Netherlands

National Affairs

Immigration and Demography

At year’s end the population of the Netherlands was about 16.4 million, with a national average of over 483 inhabitants per km². The population grew by 46,000 during 2007, twice as much as in 2006, mostly due to a 15-percent rise in immigration and a decrease in emigration.

To be sure, tough immigration policies aimed mostly at Muslim immigrants had greatly influenced Dutch society and politics since 2001. The results continued to be visible in 2007 and at times affected the Jewish community as well, not intentionally, but because the Jewish community was such a small minority that its circumstances were simply overlooked.

Although total immigration was up, it was down from so-called “non-Western” countries such as Morocco (by nearly 2,000) and Turkey (by nearly 3,000), largely because non-Western would-be immigrants had to pass a Dutch language and culture exam in their original country before they could apply for a visa, as required by a law passed in March 2006. Israel was designated a non-Western country, and in January 2007 the Dutch immigration authorities published its first statistics about Israel. Between March 15 and September 30, 2006, more than 1,500 persons sat for the exam in Israel, but the number of those who passed it was not yet available.

Another example of anti-Muslim sentiments “accidentally” affecting the Jewish community had to do with food. On February 16, Albert Heijn (AH), one of the country’s largest supermarket chains, discontinued the sale of kosher meat. For years AH had kept a freezer with kosher meat in just one of its Amsterdam shops. In October 2006, when it began to introduce halal meat in its stores, the chain bowed to pressure to stop selling meat from animals that had been ritually slaughtered without prior stunning, and so anti-Muslim sentiment affected observant Jews. The market for kosher meat in the Netherlands was almost negligible: in 2007 there was just one kosher butcher shop in the whole of the Netherlands, and one or two kosher groceries that sold meat. There were no kosher outlets at all outside Amsterdam.
POLITICS AND SOCIETY

In February 2007 the fourth Dutch cabinet led by Jan Peter Balkenende of the Christian Democrats (CDA) was sworn in after four months of negotiations. The coalition also included the Social Democrats (PvdA) led by Wouter Bos and the smaller Christen Unie led by André Rouvoet.

The new government was to include Ahmed Aboutaleb, originally from Morocco, and Nebahat Albayrak, from Turkey, as assistant secretaries of state. On February 15 the Freedom Party (PVV), an anti-Muslim group led by Geert Wilders, raised the issue of “dual loyalties” and demanded that the two either relinquish their original citizenships or step down. The next day former integration minister Rita Verdonk, a hardliner herself, proposed to make dual citizenship illegal for all Dutch citizens. In May Wilders called for closing down all Islamic schools, and in August for a ban on the Koran, which he called the “Islamic Mein Kampf.” “If you removed all violent and unacceptable passages,” Wilders wrote in the national daily de Volkskrant, “you would be left with a booklet the size of a Donald Duck comic.”

Contrary statements by left-wing politicians on Muslim issues proved equally provocative. On July 14, for example, Minister of Integration Ella Vogelaar (PvdA) likened Muslim immigrants to their Jewish predecessors. Speaking of the Jews she said: “Centuries ago, they too came to the Netherlands and now we say: the Netherlands have been shaped by Jewish-Christian traditions. I can see a similar process with Islam.” Historians and other scholars, including several Jews, publicly protested in the newspapers that so-called “Jewish-Christian traditions” were not the result of Jewish influences, but rather reflected shared values influenced by the Greek philosophers that Muslims did not share. “It isn’t as if the Dutch had just been hanging out in bearskins being pagans until the Jews arrived with hokah, Talmud, fine cooking and the Bible, after which the Dutch suddenly thought: ‘Hey, the Old Testament! Cool book!’” said Robbert Baruch, a member of the Council of Rotterdam for Vogelaar’s own PvdA.

Dutch political apathy was reflected in the low 46.3-percent turnout in the March provincial elections. Another indication of the same phenomenon occurred earlier, on February 1, the day that environmental organizations called upon the Dutch to switch off the lights for five minutes at 8 p.m. to symbolize the threat of global warming. The manager of the national energy network feared that a breakdown of services would result, but it turned out that so few people turned off their lights that no measurable effects were experienced.
Internationally, public opinion strongly objected to Dutch involvement in the U.S.-led "war on terror." In April, bumper stickers propagating the withdrawal of "our boys and girls" from Afghanistan appeared following the death of a 21-year-old soldier, Cor Strik, who had stepped on a bomb while on patrol. Discussions heated up again in June after a Dutch television crew happened to record a bloody attack, and in July, following another Dutch casualty. In September, a Dutch student was murdered with an axe in Roosendaal Station by a disturbed American looking to take revenge on a Dutch soldier for the country's participation in the Iraq war. While there were strong calls for a parliamentary investigation into Dutch participation in Iraq, the ruling PvdA managed to avert it.

