

# France

## *National Affairs*

### THE CPE CRISIS

The most remarkable series of events to occur in France during 2006 was a two-month-long struggle, marked by violence, over a proposed new employment law. The proposal, *Contrat première embauche* (CPE)—First Employment Contract—was the government's effort to address youth unemployment, a key problem that had led to massive rioting in heavily Arab and black African immigrant ghettos around France in October–November 2005 (see AJYB 2006, pp. 337–39). While the overall French unemployment rate was close to 10 percent, the figure was 23 percent for young people, and possibly double that for those of immigrant origin.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin agreed with many economists that a major reason for high unemployment was that social-welfare laws were overly protective of workers' rights. Left-wing governments that ruled France off-and-on since 1936 had instituted legislation that effectively gave much of the French labor force either quasi-ensured continual employment, or the guarantee of major financial compensation in case of dismissal. As a result, employers had become extremely wary of hiring people who had not proven their skills—principally inexperienced youths seeking to enter the workforce—or whom they were not sure they wanted to employ for long periods. While all sorts of temporary work contracts had been introduced in recent years to give employers more flexibility, unemployment remained stubbornly high.

De Villepin's CPE made it easier to dismiss employees under age 26 during their first two years of employment by exempting their employers from the law requiring provable grounds for dismissal. The government reasoned that job prospects for immigrant youths would vastly grow if employers knew they could hire them for trial periods without fear of being "stuck" with them if they were found unsuitable. In addition, a proposed Statute on Equality of Opportunities would have allowed apprenticeships from the age of 14 (replacing compulsory schooling until age 16), night work from the age of 16 (instead of 18), and the withholding of some welfare-benefit payments to families whose children skipped school.

The unexpected result was angry protest emanating from central Paris, just months after the violence that had affected the outer suburbs the year before. Student unions, soon backed by trade unionists, expressed outrage at the proposal, which, they said, violated hard-won labor rights and discriminated against the young. Left-wing parties supported the protesters, saying that the proposed legislation violated the European Union's Social Charter, and that it sought to make youthful employees as easy to discard as used facial tissue. Indeed, some called it "the Kleenex law."

After de Villepin invoked a little-used parliamentary procedure to have the CPE adopted on March 8–9, the battle—as had happened so often in France—moved to the streets. Students blocked entrances to half the country's universities, and several million people took part in demonstrations in nearly 200 cities and towns around the country. Strikes spread throughout France, including in some public services like the postal system. Serious clashes with police occurred in the Latin Quarter of Paris, a traditional hotbed of youth protest, when anarchists invaded and tried to occupy the main Sorbonne building of Paris University. Police forcibly evacuated and closed down the campus on March 11.

So unpopular had the government's position become that parliamentarians from the prime minister's own ruling UMP party scoffed that the initials CPE really stood for "Comment Perdre une Election" (How to lose an election). Although de Villepin at first dug in his feet, President Jacques Chirac stepped in on March 31 and suggested changes in the proposal that would moderate its effects, but this only encouraged opponents to step up their protests. Finally, on April 10, the government gave in and effectively abandoned the CPE.

An alarming aspect of the affair was that the mostly noisy but peaceful protests by students and trades unionists were regularly marred by the participation, as well, of thousands of violent ethnic French anarchists, as well as black and Arab teenage gangs from the suburbs who had revolted just months before. The anarchists set fire to shops and cars, the teen gangs attacked marchers and passersby to rob them of their possessions (telephones, cash, articles of clothing), stopping only to clash violently with riot police. Jewish organizations warned Jews to stay away from street gatherings for fear of being singled out for abuse, and foreign governments, including the U.S. and Great Britain, advised their citizens to be cautious when traveling in France.

The government was highly embarrassed by the turn of events. Opinion polls showed that the popularity of both President Chirac and Prime Minister de Villepin had plunged, not just among their political oppo-

nents, but even among their supporters, who faulted them for failing to curb the unrest rapidly.

#### PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Party politics throughout 2006 were dominated by jostling between would-be candidates for the presidential election the next year. The announced date for the first round was April 22, 2007, and, should no candidate get a majority, a run-off between the two top vote-getters would take place on May 6.

Chirac had appointed de Villepin prime minister in May 2005 with the clear intention of blocking the presidential ambitions of Minister of Interior Nicolas Sarkozy, Chirac's one-time protégé who had become his nemesis. Chirac, in fact, elected to his first seven-year term in 1995 and reelected for a five-year term under a new law in 2002, toyed with the idea of running for a third term. But his weak performance during the CPE crisis, coming on the heels of his lack of leadership in the 2005 immigrant riots, dealt a fatal blow to his popularity, which did not go above 25 percent in any of the 2006 opinion polls. De Villepin's poll numbers, following the CPE episode, were equally disastrous.

Sarkozy, in contrast, went from strength to strength, gaining new allies despite Chirac's efforts to stymie his advancement. Sarkozy's only opponent from within his own party, Union for a Popular Movement, was Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, who saw herself as the conservative answer to the feminine appeal and novelty of the Socialist would-be candidate, Ségolène Royal. But Alliot-Marie, finding very little support from party rank-and-file, dropped out of the contest. Sarkozy officially announced his candidacy on December 28.

Sarkozy was the son of a minor Hungarian aristocrat and political refugee, and of a mother whose own father was born into the once-storied Jewish community of Salonika, then in the Ottoman Empire and now part of Greece. That grandfather, Dr. Benedict ("Benico") Mallah, was the main male role model in Nicolas Sarkozy's life, because his father, Paul Sarkozy de Nagy-Bosca, walked out on his wife and their three sons when Nicolas was four years old, and she moved back with the children to her father's home (her mother had died several years earlier). Dr. Mallah had been sent to boarding school in France in 1904 by his wealthy parents when he was 14 years old. He later graduated from medical school in Paris, where he settled and met his future wife, the former Adèle Bouvier, converting to Roman Catholicism in order to marry her. The con-

version was apparently purely formal: Dr. Mallah is not known to have attended church, but neither did he maintain any Jewish links.

Nicolas was baptized and married in church, but as a politician he developed deep and close ties with the French Jewish community. Those ties were perceived as being so strong that leaders of the opposition Socialists unofficially protested that that CRIF (Representative Council of French Jewry), the umbrella body for Jewish organizations in the country, had dropped its traditional political neutrality and was openly backing Sarkozy.

