino in Milan. In addition, several smaller communities, including Turin, Florence, and Genoa, issued newsletters. There were also other publications, including the intellectual journal Rassegna Mensile di Israel. Italy’s Jews maintained a growing presence on the Internet with a number of Web sites, and there was a regular Jewish slot on state-run television.

Scores if not hundreds of books on Jewish themes or by Jewish authors were published. These included fiction and poetry as well as all types of nonfiction—biography, history, humor, religion—both original and translations. One exceptionally important publication was the exhaustive, two-volume, 1,178-page La comunità ebraica di Venezia e il suo cimitero antico (The Jewish Community of Venice and its Ancient Cemetery). Several Jewish cookbooks or books about Jewish food were published, including Mangiare alla giudia (Eating the Jewish Way),
a social history of Italian Jewish culinary traditions by Ariel Toaff. A prayer book for children, published in time for the new school year, included teaching materials about prayers. The Italian rabbinical assembly began work on a new Italian translation of the Mishnah. Many books with Jewish themes were on display at Milan’s fourth annual Jewish book fair, May 21–22, which also featured lectures, public readings, and other events. Editrice La Giuntina, Italy’s foremost Jewish publisher, marked 20 years of operation in 2000. There were also several other, smaller, Jewish publishers, such as Lulav and Morasha. The best-stocked Jewish bookstore in Italy was Menorah, in Rome, which also posted its catalog on its Web site. Milan’s first Jewish bookstore and Judaica shop, Davar, opened in April. Three other Milan bookstores, Tikkun, Ancora, and Claudiana, had ample sections of Jewish books, and also scheduled readings, literary evenings, and presentations of books on Jewish themes. Tikkun, for example, hosted the presentation of a new Jewish cookbook, accompanied by a food-tasting and concert, and Ancona hosted presentations of a book on dance in Jewish tradition and of a new collection of Yiddish short stories, translated into Italian. Israeli authors were very popular; Aharon Appelfeld, A. B. Yehoshua, Meir Shalev, and poet Natan Zach toured and lectured in Italy during the year.

Personalia

Bruno Zevi, prominent Jewish architect, political activist and nationally known cultural figure, died in January shortly before his 82nd birthday. Author Giorgio Bassani, best known for his autobiographical novel *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, died in April at the age of 84. In September, the artist Paola Levi Montalcini, twin sister of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Rita Levi Montalcini, died at the age of 91. Roman Catholic Cardinal Pietro Palazzini, who was honored by Yad Vashem in 1985 as “Righteous among the Nations,” died in October at the age of 88. Giorgina Arian Levi, a founder of the Turin Jewish newspaper *Ha Keilah*, turned 90 in September. In October Gad Lerner, the news director of RAI’s main television channel, resigned, saying he took full responsibility for an error that led to images of child pornography being shown on the prime-time news. One of Italy’s most prominent Jews, Lerner had been appointed to the post in the summer. Jewish journalist Amos Vitale, New York correspondent for the Rome Jewish monthly *Shalom*, was awarded a prize for journalism by the Province of Asti. In the autumn, Yosef Neville Lamdan took over as Israeli ambassador to the Holy See, replacing Aharon Lopez. Author and scholar Riccardo Calimani was named Switzerland’s honorary consul in Venice. In November Chief Rabbi Toaff of Rome received an honorary degree from the Catholic University in Lublin, Poland. During the summer, Toaff’s 85th birthday was celebrated in Rome’s Campidoglio city hall, with President Ciampi and other dignitaries in attendance.
Switzerland

National Affairs

Switzerland was torn throughout the year between political forces favoring liberalism and internationalism, on the one hand, and elements pushing an isolationist, nationalist agenda, on the other.

Several popular referenda were held during the year. In March the voters approved a proposal for judicial reform but turned down bans on sperm donations and in-vitro fertilization, as well as quotas for women in government positions. In May over 67 percent of voters backed a package of seven bilateral agreements strengthening the country's ties with the European Union, with only the Swiss People's Party and the far-right factions opposed. This was a first step toward economic cooperation and, eventually, possible EU membership. A September referendum turned down a quota on the percentage of foreigners allowed in the country (see below). In November a proposal to cut military spending by a third was rejected.

