

Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

ALTHOUGH BRITAIN had enjoyed a decade without recession, high unemployment, or rampant inflation, the fortunes of Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Labour government were on the downswing. A January poll showed just 36 percent of the public satisfied with Blair's performance as compared to 31 percent who preferred Conservative leader David Cameron. A series of government scandals as well as controversy over foreign policy—particularly the wars in Iraq and Lebanon—took a further toll on the government's standing over the course of the year.

Despite an adequate majority, the government had problems getting legislation through the House of Commons. In March, for example, an education bill that created independent trust schools passed only thanks to Tory support after some 50 Labour MPs defected. The government slid from one crisis to the next. That same month, Tessa Jowell, the culture minister, was investigated on suspicion of breaking the ministerial code of conduct after Milan prosecutors accused her husband, solicitor David Mills, of accepting a £344,000 bribe from Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi; she was subsequently cleared.

Then came the disclosure that a number of multimillion-pound loans had secretly been given to the Labour Party before the 2005 election, and that some of the lenders had later been nominated for honors. A police inquiry followed. Not only was Blair himself questioned, but Lord Levy, the prime minister's chief fund-raiser and Middle East envoy, as well as president of Jewish Care, the family and children's service, was arrested, interrogated, and released on bail pending further inquiries. The Loans for Lords (a.k.a. Cash for Honors) affair was still ongoing at the end of the year.

In April, Home Secretary Charles Clarke resigned when it was revealed that foreign nationals had been released from prison without being considered for deportation. Hundreds, including murderers and rapists who should have been deported, had been set free. John Reid, who succeeded Clarke, admitted that the Home Office was “not fit for its purpose.”

Disillusionment with the government was reflected in the May elections for local councils, as the Tories recorded their best local election result since 1992. Labour lost more than 300 councillors, its share of the vote dropping to 26 percent. In the wake of this defeat Blair reshuffled his cabinet, replacing Foreign Secretary Jack Straw with Margaret Beckett, and appointing Straw leader of the Commons. John Prescott, deputy prime minister and secretary of state for communities and local government, was relieved of the latter post because of inappropriate behaviour—including a much-publicized affair with his secretary—but retained the office of deputy prime minister.

A dawn raid on a suspected London bomb factory in June—part of the government’s antiterror campaign—did nothing to enhance Labour’s prestige: no bombs were found and police shot an innocent bystander. A more successful operation was conducted in August, when Scotland Yard claimed to have thwarted a plot to blow up planes flying from the UK to the U.S.

Hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, which erupted during Parliament’s summer recess, plunged the government into yet another crisis. In August, Jim Sheridan, a Scottish MP, quit his post as parliamentary private secretary to the Ministry of Defense because of Blair’s continuing support for American foreign policy, claiming in particular that American planes carrying arms to Israel were using Scottish airports to refuel. And in September, several ministers, incensed at Blair’s failure to call for a ceasefire in Lebanon, pushed for an emergency recall of Parliament from its recess. Then 17 MPs who had formerly been loyal Labour supporters signed a letter calling for Blair’s resignation and a change in party leadership as the only way to maintain the government. A junior minister and six government aides resigned when Blair, confirming his intention to stand down by September 2007, refused to name a departure date. Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown was still assumed to be his successor, and polls in December showed greater satisfaction with the way Brown was doing his job than with the performance of any other Labour politician.

The Conservatives, meanwhile, were given a new lease on life by their young leader David Cameron, and by December the polls showed that

37 percent of those questioned would definitely vote Conservative, 36 percent Labour, and 18 percent Liberal Democrat. Changed leadership did not profit the Liberal Democrats, who elected Sir Menzies Campbell, aged 65, as their leader in March, to replace Charles Kennedy, who had to resign in January after confessing a drinking problem.

Israel and the Middle East

THE GOVERNMENT

At the synagogue service marking the 350th anniversary of the readmission of Jews to the country (see below, pp. 346–47), Prime Minister Blair said, “Britain will always be a true friend of Israel.” That proved true during 2006, in defiance, at times, of British public opinion. When Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert visited London in June, he said that Anglo-Israeli friendship was stronger than ever.

Britain took an unwavering stance against the democratically elected Hamas government in the Palestinian territories, which was committed to Israel’s destruction. In February the Foreign Office warned Hamas that there would be no official contact until it recognized Israel and halted terrorism. In a similar vein, Blair told a press conference that British support for the creation of a Palestinian state would cease if Hamas did not abandon violence.

The Palestinian people, however, starved of foreign aid by the West’s boycott of Hamas, remained an object of concern. Deploring “the senseless and unjustified” suicide attack on a Tel Aviv falafel bar during Passover (see above, p. 226), Foreign Secretary Straw told a press conference in April that Britain had to be sure that money for Palestinians in need would not filter through Hamas front organizations into funding terrorism. The Department for International Development announced that Britain’s £15m aid to Palestinian refugees would be distributed by UNWRA, the UN agency that provided support to the Palestinians, and in May a Foreign Office spokesman said that Israel and the “Quartet” (the U.S., the UN, Russia, and the EU) had accepted this British initiative.

On his June visit to Great Britain, Olmert received qualified support for his “realignment” plan of redrawing Israel’s eastern borders unilaterally, although Britain would have preferred Israel to negotiate directly with the Palestinians. Olmert found Blair’s “language, attitude and com-

mitment extremely encouraging,” but the visit was clouded by reports that IDF bullets had killed Palestinian civilians, including a family picnicking on a Gaza beach. Britain’s support for Israel continued even in July, when fighting in Gaza and Lebanon altered the situation. Blair placed the blame on Hezbollah, Hamas, and their sponsors in Tehran and Damascus, at the same time stressing that Israel’s retaliation must be proportional and minimize civilian casualties. Blair told the House of Commons that the conflict would only end when the kidnapped Israeli soldiers were released and rockets stopped falling on Haifa. Yet in August, International Development Minister Hilary Benn, announcing a doubling of British aid for the reconstruction of Lebanon, bluntly criticized Israeli actions, saying, “It would be very hard to describe the blowing up of power stations and water purification plants as proportionate.”