Designation as the Socialist presidential candidate was fiercely contested between Lionel Jospin, Ségolène Royal, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Laurent Fabius, Jack Lang, François Hollande, and Bernard Kouchner (the latter was not, strictly speaking, a party member, but would have sought the nomination as an outsider.) Interestingly, all except Jospin and Royal were either Jewish or had close Jewish family connections, though only Strauss-Kahn was known as a synagogue member. He had told reporters at the start of the year, "I long thought that being a Jew would be a handicap that would make a negative difference in a presidential race. Today, I still believe it is a handicap, but only with a very marginal minority of anti-Semitic left-wing voters." By October, Jospin, Lang, Hollande, and Kouchner had dropped out. Hollande, the secretary general of the party, still played a major role in the race since he was Royal's long-time partner (they were not married) and the father of their four children.

A formal selection procedure followed, with several three-sided open debates held between Royal, Strauss-Kahn, and Fabius. The party rank-and-file was then asked to choose between them on November 17. Royal won by a wide margin, receiving 60.62 of the vote compared to Strauss-Kahn's 20.69 percent and Fabius's 18.66 percent.

The 54-year-old Royal was the first woman ever to run for president of France as a major-party candidate. She initially wowed the press and public with her charm and the novelty of her personality—a major departure from the classic, mainstream French male political type. Royal had, at different times, held the ministerial portfolios for the environment, family welfare, and education. She had little experience in foreign affairs, as became evident as soon as Royal began to make visits abroad, where she made several verbal gaffes that were immediately highlighted by her opponents.

Royal's most serious mistake, which occurred in Lebanon in December, caused grievous damage to her presidential hopes by projecting an impression of ignorance. While in Beirut, she met with a delegation from

the Lebanese National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, which included Ali Ammar, a Hezbollah member, who launched into a violent anti-Western diatribe in Arabic, which was translated for Royal. After some particularly scathing comments about U.S. president George Bush, Royal replied that she "shared part of his analysis concerning Bush's policies." This was instantly reported by accompanying French journalists, leading to criticism from opponents in Paris for siding with Hezbollah against the U.S. It also apparently contributed to the cancellation of a planned trip to the U.S., after Hilary Clinton indicated—presumably after reading the same reports—that she did not have time to receive Royal.

The situation went from bad to worse the next day, when Royal said, through a spokesman, that she had belatedly learned that Ammar's remarks in Arabic also included a comparison between Israel and Nazi Germany. Royal said that this had not been translated for her, and that she would have walked out of the room had she understood it. No one, in fact, had taken much notice of this comment by the Hezbollah man at the time. Journalists suggested that Royal may very well have heard and understood the words spoken, but, like everyone else, ignored them. Her reaction only came after aides decided that night to bring the issue up again, just in case her lack of comment might later be held against her.

Royal also surprised reporters by criticizing, in Beirut, Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory, but justifying them a day later, when she was in Israel. And Royal appeared, when speaking about Iranian nuclear efforts, not to understand the difference between nuclear power for civilian purposes and its use for weapons of mass destruction. Later, touring China, she praised Chinese justice, saying it acted far more rapidly than French justice. Outraged human rights activists quickly noted that China was especially known for swift executions, and that its trials did not recognize the rights of the accused.

Royal's misadventures on her Middle East visit led CRIF to issue a statement, even while Royal was still in the region, deploring that she had "engaged in a dialogue" with a Hezbollah representative. Royal's main foreign policy adviser, Julien Dray—a Jew who had sometimes had prickly relations with the organized Jewish community—expressed outrage. He believed the CRIF statement was not only motivated by pro-Sarkozy sentiments, but was also unfair, since Royal had met with a Lebanese parliamentary committee, of which the Hezbollah man was only one member.

The quick-tempered Dray was said to have exploded in anger when he

met CRIF official Meyer Habib by chance in the lobby of Jerusalem's King David Hotel. According to reports in the French press, Dray shouted: "You've sold your souls to the other camp. Don't expect anything from us. Go back to your friend and master Sarkozy. But you'll pay dearly for this. Ségolène will be elected, and on that day, you'll come crawling on hands and knees to be received by her." Dray's temper got the better of him again the next day, when he heard that Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy had described Royal's ideas about the Middle East as "simplistic." Dray retorted on national radio, "If Douste-Blazy had any intelligence himself, we'd know about it by now."

When Royal returned from abroad, CRIF president Roger Cukierman hastily arranged a meeting with her to clear the air. Afterwards, CRIF issued a new communiqué insisting it was neutral in the presidential race. But more criticism came from French Jewish publications: Royal had not visited the Western Wall; she declined to make a statement when visiting the Yad Vashem memorial; and she could not find the time to meet with the parents of three Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah and Hamas. She did meet with Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, and had a highly publicized "private" meal with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, apparently as part of her campaign of meeting with, and being seen alongside, influential women worldwide.

#### THE ILAN HALIMI MURDER

The kidnapping and murder of Ilan Halimi was one of the most shocking and traumatic events in the annals of French Jewry since the end of World War II.

Halimi, the 23-year-old son of Moroccan Jewish immigrants, was a salesman in a small Paris telephone shop. He was kidnapped in a Paris suburb on January 21 after being lured to a secluded spot by a teenage girl working for a self-styled "gang of the barbarians," made up of young hoodlums from the Paris suburb of Bagneux. Halimi was tortured while being held for ransom in the basement of a large block of mostly immigrant-inhabited projects. When his family attempted to pay the ransom, the kidnappers failed to appear at designated meeting points, for fear of being caught. Halimi was found by the side of a railway track on February 13, naked and with 80 percent of his body covered with cuts and burns. He died in an ambulance on the way to a hospital.

The gang, except for its leader, was arrested within days. The leader, Youssuf Fofana, fled to the Ivory Coast, where he was arrested on Feb-

ruary 22 and extradited to France on March 4. Subsequent police investigation revealed that Fofana was from a Muslim family that came from the Ivory Coast, a former French colony in Africa. His accomplices were mostly of black or Arab origin, but also included a few white Portuguese immigrants and ethnic Frenchmen. Nearly all had police records for small-scale drug trafficking, automobile theft, assault, and similar offenses.

Fofana, who had served more than a year in prison for armed robbery, called himself "the brain of the barbarians." After hatching several plans to get money illegally, he had decided on kidnapping, sending young women out to lure potential victims. Before abducting Halimi, the gang had tried, without success, to kidnap six other men, four of them Jews. Fofana told his accomplices that the focus on Jewish victims was "because Jews have money which they suck from the state." In his contacts with Fofana's parents, he realized that they were poor, and suggested, "go ask your rabbi to collect money from the other Jews."

