

# Central and Eastern Europe

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## Germany

### *National Affairs*

**G**ERMANY'S GOVERNMENT, a "grand coalition" of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD), entered its first full year in 2006, headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU). A poll taken in mid-February gave high ratings to Merkel and her foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD). But major domestic challenges loomed: stimulating the economy, revamping the health-care system, and educational reform.

In mid-January, Merkel, committed to mending the damaged U.S.-German relationship, made her inaugural visit as chancellor to Washington, where she discussed a number of controversial issues with American officials: multilateralism, the perceived American preemptive military approach to international conflicts, the Middle East, global warming, and human rights.

While in the U.S., Merkel criticized the detention center at Guantánamo Bay. In doing so she was giving voice to German public opinion about America's war-related policies. Germans reacted sharply to reports that their country might have secretly assisted the U.S. during the Iraq war—even though former chancellor Gerhard Schröder had pledged not to do so—and that it might even have given clandestine help in setting up and running a network of secret prisons in Eastern Europe for terrorism suspects under the so-called "extraordinary rendition program."

As a case in point, a U.S. Federal District Court judge, in May, dismissed a lawsuit by Khaled al-Masri, a German citizen who had been released in 2004 after a year of imprisonment. The judge said that a public trial might compromise national security. At the same time, he ruled that if Masri's allegations of wrongful imprisonment were true he should receive compensation. In June, the BND (Germany's intelligence agency)

admitted knowing of al-Masri's seizure much earlier than first acknowledged, and the American Civil Liberties Union said it would appeal the dismissal of his suit.

Germany's antiterror efforts produced several arrests and convictions. In January, Lokman Amin Mohammed became the first person convicted under a new law clamping down on foreign terrorist groups. He received a seven-year prison sentence for assisting Ansar al-Islam, a group allegedly linked to Al Qaeda. In November, it was revealed that terrorists had planned an attack on an El Al passenger jet in Frankfurt. Six suspects were detained and five of them released pending the submission of preliminary findings. Reportedly, one person with access to secure areas of Frankfurt's airport had agreed to smuggle a bag with explosives onto an Israeli airliner, but the plotters wrangled over how much to pay for the job. As some of the post-9/11 antiterror statutes were due to expire in 2007, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble pushed for passage of legislation that would extend them.

Germany and the U.S. continued to share security objectives. Germany maintained the largest contingent under the UN's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan/Uzbekistan—about 3,000 soldiers—and the German armed forces continued to contribute to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the European Union Force (EUFOR). Though steadfastly opposed to the war in Iraq, Germany renewed its commitment to the training of Iraqi policemen through the end of 2006. However the program was held up when Iraq's government failed to send a new class of recruits.

In September, the Berlin Opera decided not to stage Mozart's *Idomeneo* after receiving a warning from the German equivalent of the FBI that the performance—which included the beheadings of Jesus, Buddha, and Muhammed, and the handing out of the heads to the audience—might draw violent reactions. The program, planned three years earlier, was reinstated after widespread protests, including from Chancellor Merkel.

Relations with Iran remained a problem throughout the year. The Islamic Republic continuously goaded Western leaders, insisting that its nuclear ambitions were purely peaceful, while at the same time issuing threatening statements against Israel. Germany, France, and Great Britain had tried in vain since October 2003 to convince Iran to drop its plans to enrich nuclear fuel. In 2006, Germany—Iran's largest economic partner, with some \$4 billion in trade the previous year—played a leading role in condemning the anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli rhetoric of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

At the Munich Security Conference in February 2006, Merkel compared the West's hesitancy regarding Iran to mistakes made during the Nazi rise to power. She said that "concerns and fears over Iran's nuclear program are legitimate," and refused to rule out military action. Merkel said Iran could avoid potential UN sanctions by accepting enriched uranium from Russia instead of developing its own highly sensitive nuclear technology. And she said that "a president who denies the existence of Israel and the Holocaust cannot expect to receive any tolerance from Germany." Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs responded that the threat of UN sanctions would not deter Iran's nuclear program, but did not react to the criticism regarding Israel. According to *Die Welt* newspaper, one-third of Germans said they would back military action against Iran, and four-fifths agreed that Israel was endangered by Iran's nuclear program.

In May, Ahmadinedjad insisted that Holocaust denial was a valid position and should therefore be given a platform. At the same time, he told the German weekly *Der Spiegel* that if Jews were wronged by Europe, Palestinians should not have to pay. "If the Holocaust occurred," he said, "then the Jews have to go back to where they came from." These remarks followed the announcement that the Iranian leader, a big soccer fan, would not come to Germany for the World Cup games as previously expected, and instead would be represented at the opening ceremonies in Munich by Vice President Mohammed Aliabadi. Earlier, critics had urged that Ahmadinedjad not be allowed to enter Germany since he had committed a crime under German law, Holocaust denial.

Former foreign minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party) visited Iran in August as the guest of a Tehran think tank, but rejected calls to renew his political involvement in brokering Middle East peace. Fischer now served as professor of international economic policy at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

In December, Chancellor Merkel condemned the Iranian president's "Holocaust conference" to which he invited notorious Holocaust deniers. She said it demonstrated clearly the kinds of threats that Israel faced.

#### THE WORLD CUP

Germany hosted soccer's World Cup in 2006. The monthlong *Weltmeisterschaft*, which began June 9, was deemed a great public-relations success for the country. Germany proved to three million visitors that it

not only could host such a major event, but also that the supposedly dour Germans could exude friendliness to strangers. The World Cup motto, "A Time to Make Friends," was meant to boost Germany's public image, according to Franz Beckenbauer, president of the organizing committee.

Interior Minister Schäuble set up a National Cooperation and Information Center to take care of security, and the 32 participating nations supplied some 500 liaison officers to help identify and apprehend foreign troublemakers. The European soccer antiracism network FARE joined with FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) and the German organizing committee to launch a multicultural sports campaign and to set up a multilingual 24-hour hotline for reporting racist incidents during the World Cup.

The games also provided a chance to teach the "Jewish" aspect of soccer history. There were no less than three exhibits on the topic— at the Jewish museums of Frankfurt and Fürth, and at the Centrum Judaicum in Berlin. There was also a conference entitled "Hosted by the Krauts— Updating History in the Soccer Stadium," which documented the exclusion of Jewish athletes from German soccer clubs after 1933 and addressed the problems of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in the postwar culture of soccer fans. It was organized jointly by ASF (Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace), the House of the Wannsee Conference, and the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

Eruptions of extremist activity, in fact, dimmed some of the luster of the World Cup. The German media was full of talk about the bigoted behavior of some soccer fans, and printed dire warnings to visitors to avoid parts of the former East Germany, dubbed "foreigner-free," that were considered hostile to outsiders. In the months leading up to the tournament, right-wing extremists launched racist campaigns against several leading black soccer players. Neo-Nazis came out in force to welcome the Iranian team to Leipzig on June 21, demonstrating their solidarity with the Holocaust-denying President Ahmadinejad.