Britain made a bid for a more active role in the peace process. After Lord Levy traveled to Israel and the Palestinian territories for preliminary meetings in August, the prime minister himself arrived in September. “Mr. Blair played a pivotal role in emphasizing the importance of empowering moderates,” reported Miri Eisen, the Israeli premier’s foreign media advisor, after Blair met Palestinian president Abbas in Ramallah. “His meeting with Olmert,” she told the *Jewish Chronicle* of London, “was exceptional in its frankness and openness,” and added that Blair, a friend of Israel, also knew how to criticize it in “a very British way.”

Back in England, at the Labour Party conference in September, Blair pledged to maintain the search for Middle East peace as a priority, but stressed that no British initiative could succeed without American support. In response to criticism for not urging Israel to accept a cease-fire in Lebanon, Blair said, “The only way the conflict is going to end is when there is a Lebanese government in control of the whole community.” Around that time a poll of 625 Israeli adults taken by the British embassy in Tel Aviv found that an overwhelming majority of Israelis saw Blair as a “true friend of Israel,” and that about 40 percent viewed British policy as pro-Israel.

The British Foreign Office, in a report issued in October, said it was “deeply concerned” about Syria’s support for Hezbollah, and condemned once again the abduction of Israeli soldiers and the rocket attacks on Israel. The next month the Foreign Office stated that it continued to press for the return of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, the IDF soldier kidnapped by Hamas in Gaza, and that it was essential “that the Palestinian Authority make every effort to prevent terrorism as set out in the ‘road map.’” Israel did not escape criticism either. The Foreign Office expressed concern at its

failure to respect Palestinian human rights, its policy of targeted killings, and the firing of shells near populated regions of the Gaza Strip. It urged the IDF to try to avoid civilian casualties and the Israeli government to halt settlement construction and the building of a security barrier on Palestinian land, activity that "was contrary to international law and may threaten the viability of the agreed two-state solution."

The year ended with a flurry of diplomatic activity. Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni came to London in November for meetings with Blair and the newly appointed foreign secretary, Margaret Beckett. Livni called for a continuation of the international boycott of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority as a means of boosting the PA's moderate president, Mahmoud Abbas. Beckett traveled to Lebanon in December to express British support for its elected government. Both the Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament and Blair's address at the Lord Mayor's Banquet at London's Guildhall in November emphasized Britain's commitment to building an alliance of moderate governments in the Middle East, which, Blair said, was at "the core" of the fight against global extremism and terrorism. To this end he urged moderate Arabs and Muslims to work toward creation of a Palestinian government that recognized Israel. Blair toured Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Dubai, and the Palestinian Authority in December. Prime Minister Olmert, after meeting with him in Jerusalem, said that Blair "brought some excellent ideas."

In April, inquest juries at St. Pancras coroner's court (London) ruled on the deaths of two British peace activists killed by IDF bullets in Gaza in 2003, James Miller and Tom Hurndall (see AJYB 2006, p. 318). They found that Miller had been murdered and Hurndall unlawfully killed. The Israeli embassy declined the coroner's request that the soldier believed responsible for Miller's death attend the inquest, on the grounds that Israeli police had carefully investigated the incident and were unable to establish his guilt. Hurndall's killer had been convicted of manslaughter by an Israeli court and sentenced to eight years imprisonment. The families of Miller and Hurndall pressed Foreign Minister Straw to initiate legal action against the senior Israeli commander they held responsible. In May, Attorney General Lord Goldsmith held talks with officials in Jerusalem about compensation to the families.

In a related matter, Lord Goldsmith said in April that he was considering Israel's request to change legislation whereby a number of IDF officers bound for London had been threatened with arrest for alleged war crimes. In November 2005, for example, General Doron Almog returned from London to Israel without disembarking after being notified that he might be arrested (see AJYB 2006, p. 319).

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVITY

By 2006 it was becoming quite difficult to distinguish, in Britain, between criticism of Israeli policies and opposition to Israel's existence, and, even more broadly, between anti-Israel activity and enmity toward Jews. Daniel Shek, chief executive of the British Israel Communications and Research Center (Bicom), noted "a growing feeling that something more fundamental was being challenged by Israel's enemies and detractors in Britain which goes to the heart of Israel's legitimacy." And a spokesman for the Community Security Trust (CST) discerned, in June, "a wave of hostility toward Israel" that "directly affects anti-Semitism."

One manifestation of the prevailing atmosphere was the continuing drive, albeit often unsuccessful, to boycott Israel. In February the Church of England's governing body, its synod, voted to "heed the call" of Palestinian Anglicans and disinvest from companies that profited from the "illegal occupation," such as the American-based multinational Caterpillar company. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks described the decision as "a blow to Christian-Jewish relations," and nine MPs signed a letter to the *London Times* criticizing disinvestment. In March the Church's Ethical Investment Advisory Group upheld its 2005 policy that advised against disinvestment and rejected calls for economic pressure on Israel (see AJYB 2006, p. 320).

