German politics in 2001, especially in the second half of the year, were largely geared toward the national elections to be held in 2002, though the unexpected events of September 11 made previous political assumptions highly uncertain.

In November, Prime Minister Gerhard Schroder (Social Democratic Party, SPD) accepted the resignation of his foreign affairs advisor, Michael Steiner, who had embarrassed the government by demanding caviar and insulting senior German soldiers during a delayed flight to Germany via Moscow. He was replaced by Dieter Kastrup, Germany’s ambassador to the UN since 1998. Kastrup previously served in embassies in Brazil, Iran, and the U.S., and was appointed ambassador to Italy in 1994. Steiner had already been pressured to quit his post in May after he was blamed for leaking a private communiqué supposedly suggesting that Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi had admitted Libyan involvement in the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing and the 1986 bomb attack on a West Berlin night club in which several U.S. servicemen died. The government denied that Qaddafi said any such thing to Steiner.

The election of the ultraconservative judge Ronald Schill as Hamburg’s minister of interior in late September sent a chill down the spines of those concerned about extremism in mainstream German politics. Schill, who won more than 19 percent of the vote on a law-and-order platform in a city with a high crime rate, was known as the “merciless judge” for his tendency to hand down severe verdicts in minor cases. Creating his own “Party of a State-Led Offensive,” he built alliances with the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the liberal Free Democratic Party, sidelining the SPD in Hamburg for the first time since the end of World War II. Schill appeared ready to go national. Already the
number two person in the CDU in Rostock (former East Germany), Michael Necke, 28, had defected and joined the new party. Necke said the CDU no longer spoke to younger people. Schill’s party was expected to run in elections in the former East German state of Saxony-Anhalt in April, 2002.

Local politics in Germany’s capital took a few interesting twists in the fall of 2001. Berlin’s longtime conservative mayor, Eberhard Diepgen of the CDU, lost his post over revelations that the city’s finances were in ruin. He was replaced by Klaus Wowereit of the SPD, who announced, before the election, that he was gay. In another remarkable political shift, the reformed communist party, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), won enough votes in the Berlin state election to become a partner in the new coalition government there. PDS chief Gregor Gysi, who was Jewish, became minister of economics for the state, which covered the area including and immediately surrounding Berlin.

**Immigration**

Germany progressed slowly toward enactment of a law, first suggested by the coalition government in 1998, to streamline regulations for asylum seekers, facilitate the integration of foreigners, and develop a method of determining who might enter the country in order to work. There were some seven million noncitizens living in Germany on a long-term basis—nearly 9 percent of the country’s entire population of 82 million. The great majority, nearly six million, came from European countries (mostly Turkey, Italy, Greece, and former Yugoslavia). The next largest groups were Asians, Africans, North and South Americans, and Australians. An estimated 200,000 were arriving each year.

Conservatives and the extreme right had long blamed unemployment and crime on “foreigners.” In broader terms, the right resisted redefining Germany as a multicultural society. But there was also an emerging consensus among other groups—industry, labor unions, and churches—on the need for an immigration law. Discussion began in earnest in the summer of 2000, after a wave of right-wing extremist attacks on foreigners. At that time, Interior Minister Otto Schily created an independent commission on immigration policy headed by Rita Süssmuth (CDU), former president of the Bundestag (lower house of Parliament), and including Paul Spiegel, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (CCJG).

No law was enacted in 2001 since agreement could not be achieved be-
between those favoring a fixed immigration quota—the political right—and those, primarily on the left, who preferred flexible guidelines that might be adjusted on humanitarian grounds. It appeared likely that immigration would be an issue in the 2002 elections. It was unclear whether an eventual immigration law for Germany would affect the status of future Jewish refugees or immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Under existing law such Jews enjoyed a special status not shared by most other refugees (aside from “ethnic Germans,” who were automatically repatriated). Since 1991 Germany had allowed 5,000 Jews per year to emigrate from the former Soviet Union in order to help rebuild Germany’s destroyed Jewish community.

SEPTEMBER 11

The terrorist attacks on American targets on September 11 affected German politics both domestically and internationally. By the end of the year it was clear that Germany was prepared to be a committed partner with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism.

After the attacks, Chancellor Schroder pledged Germany’s “unlimited solidarity” with the United States. That solidarity withstood a Bundestag vote of no confidence in November over the question of whether German troops could take part in the war in Afghanistan: the SPD-Green Party coalition government narrowly survived. According to the German constitution, every military deployment had to be approved by the Bundestag. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, leader of the traditionally pacifist Greens, had threatened to resign if his party failed to support deployment of German troops in Afghanistan. This was just the fourth time since World War II that Germany held a vote of confidence, and this vote was the biggest test for the Red-Green coalition since its formation in October of 1998.

At the end of the year, Schröder and Fischer were reelected to head their respective parties in the national elections scheduled for September 2002. Polls indicated that a serious challenge to the coalition might be in the offing from Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Bavarian sister party of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of former chancellor Helmut Kohl. Stoiber was the governor of Bavaria. A slowing German economy was causing considerable voter dissatisfaction with the government: the deficit was growing and unemployment had risen to 10.4 percent (in his 1998 campaign, Schröder had promised to cut unemployment to 3.5 percent by 2002). Though Schröder received
public approval for his leadership after the September 11 attacks, critics said he seemed to have lost control of the “new middle,” or the center majority, to which he had appealed successfully in 1998.

It remained to be seen, however, whether the CDU had recovered sufficiently from the slush-fund scandal that rocked the party in 1999–2000. Former chancellor Kohl was no longer making negative headlines for the party, and the CDU was trying to create a positive, forward-looking image. Down to nearly the last minute, CDU party head Angela Merkel was considered the favorite to lead the party. But after opinion polls showed that Merkel would garner only 19 percent of the vote against 68 percent for Schröder, Stoiber, who polled 35 percent against the chancellor’s 41 percent, was chosen instead.

Germany’s response to the events of September 11 included numerous pro-American demonstrations, including a gathering of more than 200,000 in the capital on September 14, where President Johannes Rau and the newly appointed U.S. ambassador to Germany, Dan Coats, spoke. Both Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer visited New York City’s “Ground Zero” in the fall.

Ambassador Coats, in his first official speech on U.S.-German relations, said the debate about whether or not America was “drifting away from Europe” had ended on September 11. He listed what he considered the highest priorities for German-American cooperation: law enforcement and the fight against terrorism; NATO expansion; Balkan peacekeeping; missile defense; economic cooperation; environmental protection; labor and social affairs; and fighting Internet crime.

Popular sentiment, sympathetic to the United States immediately after September 11, turned sour when it came to the war in Afghanistan, which began with bombings on October 7. While antiwar protests came nowhere near matching the size of the earlier pro-American demonstrations, their anti-American tone was very sharp. They attracted both left- and right-wing extremists angered by American “imperialism”—and its supposed Jewish connections.

Some prominent intellectuals also expressed anti-American sentiments as the war against Afghanistan continued. The writer and Nobel Laureate Günter Grass, for example, said he identified with “American writers like Norman Mailer, who after [the attacks on] New York said ‘We have to ask ourselves why Arab terrorists hate us so much.’” This prompted Interior Minister Schily to describe the anti-Americanism within certain German intellectual circles as “really terrible.” Schily in turn was lambasted by, among others, the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, who
compared Schily to a modern-day German version of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy.

One result of the terror attacks was the cancellation of a planned October mission to Berlin by the New York-based United Jewish Communities, the merged entity of what had been the United Jewish Appeal and the Conference of Jewish Federations. It was to have been the first official trip to Germany by this major American Jewish umbrella organization. The mission was rescheduled for October 2002. (Other Jewish groups that visited earlier in the year were B’nai B’rith USA, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the North American Boards of Rabbis [NABOR], and the World Union for Progressive Judaism.)

According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, some 30,000 Islamic extremists had made Germany their home in 2000. When it became known that three of the four pilots in the terror attacks had been living in Hamburg until shortly before carrying out their deadly plans, German security forces searched the country and made several arrests. In October, Germany cracked down on politically suspect Muslim clubs, while issuing a public reminder that only a small minority of Muslims living in Germany belonged to such clubs.

Nevertheless, as in the United States, supporters of civil liberties in Germany condemned this crackdown and other attempts to limit freedom in the name of security. The Green Party, in fact, pressured its government coalition partner, the SPD, to preserve laws that protected individuals from unlawful arrest or from being expelled from Germany without due process. Such German sensitivity to civil liberties reflected the nation’s vivid memory of the abuse of police powers under Nazi and communist rule.

One law that did pass, in November, criminalized membership in and support of terrorist organizations abroad, and allowed the banning of religious groups that abused their legal protection and tax advantages by harboring terrorists or promoting extremism. Interior Minister Schily first enforced the law in December when he banned the 1,100-member Islamic State, a group based in Cologne with 19 affiliates around the country, which was reportedly linked to Osama bin Laden. The leader of Islamic State, Turkish-born Muhammed Metin Kaplan, then serving a four-year sentence in Germany for incitement to kill a rival, had called for the overthrow of non-Islamic governments.

In late November, after the U.S.-led coalition had succeeded in driving the Taliban from power, Germany hosted a conference of leaders of
Afghan ethnic and political groups in Bonn, where plans were made for an interim government. Germany was a natural choice for the conference, given its relatively large Afghan population (some 100,000 refugees and students) and its traditional commitment to “nation building” based on its own post-World War II rejuvenation through the Marshall Plan. Some viewed the decision to hold the meeting in Germany as a chance to raise the country’s international profile, especially in light of the fact that Berlin had been rejected as a site for a Middle East peace conference earlier in the year.

Another development that raised Germany’s international profile was the election in November of General Harald Kujat as chairman of NATO’s military committee, to take effect in June 2002.

Germany’s relatively large population and great economic strength ensured that it would have the greatest number of seats in the European Parliament and play a key role within the European Union, especially with the expected expansion of the EU to include countries in Eastern Europe. Both Prime Minister Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer supported an American-style elected president rather than a rotating EU presidency.

Israel and the Middle East

Germany’s long-standing close relationship with Israel, built on its recognition of guilt and responsibility, was sorely tested during a year of unending violence in the Middle East.

History was made on the first day of 2001 when Israel sent its new ambassador, Shimon Stein, to the newly reestablished capital, Berlin. Stein not only had the unenviable task of representing his country to one of its most important supporters during an exceptionally difficult time in Israel’s history, but he also followed a very popular ambassador, Avi Primor, who, in pre-intifada days, often criticized his own government—in fluent German—and was a darling of the country’s official, intellectual, and media circles. Stein quickly cemented strong connections with the government, and consistently challenged unfair criticism of Israel.

The official opening of the new Israeli embassy in Berlin in May was a major public event that drew 2,000 guests and featured a live klezmer band and kosher hors d’oeuvres. Shimon Peres, on his first official visit to Germany as Israel’s new foreign minister, offered a prayer for peace in the Middle East and for the victims of the Holocaust. Peres called the embassy “not only a House of Israel, but also a house representing all those driven out of their homes” by the Nazis. (The embassy was built
on land purchased in 1928 by a Jewish businessman, Hermann Schön-
dorf, who was forced to emigrate in 1934, a year after the Nazis came to
power.) The new building was faced with Jerusalem stone and consisted
of six segments, a reminder of the six million Jews murdered in the Holo-
cast. It was designed by Israeli architect Orit Willenberg-Giladi and built
by Hochtief, Germany's second-largest construction firm. German press
reports made much of the fact that the company had also built Hitler's
Berlin bunker.

During his visit to Germany, Peres met with both Schröder and Fis-
cher, and took part in a congress of European Social Democrats, where
he faced tough questioning on Israel's settlement policy.

In July, only two months later, Germany welcomed Syrian president
Bashar al-Assad for a state visit to Berlin. Assad had meetings with the
chancellor, the president, the foreign minister, and others. German Jew-
ish leaders were incensed at the dignified treatment given Assad, who,
during a visit to Spain earlier in the year, had said that "the racism of the
Israelis [was reminiscent] of National Socialism" and, during the May
2001 visit of the pope to Syria, had declared that Jews wanted to "destroy
the basis of all religions, just as they betrayed Jesus and just as they tried
to kill the Prophet Mohammed." Michel Friedman, vice president of the
Central Council of Jews in Germany (CCJG), said it was "unbearable" to see political leaders "who are actively anti-Semitic, racist and defam-
atory against Jews" treated like any other leaders. Reportedly, Foreign
Minister Fischer had used the occasion of his meeting with Assad to sug-
gest that the Syrian rethink his approach to Israel and Jews.

Meanwhile, Jürgen Möllemann, a vice president of the liberal Free
Democratic Party, said it was high time that more Arab leaders were in-
vited to Germany. Möllemann, who was also head of the German-Arab
Society, said that if Schröder could meet with Ariel Sharon, who, in his
opinion, was a greater threat to the peace process, then he could certainly
meet with Assad. Möllemann's anti-Israel views surfaced several more
times during the year, and drew criticism from the government and the
CCJG. Michel Friedman said that "if Möllemann has not grasped" the
fact that Israel had a right to defend itself against "brutal, hate-filled and
cowardly assassins of this world," then he "disqualifies himself from
being taken seriously in politics."

Israeli embassy spokesman Yuval Fuchs called Foreign Minister Fis-
cher "one of the greatest friends of Israel in Europe." Fischer played an
active role in trying to broker an end to violence, maintaining good re-
lations with both Israel and many Arab countries, and insisting on the need for American participation in any peace talks. In late October Fischer visited Pakistan, followed by trips to Tehran, Riyadh, and Tel Aviv. Particularly in Iran, Fischer emphasized Germany's unbending support for Israel's right to exist. He came under criticism there for his statements to the Bundestag in which he had condemned Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad as terror organizations. In Israel, Fischer tried unsuccessfully to convince Prime Minister Sharon to withdraw troops from several Palestinian cities, and to pressure Yasir Arafat to extradite the murderers of Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

In September, Fischer stood up for Israel at the UN's World Conference Against Racism in South Africa, from which both Israel and the United States withdrew in protest. Responding to comments by UN secretary general Kofi Annan, who related Israel's treatment of Palestinians today to the Nazi genocide against the Jews, Fischer said Germany "cannot accept the trivialization, relativization or even denial of the Holocaust, and it will resolutely counter any such attempts." Fischer called the Holocaust "the 20th century's most terrible crime" and said its memory "will have a lasting influence on German politics."

After some 3,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at the conference signed a nonbinding declaration condemning Israel as a "racist, apartheid state" and accusing Israel of war crimes, Fischer warned that the conference was in danger of failure. Several major German NGOs, including the pro-immigration lobby PRO ASYL, publicly condemned the resolution for its anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric. (While in South Africa, Fischer also met privately with Arafat and Italian foreign minister Renato Ruggiero to discuss the possibility of talks in Italy between Arafat and Peres.) Following the conference, diplomat Michael Gerdts, who headed the German delegation, said he was extremely pleased with the changed language in the final resolution, which did not mention Israel by name. He said this was the result of European cooperation.

While Germany had little success in moderating the generally pro-Palestinian stance of the European Union, German representatives took the lead in challenging EU funding of virulently anti-Semitic, anti-Israel Palestinian schoolbooks. In August 2001, CDU members Amin Laschet, a member of the EU legislative body and Germany's representative to its economics committee, joined with Elmar Brok, head of the EU Parliament's foreign policy committee, to publicize texts funded indirectly by the EU that described Jews as "treacherous and disloyal," suggested that
Zionism benefited from persecutions and the Holocaust, called "martyrdom in the struggle against Israel" the highest goal for young Muslims, and left the State of Israel off the maps.

In November, they and other pro-Israel members of the EU Parliament, including the prominent French lawyer François Zimeray, succeeded in attaching a rider to an EU budget line of 45 million euros earmarked for promoting the peace process. It stated that EU money was "for projects that support peace, understanding, reconciliation, and a decrease of hate," and could not be used for Palestinian textbooks that contained anti-Semitic material or incited hatred. Passage of the amendment was said to have been facilitated by intense lobbying on the part of Israel's mission to the EU in Brussels.

Popular sympathies in Germany, however, seemed to have shifted in favor of the Palestinians, the notion gaining credibility that they were victims of persecution by the former victims of the Nazis—a position rejected by the government. At year's end, politicians across the spectrum said they were under pressure from constituents to halt the sale of weapons to Israel. As Germany prepared for elections in 2002, it appeared that the Middle East could play a major role.

THE MEDIA

Upon his election as president of the Berlin Jewish Community in May, Dr. Alexander Brenner devoted his first public remarks to the negative image of Israel in the German media, which, he said, "has awakened bad memories." "Every Jew already hears in his head the next step: instead of 'Don't buy from Jews,' it is 'Don't buy from Israelis,'" he told the Berliner Zeitung, referring to the 1933 Nazi boycotts of Jewish businesses in Germany. "Jews can stand on their heads—it won't get rid of anti-Semitism. I see the discussion about Israel as a vent for latent anti-Semitism in this country."

Throughout 2001, German media reports on the Middle East reflected a distinctly pro-Palestinian, anti-Sharon bent. Thus Rudolf Augstein, for example, publisher of Der Spiegel, suggested in his magazine (Dec. 17) a comparison between Ariel Sharon and Adolf Hitler. According to Richard Chaim Schneider, an award-winning German-Jewish documentary director, "For most Germans, Sharon is an ideal lightning rod, because most of them consider him a war criminal, like Hitler." Schneider, who organized a panel discussion on German media and Israel in Munich in the summer of 2001, noted a clear "development in Germany to
compare the atrocities of the Israeli defense forces with the deeds of the Nazis, as a way to be liberated from guilt.” Lars Rensmann, a political scientist at the Free University in Berlin who specialized in anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and right-wing extremism, said his research confirmed the growing popularity of linking Zionism to Nazism.

Of special concern, since it emanated from the German mainstream, was a series of articles in the highly respected conservative daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ). The tone of these articles could be guessed from their headlines, such as “Whoever Occupies Another Country Must Not Wonder if the People Fight Back,” “All Palestine is a Prison,” and “The Problem is Called Israel.” Pro-Israel groups in Germany protested. Some 200 people—including Alexander Brenner; journalist Ralph Giordano; and Lala Süßkind, president of the Women's International Zionist Organization—signed a petition circulated by Prof. Karl E. Grözinger of the University of Potsdam that said the FAZ articles were reminiscent of the “sinister days of anti-Semitism.” The FAZ responded that the charges of anti-Semitism were absurd and that the articles in question did not necessarily reflect the opinion of the paper's editors.

Certain intellectual circles also reflected the anti-Israel trend. Author Günter Grass, the same man who condemned the U.S. for attacking Afghanistan, told Der Spiegel (Oct. 10) that “Israel must not only get out of the occupied areas. Its occupation of Palestinian land, and its settlements, are all criminal acts. This must not only stop, but it has to be retroactive. Otherwise, there will be no peace.” Grass said that he meant this not as an attack on the Jewish state, but as helpful advice from a friend. But CCJG president Paul Spiegel did not see it that way, and placed Grass “on a level with radical enemies of Israel.” Spiegel declared it unacceptable to deny that “Israel is the victim and not the perpetrator in this bloody war of terrorism,” and concluded that Grass had allied himself with “other non-Jewish intellectuals in Germany who, directly or indirectly, for years have been questioning Israel’s right to exist,” a charge that Grass denied. Speaking in support of Grass, Jürgen Koppelin, a Bundestag member of the Free German Party, told the German news agency DPA that “Paul Spiegel just has to accept that criticism of Israel’s politics is not the same as criticism of the existence of Israel.”

The Israeli embassy worked hard to combat Israel’s negative treatment in the press, and the American Jewish Committee's Berlin office commissioned a study of German media coverage of the Middle East that was due to be released, in German, in 2002.
Old-style right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism continued to plague the generally healthy democracy of Germany.

A survey released by the University of Leipzig in December 2001 indicated that about 12 percent of Germans had extreme right-wing views. Sampling the views of 4,005 Germans in the western part of the country and 1,020 in the east, it found that 10 percent agreed that “the influence of the Jews is still too big today,” and that foreigners should leave the country. Nine percent said they preferred dictatorship to democracy. Though many observers of the far-right scene worried about recruitment of youth to extremist parties, most of the extremists in the survey were elderly and not well educated, and many were unemployed.

Since the federal government changed the criteria for defining right-wing hate crimes in May 2001—including politically motivated crimes under that category for the first time—it was impossible to compare the 2001 figures to previous years. In all, the government registered 10,113 such crimes for 2001, a disproportionate number of them in Germany’s eastern states. The great majority of the total—6,823—were “propaganda” crimes, involving public expression of racism, or verbal or written threats; 579 were attacks on property; and 508 were physical attacks in which 385 people were wounded. There were seven charges of attempted murder. The postcommunist party, PDS, expressed great skepticism about the statistics and charged the government with leaving out certain crimes to make the situation appear rosier than it really was. The PDS pointed out that the state of Brandenburg reported about 1,000 more right-wing extremist crimes within its boundaries than did the federal government for the same region.

As for anti-Semitic crimes, the federal government reported 989 incidents in 2001, down from 1,084 in 2000. However, 108 cases were reported in the fourth quarter of the year alone, including six physical attacks with four injuries and at least 41 instances of public expression or display of illegal material (such as swastikas, the raised arm of the “Hitler greeting,” the singing of SS songs, and Holocaust denial).