Anti-American demonstrations caused an interesting shift in political alliances. A demonstration "against U.S. imperialism and Zionism" and in favor of Iran by the extreme right Nederlandse Volksunie and the even more extreme splinter groups Blood & Honor and Youth Storm, planned for July 14 in The Hague, was canceled after the not very U.S.-loving, left-wing Anti Fascistische Aktie (AFA) received permission to demonstrate a mere 100 yards from the spot chosen by the extreme right demonstrators, effectively blocking the latter from marching past the American embassy. Some 300 AFA demonstrators showed up anyway, accompanied by a large police contingent.

The rising level of violence in Dutch society caused considerable concern. In March some 150 inhabitants of the Ondiep neighborhood in Utrecht attacked police after an officer shot and killed 54-year-old Rinie Mulder. The policeman had felt threatened, thinking Mulder was brandishing a knife. On October 15 some 30 Moroccan youngsters rioted after policemen killed a 22-year-old man who had stabbed and critically wounded two policemen.

Starting with a knifing on March 20, Dutch high schools experienced many violent incidents. Over the course of the year ten students and one staff member were killed or severely wounded, and an unknown number slightly wounded. In most cases students attacked each other over seemingly unimportant matters, such as the ownership of a pen. While many of the cases involved Muslim aggressors, contrary to popular belief this was not always so, as in one case where a group of skinheads attacked a Moroccan boy.

In November, a national high school students' strike over the obligatory number of periods per year got out of hand in several cities, and students smashed windows, damaged cars, vandalized lampposts, ignited
fireworks, and pelted passersby with eggs. In the town of Leiden rioting students chanted, “Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas,” and 200 students were arrested. At the end of the year some 20 schools, mostly elementary schools, were set aflame with fireworks (the year before, seven schools had been treated this way). A police spokesman said that fistfighting and rioting that went on New Year’s Eve, ushering in the year 2008, surpassed what went on in previous years, particularly in Amsterdam.

**Anti-Semitism and Extremism**

**Extreme-Right Groups**

The organized extreme right showed no real signs of growth. The Nederlandse Volks Unie, a neo-Nazi party founded in 1971, failed to win any local council seats in 2006 even though its overall vote total was up. By going through the official procedure for obtaining permits, the party was able to mount several legal demonstrations. The Nationale Alliantie, which imploded in 2006 due to internal strife, increased police surveillance, and loss of membership, showed hardly any activity in 2007. New Right, an extremist party with a somewhat more politically correct veneer, seemed to be headed in the same direction. In January 2007, after John Middleman, a prominent party member, said “Jews have too much power and New Right is going to remedy that,” and that Jews “have to adjust or get lost,” a New Right council member in the town of Ridderskerk resigned his membership and started his own party. This left New Right with just one seat on a local council in the whole of the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the influence of less formally organized extreme rightists appeared to grow. The so-called “Lonsdale youths”—extreme-right fans of “gabber music”—increased their activity in 2006 and 2007. They participated in violent, racist confrontations with other groups, mostly Moroccans, and joined neo-Nazi factions such as Blood & Honor, Racial Volunteer Force, Youth Storm, and Aktiefront Nederland.

**Incidents**

CIDI, Holland’s anti-Semitism watchdog, documented a sharp increase in anti-Semitic incidents, from 159 reported in 2005 to 261 in 2006, a rise of 64 percent. The number of incidents involving physical violence was down, however, and the steep rise was mostly due to anti-Semitic e-mails
linked to Israel’s war in Lebanon during the summer of 2006. This was so even though, as usual, only “purely anti-Jewish” incidents were registered and not criticism of Israel, however severe. Also, an anti-Semitic e-mail sent to a great number of addresses was counted as one single incident, as were large numbers of (different) anti-Semitic mails sent by one single person.

One positive development was the decrease of anti-Semitic incidents in schools. According to the CIDI data, only seven occurred in 2006, half of the 2005 total.

There was an increase in the incidence of vandalism at war monuments, peaking around Dutch commemoration days. The phenomenon was undoubtedly due to the rise of extreme-right activity in the streets.