In February a newly formed organization, Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, announced plans for a campaign of political lobbying against Israel and for disinvestment from Israeli projects in the Palestinian territories. The next month the National Union of Teachers (NUT) decided against proposing a resolution at its annual conference calling on the Britain to impose sanctions and curtail its arms trade with Israel. But in May the Blackpool conference of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (Natfhe) passed a motion to boycott those Israeli individuals and organizations that did not publicly declare their opposition to Israel's policy in the territories. NUT and Natfhe merged in June to form the Universities and Colleges Union, and the new body was not bound by the resolution. Anti-Israel activists blockaded the British headquarters of an Israeli fruit-and-vegetable exporter, Agrexco, in August. Seven people had been cleared in January of disturbing public order arising from a similar blockade in November 2004.

Pro- and anti-Israel activity on university campuses continued. In January financial giant Merrill Lynch withdrew from sponsorship of an event at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) because it featured Hamas supporter Dr. Azzam Tamimi, a leading member of the

radical Muslim Association of Britain. In March a motion to twin Manchester University with al-Najah University on the West Bank and a countermotion to twin with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem were both defeated. April's National Union of Students (NUS) conference defeated a proposal by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies and the political group Respect to overturn NUS's ban on the Islamic fundamentalist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. Oxford University's student union decided in June to end its twinning arrangement with Bir Zeit University on the West Bank because supporters of terrorism, including some 23 Hamas members, sat on Bir Zeit's student council.

Events in Gaza and Lebanon during the summer added a new dimension to the debate. Pro- and anti-Israel rallies were held in London and other major cities in July. In Trafalgar Square the Muslim Association of Great Britain, the Stop the War Coalition, and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) led a mass meeting to condemn Israel and praise Hizb ut-Tahrir. Speakers included Dr. Tamimi and MP George Galloway. A lower-key, pro-Israel demonstration under the banner "Yes to Peace—No to Terror" was held at the Jewish Free School, Kenton, North London, the following week.

In August the NUS executive passed a motion condemning MP Galloway for publicly supporting Hizb ut-Tahrir, and in November campus groups protested outside the Birmingham University lecture hall where he was speaking. But a survey conducted in September by American pollster Stanley Greenberg for the Israel Project found that public sympathy in Britain for Hizb ut-Tahrir increased as the Middle East conflict dragged on, and that 25 percent of the country's "elite" judged Israel more responsible for the situation than Islamic extremism. Such sentiments were found to be strongly associated with opposition to perceived British and American support for Israel in the Lebanon war, and to anti-Blair feeling generally. In September, too, a Muslim policeman from the Metropolitan Police's special diplomatic protection group asked, on grounds of conscience, to be relieved from guarding the Israeli embassy in London: he objected to Israel's bombing of Lebanon. The PSC held a daylong lobby of Parliament timed to coincide with a debate on the Middle East, with the aim of convincing the government to stop supplying arms to Israel.

Baroness Jenny Tonge, a Liberal-Democratic MP from 1997 to 2005 and now a member of the House of Lords, told a group from the PSC at her party's October conference that "the pro-Israel lobby has got its grips on the Western world." Tonge, who had been removed as party spokesperson on international development in 2004 for declaring sympathy for

Palestinian suicide bombers, was now rebuked by Liberal Democratic leader Sir Menzies Campbell for the "clear anti-Semitic connotations" of her latest remarks. The next month she declared that although "many of us adore the Jewish people," Israel's treatment of the Palestinians was the primary force fueling global Islamic extremism. Tonge apologized in December to British Jews and to her party, even while noting that imputations of anti-Semitism could help shield Israel from justified criticism. She was not anti-Semitic, Tonge said, but was horrified by the international community's decades of inaction in dealing with the "occupation" of Palestine.

War in Lebanon brought increased anti-Israel feeling to the campuses. The Manchester University student union, in November, limited the application of its "no platform for extremism" policy to "fascist" speakers only, thereby opening the door to Hizb ut-Tahrir. In December Leeds University conducted a campus-wide referendum on a motion proposed by PSC students mandating student union authorities to ignore complaints by the campus Jewish Society "as long as Judaism as a faith was not offended." It passed by a vote of 1,421 to 895.

Pro-Israel forces on the campuses enjoyed something of a victory in December, when the national executive committee of the NUS voted to adopt the recommendations and the definitions of anti-Semitism produced in September by the all-party Parliamentary Group against Anti-Semitism (see below, p. 343). Since that group had stated that opposition to the existence of the State of Israel could be a manifestation of anti-Semitism, the NUS action implied acceptance of a connection between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

Jews who openly criticized Israel's actions met considerable reprobation from the communal establishment. But in June, representatives of Jews for Justice for the Palestinians teamed up with the PSC to organize a demonstration outside the House of Commons while Israeli prime minister Olmert was addressing MPs within, and the PSC general secretary delivered a 10,500-signature petition to Downing Street condemning both Olmert's visit and Britain's support for Israel. Representatives of Jews for Justice spoke at the Trafalgar Square meeting in July condemning Israel (see above, p. 340), and the organization placed a £10,000, full-page advertisement in the *London Times* bearing more than 300 signatures, many of Jews prominent in academia and the arts. Under the heading, "What is Israel doing?" it denounced collective punishment of Palestinians in Gaza and the use of Israel's "enormously superior military power to terrorize an entire people."

Poor public relations and biased media coverage were often blamed for

anti-Israel sentiment in the country. But an independent review of the BBC's Middle East coverage, commissioned by the BBC governors (see AJYB 2006, p. 322) and published in April, found little indication of deliberate or systematic bias. On the contrary, although the reporting could at times be, in the review's words, "incomplete" and "misleading," there was an evident commitment to be fair, accurate, and impartial.