At the end of November, Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, told the annual SPD party conference in Nuremberg that right-wing extremism was taking on an extremely troubling, “virulent” direction, including an increase in vandalism against Jewish cemeteries and synagogues. Noting that a swastika had been drawn on Dresden’s new synagogue only a day after it opened on November 9, Spiegel said criminal acts that used to be
hidden were increasingly taking place in "open daylight." He called on the government to act more forcefully against such crimes, and warned of links between Germany's far right and Islamic extremists.

The Palestinian cause had indeed become a more prominent part of the far right's anti-Jewish, anti-American platform, and the ties intensified after September 11. In the days immediately following the attacks in the U.S., the memorial at the Dachau concentration camp was vandalized with anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, and anti-American graffiti. On October 3, the 11th anniversary of German unification, some 1,000 supporters of the far-right National Democratic Party demonstrated in Berlin, with one of the rally leaders reportedly calling for "the death of the United States as a world power." Observers of the far-right scene noted that extremists had taken to wearing traditional Palestinian headscarves during public demonstrations, so that both in rhetoric and in dress it was difficult to distinguish between the far right and the far left. However, connections between Islamic extremists and German right-wingers remained tentative, limited to Holocaust denial and anti-Jewish, anti-Israel sentiments. Except for a small number of converts to Islam, right-wing racism toward Arabs appeared to limit the possibilities for cooperation.

Unlike 2000, when a spate of violent crimes, including the murders of several immigrants and homeless people, as well as an unexplained explosion injuring Jewish immigrants in Düsseldorf and an arson attack on the Düsseldorf synagogue, led to a crisis of conscience, public interest in the crimes of right-wing extremists was far more reserved in 2001. Several initiatives begun in 2000 against extremism continued though 2001, with the federal government spending tens of millions of dollars on educational programs fostering tolerance, such as "Show Your Face," a cooperative effort by the government and the CCJG.

Right-wing extremism on the Internet remained difficult to combat, since much of the German-language right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi material outlawed in Germany came in online from U.S. providers. In the fall of 2001, at the request of the German Foreign Ministry, the American Jewish Committee intervened with an Internet provider to prevent American neo-Nazi agitator Gary Lauck from hacking his own propaganda onto the sites of the German Interior Ministry and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

Lawmakers sought to mobilize support for a ban on the far-right National Democratic Party (NPD), which the Schröder government had compared to the Nazis of the 1920s. Only two parties had ever been banned in postwar Germany, one communist and the other neo-Nazi,
both in the 1950s. Though the NPD had had no electoral success, the 7,000-member party attracted many disaffected young Germans through ethnocentrism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and hatred of America. After overcoming free-speech concerns, both houses of Parliament and the federal government approved the ban. On October 1, the German Supreme Court, or Bundesverfassungsgericht, said it would grant a hearing to the NPD, which protested the move. The hearing was scheduled for early February 2002.

The NPD used the campaign to ban it to attract sympathy, and held numerous demonstrations in 2001 on the theme that their democratic right to free speech and assembly was under threat. In the largest NPD demonstration ever in Berlin, on December 1, nearly 4,000 members marched. The demonstration brought right-wingers within a few blocks of two synagogues—this was on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath—and other Jewish communal buildings, and drew an angry response from counter-demonstrators. Members of the Jewish community, who would not officially demonstrate on the Sabbath, moved their afternoon prayer service outside, in front of the New Synagogue, as helicopters hovered overhead and thousands of protesters milled in the street. Paul Spiegel called the NPD rally a “provocation of huge dimensions,” a view reflected by the mainstream political parties and ordinary citizens.

There were legal steps taken during 2001 relating to extremist outrages. New, harsher sentences were handed down on October 10 to the two young men convicted in the October 2000 arson attack on the Düsseldorf Synagogue, following an outcry over the initial punishments. One year was added to the sentence of Khalid Z., a 21-year-old Moroccan-born German citizen, bringing his term to two-and-a-half years in prison. Belal T., a 20-year-old Palestinian, received 22 months on probation, up from 18 months. His sentence was lighter because he had apologized to the Jewish community of Düsseldorf after his initial release from investigative custody. Now, Khalid Z. said in court that he wanted a similar meeting with local Jewish leaders. The two had told the court they committed the act out of anger after seeing TV images of a Palestinian child shot by Israeli soldiers. Judge Werner Arendes said he could understand their emotions, having seen those images himself. But this was no excuse for the crime, said the judge, who added that German Jews had been deeply upset by the attack on the synagogue. “You have lived long enough in Germany to become familiar with the history of the Jews,” he told the two men.

In another case, in November, four defendants were convicted in the
1986 bombing of the West Berlin disco in which two U.S. soldiers and a Turkish woman were killed. Only one defendant, Verena Chanaa, who placed the bomb, was found guilty of murder and given the highest possible sentence, 14 years in prison.

Michel Friedman, the CCJG vice president, sued Hermann Reichertz, who had called him a *Zigeunerjuden*, or "Gypsy-Jew," for defamation. In August, Friedman lost his case, the court ruling that neither "Gypsy" nor "Jew" was a defamatory term. Friedman appealed the decision.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

In September, it was announced that the new "Topography of Terror" exhibit and archive on the Gestapo would open in Berlin in May 2005, 60 years after the end of World War II. Some 37 million euros in federal and state funds were pledged to build a permanent museum on the site of the former Nazi secret police headquarters.

In October, work began on the national Holocaust memorial in Berlin, whose design, by American architect Peter Eisenman, was approved in 1999 by Parliament after more than ten years of debate and discussion. Construction of the memorial, to consist of 2,700 concrete slabs on a 204,500 square foot site near the Brandenburg Gate and the future U.S. embassy, was expected to be completed by January 27, 2004, the 59th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. It was expected to cost some $22 million.

In the summer, Lea Rosh, the non-Jewish writer and TV personality who initiated the idea for the project back in 1988, launched a controversial fund-raising campaign for the memorial. It featured giant posters with the slogan, There Was Never a Holocaust, printed over an image of snow-topped mountains and a pristine blue lake. In small letters the ad continued, "there are still many who believe that’s true, and in 20 years there may be even more," followed by a plea for donations to the memorial. Holocaust survivors and German Jewish leaders joined in condemning the ad campaign— one survivor even filed a lawsuit—on the grounds that the large headline, which was all that most viewers would read, could be interpreted as Holocaust denial. Paul Spiegel of the CCJG commented, "the subject of the Holocaust is not suitable for advertising campaigns." The campaign was dropped.

The Hamburg Institute for Social Research reopened its "Crimes of the Wehrmacht" traveling exhibit in December, in Berlin, after a two-year hiatus. The original exhibit was withdrawn in 1999 because of the misiden-
tification of nine photos. The revelation of mistakes in the exhibit had greatly pleased its detractors, including neo-Nazi groups that claimed all the photos were faked, reflecting decades of general public consumption of the myth that only the SS, not the regular army, committed war crimes during World War II (see AJYB 2000, pp. 348–49). Now the errors had been corrected, and the revised exhibit, stressing text rather than photos, drew positive reviews. But neo-Nazi groups protested the new exhibit just as loudly as they had the original, not just in Berlin, where the exhibit opened, but in Bielefeld as well, its next stop.

In December, Paul Latussek, head of the Thuringen branch of the Organization for Refugees, resigned his post in disgrace after publicly expressing doubts about the number of victims murdered at Auschwitz. The organization represented Germans expelled from Nazi-occupied lands after the end of World War II. Because it was illegal to deny the Holocaust in Germany, state prosecutors were reportedly looking into the possibility of filing charges against Latussek.

In October, another dark secret of former East Germany was revealed. Papers discovered by Berlin historian Andreas Weigelt showed that in the 1970s East German secret police exhumed some 600 bodies of Jewish victims of the Nazis from a mass grave in Lieberose at a satellite camp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp; security officials ordered examinations of the corpses and the removal of gold teeth. The gold, totaling more than 2 pounds in all, was most likely melted down by the finance department of the Ministry for State Security.

The “Finkelstein Debate” came to Germany when Norman Finkelstein arrived in Berlin on February 8. This American writer was the author of The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering, a damning indictment of Jewish leaders who, he claimed, cynically exploited what happened to Jews in the Holocaust in order to revive American Jewish identity, squeeze money out of European governments for the benefit of Jewish organizations, and support the policies of Israel. While U.S. critics generally panned the book and the American reading public ignored it, Finkelstein found an interested public in Germany, and the translation into German became a best seller in 2000 (see “The Assault on Holocaust Memory,” AJYB 2001, pp. 3–20).

Many German historians and political scientists considered the book unscientific and even irrational, but Finkelstein attracted large crowds to his presentation in Berlin. A sizable group of neo-Nazis who showed up were ultimately expelled. Also present were protesters who shouted that the term “Holocaust Industry” should be applied to those German com-
panies that built the machinery of death and/or used slave laborers, not to the Jewish organizations that have sought compensation and restitution of property to Jewish and non-Jewish survivors.

Although the impact of Finkelstein's visit faded later in the year, many worried that right-wing extremists were not the only Germans who appreciated his biting criticism of the Jewish establishment. There was considerable resentment among conservative Germans about the ongoing issue of reparations for survivors, and Finkelstein's charges could very well help begin breaking old taboos against anti-Semitic stereotypes of avaricious Jews.

In August, a controversy arose about wartime writings by Rabbi Leo Baeck, the leader of Reform Judaism in Germany, who headed the Reichsvertretung, or Union of Jews in Germany, during the Nazi period, and hence represented the Jews in their dealings with the regime. Baeck was long considered a saintly figure, refusing to leave the Jewish community of Germany even when offered asylum abroad. When he was deported to Theresientstadt in 1943, Baeck, then almost 70 years old, was appointed head of the Jewish council in the concentration camp. He survived the war and settled in England where he died in 1956.

Material unearthed by Hermann Simon, director of Berlin's Centrum Judaicum, raised questions about the extent to which Baeck—who, in 1933, said that "the thousand-years of history of Jews in Germany has come to an end"—had actually kowtowed to the SS in writing his 1,600-page wartime report, "The Development of the Legal Position of Jews in Europe, Chiefly in Germany." Baeck himself said after the war that he did the report for members of the conservative resistance, who planned to use it after the expected downfall of Nazism to argue for Jewish rights in a new Germany.

However Simon revealed that in the early 1980s he had found papers in the attic of the Jewish Community House in East Berlin indicating that Baeck had done the work under contract to, and the control of, the Gestapo. Among these papers were notes apparently dictated to Baeck by SS-Sturmbannführer Friedrich Suhr, head of the SS Jewish department, between September 1941 and October 1942. Simon said he hid the material so it would not come into the hands of the German communist government, and even after the downfall of the communist regime he debated with himself for years whether to publicize these notes, since they seemed to cast a negative light on Baeck. Even now, after going public, Simon made it clear that he had no desire to cast doubt on the "great service that Leo Baeck rendered to German Jewry." German historian Götz
Aly suggested that Suhr, charged with handling diplomatic activities related to the "solving of the Jewish question in Europe," may have wanted better to understand the process of Jewish emancipation in other lands in order to prepare the ground for the liquidation of Jewish populations outside Germany, or, more innocently, may have planned to use Baeck's study as the basis for his own doctoral dissertation.

**Compensation**

After years of negotiations, held up by German industry's demands for immunity from future litigation, the Remembrance and Future Fund, created by the German government and industry in 1999, finally reached agreement with Jewish organizations in the spring of 2001. This set the wheels in motion for payment of compensation to Nazi-era slave and forced laborers. The fund totaled about 5 billion euros, with equal contributions from German industry and government. In the summer, the Bundestag voted to extend the deadline for applications from August 11 to the end of 2001.

A board member of the fund announced that an estimated 1.5 million applications for funds had been received — only about 10 percent of them from Jews — 30,000 more than had been expected. Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, called on claimants' lawyers to give up a portion of their fees so that all survivors might receive compensation. Some 51 attorneys were sharing a total of DM 118 million, divided according to the number of clients they represented in class-action suits. Munich attorney Michael Witti said he received only about $95 for each of his approximately 30,000 clients.

In June, the first payments, amounting to about $7,000, went out from the Remembrance and Future Fund to former slave laborers in the Czech Republic — 2,500 concentration camp survivors and the 7,500 oldest forced laborers — and in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. In Frankfurt, Karl Brozik, the German representative of the Claims Conference, the international organization that negotiated for survivors, himself handed DM 10,000 to the victims. By October, more than 500,000 euros had been paid to more than 300,000 former slave and forced laborers. The German industry foundation announced in October that it had collected its entire assigned contribution from some 6,500 firms. A new director of the foundation was chosen, Hildgund Jehle, an ethnologist who had worked for the Volkswagen Foundation. By the end of 2001, the foundation was drawing up guidelines for grants to cultural, educational, and
social programs to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive for future generations.

In October, Germany rejected Polish claims of unfair treatment in the payment of compensation to Polish Nazi-era forced laborers. A half-million Polish survivors were to receive almost a quarter of the money from the Remembrance and Future Fund, but Poland said Germany had used an unfavorable exchange rate in calculating compensation. The German government responded that the Finance Ministry had checked its numbers and found no improprieties.

Religious bodies that had benefited from forced and slave labor also announced compensation programs. The Catholic Church said that it would set up its own fund, and not participate in the German government and industry fund. The Protestant umbrella organization in a section of Berlin declared that it would pay about $500 each to 74 Nazi-era forced laborers who were made to work in cemeteries in Berlin between 1942 and 1945. The church, which had also contributed about $170,000 to the government and industry fund, said it would also pay widows of the cemetery workers.

In other news, in March, a Berlin court rejected a lawsuit brought by leaders of the Slovakian Jewish community claiming compensation for Slovak victims of the Holocaust. Their case was based on the fact that the pro-Nazi Slovak government had given more than $60 million in confiscated Jewish assets to the Germans to pay for the deportation of more than 57,000 Slovak Jews to death camps. In rejecting the suit, the German court said the problem could only be resolved through international agreement.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography and the Immigration Debate**

Germany had one of the fastest growing Jewish communities in the world, thanks to the arrival of tens of thousands of Jews from the former Soviet Union. Since 1990, the federal government had received more than 203,000 immigration applications from Jews in the FSU, and 125,000 actually arrived (many subsequently leaving), and the number of people officially registered as Jews more than tripled, from 30,000 to over 90,000 in 2001.

According to a 1991 agreement between the government and the Jew-
ish community, Russian-speaking immigrants who could prove their Jewish heritage would be given the right to remain in Germany and to receive social assistance and help with integration, whether or not their Jewish heritage was maternal or paternal. They did not get automatic German citizenship, retaining refugee status for six years under the Geneva Convention, after which they could apply for citizenship. Most of the ex-Soviet Jews were well-educated professionals and had difficulty finding jobs in Germany. To the great annoyance of many Jewish old-timers, the newcomers seemed eager to associate with the community in order to reap the benefits of language education and job training provided to new Jewish immigrants, but said they could not afford to pay the dues that supported these programs and showed little interest in learning about their Jewish identity.

Paul Spiegel, head of the CCJG, made headlines when he suggested that the immigration law that Germany was considering (see above, p. 405) should include regulations limiting Jewish immigration to those who could prove Jewish lineage through the maternal line, or who had converted to Judaism according to rabbinical law. He suggested that experts be hired to check the validity of immigrants' claims to be Jewish, since, he went on, it was well known that there was a black market for Jewish identity papers in the former Soviet Union. Up to 30 percent of people entering Germany by claiming Jewish heritage, charged Spiegel, were non-Jews who used this opportunity as their big break, and then disappeared once inside Germany.

Spiegel's support for tougher immigration requirements for Jews drew harsh criticism from Andreas Nachama, former president of the Berlin Jewish Community, who said that anyone who was persecuted as a Jew should be allowed into Germany. He quoted the late Ignatz Bubis, Spiegel's predecessor at the helm of the CCJG, who had said that Germany's commitment to help the persecuted precluded asking someone if he had a Jewish mother.

Communal Affairs

The 83 local Jewish communities in Germany operated under the umbrella of the Einheitsgemeinde, or "united community," which oversaw funding for communal needs. While officially Orthodox, the community was slowly moving toward acceptance of the liberal streams of Judaism. The expanding Jewish population created a need for more synagogues, schools, and community centers. This was especially evident in the smaller
cities, such as Krefeld, which had 130 Jews in 1989–1990 and 901 in 2001, and was still without a rabbi or cantor.

The Jewish community of the large city of Dresden, in eastern Germany, replaced its communist-era synagogue, which had room for just 90 worshipers, with a new structure to accommodate its 350 members. The new cube-shaped building was dedicated November 9, the 63rd anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night in 1938 when the original synagogue on that site was one of hundreds destroyed during the pogrom against Jewish property in both Germany and Austria. The project cost more than $10 million and was supported by the city of Dresden and the state of Sachsen, as well as by $2 million in private donations collected by the ecumenical Foundation for the Rebuilding of the Dresden Synagogue. Some 6,000 people showed up for the opening ceremonies, far more than the 1,200 who were expected. Many waited in line to have what they said was their first look inside a synagogue. Among the guests were U.S. ambassador Coats; German political figures; and Jewish and Christian leaders. The ceremony was broadcast live across the country. Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, called the structure "a miracle" that he never could have imagined ten years earlier. The next night, the building was defaced with Nazi graffiti (see above, pp. 414–15).

Similar expansion occurred elsewhere in eastern Germany. In December, a new Jewish community center and synagogue were dedicated in Frankfurt an der Oder, near the Polish border. About $50,000 was spent to renovate an old villa in the center of the city, previously used as a kindergarten. The city also planned to create a museum about the 700-year history of its Jewish community. When Hitler came to power in 1933, there were 586 Jews in the city; in 2001 there were about 220, most of them from the former Soviet Union.

In Würzburg, in the southwestern part of the country, Jakov Ebert was named rabbi in December. A native of Tel Aviv, Ebert became the first rabbi to serve this Jewish community since its destruction by the Nazis. Some 1,000 Jews lived in Würzburg in 2001.

In June, the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (UPJGAS) held a conference on "Renewal of Jewish Life: 200 Years of Reform Judaism in Germany," in the city of Halberstadt. Cosponsored by the Moses Mendelssohn Academy of Halberstadt, which was founded in 1995, the conference included lectures, workshops, religious services, and the awarding of the Israel Jacobson Prize to Rabbi Walter Homolka.

Another milestone in modern German Jewish life came in December,
with Tarbut, touted as the first “Jewish Cultural Congress in German-speaking Regions.” The event was held in the picturesque Bavarian Alpine setting of Schloss Elmau. The goal of Tarbut was to bring controversial issues to the table, including stereotypes of Jews, mixed marriage, the effects of the new Russian-speaking immigrants on Jewish life in Germany, and the overall health of European Jewry. The brainchild of Rachel Salamander, award-winning Jewish cultural activist and Jewish bookstore owner, and Michael Brenner, chairman of the Department of Jewish History and Culture at the University of Munich, the conference included some of the most prominent communal, religious, and academic figures in German Jewry, such as Paul Spiegel, head of the CCJG; Dr. Salomon Korn, head of the Frankfurt Jewish Community; Rabbi Paul Eisenberg of Vienna; Julius Schoeps, director of the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam; Charlotte Knobloch, head of the Munich Jewish Community; Rabbi Walter Rothschild of Berlin and Munich; Anetta Kahane of the Berlin Jewish Community; German Jewish journalist Josef Joffe; and Diana Pinto, Jewish representative to the European Union.

BERLIN

The Jewish community in the capital city of Berlin had increased from about 6,000 people to about 12,000 over the previous decade, largely due to immigration from the FSU. In early May, Dr. Alexander Brenner was elected president of the Berlin Jewish Community, replacing incumbent Andreas Nachama, who returned to his work as director of the Topography of Terror Foundation, the archive and memorial exhibit on the history of the Gestapo in Berlin. Among Nachama’s accomplishments was securing official support for an egalitarian congregation in the city, as well as securing contracts for Berlin's first two female cantors. Brenner, 71, was born in a Polish village near the Ukrainian border, son of a shopkeeper. When he was 11, he, his parents, and a sister were forced to resettle in Siberia. After World War II, the family was sent back to Poland. While the rest of the family emigrated to Israel, he went to Berlin, where he studied chemistry and physics. Brenner, who spoke English, German, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, and Yiddish fluently, began his career as a research scientist and then worked for the Federal Board of Health. He had since held German diplomatic posts in the former Soviet Union and in Israel. Brenner said he intended to do more to integrate the recent immigrants, who, both young and old, came with little knowledge of Jewish tradition, history, and religion.

In other Berlin communal news, the British-born Rabbi Walter Roth-
schild, who in 2000 had lost his job as the Liberal rabbi in Berlin, was hired as rabbi in Munich. Rabbi Chaim Rozwaski became an official rabbi of Berlin, in charge of the liberal-traditional synagogue on Pestalozzistrasse. The egalitarian congregation worshipping at Berlin's Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue continued to flourish, and a new Liberal group began meeting regularly at the location of the former American army chapel.