A year after the crime, 18 people were still in prison awaiting trial for the murder-kidnapping. The exact degree to which anti-Semitism was involved in the case was still not entirely clear, except for police statements to the press. Among these was that one of the men told detectives he had stubbed out a cigarette on Halimi's forehead, saying, "This is because you are a Jew."

It was only after the discovery of the dying Halimi that the public became aware of the kidnapping and its possibly anti-Semitic aspect. Interior Minister Sarkozy told the National Assembly on February 21 that while the prime motive for the kidnapping had been to extort money, "the choice of a Jewish victim showed an anti-Semitic background." A memorial service at Paris's main synagogue on February 23 was attended by both President Chirac and Prime Minister de Villepin. (A year after Halimi's death, in February 2007, his body would be disinterred and reburied in Jerusalem.)

Major Jewish and antiracist groups organized a march and demonstration through central Paris on February 26, at whose head walked most of France's major politicians, including Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy. The crowd of more than 100,000 people, however, was made up overwhelmingly of French Jews, which came as a major disappointment to a Jewish community that had hoped that large sectors of the non-Jewish public would demonstrate solidarity. Roger Cukierman, the CRIF president, said in an interview with the Jewish weekly *Actualités Juives* on March 9 that the failure to make the fight against anti-

Semitism a national priority, particularly on the part of the media, "is very dangerous."

Thousands of newspaper and magazine articles were written about the Halimi affair, and several books were subsequently devoted to the subject. Among them was philosopher Adrian Barrot's *If This Is a Jew*, whose title was modeled on Primo Levi's account of survival at Auschwitz, *If This Is a Man*. Barrot wrote, "This was not just an anti-Semitic crime, this was Nazism in its most basic state; this is the sewer from which Nazism sprang."

### *Israel and the Middle East*

Franco-Israeli relations began the year in a positive fashion, still reflecting the unexpected warmth that marked the visit to Paris in July 2005 of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (see AJYB 2006, pp. 344–45).

Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni visited France in March as part of a tour of West European capitals to update these governments on Israeli policies in the wake of the Hamas victory in the Palestinian Authority elections. Livni gave an interview to the conservative daily newspaper *Le Figaro* in which she said: "If the Islamists are going to use the Palestinian Authority to promote terrorism and hate, that goes completely contrary to the concept which motivated us in supporting the creation of the PA." She discussed with French foreign minister Douste-Blazy the issue of foreign funds donated to the PA, which Israel feared might be used for anti-Israel purposes. Douste-Blazy, however, told Livni that the lack of funds would "lead to chaos in the territories." He said, "A brutal collapse of the Palestinian administration and economy is in no one's interest."

President Chirac telephoned Prime Minister Olmert on March 30, two days after Kadima's strong showing in the Israeli general election, to congratulate him and "to underline the importance which France attaches to its relations of friendship and confidence with Israel." Chirac was also reported to have said that he hoped "the same dynamism which marked ties with former prime minister Sharon would continue." Douste-Blazy also hailed Olmert, saying his party's electoral success was "good news for peace."

Such warm feelings were apparently also felt by the general public. An opinion poll carried out on behalf of CRIF showed that the French had far more positive impressions of Israeli leaders than of Palestinian leaders. Conducted by the Sofres polling group, the survey indicated that 57 percent of the sample were convinced Olmert would improve the living

conditions of Israel's population, whereas only 39 percent thought the Palestinian government would do so for its people. The same poll showed that 64 percent of Frenchmen polled and 46 percent of Frenchwomen did not believe the Palestinian government sought peace. Doubts about Palestinian motivations were highest among respondents with the highest levels of education: a full 70 percent of university graduates did not believe that the Palestinians had peaceful intentions, as compared to 55 percent of non-graduates.

The summer crisis over Lebanon, taking place at the same time as Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip, saw France initially adopt a relatively even-handed stance. In the early stages of Israeli military action in response to Hezbollah's capture of two Israeli soldiers near the Lebanese border and Hamas's seizure of one soldier near the Gaza Strip demarcation line, President Chirac expressed sympathy with civilians under Israeli bombardment, and also called, in the same statement, for the release of the captured Israeli soldiers and for a halt to rocket fire against Israel. Clearly referring to Syria and Hezbollah, Chirac said: "One must stop all forces which endanger the security, stability and sovereignty of Lebanon." Three days later, while blaming Israel for "the destruction of infrastructure and equipment which is indispensable for the running of Lebanon," he was even clearer in placing blame on Hezbollah, saying, "there cannot be a politically stable Lebanon . . . if part of its territory is occupied by militias which do not obey the Lebanese government."

France then undertook a major operation to evacuate thousands of French-passport-holders from Lebanon, many of them people born in Lebanon or of Lebanese extraction who held dual citizenship. The part of the evacuation undertaken in south Lebanon close to the Israeli border was closely coordinated with Israeli authorities, ensuring that bus convoys were properly identified so as to avoid their being mistakenly hit by Israeli aircraft.

France played a major role in the see-saw negotiations at the UN in New York and elsewhere that ultimately led to the Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1701, instituting an effective cease-fire and the addition of new contingents to reinforce the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Despite the resolution's calls, however, the two kidnapped Israeli soldiers were not released. Lebanese government troops arrived in the area for the first time in decades, but they did not disarm Hezbollah, which apparently either pulled out of the area or concealed its weapons.

The summer crisis led to a series of political statements and demon-

strations in France. Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said on July 15 that Hezbollah was the clear aggressor in the conflict. "Israel must defend itself and has the right to defend itself, but, if one is a friend of Israel as I am, one must advise Israel not to lose control and to overreact." He added, however, that "it is easier to give this advice from Paris than from Haifa," then under bombardment. Two small anti-Israel demonstrations took place in the streets of Paris that same day, one by Hezbollah sympathizers, most of them Arabs, and the other by supporters of the Lebanese government who condemned Israel but also asked for Hezbollah's disarmament.

French Jewish organizations were very active during the crisis raising funds for Israel, while small groups and individuals went to Israel on self-styled missions to distribute foodstuffs to inhabitants of northern border towns under bombardment. The families of the three kidnapped Israeli soldiers later came to Paris to meet government officials and French Jewish leaders as part of a campaign to secure the release of the three. One of them, Gilad Shalit, captured near Gaza, had dual Franco-Israeli citizenship. One recent immigrant from France who had arrived in Israel shortly before the conflict without his parents was among the Israeli soldiers killed in the conflict.