**Judicial Response**

The Netherlands continued to be one of few EU countries where Holocaust denial and denial of genocide were not forbidden, except when used to insult specific groups, and even in such cases only survivors and their direct descendants could initiate cases. However, new EU legislation adopted on April 19 stated that incitement to violence and/or the whitewashing of “genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes on racist or xenophobic grounds” was to be forbidden, and that racist and xenophobic motives would constitute aggravating circumstances for “ordinary” crimes. A period of two years was allowed for updating national legislation to reflect the new EU standard.

According to *Monitor Racism & Extremism* 2006, published in August 2007 by the Anne Frank Stichting and the University of Leiden, the number of discrimination cases tried by the courts was up in 2006, and racism, comprising 55 percent of such cases, was still the most common ground for prosecution. In 2006, one-third of all discrimination cases entailed anti-Semitism, a marked increase from previous years. A growing number of perpetrators were Dutch natives with an extreme-right background; a smaller number were of North African background. While the total number of violent incidents prosecuted went down by some 10 percent in 2006, extreme-right participation in these grew significantly, from 38 in 2005 to 67 in 2006. A particularly worrying tendency was the increase, over the previous decade, in the percentage of perpetrators who were minors: for boys the figure went up from 5 percent to 14 percent in 2006, and for girls from 1 percent to 4 percent.
ATTITUDES

In July 2007 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released a EU-wide survey of attitudes toward Jews. Forty-six percent of the Dutch sample thought it was “probably true” that Jews were more loyal to Israel than to their country of residence. This was a lower rate than that found in Austria, Belgium, Hungary, and the UK, where a majority thought it was “probably true.” Of the Dutch respondents, 11 percent believed “Jews have too much power” and 14 percent believed this was true in the realm of international finance. Thirty-one percent thought Jews “talk too much” about their suffering in the Holocaust. Nearly half the Dutch respondents, 45 percent, compared Israeli treatment of Palestinians and apartheid in South Africa. Yet 60 percent believed Hamas was out to destroy Israel, as compared to about a third of the sample that felt that Israel was seeking to destroy the Palestinians. Overall, Dutch attitudes on Israel-related questions were slightly more sympathetic to the Jewish state than had been the case in a similar ADL survey in 2005.

Holocaust-Related Matters

RESTITUTION

Since 2004, restitution of Jewish wartime assets had been an ongoing process. The total amount available was 47.3 million euros, and it was distributed by an independent allocation board appointed by the Jewish community to projects under the categories of culture, media, education, religion, social work, youth, external relations, and remembrance. Despite a set of rules aimed at preventing the bulk of the monies from going to large, established organizations, that purpose proved difficult to fulfill. For one thing, the planning and paperwork involved in applying for money strongly favored large organizations. And for another, projects started with restitution funds were ineligible for further subsidies; established bodies had their own sources of funding to keep these projects going, but smaller and newer ones did not.

By 2007, 17 million euros had been allocated. Roughly a third (6.25 million) had gone to the “religion” category—rather strange considering that in 2000 72 percent of Dutch Jews said they were unaffiliated with any religious organization. Over 7.5 million euros went to building projects, 3 million of that sum to constructing new synagogues, including a splendid new Liberal synagogue and an equally ambitious Orthodox one,
both for the Amsterdam community. Large amounts also went to the infrastructure costs of large Jewish organizations.

Priority was supposed to be given to projects that would “ensure the continuity of Jewish life in the Netherlands,” but views differed not only over how to ensure this but also over what kind of Jewish life was to be stimulated. Three main groups competed to demonstrate they were the appropriate recipients. Two of them were religious, the Orthodox and the Liberal Jewish communities. The third was JM W, the Jewish Social Work organization, often called “the third, secular Jewish denomination.” All three applied for and received large sums for projects involving their membership or clientele.

In September, the Claims Conference announced that more survivors than expected would be eligible for monthly pensions from the Article 2 Fund. Pensions were supposed to be paid to survivors who qualified and had a low yearly income; whereas earlier a spouse’s income would be counted, beginning October 1 only the applicant’s income would count. In November, 30 Dutch Jewish organizations petitioned German chancellor Angela Merkel to do something about the fact that over 85 percent of the approximately 3,000 Dutch Jewish applicants for restitution in the Netherlands and Israel had been turned down because they had received one-time payments in the 1960s.