In addition to the vote for the EU link, another important sign of growing enthusiasm for international involvement even at the cost of the nation's isolationist tradition was the filing, in March, of a petition calling for Swiss membership in the UN. It received enough signatures to require a national referendum. Also, demands were heard for English — viewed as the primary linguistic vehicle of international commerce and culture — to be taught as the primary foreign language in the schools of the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Yet the Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC), a nationalist and populist faction that was part of the four-party coalition that had governed Switzerland since 1954, moved in an increasingly right-wing direction, especially in its hostility toward immigration. Dramatic evidence of this came in October when Adolf Ogi, the party's representative on the seven-member Federal Council, which functioned as a cabinet, resigned from his post as minister of defense and from the Swiss presidency, which he was then holding for a one-year rotating term. Ogi stated that his Swiss People's Party had become so extreme in its views that he no longer agreed with it. While the party's guru, Christoph Blocher, sought to have a hard-liner elected to the empty Federal Council chair, the parliament instead chose another moderate member of the party, Samuel Schmid.

The forces of xenophobic nationalism were clearly in evidence when, in February, the government of neighboring Austria included the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), led by Jörg Haider, in the governing coalition. While the European Union strictly condemned this political alliance, Switzerland reached out to Aus-
tria and invited Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel to Bern for an official visit. In doing so, it was following the established custom between Switzerland and Austria for new heads of state in either country to visit each other first, before any other foreign trips, a practice symbolizing their common Alpine geography and a similar sense of being small countries not fully integrated into the international community. Yet there was no sense of any embarrassment in Swiss official circles about honoring this tradition even under such unique and troubling circumstances. Left-wing parties and antiracist organizations mobilized and demonstrated in front of the parliament to express their dissatisfaction.

Israel and the Middle East

The Jewish community of Switzerland reacted to the show trial of 13 Iranian Jews accused of spying for Israel with a large demonstration, on April 13, in front of the UN headquarters in Geneva, timed to coincide with similar demonstrations in Paris and Vienna. A message of support from the Geneva government was read on this occasion. Diplomatic appeals were also made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose representatives in Iran were closely following the matter, to Mary Robinson, the UN high commissioner for human rights, and to other personalities and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The main Middle East focus in Switzerland, however, became the Palestinian riots toward the end of the year, which had serious repercussions in a country with 300,000 Muslims. There were many pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and they often included such slogans as “Israel is conducting a genocide” and “The Zionists want to kill our children,” as well as outright anti-Semitism. On October 8, addressing a crowd gathered in front of the United Nations in Geneva, Hani Ramadan—grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and leader of the Geneva Islamic Center, which advocated fundamentalist Islam—called for jihad, holy war, for Palestine. The Jewish community reacted by holding a demonstration on the same spot, three days later, calling for an end to violence, hatred, and anti-Semitism. The call for jihad came at the beginning of the violence, at a time when many Jewish leaders and communal institutions were receiving anonymous threats. For more than two months local police provided heavily reinforced security arrangements around Swiss synagogues.

Leftist parties also supported the Palestinian cause, with anti-Zionist speeches depicting Israel as a racist and colonialist state, and even denying Israel’s right to exist. Much of the media agreed. Public opinion, as far as could be determined from letters to newspapers, tended in the same direction. These letters often had anti-Semitic undertones, mixing Middle East politics with the Holocaust and Palestinian claims with Jewish class-action suits against Swiss banks. In fact the situation in the Middle East, with Israel seen as the oppressor and the Palestinians as victims, gave a welcome pretext to many Swiss to take a kind of “revenge” against the Jews after the Holocaust debate had pointed at Switzerland’s shortcomings.
Even the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs abandoned its neutrality at a session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, a meeting called specially to discuss violence in the Middle East. Switzerland—which had the status of an observer, like Palestine, and not a UN member state—had its views announced by Ambassador François Nordmann, a Jew. He said that “Israeli forces, army or police, have used disproportionate repressive means and without discernment, as testified by the type of weapons and the number of casualties. On both sides, hatred was expressed by shocking, barbaric scenes, lynches and destruction of houses of worship.” The Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities expressed its strong disapproval to Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss, who replied by simply repeating the same arguments made at the UN. Meanwhile, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation continued to fund Palestinian projects, including a film about the rigors of daily life for Palestinians under Israeli occupation. The Swiss section of Amnesty International launched a poster campaign showing a child—obviously Palestinian—holding his schoolbag while facing a soldier—obviously Israeli—aiming a gun at the child. The caption read: “Stop the killing,” and listed the names and ages of dozens of Palestinian victims. Questioned about this message, Swiss Amnesty International replied that it condemned all violence in the Middle East, and paid tribute to all victims, Jewish and Arab.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