The Paris suburb of Issy-les-Moulineaux received 30 Israeli teenagers from the town of Nahariya, with which it was twinned, and hosted them at a seaside summer camp for three weeks in August. A group of 13 Israeli youths of Ethiopian origin who lived in northern Israel spent August as guests of the city of Metz, in eastern France, while ten young people from the northern Israeli town of Maalot were received at a Jewish holiday camp on the French Atlantic coast.

The French Foreign Ministry—long suspected by French Jewry of harboring pro-Arab sympathies—issued a public call for funds to aid Lebanese refugees, as it had done often before for refugees in other conflicts. Reminded by French Jewish groups that many Israelis had also been forced from their homes, the ministry donated \$200,000 to refurbish a kindergarten for handicapped children in Acre and help build a center for trauma victims in Afula. Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë, a friend of the Jewish community, visited Israel in November and handed over some \$65,000 to aid projects in the north of the country.

In a move clearly connected to French domestic politics, the European Parliament announced in October that a visit to Israel scheduled by a parliamentary delegation from October 28 to November 4 had been "postponed to a further undecided date for technical reasons connected to the delegation's program." The decision was actually due to the presence in

the delegation of Marine Le Pen, daughter of, and would-be political heiress to, extreme rightist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. Marine Le Pen had for several years conducted a discreet campaign to woo Jews and soften the image of her father, whose multiple anti-Semitic outbursts landed him in French courtrooms on several occasions. But according to Jewish community sources, Israeli authorities had said that if Marine Le Pen were in the delegation, there would be no meetings with Israeli officials.

An unexpected mini-crisis broke out between Israel and France on November 8, when French defense minister Alliot-Marie told Parliament that Israeli combat aircraft had carried out what she described as mock attack runs against the headquarters of a French UN battalion at Deir Kifa in south Lebanon on October 31. "We were just seconds away from firing antiaircraft missiles for our defense," she said.

Israeli ambassador Daniel Shek was summoned to the French Foreign Ministry, where he denied any hostile intentions and said the overflights were wrongly interpreted by the French contingent. Shek said Israel had to continue reconnaissance flights over Lebanon since Hezbollah was still receiving weaponry from Syria. While Resolution 1701 outlawed such flights, Shek said Israel could not comply until all parts of the resolution, including that calling for the release of the soldiers, were implemented. An IDF officer later visited Paris to draw up procedures to avoid new incidents.

CRIF carried out an opinion poll in November on French attitudes toward Iran. Conducted by the TNS Sofres group among 1,000 respondents, it showed that 80 percent believed Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when he said he wanted to wipe Israel from the face of the earth, and 81 percent thought Iran wanted to build nuclear weapons. Although some 79 percent said they favored UN sanctions, only 37 percent wanted Iran expelled from the UN, with 47 percent disagreeing. CRIF president Roger Cukierman commented, "We were rather satisfied because its findings showed that the French are mature and aware of the danger of a nuclear armed Iran."

A Paris court, on October 19, ordered Philippe Karsenty, the (Jewish) director of the Media-Ratings Web site, to pay \$1,300 in damages and \$4,000 in costs for libeling television journalist Charles Enderlin of the state-owned France 2 network. Enderlin, a French immigrant to Israel and the station's veteran correspondent in the country, was the author of the TV report of the death of a Palestinian child, Muhammad al-Dura, in Gaza in late September 2000 (see AJYB 2001, p. 495). The image had since been used around the world to excoriate Israeli policies.

Enderlin, in fact, had not been present on the scene, but used his Pales-

tinian cameraman's film and authored the text, which blamed Israeli troops for the death. The IDF, however, had since said it was impossible to know who was responsible for the child's death in a cross-fire. Karsenty had claimed on his Web site that the entire scene was faked, and demanded that Enderlin resign. Instead, Enderlin, under fire from French Jewry ever since the affair, sued. The court found that Karsenty brought no proof of his allegations, and cited the Israeli army's own uncertainty about the case.

Philosopher and pro-Israel activist Alain Finkielkraut was acquitted in two separate court cases, on June 27 and July 4, of libel charges. The first had been brought by anti-Zionist Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan, and the second by the Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples (MRAP). In 2005, Finkielkraut had been the target of a major campaign against him by left-wing groups and publications because of his support of Israel and his remarks about criminal behavior among immigrant communities (see AJYB 2006, p. 341).

The 2006 court cases, however, involved statements Finkielkraut made in 2003. In the first instance, he accused Sivan of "participating in Jewish anti-Semitism" by producing a documentary film comparing the situation of Palestinians to that of Jews in occupied Europe. The Paris court cleared Finkielkraut, saying his statement was fair criticism. In the second case, Finkielkraut had denounced MRAP's support of the UN's World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, which had strongly anti-Semitic features. Finkielkraut, in a play on words, insinuated that the self-styled antiracists of MRAP were transforming themselves into anti-Semites. The court dismissed that case as well on the grounds that the accusation of libel had not been clearly proven.

A Paris court, on June 13, ruled that black "comedian" Dieudonné M'bala M'bala had to pay \$2,000 in damages and \$5,000 in costs to the Jewish television personality Arthur (real name, Jacques Essebag) for libel. Dieudonné, who specialized in goading the French Jewish community and had been virtually excluded from appearing on television due to a string of anti-Semitic outbursts, said Arthur's highly successful production company "actively and financially supports the Israeli army which kills Palestinian children." Another court had already fined him \$6,500 on March 10 for incitement to racial hatred against Jews. In that case, Dieudonné had said in a newspaper interview, referring to Jews, "It is all those slaveowners who reconverted themselves into banking and show business who today back Ariel Sharon's policies."

Later in the year, in the wake of the summer war on the Israel-Lebanon

border, Dieudonné paid a “solidarity visit” to Lebanon and Syria, accompanied by several ultra-leftist figures, including Thierry Meyssen, author of a book purporting to show that no aircraft crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. During their visit they met Hezbollah leaders, whom they praised for their anti-Israel actions.

### *Anti-Semitism*

After falling by nearly 50 percent between 2004 and 2005, the number of anti-Semitic incidents went up sharply, from 300 in 2005 to 371 in 2006—a 24-percent increase. Incidents involving physical attacks against people rose from 77 to 112. The Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive (SPCJ), the security service maintained by the Jewish community, which worked closely with the police, attributed the worrying trend to tensions surrounding the Halimi affair and Israel’s summer conflict in south Lebanon.

When assailants were identified in the most serious incidents, they were overwhelmingly young French nationals of Muslim Arab origin, or—increasingly—blacks of West-Central African origin. Victims of the physical attacks were nearly all young Jews, often minors, set upon haphazardly in the streets of lower-class neighborhoods when they were recognized as Jews. Several non-Jews mistakenly identified as Jews were also attacked.