Fifteen museums in the Netherlands and abroad were asked to inspect their collections for looted artworks, particularly for 500 paintings that had belonged to art dealer Jacques Goudstikker and were still missing. In 2006 the Dutch state had committed itself to returning 202 works of art to Marei von Saher, the main Goudstikker heir; 170 of these were subsequently auctioned. On February 16 a court in The Hague awarded 9.8 million euros to one of Von Saher’s former lawyers.

An exhibition of 50 works of art presumably taken from unknown Holocaust victims, held at the Hollandse Schouwburg in Amsterdam, ended in March. The purpose had been to publicize the existence of these items and possibly locate the owners or their heirs. Three claims were entered by people who recognized their family’s property. A symposium was held on March 13 in Amsterdam on the topic “Looted, But from Whom?” It concluded that little more could be discovered about the original owners of this art. Of some 4,500 paintings and other objects believed to have been taken from Jews, some 400 had been restituted over a period of nine years, most of these to the Goudstikker heirs. Some members of the Jewish community wanted to extend the exhibition in the hope that more owners’ heirs might come forward.
COMPETITION

The passage of time made it difficult to maintain the memory of World War II and the Holocaust as unique phenomena, and the younger generation came increasingly to view the events of those years as just some of many “terrible things” that happened in world history. Also, the growing number of second- and third-generation immigrants from Morocco had little empathy for the fate of Dutch Jews. In an effort to make Holocaust commemoration relevant, well-meaning organizers linked Holocaust memorial events to “other genocides,” such as that in Darfur. Those who had other agendas, however, used the broader framework to identify the government of Israel as a Nazi-like perpetrator of genocide against Palestinians.

In January, discussion was still raging about the speech of Max Wieselmann, chairman of Another Jewish Voice, at a yearly Christian commemoration on Christmas 2006. Speaking at the site of the Westerbork concentration camp on the theme of human rights, he drew a parallel between the Shoah and the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories. This speech, taped by members of the youth organization of CIDI, incensed Jewish organizations and individual survivors (see AJYB 2007, pp. 396–97).

On the May 5, the day the Dutch commemorated their national liberation from Nazi occupation, a Palestinian-European conference on the Palestinian “right of return” was planned for Rotterdam. The date had been chosen to identify Israel’s control of the territories with the Nazi occupation of Europe. Although Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniyeh and another cabinet minister were invited to speak, Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen announced that they would be refused visas, whereupon another scheduled speaker, Ikrima Sabri, withdrew. He was the extremist mufti of Jerusalem known to have called for violence against the U.S., the destruction of Israel, and the expulsion of all Jews, but was not a member of Hamas.

Former Dutch prime minister Dries van Agt, however, did speak at the conference; this was only one of several occasions during 2007 that he voiced vehemently anti-Israel opinions not just at conferences, but on national radio, television, and in the newspapers. In December van Agt launched a Website on Human Rights Day that opened with an article entitled “Name Israel’s Atrocities,” which claimed that Foreign Minister Verhagen did “not pay attention to Palestinian human rights.” The article voiced “deep admiration” for “Dutch peace activists, including many Jewish Dutchmen.”
On Friday, November 9, the yearly Kristallnacht commemoration began in Camp Westerbork starting at 7 p.m. — Shabbat had already begun — with Darfur as the main theme. Jewish organizations had earlier objected both to the theme and the timing, which prevented Jews from taking part, but the organizers refused to change anything. In the end, only about 100 people showed up. This contrasted sharply with another commemoration earlier in the year, also in Westerbork but on a Sunday. On July 15, hundreds of people gathered to commemorate the date on which the first deportation train left the camp with the staggering number of 1,750 Jews, only one of whom survived.

In March, the owner of the "Anne Frank tree" received permission from the city of Amsterdam to cut it down. Its historical significance was that Anne Frank could see this tree, part of a neighboring garden, from the window in her Amsterdam hiding place. The tree was severely ill and cutting it down appeared the only option, but the announcement of the decision triggered opposition, and people living nearby took the city to court in November, claiming it was possible to save the tree. Amid much media hype the judge decided the tree could stay pending more study of its condition.