While this was good news for BBC management, it rejected the review's recommendation to appoint a stronger editorial guiding hand to supervise Middle East news. Instead, management decided to enhance the role of its Middle East editor, currently Jeremy Bowen, in explicating the context of high-profile news programs. Also rejected was a recommendation to be more explicit in the use of language, such as in calling terrorist acts "terrorism." "We should let other people characterize," the BBC explained, "while we report the facts as we know them." Jewish community spokesmen expressed disappointment, noting that the review failed to address the bias implicit in portraying Israel's actions solely in the context of its role as an occupying power, while rationalizing acts of the Palestinians as those of an occupied people.

In June the board of Bicom agreed to launch a three-year, multimillion-pound program to promote Israel's image through the Jewish Leadership Council, CST, and the Friends of Israel groups of the three main political parties. But the impact of Israel's summer war in Lebanon caused re-cremations within British Jewry. In September the United Synagogue (US) council attacked the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council for their handling of public relations during the conflict, berating what it saw as the community's silence and inertia in the face of anti-Israel propaganda.

The law did its part in restricting anti-Israel activity. In February radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza was found guilty at the Old Bailey on nine charges, including soliciting others to murder Jews and other non-Muslims; using threatening, abusive or insulting behavior with intent to stir up racial hatred; and possessing a document likely to be useful in committing a terrorist act. He was sentenced to seven years in jail. The CST thought the sentence too light, and also criticized the police for not bringing Abu Hamza to justice sooner. Two radical Islamist groups were banned in July for preaching extreme anti-Israel and anti-Western propaganda. According to the Home Office, Al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect had disseminated material that fell within the purview of the 2006 Terrorism Act, which banned the praise, commission, or preparation of terrorism, and made belonging to or encouraging support for a proscribed organization a criminal offense.

Rabbis paid tribute to Sheikh Zaki Badawi, principal of London's Muslim College and cofounder of the Three Faiths Forum, who died in January. The forum, aimed at promoting dialogue between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, received a £50,000 grant from the Home Office in February to employ an education officer who would teach religious tolerance in schools and colleges. Another Home Office grant in May helped young Jews and Arabs set up a joint radio station, Salaam Shalom, in Bristol. That same month saw the launch of the Woolf Institute, a new project for the study of Jewish-Muslim relations that was an extension of the Cambridge Center for the Study of Christian-Jewish Relations.

In December, the Charity Commission launched a formal inquiry into the British charity Interpal on charges of funneling money to Hamas-linked individuals and organizations. A similar investigation into Interpal in 2003 on such charges had not turned up sufficient evidence to ban it (see AJYB 2004, p. 283).

Anti-Semitism

Jews were becoming "more anxious and more vulnerable to abuse and attack than at any other time for a generation or longer," noted the report of the Parliamentary Group against Anti-Semitism, published in September. The group, chaired by former cabinet minister Denis MacShane and consisting of MPs from all parties, had, over the previous year, listened to evidence from public officials, police officers, Jewish leaders, and experts on race relations. There was, the report noted, "a widespread change in mood and tone when Jews are discussed," and evidently anti-Semitism was "becoming respectable among certain sectors of society." The report urged the government, law-enforcement agencies, educators, and the media to take swift action. It also pointed to the financial burden that security measures placed upon the Jewish community: the Board of Deputies' Community Security Trust (CST) cost some £5m annually. MacShane told the *Jewish Chronicle*, "We cannot accept that there should be need for a group of British citizens to spend a large amount of money just to defend themselves."

The CST reported a total of 594 anti-Semitic incidents in 2006, the highest figure since such statistics began to be collected and 12 percent more than the previous high recorded in 2004. The 2006 total included 112 acts of violence, 365 of abusive behaviour, and 70 of property damage. Strangely, a report from the Jerusalem-based Global Forum against Anti-Semitism showed a fall in the number of incidents in Great Britain, from 321 in 2005 to 312 in 2006.

The CST issued a warning to the Jewish community in July, after anti-Semitic mail was received that referred to the Middle East crisis. According to the CST, British Jewry faced "a wave of intimidation" in the wake of Israel's bombing of Lebanon. The war in Lebanon indeed brought an upsurge in anti-Semitic incidents, 168 occurring in July and August 2006, as compared with 73 in the same two months of 2005.

Relations with London's left-wing mayor, Ken Livingstone, seemed to have improved in late 2005, when, at the launch of the London Jewish Forum in December, Livingstone apologized "if I have caused offense to anybody" (see AJYB 2006, p. 327). But he remained at odds with the Jewish community for much of 2006. Early in the year the Adjudication Panel for England suspended him from office for four weeks for likening a Jewish reporter to a concentration-camp guard a year earlier (see AJYB 2006, p. 323), concluding that his comments were "unnecessarily insensitive and offensive." A court decision in March froze the suspension, but Livingstone had to face another official inquiry when, in the course of a press conference, he accused the Reuben brothers, Jewish property developers, of stalling the development of Britain's East London Olympic site, and told them to "go back to Iran and try your luck with the ayatollahs."

Livingstone explained, in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle*, that his only interest in the Reubens was their effect on the Olympic Games, "not their religion or ethnicity." In June the Greater London Authority's monitoring officer judged that these remarks were not anti-Semitic, as Livingstone had not known at the time that the Reubens were Jewish. The High Court quashed Livingstone's earlier suspension order in October. "We probably won't ever agree on the policies of the Israeli government and the idea that anyone who disagrees with those policies is anti-Semitic," Livingstone told the Board of Deputies at that time. But he nevertheless hoped that it would work with him on matters where they could find common ground.