Aside from the 112 physical attacks, there were 213 incidents involving vandalism or the throwing of objects at Jewish property. This marked a 40-percent rise from the year before, which saw 152 such incidents. Less serious violations, such as threats, false bomb alerts, insults, and hate mail, numbered 158 compared to 148 the year before, a 7-percent increase.

The overwhelming majority of incidents took place in the greater Paris area, particularly in blue-collar neighborhoods where Jewish minorities lived cheek-by-jowl with far more numerous Muslim Arab populations. There were virtually no attacks on Jewish community buildings, such as synagogues or schools, presumably because of the heavy protection afforded them by the state—often, as he himself liked to recall, at the instigation of Interior Minister Sarkozy.

One exception was an attempt to burn down the Mercaz HaTorah boys’ school in the rough Paris suburb of Gagny late on the night of November 8, when the building was empty. A window was broken and a firebomb thrown inside, but the blaze was quickly spotted and extinguished by the occupants of a police car on regular night patrol.

Commenting on the 2006 statistics, SPCJ spokesman Ariel Goldman

said, "We are no longer in the dramatic period of 2001–02. But neither are we in a zero-incident period like in 1990. What we are going through is a hazy period where there are punctual flare-ups of anti-Semitism. The situation remains worrisome." He expressed concern that after the murder of Ilan Halimi, which should have come as a cautionary warning to French society, the pace of anti-Semitic incidents in fact accelerated.

One incident that drew nationwide attention was the demonstrative presence, on Sunday, May 28, in the Rue des Rosiers—the best known "Jewish street" in Paris—of more than 30 members of "Tribu Ka" (Ka Tribe), a group of black extremists who admired the head of the American black Muslims, Louis Farrakhan. The "Tribu Ka," threatening passersby, said they had come to "settle accounts" with Betar, a militant Jewish nationalist youth group they accused of attacking passing blacks during the February street march in Ilan Halimi's memory. Incidents of Jewish youths attacking innocent Arabs or blacks had indeed marked several large-scale Jewish gatherings in the past. The blacks paraded around the Rue des Rosiers for nearly half an hour before police arrived and searched them for concealed weapons, which Jewish merchants said they had seen. No weapons were found and no arrests made.

The media reported extensively about the story. Politicians flocked to the neighborhood to express sympathy with the Jewish community. Among the first on the scene was Interior Minister Sarkozy, who ordered the "Tribu Ka" disbanded in July. The group held several public meetings since under other names, but stayed away from the Jewish quarter.

Another incident that drew wide attention and stimulated public debate occurred in early November. Jewish shopkeeper René Dahan and his wife were attacked in their home in the quiet Paris suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne by three intruders, two Arabs and one West Indian, who broke in as Mr. Dahan was about to leave for work in the morning. The three were planning to extort money from him, but Dahan leaped on one of them and wrestled his pistol away. A free-for-all ensued, and Dahan fired two shots that caused the men to flee. As the West Indian, a 27-year-old with a long police record, jumped out the window, Dahan fired a third shot that killed him instantly. Police summoned to the crime scene took Dahan away for questioning, and a magistrate ordered him jailed on the charge of manslaughter, since the fatal shot was not fired in self-defense.

There was an immediate uproar from shopkeepers' associations, self-defense groups, and Jewish personalities, who protested the magistrate's decision. Interior Minister Sarkozy intervened publicly and asked Justice Minister Pascal Clement to release Dahan, which he did. Sarkozy's political rival Royal charged that the interior minister was "playing politics"

with a case that should have been left in the hands of the judicial system. The two surviving assailants told police they had singled out Dahan because they knew he was Jewish and assumed he was wealthy. By a strange coincidence, Dahan's shop was on the same Boulevard Voltaire in eastern Paris where Ilan Halimi had worked.

On November 23, there was a soccer match between visiting Hapoel Tel Aviv and host Paris St. Germain, a team notorious for the hundreds of Nazi-saluting skinheads who attended its games. Israeli fans who had arrived from Tel Aviv to support their team were placed together in a part of the stadium specially protected by police in anticipation of trouble, but several thousand French Jewish spectators were dispersed throughout the stadium, and they became the target of insults when they hoisted Israeli banners. The likelihood of violence escalated when the Israelis trounced the host team 4-1, and PSG fans, especially the skinhead element, began to harass Jews outside the stadium immediately after the match.

Yaniv Hazout, a young French Jew, was pursued by a gang of such hooligans when he was identified as a Jew after leaving the stadium. Just as he was about to be caught by dozens of potential aggressors, plainclothes policeman Antoine Granomort, a black native of the French West Indian island of Guadeloupe, stepped in to protect him. With dozens of skinheads closing in on them shouting, "Dirty Jew" and "Dirty Arab," Granomort pulled out his service pistol. When knocked to the ground and after losing his glasses, Granomort fired a single bullet which went through the lung of Moroccan-born Mounir Bouchaer and fatally injured Frenchman Julien Quemeneur, who died on the spot from a bullet to the heart. Granomort and Hazout took refuge in a McDonald's restaurant, which was attacked by close to 200 infuriated fans. They broke all the windows before police reinforcements arrived and dispersed the crowd, making several arrests.

Bouchaer was known to police as a soccer hooligan, but Quemeneur was not, and his family and friends insisted he was an ordinary fan. But police footage of the game showed the shaven-headed Quemeneur with a bandana around the lower half of his face, standing and shouting among the most active PSG supporters. Granomort was questioned by police internal disciplinary services, and they accepted his statement that he acted in self-defence. The Jewish community asked that Granomort be treated as a hero and decorated, but it later emerged he was already under investigation within the police department for a criminal act he may have committed several months before.

An opinion poll conducted by the IFOP group on March 2-3 found

that 64 percent of the French public believed anti-Semitism was on the rise in the country, as compared to 36 percent who did not think so. The category with the highest percentage of people who did not believe anti-Semitism was increasing was those who had the highest level of education. Commentators explained that this reflected the fact that anti-Semitic incidents rarely occurred in well-to-do neighborhoods.

### *Holocaust-Related Matters*

A French administrative court, on June 7, ordered the SNCF National Railways to pay about \$250,000 in damages to Alain Lipietz, a member of the European Parliament representing the French Green Party, as well as to his uncle and his sister, for transporting four members of their family, including Lipietz's father, to the Drancy internment camp in May 1944. Scheduled to be sent from there to Auschwitz, where 76,000 other French Jews were murdered, they were freed that August by advancing allied troops. The court found that the railways "could not have ignored at the time that they were facilitating an operation that was meant to be a prelude to the deportation of the persons involved to death camps."