Amoetat Akevoth, a group dedicated to Dutch Jewish genealogical research, joined forces with the Orthodox umbrella body NIK on a project of publishing on-line photographs and translations of gravestones earlier than 1940 in Jewish cemeteries. The database expanded continuously, with translations in Dutch and English.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish community in the Netherlands, estimated at about 44,000 people in 2000, had probably decreased since then due to late marriage, intermarriage, and a low birthrate. Even assuming no decline in their numbers, Dutch Jews constituted about 0.275 percent of the total population of 16.4 million in 2007. Jews, historically "the" minority group in the Netherlands, were almost negligible in comparison to the much more numerous Muslim minority.

Communal Affairs

Like their non-Jewish Dutch counterparts, younger Jews were not "joiners," and therefore membership in synagogues and Jewish organi-
organizations had been declining for years; according to the 2000 data, only 54 percent of Jews identified as Jewish and just 28 percent belonged to any Jewish association. As older people died off, the average age of members went up and the organizations struggled to attract enough new ones to make up for the losses. The community was so small that their efforts could be characterized as "fishing in the same small pond."

The core membership of the Jewish community, especially in Amsterdam, consisted of a small number of interrelated families. Parents who had attended the same schools and youth movements sent their children to the same institutions where "everyone knew everyone." The number of Jewish organizations still reflected the much larger prewar communities. Each institution had its own board, and male baby boomers often simultaneously held positions on several boards. When there were openings they were filled by cooptation. The same was true of the boards of the Jewish communities themselves, even though these were elected positions. By 2007 many of the baby boomers were ready to retire from such responsibilities but there were few younger people to replace them.

The Orthodox Jewish community of Amsterdam, the only one large enough for party politics, mirrored the Dutch political system in miniature, with many factions that had to form coalitions in order to govern. The council, which was the policy-making body, consisted of 30 men, the same size as before World War II. Women were barred, a position reaffirmed on June 21, 2007, when that body rejected a package of proposed reforms that would have included women on the board. Several years earlier the board ruled that fathers and sons could not sit on the same board, and some fathers had stepped down so that their sons could be seamlessly elected in their places. Women did serve on the boards of some non-religious organizations, often replacing their fathers. Many Dutch Jews active in communal life spoke of the need to attract more members, but the Jewish establishment did not seem prepared to make the cultural changes necessary, much less relinquish influence to newcomers.

Everyone agreed that activities for Jews under age 35 were a priority, if only to combat intermarriage. But the fragmentation of the community prevented a coordinated strategy. The Orthodox community did not recognize Liberal conversions, and both of these religious streams deemed a large part of the secular clientele associated with Jewish Social Work (JMW) to be not Jewish. All three had their own youth organizations and did not want to subsidize programs that included members of the others. Such events were considered successful if 20 people showed up. Thus Jewhoo!, a series of evenings organized by JMW for singles, attracting
ten people each in Utrecht and in Groningen; in Rotterdam not a single person came.

More successful were parties and other fun events organized outside the framework of the existing youth organizations. In February, for instance, 290 young Jewish adults participated in a party organized by two Jewish students in Amsterdam's fashionable and exclusive club Jimmy Woo. And in December, some 450 students from several European countries attended a weekend organized with the help of the European Center for Jewish Students (ECJS). While the Dutch Orthodox community subsidized the costs of attendance for its members, other Jewish organizations refused to do so for their young people on the grounds that the charges were too high. Thus non-Orthodox participants had to pay a higher cost per person out of their own pockets.

There were an estimated 7,000 Israelis living in Holland in 2000. They and their families constituted another group that had trouble securing funding for their activities. Many had married non-Jewish spouses, and a large number were much less affluent — and hence less socially acceptable — than the Dutch Jewish families that influenced decisions on allocations. The Israelis organized and paid for their own events on an informal basis, outside the existing communal framework.

The three sectors of the organized community—Orthodox, Liberal, and Jewish Social Work — subsidized and controlled their own publications, which were sent out to members or clients. But something of a crisis developed during the year for the independent Dutch Jewish media. 

Joods Journaal, a glossy quarterly funded entirely out of subscriptions and advertising income, folded, and in January 2007 it was announced that its replacement would be an annual, Joods Jaarboek, that would make its first appearance in December. However it was later postponed to 2008.

Joods.nl, the independent Dutch Jewish Internet site, ceased to exist in May, after the failure of many rescue attempts. The site, which employed two editors, had been financed almost exclusively out of restitution funds. According to founder Naftali Herschler, Dutch Jewish organizations demanded high quality services but were not prepared to help pay for them. The site was unable to generate sufficient money from advertisers.