The year 2000 saw an increase in far-right activities in Switzerland, largely the work of Holocaust deniers, skinheads, and neo-Nazis. In mainstream politics as well, which had to grapple with immigration issues, racism often surfaced.

While popular anti-Semitism, evoked by the public debate about Switzerland and the Holocaust, diminished, extremist movements heightened their activities and increased their visibility. Throughout the year hooligans associated with the Geneva Football Club shouted racist slogans and waved Nazi banners during soccer games, without once being disturbed by the police. Similar manifestations were reported in other Swiss soccer stadiums.

A striking event occurred on August 1, the Swiss National Day, during celebrations at the Grütli, the historical site where the Swiss Confederation was founded in 1291. While former president Kaspar Villiger was giving his speech, a group of skinheads displayed neo-Nazi symbols and flags, made the Nazi salute, and shouted racist slogans. The police did not react, and Villiger later said he did not know who these people were. Many felt that his reaction sent a message that he did not care very much about extremist groups interfering with the national holiday. However the incident was reported widely in the media, and it apparently made Swiss political leaders and the general public more sensitive to the growing danger posed by the far right.

According to a new report by the Federal Police, the number of skinheads had risen from 300 to 1,000 since 1998. New recruits were younger (starting as young as 13), more radical, and more inclined to use violence. In 2000, skinheads led
attacks against squatters and leftists, shooting at houses and even posting a call to murder on the Internet: a Web site showed a picture of two far-left activists, with the caption: "Born to get killed." The police report stressed that skinheads were heavily armed with sophisticated and illegal equipment. What they still lacked, however, was organization and a charismatic leader. Though most skinhead groups were local, two were organized nationally — the Hammerskins and Blood & Honour. The former, which considered itself an elitist white racist brotherhood, met weekly in a club in Malters (Lucerne canton), where it held concerts and other events. The latter group, the Swiss branch of a movement founded by British Nazi rocker Ian Stuart, linked itself to the traditions of the Waffen-SS. In June it published the first issue of a French-language "skinzine," Blood & Honour Romandie.

Skinheads had numerous ties with Holocaust deniers, who remained quite active. Several trials took place in 2000 for violation of the antiracism law, especially for Holocaust denial.

The Lausanne court sentenced veteran Nazi sympathizer and Holocaust denier Gaston-Armand Amaudruz to one year in jail and a substantial fine. While awaiting trial, Amaudruz continued to publish his 44-year-old monthly, Courrier du Continent. On appeal, his sentence was cut to three months and a smaller fine, the appeals court stating that Amaudruz did not play an active role in extreme-right propaganda and that his anti-Semitic prose was unlikely to sway the masses. Due to a little-known provision in the law, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, antiracist organizations, and Holocaust survivors lacked standing to become parties to the suit, and a proposal to amend the law in the canton of Geneva to enable such involvement was suggested, which, if approved, might trigger similar changes in other cantons and even on the national level. Meanwhile the Amaudruz case was appealed again, this time to the Federal Court.

The Federal Court sentenced Aldo Ferraglia, convicted of distributing Holocaust-denial books, to a 20-day suspended jail sentence, leading many to believe that, like Amaudruz, Ferraglia was getting off easy. Ferraglia moved to Vuadens, near Fribourg, where he resumed selling the same books. The city said that it would not renew the lease of his bookstore in 2001.

The Federal Court also convicted two major Holocaust deniers, but neither spent a day in jail. René-Louis Berclaz was given a three-month suspended sentence. Jürgen Graf, sentenced to 15 months, disappeared from Switzerland, and was assumed to be in Iran, which had no extradition treaty with Switzerland. Seventy-nine-year-old Walter Stoll, a former Waffen-SS officer, was convicted of sending out letters containing anti-Semitic threats and sentenced to four months, but this, too, was suspended. Two employees of the federal government were fired, one for racist postings on the Internet, the other for repeated contacts with neo-Nazis.