Lipietz said the ruling demonstrated the responsibility of the Vichy French administration for Nazi policies. But the SNCF appealed the decision on the grounds that it was based on "historically false arguments." Its lawyer, ironically, was Jewish activist Arno Klarsfeld, son of Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld, who was the lawyer for the SNCF in similar cases pending before U.S. courts. Klarsfeld senior, commenting on the Lipietz case in the newspaper *Le Monde*, wrote, "Could one have demanded that those who drove railways resign and deprive their families of their livelihood? Those who did so were heroes while the others were, and always will be, the majority. Indifference to the sorrows of others is not a crime, it is part of human nature."

The controversy was given considerable space in the Jewish weekly *Actualités Juives*. Lawyer Corinne Hershkovitch, who represented some 450 families filing legal claims against the SNCF, said many victims felt guilty because Serge Klarsfeld disapproved of their actions. Paul Mingasson, executive director of the SNCF, recalled that the company itself had sponsored the historical research that led to the judicial decision against it, and that the SNCF had not only cooperated with Jewish groups in organizing events to recall the Holocaust, but had gone so far as to affix memorial plaques in railways stations from which Jews had been deported. Serge Klarsfeld told *Actualités Juives* that "the government has

already done what was necessary in paying pensions to survivors and their descendants . . . .”

French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson was sentenced on October 3 to a suspended three-month prison term and ordered to pay a fine of \$10,000. This was the fifth time French courts had found him guilty of such crimes. The charge this time, brought by several human-rights groups, had to do with an interview Faurisson gave in 2005 to Sahar 1, an Iranian television station whose broadcasts could be seen by French dish owners, in which he said, “There never existed a single Nazi gas chamber . . . everything that tourists see at Auschwitz is a lie and a falsehood for tourists.”

A Paris court ruled on July 11 that extreme right-wing leader Jean-Marie Le Pen would have to stand trial for new statements he had made minimizing the impact of the Nazi occupation of France. In January 2005 Le Pen told the ultra-rightist weekly *Rivarol* that the occupation had “not been particularly inhumane when you take into account the size of France,” and went on to cast the Gestapo in a positive light. In September, the date for the trial was scheduled for June 2007, which led to protests from Serge Klarsfeld, who said that setting the trial after the April–May presidential elections seemed calculated to enable Le Pen to run, as a new condemnation before a French court would immediately bar him from doing so.

*L'Est Républicain*, a newspaper in Nancy, in the east of France, refused to publish a memorial notice submitted by a local Jew, Joel Volfson, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the death of his father, a merchant deported to Auschwitz in 1944. The paper objected to the notice's reference to “Nazi barbarity,” which it found “too violent,” and insisted that *L'Est Républicain* retained the right to refuse certain terms in ads. It gave, as another example, the word “murder” when submitted by the families of those killed in car crashes. Local Jewish groups protested, and the French national journalists' union, SNJ, noting that other French newspapers published such ads, called on *L'Est Républicain* to change its policy. The controversy escalated when a spokesman for the newspaper told a Jewish journalist, “What would you say if we were to publish a death notice about a Lebanese civilian killed in the recent war with Israel that would contain the words, “Israeli barbarity?”

Jewish activist Patrick Gaubert, president of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA), a leading human-rights group created in the 1930s to fight Nazism, denounced ceremonies organized by the Ukrainian community to honor Ukrainian national hero

Simon Petliura, who had been a leading pogromist. On May 25, Ukrainian diplomats and expatriates laid a wreath in his honor at the Tomb of France's Unknown Soldier, and Gaubert requested French authorities not to allow this to happen again. Petliura, a key figure in the establishment of Ukraine's short-lived independence in 1917, was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews there at that time. He went into exile in France when Soviet Russia took over his country, and was assassinated in Paris in 1925 by Samuel Schwarzbard, a Ukrainian-born Jewish veteran of the French army.

On October 16, President Chirac decorated an American, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), with the insignia of Chevalier (Knight) of the Legion of Honor, in recognition of his efforts to fight anti-Semitism and strengthen ties between France and the American Jewish community. The ceremony took place at the Élysée Palace.

The French government announced on December 21 that a special national tribute would be held in Paris on January 18, 2007, to French nationals who had been designated Righteous Gentiles by Jerusalem's Yad Vashem for saving Jews during World War II. Chirac would preside over the ceremony at the Pantheon building, the resting place of French national heroes. Some 2,740 French nationals were Righteous Gentiles, the third largest national contingent after Poland and the Netherlands.

French Jews of Tunisian origin held a special commemoration on December 10 to mark the 64th anniversary of the arrest of Tunisian Jewish leaders by the German S.S. in 1942, when the country was briefly occupied by the Nazis. Some 5,000 Jews were then interned and placed into forced labor, including the repair of airfields under fire. The Allied victory in Tunisia in May 1943 secured the release of all the Jews but a few, who had been transferred to Europe by plane and sent to concentration camps, the only known cases of such deportations by air.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Communal Affairs*

The governing board of the World Jewish Congress met in Paris on November 16. More than 100 Jewish leaders from 80 countries attended. Prime Minister de Villepin addressed the gathering, pledging that France would continue to fight against anti-Semitism and would reinforce its ties

with Israel. Other speakers included Dr. Dalil Boubakeur, president of the Council of French Muslims, and Monsignor André Vingt-Trois, archbishop of Paris. WJC president Edgar Bronfman hailed the presence of these religious leaders and called for a world alliance of religions. Bronfman and others denounced Iranian statements calling for Israel's destruction. WJC leaders were received during their visit by President Chirac.

A group of Jewish female intellectuals successfully challenged, before the nation's courts, one of French Jewry's last all-male bastions, getting the judicial system to declare illegal the exclusion of women from the board of the Jewish Consistory—which managed the religious affairs of the community—in the province of Alsace. When the Consistory system was established by Emperor Napoléon I in the early nineteenth century, only men were allowed to run for election. When religion and state were separated in France in 1905, Alsace was under German rule, and the separation requirement was not applied when it reverted to French control in 1918.

In October 2006, a group of women professors and physicians filed suit to force the Consistory to change its rule banning women, saying that it violated the laws of France and the European Union. The local rabbinate, however, resisted. After the women won their case, a number of Orthodox men resigned from the board, and, after a particularly tense board meeting, Chief Rabbi René Guttman had to be rushed to the hospital. New elections were held in December, and a woman, Sandrine Buchinger, was elected from the city of Mulhouse, winning more votes than any of the men who were competing.