Joodse Omroep, the Jewish Broadcasting Organization, also faced serious problems. It was financed by public money, and Dutch broadcasting rules demanded pluralistic programming to reflect all streams within Judaism. However it had started out in 1973 as the broadcasting arm of the Orthodox umbrella body NIK, which still owned the broadcasting li-
cense and continued to appoint the board members. Thus developed the strange situation of a board that was not allowed to control the content of the broadcasts: programs were produced and production funds allocated by an independent broadcasting team. In September 2007 the board of Joodse Omroep resigned and the NIK board “temporarily” appointed itself in its place. At year’s end the Joodse Omroep board was still identical to the NIK board, which was not allowed under Dutch broadcasting rules.

The independent Jewish weekly Nieuw Israelitische Weekblad, which was also funded entirely from subscriptions and advertising income, had overcome earlier financial troubles, and in 2007 was the only independent Jewish publication left. Partly thanks to its relationship with an outside publisher, it was healthy enough to expand its Website to fill the gap left by the demise of joods.nl.

In February, Sinai Centrum, the only Jewish mental hospital in Europe, started its move from Amersfoort to Amstelveen, in the Amsterdam metropolitan area. The purpose of the change was to facilitate visits of family members: half of the country’s Jews lived in greater Amsterdam. Also in Amsterdam, a Jewish hospice, Emmanuel, opened its doors on May 14 with six beds. It was the first Jewish hospice in Europe.

The city of Amsterdam announced a donation of 1.4 million euros towards the restoration of the Portuguese Esnoga. The synagogue, built in 1675, was one of the city’s most beautiful monuments, but the Portuguese community, with only a few hundred members in the entire Netherlands, was much too small to pay for its upkeep.

Several organizations celebrated anniversaries in 2007. The Sander Israels minyan, also known as “Shul West,” was 50 years old. The Center of Jewish Studies in Leiden celebrated its 25th anniversary, which included a reunion. Beth Studentiem, the Jewish students’ home in Delft, celebrated a half-century of activity.

In August a merger was announced between the Jewish communities of Alkmaar (60 members), Haarlem (172 members), and Zaanstreek-Waterland (30 members). The Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam moved to a temporary synagogue in November. The old building had been sold but the new one would not be ready until 2009 because of funding problems.

There were a number of activities related to Israel. In July, 120 Israeli children suffering from cancer came to the Netherlands for a short holiday. This was the fourth such visit, organized by the Dutch friends of Zichron Menachem, with help from the Dutch Red Cross. A delegation
from Magen David Adom visited the Dutch Red Cross in The Hague for the first time since it had been admitted into the International Red Cross organization in June 2006. The Dutch Red Cross had a bad name with Dutch Holocaust survivors, who vividly remembered members of other nationalities receiving packages in the camps while the Red Cross did not forward packages for them.

On October 30 some 300 people demonstrated in Amsterdam’s city center for the release of the Israeli soldiers taken hostage by Hezbollah and Hamas. The demonstration was organized by Jewish youth organizations.

Culture

On February 23 the renovated Jewish Museum officially opened its doors to the public. Founded in 1932 in a small building in the old Jewish neighborhood of Amsterdam, the museum moved to the old Ashkenazi synagogue building in 1987. The complex — parts of which remained open to visitors throughout — was now not only renovated but also enlarged. Excavation work in the old cellar revealed an old ritual bath, and that was incorporated into the exhibition. The museum also marked another milestone, receiving its two-millionth visitor.

CIDI, the anti-Semitism watchdog, organized a number of seminars and lectures on Israel and on Jewish-Muslim coexistence. As usual, it also cooperated with Dutch universities in sponsoring a series of ten lectures on Israeli foreign policy for the university students, both Jewish and non-Jewish. CiJo, the CIDI youth organization, hosted a number of Dutch politicians at monthly discussions, which often drew 50 or more young people.

Israeli dance and, increasingly, films, were popular in the Netherlands. A festive opening of the Parktheater in Eindhoven, for instance, featured the European premiere of “The Aluminium Show” by Ilan Azriel and his dancers, as well as two other Israel-connected performances. The Rotterdam Film Festival featured no less than 12 Israeli documentaries and films. The prize-winning Dutch/Israeli film Souvenirs by Shahar Cohen and Halil Efrat, and Paradise Now by Dutch-Palestinian Hany Abu-Assad toured Dutch cinemas in January. Two Israeli documentaries received awards at the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam.