Controversy at Antony Lerman's appointment as director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (see AJYB 2006, p. 326) reignited in March 2006, when journalist Daniel Finkelstein became the fourth trustee in three months to resign from the IJPR board. The resignation was triggered by the board's withdrawal of support from a planned book on anti-Semitism. Finkelstein claimed that the withdrawal was a symptom of a shift in IJPR policy under Lerman, who, in the organization's name, had suggested that the problem of anti-Semitism in Great Britain was ex-

aggerated. IJPR relaunched itself in October: instead of functioning as an organization of the British Jewish community, it would now be a policy think tank for European Jewry.

In April, Board of Deputies director general Jon Benjamin warned that burgeoning support for the extreme right-wing British National Party (BNP) was "of very serious concern," even though Jews were not its main target. The same month, Tory leader David Cameron advised voters to "support any party rather than BNP, which is thriving on hatred." Nonetheless a survey by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust found that 25 percent of London's voters would consider voting for the BNP. The party fielded 360 candidates in the May local elections and increased the number of its councillors from 23 to 45, becoming the second largest party in Barking and Dagenham, East London, where it won 11 seats. The local MP, Margaret Hodge, a Labour minister, attributed the rise in BNP fortunes to the unpopularity of the government and to concerns over immigration and public housing in poverty-stricken areas. In November, BNP leader Nick Griffin and publicity director Mark Collett were acquitted of stirring up racial hatred, a charge brought on the basis of speeches they had made at a private meeting in West Yorkshire two years before that were filmed by an undercover reporter for a BBC documentary (see AJYB 2005, p. 325).

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

An unexpectedly healthy demographic profile of the community emerged from *Community Statistics, 2005*, a report by David Graham and Daniel Vulkan released by the community research unit of the Board of Deputies. Whereas the picture had for many years been one of decline, this report showed an increase in the number of circumcisions recorded, from 1,579 in 2004 to 1,640 in 2005. Figures for births, partly derived from the circumcision data and compiled using a new methodology, rose from 3,076 in 2004 to 3,205 in 2005. There were 1,000 marriages under Jewish religious auspices in 2005 as compared to 955 in 2004, much of the increase concentrated in the strictly Orthodox and Reform sectors. The marriages among the strictly Orthodox, indeed, constituting a quarter of the total performed. On the other hand, the number of Jewish religious divorces fell from 274 in 2004 to 249 in 2005. Burials and cremations

under Jewish religious auspices fell to 3,221 in 2005 from 3,257 the previous year.

Nevertheless, Rona Hart, head of the community research unit, estimated that a total UK Jewish population of 270,000 in 2005 would shrink to about 260,100 in 2010; 249,000 in 2015; and 229,700 in 2025. She projected that annual Jewish births over those two decades would fall to 2,070.

New analysis of the 2001 national census, published in March, showed that 4,002 Jews immigrated into Britain from April 2000 through April 2001. The largest groups came from the U.S. (1,289) and Israel (972). Rona Hart, in November, said that 9,000 native-born Israelis lived in London in 2006 as compared with 4,000 in 1997. These figures, which excluded illegal and temporary residents, were based on a survey carried out by the Office of National Statistics for the *Evening Standard* newspaper.

The Reform Synagogues of Great Britain announced that its religious court accepted the conversions of 109 adults and 41 children to Judaism in 2006. In 2005 the numbers had been 113 adults and 51 children.

To mark the 350th anniversary of the readmission of Jews to Great Britain (see below) Mayor Livingstone of London commissioned a report on the status of the London Jewish community. Published in December, *The Jewish Population of London* was produced by the data-management and analysis groups of the Greater London Authority, based on 2001 census data. It found that London's 150,000-strong Jewish community was the best-off of ten census groupings, its proportion of self-employed, 27 percent, more than double the overall rate. The average Jewish household consisted of 2.17 persons, though the most common household type (38 percent) consisted of a single person, in most cases an elderly pensioner. Single-parent households made up only 5 percent of the Jewish household total, the lowest rate among all religious groups.

Even so, the economic condition of the strictly Orthodox in Britain gave cause for concern. A report on the Manchester Jewish Community Project published in February pointed to extreme poverty among the city's Haredim.

Communal Affairs

This year marked the 350th anniversary of the readmission of Jews to Great Britain. Although activities were organized nationwide, London was the main focus. Two major events were a commemorative service in June at Britain's oldest synagogue, the seventeenth-century Spanish and

Portuguese Bevis Marks in the City of London, and “Simcha in the Square,” a celebration of British Jewish culture and a major rally in Trafalgar Square in September. London’s controversial mayor Ken Livingstone (see above, p. 344) was not invited to lead the rally, but he issued a press release expressing his determination that not only would “London remain a city that does not tolerate anti-Semitism,” but it would also “positively celebrate the gigantic Jewish contribution to human culture and civilization.” He also highlighted his office’s funding of the event to the tune of £60,000. The same month, the local council of Barnet, North London, bestowed “freedom of the borough” on Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Celebrations reached a peak in November, when Queen Elizabeth II hosted a reception for communal leaders and other personalities at St. James’s Palace.

In November, the Jewish Leadership Council, an umbrella body with an increased membership of 23 organizations, adopted a new three-pronged program: improving the effectiveness of pro-Israel advocacy; nurturing new communal leadership; and improving welfare and educational services. Task forces were assigned to address each area of concern.

In January, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) announced that David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party, had agreed to become a patron, and in March, the Duke of Edinburgh hosted a lunch on JNF’s behalf. But the dispute with its erstwhile partner, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-JNF (KKL), over the right to use the names KKL and JNF to raise funds for Israel in Britain (see AJYB 2006, p. 328) accelerated. In February KKL asked Israeli authorities to investigate Nes Israel, a charity JNF set up in Israel. According to KKL, the £130,000 Nes had received from JNF breached its commitment to KKL. JNF retorted that it was KKL’s failure to say where its money went that had made JNF set up Nes in the first place. In December, JNF threatened legal action if KKL did not agree to mediation before March 2007.