One incident at the games revealed just how deeply politics could penetrate sports. The government of Ghana apologized to the Arab League after one of its athletes, John Pentsil, waved an Israeli flag to celebrate his team's goals against the Czech Republic in Cologne. When not playing for his national squad, Pentsil was a member of Hapoel Tel Aviv, and two of his Ghananian teammates played for other Israeli soccer teams.

While the World Cup was in progress, two events were held to promote intergroup harmony. About 150 non-Jewish sports fans from Great Britain, Germany, and Poland visited the Dachau memorial outside Mu-

nich on June 23, in a program organized by Maccabi of Great Britain and the antiracism initiative of the organization LondonEnglandfans. And in Berlin, Cantor Avital Gerstetter organized an interfaith soccer tournament for local Turkish-Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and nonreligious amateur athletes; shirts were provided by Adidas and Nike. The Muslims won, beating the Jewish team. Gerstetter applauded the positive impact of the World Cup games on intergroup relations in the country. She said: "When I see Muslim kids running around in Berlin shouting, 'Go, Germany!' and waving the flag, I think it's great that they really feel a part of this society. And that's the way we Jews feel, too—we are at home in Germany."

In September, the German Soccer Association adopted strengthened FIFA regulations providing tough sanctions against clubs whose fans demonstrated xenophobic and anti-Semitic behavior. Also, its referees' committee recommended issuing warnings on the loudspeaker system, or halting and even canceling games, in the event of racist incidents. In October, a task force against xenophobia, racism, and violence in German stadiums was created.

#### GERMANY AND ISLAM

Concerned about the growing presence of unacculturated Muslims, the State of Baden-Württemberg instituted a "patriotism test" for Muslims already in Germany who applied for citizenship. It included questions about whether a man should beat his wife or marry more than one woman; how one might react to learning that a son was homosexual or that a daughter/sister had been sexually assaulted; and whether the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. should be considered terrorists or freedom fighters.

The Central Council of Muslims in Germany threatened a lawsuit, saying that the only legitimate question to ask of an applicant for citizenship was whether he or she respected the constitution. Some members of the Turkish-Muslim community, however, pointed out that the questionnaire did raise legitimate questions about the treatment of women in some Muslim families. The Jewish community joined civil rights groups in opposition to the test.

Jewish and Muslim leaders also found themselves on the same side in April, when Ursula von der Leyen, the federal family-affairs minister, proposed working with Christian churches to develop guidelines on raising children. Stephan Kramer, secretary general of the Central Council

of Jews in Germany (CCJG), said that excluding non-Christian faiths from the project was "quite painful." Von der Leyen said she planned to include other religious groups later, and added that, in her view, Germany's culture was based on "Christian values."

In September, Chancellor Merkel initiated a dialogue with Muslim religious and secular leaders to discuss issues of importance to the community. The plan was to hold two high-level meetings annually over the course of about three years. Meanwhile, Lale Akgün, parliamentary speaker on Islamic affairs for the SPD, said it was high time the government placed Islam on a legal par with other religious groups in the country. Germany had no formal relationship with any one Muslim body. Unlike the Christian churches and the Jewish community, there was no umbrella organization representing all shades of Islam.

### *Israel and the Middle East*

Chancellor Merkel made her first official trip to Israel in January. An earlier plan to travel in December 2005 was postponed after Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon fell gravely ill. The January trip was also the first visit by an international leader to the Palestinian Territories since the Hamas election victory. But Merkel insisted she would only meet with PA president Mahmoud Abbas, not with Hamas leaders, and made it clear there would be no German financial support for a Hamas-led Palestinian government.

Two days before the trip, Foreign Minister Steinmeier called on the new Palestinian government to renounce violence and recognize Israel. He told *Der Spiegel* magazine that he believed the Palestinian people had voted for Hamas because they wanted social reforms, not because they opposed peace. Israel's ambassador to Germany, Shimon Stein, as well as German Jewish leaders asked Merkel to press Abbas to keep his promise to disarm Palestinian militants.

Steinmeier met in February with Ehud Olmert, then Israel's acting prime minister, and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and reiterated that "there can be no cooperation with a terrorist organization, even if it forms a government." Responding to Olmert's victory in Israel's March elections, Merkel sent her congratulations and said Germany would work with the new government to help bring peace to the region.

In May, Merkel reiterated her support for Israel in a speech at the American Jewish Committee's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. At the gala event, which marked the AJC centennial, Merkel—the first Ger-

man chancellor ever to address the group's annual meeting—also said that Iran must not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. She once again demanded that the new Palestinian government “reject violence and acknowledge without ambiguity Israel's right to exist,” noting that the decision “lies with Hamas.” While in Washington, Merkel met with President Bush. AJC also honored former foreign minister Joschka Fischer at its meeting for his activities on behalf of peace.

In late June, Germany demanded that the Palestinians release the Israeli soldier they had taken hostage on June 25. Also, Foreign Minister Steinmeier spoke with his Israeli counterpart, Livni, reportedly urging Israel to show restraint so as not to exacerbate tensions. Israel's incursion into Lebanon in July, after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers and killed eight, drew strong negative reactions in Germany. Despite attempts by some scholars and politicians to explain the context of Israel's reaction, popular sentiment was strongly on the other side.

On July 21, some 2,700 people gathered in Berlin to protest Israeli actions. The protestors—including many Arabs—pointedly distanced themselves from anti-Semites and neo-Nazis. Heike Haensel, an MP for the Party for Democratic Socialism (the reconstituted communists), called for an immediate stop to Israeli military actions and asked the German government to press for a truce. Other smaller demonstrations were held in Bremen, Düsseldorf, and Frankfurt on July 22. In Verden, in Lower Saxony, a protest by some 200 far-rightists led to the arrest of Udo Voigt, head of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of Germany, on charges of incitement. Voigt allegedly chanted, “Israel: International Headquarters of Genocide.”

Meanwhile, a nonpartisan pro-Israel coalition organized a counter-demonstration on July 28 in Berlin. Its motto was “For Israel—and Its Right to Self-Defense.” Some observers expressed disappointment that only about 1,000 people showed up. Speaking at the event, Gideon Joffe, president of the Berlin Jewish community, said that Jews joined with Muslims and Christians in abhorring the suffering of innocent people, and called on Muslims to condemn the terrorist acts of Hezbollah.

