

Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

FROM AN ECONOMIC STANDPOINT, the year ended much as it began, but with some suggestion of difficulties ahead. Interest rates remained at about 4 percent all year, a 38-year low, leading to a rise in house prices and a boom in consumption. Employment was at a record high as retailers and the public sector continued to recruit heavily, and the number of unemployed reached a two-year low in November. Average earnings from August to October rose 3.7 percent and remained well below the 4.5-percent rate the Bank of England considered consistent with its 2.5-percent inflation target. However, the rapid rise in house prices brought year-end inflation to 2.8 percent, the highest in four years, creating a potential problem. Also worrisome was the government's vastly increased need to borrow. In his prebudget report in November, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown noted that the tax revenue forecast in his April budget had not been reached due to disappointing growth in the economy, falling stock prices, and lower profits for investment banks and brokers. The deficit was forecast to reach £20 billion by the end of the year, £9 billion more than predicted in April and more than in any year since Brown became chancellor in 1997. Also in his November report, Brown revealed that he had set aside £1 billion toward the cost of war in Iraq. Rather than raise taxes or cut spending, he announced that the government would cover the deficit by borrowing.

The increased appropriations in the April budget were aimed primarily at improving standards and facilities in the National Health Service and the state educational system. These objectives enjoyed wide public support that compensated politically for the signs of governmental disarray evident in the resignations of the unpopular ministers for transport and education. Thus the Labor lead over the Tories, which fell to 7–9 per-

centage points in March, was up to 12 percent by November. A survey that month showed 42 percent Labor; 30 percent Conservative; and 21 percent Liberal Democrat—virtually no change since the 2001 election.

Israel and the Middle East

The main lines of British policy emerged in March, when Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw supported a UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to Middle East violence and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Israel's right to a secure existence had to be acknowledged "by all the Arab world," Blair told the House of Commons, and Israel and the international community had to accept "a viable Palestinian state." In April, sources reported Britain's readiness to seek a Security Council resolution based on Saudi crown prince Abdullah's land-for-peace proposals. In June, Britain welcomed the two-state solution envisaged by President George Bush, including the notion of a peace treaty within three years. But while sharing Bush's frustration at the leadership of Palestine Authority president Yasir Arafat, British diplomats did not go so far as to advocate his removal, asserting that the Palestinians should choose their own leaders. And whereas Bush pointedly refused to meet with Arafat, Blair had met with him some dozen times in recent years. In June, Straw announced that Britain planned to give more than £30 million in aid to the Palestinians in 2002.

Prominent British politicians met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on numerous occasions, condemning acts of terror, urging restraint, and appealing for an end to violence. In January, Foreign Office minister Ben Bradshaw met with Arafat and "very firmly" expressed Britain's dissatisfaction at how few terrorists the PA had arrested. In February, Foreign Secretary Straw visited Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Turkey to show concern over the growing violence. Mike O'Brien, who replaced Bradshaw in May, was in Ramallah in June urging Arafat to take decisive action against terrorism. Whitehall persisted in refusing to grant Israel export licenses for military hardware lest it be used against Palestinians. Already in March, Straw accused Israel of contravening an undertaking not to use British-supplied military equipment, such as Centurion tanks, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Britain generally condemned acts of violence by either side. The Foreign Office described the suicide car bombing near Megiddo in June as "appalling" and urged the PA to do more to crack down on terror, but

made equally clear its opposition to Israeli incursions into the West Bank. In July, Straw called Israel's air strike on Gaza, aimed at a top Hamas terrorist, "completely unjustified." Describing the strike as the "slaughter of innocents," O'Brien called on Israel to impose an immediate freeze on settlement activity. In November, Straw condemned an ambush that killed 12 Israeli soldiers and security guards, but warned Sharon against expanding settlements in the Hebron area, which Britain considered illegal and an obstacle to peace.

In the spring, Britain expressed readiness to play a more proactive role in the peace process. After backing a Security Council resolution in March calling on Israel and the Palestinians to agree to a cease-fire, in April Britain said it was willing to send observers to the Middle East to monitor the cease-fire and ensure that terrorists were kept behind bars. The same month a team of Foreign Office experts traveled to the West Bank to prepare for the arrival of British and U.S. security personnel to guard prisoners in a Jericho jail who were accused of murdering Israel's tourism minister in 2001.

British policy became even more assertive toward the end of the year, signaling what Israeli officials saw as a shift in favor of the Palestinians. In October, Great Britain's ambassador to Israel, Sherard Cowper-Coles, called the West Bank and Gaza "the largest detention camp in the world." Britain hosted a visit by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in December, despite protests from the Jewish community and Israeli officials. Assad received a glittering welcome in London, meeting both Blair and Queen Elizabeth, though one Whitehall official described the atmosphere as "cool," and major differences between the two countries remained, particularly regarding terrorist organizations based in Syria.