Jewish Identity Day was marked in Amsterdam on March 18 with school lessons about Jewish culture and history. The classrooms were filled to overflowing, and some people had to follow from the corridor.
A number of important Jewish social and cultural events occurred in the Netherlands during the year. On February 4 a gala art auction organized by B'nai Brith Amsterdam raised 50,000 euros for the children’s village Neve Michael in Israel. The fifth annual Mimoena, the traditional Moroccan Jewish after-Peasch party, drew 500 visitors from all over Amsterdam. In June, Jom Havoetbal, the Jewish soccer tournament with teams from the Netherlands and several other European countries, brought together some 3,000 Jews from all walks of life. About 250 people participated in the conference for baby-boomers organized by JM W on October 14. In November, the tenth annual Yiddish Music Festival in Enschede drew 500 Jewish and non-Jewish spectators. Skijar, a skiing holiday in France organized by Dutch Jewish students, attracted 75 young adults from 16 European countries. And in December, over 500 children — more than in previous years — spent time at the winter camps of the Dutch Jewish youth movements Bne Akiwa, Hasjalsjelet, Haboniem, and Tikwatenoe.

A Dutch delegation attended the first international Young Hadassah Conference in Rome, July 5–8. That same week another Dutch delegation, made up of 75 Jewish athletes and trainers, flew to Rome for the 12th European Maccabia. They won the gold medal for karate, and silver and bronze for karate, golf, tennis, and chess.

**Publications**

A large number of accounts by and biographies of Holocaust survivors appeared during the year, especially in the run-up to the annual Dutch commemoration of World War II on May 4. Among them was *Gered uit het vuur, de wonderbaarlijke oorlogs geschiedenis van een Rotterdams-Joods gezin* (Saved from the Fire: The Miraculous History of a Rotterdam Jewish Family), in which Zwi Laufer described how his parents survived the horrors of the Shoah with their three daughters. *De Zoektocht* (The Search) was a different kind of Holocaust book, telling the story in cartoons. Published by the Anne Frank Foundation in cooperation with the Hollandsche Schouwburg, it came with educational material for 13- and 14-year-old students. The book was later translated in other European languages.

There were many other significant works released. *In de Tenten van Jaakov, impressies van 75 jaar Progressief Jodendom in Nederland 1931–2006* (In Jacob's Tents: Impressions of 25 Years of Progressive Ju-
daism in the Netherlands) by Chaya Brasz was published by Progressive Judaism to mark its 75th anniversary and given free to all its members. René Süss, a former convert to Christianity and Protestant minister, returned to Judaism and wrote a controversial book, *Luther's theologisch testament: over de Joden en hun leugens* (Luther’s Theological Testament: About the Jews and their Lies), which linked Luther's anti-Semitism to the Shoah. In *Nieuwe Nederlanders* (New Dutchmen), historian Bart Wallet documented the integration of Jews in the Netherlands between 1814 and 1851. *Joden in Nederland in de twintigste eeuw* contained short biographies of 506 prominent Jews who lived in the Netherlands in the twentieth century. Many more were available on a Website, including clickable links to relatives of the subjects.

The first copy of *Minhagee Amsterdam*, a Dutch translation by Rabbi R. Evers of the original Hebrew book by Rabbi Jehoeda Brilleman about typically Amsterdam customs, was presented to Mayor Job Cohen in October. *Een kleine kehilla met de jeroesje van een grote* (A Small Jewish Community with a Large Inheritance) was Paul van Trigt’s history of the Dutch Jewish community after 1945, using archives and interviews. *Tanach, Hebreeuws/Nederlands* was a Liberal Jewish variation on the new Dutch Bible translation published in 2004, with the Hebrew on the right-hand page and the somewhat adapted Dutch text on the left. CIDI published *Hamas, portret en achtergronden* (Hamas, Portrait and Backgrounds) by researcher Wim Kortenhoeven.

Only 700 copies were printed of *Het Zotte Vleesch* (The Mad Flesh), the first and only reprint after 82 years of Jacob Hiegentlich’s novel about his native town of Roermond. Four hundred of them were sold even before publication. The original first edition, published in 1925, was almost completely bought up by Jacob’s father, Sallie Hiegentlich, to avoid a scandal. The novel painted a very unflattering picture of important people in Roermond, including many of Sallie’s friends. The reprint was presented on May 1 at the unveiling of a monument opposite the synagogue bearing the names of Roermond’s 133 Shoah victims.