Several days later, Berlin authorities banned the display of images of Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Nasrallah. Berlin's senator of the interior, Ehrhart Körting, said the ban was based on Nasrallah's goal of destroying Israel. He denied that it infringed on freedom of speech or the right to assemble, since promoting Hezbollah amounted to disturbing the peace. Actual Hezbollah membership in Germany was quite small: ac-

According to official reports in 2005, there were about 160 members in Berlin and about 900 nationwide.

On August 10, 70 Jewish and Muslim artists and intellectuals issued an appeal for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and for cooperation between their faiths. It appeared in the German daily newspapers *Die Zeit* and *Berlin Tagezeitung*. Among the signatories were Susan Nieman, head of the Berlin-based Einstein Forum, and Navid Kermani, a German expert on Islam.

Also in August, members of Germany's opposition parties—the Greens and the Free Democrats—called for a suspension of arms deliveries to Israel until the conflict was over. Beginning in 1964, former West Germany had delivered patrol boats and missile-defense systems to Israel, and Israel had used German Patriot antimissile systems to defend itself against Saddam Hussein's scud attacks. Most German assistance reportedly came in the form of weapons components and technical support. Now, however, Winfried Nachtwei, the Greens' defense expert, argued that Germany was legally barred from exporting weapons to crisis areas. The Jewish community was taken aback when Rolf Verleger, a CCJG board member, added his voice to the criticism of Israel. The CCJG quickly distanced itself from Verleger, saying his comments did not represent the Jewish community.

Meanwhile, debate began over whether German troops should be included in any potential peacekeeping force in the region. The once-theoretical question of whether Germans in uniforms should help keep Jews and Arabs apart took on a new twist after Olmert directly asked for German troops to participate. Merkel at first hesitated. Foreign Minister Steinmeier called Olmert's request "a remarkable sign of trust," but said no hasty decision would be made. Some worried that Germany would be seen as taking sides in the conflict if it joined a peacekeeping force, and others argued that Germany's military was spread thin through its peacekeeping deployments in Kosovo, Congo, and Afghanistan. Left Party parliamentarian and former communist party leader Gregor Gysi, who was Jewish, said Germany's responsibility for the genocide of European Jewry ruled out any participation.

Stephan Kramer, the CCJG secretary general, said Holocaust survivors in Israel might react negatively to the presence of German troops in the area, but Michel Friedman, head of Keren Hayesod in Germany and a former vice president of the CCJG, said that if Germany sent soldiers it would "show the true colors of its support for Israel, and take re-

sponsibility." Solomon Korn, the current CCJG vice president, said he could imagine "coming to a compromise: German soldiers yes, but not directly on the front." On August 16, the government announced it had agreed, in principle, to contribute to a 15,000-member UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

Germany also provided two million euros in aid for civilians in southern Lebanon affected by the fighting. In September, Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul (SDP) visited Lebanon and criticized Israel for bombing civilian targets with cluster bombs. Salomon Korn accused Wieczorek-Zeul of "one-sidedness." She responded that she fully supported Israel's right to exist. Chancellor Merkel said Wieczorek-Zeul's statements were her own personal opinion.

In other Israel-related news, in March, a German broadcaster pulled a documentary on Islamist violence against Christians in Bethlehem, fearing for the safety of his Christian informants there. The film, *Terror against Christians*, by German-Israeli filmmaker Uri Schneider, was to air March 12 on ARD, a Südwestrundfunk affiliate. It was replaced by a documentary about teen mothers. An edited version was shown months later.

A small pro-Israel demonstration was held in October to protest the annual anti-Israel Al Quds Day march by extremist Muslims, which had been established in 1979 by Iran's Islamic revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. Some 250 people from the Berlin Association against International Al Quds Day used the occasion to respond to the anti-Israel comments of Iranian president Ahmadinejad. The anti-Israel demonstration itself attracted only about 300 people this year.

In December, Ehud Olmert made his first official visit as prime minister to Germany. On the agenda in talks between Olmert and Merkel were Iran's nuclear ambitions, the situation in Lebanon, and initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Olmert also visited a Holocaust memorial in Grunewald, the site from which tens of thousands of Berlin Jews were deported to death camps.

### *Anti-Semitism and Extremism*

In 2006, the number of extremist right-wing crimes reported to the police reached a new record, surging from 15,914 in 2005 (the previous high) to at least 18,000, a rise of 14 percent. The number of crimes committed by left-wing extremists went up by 9 percent, to about 5,300. The Interior Ministry released data showing 452 violent anti-Semitic crimes

during the first eight months of 2006, up from 363 in the same period the previous year.

According to Germany's domestic intelligence agency, about 10,000 of the roughly 40,000 members of neo-Nazi groups were potentially violent. Most racially motivated incidents took place in former East Germany, a stronghold of the small but vociferous neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD). Interior Minister Schäuble said that right-wing skinhead music was an important recruitment tool, and announced plans to expand educational efforts to combat the problem.

A survey of 5,000 Germans carried out in November suggested that xenophobia was particularly high in the eastern part of the country, while virulent anti-Semitism was more prevalent in the west. Furthermore, according to the University of Leipzig-Friedrich Ebert Foundation study, while only 9 percent of the national sample was decidedly xenophobic and/or anti-Semitic, about half of those questioned endorsed such thinking to some extent. Researchers Elmar Brähler and Oliver Decker said it was no longer accurate to call the problem only a "fringe" phenomenon. Political scientist Klaus Schröder challenged the findings, saying there was no substantial proof that right-wing extremism had gained a foothold within German society.

Another area of research was the connection between education and anti-Semitism. This was a key theme of the fifth annual study by Wilhelm Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände* (German Situation), put out by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Conflict and Violence Research of the University of Bielefeld. It suggested that while more education generally correlated with reduced prejudice, this did not hold true for Muslims. According to Heitmeyer, Muslim immigrants, not accepted by the mainstream society, tended to defend their faith "at all cost," as their only positive asset. "This creates barriers and hampers self-critical development. We, the majority society, play a significant role in this process," he wrote.

Several anti-Semitic incidents during the year drew particular attention. Perhaps the most shocking was the burning of a copy of Anne Frank's diary by neo-Nazis at a summer solstice festival in the former East German town of Pretzien. The Anne Frank Center in Berlin and local religious and political groups organized emergency programs in response. Thomas Heppener, director of the center, filed suit against three of the alleged perpetrators, and they were arrested. At a town hall meeting following the incident, 1,000 residents of Pretzien showed up to discuss the

incident and its repercussions. In another case, teenagers in the town of Parey in the former East German state of Saxony-Anhalt forced a schoolmate to wear a sign bearing the slogan, "I am the biggest pig of all because I hang around with Jews." Police identified three suspects. And in late September, a Maccabi Jewish soccer team left the field after fans of the opposing German team, Altglienicke, threatened them.