President Chirac presided over a major commemoration on July 12 to mark the 100th anniversary of the rehabilitation of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. It took place on the same spot, on the grounds of L'École Militaire, the French War College, where Dreyfus had been ceremonially stripped of his rank in 1894 while anti-Semites outside shouted for his death. Descendants of Dreyfus and leaders of the French Jewish community were guests at the military ceremony, which received massive media coverage. In his speech Chirac said that the lesson of this episode was that “the rejection of racism and of anti-Semitism, the defense of human rights, and the absolute need to place justice above all are values which are now part of our heritage.”

The organized Jewish community gave full support to Robert Redeker, a philosophy professor forced to go underground under police protection after receiving credible death threats in September. Redeker, who taught

near Toulouse until forced to suspend his activities, had written an article in the French daily *Le Figaro* on September 19 titled, "What Must the Free World Do in the Face of Muslim Intimidations?" It appeared in the wake of the international controversy earlier in the year over cartoons of Mohammed that led to violent demonstrations in some Muslim countries and a number of deaths (see below, pp. 433–35).

Redeker compared Islam to communism in its heyday, in the manner in which intellectuals feared to criticize it. He noted that passages from the Koran showed Mohammed to have been a "pitiless warlord, looter, killer of Jews, and polygamist," and charged that Muslim holy texts glorified violence and hate. The "death sentences" against Redeker immediately appeared on Islamic Web sites in several languages, containing his photo, home address, and maps showing how to reach his home. CRIF called on the authorities to offer full protection to Redeker and to allow him to teach again, and its president, Roger Cukierman, was onstage when Redeker appeared, with police protection, at a public rally for him in Toulouse, in November.

The remains of Paulina and Hans Herzl, children of Theodor Herzl, founder of the modern Zionist movement, were disinterred from the Jewish cemetery of Bordeaux on September 19, and flown to Israel where they were reburied near their father's on Jerusalem's Mount Herzl the following day. Ceremonies were held at both cemeteries, in the presence of French Jewish leaders and Israeli diplomats. Paulina, who suffered from mental disorders, died in 1930, and Hans committed suicide over her grave the next day. A third child, a younger daughter named Trude, was killed in a Nazi concentration camp in Czechoslovakia and her body was never found.

The French Jewish cable television station TFJ went out of business in November. After an earlier bankruptcy in 2003, it had resumed broadcasting in March 2006 with 16 employees, only to fail once again. Lack of sufficient advertising revenue was blamed in both cases.

### *Immigration to Israel*

Of the 19,624 people worldwide who immigrated to Israel in 2006, approximately 2,900 came from France. Slightly down from the 2005 figure of 3,005, it was still the second largest annual French aliyah in 34 years. The numbers were even more impressive in light of the fact that total aliyah from all countries dropped by 9 percent from 2005, and was the lowest since 1988.

Despite the ongoing Lebanese conflict, the Jewish Agency maintained a scheduled mass arrival of French Jewish immigrants on July 25, when 650 people arrived at Ben Gurion Airport aboard special flights from Paris and Nice. They were personally greeted by Prime Minister Olmert who, referring to bombardments from Lebanon, said that Israel's enemies "may have weapons which can hurt us, but our secret and powerful weapon is the Jewish people who love the State of Israel, who come to live here and to defend it. Our enemies do not understand the special link that ties together Jews around the world wherever they are."

### Culture

Many original publications of Jewish interest appeared in France during 2006.

Among the significant books of fiction were Alain Suiéd's *L'Eveillée* (The Awakened One); Gerald Tenenbaum *Le Geste* (The Gesture); Edeet Ravel's *Trois Mille Amants* (3,000 Lovers); Revisionist Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky's *Les Cinq* (The Five), a French translation from the Russian original, published in Paris in 1934 as a serial in a local Russian-language journal; Nathalie Azoulai's *Les Manifestations* (The Demonstrations); Dominique Laury's *Un Juif par Hasard* (A Jew by Chance); Michael Sabban's *Kotel California*; Gilles Rozier's *La Promesse d'Oslo* (The Oslo Promise); Maurice Attia's *Alger la Noire* (Algiers the Black); Donia Fervante's *Desarrois* (Helplessness); Richard Malka and Paul Gillon's *L'Ordre de Cicéron* (The Order of Cicero); Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienveillantes* (The Kindly Ones), written in French by an American author; and Marc Weitzmann's *Fraternité* (Fraternity).

Books on ideas and current affairs included Alain Finkielkraut and Benny Lévy's *Le Livre et les livres* (The Book and Books); Marie Balmory's *Le Moine et le Psychanalyste* (The Monk and the Psychoanalyst); Henri Meschonnic's *La Pensée et le poème* (Thought and the Poem); Raphael Draï's *L'Etat Purgatoire* (The Purgatory State); Jacqueline Mesnil Amar and André Amar's *Parcours d'écriture* (A Journey of Writing); David Saada's *Le Pouvoir de Benir* (The Power to Bless); Rabbi Daniel Farhi's *Profession—Rabbin* (Profession—Rabbi); Shmuel Trigano's *L'Avenir des Juifs de France* (The Future of France's Jews); Liliana Messika and Fabien Ghez's *La Paix Impossible?* (The Impossible Peace?); André Glucksmann's *Une Rage d'Enfant* (A Child's Anger); Elisabeth de Fontenay's *Une Toute Autre Histoire* (A Completely Different History); Catherine Chalier's *La Lettre et L'Esprit* (The Letter and the Spirit);

Frédéric Encel's *Geopolitique du Sionisme* (Geopolitics of Zionism); and Rony Brauman and Alain Finkielkraut's *La Discorde* (The Discord).