A hotly challenged decision in February allowed every Jew in the country, not just those registered, the right to vote for British delegates to the World Zionist Congress planned for June in Jerusalem. Only 1,296 votes were cast, half of them for Progressive (Reform) and Masorti (Conservative) candidates; more than a third of the ballots were disqualified. The Orthodox Mizrachi group challenged the outcome in an appeal to the Zionist electoral court, and thereby procured an additional seat.

Norwood, Britain’s leading Jewish children and family service, announced in March that it was expanding its family center in Stamford Hill, North London, to combat the welfare problems of Hackney’s strictly

Orthodox community. These, said Norwood's director of operational services, "involve families with eight, nine, or more children on low or no income, experiencing a high level of poverty." In November, plans to build a 300-home community in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, for strictly Orthodox Stamford Hill Jews were abandoned in favor of expanded development in Stamford Hill itself.

Religion

Trends in British Synagogue Membership, 1990–2005/6, a comprehensive report by Rona Hart and Edward Kafka published by the Board of Deputies, showed that the number of British Jews belonging to synagogues had declined by 18 percent over the previous 15 years, roughly the same rate as the decrease in the overall Jewish population. Some 30 percent of Britain's Jews were not affiliated with a synagogue. Approximately 70 percent of synagogue members lived in Greater London and contiguous areas, while within the London region itself, 41 percent of membership households lived in the three Northwest boroughs of Barnet, Brent, and Harrow.

The mainstream Orthodox sector was particularly hard hit, synagogue membership falling 31 percent, so that its share of the total fell from 66 percent in 1990 to 55 percent. The Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (popularly known as Aduth), with a much more Haredi orientation, saw its membership rise by 51 percent, from 5,810 household members in 1990 to 8,800 in 2005/6. The relatively new Masorti grouping grew even faster, increasing by 63 percent to 2,090 membership households in 2005/6, from 1,280 in 1990; Masorti now made up 2.5 percent of households affiliated with synagogues.

The downward trend was quite marked in the provinces. For example, the synagogue in Sunderland closed in March, as only 30 Jews remained in what had once been a thriving Jewish community that supported a yeshiva and a Jewish day school. Only Newcastle and Gateshead remained of what had been 12 viable Jewish communities in the northeast of England.

In April the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (Aduth) was criticized for providing financial support to the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta grouping, and three months later the Aduth synagogue in Hendon, North London, threatened to leave the organization unless it dissociated from Neturei Karta. Matters reached a head in December, when a Neturei Karta delegation, including its British leader, Ahron Cohen, attended the Holocaust-denial conference in Tehran. Chief Rabbi Sacks

expressed the communal consensus, describing this as “outrageous” and an “unforgivable betrayal of the memory of Holocaust victims.”

A report commissioned by the Movement for Reform Judaism, *Getting in Touch—18–35*, found that young adults’ absence from the synagogue did not necessarily imply indifference to Judaism. The movement therefore announced plans to raise £500,000 over the next five years to finance an outreach initiative geared to that age group, and hired an American consultant to direct the effort.

Education

The number of Jewish children attending Jewish day schools and nurseries, which stood at 14,660 in 1992, went up to 24,420 by 2004, a rise of 66 percent, according to a report published by the Board of Deputies community research unit. The 2004 total included 12,570 children at primary schools and 8,670 at the secondary level. The numbers of students attending strictly Orthodox schools rose from 5,330 to 10,860; at mainstream Orthodox schools from 9,000 to 12,720; and at Progressive schools from 330 to 910. The number of Jewish schools increased similarly over that time span, from 34 to 69 primary schools and from 22 to 41 secondary schools.

Still more schools were opening and others were in the planning stage. In February the government gave the go-ahead to Anglo-Jewry’s first cross-communal secondary school, six months after its first bid for state funding was rejected (see AJYB 2006, p. 330). Scheduled to open in East Barnet in 2009, the school was chosen to pilot a new wave of parent-promoted schools, part of the government’s educational reforms. It was expected eventually to take 1,260 students, plus 50 more in a special-education facility run by Norwood child care, with involvement on the part of ORT as well. In April the Huntingdon Foundation opened a new, private Jewish primary school in the Bushey-Watford area.

Statistics prepared for the *Jewish Chronicle* in July by Rona Hart of the Board of Deputies indicated the prospect of a mismatch between planned increases in school places and a shrinking Jewish population in London (see above, p. 000). In July, therefore, the United Synagogue announced plans for the creation of a strategic planning body to oversee Orthodox education in Hertfordshire and in the London area.

Indeed, there was reason to believe that some of the Jewish schools would not fill up. Yavneh College, Britain’s newest Jewish secondary school, opened in September in Boreham Wood, Hertfordshire, with 93 students (see AJYB 2006, p. 330). In March, the United Synagogue-

sponsored King Solomon High School in Barkingside, East London, found that applications for admission were drastically down—partially due to the opening of Yavneh—and began admitting children who were not Jewish by strict Orthodox definition. Russell Kett, board chairman of the Jewish Free School (JFS), Britain's largest Jewish comprehensive secondary school, in Kenton, North London, warned that it too, for the same reason, might need to admit non-Jewish pupils by 2007. Meanwhile, Jewish demographic decline outside London meant that only about a third of the students at Birmingham's King David, a primary school, were Jewish, and at King David High School, Liverpool, only a quarter.

In October, following a vociferous campaign led by the Board of Deputies, the government dropped a proposed amendment to its Education and Inspections Bill that would have empowered local authorities to force new schools under religious sponsorship to allocate 25 percent of their places to pupils of other faiths or of none. The amendment had been introduced in the House of Lords with the argument that mixing students of different religions would encourage inclusiveness and intergroup understanding.