The surge in right-wing crimes raised concerns about Germany's public image on the eve of the World Cup Games in June and July (see above). Uwe-Karsten Heye, who had been a spokesperson for former chancellor Gerhard Schröder and later served as consul general in New York, caused an uproar by declaring that xenophobic extremists had made certain areas of Germany de facto off-limits for foreign visitors.

CCJG president Charlotte Knobloch compared the atmosphere in Germany to the situation in 1933, when the National Socialists came to power. But Stephan Kramer, the CCJG general secretary, said that evoking the past in this way was not helpful, as today's Germans were not guilty for the crimes of the past, and that emphasis should be given to education. During meetings with German officials in Berlin, Abraham Foxman, national director of the New York-based Anti-Defamation League, called the incidents and statistics "a wakeup call." The Jewish community had "a right to be concerned," he went on, "but I am not sure it is productive to compare it to the 1930s."

More alarm bells rang in September, when the NPD made gains in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania elections. Voters in this former East German state gave the extreme-right party 7.3 percent, more than the 5 percent necessary to win a seat in the state parliament. This was the fourth state in reunified Germany to have such parties represented, joining Lower Saxony in the west, and Saxony and Brandenburg in the east.

Many observers claimed that high unemployment played a role in turning voters to the right: Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania had a jobless rate of 18.2 percent. But shrewd strategy also paid off for the NPD. Gideon Botsch, an expert on right-wing extremism, told Deutsche Welle, Germany's international broadcaster, that the NPD had campaigned vigorously across the state and dressed itself up to look respectable. Members of the party were "in parents' associations in schools and kindergartens, or in sports clubs, and use their position there to relay their ideas to the people," said Botsch. The NPD claimed to have invested \$508,000 in the campaign.

This state election had national repercussions. Responding to the result, the federal government announced it would raise the budget for

fighting right-wing extremism by \$6.3 million. Renewed attention was directed at remaining gaps between how eastern and western Germans embraced democracy. According to the Federal Statistics Office, only 38 percent of eastern Germans said democracy was the best form of government for the country, whereas in western Germany 71 percent approved democracy. And the question of whether the NPD should be banned came up again. A previous attempt to outlaw the party had failed in March 2003 due to a legal loophole (see AJYB 2004, p. 373).

In February, an NPD leader, Thorstein Heise, was convicted of violating laws prohibiting the distribution of anti-Semitic material. He was said to have ordered the production of 6,000 CDs containing "seditious" lyrics, with the intention of selling them in Germany. Heise was ordered to perform 200 hours of community service and to pay a fine of 15,000 euros. In October, the NPD organized a demonstration in Berlin of some 750 extremists in support of Michael Regener, the jailed lead singer of a skinhead musical group. He had been imprisoned in 2003 after judges found that his rock band, "Landser" (Foot Soldiers), was guilty of spreading hate against Jews and foreigners.

There was much debate in Germany over the Danish cartoons depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammed (see above, pp. 433–35). In February, as Jews and non-Jews in Germany reacted with dismay to violent Muslim protests worldwide, Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, warned against overreaction on all sides. He said it would make sense "to show more sensitivity to religious sensibilities of Muslim communities" so as to avoid "a clash of cultures." In May, the CCJG and the Turkish Islamic Union held a groundbreaking public discussion in Berlin on "Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and Xenophobia." The Israeli and Turkish embassies supported the event.

In July it was announced that former chancellor Schröder would replace the late Johannes Rau, who had been president of Germany, as head of *Gesicht Zeigen!* (Show Your Face!), a group that fought xenophobia and anti-Semitism, cofounded in 2000 by Uwe-Karsten Heye and Paul Spiegel.

Berlin's Center for Research on Anti-Semitism held a three-day "Summer University against Anti-Semitism" in September. Topics included basic definitions and forms of anti-Semitism, its history in Europe, negative stereotypes of Jews in literature, and anti-Israel critique as a form of anti-Semitism.

In November, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe met in Berlin, as a follow-up to the OSCE's 2004 task force on anti-

Semitism. Experts complained that few of the 56 OSCE member states had complied with their 2004 commitments to monitor anti-Semitic crimes. At the same time, European Jewish organizations were reporting an increase in incidents.

Later that month, a conservative legislator apologized for statements insulting to Jews. Henry Nitzche, a CDU Bundestag representative from Saxony, had said in June that Germany needed more patriotism "to finally get out of this cult of guilt" so that the country "will never be run again by multicultural fags in Berlin." It took several months for these comments to surface publicly, and then the Green Party called for the CDU to eject Nitzche. The CCJG, for its part, accused Nitzche of using NPD vocabulary. In fact, the head of the NPD in Saxony had congratulated Nitzche for his statement. He invited Nitzche to become "the first member of the German Parliament to switch to the NPD," and sent him an application for party membership. Nitzche apologized on November 30, saying that "unfortunately, in hindsight, I have to declare that the words I chose were worse than ambiguous."

In December, Berlin was shaken by a report in *Spiegel Online* of increased anti-Semitism in the public schools. Most of the incidents allegedly involved either neo-Nazis or extremist Muslim pupils. The word "Jew" was increasingly used as a curse, the report said. Barbara Witting, director of the Jewish High School in Berlin, was quoted as saying that children had been transferring to her school to avoid discrimination in public schools.

### *Holocaust-Related Matters*

#### DENIAL

The trial of Ernst Zündel, 66, on charges of incitement to hatred and Holocaust denial recommenced in February, after being postponed in November 2005. Zündel had been deported back to Germany from Canada in 2005, after courts there declared his Internet hate site illegal. According to courtroom observers, sympathizers clapped when the accused appeared in the room. One of Zündel's own attorneys, Jürgen Rieger, had himself once been sentenced for inciting hatred.

In November, extreme right-winger Germar Rudolf denied the Holocaust in front of a court in Mannheim. Rudolf was on trial for incitement to hatred and publishing racist propaganda on the Internet. He had

been deported from the U.S. in 2005 after fleeing Germany to avoid a 14-month prison sentence for a 1995 conviction on charges of slander and incitement to hatred. A chemist, Rudolf had published an "expert opinion" in 1991 that the poison gas Zyklon B was never used in the Auschwitz death camp.

In December, a daylong conference on Holocaust denial was held in Berlin, coinciding with the meeting of Holocaust deniers and their sympathizers in Tehran, Iran. The Berlin event was organized by the Technical University of Berlin and the federal Department for Political Education. Speakers, including David Menashri of Israel, emphasized that Holocaust denial was a form of anti-Semitism, and that the Iranian president was using the theme, together with his threats against Israel, to gain international standing among Muslims and Arabs.