The second Bet Debora conference, for female rabbis, cantors, scholars, and community activists, took place in May in Berlin, on the theme of "The Jewish Family—Myth and Reality." The program was organized by Berliners Lara Daemmig and Elisa Klapheck, who planned to publish a volume based on the presentations. The conference discussed both traditional and alternative definitions of family. Most participants were Reform Jewish women, though there were also many Conservative Jews and some from an Orthodox background. As was the case with the original conference, held in May 1999, this Bet Debora event was sponsored in part by the Jewish Community of Berlin, a fact that organizers said reflected the community's readiness to attend to the concerns of its non-Orthodox members.

Education

Three new Jewish educational programs for adults opened in Germany in the fall. Two provided rabbinical training—Germany's first since World War II—and the third offered German women their first organized opportunity for higher Jewish education. Though the number of students in all three was small, many viewed the programs as signs that postwar German Jewry was coming of age.

Three rabbinical candidates began study in October at the new, multidenominational rabbinical program of the Institute of Judaic Studies in Heidelberg. It operated in coordination with Yeshiva University (Orthodox) and the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative) in New York, the Leo Baeck College (Liberal) in London, and the Schechter Seminary (Conservative) and Beit Morasha (Modern Orthodox) in Israel. At the same time, five candidates began their studies at a new Liberal seminary, the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, affiliated with the Moses Mendelssohn Center at the University of Potsdam. Many Reform Jews in America responded generously to appeals for financial support for the Geiger program, which was billed as a return of Reform Judaism to the land of its birth.

In Frankfurt, meanwhile, seven German Jewish women began an Or-
Orthodox Jewish educational program at the new Ronald S. Lauder Midrasha for Women, a sister school to the two-year-old Lauder Jüdisches Lehrhaus for men in Berlin. Rabbi Binyamin Krauss was director of the program, which offered training in Hebrew, Bible, Jewish law and tradition, and Jewish philosophy.

**Interfaith Relations**

The Protestant Church of Friedrichstadt announced plans in 2001 to use its building, opposite the new Jewish Museum in Berlin, as a meeting place for dialogue between Jews and Christians.

In December, the Bavarian administrative court began discussions on a complaint by teacher Konrad Riggenmann that the requirement that there be a cross in every Bavarian classroom infringed upon his religious freedom. It was the first time that a teacher, and not parents, had complained against the Bavarian “school-cross” law. Riggenmann said the cross was not only a symbol of the execution of Jesus, but of the murder of 13 million Jews in the name of Christianity since the Crusades. The Bavarian cultural ministry countered that teachers knew they would have contact with this symbol when they entered their profession, and that the cross symbolized “the culture and the history that stand behind the educational system of Bavaria.”

**Culture**

**Museums and Exhibits**

Pride in German Jewish history was the story of 2001, symbolized by the long-awaited opening of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The museum was federally funded, with a budget of about $10 million.

It was officially inaugurated at a gala event on Sunday, September 9. Inside the zinc-covered, angular building designed by architect Daniel Libeskind were depictions of nearly two millennia of Jewish life in Germany. Some 850 invited guests—including Chancellor Schröder, President Rau, and the German-born former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger—had a preview of the exhibit and a lavish dinner. The museum was scheduled to open to the public on September 12, but security concerns after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. forced a postponement.

The exhibit’s aim was to connect a rich history with a hopeful future,
ever mindful of the break in civilization that was the Holocaust. "The National Socialists wanted not only to destroy European Jewry physically, but to have control over how Jewish culture and German-Jewish relationships would be portrayed," said President Rau at the dinner, referring to the museum about an "extinct" people that Hitler planned to build. "That is why it is so important that in this museum we find images and witness of almost 2,000 years of the German-Jewish relationship." Schröder, after visiting the museum, said he always found it "miraculous that there are Jews living in Germany today, and that we meet together as friends." Paul Spiegel called the museum "long overdue." Noting the increase in xenophobic crime in Germany, Spiegel noted: "If one does not know Jewry, one can continue to see Jews as foreign."

The exhibit, designed by the project director, Ken Gorbey of New Zealand, received a number of negative comments from the press, museum critics, and some in the Jewish community, who called it superficial and questioned its emphasis on the assimilation of Jews into German culture. But there was a general consensus that the museum provided a good introduction to Jewish traditions and the history of German Jewry. It included artworks, books, Judaica, and household items. Displays were both high-tech and down-to-earth, with computer consoles and children's corners. The museum sought to deal with stereotypes, such as the notion that Jews were greedy: a display explained how, during certain periods, Jews were not permitted to work at any jobs aside from money-lending. The meaning of Jewish religious rituals were explained in direct terms—circumcision tools, for example, were on display.

German Jewish history was a key theme. The oldest item in the exhibit was a 10th-century book on loan from the Vatican, which referred to a Jewish community in Germany. In a space devoted to accomplishments of Jews in the 20th century, there was a page from Albert Einstein's notebook, with the famous equation $E=MC^2$. One of the few rooms left undecorated was the Holocaust Tower, a dark concrete chamber, a place for contemplation. Its door, when shut, would disappear in darkness. The museum also had an annex about a mile away, in a former Jewish quarter, the former brush-making workshop of Otto Weidt, who saved about 30 Berlin Jews from deportation to concentration camps by employing them. The small exhibit created in these rooms by Berlin students had become a part of the new museum. In addition, the New York-based Leo Baeck Institute established a branch of its archive at the Berlin Jewish Museum. For its inaugural event, the Institute planned a conference in Berlin for April 2002.
The museum quickly became a popular destination for Berliners and tourists. By late November 2001, the museum had recorded more than 217,000 visitors since its September 9 opening, making it one of the most visited museums of Germany.

This was by no means the only exhibit focusing on Jewish themes in Germany. One in Emsland about Jews under the Nazis, under the title “Everyday Jewish Life: Between Hope and Fear,” was on display in October and November. Two related exhibits there covered “Jews in Germany Today” and “Jewish Holidays and Practices,” featuring photographs by American photojournalist Edward Serotta.

In November, an exhibit about the “aryanization” of Jewish property during the Nazi era opened in the Koblenz Archives. Michel Friedman, vice president of the CCJG, spoke at the opening ceremony on November 23, saying that the confiscation of Jewish property was one step on the way to the Holocaust, and that it was important to recognize and respond to the earliest signs of discrimination.

The Maximilian Museum in Augsburg announced in December that it had received a valuable document related to the 19th-century history of German Jewry. The document, bound in silver, came from a family named Kaula that made its name in lending gold.

In December, the traveling exhibit “Milestones for Peace” opened in Aachen, its first German stop. The exhibit, already seen in New York and in Venice, consisted of Jerusalem stones collected and sent to artists and writers around the world, who were asked to create works related to themes of peace. The prototype was created by Peruvian artist Ivan Macha, together with Polish artist Ryszard Wasko and Israeli artist Iris Elhanani.

Also in December, a new memorial exhibit about former slave laborers was dedicated in the eastern German city of Leipzig. It recounted the exploitation of 90,000 forced laborers and concentration camp prisoners who had to work in armaments factories in Leipzig during World War II. Its location was Permoserstrasse 15, where at one time the largest Nazi tank manufacturing center stood. The exhibit included everyday objects, letters, lists of the names of forced laborers, and videotaped testimony.

Hartmut Topf, a descendent of the family that manufactured ovens used in concentration camps, said he wanted to create a memorial to Holocaust victims at the location of his family’s former factory in Erfurt. It remained to be seen whether the city administration would support it.
FILMS AND PERFORMANCES

The 51st Berlinale International Film Festival was kicked off in February with a ceremony honoring film star Kirk Douglas, 84. Douglas, whose parents were Russian Jews, and who spoke Yiddish at home, told the audience that this helped him during various filmings in Germany. Among the most important, if not best received films at the festival was Jean-Jacques Annaud’s epic about the devastating World War II battle of Stalingrad, *Duel—Enemy at the Gates*. Annaud recreated the campaign fought in 1942–43 in which more than a million Soviet soldiers and 800,000 German soldiers were killed before the Nazis withdrew. The Israeli-American film *Trembling Before God*, about homosexuality in Orthodox communities, won the Teddy for best documentary film on a gay-lezbian topic. Another film with a Jewish theme, *I Am Josh Polonski’s Brother*, by American director Raphaël Nadjari, told the story of three brothers, Abe, Ben, and Josh, with a textile business in Brooklyn. *Reshimat Ahava* (Love Inventory), by Israeli documentary filmmaker David Fisher, related the story of a young woman’s search for a sister who disappeared as an infant. A documentary that warmed the hearts of many was *The Sweetest Sound* by American Jewish filmmaker Alan Berliner, who decided to look for other people who share the name “Berliner,” and brought them all together. This film was shown later at the Berlin Jewish Film Festival as well.

Other films screened at the 2001 Jewish Film Festival included *Fighter*, a documentary by American filmmaker Amir Bar-Lev about two friends and Holocaust survivors from Prague who lived through National Socialism and communism; *Waiting for Messiah*, a romantic comedy about Jews in Buenos Aires, by Argentinean director Daniel Burman; and *Timbrels and Torahs* by American directors Miriam Chaya and Judith Montell, about the search for new and old Jewish rituals for women.

The annual two-week Jewish cultural festival in Berlin was dedicated in 2001 to the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. Some 40 programs of theater, music, exhibits, readings, and films were included, as well as, for the first time, a fashion show, featuring Berlin star models wearing designs by Kedem Sasson and Avivid Izher and parading down the runway to the beat of music provided by Israeli deejay Shimrit Maron. The Tel Aviv Kammer-Theater performed an adaptation of Chekov’s *Requiem*, the last work of the late Israeli writer and director Hanoch Levi. The final concert was a solo performance by Israeli pop singer Yehudit Ravitz, together with the Israel Philharmonic.
Several other German cities also held their annual Jewish festivals, including Munich and Erfurt.

In June, the Munich-based Elysium Academy of Continuing Education in the Arts held a series of musical and literary events in Bernreid, Berlin, and Leipzig under the title, “Point of Escape: Exile,” focusing on artists who fled Nazi Germany.

Among the remarkable concerts held in 2001 in Berlin were two sold-out outdoor performances in June by Israeli singer Chava Alberstein, the American avant-garde klezmer group the Klezmatics, and American pop star Peter Yarrow, formerly of Peter, Paul, and Mary. Held in the area behind the New Synagogue/Centrum Judaicum on Oranienburgerstrasse, the concerts were filmed by German and Israeli TV, as well as by the American nonprofit station PBS.

In July, a controversy arose in Israel when Daniel Barenboim, conductor of the Berlin Staatskapelle and musical director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, chose to play a piece by Richard Wagner at the Israel Festival. This broke the festival’s taboo against including pieces by the known anti-Semite and favorite composer of Adolf Hitler. Reportedly, Barenboim had originally agreed not to play Wagner’s opera Die Walküre after Holocaust survivors, politicians, and officials of the Simon Wiesenthal Center protested, but he then conducted Wagner’s overture to the opera Tristan und Isolde as an encore to the July 7 concert. A Knesset committee decided that Barenboim, a Jew, should be boycotted until he asked for forgiveness. In what might have been an act of defiance against the call for a boycott, Barenboim was the featured conductor in a Mahler concert marking the opening of the new Jewish Museum in Berlin on September 9. He received unrestrained applause from the full house at the Berlin Philharmonic.

A new Jewish theater, Bamah, opened in Berlin on May 26, 2001, with a medley of works by Jewish artists. During the year, the theater, founded by Israeli-born director Dan Lahav, presented a broad international repertoire of works by Jewish authors, readings, and musical evenings, as well as staged celebrations of Jewish holidays and the Sabbath (not performed on Friday nights) planned especially for non-Jews interested in learning more about Jewish celebrations. Lahav, who had German-Jewish roots, had been living in the country since 1981.

Germany continues to provide fertile ground for Jewish popular culture, consumed mostly by non-Jewish Germans. Bagels, no longer relegated to bagel shops, were on many quality restaurant menus. Jewish museums, walking tours, and cultural events drew enthusiastic crowds.
Klezmer music, performed by Jews and non-Jews, was celebrated by some and deplored by others, the latter dismissing this and other "faux" Jewish culture as "Jewish Disneyland." Nevertheless, non-Jewish thirst for knowledge about Jewish culture and religion and life was quite real.

**Publications**

The memoirs of Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, were published in 2001 by Ullstein Verlag under the title *Wieder zu Hause? Erinnerungen* (At Home Again? Recollections). The book received much public attention and favorable reviews. Toward the end of the year Spiegel gave numerous readings from the book to audiences across Germany. Born in 1937 in Warendorf, Spiegel survived the Holocaust in hiding with a Belgian foster family. His parents survived as well, but his sister was murdered in Auschwitz. In the book, Spiegel described his flight from Germany as a child, his return, and his hopes for the future of Jews in Germany.

A new book on Hitler, *Hitler's Secret — The Double Life of a Dictator*, by Bremen historian Lothar Machtan, caused a stir by stating unequivocally that Hitler had numerous gay friends in the 1920s and that his "homosexual nature" affected his politics. Machtan said it was time to break the taboo on examining Hitler's private life.

The second edition of *Golem — Europäisch-jüdisches Magazin* (Golem—European-Jewish Magazine), was published in November by Philo Verlag in Berlin. The magazine, in which all contributions are published in three languages, English, German, and French, was a nonprofit venture by a group of Berlin-based writers, editors, and artists.

In December, Bear Family Records released *Vorbei... Beyond Recall*, a 500-plus page book and 11-CD package (14 hours) of rare German-Jewish recordings from the 1933–1938 period, likely the last such recordings made in Nazi Germany. They included classical music, Yiddish comedians, German cabaret, Palestinian folk songs, and cantorial singing. Some were rescued and restored from single copies or test pressings. The accompanying text had contributions from numerous historians, with an introduction by Rabbi Andreas Nachama, whose late father was a cantor in Berlin from the postwar years until his death in 2000.

In December, a new book in German about the 900-year history of the Jews in the Gelderlands was published. The 412-page volume, 12 years in the making, was based on research by Bernhard Kück, city archivist, and Gerd Halmanns, and was sponsored by the Workshop of the Jewish
House of Prayer of Issum and the Historical Foundation of Geldern and Environs.

**Personalia**

In September, Paul Spiegel, head of the CCJG, was named an "honorary citizen" of the city of Warendorf on the Ems. Spiegel's father had been arrested and badly beaten in that city during Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938.

The annual Leo Baeck Prize was awarded in October to Hans-Jochen Vogel, former head of the SPD. Vogel now headed an organization called Against Forgetting—For Democracy.

New York's Leo Baeck Institute gave its Leo Baeck Medal to German president Johannes Rau, in recognition of his work toward reconciliation between Jews and Christians. The award was presented in November during Rau's visit to the United States.

In November, B'nai B'rith in Berlin honored schoolteacher Rüdiger Rottger of Hochneukirch for his Holocaust education project. Since 1996, Rottger had worked with students on the history of Jewish life in the town during the Nazi era and afterwards, and restored the local Jewish cemetery. Rottger was the first non-Jew to receive the prize.

Also in November, a memorial tablet honoring the late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the leader of Chabad, was installed in Berlin. Schneerson was born in Ukraine and studied mathematics and physics in Berlin from 1928 to 1933 before leaving for Paris and later fleeing to the United States.

The annual Obermayer German Jewish History Award, given by Arthur Obermayer, honored non-Jewish Germans who contributed toward recording or preserving the Jewish history of their communities. Winners of the 2001 prizes were: Josef Motschmann, a theology teacher and marriage counselor who researched Jewish history in Staffelstein, where he was born; Monica Kingreen, a historian and teacher who, since 1983, conducted research on the Jewish history of her town, Windecken, and published several books and articles on the subject; Olaf Ditzel, a bookstore owner who, with his colleagues, restored a mikveh in Vacha in Thuringia; Günter Boll, a schoolteacher and researcher who began scholarly work on the Jewish communities of Alsace in 1981, after he rescued rare Jewish documents and objects from a burning trash site; and Heinrich Schreiner, retired state bank president from Mainz, who organized
the reconstruction and restoration of the Mainz-Weisenau synagogue, and directed its use for cultural and religious events.

One remarkable honoree was not able to attend the ceremony: Gisele Bunge, an 82-year-old widow in Gardelegen, had for decades defied the communist authorities in her town to document the history and fate of Jews there. She made contact with Jewish families with roots in Gardelegen, and wrote a history of the Jewish community.

Stefan Heym, the German Jewish writer and politician who chose to live in former East Germany, died on December 16, while on a visit to Israel, at the age of 88. The Berlin resident fled Nazi Germany and later became a prominent critic of the communist government from within. He served as honorary president of the German branch of the PEN writers' association and had been a guest speaker at a conference in Jerusalem on the German poet of Jewish heritage, Heinrich Heine, just three days before he died.

Toby Axelrod
Austria

National Affairs

D espite its shaky start, the governing coalition, made up of the People's Party (ÖVP) and its junior partner, the Freedom Party (FPÖ), attained apparent stability. The government, which came to power in February 2000 (see AJYB, 2001, p. 397), pursued a conservative policy in domestic matters. Despite a buoyant economy and low unemployment, there was a large budget deficit, and the government responded by cutting social services and pensions. In foreign policy, the coalition hewed closely to the lines laid down by the European Union on such matters as the Middle East conflict and, after September 11, the war in Afghanistan.

On the political front, several public opinion polls showed the conservative People's Party maintaining the level of support it had garnered in the October 1999 national election, and the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) rebounding a bit from its lackluster 1999 performance. The extreme right-wing Freedom Party, however, was losing popularity — a decline that had begun almost as soon as its leader, Jörg Haider, led the party into coalition with the People's Party. (Although Haider resigned the party leadership in 2000 and was replaced by the vice chancellor, Susanne Riess-Passer, he still dominated the Freedom Party and sat on the coalition committee that set government policy.) Disappointing showings in the Styria and Burgenland provincial elections in late 2000 provided concrete evidence of the FPÖ's problems.

The party's downward spiral continued in the Vienna election, held on March 25, 2001. The big winners were the Social Democrats, who got 46.8 percent, as compared to 39.2 percent five years earlier. The People's Party, the socialists' coalition partner in city hall over the previous five years, increased its share of the vote from 15.3 to 16.4 percent, and the Greens surged from 7.9 to 12.5 percent. The Freedom Party's share of the vote, however, plunged from 27.9 percent in 1996 to 20.3 in 2001. Although the party remained the second largest in the province that was home to a fifth of the country's population, the result was a setback for the FPÖ and a blow to the personal prestige of Haider, long seen as a skilled politician, who had campaigned actively in the capital.

In addition to his usual attacks against foreigners, Haider had launched
an unprecedented offensive against Ariel Muzicant, president of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG), the community organization of Austria's Jews, which was widely denounced both at home and abroad as anti-Semitic. Haider accused Muzicant of being "unpatriotic" for allegedly spreading lies abroad about threats to the Austrian Jewish community that, Haider charged, had been used by the World Jewish Congress to blacken Austria's reputation. In one speech, Haider also made a punning reference to Muzicant's first name, Ariel, the name of a brand of detergent. Haider said that Muzicant had Dreck am Stecken, which literally meant dirt sticking to someone, but was generally understood to mean having skeletons in one's closet, or a shady criminal past. The FPÖ leader insisted his remarks were not anti-Semitic but a legitimate attack against a political opponent. Muzicant, who had already sued Haider for libel for previous remarks that he considered anti-Semitic, denied that the Austrian Jewish community had any part in the World Jewish Congress's statement about Austria, and announced that he intended to sue Haider for defamation of character. In April the federal prosecutor ruled, without explanation, that he would not bring criminal charges against Haider.

Haider's tactics marked a departure from his past political practice of steering clear of attacks against Jews. It was widely assumed that playing the anti-Semitic card was a gamble on his part to stem the party's declining fortunes, especially since the recent approval of a large financial settlement for Jewish and other victims of Nazi atrocities had caused some grumbling in the country. There was even speculation that Haider wanted his remarks to draw international condemnation of Austria, in the hope that this would set off a nationalist Austrian backlash helpful to the FPÖ. If this was his intention, he failed.

Despite the decline in the Freedom Party's fortunes, it remained Europe's most successful far-right political party; it and Italy's National Alliance were the only two such parties in Western or Central Europe to enter a national governing coalition. Furthermore, a political analyst at Vienna's Center for Applied Political Research, Franz Sommer, argued that even the election result in Vienna was something of a victory for the Freedom Party, demonstrating its ability to stabilize its electoral support at a high level, over 20 percent.

Quite aside from Haider's Jew-baiting, the Freedom Party, in the Vienna election, continued to offer the racist and xenophobic slogans that were its stock-in-trade. Thus one of the placards of the party's top candidate, Helene Partik-Pabl, read: "FOREIGNERS: I understand the worries of the Viennese." Other campaign material linked foreigners, espe-
Daily blacks, to crime, particularly drug-dealing. Damien Agbogbe, a 32-year-old professor of religion born in Togo, and the first black candidate to run for office in Vienna, was the frequent object of verbal abuse and threatening phone calls. Human rights groups, notably the International Helsinki Federation, accused the Freedom Party of playing on people's fears in a manner reminiscent of the Nazis. The Vienna election seemed to confirm information about Austria contained in a report issued in April by the Council of Europe's European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), covering events only up to June 2000. "The widespread use of racist and xenophobic propaganda in politics is of deep concern," it said of Austria, and not only within the Freedom Party. The report pointed to numerous instances of discrimination, and even some police violence against blacks. It stated also that gypsies and Jews were often targeted by racists, and blamed the Austrian media for contributing to "an atmosphere of hostility and rejection towards members of minority groups," including Jews. The ECRI recommended changes in the law to fight racism and xenophobia, and a crackdown on racism within police ranks.