Foreign Aid

World Jewish Relief (WJR) received a welcome boost in February when Prince Charles hosted a reception at Clarence House, his London home, for about 100 potential supporters. The prince had become interested in WJR activities since he visited Kraków and inspected the WJR community center project there (see below, p. 498).

Under its Gifts in Kind program, WJR had, since June 2005, shipped £3.5m worth of goods to impoverished Jews in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it was reported in March. Working closely on the ground with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, WJR provided food, household articles, toys, clothing, bedding, and medicine. Even the youngest members of the community rallied to the cause: children at the Bury and Whitefield Jewish primary school produced survival kits as part of the project.

WJR introduced "lifeline cards" in Argentina and the Ukraine so that poor Jews could do their own shopping using these cards instead of receiving food parcels or going to soup kitchens. "This is a way of giving them back their dignity," said Nigel Layton, WJR chairman.

Ukraine was a particular focus of British support. Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, North London, raised over £50,000 at a concert in January to help the Jewish community of Lviv. In February WJR had a

fund-raising campaign at South Manchester Synagogue for its Ukrainian projects. Edgware and District Reform Synagogue started a new twinning arrangement with a progressive congregation in Odessa: for 12 years the synagogue had been associated with Kiev's Hatikvah Reform community, and now that it was thriving, Edgware and District wanted to support a newer community that had greater needs.

WJR, which already had a London-Belarus twinning program for young people of bar- and bat-mitzvah age, arranged another twinning arrangement between Jewish Care's Holocaust Survivors' Center, Hendon, North London, and Belarus's Association of Jewish Ghetto and Nazi Camp Prisoners, in Minsk, many of whose members lived in extreme poverty. The Hendon Center started by collecting and sending clothing to Minsk.

The practice of bringing groups of young people from areas affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster to Britain for short vacations continued. In June, Radlett United Synagogue, Hertfordshire, joined Radlett and Bushey Reform in hosting children from Grodno, Belarus. November saw the tenth anniversary celebration of the Jewish Chernobyl Children project, which had brought approximately 200 children from Moghilev, Belarus, to London, with support provided by WJR.

West London Synagogue, the Reform movement's flagship congregation, raised £2m, in cooperation with United Jewish Israel Appeal, to equip Shaarei Sholom, a new progressive synagogue in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Publications

For the first time, the 2006 Jewish Quarterly-Wingate literary awards for fiction and nonfiction were combined, the prize going to Imre Kertész, the Hungarian-born 2002 Nobel laureate, for his semiautobiographical novel *Fatelessness*. First published 30 years earlier in Hungarian, it appeared in English translation in 2004.

Books published on religious themes during the year included *Rhythm of the Heart*, a commentary on the Psalms by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin; *Orthodox Judaism in Britain since 1913: An Ideology Forsaken* by Miri Freud-Kandel; *The Light and Fire of the Ba'al Shem Tov* by Yitzhak Buxbaum; *The Flame of the Heart: Prayers of a Chasidic Mystic*, translated and edited by David Sears with the Breslov Research Institute; *Signposts of the Messianic Age* by John D. Rayner; *Remaking Israeli Judaism: The Challenge of Shas* by David Lehmann and Batia Siebzehner; *The Music of the Hebrew Bible and the Western Ashkenazi Chant Traditions*.

tion by Victor Tunkel; *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, the story of the rescue of the Westminster Synagogue Torah scrolls, by Philippa Bernard; *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, edited by Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn; *Beyond the Pulpit* by Jeremy Rosen; *The Essence of Kabbalah* by Brian L. Lancaster; *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction* by Joseph Dan; *The Christian and the Pharisee: Two Outspoken Religious Leaders Debate the Road to Heaven* by R.T. Kendall and David Rosen; *Siddur Lil' mod v'La'asot*, a new prayer book for young people compiled by LJY-NETZER, the youth arm of the Liberal movement; and, at the other end of the spectrum, a new edition of the venerable Singer *Siddur*, the authorized daily prayer book for Britain's mainstream Orthodox communities, with a new translation and extensive commentary by Chief Rabbi Sacks.

Biographies and autobiographies included two lives of James Parkes, a leading non-Jewish figure in Jewish-Christian studies—*Campaigner Against Anti-Semitism: The Reverend James Parkes, 1896–1981* by Colin Richmond, and *He Also Spoke as a Jew: The Life of the Reverend James Parkes* by Haim Chertok. Also published were *The Bronfmans: The Rise and Fall of the House of Seagram* by Nicholas Faith; *Man in the Shadows*, the autobiography of one-time Mossad chief Efraim Halevy; *Passport to Freedom* by Anthony Laye; *Tea with Einstein and Other Memories* by William Frankel; *Dora B* by Josiane Behmoiras; *The End of Petticoat Lane*, the biography of East End boy Henry Freedman, by Andrew Miller; *Suburban Shaman* by Cecil Helman; *The Rainbow Never Ends* by Aubrey Rose; and Greville Janner's *To Life!*

Books on anti-Semitism included *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism* by Walter Laqueur; *Anti-Semitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity* by Hyam Maccoby; and *The Paradox of Anti-Semitism* by Dan Cohn-Sherbok.

Works of fiction were *Sea Change* by Michael Arditti; *Overexposure* by Hugo Rifkind; *Mandrakes from the Holy Land*, a translation of the Hebrew work by Aharon Megged; *Seeds of Greatness* by Jon Canter; *Made in Heaven* by Adèle Geras; *A Woman in Jerusalem*, a translation of the Hebrew novel by A. B. Yehoshua; *The Righteous Men* by Sam Bourne (nom de plume of journalist Jonathan Freedland); *The People on the Street* by Linda Grant; *Kalooki Nights* by Howard Jacobson; *Our Holocaust* by Amir Gutfreund; and *Disobedience* by Naomi Alderman.