Neo-Nazi groups continued to produce publications spreading their ideology. Vérité & Justice (Truth and Justice), an organization led by Graf, Berclaz, and
Philippe Brennenstuhl, issued a pamphlet, *The Counter-Bergier Report*, which offered a pseudohistorical “refutation” of the official Bergier report on Switzerland’s role during the Holocaust. Looking for publicity, Vérité & Justice advertised a “public” lecture in the city of Sion, but denied access to reporters. The local police knew about the meeting but did not intervene. A few weeks later, their new pamphlet was sent to all members of the parliament. One of them, Patrice Mugny, the Green representative from Geneva, sued Vérité & Justice. The trial had not yet taken place as the year ended.

Other far-right publications included *Alias*, an ultraconservative leaflet from Valais that supported Amaudruz after his trial, and Max Wahl’s *Eidgenoss*, sent to a “circle of friends” twice in 2000, in spite of previous convictions for fomenting hate. Ernst Indlekofer, in his leaflet *Prüfen+Handeln* (Examine and Act), available in French translation as *Examiner+Agir*, viewed the UN and the European Union as secret societies manipulated by a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Bernhard Schaub published a new edition of his *Rose und Adler* (Rose and Eagle), a book replete with racism and anti-Semitism, topics he lectured about as well. Erwin Kessler, a self-styled defender of animal rights, used his critique of Jewish ritual slaughter as a pretext for anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. Geneva lawyer Pascal Junod maintained regular activities through various “New Right” circles, including Thulé, Amis de Robert Brasillac, and Cercle Proudhon. Skinheads, Holocaust deniers, and neo-Nazis attended his lectures. Avalon, a far-right club founded in 1990 by Roger Wiithrich, tried to unite skinheads, Holocaust deniers, former Waffen-SS, and neo-Nazis for lectures and parties. Wiithrich sought to become the general adviser for the entire extreme right in Switzerland.

With the outbreak of violence in Israel and the territories toward the end of the year, expressions of anti-Semitism escalated. In December hundreds of anti-Semitic stickers declaring, “Only Jews have the right to be racists,” were found glued all over Geneva, echoing a similar hate campaign that took place in December 1999. A suit was filed, though no suspects could be identified.

**Mainstream Politics**

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance criticized Switzerland for restricting foreign immigration, setting up separate classes for foreign schoolchildren, not encouraging a multicultural society, and allowing political speeches that play on the population’s fears. In 2000 xenophobic sentiments tended to find expression in mainstream politics during discussions about granting citizenship to foreign-born residents of the country. Switzerland’s immigration laws created grave difficulties for immigrants: naturalization fees were very high, and priority was given to Europeans and Christians at a time when the bulk of potential applicants were Turkish and Balkan Muslims. Out of 1.4 million foreigners living in Switzerland, only 600,000 were even eligible to become Swiss citizens, and, in 1998, just 21,705 people were naturalized.
A national debate was set off when the town of Emmen, near Lucerne, decided that its 20,000 citizens would vote on the individual citizenship applications of foreigners living there. By March 2000, 56 people had applied, most of whom had been living in the area for over 15 years, had children born there, and spoke the local dialect. As a result of the voting, only eight of the applicants obtained Swiss citizenship, and they were all of Italian or Spanish origin. The 48 rejected applicants happened to come from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, or Albania.

In September a popular initiative sought to restrict the foreign presence in Switzerland even further through a referendum limiting the number of foreign residents to 18 percent of the total population of the country. Supporters of the proposal—far-right groups and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP/UDC)—used economic arguments to defend cutting down on the number of foreigners, but references to the threat immigrants allegedly posed to the national identity showed that xenophobia and even racism played a role in the campaign. The voters rejected the initiative, with close to 64 percent voting against it.

Earlier in the year, the media spotlighted the close relationships between certain activists in the Geneva section of the Swiss People’s Party and far-right groups. Lawyer Pascal Junod, notorious for his New Right connections, maintained a quiet but significant role training young party members. Another lawyer, Pierre Schifferli, walked out of the party’s national convention with his right arm raised in what looked like a Nazi salute. When challenged, he replied this was actually the original salute of Switzerland’s founders. Various members of the party’s Geneva section also had religious and financial ties with Islamic countries, including Iran.