#### MEMORY

One year after it opened, Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe reported that an estimated 3.5 million people had visited the site, and its underground information center had 490,000 registered visitors. Fears of possible vandalism had proven unfounded, and those who came behaved respectfully, according to memorial officials.

In January, a new permanent exhibit opened at the House of the Wannsee Conference outside Berlin, the villa where 15 top Nazis met in 1942 to organize the "Final Solution." The new exhibit cost about \$730,000, funded by the federal government and an educational lottery. Among the items added to the display was a memo, found in a Latvian archive, from SD chief Reinhard Heydrich, written days after he chaired the Wannsee Conference, in which he referred to the "total solution to the Jewish question."

Also in January, an exhibit on Jewish children who hid in wartime Berlin opened at the Anne Frank Center in that city, featuring the stories of several survivors. It was produced jointly by the Center for Research on Anti-Semitism and the Memorial to German Resistance.

Two new Holocaust memorials were given the go-ahead in 2006, after years of debate. In January, the government announced approval of a memorial in central Berlin, near the Jewish memorial, dedicated to the tens of thousands of homosexuals persecuted and murdered under the Nazis. It was expected to cost about \$549,000, a sum to be funded by the federal government. The decision came three years after Parliament agreed to the idea in principle. The other new memorial, approved in May,

was for the hundreds of thousands of Sinti and Roma murdered by the Nazis. The German government and the Central Council of Sinti and Roma agreed on a design, which would cost the government \$2.5 million. Designed by artist Dani Karavan, it, too, was to be located near the large Holocaust memorial.

The Dresdner Bank held a public symposium in February on the results of historical research on its own World War II history. The event, "Dresdner Bank in the Third Reich," was held in the rooms of its foundation, after protests against the original plan to hold it at the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The symposium presented the results of an eight-year research project conducted by an independent commission of historians and led by Klaus-Dietmar Henke. It revealed the institution's close connections with the Nazi terror apparatus, and hence its share of responsibility for the Holocaust.

A rather bizarre episode in the history of Holocaust commemoration occurred in mid-March, when the Spanish-born artist Santiago Sierra abruptly canceled a planned installation that involved pumping poison auto exhaust into a former synagogue in Pulheim-Stommeln, near Cologne. It was meant as a memorial to the 750,000 Jews and 5,000 Sinti-Roma asphyxiated with motor-exhaust fumes in 1941 and 1942. Municipal authorities had ruled that only those wearing gas masks could enter, excluding those with beards or larger-than-average heads. Jewish leaders condemned the project from the start, and Sierra finally gave in. He, together with the city of Pulheim and the Cologne Jewish community, announced that they would abandon the exhibit and start from scratch, seeking "an appropriate and fitting remembrance and reminder of the past." Sierra explained that he "did not and does not wish to insult or hurt anyone."

In May, the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies in Potsdam announced it was raising funds for a "library of burned books," to contain some 10,000 works by authors whom the Nazis persecuted. Director Julius Schoeps said he wanted the library to send out small collections of such books to German high schools as a living memorial to the victims of Nazi censorship.

Also in May, Germany announced it would support opening the archive of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen for use by historians. Since the end of World War II it had been used almost solely to prove the compensation claims of survivors. But the archive could not open its doors until the 11 member countries on the ITS board—Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the UK, and the U.S.—agreed on regulations

to protect the privacy of individuals named in the documents. No such agreement was reached before year's end.

The federal government published, in May, a four-volume book naming all 150,000 German Jews known to have died in the Holocaust. The alphabetical listing updated a 1966 edition that did not include victims from former East Germany or areas of Poland that were part of Germany before World War II. The new edition, compiled by the Federal Archive, included information from documents uncovered after German unification in 1990. The government was already preparing a new work which would list all Jews who lived in Germany between 1933 and 1945.

Pope Benedict XVI visited the memorial at the Auschwitz death camp in May (see below, p. 495). While the German-born pope prayed at the site, he drew criticism for failing to mention Germany's responsibility for the Holocaust. Instead, he said the crimes were committed by a "band of criminals," and that the German people had been "used and abused" by the Nazi regime. In June, the Pope authorized the opening of all Vatican archives for the period 1922–39. Historians hoped the files might shed light on how Pope Pius XII reacted to the persecution of the Jews.

June was also the month that the German Federal Intelligence Services admitted it had located Adolf Eichmann—a key architect of the "Final Solution"—in Argentina in the 1950s, but failed to inform Israel. U.S. documents released on June 6 suggested that in 1958 the German agency informed the CIA, but not the Israeli intelligence services, of Eichmann's hiding place and false name. Historian Timothy Naftali said the German government at that time was concerned that Eichmann, if interrogated, would incriminate "rehabilitated" Nazis. The country's state secretary was then Hans Globke, an author of the Nazi Nuremberg Laws that legalized discrimination against Jews.

In July, Charlotte Knobloch, the CCJG president, recommended an overhaul of Holocaust education and teacher training in Germany, particularly in the former East Germany. Teachers groups denied any need for this, pointing out that such education was already mandatory. Teachers union president Josef Kraus said that "no other era of German history [is] studied as intensively in German schools."

Nobel Prize-winning author Günter Grass shocked the country in August, when he publicly admitted his membership in the elite Nazi Waffen-SS toward the end of World War II. The admission came as his new autobiography was about to be released. Ironically, Grass had frequently used his role as one of Germany's great modern writers to preach against society's ills, including its failure to confront the Nazi past.

Grass, 78, now admitted that when he was 17 he was drafted into the

Waffen-SS, where he briefly saw action during the Nazi retreat from the Russian front. Grass was wounded and taken prisoner by American troops. His original statement of membership in the SS, written in a teenage scrawl, had always been available for viewing at the Berlin Wehrmacht documentation center, but, the center's deputy director explained, no one came to look for it, not even Grass's official biographer. Charlotte Knobloch dismissed his confession as a publicity stunt. In the wake of the controversy, the publication date of his autobiography, *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* (Peeling Onions), was moved up from September to August 16. It was an immediate best-seller.

An exhibit opened in August on the postwar expulsions of ethnic Germans from areas liberated from Nazi rule. It was organized by the conservative German League of Expellees and mounted in the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin. Critics accused the organizers—who wanted to establish a center dedicated to studying and commemorating this history—of an undifferentiated comparison of the fate of Germans with the fate of victims of Nazi crimes.

The U.S., in September, deported 84-year-old Elfriede Lina Rinkel, a former guard at the Ravensbrück concentration camp, to Germany. A resident of San Francisco, the Leipzig native was found to have concealed her criminal past when coming to the U.S. in 1959.

Also in September, 21 watercolors and drawings attributed to Adolf Hitler were put up for sale through the British auction house Jefferys. The *Guardian* newspaper, which reprinted some of the images, said the media's interest in the sale was an example of "unthinking intoxication with fame and infamy." The works were produced from 1916 to 1918 and had been found in a Belgian attic 60 years later.