Holocaust literature included *Trust and Deceit* by Gerta Vrbova; *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Disaster* by Martin Gilbert; *Nazism, War and Genocide*, edited by Neil Gregor; *Journey into Freedom* by Peter Hart; *A Thousand Kisses*, edited by Christoph Moss; *Salo's Song* by Barbara

Esser; *A Rose for Reuben: Stories of Hope from the Holocaust* by Robert Rietti; and *Parallel Lines* by Peter Lantos.

Historical works varied widely in scope. There were detailed studies such as *Novogrudok: The History of a Shtetl* by Jack Kagan; *A Strange Death* by Hillel Halkin, an investigation of a spy ring that helped the British against the Turks during World War I; *The Triumph of Military Zionism: Nationalism and the Origins of the Israeli Right* by Colin Shindler; *City of Oranges*, Adam LeBor's history of Jaffa; *Expulsion, Britain's Jewish Solution: Edward I and the Jews* by Richard Huscroft; *Jews in North Devon during the Second World War* by Helen Fry; and *The Sephardim of Manchester* by Lydia Collins. Others looked at whole communities, such as *Jews in Britain* by Raphael Langhamand; *The Jewish Community of Salonika* by Bea Lewkowicz; and *The Jews of Ethiopia*, edited by Tudor Parfitt and Emanuela Treisan Semi. Taking an even broader view was *The Phases of Jewish History* by Philip Ginsbury and Raphael Cutler.

Books about Jewish art and artists were *Treasures of Jewish Heritage* by David Bindman, Rickie Burman, and others; *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, 1906–1996*, edited by Jeremy Adler and Birgit Sanders; *Avigdor Arikha from Life* by Duncan Thomson and Stephen Coppel; *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* by Colin Cruise; *Once Upon a Time in Lithuania: Sketches and Paintings* by Naomi Alexander; Simon Schama's *Power of Art*, published to accompany Schama's television series of the same name; *Jacob Kramer: Creativity and Loss* by David Manson; and *My Grandparents, My Parents and I: Jewish Art and Culture* by Edward Van Voolen.

Books of poetry were *The Lost Notebook* by Jennie Feldman; *Black Over Red* by Lotte Kramer; *What Is the Purpose of Your Visit?* by Wanda Barford; *What I Never Told Mother* by Joan Gordon; *POT! Anthology*, edited by Michael Horowitz; *The Jewish Pilgrimage* by Geoffrey Hoffman; and *Anglo-Jewish Poetry from Isaac Rosenberg to Elaine Feinstein* by Peter Lawson.

In a class of their own were two books on contemporary affairs, *Londonistan* by Melanie Phillips, and *ADAM: An Anthology of Miron Grindea's ADAM International Review Editorials*, edited by Rachel Lasserson.

Personalia

Honors conferred on British Jews in 2006 included knighthoods for Sir Philip Green for services to the retail industry and Sir David Michels, the

former Hilton chief. An honorary knighthood went to Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel in recognition of his contribution to Holocaust studies in Great Britain.

Notable British Jews who died in 2006 included, in January: Rabbi Sholom Krafchik, Leeds *mohel*, aged 44; Victor, Lord Mishcon, major communal personality and lawyer, aged 90; Judith Tankel, prominent Glasgow communal worker, aged 71; Meer Basri, leader of Baghdad Jewry, aged 94; Philip Mishon, who organized the annual Remembrance Day parade, aged 81; in February: Joash Woodrow, artist, aged 78; Sidney Beenstock, key figure in Manchester Jewish education, aged 89; Gerald Fleming, Holocaust historian, aged 84; in March: Marcus Fielding, WIZO UK's executive director, aged 53; Ernest Polack, head of Polack's house, Clifton College, Bristol, aged 75; Muriel Spark, novelist, in Italy, aged 88; in April: Vivian Pereira Mendoza, leading member of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation and first director of the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, aged 89; in May: Rabbi Casriel Kaplin, one-time *dayan* of the United Synagogue Beth Din, aged 74; John Simon, national president UK B'nai B'rith, 1975–79, aged 92; in June: Ronald Cass, composer, aged 83; Judd Solo, band leader, aged 88; Louis Glassman, Hebrew scholar and ritual slaughterer, aged 95; in July: Louis Jacobs, the eminently learned and internationally renowned rabbi, scholar, and author, aged 85; Alan Senitt, committed youth leader, aged 27; Theresa Science Russell, Newcastle civic and communal personality, aged 96; in August: Eddie Brown, president of the Jewish National Fund, 1983–95, aged 67; Gerald Bean, national chairman of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, 1981–83 and 1996–98, aged 72; Sandra Blow, abstract artist, aged 80; Bluma Feld, caterer and hotelier, aged 98; Alfred Sherman, Conservative politician, aged 86; in September: Sir Martin Roth, Cambridge University's first professor of psychiatry, aged 88; Ephraim Gastwirth, religious minister and teacher, aged 85; in October: Reg Freeson, Zionist and former government minister, aged 80; Jonathan Cansino, leading bridge player, aged 67; Hanna Pinner, educator, aged 76; Michael Kester, champion of kosher slaughter, aged 65; in November: Chava Frankel, cofounder of Parnes House school, aged 94; in December: Peter Marsh, journalist and barrister, aged 73; Cyril Blaustein, real-estate developer and Jewish communal official, aged 89.