Israel and the Middle East

Following the swearing-in of the new government in February 2000 that included the Freedom Party, Israel withdrew its ambassador and only maintained a lower-ranking official, accredited as a chargé d'affaires. Apart from the FPÖ's xenophobic policies, its leader, Jörg Haider, had, at various times in the past, praised certain policies of Hitler's Germany, though he subsequently apologized. Despite the withdrawal of the Israeli ambassador from Vienna, Austria retained its ambassador, Wolfgang Paul, in Tel Aviv. In July, Israel upgraded its level of representation in Vienna by sending a senior diplomat, Avraham Toledo, who held the rank of ambassador even though he served only as chargé d'affaires. Israel's refusal to return its ambassador even after the European Union countries restored normal diplomatic ties with Vienna in September 2000 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 397–98) came in for criticism from some quarters in Israel. The head of the organization of Austrian immigrants in Israel, Gideon Eckhaus, wrote a letter in the name of the organization's central committee to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in May, calling on him to reconsider Israel's policy and return its ambassador to Vienna. Eckhaus, and others who sought this change, argued that the current Austrian gov-
government had been quite forthcoming in awarding compensation to Jews for the wrongs suffered during the National Socialist era, and therefore merited full diplomatic contact with Israel.

As a result of the disruption of regular relations between the two countries, there was no exchange of visits by high-ranking officials or political figures during the year, with the exception of Austrian vice chancellor Susanne Riess-Passer's visit to Israel in October. Riess-Passer, who also served as minister of sports and was the highest-ranking minister of the Freedom Party in the government, came for the stated purpose of attending the October 7 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Austria and Israel in Tel Aviv. (The game ended in a 0-0 tie.) She was not invited to Israel, nor did any government official receive her. Some speculated that she came in order to reassure members of the Austrian soccer team, some of whom had announced they would not travel to Israel because of the security situation. Others believed she made the trip on the mistaken advice of Freedom Party general secretary Peter Sichrovsky that he could arrange some meetings for her with Israeli officials. This, despite the clear warning by the Israeli chargé d'affaires that there could be "no official appointments."

The ban on meeting with leaders of the government did not extend to members of the Austrian political opposition. In October, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Alfred Gusenbauer, and the head of the Greens, Alexander Van der Bellen, paid an official visit to Israel and met with Foreign Minister Peres.

At the UN, Austria joined with other European Union countries in voting against Israel on issues relating to the Palestine question. There were reports, however, that Austrian diplomats worked to soften the more hard-line stance toward Israel favored by certain of these countries. At the UN World Conference Against Racism that met in September in Durban, South Africa, the Austrian delegation opposed resolutions that sought to equate Zionism with racism. In addition, unlike the sharply critical tone of media reportage in other EU countries about Israeli policy toward the Palestinian Authority and the new intifada, news reports in Austria were generally factual and largely devoid of condemnation.

Yasir Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, made an impromptu visit to Vienna in February to win support for the faltering Middle East peace talks, holding meetings with Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel and Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Arafat told reporters that the peace process "needs a push" from the European Union,
in particular Austria, and from the international community as a whole. Arafat, whose friendly relations with Austria began in the 1970s when Bruno Kreisky was chancellor, also met with President Thomas Klestil.

While political relations between Austria and Israel remained strained, educational and cultural exchanges continued. As part of a continuing effort to educate the Austrian public about the Shoah, the Israeli government hosted 25 Austrian teachers at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center. In October, the Israeli chargé d'affaires addressed 50 teachers in the city of Linz on the influence of the Holocaust on Israeli society. A film conference involving a number of Austrian film directors took place in June at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba. An exhibition titled "I Had a Dream: The Zionist Youth Movement in Austria," was held in Jerusalem from July through September. Another exhibition, "Austrian Presence in the Holy Land," hosted by the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem September 2–25, featured pictures and accounts of Austro-Hungarian activities in the Holy Land when the latter was part of the Ottoman Empire. Twelve Israeli youths visited Austria as guests of the government under its "back to the roots" program. The Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, paid a brief visit to Austria, where he met with President Klestil and Mayor Michael Häupl of Vienna.

The formal opening of the Center for Austrian Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem took place in May. Jointly financed by the Austrian government and several Austrian citizens, with Prof. Robert S. Wistrich as academic chairman, the center was intended to deepen cultural and scholarly cooperation between Austria and Israel.

**Holocaust Restitution and Compensation**

In Washington, D.C., on January 17—just three days before the Clinton administration left office—President Clinton's special envoy on Holocaust claims, Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat, achieved a deal with the Austrians. "Today's agreement," Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa, Austria's chief negotiator, said, "constitutes on our side a major contribution to completing our response to the terrible fact of Nazi persecution," though, he went on, "I know that no amount of money can undo the tremendous suffering and losses that have been inflicted on our Jewish citizens.'

Under the arrangement, $150 million would be distributed in an expedited manner. Each claimant was to receive $7,000 for losses of apartment and small-business leases, household property, and personal valu-
ables and effects. In the event that an eligible person died after October 24, 2000, his or her heirs could apply for the money. Responsibility for administering payments was lodged with the Nationalfond, established in 1995 (see AJYB, 2001, p. 402). This fund had already compiled a list of survivors who were eligible to receive payments under previous legislation, and the new disbursements began immediately. In June, President Bush praised Austria's prompt fulfillment of its obligations. In a letter to Chancellor Schüssel, Bush wrote: "I would like to congratulate your government, the Austrian people, and the Austrian business community for these highly responsible actions and applaud your leadership on this important issue." As of December 31, 2001, payments had been made to 11,000 persons living in many different countries.

In addition, the agreement provided that the Austrian government establish a General Settlement Fund (GSF) in the amount of $210 million, also to be administered by the Nationalfond. Its purpose was to acknowledge, through voluntary payments, the moral responsibility for losses and damages inflicted upon Jewish citizens and other victims of National Socialism. Persons or associations persecuted by the Nazi regime, or forced to leave the country to escape such persecution and who/which suffered property losses or damages, were eligible to apply for compensation. Heirs of such persons and legal successors of defunct associations might also apply. The categories of property for which compensation could be sought were liquidated businesses, real property, bank accounts and stocks, bonds and mortgages, insurance policies, and occupational or educational losses. In addition, applications would be accepted for actual restitution of real estate (land) and buildings (in the case of Jewish organizations, also tangible movable property) which were owned by the federal government or the city of Vienna as of January 17, 2001. Two international panels, created under the terms setting up the new fund, were to rule on the validity of claims. The deadline for filing applications was set for May 27, 2003.

A key stipulation of the agreement was that no money would be paid out of the GSF until the achievement of legal closure, that is, the dismissal of all U.S. class-action suits against Austria and/or Austrian companies relating to the National Socialist era. As of the end of 2001, the fund had made no payments because two such suits were still pending in U.S. federal courts.

An additional $112 million was to be paid out in the form of social benefits to survivors living outside of Austria, including those who were under six years of age in 1938, when Hitler took over the country. These
monies were to be available for nursing allowances, the right to retroac-
tively purchase pension rights, and similar purposes. Responsibility for
paying out this money was assigned to the Ministry of Social Affairs and
the administrative authorities of the Austrian pension system. Once
again, as was the case with the GSF, no disbursements would be made in
the absence of legal closure, which was still not attained at year’s end.

The government also pledged more money to restore and maintain Jew-
ish cemeteries, expedite the restitution of looted artwork, reestablish the
Hakoah soccer field that was leased by Austrian Jews in Vienna in the
1930s, and provide a subvention of $8 million to build a new Hakoah fa-
cility. In addition, $25 million would be made available to settle insurance
claims from survivors who bought policies during the Nazi years. These
sums were on top of $382 million previously allocated for the estimated
150,000 survivors of forced and slave labor in Austria, of which the first
payment, totaling $36 million, was made in July to 20,000 people who
worked as slave laborers for Nazi Germany.

Although they could not keep the agreement from going into effect,
there were those who criticized it. Ariel Muzicant, president of the IKG
and the leader of the Austrian Jewish community’s delegation to the ne-
gotiations, refused to sign the deal on the grounds that it did not go far
enough in compensating for the loss of property. Toward the end of the
year Muzicant met with representatives of the federal government and
Austria’s nine provincial governments to resolve outstanding issues that
had not been addressed by the accord of January 17. Negotiations with
the federal authorities centered not only on Holocaust compensation, but
also on strengthening the IKG’s social infrastructure, such as services to
the Jewish elderly and new immigrants, meeting rising security costs, im-
proving Jewish schools, and reconstructing synagogues. The sum involved
was on the order of $22.5 million. The talks with the provincial officials
dealt with the return of looted ritual artifacts and artworks, upkeep of
Jewish cemeteries, and help for social institutions. Under an agreement
hammered out in December but not yet signed by the parties at the end
of the year, the provinces committed themselves to compensate the Fed-
eration of Jewish Communities of Austria $16 million over five years.

Jörg Haider, on the other hand, criticized the Washington agreement
for going too far. He said it was a “treacherous hope” for Chancellor
Schüssel to agree to the deal in the hope that it would earn him “over-
whelming applause from the East Coast”—an allusion to American
Jews—since the demands would only escalate. Haider said that his party
acknowledged the need to resolve the problem of Holocaust compensa-
tion, but added that "einmal muss Schluss sein" (at some point there must be an end). On several other occasions during the course of the year Haider kept coming back to the theme that Austria must leave the past behind and concentrate on the future.

The Holocaust Victims' Information and Support Center (HVISC, or "Anlaufstelle"), which was established in July 1999, had expanded its work to promote the interests of Jewish Holocaust victims in and from Austria (see AJYB, 2001, p. 403). Since its establishment, the HVISC staff had held 2,300 individual consultations, placed 13,000 telephone calls, and drafted 17,000 letters to Austrian Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Austria and abroad. On the basis of archival research and some 5,000 completed questionnaires concerning seized assets, the HVISC prepared background documentation for the restitution negotiations with the federal and provincial governments.

The HVISC was also active in securing the restitution of artworks. Two of its representatives sat on the Austrian Commission for the Investigation of the Provenance of Art Objects. Since the 1998 Austrian federal law concerning "Return of Works of Art from Austrian Federal Museums and Collections" did not provide for a search for heirs, the HVISC sometimes did its own investigations. In 2001 the Austrian government restituted 74 artworks that had been taken from ten collections once owned by Jews. For the 1999–2001 period, the number of works restituted was 619 from 42 different collections. Of these, the HVISC had identified heirs of 14 of the collections.

Another HVISC function, delegated to it by the IKG, was the creation of a data bank with documentation on the dissolution of Jewish social institutions, associations, and foundations, the destruction of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, and the theft of capital assets and movable properties during the National Socialist era. As part of this effort, it published a detailed report in October, *The Vienna Jewish Community: The Robbing and Liquidation*, complete with documents, pictures, and full analysis. IKG president Muzicant used this documentation in his negotiations with provincial governments on compensation. The HVISC also reorganized much of the Vienna Jewish community's archival material dealing with the seizure of assets during the Nazi years and the acts of restitution after 1945, and made it available both to historians and to Jewish and government agencies involved in restitution issues.

In January, Austria was admitted to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Created in the spring of 1998 at the initiative of Swedish prime minister
Goran Persson, the task force was originally made up of representatives from France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, though membership was open to all countries. Its purpose was to mobilize political support worldwide for perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust.

JEWSH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population registered with the IKG numbered about 6,600, around the same as the previous year. Knowledgeable observers, however, estimated the actual number of Jews living in the country to be at least twice that. The overwhelming majority of Jews continued to be concentrated in Vienna. Only about 500–600 made their homes elsewhere, primarily in the large provincial cities of Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, and Linz.

The Jewish community worried about its numbers—there was a small but steady emigration, and virtually no new immigrants. It was estimated that several hundred Jews, many of whom had come from the former Soviet republic of Georgia, had emigrated in search of better economic opportunities, mainly in Eastern Europe. To offset this outflow, the IKG had requested the government in 2000 to waive certain provisions of the country's highly restrictive immigration laws so as to allow in the same number of Jews who had left. Receiving no response, the IKG had, at least for now, decided not to pursue the matter. An IKG campaign offering incentives to new members induced 120 people to join the official Jewish community.

Communal Affairs

In July, the Jewish community of Vienna celebrated the 175th anniversary of the dedication of the Stadttempel synagogue, which opened its doors for religious services in 1826. Among those addressing the assemblage of political and religious dignitaries and members of the Jewish community were Austria's president, Thomas Klestil, Chaim Eisenberg, the chief rabbi of the country, and IKG president Ariel Muzicant. A similar event took place in Salzburg that month to commemorate the centenary of that city's synagogue. President Klestil also spoke on that
occasion, lauding the continued Jewish presence in Salzburg. Also in attendance were the mayor of the city, the governor of the province, Eisenberg, Muzicant, and dignitaries from the Salzburg Jewish community.

A religious milestone was reached with the installation in April of Vienna's first woman rabbi. Vienna-born Eveline Goodman-Thau was named rabbi of the liberal congregation Or Chadash. Founded in 1991 and emphasizing worship, social action, and help for the needy based on the principles of equality and inclusiveness, Or Chadash was affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

Plans proceeded for the establishment of a Shoah research center in Vienna. In talks with IKG president Muzicant, Mayor Michael Häupl indicated that the city would provide financial support for the project. The proposed center would work in close cooperation with the Documentation Archives—a foundation headed by Prof. Wolfgang Neugebauer—the Jewish Documentation Center run by Simon Wiesenthal, and the University of Vienna's Department of Contemporary History and other units of the university.

The Jewish Cultural Weeks Festival, in November, provided a wide array of events: dance, featuring the Noa Dar and Bat Sheva troupes from Israel; plays, such as a performance by the Yidishpil company at Vienna's Atzmon theater; and films, including a number of French productions dealing with Jewish themes.

Among the exhibitions mounted by the Vienna Jewish Museum in 2001 was one of selected works of Ludwig Meidner (1884-1966), which ran from October 5 through January 20, 2002. A painter and graphic artist who was little known in Austria during his lifetime, Meidner was an important representative of German Expressionism. After World War I, Jewish identity became an increasingly important aspect of his life and work. Meidner was forced to emigrate when the Nazis came to power. After a bitter exile in England, he returned to Germany, and died in Darmstadt. Another exhibition, entitled "Displaced," which ran from November 14, 2001 through February 24, 2002, dealt with Paul Celan's six-month sojourn in Vienna in late 1947 and early 1948. Photos, books, and other rare collectors' items told the cultural and political story of a strife-torn city that was unable to offer the homeless poet a permanent abode.

The St. Polten-based Institute for the History of Jews in Austria continued to publish research studies and hold its annual congress on diverse topics relating to Austrian Jewry in the past and present. Established in 1987, in 2001 it published, among other works, *The 18th-Century Toler-*
ance Policies of Joseph II and Their Effect on the Austrian Economy by Prof. Klaus Lohrmann, director of the institute, and The Role of Jewish Women in Austria, Germany and Central Europe by Dr. Marta Keil. The institute’s annual congress, held in July, focused on Contemporary Issues Facing Jewish Communities in Central Europe. Approximately 200 people from many countries attended.

In the presence of military attachés from a number of countries, a monument was dedicated in Vienna’s Jewish cemetery on June 24 to honor Jewish soldiers from allied armies and partisans who gave their lives in World War II.

MURRAY GORDON SILBERMAN
East-Central Europe

Postcommunist countries continued the process of development and integration into Europe at different rates, largely determined by economic progress. The Czech Republic and Hungary remained front-runners to join the European Union in 2004, but Poland’s economic slump threatened to delay that country’s bid to enter. An EU report in November attributed Poland’s slowdown to a “poorly coordinated policy mix, combined with . . . political domestic uncertainty.” Most EU officials and observers, however, felt that EU enlargement would be impossible without the inclusion, in the first wave, of Poland, which had the largest economy in the area.

There was continuing concern over the persistence of racism—directed primarily against Roma (Gypsies)—and anti-Semitism in the region. These were becoming increasingly cross-border activities as skinheads held international gatherings (including concerts featuring hate music), and the Internet created easy links. Mein Kampf and other anti-Semitic tracts were published in several countries, and anti-Semitic articles appeared in the media.

Jewish communities, institutions, and individuals continued—also, at various rates of speed—the process of integration and community building. Many set up or enlarged Web sites and Internet links. Countries in the region took part in the European Day of Jewish Culture, on September 2, a continent-wide initiative that saw hundreds of Jewish heritage sites in 23 countries opened to the public. Jewish communities also sent representatives to various international Jewish meetings, including a get-together with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in Berlin in February, a gathering of the general assembly of the European Council of Jewish Communities in Spain at the end of May, and the World Jewish Congress annual meeting in Jerusalem in November.

Internally, questions revolving around conversion to Judaism and criteria for membership in the Jewish community remained pressing issues, and several communities opened the door to a greater non-Orthodox Jewish religious presence. Throughout the year there was deep concern about the situation in Israel. While homegrown anti-Semitism had by no means abated, these Jewish communities appeared to feel less alarmed
than did large Jewish communities in the West about the possible repercussions of the Palestinian intifada and the attacks of September 11.

**Bosnia-Herzegovina**

About 1,000 Jews lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina, more than two-thirds of them in the capital, Sarajevo, about 200 in the Muslim-Croat controlled sector of the country, and about 125 in the Serbian-controlled Republika Srpska. As Bosnia slowly recovered from its 1992–1995 war, Jews continued to depend heavily on international humanitarian aid, much of it channeled through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). In Sarajevo, the community operated a Sunday school for about 30 Jewish and non-Jewish children, a nonsectarian home-care program for the elderly, and well-attended Israeli folk-dance classes.

The tiny Jewish community symbolized the ideal of interethnic coexistence in Bosnia, and for that reason enjoyed a political importance out of proportion to its numbers. This was why senior officials made a point of attending special Passover seders in Sarajevo.

Jewish leaders were active in interfaith and interethnic dialogue. Jakob Finci, president of the Jewish community, was appointed chairman of the Federal Constitutional Commission and was also involved in efforts to establish a “truth commission,” modeled on the one in South Africa, to deal with the perpetrators of wartime atrocities.

In April, Bosnian Jews were joined by local Muslim, Croat, and Serb religious leaders and by foreign dignitaries in a ceremony formally laying the cornerstone for a new synagogue and Jewish cultural center in the southern city of Mostar. The complex was being built just 100 meters from the site of the famous 16th-century stone bridge that was destroyed by Croat mortar fire in November 1993 and was to be rebuilt under the auspices of UNESCO. Construction of the synagogue and center would be financed by Mostar municipal authorities, and they pledged to have the building completed in 2002. Although only about 45 Jews lived in Mostar, Jewish community leader Zoran Mandlbaum had become a local hero during the Bosnian war for his nonsectarian humanitarian work, and his efforts were crucial in getting the synagogue project started.

This ceremony marked the first time in several months that leaders of Bosnia’s three main religions had joined together. Mostar’s Croat mayor and Muslim deputy mayor also attended, along with a number of foreign ambassadors and other senior diplomats. No American representatives were there, however, because the U.S. banned travel to Mostar and sur-
rounding areas for its citizens after violent riots there earlier in the month by Croat extremists—the worst violence in Bosnia since the Dayton accords of 1995 ended the Bosnian war. The travel ban also prevented a ten-member delegation of the JDC board from attending the ceremony, but the group did manage to meet in Sarajevo with Karlo Filipovic, president of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who had taken up his post just six weeks earlier.

In June, representatives of the Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Jews, and Muslims of Bosnia met in Rome under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Sant’Egidio community, a charity involved in relief work and interfaith dialogue. They appealed to the world’s major powers to take steps to reconstruct religious buildings damaged or destroyed in the Bosnian war, and to sponsor “education for peace and faith.”

**Bulgaria**

Bulgaria’s economy expanded by 4.9 percent in 2001, but conditions remained difficult. The country had one of the lowest GDP-per capita among countries aspiring to join the European Union. Bulgarian Jews suffered economic woes together with other Bulgarians, with the elderly and others on fixed incomes hardest hit.

Bulgaria went through startling political changes. In April, former King Simeon II registered his own new political party, the Simeon II National Movement, to run in the June 17 parliamentary elections. Simeon had reigned as a child from 1943 to 1946, and returned to Bulgaria in 1996 after living most of his life in exile. His party pledged to eliminate corruption in politics and attract foreign investment. The party swept to victory, and Simeon, 64, became prime minister.

His foreign policy adviser, Solomon Passy, a Jew, became foreign minister. Over the previous decade Passy, 44, had been a key proponent of Bulgaria’s membership in NATO and the EU. He had ties with the American Jewish Committee and other international Jewish organizations and favored close relations with Israel. Georgi Parvanov, the leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, was elected president in November, defeating incumbent Petar Stoyanov.