In October, the remains of more than 20 people, many of them children, were discovered in a mass grave in the city of Menden, in Sauerland. Experts suspected the dead were victims of the Nazis' so-called euthanasia program, in which an estimated 100,000 mentally or physically handicapped people were murdered between the fall of 1939 and the summer of 1941, when protests by German church leaders brought the program to an end, at least publicly. Soon after the discovery, the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden opened an exhibit about the euthanasia program. It was the work of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and this was believed to be the first time that institution had sent an exhibit abroad.

That same month, the Foundation for a German Holocaust Museum, a private body, proposed building a Holocaust museum in the former East

German city of Leipzig, which would memorialize Jewish and other victim groups such as Sinti and Roma, and deserters from the German army. The city administration said it was open to the idea, and negotiations began on the use of the empty former Russian pavilion on the Leipzig fairgrounds. German architect Meinhard von Gerkan was chosen to design the museum, which was still seeking financial backers.

A reunion took place in late October, attended by 46 people, at the former home for Jewish children in Blankenese, near Hamburg. The Warburg banking family had made the site available in 1945 for Jewish children, most of them orphans, and it was administered by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The event was organized by retired classics scholar Martin Schmidt, a non-Jew who had researched the history of Jews in Blankenese. A book about the home was translated in 2006 from Hebrew into German under the title *Kirschen auf der Elbe, Das Jüdische Kinderheim Blankenese* (Cherries on the Elbe, the Jewish Home for Children in Blankenese).

An agreement was reached in December for German train stations to mount an exhibit on the deportation of Jewish children. At first, railway chief Hartmund Mehdorn had said the stations were not appropriate sites "for such a serious theme." Critics responded by accusing him of seeking to cover up the complicity of the Nazi-era railroads in the Holocaust. The exhibit, based in part on a project designed by Nazi-hunter Beate Klarsfeld, was expected to open in Berlin on January 27, 2008, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Klarsfeld's exhibit about the 11,000 Jewish children deported from France to death camps had already been shown at 18 French railway stations.

In December, the Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History granted Berlin's Free University access to its 52,000 survivor testimonies, making it the first non-U.S. institution with access to the archive, created by American film director Steven Spielberg. Most of the video-recorded interviews were with Jewish survivors, but there were also some with homosexuals, Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, political prisoners, and others.

#### COMPENSATION

In a breakthrough for Holocaust survivors, the former inmates of three Nazi prison camps in Tunisia became eligible for compensation of about \$320 per month from Germany. The development was announced June 13 after meetings between the Conference on Jewish Material Claims

Against Germany and the German Finance Ministry. Claims Conference executive vice president Gideon Taylor estimated that there might only be a few hundred people eligible for the compensation, "but it is still significant," he said.

Germany committed a total of \$277 million to this and several related causes, including \$26 million for social services through the end of 2007 for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, up from \$11 million in 2005. In addition, Article 2 payments could be applied to 4,000 additional claimants from certain Western European countries whose eligibility was established after negotiations in 2003. The number of recipients in 2006 rose by 8 percent to 49,000. Article 2 had paid more than \$1.8 billion to more than 68,000 Holocaust survivors since it began in 1992, following Claims Conference negotiations with the newly unified Germany.

In the fall, Germany's Restitution Authority ruled that the department store chain KarstadtQuelle must return several sites, including the Beisheim Center in central Berlin, to the Claims Conference, representing the Jewish heirs. The Conference had successfully argued that Germany had erred in handing the property over to Karstadt after German unification, based on Karstadt's earlier purchase of businesses that included the former Wertheim properties. The Wertheims had owned a chain of department stores in Germany before fleeing Nazi persecution in 1939. "Karstadt got the land for free from the [then] Berlin government and they then sold it to [German developer Otto] Beisheim for 145 million euros" in 2000, Taylor said. Beisheim built the Ritz Carlton Hotel on the site. The property was worth about \$185 million in 2006. KarstadtQuelle, however, said it would appeal the decision.

Two noteworthy looted artworks were returned to their former owners or heirs in 2006. In February, the German Ministry of Finance announced it would return *Fiat Justitia*, an 1857 painting by Carl Spitzweg, to the heirs of Leo Bendel, a German Jewish collector who died in 1940 in Buchenwald. The painting had been on display in the Villa Hammer-schmidt, the presidential palace in Bonn, the former West German capital. A government inquiry determined that Bendel had been forced to sell it to a dealer during the Nazi period, and used the proceeds to help his family escape from Germany to Austria. The painting was purchased a few months later on Hitler's orders for a museum he planned. An image of the painting graced the cover of a book translated from German into English in 2006, *Nazi Looted Art: A Handbook to Art Restitution Worldwide*, by Gunnar Schnabel and Monika Tatzkow.

Far more controversial was a decision in June by Thomas Flierl, senator for cultural affairs of the State of Berlin, to return *Strassenszene Berlin*, an iconic Expressionist painting done in 1913 by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, to the heirs of its former owner. Critics said the decision was based on flimsy evidence and would lead to a hemorrhage of twentieth-century art from German museums. The CCJG, however, defended the move, noting that it could not be established that the original owner had sold the painting voluntarily and for an appropriate sum. Christie's sold it at auction in New York on November 8.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Demography and Immigration*

In 2006, there were approximately 120,000 dues-paying members of Jewish communities in Germany, but the unofficial number was estimated to be as high as 200,000. Most German Jews were post-1989 immigrants from the former Soviet Union; less than 10 percent had roots in prewar Germany. In 1989, there had been only some 28,000 Jews in Germany. Berlin had the largest Jewish community in 2006, with about 11,500 members and perhaps again as many unregistered Jews. Other cities with large communities included Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Hamburg.

The rapid growth of Germany's Jewish community slowed due to new immigration policies that had been urged by Israel in 2004, when more ex-Soviet Jews entered Germany than the Jewish state. Only 617 Jewish immigrants came to Germany in the first nine months of 2006, as compared to an average of 15,000 who had arrived each year from 1995 to 2005, according to the German Interior Ministry.

A point system was formally introduced in July, with the announced goal of reducing pressure on existing Jewish communities to integrate newcomers. Under the new system—which reportedly received the approval of the CCJG—points were awarded for education, job experience, knowledge of German, and being under age 45. Exceptions were made for survivors of National Socialist persecution. The federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees would evaluate all requests, and applicants also had to receive confirmation from the CCJG that they would be accepted as members of the Jewish community.

### *Communal Affairs*

The Central Council of Jewish in Germany (CCJG) was the umbrella organization for Germany's 89 local Jewish communities. Founded in 1950, its main task had become the integration of Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants.