Some historical works were Brigitte Sion's *Max Ehrlich: Le Théâtre contre la barbarie* (Max Ehrlich: Theater against Barbarism); Gérard Silvain and Joël Kotek's *La Carte Postale Anti-Sémite depuis l'Affaire Dreyfus jusqu'à la Shoah* (Anti-Semitic Postcards from the Dreyfus Affair to the Shoah); Clémence Bouloque and Nicole Sarfaty's *Juives d'Afrique du Nord: Cartes Postales* (North African Jewish Postcards); Pierre Birnbaum's *Prier pour l'Etat: Les Juifs, L'Alliance Royale et la Démocratie* (Praying for the State: Jews, the Royal Alliance, and Democracy); Jo Amiel's *Et si... Un Rêve Imaginé* (And If... An Imagined Dream); Henri Minczeles's *Une Histoire des Juifs de Pologne* (A History of Polish Jewry); Olivier Todd's *Carte d'Identités* (Card of Identities); Albert Lirtzmann's *Bogopol*; Betty Rojzman's *Les début du Bné Akiva en Europe* (The Beginnings of Bnei Akiva in Europe); Gerard Desporte's *Les Dessais* (The Dispossessed); and Samuel Blumenfeld's *L'Homme qui Voulait Etre Prince—Les Vies Imaginaires de Michal Waszynski* (The Man Who Wanted to Be a Prince—The Imaginary Lives of Michal Waszynski,

On the subject of Israel there were three works about former prime minister Ariel Sharon: Freddy Eytan's *Sharon, le Bras de Fer* (Sharon, the Iron Arm); Daniel Haik's *Sharon, Un Destin Inachevé* (Sharon, An Unfinished Destiny); and Michel Gurfinkiel's *Le Testament d'Ariel Sharon* (Ariel Sharon's Will), as well as Pierre Razoux's *Tsahal, Nouvelle Histoire de l'Armée Israélienne* (Tsahal, a New History of the Israeli Army).

Holocaust-related books included Laurent Joly's *Vichy Dans La Solution Finale* (Vichy in the Final Solution); Patrick Rotman's *Les Survivants* (The Survivors); Diane Afumado's *Exil Impossible—L'Errance des Juifs du Paquebot St.-Louis* (Impossible Exile—The Wanderings of the Jews of the Passenger Liner St. Louis); Imré Kovac's *Le Vengeur—À la Poursuite des Criminels Nazis* (The Avenger—Hunting the Nazi Criminals); Monique Novodorski-Deniau's *Pithiviers-Auschwitz, 17 juillet 1942* (From Pithiviers to Auschwitz, July 17, 1942); Joseph Minc's *L'Extraordinaire Histoire de ma Vie Ordinaire* (The Extraordinary Story of My Ordinary Life); Laure Adler's *Dans les Pas de Hannah Arendt* (In the Footsteps of Hannah Arendt); Rika Zarai's *L'Espérance a toujours raison* (Hope Is Always Right); and Frédéric Gasquet's *La Lettre de Mon Père* (My Father's Letter).

There were a number of films of Jewish interest. Christophe Malavoy's *Zone Libre* (Free Zone), adapted from a play by Jean-Claude Grumberg, was about the trials and tribulations of a family of Polish Jewish origin

hidden in a French farmhouse during the Nazi occupation. Roschdy Zem's *Mauvaise Foi* (Bad Faith) concerned the multiple misunderstandings that can arise when a French Muslim man and an Ashkenazi Frenchwoman, neither of whom are religious, try to inform their respective families of their nuptial intentions. The film was based on the French-Arab director's real-life marriage. Zem, of Moroccan origin, also played an Israeli Jewish father who adopts an Ethiopian Jewish orphan in the film hit *Va, Vis et Deviens* (Live and Become). Élie Chouraqui's *O Jerusalem* was based on the best-selling book of the same name by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins; Chantal Akerman's *La-Bus* (Over There) was an impressionistic documentary about the director's recent stay in Israel; Lisa Azuelos's *Comme T'y Es Belle* (How Beautiful You Are) satirized "nouveau riche" Sephardi Jewish women in France; and Joseph Morder's *El Cantor* (The Cantor) focused on a dysfunctional Jewish family.

### Deaths

Author and songwriter Jacques Lanzmann died on June 21, aged 79. The son of Polish-Jewish immigrants and the brother of philosopher and film director Claude Lanzmann (*Shoah*), he traveled around the world after World War II, during which he had fought in the *maquis* underground against Nazis and their French collaborators, supporting himself as a welder, cleaner, house painter, and miner (in Chile), before turning to writing. Among his best known works were *Le Rat d'Amérique* (The Rat from America), *Cuir Russe* (Russian Leather), and *Viva Castro*. He wrote some 150 songs for well known French singers.

Social worker and wartime rescuer of Jewish children Vivette Samuel died on July 16, aged 87. The daughter of Nahum Herman, director of the French branch of the Karen Hayesod, who was killed in a Nazi concentration camp, Vivette was the widow of Julien Samuel, the first post-war head of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié—the welfare and educational arm of the organized French Jewish community—and creator of the respected Jewish monthly *L'Arche*. A social worker for Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), a Jewish welfare organization, in Vichy France from 1940 to 1942, she organized the escape from internment camps to Switzerland of about 400 Jewish children. She continued her work underground after the Nazis occupied southern France, and later wrote a book, *Sauver les Enfants* (To Save the Children), recounting her experiences. After the war, she was involved in rehabilitating concentration camp survivors,

and later returned to OSE, serving as director general from 1979 through 1985.

Film director Gerard Oury (born Max-Gérard Tannebaum), best known for his blockbuster comedy *The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob*, died on July 20 at the age of 87. A theater and film actor who began his career before World War II, Oury started directing in 1959. The 19 films he directed were seen by an estimated 50 million people, plus another 200 million who saw them on television.

Jewish community activist Kurt Niedermaier died on September 11, aged 83. Born in Germany, he fled to France with his family shortly before World War II, and during the Nazi occupation was hidden together with other youths his age on a farm at Moissac, in central France, run by the UEJF, the French Jewish students' organization. Completing his studies after the war, he was employed by Jewish think tanks and educational organizations, helping create the Israel and Middle East Documentation Center and dealing with the European Parliament.

Writer André Schwarz-Bart, aged 78, died on September 30 on the French West Indian island of Guadeloupe. He was best known for the world-acclaimed *The Last of the Just*, a novel about a Jewish family from the Middle Ages until Auschwitz. Published in 1959, it won the Prix Goncourt, France's top literary award, the same year, and the Jerusalem Prize in 1967. Born in Metz, France, of Polish Jewish immigrant parents, he was deeply marked by the experience of World War II, when he fought for the French Resistance. Both of his parents and two brothers were murdered in Nazi death camps. He also wrote *Pork and Green Bananas* together with his Guadeloupe-born wife Simone, with whom he also wrote the seven-volume encyclopedia *In Praise of Black Women*.

Retired boxer Alphonse Halimi died on November 12, aged 74. The Algerian-born Halimi was world bantamweight champion from 1957 to 1959, and became European champion in 1962 when he won a match in Tel Aviv, the first professional fight ever held in Israel. Halimi always fought with a large Star of David on his shorts.