There were several neo-Nazi incidents during the year, though these were rare in comparison to other postcommunist states. During New Year’s Eve celebrations in downtown Sofia, some people in the crowd waved a flag with a swastika on it, drawing a denunciation from President Stoyanov who said that the Bulgarian people “will never accept in-
dividuals or groups with a Nazi ideology.” Bulgaria, he went on, “must on no account allow a handful of people to stain its image, which has been created not only in the last ten years, but also during World War II, when Bulgarian citizens served as an example to many European nations by showing solidarity with, and tolerance toward, persecuted Jews.”

Toward the end of the year, a translation of Mein Kampf was published legally for the first time in Bulgaria and was said to be selling well. The edition included a preface by a historian saying it was a racist and anti-Semitic book. An aggressive advertising campaign accompanied publication, with hundreds of posters showing Hitler pasted up on Sofia walls. The publisher, however, denied putting up the posters. Jewish leaders slammed the poster campaign as “fascist propaganda.” In 2000, Bulgarian police had barred the sale of a translation of Mein Kampf that was published illegally because the imprint did not identify the publisher.

The story of how Bulgaria saved its 50,000 Jews during World War II gained wide publicity during the year. A new documentary film about it by Israeli director Nitzan Aviram premiered in Sofia in January based on a 1998 book by Michael Bar-Zohar, Beyond Hitler’s Grasp. Bar-Zohar was one of the Bulgarian Jews who had been saved, as was Emanuel Siessmann, the current Israeli ambassador to Bulgaria. Later in the year The Optimists, another film on the subject, by Jacky and Lisa Comforty, opened in the United States.

In April, Sir Sigmund Sternberg of the International Council of Christians and Jews visited Bulgaria at the invitation of the government. His organization founded an interfaith dialogue group with the participation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the papal nuncio, the Islamic mufti, and the Jewish community. President Stoyanov lent his support.

Relations with Israel were good, with considerable Israeli investment in the Bulgarian economy. But a crisis flared between the government and the Israeli owner of Bulgaria’s flag carrier, Balkan Airlines. That Israeli owner was the Zeevi Holding Company, which had bought 75 percent of Balkan Airlines in 1999 for $150,000 and a pledge to pay off the airline’s $120-million debt while also investing $100 million in it over a five-year period. But in February 2001 all flights were grounded and the airline’s executive director fled the country. Zeevi Holding demanded that the Bulgarian government pay it $230 million for breaches in the acquisition agreement and $6 million in compensation for assets missing from the company after its purchase. The airline was placed into receivership little more than a week later. Zeevi Holding sold its stake in it, but the finance minister said the sale was invalid. On May 5, the government re-
voked Balkan Airlines' aviation license and a court later declared the airline bankrupt, though some flights were resumed while administrators sought new investors.

In December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded the Gold Laurel Branch decoration to Daniel S. Mariaschin, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International.

**Jewish Community**

In April, Jews from Kansas City, whose local federation had a partnership arrangement with Bulgarian Jewry, brought a Torah scroll to Sofia to take the place of 11 priceless scrolls that had been stolen in February. The Torah was installed during a ceremony coinciding with Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. With the help of JDC representatives, the Torah had been flown to Bucharest and taken overland by car to Sofia—a journey of about eight hours.

Hanukkah ceremonies under the rubric "eight days of Jewish renewal in Bulgaria" served to symbolize the revival of Jewish communal life for Bulgaria's approximately 5,000 Jews. Top Bulgarian officials took part, the prime minister lighting the first candle in the synagogue, where some 300 people were gathered. Candles were lit on subsequent nights at events organized for different age groups and held at several Jewish locations besides the synagogue, including the Beit Haam JCC, the Jewish school, and the old-age home. The ceremonies were followed by lectures and study sessions about Hanukkah.

On the final weekend of Hanukkah, about 120 young Jewish adults from all over Bulgaria came to Sofia for a Hanukkah seminar designed to enhance Jewish identification among this age group and reach out to the unaffiliated. The participants learned about the holiday, engaged in discussions, and socialized. A separate group of about 90 university students held their own party to light the seventh candle. On the eighth and final day of Hanukkah, children attended a workshop program at the JCC and then had a party.

**Croatia**

Croatia continued to consolidate the democratic reforms put into motion after the death, in 1999, of nationalist strongman Franjo Tudjman. The government was cooperating with the Hague Tribunal for War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia, and reduced its support for hard-line
Croatian nationalists in Bosnia. President Stipe Mesic said the government would promote Holocaust education in Croatian schools.

In the spring, when Israel’s new ambassador, David Granit, presented his credentials, Mesic condemned anti-Semitism and said his nation had left behind a period when it was “flirting with Nazi-fascist ideas.” He also vowed not to forget Croatia’s World War II history as a Nazi puppet state.

In October, Mesic made the first visit ever to Israel by a Croatian president. He told the Knesset: “As the president of the Republic of Croatia, I sincerely condemn with all my heart the crimes that were carried out against Jews during World War II by the government that collaborated [with the Nazis] and unfortunately bore the name Croatia. . . . I take every opportunity to ask forgiveness from all those who were hurt by Croats anytime, first of all the Jews.” In an interview with Ha’aretz, Mesic said he wanted to see Israeli investment in Croatia. For its part, Israel hoped to sell security-related products to the Croatian military. In January, Croatia had to cancel a $100-million agreement with Israel to modernize its MiG-21 jets because of a lack of funds.

In December, archives, tapes, documents, and other material telling the story of the Jasenovac concentration camp were reinstalled in the Jasenovac Museum. They had been removed for safekeeping during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, and in 2000 were sent to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington where they were catalogued and restored at a cost of $150,000. The museum at Jasenovac, dismantled in 1991, was rebuilt to house the relics, which were due to go on display in 2002.

In the summer, the Jewish communities in Zagreb and Osijek received hate mail calling on Jews to leave the country or be “cleansed.”

**Jewish Community**

About 2,000 Jews were registered in Croatia’s nine Jewish communities, three-quarters of them in the capital of Zagreb. Jews were an officially recognized national minority and thus qualified for state aid, including money for a kindergarten, old-age home, newspaper, and a variety of Jewish cultural projects. The community was moving to refurbish the Jewish summer camp at Pirovac on the Adriatic coast, to which it had regained title. The community also maintained a recently established Documentation Center for Research on the Holocaust. In October, historian Ivo Goldstein, a prominent member of the community, published a detailed book on the Holocaust in Croatia.

The rate of intermarriage was high, with some 80 percent of Zagreb’s
Jewish community members either born to intermarried couples or married to non-Jews. However unlike the situation in many Western countries, it was typical for the non-Jewish spouse to identify with the Jewish community, so that most of the younger community members had only one Jewish parent, or even just one Jewish grandparent. Jewish leaders, fearing the community could lose its national-minority status if its numbers dipped too low, urged members to declare their nationality as “Jewish” during the national census of 2002.

Rabbi Kotel Dadon, based in Zagreb since 1999, was Modern Orthodox, and he influenced a growing number of younger Jews to attend synagogue. Shabbat dinners for families at the Jewish community center were also popular. Nonetheless, most community members were not religiously observant and regarded Jewish identity in terms of tradition and secular culture.

In April, Zagreb hosted a youth seminar that drew nearly three dozen young Jews from Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Bosnia. In addition to study sessions, cultural events, and opportunities for socializing, they joined Holocaust survivors at ceremonies commemorating the victims of the Jasenovac prison and death camp, where 17,000 Jews and scores of thousands of Serbs, Roma, and others were killed by Croatian fascists. Interviews with the young Jews indicated that many still felt they were “Yugoslav Jews,” despite the bloody breakup of the former Yugoslavia. A large number said they wanted to marry a Jewish spouse, but saw little possibility of finding a Jewish mate in their home countries. In October, the Croatian Jewish community hosted a meeting at a resort complex on the Adriatic island of Brac for adult Jews who came from all over the former Yugoslavia.

**Czech Republic**

Racist attacks—primarily on Roma (Gypsies)—skinhead activity, and other evidence of right-wing extremism caused concern throughout the year and prompted calls for action. The Interior Ministry released figures showing that the number of crimes committed by the far right in the Czech Republic had risen in 2000 by more than 15.2 percent to 384. At the beginning of April, the Board of Romany Regional Representatives set up a crisis committee to monitor the situation. Increasing numbers of Roma sought asylum in Britain and other western countries.

The growing popularity of rock concerts by racist bands was a specific concern. Interior Ministry figures showed that more than 80 such con-
concerts took place in 2000. One concert, on April 6 near Prague, sparked an outcry. It was attended by about 400 skinheads from the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, and Poland. One of the bands was a Slovak group called Juden Mord—"Death to Jews"—whose CD cover featured a picture of the Auschwitz gates. Police monitored the concert but made no arrests, saying it was a "private party." But their failure to act drew sharp criticism. President Václav Havel said he was shocked by the apparent police indifference. Interior Minister Stanislav Gross vowed to crack down on such extremism.

Jewish organizations pressured the government to take action. In a letter to Gross, the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities said that the name Juden Mord "is in our opinion so self-explanatory that to have allowed the concert to take place cannot be considered anything other than indirect support of anti-Semitism." Police did intervene at a similar concert in another town near Prague on April 14. They detained but later released ten of the 150 skinheads in attendance and deported a Slovak skinhead who had attended the April 6 concert.

In May, Czech Jewish leaders issued a statement expressing concern about the racist rock concerts and other neo-Nazi activities, and appealed directly to the Czech public for support in combating the threat. The Czech Catholic Bishops' Conference supported the Jewish statement, and other Christian leaders also condemned as alarming the "indifference on the part of a large segment of the public, including those who are in responsible positions, toward the expression of neo-Nazi postures and the ever-growing cult of violence."

That month, five policemen in Karlovy Vary attacked and beat a Roma man. They were later charged with "racially motivated behavior." In July Prague's Jewish leadership sharply condemned the murder of a Roma by a skinhead in the town of Svitavy, saying it underscored the urgency of their earlier appeal.

These calls apparently had an effect. In early August police intervened at a concert organized by skinheads. They detained one participant wearing a shirt with Nazi symbols and said he would be prosecuted for supporting a movement aimed at repressing the rights and freedoms of citizens. About 40 right-wing extremists staged a protest in Prague against the police intervention, accusing Interior Minister Gross of hindering free speech. They said skinheads were fired from jobs because of their opinions. On August 25, police stopped a rock concert in Plzen (Pilsen) when the audience began chanting Nazi leader Rudolf Hess's name. They detained more than 20 participants and charged three of them with sup-
porting a movement aimed at suppressing the rights and freedoms of others. On August 11, skinheads attacked a gay club in the town of Liberec. Police detained two people and charged them with disturbing the peace.

In the late summer, a range of state and nongovernmental agencies, backed by a division of the European Union, launched an ad campaign on prime-time Czech television and billboards around the country that ridiculed neo-Nazis. Czech Jewish representatives applauded the campaign, but some critics suggested that by making light of the extremists the ads failed to address their true danger. The Czech far-right Republican Party filed a criminal complaint, accusing the campaign organizers of scaremongering.

Publication of Mein Kampf in the Czech Republic continued to make waves. In March, Vit Varak, who sold Czech translations of the book over the Internet, was convicted of supporting a movement suppressing the rights of Czech citizens and fined nearly $3,000. In February, citing “serious judicial mistakes,” the Prague City Court overturned a December 2000 sentence against Michal Zitko, the publisher of another Czech-language translation, and sent the case back to the district court for re-examination. In November, the district court upheld the three-year suspended jail sentence against Zitko and ordered him to pay a fine amounting to around $54,000. He again lodged an appeal.

As in previous years, there were reports of vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, most of which were abandoned or rarely visited.

Tension developed between Czech Jews and the local Muslim community in October over anti-Jewish statements published in a booklet and on a Web site run by the Islamic Foundation in Prague. Official Muslim representatives defused the situation by disassociating themselves from the texts.

In the fall, Arthur Avnon replaced Erelly Hadar as Israel’s ambassador to the Czech Republic.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were approximately 3,000 registered members of Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, about half of them living in Prague, but Jewish leaders estimated that there were many more unaffiliated Jews in the country. Ten officially mandated Jewish communities and a number of secular Jewish institutions came under the aegis of the Federation of Jewish Communities.

In April, Prague’s Jewish community elected 32-year-old Tomas Jelinek
as chairman, a post considered the most powerful Jewish position in the country. Jelinek, who also represented the Czech Republic on the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims and was chairman of the board of the Czech Endowment Fund for Holocaust Victims, worked as an economic adviser to President Havel. But he had to leave his job in Havel’s office in the fall after being told that his position as chairman of the Jewish community, tantamount to heading a business, made him ineligible to hold a government post.

The organized Jewish community was officially Orthodox even though most Jews were non-Orthodox or secular. This had caused friction for some time, and there were those who wanted to introduce pluralism in the Jewish community. Soon after his election, Jelinek said he wanted all streams of Judaism to be equal. In the spring, the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities revealed results of an opinion poll that found 80 percent of respondents wanting the federation to include non-Orthodox streams. In response, the federation took up for consideration the creation of a partnership arrangement with the Reform movement’s World Union for Progressive Judaism.

There were many signs of new vitality within the Jewish community. About 400 people attended the annual Jewish charity ball in March, which raised around $8,000 for the Prague Jewish Community Foundation. In the summer, Rabbi Samuel Abramson became the first rabbi in 60 years in the spa town of Karlovy Vary. Though the 90-member community wanted a Reform rabbi, Abramson, 34, was Modern Orthodox and a trained veterinarian, and was charged with overseeing kashrut standards throughout the country.

In early September, the chief rabbi, Karol Sidon, officiated at the first wedding in more than 30 years to be held at Prague’s ornate Jubilee Synagogue. The groom was David Stecher, chairman of the Prague Jewish community’s supervisory board, who, 19 years earlier in the same synagogue, had become the only Prague Jew of his generation to celebrate a bar mitzvah. Community members hailed his wedding to Jitka Sobotkova as a sign of a renaissance of Jewish life in the city.

The controversy over a 13th-century Jewish cemetery discovered under the construction site for an insurance company in downtown Prague in 1999 (see AJYB 2000, pp. 379-80) appeared to have been resolved. In 2000, the remains of 160 bodies were removed from the site and ritually reburied. In the fall of 2001, a tombstone and memorial for those deceased were dedicated at Prague’s New Jewish Cemetery. The monument ceremony also honored hundreds of graves being encased in concrete at
the building site under a compromise arrangement with the Czech state that enabled construction to proceed. The inscription on the memorial thanked the Czech state, Prague’s Jewish community, and “foreign Jewish institutions” for preserving the remains. Plans were also under way to erect a memorial at the original burial site.

There were a number of Holocaust commemorations. In January, a ceremony in Brno marked the mass deportations to Auschwitz of Czechoslovak Roma in March 1943. A new plaque, at what had been the Nazi Protectorate police headquarters there, also commemorated the deportations. Of about 5,000 deported Roma, only 500 survived. On March 25, the annual ceremony in Poprad commemorating the victims of the first mass deportation of Jewish girls and women to Nazi death camps was disrupted by an explosion apparently caused by a percussion bomb. No one was injured. In the spring, a record 80 schools from 26 Czech cities and towns took part in the eighth annual “man is not a number” competition aimed at educating teenagers about the Holocaust. Pupils submitted 300 paintings and 150 essays on Holocaust themes. In October, a group of Czech Holocaust survivors traveled to Poland to mark the 60th anniversary of the first Czech transports to the Lodz Ghetto. In September, Israeli ambassador Hadar presented “Righteous among the Nations” certificates, most of them posthumously, to 15 citizens of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Jewish representatives from nine countries—Britain, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia—met in Prague in the fall to plan a new European Association of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust.

The Prague-based Endowment Fund for Victims of the Holocaust, a $2.5-million fund operated by the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities, set a December 31 deadline for individuals from all nationalities to apply for Holocaust compensation for property seized during World War II. Czech legislators had, in 2000, voted to provide the money as a humanitarian gesture.

The Prague Jewish Museum expanded its facilities and featured numerous exhibitions and cultural activities. In February, the museum relocated its headquarters to a new state-of-the-art complex next to the city’s recently restored Spanish Synagogue. The new center included art restoration workshops, a library, archives, a café, and an exhibition hall, as well as offices. In the fall, a new display of priceless silver Judaica was installed in the synagogue as a permanent exhibition, “Synagogue Silver from Bohemia and Moravia.”

Numerous concerts, exhibitions, publications, performances, and other
Jewish-themed cultural events took place throughout the year. Among them: a combination of music, readings, and performance called Purim Reflections, held in March in Prague’s Spanish Synagogue; in the spring, a discussion at the 11th Prague Writers Festival, attended by British author Salman Rushdie, about the life and works of the late Italian Jewish writer Primo Levi; and in the fall, the creation of a new monthly magazine about Jewish identity in a changing world, Hamaskil, by Sylvia Wittman, a longtime Jewish activist in Prague.

Several films on Jewish themes made news. The American ABC network filmed a miniseries about Anne Frank in Prague. Divided We Fall by director Jan Hrebejk, about a Czech couple who hid a Jew during the Shoah, was nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign-language film. The Power of Humanity, a film about Nicholas Winton, an Englishman who saved the lives of hundreds of young Czech Jewish refugees during World War II, premiered in the fall. The documentary Fighter by Amir Bar-Lev followed two Czech Holocaust survivors in their 70s—Jan Wiener and author Arnost Lustig, both of whom moved to the United States after the war—as they revisited the sites of Wiener’s wartime odyssey of escape through Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, and Italy. New York-based Czech native Zuzana Justman’s new film, A Trial in Prague, which opened in the fall, was a documentary about the anti-Semitic trial of Rudolf Slansky and other top communist leaders in Czechoslovakia in 1952. Of the 14 officials tried on trumped-up charges of treason and espionage, 11 were Jews.

Hungary

Eager to progress on the road toward joining the European Union, Hungary, by the end of the year, had successfully brought its domestic laws into line with EU standards in 23 of the 31 stipulated policy areas for aspiring member states. Early in the year, the National Assembly overwhelmingly passed a “status law” to take effect at the beginning of 2002 that granted ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, Ukraine, the former Yugoslavia, and Slovakia, countries bordering Hungary, access to state-funded jobs, education, and health care in Hungary. The affected countries at first denounced the law, but at the end of 2001, Hungary managed to reach an agreement on it with Romania.

Throughout the year, Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s ruling rightist FIDESZ party denied that it might make a political deal with the noto-
rious far-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP). Nonetheless Jews worried about the influence MIEP seemed to be getting in the government and about a creeping if ambiguous form of political anti-Semitism expressed in the mass media. Racism, particularly against Roma, also seemed to be on the rise: a number of Roma sought asylum in France and other countries, prompting Canada to impose visa requirements on Hungarian citizens in December. The Canadian ambassador to Hungary said that some 8,000 Hungarians had applied to Canada for asylum since 1998, of whom only 8–15 percent had been accepted. Most of the asylum seekers were believed to be Roma.

A committee of the Council of Europe issued a report in the spring accusing Hungarian police of brutality against people in their custody, primarily foreigners, juvenile offenders, and Roma. A survey released in November showed that 14 percent of students in their final year of teacher-training college expressed racist views or harbored prejudices. Only 7.4 percent held open and tolerant views, while 36.5 percent could be described as "mildly affected by prejudice." After September 11, MIEP’s outspoken chairman, Istvan Csurka, broke ranks with other Hungarian political forces and said the terrorist attacks were a consequence of U.S. policies and globalization.

Hungarian Jews protested both the general climate and individual episodes of anti-Semitism. In January, the Jewish leadership protested an attempt by MIEP to obtain a retrial of World War II prime minister Laszlo Bardossy. Bardossy, implicated in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews, had been executed in 1946 for war crimes. In the summer, a small street in the village of Paty was named after Admiral Miklós Horthy, Hungary’s head of state from 1920 till 1944. This was first time since the war that a street in Hungary had been named after him. In the spring, Hungary’s justice minister rejected a request filed in 1999 by the Jewish community for a law that would make Holocaust denial illegal. In the fall, a Hungarian representative to the World Jewish Congress conference in Jerusalem said there was a “new wave of political anti-Semitism in the country, formally and informally supported by the government.”

Several incidents received particular attention. In July, there was a sharp anti-Semitic reaction when a company owned by a Jewish businessman bought the popular Ferencvaros soccer club. MIEP deputy chairman Laszlo Bognar called the purchase “antinational,” since the team “was sacrificed to a group of dirty, greedy, unscrupulous businessmen without morals, who have nothing to do with Ferencvaros or the
Hungarian people." Six Jewish organizations sued Bognar, accusing him of "incitement against a community." But the Prosecutor General’s Office decided not to prosecute.

A furor arose in September over an anti-Semitic article published by MIEP parliament member and deputy chairman Lorant Hegedus, Jr., in a MIEP magazine in Budapest. Hegedus, a Calvinist pastor, wrote that a Christian Hungarian state would have avoided devastation by the Tartars and Turks as well as rule by the Habsburgs if "a hoard of vagabonds from Galicia had not entered the country. ..." Clearly referring to Jews, Hegedus called on Hungarians to "exclude them, otherwise they will do the same with you."