In June, two months after the death of CCJG president Paul Spiegel (see below, p. 467), Charlotte Knobloch was nominated to succeed him. The 73-year-old Knobloch—a vice president of the World Jewish Congress and the European Jewish Congress, and head of the Jewish community of Munich and the State of Bavaria—was the first woman to assume this post. She was officially confirmed to a four-year term in November. Knobloch had been born in prewar Germany and survived the Holocaust in hiding. She and her husband, a businessman and concentration-camp survivor, had three children.

Another vital Jewish body was the Frankfurt-based Zentralwohlfahrtstelle, or Jewish Central Welfare Organization. Founded in 1917, it was also primarily concerned with helping the newer members of the community. Other communal institutions included the College of Jewish Studies in Heidelberg; the *Jüdische Allgemeine*, a weekly newspaper published by the CCJG; the *Jüdische Zeitung*, a new, independent monthly; the Jewish Women's Union; and several student organizations.

In November, a new synagogue—Ohel Jakob—and a Jewish community center opened in the center of Munich. For many, this symbolized a new Jewish willingness to demonstrate Jewish identity publicly. The official opening took place on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, November 9, and fulfilled a dream of Knobloch, a longtime leader of the Munich Jewish community. The dedication ceremony took place in the presence of more than 1,000 people, with tens of thousands more watching on TV.

Other new and revived centers for Jewish life appeared in Germany in 2006. In January, a synagogue opened in Pforzheim, 67 years after the destruction of the old one. About 500 Jews lived in the community. Würzburg saw the opening of a new community and cultural center, "Shalom Europa," in October. The complex included a synagogue, classrooms, and a documentation center for Jewish history and culture. The city's 2006 Jewish population was more than 1,100. Also in October, Berlin's Jewish community moved back to its historic headquarters on Oranienburgerstrasse in the city's former eastern section. From the time that Berlin was divided after World War II, the city's Jewish community had had two headquarters.

Two significant Jewish-Catholic dialogues took place during the year. In July, the Israeli embassy and German Bishops Conference held a discussion marking 40 years since Vatican Council II adopted *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration on Church relations with non-Christians. A second meeting took place in October in Berlin, where Vatican and German cardinals met with the Rabbinical Committee of Germany. Karl Cardinal Lehmann, president of the German Bishops Conference, said his group planned to deepen their relationship with both the CCJG and the rabbinical group.

### *Education*

A dramatic, public educational milestone was achieved in September, when Abraham Geiger College, in Potsdam, ordained its first three rabbis in a ceremony cosponsored by the CCJG. Two of the rabbis, Daniel Alter and Tomasz Kucera, headed off to serve German congregations, and the third, Malcolm Mattitiani, took a pulpit in his native South Africa. Thus the Reform movement, which was born in nineteenth-century Germany, ordained the first rabbis in the country since 1942. In May, the German government had announced it would double its support for the college to 150,000 euros (\$191,000) a year, a quarter of the school's budget. The CCJG matched that amount and also funded several scholarships. The announcement followed meetings in April between Chancellor Merkel, German Jewish leaders, and international representatives of Reform Jewry.

In the summer, the 30 young men studying in the Orthodox Beis Midrash of Berlin of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation moved from their location on Rykestrasse to a newly renovated historic synagogue in Brunnenstrasse. The school was also given a new name, Yeshivas Beis Zion-The Lauder College at the Skoblo Synagogue and Education Center. The CCJG contributed 90,000 euros (\$115,000) each year to the Orthodox school, which received no state funding. The program also initiated a Community Kotel for Central Europe, bringing several young rabbis and their families to Berlin to help build an observant community in the former East Berlin neighborhood. In addition, the Lauder Midrasha for women, with 15 students, moved to the Rykestrasse location from Frankfurt, and the Lauder-Nitzan kindergarten opened in August.

Touro College Berlin held its first graduation ceremony in July. The U.S. ambassador to Germany, William R. Tinken, gave the commencement address to the 24 students who had completed the three-year pro-

gram in business and Jewish studies. The Berlin school was a branch of the New York-based Touro College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In September, the school launched the Lander Institute for the Communication of the Holocaust and Tolerance, directed by Rabbi Andreas Nachama, former president of Berlin's Jewish community. The institute held its first seminar in October on "War, Genocide and Expulsion: History and the Politics of History in Germany and Poland."

In August, the Limmud Jewish festival of learning—which originated in Nottingham, England—held its first event in Germany. The non-denominational, one-day program of workshops and entertainment on Jewish themes was hosted by Berlin's Centrum Judaicum. And in November, Arzenu, the association of progressive Zionists in Germany, held a seminar in Berlin on the relationship of Rabbi Leo Baeck to Israel.

The CCJG continued its "Jewish Perspectives" educational series with special guest lectures, including British publisher and philanthropist Lord George Weidenfeld on what it meant to be a European Zionist; Hebrew University political scientist Peter Medding on the myth and reality of American Jewish power; and experts Adrea Röpke and Andreas Speit on right-wing extremism.

### *Culture*

Controversy erupted during the 56th annual Berlin International Film Festival in February, where the start-up of the Green House Mediterranean Film Center was announced. Headquartered in Tel Aviv, the project was to include Israeli, Palestinian, Spanish, Czech, and Turkish partners. The European Union would provide funding for the first three years to the tune of 1.9 million euros. Forty Palestinian filmmakers and directors asked the EU to stop Green House, which they called an act of collaboration "with Israeli government-sponsored institutions," and more than 60 Israeli filmmakers, writers, and musicians added their names to the protest. The argument underscored how difficult it was to build even ostensibly nonpolitical programs involving these parties. Both Israelis and Palestinians had been formally accepted as members of the European Film Academy in 2004.

That was not the only film controversy in February; there was another over the Turkish movie *Kurtlar Vadisi—Irak* (Valley of the Wolves—Iraq), a big hit among young Turkish men in Germany. It depicted U.S. soldiers in Iraq trading in human organs surgically removed from Iraqi

prisoners by an American Jewish doctor. Reportedly, audiences cheered the film with the cry, "Allah is great!" Jewish leaders and German politicians denounced the film as anti-American and anti-Semitic, and there were calls for it to be banned. CinemaxX, the country's largest chain of movie houses, responded to the complaints by pulling the film from its theaters.

The 12th annual Jewish Film Festival Berlin opened May 17 with a gala screening of *West Bank Story* by U.S. director Ari Sandel, which later also won an Oscar in the category of short films. The festival's prizewinning Israeli submission was *Ushpizin*, a 2004 film by Gidi Dar. The public's top prize went to *The First Time I was Twenty*, also released in 2004, by French director Lorraine Levy. The two-week festival also featured a screening of Charles Lewinsky's *A Completely Ordinary Jew*.