Two small far-right groups remained active but had little impact. The xenophobic Union of Swiss Patriots was still unable to elect any candidate to office, and kept a very low profile. A young skinhead from Bern, David Mulas, announced the founding of a Swiss section of a German far-right party, the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland (NPD), which was generally seen as neo-Nazi. After the party was sued for violation of the antiracism law, a spokesperson said that it had been dissolved. However it soon published the first issue of Das nationale Blatt (The National Paper), which declared itself the party’s official publication, and a series of NPD stickers were spotted in the streets of Bern.

**Combating the Extremists**

Switzerland had a Federal Commission against Racism, but it received insufficient government funding to conduct significant projects. Therefore most initiatives to combat extremism—such as educational programs, publications, lectures, and exhibits—were the work of privately funded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In 2000 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would allot 10 million Swiss francs (about $6 million) to support educational
projects against racism, but, after considerable consultation with the NGOs, it had not yet decided how to allocate the money as the year ended.

After the skinhead incident at the Swiss National Day (see above, p. 367), Minister of Justice and Police Ruth Metzler said: “We take far-right extremism seriously, but without dramatizing it.” She denied that it was a serious security problem or a threat to public order. Her ministry commissioned a legal team to study the matter, and it suggested a number of steps: compiling a list of acts of hooliganism perpetrated in Switzerland; making far-right and racist gestures—like the Nazi salute—and symbols such as swastikas illegal and punishable; forbidding entrance into Switzerland to notorious far-right activists from abroad; monitoring the mail, phone, fax, and e-mail of the extremists; and giving up Switzerland’s reservations about the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racism. None of these measures were officially implemented in 2000. A full report, expected to tackle issues related to hate on the Internet and suggest additional preventive measures, was expected in 2001.

A number of antiracist activist groups conducted demonstrations against anti-Semitism in several cities, most notably in Malters (Lucerne canton), where skinheads met regularly. CICAD (Committee against Anti-Semitism and Defamation), a Jewish organization based in Geneva, filed a complaint with the Swiss Press Council against the Lausanne daily 24 Heures for having allowed anti-Semitic postings, with only the first names of the authors, to appear on the paper’s Internet forum. The council agreed, blaming the newspaper for letting people express hate while hiding behind a cloak of anonymity and for not providing any explanatory comments that would indicate the unacceptability of the statements. DAVID (Center against Anti-Semitism and Defamation), a Zurich-based sister organization of CICAD, responded to extremist statements in the media, organized youth seminars, and published a brochure in German, Der Antisemitismus: Historie. Fakten. Zahlen. Eine Zusammenstellung (Anti-Semitism: History. Facts. Numbers. A Summary).

Holocaust-Related Matters

A public-opinion survey, Swiss Attitudes towards Jews and the Holocaust, was published in March by the American Jewish Committee. The research was conducted by the GfS Research Institute on behalf of the AJC and CICAD. The study showed that a significant minority of the population openly expressed prejudice against Jews, while a strong majority identified anti-Semitism as a problem in Switzerland and rejected Holocaust denial. Similarly mixed results prevailed concerning the reassessment of Switzerland’s role during the Holocaust. A majority supported the historical findings that Switzerland’s immigration policy was biased against Jews during World War II and that the Swiss banks were to blame for failing to refund dormant accounts of Holocaust victims. At the same time, however, a majority thought that Switzerland’s behavior was justified by the
circumstances of the war, and that therefore no apologies were necessary. And while the Swiss surveyed showed poor factual knowledge of the Holocaust, they overwhelmingly supported Holocaust education in the schools and Holocaust remembrance. The survey received tremendous media coverage both nationally and internationally. Right-wing parties and even some Swiss Jews criticized it for projecting what they felt was an overly negative image of Switzerland.

Following the global settlement reached between Jewish plaintiffs and organizations and Swiss banks in August 1998, Judge Edward Korman, of Brooklyn Federal Court in the United States, authorized to examine the claims of individual survivors of forced labor and the Holocaust—and their heirs—received about 560,000 applications. He named New York lawyer Judah Gribetz to administer the distribution of the $1.25 billion set aside for the purpose by the banks.