Opposition politicians called the article "fascist" and "hate speech." In November, the Hungarian Calvinist church synod said the article was against the Gospels and incompatible with the Calvinist faith. In December, the Calvinist church and the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Religious Communities agreed that both would refrain from taking political positions and from supporting or accepting support from political parties. Also in December, parliament suspended Hegedus's parliamentary immunity, opening the door to possible indictment for inciting hatred against a community.

As demonstrated by the Hegedus case, racism and anti-Semitism in the mass media were problems. In the fall, the B'nai B'rith chapter in Budapest published a book documenting recent anti-Semitic discourse in the Hungarian media and other public forums. It was based on research carried out throughout 2000 by its Jewish Documentation Center, founded in 1999 to monitor and document Hungarian Jewish life as well as racist and anti-Semitic acts in the country.

Broadcasts on Pannon Radio—often described as a mouthpiece for MIEP—were particularly worrying. In November, the National Radio and Television Board described the station as "solely committed to the dissemination of an extremist ideology" bearing the mark of "far-right nationalism and of conspiracy theories." Its programs, according to the board, promoted anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and hatred against Roma and homosexuals, thus violating the media law and the constitution. Soon after this report was published, the new U.S. ambassador to Hungary, Nancy Goodman Brinker, ruffled feathers by expressing concern at the rise in anti-Semitism and xenophobia in the country. Goodman, a Jew, told a meeting at the Hungarian Academy of Science that such forms of intolerance "are the only unpleasant features" that she had encountered
in her first two months in Budapest. She said she has not experienced “anything like it anywhere else.”

There were also episodes of vandalism against Jewish sites, including the cemeteries in Jaszkarajeno and Siofok.

Not all the news was bad. There were many initiatives to teach Hungarians about the Holocaust, commemorate its victims, and to combat racism. Hungary instituted its first official Holocaust Memorial Day on April 16, the date the first ghetto in Hungary was set up in 1944. The National Assembly, Hungary’s parliament, officially marked the occasion with a ceremony the next day, and on that occasion Jewish leaders asked it to bar all racist and anti-Semitic manifestations in its chambers and renewed their call for outlawing Holocaust denial and incitement against ethnic minorities. MIEP’s 12 members boycotted the ceremony.

Ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day, the Hannah Arendt Association, a Holocaust education organization, joined with the Goethe Institute in Budapest in sponsoring a three-day seminar to help prepare teachers for the observances, since this was the first time that Hungarian schools had ever held a Holocaust commemoration. On March 28, the minister of education said the observances indicated “that the Holocaust is part of our national history,” adding, “Our aim is not to arouse a guilty conscience, but a sense of responsibility in today’s children.” As part of the ceremonies, which coincided with Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Israeli embassy unveiled a plaque to Hannah Senesh, a Hungarian Jewish fighter with the Haganah in Palestine who was tortured and killed by Hungarian fascists after parachuting into Nazi Europe in 1944. A group of private citizens began work in the spring on establishing a Holocaust museum in Budapest.

In May, the Supreme Court jailed right-wing extremist Kemal Ekrem for conspiring to topple the constitutional order. In 1996, Ekrem had founded a group dedicated to carrying on the legacy of Hungary’s World War II fascist Arrow Cross movement. In November, the Budapest Prosecutor-General’s Office charged seven people with offenses connected with the publication of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Aron Monus, one of the accused, printed more than 3,000 copies in 1999. He also published a Hungarian translation of Mein Kampf. In December, Budapest mayor Gabor Demszky banned a planned skinhead concert and rally that was to have taken place in a popular rock-music venue. Demszky said that the concert, expected to draw skinheads from several countries, would have turned into a racist rally.
On a one-day visit to Hungary in August, Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres met with Hungarian leaders and Jewish community representatives and laid a wreath at the Holocaust memorial next to Budapest's main synagogue. Asked about rising anti-Semitism, he said it was Hungary's problem to tackle. In October, the Austrian embassy unveiled a memorial plaque to Raoul Wallenberg, bringing to five the number of plaques or memorials in Budapest to the Swedish diplomat who saved Jews during the Shoah. In December, Israel's ambassador to Hungary, Judith Varnai Shorer, awarded the "Righteous among the Nations" citation to 31 Hungarians who helped save Jews during World War II. That brought to nearly 500 the number of Hungarians receiving the award since Hungary and Israel reestablished diplomatic relations in 1989.

Jewish Community

Estimates of the number of Jews in Hungary ranged from 54,000 to 130,000 or more. About 90 percent lived in Budapest, the vast majority of them nonobservant, secular or totally unaffiliated. Only 6,000 or so were formally registered with the Jewish community, and about 20,000 had some affiliation with Jewish organizations or institutions. The dominant religious affiliation was Neolog, similar to America's Conservative Judaism. There was a very small Orthodox community made up of both Modern Orthodox and Hassidim. Neolog communities were grouped in the Alliance of Jewish Communities in Hungary, while the Orthodox operated as the Autonomous Orthodox Community. Sim Shalom, a small Reform congregation established in Budapest in 1992 that functioned outside these official umbrella structures, was associated with the World Union of Progressive Judaism and led by a female rabbi. There was also an active Chabad-Lubavitch presence. At Passover, Budapest underwent a matzo shortage; the local matzo bakery had closed down and the Jewish community had failed to import enough.

There were three Jewish day schools and several kindergartens operating in Budapest, as well as a Jewish University incorporating a rabbinical seminary and a teachers college. Total enrollment in all of these institutions was about 1,800. Budapest's Balint Jewish Community Center had an active program of lectures, clubs, courses, and public events. In February, about 20 representatives of Hungarian Jewish organizations began a four-month course in basic fund-raising techniques. The first such training program implemented for Hungarian Jews, it was conducted by the staff of a professional development foundation. In Octo-
ber, some 80 JDC staffers working in or dealing with the former Soviet Union (FSU) held their regular semiannual retreat in Budapest, the first time it had ever taken place outside Israel or the FSU itself. The purpose of the retreat was to examine models of community development in countries where Jewish communal life had persisted, if weakly, under communism, to weigh their pluses and minuses, and to consider whether they could be applied in, or adapted to, the FSU.

The Lauder/JDC international Jewish summer camp at Szarvas in southern Hungary drew about 2,000 Jewish children from all over eastern and central Europe. Young Jews from the United States and other western countries also attended. The camp was used for seminars throughout the year.

Hungarian Jews expressed deep concern about Israel, some making solidarity trips there. For the first time, young Hungarian Jews registered to go on Birthright Israel trips in the winter of 2001/2002.

In the spring, Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland joined together to establish the Central and Eastern European Jewish Communities Jewish Studies Support Research Grant, a scholarship fund for students of Jewish studies at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. CEU also ran a popular public lecture series on Jewish topics. In July, it cosponsored a three-day international conference on Jewish identities in the postcommunist era.

In June, 130 women from 20 countries came to Budapest for the European conference of the International Council of Jewish Women.

Throughout 2001 there were numerous Jewish cultural and social events. Early in the year, Italian filmmaker Alberto Negrin finished shooting a miniseries for Italian TV about Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian businessman who worked alongside Wallenberg to save Jews in Budapest. In March, some 500 Jewish singles from around the world converged on Budapest for a singles weekend culminating in a “Jewish European Ball” held in the Museum of Fine Arts. Also in March, the third annual Israeli film week drew large crowds. Theaterfest, sponsored by the Federation to Maintain Jewish Culture in Hungary in April, featured three short Jewish-themed plays. This was part of a larger “day of Jewish culture,” which also included an auction of Jewish art. Another Judaica auction in November drew local, foreign, and Internet bidders, and included items from two private collections. The highlight was a 19th-century megillah that sold for about $5,000. In the summer, a major exhibition of works by Marc Chagall opened at the Jewish Museum, including seven paintings on international display for the first time. The fourth annual Jewish
culture week took place in Budapest in August. The artist Laszlo Feher had a major exhibit in December.

There was considerable Jewish dissatisfaction with delays in compensation to the relatives of Holocaust victims. A 1999 law had granted about $140 per person, far less than the sum for relatives of victims of communist terror, and in December 2000 the Constitutional Court, agreeing that this was unfair, had canceled the law. But no new compensation legislation was forthcoming. In July 2001, Peter Tordai, head of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary, appealed to Prime Minister Orban to speed up the process, and went so far as to threaten street demonstrations.

In February, President Ferenc Madl awarded the commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit to Israel Singer, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress. U.S. physicist Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb, became the first person to receive a newly revived award that had been granted to artists and scientists in prewar Hungary. A delegation from Budapest presented the Corvin chain to Teller, 93, at his home near San Francisco. Teller, who is Jewish, fled Hungary before the Shoah. In December, Germany’s ambassador to Hungary awarded Erno Lazarovits, foreign affairs director of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary, the German Order of Merit, Grand Cross, for his work promoting Jewish-Christian relations and a positive image of Germany. Also in December, 50 of the 52 sports writers affiliated with the International Chess Writers Association voted Hungarian Jewish chess star Judit Polgár the best female chess player of the last century.

Macedonia

Fighting between Macedonian troops and ethnic Albanian rebels erupted in February, and a number of times during the year threatened to escalate into full-scale Balkan warfare. In May, a broad-based coalition government of national unity took power in the country. It signed a Western-brokered peace accord with the rebels in August and legislated guarantees of equal rights for Albanians in November, but tensions lingered nevertheless.

Macedonia’s 200-member Jewish community spoke out for peace, sometimes in joint statements with other religious groups. In June, Macedonian Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Methodist leaders issued a statement expressing their “commitment to the One God for peace for our common country” and urging international support for concrete
peace initiatives. It said, "Our churches and religious communities are not involved in the conflict, and we strongly reject any effort to allow ourselves to be involved and to be manipulated, as well as any misuse of religious symbols and language for the purposes of violence." It also condemned "the use of sacred places and buildings for military purposes, and their desecration and destruction [as well as] incidents of harassment of religious people." The statement—months in the making—was released at the close of a three-day meeting of Macedonian religious leaders organized in Switzerland by the World Congress of Churches.

In August, Macedonia's five official religious communities again expressed "joint concern" about the tense situation in their country despite cease fire initiatives, and "about the continuous threatening, damage and pillage of religious buildings—churches, monasteries and mosques."

Poland

Poland's economic growth, slowing nearly to a standstill, was estimated at just 1 percent for the year. More than three million people—a record high in postcommunist Poland—were out of work in November, reflecting a jobless rate of 16.8 percent.

A dominant theme through much of the year was a lacerating debate, carried out in the media, churches, public meetings, conferences, and other forums, over the Polish role in the Holocaust. The furor was sparked by the publication in 2000 of a book, Neighbors, by New York-based sociologist Jan T. Gross, which described the massacre of 1,600 Jews in the village of Jedwabne by local Polish Catholics in 1941 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 424–25). The exchanges were the freest, most open, and deepest exploration of Poland's responsibility in the Holocaust ever to take place, and they polarized the country. Several Web sites were devoted to the issue, including www.pogranicze.sejny.pl/english/jedwabne, which included a list of dozens of articles, in English, on the affair. A documentary about the massacre aired on Polish television in March.

In May, at a special prayer service at All Saints' Church in Warsaw, some 100 Roman Catholic bishops, led by the primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, apologized for the Jedwabne massacre and for all wrongs committed by Poles and Catholics against Jews. Rabbi Michael Schudrich of Warsaw was invited to the ceremony but did not attend as it coincided with the holiday of Shavuot.

"We want, as pastors of the Church in Poland, to stand in truth before God and people, but mainly before our Jewish brothers and sisters, re-
ferring with regret and repentance to the crime that in July 1941 took place in Jedwabne and in other places," said Bishop Stanislaw Gadecki, chair of the Polish church’s council for dialogue with other religions. “Among the perpetrators [at Jedwabne] were also Poles and Catholics, baptized people,” he went on. “We are in deep sorrow over the actions of those who over history, but particularly in Jedwabne and in other places, have inflicted suffering on Jews, and even death. We condemn all signs of intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism, which are sinful.” Jews welcomed the unprecedented move, but rejected suggestions by Cardinal Glemp that Jews should apologize for the actions of Jewish communists who, Glemp charged, had persecuted Polish patriots after the war.

On July 10, 60 years to the day after the Jedwabne massacre, President Aleksander Kwasniewski and other top Polish leaders were joined by local officials, Jewish leaders, and relatives and descendants of the murdered Jews for a ceremony to unveil a new monument at the site of the slaughter. A smaller monument attributing the massacre to German Nazis was removed in March. Jews were unhappy with the inscription on the new monument: although it did remove reference to the perpetrators as having been German Nazis, it did not say who actually did the killing. In a speech at the July 10 ceremony, Kwasniewski apologized for the massacre and begged forgiveness from the victims and their families “in my own name, and in the name of those Poles whose conscience is shattered by that crime.” The ceremony was preceded by a commemoration in the Warsaw synagogue on July 6, the 15th day of the Jewish month Tammuz, the yahrzeit (anniversary according to the Jewish calendar) of the slaughter. Jewish leaders said the synagogue ceremony was a “complement not a competition” to the official event.

Many people came to the July 10 ceremony from around Poland, but the local Jedwabne priest and other Roman Catholic officials were absent. Also, many Jedwabne villagers felt they had been unfairly stigmatized by the massacre revelations and stayed home. Opinion polls showed that about half of Poles refused to accept Polish responsibility for the killings. Jedwabne’s mayor resigned in August because town councilors failed to support efforts to memorialize the massacre. In December, investigators from the Institute of National Remembrance looking into the Jedwabne massacre said they had uncovered evidence that local people perpetrated the killing without the active involvement of Nazi forces.

Another embarrassing revelation, albeit minor in comparison, occurred in March, when President Kwasniewski’s top foreign-policy aide, Andrzej Majkowski, admitted he had taken part in the communist anti-
Semitic campaign of 1968. He apologized for his actions but rejected calls to quit his government post.

Poland held general elections in September. Voters frustrated with the country’s poor economic performance ousted the rightist Solidarity bloc and restored the former communists to power, with Leszek Miller as prime minister. Miller's postcommunist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) got about 41 percent of the vote. The liberal Civic Platform, founded earlier in the year, came in a distant second with about 12 percent. Neither the Solidarity bloc, which had headed the government for the previous four years, nor the Freedom Union, a liberal party friendly to Jewish interests, got enough votes even to get into the parliament. Three radical fringe groups, however, did do well enough to enter the parliament, picking up, together, more than a quarter of the votes. Self-Defense, the radical farmers’ union, became the third force in parliament with more than 10 percent of the vote; the rightist Law and Justice party got 9 percent; and the extreme right and pro-Catholic League of Polish Families got 7.3 percent. The latter included individuals who had openly expressed anti-Semitism and were closely tied to the anti-Semitic Radio Maryja.

On the popular level, the sale and dissemination of anti-Semitic pamphlets and books aroused concern. In June, Jews in Warsaw complained about an anti-Semitic bookstore in the basement of All Saints’ Church called Antyk—The Conservative Bookstore. Ironically, this was the same church where the Polish bishops had hosted the unprecedented service for contrition for sins against the Jews in May, and several of the anti-Semitic books on sale were sharp attacks on Jan T. Gross.

Gdansk priest Henryk Jankowski continued to demonstrate anti-Semitism. At Easter, he displayed a model of the barn in Jedwabne in which the local Jews were killed, along with the inscription: “The Jews killed Jesus and they are in the process of crucifying Poland.” Senior church officials ordered him to remove the display and religious and civic leaders condemned Jankowski. In December, a court in the southwest city of Opole found former university professor Dariusz Ratajczak guilty of spreading Holocaust denial in a book, but the court waived punishment because of what it called “the negligible damage”—only 350 copies of the book were printed in 1999, and just five copies were now to be found on sale in bookshops. Ratajczak had already been suspended from teaching because of his publication.

In April Polish authorities ordered the closure of a controversial discotheque located near the Auschwitz camp on the site of a former tannery where slave laborers worked and died. Also in April, more than
1,000 teenagers from around the world came to Poland for the annual March of the Living Holocaust commemoration. During the trip, a group of 200 high school students from Florida and New Jersey took part in a new project aimed at fostering dialogue between Jewish and Polish teens. "The Next Generation: Strengthening Ties between Polish Society and the American Jewish Community" was devised by the American Jewish Committee in cooperation with the Polish embassy in Washington and the International March of the Living. It entailed face-to-face dialogue with Polish high school students and young leaders, based on a special curriculum about the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, contemporary Poland, and the ways in which Jews and Catholic Poles thought about each other. Its goal was to open contacts, break down stereotypes, and enable young Jews and Poles to commemorate the Shoah together and move forward with mutual understanding and respect.

In July, a Polish court sentenced Henryk Mania, 78, to eight years in prison for helping the Nazis kill Jews at Chelmno camp. In November, Polish researchers announced the discovery of mass graves at the Sobibor death camp, which was razed by the Nazis in 1943 after inmates staged an uprising. Some 250,000 people, most of them Jews, were believed to have died in the camp. About 50 people escaped and survived.

The International Auschwitz Council decided in September against a former Jewish prisoner's claim to a series of seven watercolor portraits of Roma (Gypsy) inmates she painted there, saying the portraits should remain in the Auschwitz museum. Dina Gottliebova painted the portraits on the orders of Josef Mengele in 1943 and 1944. All the people she painted were subsequently killed.

As every year, there were episodes of desecration of Jewish sites. In May, vandals wrecked about 30 tombstones at the Jewish cemetery at Oświęcim, the town where the Auschwitz camp was located. Among the vandalized tombs was that of Shimshon Klueger, the last Jew to live in the town, who died in 2000. Also in May, arsonists set a fire that caused minor damage to the museum at the former Majdanek camp near Lublin. A picture of Jesus Christ in the building next to the Auschwitz camp that at one time housed a controversial convent was sprayed and axes were stuck in it.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Estimates of the number of Jews in Poland ranged widely, from the 7,000-8,000 officially registered with the community, belonging to Jew-
ish organizations, or receiving aid from the JDC, to the 10,000–15,000 people of Jewish ancestry who showed interest in rediscovering their heritage, to as many as 30,000–40,000 people with some Jewish ancestry. The Lauder Foundation ran the country’s most extensive Jewish educational programs, including a K–12 day school with more than 160 pupils. At a joyful ceremony in May, the school received a 120-year-old Torah scroll, originally from Poland, from the Ezra Academy of Woodbridge, Connecticut. The Joint Distribution Committee, which provided extensive social welfare aid, continued also to refocus activities on education and leadership training through the Pedagogical Center it ran in Warsaw. The Polish Jewish community expanded and upgraded its Web site, www.jewish.org.pl, to provide information about the community and news about cultural, religious, and other activities.

In the spring, a shipment of matzo and other Passover supplies was delayed for weeks because of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe, and only direct intervention by the offices of the president and the veterinary general of Poland enabled the goods to arrive in time for the holiday. Passover was celebrated with numerous communal seders in Poland that were run by local Jewish communities and the Lauder Foundation, which published a new guide to celebrating Passover, complete with recipes. In addition, the liberal Jewish group Bejt Warszawa brought American rabbi Cynthia Culpeper to lead a seder in Warsaw. During her ten-day stay, she led a discussion about her experiences as a woman rabbi and conducted a naming ceremony for the newborn daughter of Bejt Warszawa members. Culpeper returned in the fall for the High Holidays.

In the summer, Rabbi Josef Kanofsky took up the post of director of the Lauder Foundation in Poland, replacing Jonah Bookstein, who moved to the United States to continue his studies. Bookstein’s wife, Rachel Steiner Bookstein, had also worked for the Lauder Foundation, in particular teaching about the role of women and the family in Judaism. In the fall, Ivan Caine, a Conservative rabbi, took up the post of rabbi in Wroclaw, where a nondenominational havurah had functioned since the early 1990s with equal participation by men and women. In September, Caine took part in the “march of silence” organized by Wroclaw officials to show solidarity with the American people after September 11.

The arrival of Caine meant that there were now four full-time rabbis in Poland, all Americans or American-trained. In addition to Kanofsky and Caine, Michael Schudrich served as rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz, and Rabbi Sacha Pecaric was the director of the Lauder Foundation’s Kraków branch.
In December, at Hanukkah, Jerzy Kichler from Wrocław was elected to a second term as president of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland at a meeting in Warsaw of 74 delegates representing eight organized Jewish communities around the country—Warsaw, Kraków, Lodz, Wrocław, Katowice, Szczecin, Bielsko-Biała, and Legnica—and several smaller local branches. The delegates later took part in the opening of an exhibition on Warsaw’s Jews, “Remembrance: Jewish Monuments in Warsaw,” that was held in the city’s Nozyk Synagogue as part of celebrations marking the synagogue’s centennial year. Funded primarily by the Warsaw city government with additional funding from the JDC and private sources, the exhibit included contemporary images of Jewish sites as well as historic photographs of prewar Warsaw.

Nozyk was the only Warsaw synagogue that survived World War II. It was now used for services and formed part of a larger complex serving the Jewish community. It and another prewar building next door housed Jewish clubs, offices, meeting rooms, educational and welfare services, the Pedagogical Center, and kosher eating facilities. Another nearby building housed the Yiddish theater and a secular Yiddish cultural society.