In November, 88-year-old producer Artur Brauner released a new film, *The Last Train*, about the deportation of Jews from Berlin in 1943, which received positive reviews. Brauner, a Holocaust survivor originally from Lodz, Poland, had made more than 20 movies on themes related to the Holocaust.

Berlin-based Jewish filmmaker Dani Levy released a new comedy about Hitler, *Mein Führer: The Truly Truest Truth About Adolf Hitler*, in late December, and it appeared in German theaters after the New Year. The film triggered considerable public debate about the limits of good taste in treating Nazi crimes in a humorous way.

Several new publications focused on the Holocaust. *Dictator, Demon, Demagogue* by Anna Maria Sigmund explored the myths that had developed about Adolf Hitler. Vivian Jeanette Kaplan's *From Vienna to Shanghai* dealt with Jewish refugees in China during World War II. Ayelet Bargur's Hebrew book about a Berlin home for Jewish orphans between the two world wars, *Ahavah Means Love*, was translated into German and published in 2006. Edgar Hilsenrath, an 80-year-old Holocaust survivor who had returned to Germany in 1975, published *Berlin Endstation*, a Holocaust satire.

Verlag Hentrich & Hentrich's Jewish Miniatures series published several new volumes in 2006, including biographies of Heinrich Heine; Sigmund Freud; Berlin surgeon Moritz Katzenstein, a close friend of Albert Einstein; circus strongman Siegmund Breitbart; and actress Helene Weigel.

In the area of religion, a new German translation of the Bible appeared, *The Bible in Fair Language*. One of its goals was to eliminate

misogynist and anti-Semitic elements that appeared in previous translations. A new biography of Rabbi Leo Baeck, the renowned German Reform rabbi, was written by Rabbi Walter Homolka.

### *Awards*

On January 25, American Jewish businessman Arthur Obermayer presented the sixth annual Obermayer German Jewish History Awards in Berlin. They honored non-Jewish Germans who contributed toward recording or preserving the Jewish history of their communities. This year's honorees were Robert Kreibig, Johann Fleischmann, Günter Heidt, Rolf Hofmann, Kurt-Willi Julius, and Karl-Heinz Stadler. All were nominated by Jews from the U.S., Israel, and Europe whose ancestors had fled Nazi Germany. Obermayer himself had roots in Creglingen, Germany.

Also in January, the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation and the Angelo Roncalli International Committee honored three Berliners for contributions to Jewish-Christian dialogue: Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson, Michael Mertes, and Pastor Johannes Hildebrandt. The awards were presented in connection with the exhibition "Visas for Life—Diplomats who Saved Jews."

The German Coordinating Council of the Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation presented the annual Buber-Rosenzweig medal in March to Dutch Jewish writer and columnist Leon de Winter. The prize, named for the philosophers Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, had been given annually starting in 1968. Also in March, Germany's top Catholic prelate, Karl Cardinal Lehmann, received the annual Abraham Geiger Prize from Germany's Reform movement for his contribution to Catholic-Jewish understanding.

In November, the CCJG presented its annual Leo Baeck Prize to publisher Hubert Burda in recognition of his support for Israel and for the growth of Jewish life in Germany. Burda's father, Franz, profited from the so-called Aryanization, or expropriation, of Jewish property under the Nazis. Hubert Burda contributed a million euros toward Munich's new Jewish community center.

That same month, the Berlin Jewish community gave its 17th annual Heinz Galinski Prize to Annemarie Renger, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin awarded its Prize of Understanding to conductor Daniel Barenboim, music director of the Berlin State Opera, and Helmut Panke, chairman of the board of BMW. At the ceremony, Barenboim, an outspoken

critic of Israeli policies, urged Israel to recognize “the suffering of the Palestinian people.”

### *Deaths*

Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, died in April at the age of 68. The funeral took place near his home city of Düsseldorf, and a public memorial service was held later. A businessman, Spiegel was elected to head the German Jewish community in January 2000. News of his death drew immediate condolences from a broad spectrum of German political and religious leaders. Chancellor Merkel mourned Spiegel as “a very impressive personality . . . who dedicated himself passionately to building a good future for the Jewish community in Germany.”

Spiegel was born on December 31, 1937, in the city of Warendorf near Münster. He and his mother survived the Holocaust in hiding in Belgium; his father survived Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and Dachau. Spiegel’s older sister was arrested in 1942 at age 11 while procuring food for the family. She was deported to Auschwitz and murdered. After the war, the three surviving family members returned to Warendorf. Spiegel described the ongoing pain of the Holocaust experience in his 2001 autobiography, *At Home Again? Recollections*. He wrote another book, a guide to basic Judaism, *Was ist Koscher? Jüdischer Glaube—jüdisches Leben* (What’s Kosher? Jewish Belief—Jewish Life), which came out in 2003.

As president of the CCJG he presided over several major developments in the postwar Jewish community. In 2003, he signed the first contract between his organization and the federal government, placing the Jewish community on a legal par with its Catholic and Protestant counterparts. He was also involved in crafting a reparations agreement for surviving Nazi-era slave laborers and in developing legislation on immigration. After a wave of violent xenophobic crimes in Germany in 2000, Spiegel started *Gesicht Zeigen!* (Show Your Face!)—a campaign in which public figures encouraged Germans to stand up against extremism. In his final years, he orchestrated a rapprochement between the CCJG and Reform congregations, paving the way for their official acceptance under its organizational umbrella.

In November, Markus Wolf, son of a Jewish playwright and doctor, died in Berlin at age 83. Known to his family as Misha, he had been the spy chief of communist East Germany. For decades, Western intelligence—which called him “the man without a face”—sought in

vain to capture an image of the elusive architect of his country's international intelligence network. At the height of his power he commanded an estimated 4,000 secret agents, and was famous for having infiltrated the highest echelons of the West German government, ultimately perpetrating a security breach that forced Chancellor Willy Brandt to resign. Wolf reexamined his Jewish roots in his later years, though he once told the Swiss Jewish newspaper *Jüdische Rundschau* that he would never identify religiously. He visited Israel once, in 1996, and described it as "a great experience."

In September, the non-Jewish German writer and historian Joachim Fest, author of a highly regarded biography of Adolf Hitler, died at age 79, a week before publication of his autobiography, *Ich Nicht* (Not Me). Fest had been a copublisher and editor at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Fest's *Hitler*, published in 1973, was "without a doubt one of the most important books on the subject," said literary critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki upon receiving news of his death. In his own autobiography, Fest described how as a young man he opposed the wishes of his Nazi-hating father and enlisted in the German army in 1944, to avoid conscription into the SS.

TOBY AXELROD