On May 7, *Tirza*, the latest novel by Arnon Grunberg, received the Libris Literature Award. The novel, published in September 2006, had already won the Gouden Uil for Dutch-language literature in Belgium.

Cefina, the central organization responsible for subsidizing Jewish social organizations in the Netherlands, celebrated its 60th anniversary with the publication *Springlevend*, a book about Dutch Jewish literature.
Personalia

A symposium was held in honor of Hadassa Hirschfeld, who resigned her post as vice chairman of CIDI; Willem Koster resigned as chairman of Cefina, succeeded by Eddy Sajet, and became chairman of the Dutch Union of Progressive Judaism; Rabbi Dov Salzmann left the Jewish community of Enschede and was replaced by Rabbi Elijahoe Philipson; and Dayan Pinchas Toledano, formerly head of the Sephardi Bet Din in London, was appointed part-time rabbi of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam, which had not had its own rabbi since 1998.

Frans Weisglas, a former speaker of parliament, was appointed Dutch ambassador to Switzerland in May; he was due to move to Bern in 2008. Ed van Thijn retired from Dutch politics after 45 years. Van Thijn, who started his political career on the city council of Amsterdam, later became the city’s mayor, and moved on to a parliamentary seat in 1967. He published several autobiographical works, including one on his experiences in hiding during World War II.

Dutch Jews received a number of awards during the year. Jaap Meijers was given the Yakir Award for his communal work; historian Salvador Bloemgarten received the Dr. Henriette Boas Award for his book Hartog de Hartog Léon, 1755–1823, a biography of one of the first Jewish members of the Dutch parliament: author Harry Mulisch received an honorary doctorate from the University of Amsterdam, and his novel De Ontdekking van de Hemel (The Discovery of Heaven) was voted “best Dutch book of all time”; Hilde Pach was awarded the Oranje Translators’ Award for her Hebrew-to-Dutch translations of Israeli works; and Raoul Rosenthal, a student at the Jewish high school Maimonides, won the 28th National Chemistry Olympiad and later won third prize at the International Chemistry Olympiad in Moscow.

The yearly royal decorations announced in May included several Jews: Dave Verdooner; Sami Kaspi; Leon Heilbron; Benno Troostwijk; Dr. Abraham Baumgarten; Samu de Leeuw; Willem Koster; Harry en Siny Cohen-Kattenburg; Jaap van Velzen; Lenny Kuhr; Appie Drielsma; and Jules Schelvis, one of very few surviving Dutch Jews who spent time in Sobibor, who was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Amsterdam. Rabbi Avraham Soetendorp received the Peace through Dialogue Award from the International Council for Christians and Jews.

In sports, Israeli basketball player Roye Berkowitz was signed by the Dutch champion Eiffel-Towers Den Bosch. Soccer player Haim Ma-
gralashvili of Maccabi Haifa received a three-year contract from the Arnhem soccer club Vitesse, and missed one match that was played on Yom Kippur. Israeli basketball coach Arik Shivek returned to the Netherlands to coach the Amsterdam Astronauts. Boxer Barry Groenteman won the national amateur welterweight championship.

Prominent Jews who died in 2007 included former resistance fighter and member of parliament Joop Wolff, 79; Dave Aronson, considered among the world top antiques dealers, 61; the oldest member of the Liberal Jewish community of Twente, Frits Menno Kan, 90; actor Yakov Lind, who authored two books on how he survived World War II under an assumed identity, 80; Betsy Spijer-Nieuweg, who did much for the Jewish community in The Hague, 81; historian and honorary member of the Nederlands Auschwitz Comité Eva Tas, 91; Dick Bruinsma, deputy secretary general of the UN Conference for Trade and Development, 56; Louise (Loes) Adelaar, senior social worker with JMW, 86; poet Hanny Michaelis, 85; Trudel van Reemst-de Vries, who fought in the Spanish Civil War and the resistance, and later worked as a nurse in Westerbork, 93; Rabbi Nardus (Nachum) Groen, 88; Erich S. Grünwald, former chairman of the Jewish community of Groningen, 95; Jaap Loonstein, former secretary of the PUR (the body responsible for survivors pensions) and board member of the Amsterdam Jewish community, 75; Wim Vleeschhouwer, board member of Maccabi Tennis Amsterdam, 86; Joop Boas, chairman of the Jewish students' home Beth Stoeodentiem in Delft, leading Zionist, and board member of the Liberal Jewish community of Rotterdam, 77.