Efforts at obtaining restitution of Jewish property seized during World War II inched forward. In July—mindful of the looming deadline of May 7, 2002, for filing restitution claims for Jewish communal property confiscated by the Nazis and nationalized by the postwar communist regime—Poland’s Jews and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) put aside their previous differences and resumed cooperation. At a meeting in Warsaw, the two agreed on a modified version of an agreement reached in June 2000 that had collapsed earlier in the year before it could be implemented. Claims for only a fraction of the estimated 4,000 communal sites had been filed, due to infighting between the two groups (see above, p. 59).

In March, the Sejm, the Polish parliament, approved a bill allowing partial compensation to people whose property had been seized by the communist regime from 1944 to 1962. Claimants had to have held Polish citizenship until the end of 1999, a requirement that disqualified some 40,000 people, mostly Holocaust survivors and their heirs who had left the country before that date. President Kwasniewski vetoed the bill, saying it was too expensive.

In June, Jewish leaders asked a state company in Bialystok to halt construction of an office building near the site of a 19th-century Jewish
cemetery after about 250 bones and ten skulls were found. The cemetery, where cholera victims were buried in the 1830s, was razed under communist rule in the 1960s.

There were numerous Jewish cultural events, exhibits, educational and spiritual seminars, and conferences during the year. Poland was one of four countries with small Jewish populations chosen by the London-based Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) for a “mapping of Jewish culture” survey. This was an attempt to chart all Jewish cultural events in Italy, Sweden, Belgium, and Poland during the twelve-month period from May 2000 through April 2001. Preliminary results, made public in July, indicated a total of more than 700 events in the four countries, including 196 individual events and seven Jewish culture festivals in Poland. The ratio of cultural events to Jewish population clearly showed that most of the target audience was not Jewish.

Warsaw hosted its first Jewish culture festival in June. It featured concerts, exhibitions, performances, films, lectures, workshops, and guided tours of Jewish historic sites, including the Warsaw Ghetto and the historic Jewish cemetery. The Lauder Foundation sponsored it, in cooperation with other organizations. In late June a Yiddish culture festival and music workshop took place in Sejny, northern Poland. The 11th Festival of Jewish Culture took place in early July in Kraków, and President Kwasniewski wrote the foreword to the souvenir program. An exhibit documenting Nazi persecution of Gypsies opened at Auschwitz in August. The fourth annual Jewish Book Days took place in Warsaw in September. Also in September, a Center for Jewish Studies was established at Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin. In Warsaw, the Lauder Foundation opened its Moses Schorr Interdisciplinary Center for Jewish Studies. In October, 40 Polish teachers and 40 Lithuanian teachers met for three days in Kraków to study the Holocaust, through an initiative of the London Jewish Cultural Center. Polish television aired a film in November on Polish-Jewish relations, telling the story of a rabid anti-Semite who found out that he was himself Jewish. In December, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw organized a seminar for Polish teachers on the fate of Polish Jews during and after the Shoah.

During the year, Roman Polanski shot his new film, The Pianist, in Warsaw. Based on the book by Władysław Szpilman, it recounts the author’s survival in wartime Poland. From Kristallnacht to Crystal Day: A Synagogue in Wroclaw Glows Again, a documentary film by Ellen Friedland and Curt Fissel about the renewal of Jewish life in Poland, aired on
PBS nationwide in April. During the year, preparations continued for the establishment of a Museum of Polish Jewish History in Warsaw.

In February, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York awarded the Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska Prize to Maria and Kazimierz Piechotka, non-Jewish Polish architects renowned for their work in documenting Polish synagogues. In March, the Polish Council of Christians and Jews presented its annual “figure of reconciliation” award to the Israeli poet and author Halina Birenbaum, a child survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, Majdanek, and Auschwitz, who lost all her family in the Shoah. Zygmunt Nissenbaum, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto who, in the 1980s, established a foundation to protect Jewish monuments in Poland, died in August at his home in Germany, aged 75.

Romania

The Romanian economy remained precarious, and at the end of May Prime Minister Adrian Nastase reported that nearly half of Romanians “live on the edge of poverty.” He said that in the previous four years the number of people living below the poverty line had increased by 20 percent, and that the percentage of poor people in Romania was surpassed in Europe only by Albania, Russia, and Moldova.

In January, President Ion Iliescu joined Romanian Jews in a memorial ceremony at Bucharest’s Choral Synagogue to mark the 60th anniversary of the torture and slaughter of Jews by the Romanian fascist Iron Guard during a failed coup against Romania’s pro-Nazi military ruler Marshal Ion Antonescu that took place January 21–23, 1941. Antonescu crushed the rebels and then outlawed the Iron Guard. Iliescu said “one must not forget” what “delirium of intolerance and anti-Semitism” signifies for Romanian history. But other than that, he added, Romania had not contributed to the “long European history” of persecution of the Jews. He also called it “unjustified to attribute to Romania an artificially inflated number of [Jewish] victims for the sake of media impact.” In a speech in April, Iliescu said Romanian society had “developed an immunity system against interethnic hatred, intolerance, xenophobia, extremism, anti-Semitism, and racism,” and that Romanians were now “firmly convinced” that the existence of national minorities on their territory “is an advantage contributing to the enrichment and diversification of the national cultural and scientific heritage.”

Nonetheless, there was concern throughout the year over right-wing nationalist extremism, manifestations of racism and anti-Semitism, and
nostalgia for Antonescu’s pro-Nazi World War II Romanian government. Romania was under particular scrutiny, since the Greater Romania Party (GRP), which considered Antonescu a hero, became the country’s second-largest party in the 2000 elections, winning one-fourth of the seats in the chamber of deputies, the lower house of Parliament. GRP leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor, known for his anti-Jewish views, was defeated by Iliescu in a runoff presidential election in December 2000. Romania’s quest for membership in NATO, many believed, could be hurt by the influence of political extremists on the government.

In January, a newspaper published a document from the communist Securitate secret police purporting to show that Teoctist, the Orthodox patriarch, had been a member of the fascist Iron Guard, participated in its attempted coup against Antonescu in January 1941, and helped burn down a synagogue in Iasi. The patriarchate described the document as “pure invention.” The Securitate were known to falsify material in their files. Officials later called the accusations a “smear campaign.”

Since the fall of communism, several pro-Antonescu groups and other organizations claiming to be successors of the Iron Guard had emerged. In the spring, two such groups, the Marshal Ion Antonescu League and the Marshal Antonescu Foundation, merged into a single body whose leadership included a former Iron Guard member and several fiercely anti-Semitic Holocaust deniers.

On several occasions, statues or plaques were planned or actually erected to honor Antonescu. In February, three American Jewish organizations—the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and B’nai B’rith—wrote to President Iiiescu protesting such efforts, specifically mentioning a decision by the Bacau municipality to erect a statue. They said they would like to support Romania’s aspirations for membership in NATO but “for this to occur Romania needs to make a clear break with the Antonescu legacy.” The letter said that statues of Antonescu “as well as plaques and street-naming in his honor” were tantamount to “paying homage to one of the darkest periods in Romania’s past.” The ADL made another protest in the summer, after a bust of Antonescu was unveiled in a church courtyard in Bucharest.

In November, Romanian Jewish leaders praised Prime Minister Nastase for telling prefects around the country to drop any plans for statues honoring Antonescu and for releasing evidence that Antonescu had ordered the mass slaughter of Jews in occupied Odessa. During a visit to the United States in October, Nastase also pledged to curb the Antonescu
cult—and was criticized for this in his country by right-wing media and politicians.

Anti-Semitic publications had been on the rise since the 2000 electoral success of the GRP. In May, the Supreme Court asked prosecutors to investigate the availability of Nazi and other anti-Semitic propaganda, including the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, at an international book fair in Bucharest. Also in May, the Hyperion publishing house in Cluj apologized for issuing a book containing jokes that belittled the Holocaust, and ordered any remaining copies to be withdrawn from sale, though most of the more-than 22,000 copies had already been sold. The book was written by a Cluj city councilor representing the GRP. The prosecutor general's office launched a criminal investigation against him for inciting racial hatred after Israel's ambassador to Romania, Avi Millo, complained about the book. Vadim Tudor, the GRP leader who himself had voiced anti-Semitic sentiments, issued a statement apologizing for the "macabre and inadmissible" publication.

In August, another book by a GRP lawmaker caused controversy. Following protests by Jewish, Roma, and ethnic Hungarian leaders, the prosecutor general's office launched an investigation into *The Nationalist* by parliament member Vlad Hogea. A statement by the Federation of Jewish Communities said the book constituted "a grave incitement to interethnic and racial hatred" in violation of the Romanian constitution's ban on anti-Semitic and racist material. Most of the essays in the book had been previously published in other anti-Semitic publications. *Greater Romania*, Tudor's magazine, violently attacked the Jewish community, saying its protests against Hogea's book were an attempt to stifle free speech.

Romania maintained close relations with Israel on various levels. There were thousands of Romanian guest workers in Israel. In May, two of them were killed and one injured in a Palestinian bomb attack. Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, met with President Iliescu on December 4 in Bucharest. Peres, who also received an honorary doctorate from Bucharest University, called Iliescu "a great friend of the Jewish state" and said Romania had long played an important role in the search for peace in the Middle East. The day before he met with Peres, Iliescu released a statement condemning the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa of December 2 and 3. But he also warned that Yasir Arafat must not be forced from the political scene.

During the year, Iliescu discussed the Middle East situation with other leaders from the region, including Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak
who visited Romania in April. Prime Minister Nastase made an official visit to Israel in July.

**Jewish Community**

Between 11,000 and 16,000 Jews were believed to live in Romania, about half of them in Bucharest, the capital. Most Romanian Jews were elderly. Educational, religious, and welfare programs were carried out by the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities (FEDROM), funded by the JDC. The Lauder Foundation ran the Lauder Reut Kindergarten and Lower School in Bucharest. The Jewish publishing house HaSefer issued books on Jewish themes, and a biweekly Jewish newspaper, *Realitatea Evreiasca*, included pages in Hebrew and English as well as Romanian.

The Israel-based Rabbi Menachem Hacohen commuted every few weeks to serve as Romania’s senior rabbi. He was aided in Bucharest by Rabbi Eliezer Glantz, who served as the ritual slaughterer. Rabbi Ernst Neumann was based in Timisoara. During the year, FEDROM continued the groundbreaking youth, community development, and leadership-training programs it initiated in 2000. There were a number of seminars, including one in Bucharest in April to train 30 young people who showed leadership potential. Seven Romanian Jewish representatives attended the European Council of Jewish Communities general assembly in Spain at the end of May.

Research carried out in 2000 by Jodi Guralnick, the JDC’s Ralph I. Goldman Fellow, set the stage for targeting programs to the “missing” middle generation of adults aged 30–60. These included clubs and cultural events, leadership-training and educational seminars, and the collection of names and addresses for a database. Paul Schwartz, appointed coordinator of middle-generation programs, personally visited 14 Jewish communities around the country, and contacted by phone and sent questionnaires to 45 communities in an effort to obtain necessary information for the database. Schwartz estimated that there were about 2,500 people in the middle generation. While most were formally affiliated with the community, few participated in Jewish activities. The first middle-generation clubs were set up in the summer in Bucharest, Timisoara, Cluj, and Oradea, with the help of the OTER network of youth clubs established little more than a year before.

As part of the community’s youth educational programs, a pedagogical center in Bucharest was expanded, and educational materials were translated into Romanian and disseminated. About 150 households re-
ceived their Jewish education through correspondence courses. There were also Jewish computer clubs in about a dozen communities, and several organizations set up new Web sites.

Despite these advances, it was evident that the communist-era mentality still lingered. In some communities, elderly communal leaders feared being displaced by younger activists. FEDROM’s still highly centralized structure caused some provincial Jewish communities to demand more say in decision-making. Also, despite the new youth programs, most young Romanian Jews still appeared to want to leave the country, not only for economic reasons but also because of the upsurge in anti-Semitism and political extremism.

Numerous commemorative and cultural events took place during the year. In August, ceremonies were held to mark the centenary of the synagogue in Brasov, designed by the prolific Budapest architect Lipot Baumhorn, who designed more synagogues than any other architect in modern Europe. The centennial of the synagogue in Ploiesti was celebrated not long after; Israel’s new ambassador, Sandu Mazor, who was born in Ploiesti, attended.

Zigu Ornea, a Jewish intellectual and the most prominent contemporary cultural historian of Romania, died on November 15 at the age of 71. The author of many books on 19th- and 20th-century Romanian political history and its impact on the country’s cultural life, he was director of the HaSefer publishing house.

Slovakia

There was continuing concern throughout the year about racist violence and xenophobia, particularly against Roma.

In January, the publisher of the first Slovak translation of Mein Kampf was charged with support of a movement suppressing citizens’ rights and freedoms. In April, police seized neo-Nazi CDs and memorabilia at a rock concert attended by more than 300 skinheads in western Slovakia. In September, People against Racism, a volunteer civic group, set up a telephone antiracism hot line that the victims of racially motivated attacks could call for legal and other advice. People against Racism marked the Day of Human Rights, December 10, by launching a campaign for tolerance.

There were episodes of vandalism against Jewish cemeteries, including that in Levice, where more than 50 tombstones were damaged. In July, vandals damaged or destroyed historic tombstones in Zvolen just two years after a major renovation of the cemetery. The attacks prompted Jewish leaders to call on local authorities for increased security.
Slovakia marked its first Holocaust remembrance day on September 9, the anniversary of the date in 1941 when the parliament of the pro-Nazi Slovak puppet state imposed the harsh anti-Semitic laws that preceded the deportation of Slovak Jews to death camps that began in March 1942. The fascist Slovak leadership paid the Nazis DM 500 in exchange for each expelled Jew and a promise that the deportees would never return to Slovakia. Some 57,000 were sent to their deaths.

A series of commemorative events took place around the country, attended by senior officials and a high-level Israeli delegation. Beginning September 6, there were memorial ceremonies, exhibits, publications, and a symposium on racist hatred in the past and the present. Avraham Burg, speaker of the Israeli Knesset, was guest of honor at a ceremony at the Museum of the National Uprising in Banska Bystrica, and in Bratislava Burg chaired an award ceremony for people who made a special contribution to the struggle against anti-Semitism. At another ceremony in Kremnica, at the site of a Jewish mass grave, President Rudolf Schuster said “the genocide of the Jewish people during World War II must be constantly remembered, because many people have started to underestimate” its extent and its lessons. He called for educational efforts to explain the Holocaust to young people and for tougher penalties for Holocaust denial and racial or religious bigotry. On November 8, the Slovak penal code was amended to make the denial of the Holocaust and belittling its crimes a punishable offense.

Slovak Jews were disappointed at the Slovak Catholic church’s proposal to the Vatican that Bishop Jan Vojtassak be beatified. The Jews argued that the bishop, who served on the Slovak State Council during World War II and knew about plans to deport the Jews, had kept silent. A spokesman for the Confederation of Slovak Bishops rejected this, saying that Vojtassak had saved many Jews during the war and that testimonies of those rescued were attached to the beatification proposal. After World War II, the communist regime jailed Vojtassak for 12 years.

Filming began in the spring in Slovakia for an American miniseries on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, starring Donald Sutherland and David Schwimmer.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Fewer than 4,000 Jews were believed to live in Slovakia. The main communities were Bratislava and Kosice, in eastern Slovakia, each with about 500 Jews.

Work began in May on construction of a memorial to the 19th-century...
sage Chatam Sofer and 23 other important rabbis who were buried in an underground mausoleum in Bratislava. Bratislava city hall, the local Jewish community, and a U.S.-based cemetery restoration committee consisting of descendants and admirers of Chatam Sofer signed an agreement in 1999 to build the monument, and it was scheduled to open to the public in early December 2001. But disputes over money and planning delayed progress of the $1.5 million project, and construction, already behind schedule, was halted at the end of November.

On August 5 the Los Angeles-born scholar Shawn Landres married Zuzana Riemer in Kosice in an Orthodox ceremony that was the first full-scale, traditional Jewish wedding of a Kosice Jewish community member in decades. The congregation was bolstered by a visiting group of Hasidim from New York, and they took active part in the celebrations. London-based Rabbi Hershel Gluck, who for more than 20 years has traveled widely in Europe to promote Jewish revival, performed the ceremony, aided by Prof. Jonathan Webber, Landres’s doctoral adviser at Oxford. (There was no resident rabbi in Kosice.) Webber explained each step of the ceremony to the congregation, as many members had little knowledge of traditional Jewish ritual.

Slovak Jews inched toward arrangements for Holocaust compensation. In March, a Berlin court rejected a multimillion-dollar lawsuit filed against Germany by Slovakia’s Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities. Slovak Jews were seeking money the wartime Slovak government paid to Nazi Germany to deport Slovak Jews. In August, after two years of pressure from the Jewish community, the government of Slovakia agreed to set up a joint commission, consisting of ten government officials and ten Jewish representatives, to consider compensation for property confiscated by the Nazis. The Central Union said proceeds would be used for Jewish charities, social projects, and the maintenance of Jewish monuments. In December, the commission reached agreement on its agenda: resolving outstanding ownership questions, preparing a list of properties that could qualify for compensation, establishing a foundation to help maintain Jewish cultural heritage sites, compensating individuals, and financing projects to strengthen existing Jewish communities in Slovakia.

**Slovenia**

Slovenia’s tiny Jewish community made great strides in 2001. The Jewish organization based in the capital, Ljubljana, had been weak and carried out practically no social, cultural or religious functions until the late
1990s, when a new, active leadership took over. With support from the JDC, the community obtained a meeting room in 1997 and ran programs, including a youth group, a women’s group, and courses in Hebrew.

By 2001 membership in the community had doubled—to about 150. Jewish leaders were looking for bigger premises and hoped to found a real synagogue. Rabbi Ariel Haddad, an adherent of Chabad and director of the Jewish museum in Trieste, Italy—on the border with Slovenia about an hour’s drive from Ljubljana—took up the position of Slovenia’s chief rabbi in 1999. He went to Ljubljana about once a month to meet with local Jews, hold classes, and sometimes officiate at services.

The first organized community seder in Ljubljana took place in 2000, and Haddad brought all the kosher food with him from Trieste, already cooked. In 2001 about 100 people attended the seder in the downtown Hotel Union, which loaned the premises and kitchen for free. Haddad came a few days early and koshered the kitchen, so that all the cooking was done on site.

During the year, work began on a Slovenian translation of the Passover Haggadah.

**Yugoslavia**

Yugoslavia continued its difficult journey into the post-Milosevic era. President and strongman Slobodan Milosevic was ousted in October 2000, opening the door to democratic reforms and Yugoslavia’s reentry into mainstream European life. On April 1, authorities arrested Milosevic after commandos stormed his compound, and at the end of June he was transferred to the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, where he was charged with crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war.

Yugoslavia’s 3,000 Jews, about half of whom lived in Belgrade, were highly integrated, mostly secular, and often intermarried. They generally praised the policy of the new president, Vojislav Kostunica, on Jewish issues. He delighted the Jewish community in April by taking part in ceremonies in Belgrade’s synagogue marking Holocaust Memorial Day. Other leading government figures also participated, along with the Israeli ambassador and representatives of Jewish communities. It was the first time a Yugoslav president attended such a ceremony.

Nonetheless, Jews reported an upsurge of anti-Semitic episodes after Kostunica took office. These included several offensive slogans and swastikas scrawled on city walls, and the vandalizing of Jewish memorial plaques in the towns of Kikinda and Zrenjanin. Gravestones in sev-
eral Jewish cemeteries, including those of Zrenjanin, Belgrade, and Zemun, were also vandalized. A Belgrade theater that once housed a synagogue was defaced with swastika posters and Nazi graffiti in February, as was a building on the grounds of the Jewish cemetery and a culture center hosting an exhibit on Roma art. Among the many protests against those incidents, President Kostunica issued a public apology to the Jews and Roma in Yugoslavia. He blamed the vandalism on people who "wish to turn the wheels of history back to the dark ages."

Jews also reported receiving hate mail. Offensive propaganda and slogans appeared in books, pamphlets, and on the Internet, and some movements and individuals publicly accused Jews of being the enemies of the Serbian people. Despite this, there was some indication by the latter part of the year that anti-Semitic incidents were waning. A public-opinion poll at the end of the summer showed that 42 percent of respondents had a positive attitude toward Jews, 12 percent had a negative attitude, and 44 percent were undecided. Comparison with earlier surveys showed 21 percent with negative attitudes in 1994, 15 percent in 1996, and 10 percent in 2000.

Jewish leaders also slammed an attempt by far-right nationalist leader Vojislav Seselj and his extremist Radical Party to compare their position to that of Jews during the Holocaust. Aca Singer, president of the Federation of Yugoslav Jewish communities, protested an incident early in the year during which Seselj and other Radicals in the Serbian Parliament donned yellow armbands and claimed that they were "modern Jews" who were being threatened by the new post-Milosevic government.

In May, Klara Mandic, who founded the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society in the 1980s, was murdered in her apartment. Besides being a prominent Jew, Mandic was politically close to both Milosevic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, and there was speculation that politics or anti-Semitism had been behind her murder. Robbery, however, appeared to be the cause. Motives for an attack in May on another prominent Jewish woman, Mira Poljakovic, were less clear. Poljakovic, vice president of the Jewish community in Subotica, was beaten up on the street. Besides her position in the Jewish community, Poljakovic, a lawyer, was outspoken in her opposition to Milosevic and defended members of the anti-Milosevic youth movement, Otpor.