That many in Switzerland tended to see the restitution issue solely in terms of money, with no moral dimension, was illustrated by the case of Joseph Spring. In 1943 Spring tried to cross over from Germany into Switzerland with his cousin and a friend. A Swiss border guard arrested them, turned them over to the Germans, and identified them as Jews. They were deported to Auschwitz, and, of the three, only Spring survived. He sued Switzerland for “moral wrong” and asked for 100,000 Swiss francs in reparation. The Federal Court, which decided the case in 2000, agreed to pay Joseph Spring exactly the amount he claimed, not for moral wrong, but for his “expenses,” and without acknowledging that Switzerland bore any ethical responsibility. The decision stated that “Switzerland’s immigration policy, as hard as it was, was legally acceptable,” and that “morality cannot influence a legal decision.”

The historical commission led by Professor Jean-François Bergier that examined Switzerland’s role during World War II released a report in 2000 about discriminatory immigration policy towards Gypsies. The findings contributed an important perspective to the commission’s major report of December 1999 about Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied countries who were turned back at the Swiss border (see AJYB 2000, p. 332). During 2000, some critical voices were heard in reaction to the 1999 report. Veterans’ groups and other Swiss nationalists questioned the statistics and the analysis of the Bergier Commission, and argued that the number of Jewish refugees turned away was actually less than claimed. The aim of these critics was to diminish the extent of Switzerland’s responsibility for the fate of those denied entry.

The Swiss Solidarity Foundation, proposed in 1997, was intended to memorialize the Holocaust by using 7 billion Swiss francs (more than $4 billion) from the national gold reserves to fight poverty and violence, both domestically and internationally, especially among young people. The plan had never been approved, and a referendum was set for 2001 to decide whether to create the foundation. Approval was considered highly unlikely since most of the political parties preferred using the money for other purposes, such as funding social security. The Geneva canton officially admitted partial responsibility for the deporta-
tion of some Jewish refugees during World War II, and expressed its regrets to victims and their families. Geneva was one of the very few cantons whose wartime archives were still available, and they showed clear evidence of discriminatory immigration policies.

The bishops of Switzerland issued a strong statement in 2000 asking forgiveness for the Swiss Catholic Church’s behavior towards Jews during the Holocaust. “Too little was done to protect and help persecuted people,” it declared. “Protestations against anti-Semitic Nazi ideology were not enough.” The statement was warmly greeted in Jewish circles. However the Vatican’s beatification of the anti-Jewish Pope Pius IX, and its document *Dominus Iesus*, which seemed to deny the worth of other faiths, triggered opposition from the Swiss Jewish community—which considered them major setbacks to the Jewish-Christian dialogue—as well as from Protestant leaders.

The Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem named two more Swiss citizens “Righteous among the Nations,” bringing the total number of Swiss designees to 37.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

The number of Jews in Switzerland remained about 18,000, the great majority living in urban areas. Ashkenazi families, many of which had lived in the country for several generations, tended to concentrate in the German-speaking regions, while Jews of Middle Eastern origin, relative newcomers, were the majority in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, especially Geneva.

The Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities elected a new president, Professor Alfred Donath, after the incumbent, Dr. Rolf Bloch, decided not to seek a new term. As the political organ of Swiss Jewry, the federation held regular meetings with members of the government, which were especially important in times of crisis, such as the visit of the Austrian chancellor, the trial of the Iranian Jews, and the issuance of Switzerland’s statement about the Middle East. The federation also functioned as a religious body, and in that role it continued to refuse to allow the two Reform communities, one in Geneva and the other in Zurich, to join its ranks.

A number of books on Jewish issues were published in 2000: *Judenmord von Payerne* by Hans Stutz (about an anti-Semitic crime that occurred in 1940); *Couleur Espérance, mémoire du mouvement juif ouvrier* (memoirs of Jewish workers and unionists) edited by Nathan Weinstock; *J'ai oublié Maman* and *Le Mandarin givré*, two thrillers by Bertrand Weill; and a catalog accompanying an exhibit about the history of Jews in the Jura canton.

Brigitte Sion