A war-damaged mosque in the Kosovo village of Shqiponje was repaired and rebuilt with funding from Jews, Catholics, and Muslims. Representatives of the JDC, which spearheaded the project, attended an ecumenical dedication ceremony in September together with the Muslim
grand mufti and the Roman Catholic bishop. The restoration fell under the $2-million nonsectarian relief program in Kosovo that the JDC initiated in 1999 to aid the hundreds of thousands of refugees who returned to Kosovo after the end of hostilities. Funding came from individual donations to the special “mailbox for Kosovo” set up by JDC, through which it renovated 40 schools and established a psychology department at the University of Pristina, and, working together with ORT, sponsored numerous vocational-training courses.

In October, a foundation was established aimed at restoring and revitalizing the century-old synagogue in the town of Subotica in northern Yugoslavia. Called SOS Synagogue, the foundation included Jewish representatives and local political figures. It was headed by former Subotica mayor József Kasza, currently serving as deputy prime minister of Serbia. Though owned by the city, the synagogue was part of a complex of Jewish buildings that otherwise were still owned and used by the small but active local Jewish community. In Belgrade, the synagogue was restored during the summer and work progressed on organizing a kosher kitchen and restaurant. Five of Yugoslavia’s nine Jewish communities offered Hebrew classes, there were many Jewish cultural activities, and major restoration and reorganization work was completed at the Jewish Historical Museum.

At the annual assembly in December of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, several major challenges for Yugoslav Jews were discussed. These included the lack of funds that made “existential survival” problematic, the special hardships endured by the elderly—particularly Holocaust survivors on tiny fixed incomes—and the issue of property restitution. There were also calls for a reorganization of the federation. The welfare of the community was thought to depend largely on pending legislation, including proposed new laws governing national minorities, religious communities, and property restitution.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
In Russia, President Vladimir Putin continued to consolidate his power by restoring Russia’s role as an important actor in world affairs, appointing people loyal to him to key positions, and projecting an image of confidence, vigor, and honesty. In contrast, Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma came under severe domestic criticism for ordering the arrest and, allegedly, even the murder of political rivals and investigative journalists, and for suppressing dissent—though both Russia and the United States shied away from criticizing Kuchma or modifying their relationships with Ukraine. Both presidents, Putin and Kuchma, continued to maintain cordial relations with their respective Jewish communities, paying careful attention, as well, to world Jewish organizations.

Russia benefited from OPEC’s cut in oil production. While OPEC was cutting its production by 13 percent, Russia, the world’s second largest oil producer, increased production by 7 percent, faster than any non-OPEC oil-producing country. Since oil and gas account for half of Russia’s export earnings, the increase in sales had a direct and positive impact on the Russian economy. The resulting reduction in inflation and rise in the standard of living redounded to the political benefit of President Putin and his government. Nevertheless, some regions within Russia lagged far behind others in economic development. Ironically, despite the increased oil production, there were severe fuel shortages in Siberia and the Russian Far East. During one of the coldest winters in years, with temperatures dropping to as low as −58 degrees, many residents in those parts of the country were without heat, causing illness and death.

Despite the upturn, Russia faced serious economic challenges. The entire Russian budget for 2001 was $42 billion, and the nation owed $48 billion to Western creditor nations (the “Club of Paris”). But with a growth rate estimated at about 4 percent and with huge earnings from energy exports, Russia, for the first time in many years, was able to make payments on both principal and interest to her Western creditors. On the other hand, Ukraine, Georgia, and other former Soviet republics, as well as countries in Asia and Africa, owed Russia enormous amounts of money, primarily in payment for energy supplies.
President Putin, expressing satisfaction with the improving economy, nevertheless noted with regret that Russia's main source of income was still resource extraction, similar to the economies of the underdeveloped former colonies of Western countries and unlike the income sources of developed countries. Total stock market capitalization in Russia was about $50 billion, less than half of that of Nokia, the telecommunications manufacturer in neighboring Finland.

Putin continued to win political battles against his critics, particularly the "oligarchs" who had been favored by his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin. Vladimir Gusinsky, a media magnate who also served as president of the Russian Jewish Congress, lost control of NTV television, the network that had been the most critical and independent of the government. He also lost control of other media, including the magazine Itogi and the daily newspaper Sevodnya. Gazprom, Russia's largest company and the major producer of natural gas, controlled 46 percent of NTV. In May, Putin managed to replace 66-year-old Rem Vyakhirev as head of Gazprom. His successor, Aleksei Miller, 39, had worked as a deputy to Putin for five years in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The government secured a bare majority of the 11 seats on the board of Gazprom, effectively bringing this economic giant under its control.

In March, Putin replaced the defense and interior ministers. Military spending for 2001 was put at $8 billion out of a $42-billion national budget. Putin aimed to reduce this proportion and cut Russia's armed forces from about 1.2 million men and women to about 850,000, while at the same time improving conditions for them. It was well known that the Russian military was plagued by draft evasion, desertion, hazing, suicides, low morale, and even hunger, to the point where soldiers were stealing or begging for food.

The war in Chechyna continued. At least 40,000 regular army troops and a large contingent of internal-security forces were stationed there, but they still could not decisively defeat the Chechen forces. The Russian government admitted to about 3,000 dead and 8,000 wounded since the war had been renewed in the summer of 1999.

There were several Russian-American confrontations over spying, despite an overall cordial and even friendly relationship between the two countries. Edmond Pope, just the second American in 40 years to be convicted of espionage in Russia—U-2 spy-plane pilot Francis Gary Powers was the other—was released in December 2000. However, an American graduate student on the Fulbright Program, John Edward Tobin, was arrested on a minor drug charge in January and charged with espionage
a month later. Tobin claimed that the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), successor to the Soviet-era KGB, had tried to recruit him as a spy, and when he refused he was accused of spying for the United States. After six months in jail and many representations by American officials, Tobin was released. But in March, the United States and Russia each expelled 50 of the other’s diplomats on the grounds that they had engaged in activities incompatible with their official roles. Some speculated that the FSB was trying to slow or halt Russia’s movement toward closer relations with the United States.

The Russian Orthodox Church continued its opposition to other Christian denominations, battling Catholic, Protestant, and Jehovah’s Witnesses groups. The head of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Aleksei II, protested against Pope John Paul’s visit to Ukraine and instructed his followers to protest actively against it. Indeed, when the pope arrived in Ukraine in late June, followers of the Moscow-based Orthodox Church followed their leader’s instruction and demonstrated. However, a breakaway Ukrainian Orthodox church, headed by Patriarch Filaret, enthusiastically greeted the pope, as did Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics, though the Kiev-based main Ukrainian Orthodox Church did not. While in Kiev, the pope visited Babi Yar, site of the murder of over 33,000 Jews by the Nazis in September 1941. He was accompanied by Ukraine’s chief rabbi, the American-born Yaakov Bleich.

Journalist Georgy Gongadze, who had been investigating corruption in Ukraine, had disappeared in September 2000, and his headless body was discovered that November. A member of Ukrainian president Kuchma’s bodyguard, Mykola Melnichenko, fled the country and was hiding in Western Europe when he released tapes implicating Kuchma in ordering political killings, including that of Gongadze. In January 2001, there were mass demonstrations, for and against Kuchma, in Kiev. On February 11, some 5,000 marchers there demanded Kuchma’s resignation. The president denied the authenticity of the tapes and refused to resign. Instead, he dismissed two top intelligence officials. At the same time, Yulia Timoshenko, who had made a fortune in the gas business but had pledged, as deputy prime minister, to eliminate corruption in the energy sector, was arrested some time after her dismissal from her government post. Ironically, she was charged with corruption. Her former superior, Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, who had a reputation as an economic reformer and battler against corruption, was forced to resign on April 26, the 15th anniversary of the nuclear-power-station disaster at Chernobyl.

A coalition of communists, Kuchma supporters, and parties led by
Ukraine’s business oligarchs voted to bring down the government. Anatoly Kinakh, a close ally of Kuchma and leader of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, was appointed the new prime minister. It was widely noted that the presidential administration had become much larger than that of the prime minister and the cabinet, and that the president’s office controlled a larger budget and supervised more of the law-enforcement functions.

Putin and Kuchma, meeting in February, agreed that Ukraine and Russia would reconnect their power grids and work on joint development of the Antonov-70 airliner. A mine explosion in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, killed at least 36 miners, one of many accidents that continued to plague Ukraine’s antiquated mining industry.

In Moldova, one of the smallest and poorest of the Soviet successor states, the Communist Party swept to an impressive victory in parliamentary elections, winning more than half the vote and 70 percent of the seats. It succeeded a Western-oriented government.

**Israel and the Middle East**

Russian government spokesmen consistently deplored the violence that had broken out in Israel and the territories, calling on both sides to show restraint. On January 23, President Putin hosted Israeli president Moshe Katzav at a state dinner in the Kremlin, having created a new kosher kitchen for the occasion that was supervised by the Chabad-Lubavitch rabbinate. President Katzav also visited Georgia, where he praised Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze for facilitating Jewish emigration in the waning years of the USSR, when Shevardnadze was Soviet foreign minister, and for nurturing close ties between Georgia and Israel, where tens of thousands of Georgian Jews resided.

Israeli infrastructure minister Avigdor Lieberman, a native of Moldova, visited the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in July to promote economic ties. The volume of Israel’s trade with Kazakhstan, a very large country well endowed with natural resources, had doubled in 2000 to about $17 million.

About 1,500 young Jews from the states of the former Soviet Union participated in the Birthright Israel program that heavily subsidized two-week trips to Israel for those who had never been there before. This was double the number of FSU participants the previous year, and the jump was in sharp contrast to the diminished number of travelers from Western countries.

On October 4, a missile shot down a Sibir Airlines Tu-154 plane that
was on its way from Israel to Siberia, carrying mostly Israelis who were former Soviet citizens. All 78 passengers died (66 of them were Israelis) as the plane crashed into the Black Sea. Ukrainian authorities at first denied any responsibility, but under Russian pressure, on October 13, the commander of the Ukrainian air-defense forces, Col. Gen. Vladimir Tka-chov, admitted that the crash had been caused by an errant missile fired in a Ukrainian training exercise. The Ukrainian government issued an apology to Israel. (See below, pp. 594-95).

Anti-Semitism

On April 26, the Russian Duma—the lower house of the parliament—failed to pass a resolution appealing to President Putin to work against "all manifestations of anti-Semitism," since the proposal did not get a majority of all members. The resolution received 129 votes in favor, 17 against, and 303 deputies did not vote.

In June, 43 Jewish gravestones were desecrated in Velikie Luki, Pskov region. At the same time, a local Jewish community center there was vandalized. A similar incident occurred in August in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, where 50 Jewish graves were daubed with swastikas. Swastikas were also painted on Moscow's Choral Synagogue in September. A fire destroyed the synagogue in Riazan on August 16, and arson was suspected. A Jewish school was destroyed by fire in Kazan, capital of Tatarstan, on July 13.

Holocaust-Related Developments

Kazys Gimzauskas, accused of participation in the killing of Jews in Vilnius during World War II, was convicted by a Lithuanian court on February 15, but was judged too ill to be imprisoned. The 93-year-old Gimzauskas had fled the United States for Lithuania in 1993, where no formal investigation was launched for the first three years of his residence in the country.

A Lithuanian state commission to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust in Lithuania was formed. It planned to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day on September 23. Parliament passed a resolution condemning genocide and highlighting "the duty of the Lithuanian State to remind the country of its painful historical moments in order to avert the recurrence of the bloodshed of Holocaust victims." On March 26, Lithuania asked Great Britain to extradite Anton Gecas, an 85-year-old
former commander of Lithuanian auxiliary police during World War II. On September 13, however, before any action was taken, Gecas died in Edinburgh, Scotland.

On May 29, a court in Melbourne, Australia, ruled that Konrad Kalejs, 88, could be extradited to Latvia to face charges of war crimes and genocide for his role in the persecution of Jews. Latvia had, up to then, never yet tried anyone suspected of war crimes. Kalejs, however, died before extradition could take place (see below, p. 497).

In June, officials of Russia's Fund for Mutual Understanding and Reconciliation began to distribute compensation to those who had been forced laborers under the Nazis and to about 16,000 survivors of concentration and extermination camps.

A scandal erupted in Ukraine in May, when workers from the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem chiseled fragments from wall paintings by the Polish-Jewish writer and artist Bruno Schulz and spirited them out of the country to Israel. The paintings were on the walls of an apartment in Drohobych, where Schulz had been at first protected by a Nazi officer and then shot on a Drohobych street by a rival of that officer. These were the last known works by Schulz. Spokesmen for the local Jewish community and for the Ukrainian government both condemned Yad Vashem's actions. A furious debate followed, in the newspapers of Ukraine, Israel, Poland, and the United States, over who was the proper heir and custodian of artistic works created by Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Yad Vashem planned to exhibit the paintings in its projected new historical museum (see above, pp. 71–74).

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Emigration

Emigration from the FSU slowed in 2001 because of the deteriorating political and economic situation in Israel, the improving Russian economy, and the near shutdown of immigration to the United States after the September 11 attacks by Islamic terrorists on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington. In 2000, 50,859 immigrants from the FSU had come to Israel, but, from January through August 2001, only 21,015 made the move. Immigration to the United States declined from 4,862 in 2000 to 4,010 in 2001. After September 11, the American embassy in Moscow closed down its immigration service and
the U.S. government made drastic cuts in government assistance to refugees. In October, not a single FSU immigrant arrived in the United States, and only 22 did so over the next two months. As a consequence of declining immigration in recent years, HIAS, the main Jewish immigration agency in the United States, had already cut its staff by nearly 40 percent, and Germany had replaced the U.S. as the second most popular destination, trailing only Israel, for those emigrating from the FSU.

It was noted that in the first five months of 2001, only 221 Jews had left the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (Birobidzhan) for Israel, compared with about 3,000 who had left in 1999 and 1,106 in 2000. This probably reflected both the depleted pool of potential emigrants as well as the perceived deterioration of Israel’s economic and security situation.

The age structure of FSU immigrants to Israel remained quite stable. Slightly over 20 percent of them were under the age of 18, and about 13 percent were 65 or older. A quarter of the immigrants were between the ages of 18 and 32. The largest occupational category continued to be “engineers” (about 10 percent), and the next largest category (5 percent) were teachers.

Communal Affairs

Two changes occurred in rapid succession in the leadership of the Russian Jewish Congress (RJC), the largest national Jewish organization. On March 1, Vladimir Gusinsky, who had been the founding president of the RJC, resigned; he could no longer perform his duties since he was then living outside Russia. Leonid Nevzlin, 41, who was deputy chief of the Yukos Oil Company, replaced Gusinsky as interim president, and, in May, was elected president. In an interview with an Israeli Russian-language newspaper, Nevzlin stated that the RJC had spent more than $25 million since 1996, $7.5 million in the year 2000 alone. Nevzlin related that his first wife had been Jewish and his daughter by that marriage had attended a Moscow Jewish school, but that his present wife was a practicing member of the Russian Orthodox faith, and their daughter had been baptized (Vesti, June 7, 2001).

When, in December, Nevzlin was elected to the Russian Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament, he resigned as RJC president since, he said, he could not devote sufficient time to the latter. He was succeeded by a businessman and long-time Jewish activist, Evgenyi Satanovsky, 47. Satanovsky was head of a business conglomerate called Ariel and had participated in the Va’ad, the first national Jew-
ish organization established in the postcommunist USSR, in 1989. He had sponsored research and study about Israel and Jewish affairs in several institutions.

Since the FSU Jewish population was disproportionately elderly, the work of local welfare organizations, usually supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), played a central role in communal life. A network of such organizations, usually called hasadim (plural of the Hebrew word hesed, meaning an act of kindness), had developed, with the local units providing medical and social services to Jews. In Simferopol in the Crimean region of Ukraine, for example, some 3,000 people benefited from “meals on wheels” delivered to the infirm and housebound; medical advice and care and physical rehabilitation; and “warm homes” in which holidays were celebrated and social gatherings held. The Hesed Shimon Society, named for Shimon Korotko, one of the founders, in 1989, of the Crimean Jewish Cultural Society, included several clubs, such as one for veterans and another for women—the latter linked to Kesher, an international Jewish women’s organization. Hesed Shimon provided “warm homes” in the small towns of Armiansk, Dzhankoe (once the site of a Jewish collective farm), and Krasnogvardeiskii village. Larger towns and cities had more comprehensive and diversified hasadim.

In Moscow, work was said to have begun in February on a $5-million project to renovate the Choral Synagogue, built in 1886, and to renovate nearby buildings, in order to create a “Jewish campus” or “Jewish quarter” that would include a community center, Jewish schools, a Jewish bookstore, and a kosher restaurant. Indeed, by March, the synagogue dome and Magen David (Star of David) that had been removed in the late-19th century had been restored.

In Riga, Latvia, a Jewish community library was opened on June 4 in conjunction with the third reunion of Jews born in, or formerly residents of, Latvia, but now living elsewhere. The president of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Fraiberga, spoke to the gathering and assured these Jews that “Latvia is your homeland.”

It was reported that the Jewish population of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, was now some 1,000–1,500, sharply down from about 20,000 in 1989, reflecting a general massive out-migration of Central Asian Jews. Many of them resettled in Israel and others in New York, where they created their own communities and associated institutions. The Chabad-Lubavitch Hassidic group, whose activities in Central Asia were funded in large part by Lev Leviev, a native of the area, was replacing traditional communal
organizations in several cities. Critics of Chabad charged that it was using financial inducements to gain adherents and was replacing local traditions with Chabad practices, while others praised it for its willingness to serve a rapidly diminishing population.

President Putin sent greetings to Russia's Jews on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and mentioned what he saw as a religious revival among them, saying: "Many Jews [have] discovered the unique wealth of their national culture and religion." He pledged to fight anti-Semitism and assist in the further development of Jewish communities in the country.

A small statue commemorating the great Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem was put up in Moscow at the corner of Bol'shaya Bronnaya and Mala Bronnaya streets. This location in the center of the city was where the State Yiddish Theater had stood from the 1920s until its forcible liquidation in 1948. It was also close to one of Moscow's few synagogues, a building constructed by Samuel Poliakov, one of Russia's richest Jews before the 1917 revolution.

**Religion**

The Reform (Progressive) movement claimed 15,000 members in its 40 FSU congregations, united under the organizational banner of the Religious Union for Progressive Jewish Congregations. There was, however, only one resident Reform rabbi in Ukraine, Alex Dukhovny, grandson of a Hassidic rebbe and a native of Ukraine, who trained for the rabbinate at the Leo Baeck College in London. A spokesman for the American Reform movement, Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, announced that the movement would commit $1 million to the Reform congregations in the FSU, nearly half of which were in Ukraine. In Kiev, there were two Reform kindergartens with 100 children.

The Conservative movement sponsored six Sunday schools and one all-day school in Ukraine, but had no affiliated congregations or schools elsewhere in the FSU. Its school in Chernivtsi had an enrollment of 260 children, not all of whom were Jewish, in 11 grades. In February, the first Conservative congregation was registered in Ukraine, in the city of Uzhgorod in the Transcarpathian region. About 30 families were affiliated with the new congregation, and 45 children attended its Sunday school.

Chabad-Lubavitch, which enjoyed a high profile in most of the FSU, claimed 198 congregations and 54 rabbis, most of whom were citizens of the United States or Israel. It planned to spend $27 million on its activities during 2001. In an interview with an Israeli Russian-language news-
paper, Rabbi Berel Lazar (Chabad), one of two “chief rabbis” of Russia, criticized the other, Adolf Shaevich, for having been too accommodating to the Soviet government in the 1980s. Lazar defended his own election as chief rabbi in 2000 on the grounds that Shaevich was too closely tied to Vladimir Gusinsky and that he had refused an invitation to meet with Jewish congregational leaders, who then elected Lazar as chief rabbi. Rabbi Lazar claimed there were 70 rabbis and ten yeshivahs in the FSU, the latter graduating 30 rabbis a year, but that most of them left the country, especially for New York, “where a million Russian Jews live” (Luch, Jan. 31, 2001). According to HIAS figures, however, in all of the United States there were only about 335,000 Jews who had immigrated from the FSU. In March, the Russian government dropped Rabbi Shaevich from the Presidential Council on Relations with Religious Organizations, and two months later Rabbi Lazar resigned from the board of the Russian Jewish Congress, on which Shaevich served.

In November, the Chabad-dominated Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia held its second national congress. According to the newspaper Kommersant (Nov. 20), 200 delegates from 135 communities attended (Chabad sources cited 400 delegates from 143 communities). The Russian minister of culture, Mikhail Shvidkoy, represented the government; Israeli ambassador Natan Meron also brought greetings; and the executive vice president of the Russian Jewish Congress attended and praised the federation’s leadership.

There were reported to be 70 “messianic Jewish” congregations in Ukraine, with memberships ranging from ten to a thousand. Aleksander Lokshin, who had immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1992, headed an organization called Magen (shield), dedicated to combating missionary activity.

ZVI GITELMAN