Britain gave supporters of Israel further cause for concern when it neither informed nor consulted Israel about its decision to convene a conference on Palestinian political reform, to be held in London in January 2003. It would be chaired by Straw, and participants would include the PA, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, as well as the "Quartet"—the U.S., the European Union, Russia, and the UN. The conference, Blair told Arab leaders, would focus on ways the international community could help the Palestinians prepare for independence, setting the stage for implementation of the Quartet's "road map" for peace once the new Israeli government was in place. That the Palestinian delegates to the conference would be nominated by Arafat—a man regarded as irrelevant by Israeli leaders—heightened Israel's unease. It made talk of genuine PA reform pointless, Israeli foreign minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Straw when

he visited London in December to “a less than friendly” welcome. The fact that Amram Mitzna, the new leader of the opposition Labor Party in Israel, had been invited to visit London the following month did not improve the atmosphere.

THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

On the cover of the January 14 issue of the weekly *New Statesman* appeared the title of the lead article—“A Kosher Conspiracy?”—concerning alleged Zionist control of the media, illustrated with a large Star of David standing atop the Union Jack. The editor denied any anti-Semitic intent, but, acknowledging that the publication’s Web site had received laudatory anti-Semitic messages, issued an apology. Also in January, Harrods, the large, upscale department store owned by Mohamed Al Fayed, acceded to a request from the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU) and removed from its shelves Israeli products that might have originated in Gaza or the West Bank. In the wake of strong protests, however, Harrods once again stocked the products, but with stickers affixed noting where they came from. In March, the Scottish Palestinian Forum launched a “Boycott Israeli Goods” campaign.

Other signs of anti-Israel sentiment showed in connection with the Israeli occupation of West Bank cities in the spring, particularly the events in Jenin. The British media gave almost unanimous credence to atrocity stories that were later proved to be fabrications, the popular London tabloid the *Sun* standing virtually alone in defending the Jewish state. In an editorial, the *Guardian* called the actions of the Israeli army “every bit as repellent” as September 11. The columnist for the *Evening Standard* wrote “of massacre, and a cover-up, of genocide,” and accused Israel of poisoning Palestinian water supplies (a few months earlier he had “reluctantly” concluded that Israel had no right to exist). Phil Reeves, Jerusalem correspondent for the London *Independent*, uncritically quoted local Palestinians who spoke of “mass murder” and “executions.” Tom Paulin, a poet who taught at Oxford, went further, telling an Egyptian newspaper that U.S.-born Jews living in the West Bank were Nazis, and should be “shot dead.” Iain Duncan Smith, leader of the Conservative opposition in Parliament, called Paulin and his ilk “salon anti-Semites” whose actions were “unforgivable.” Yet even months later, after the allegations of Israeli crimes had been shown to be false, no apologies were forthcoming from Paulin or the newspapers.

In June, the Jewish community protested remarks by Cherie Blair, the prime minister's wife, which seemed to show understanding of Palestinian suicide bombers. Mrs. Blair said that her words had been misinterpreted—she had not meant to justify the bombers, and her sympathy lay with the victims. The controversy subsided at the end of the month, when Mrs. Blair hosted a charity event at 10 Downing Street to benefit Israeli terror victims.

Hostility toward Israel was noticeable on university campuses. Although an anti-Israel motion at Manchester University failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority in February, Jewish students there faced “vicious anti-Semitism of a level unseen for years on campus,” according to the campaign organizer for the Union of Jewish Students (UJS). In March, the annual conference of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) passed an anti-Israel resolution. Motions committing student unions to boycott Israeli academics and products were rejected at York University but passed unanimously at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), where a talk at the Islamic Society in May was titled “Sharon: A New Hitler for a New Age.”

Campus controversy over Israel's policies accelerated in May and June, after the incursion into Jenin. The student union at the University of Central England in Birmingham passed a motion banning anti-Israel literature on campus; a resolution at Oxford University calling on Israeli forces to withdraw from West Bank Palestinian towns was rescinded on legal grounds; anti-Semitic and anti-Israel posters appeared at Bristol University; and Liverpool University's ban on anti-Zionist literature on campus, passed unanimously in March, was overturned. These controversies resumed again toward the end of the year. In November, University of East London students pledged to raise funds to send a delegation to Palestine to demonstrate solidarity; Jewish students at SOAS were harassed; a motion at Sussex University accusing Israel of human-rights abuses was defeated; and a Cambridge University motion supporting a boycott of Israeli academics and goods was passed. In December, anti-Israel motions were defeated at the London School of Economics and at Warwick and Cambridge universities.

A dispute arose in June, when, as part of the campaign to boycott Israeli scholars and universities, two Israeli academics were removed from the boards of British translation journals that were edited and published privately by Egyptian-born Mona Baker of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST). In July, Ian Haworth,

that institution's director of external relations, announced that "UMIST does not agree with the boycott of the editorial committee members" and announced an investigation. A House of Commons early-day motion condemning the sackings called on university authorities and the government to ensure that academic life in Britain was not "disfigured by prejudice and persecution." But in November, the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Standards petitioned UMIST's chancellor to drop the inquiry into the dismissals. As the year ended, the university had not yet taken any action.

In August, following the dismissals, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the community's representative body, announced plans to lobby educational institutions—including universities—to combat discrimination, and in October the board warned university vice chancellors of the dangers of academic boycotts. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, whose annual meeting in June urged British schools to consider cutting academic links with Israel until its forces withdrew from the territories, issued a statement condemning anti-Semitism and agreed that anyone distributing inflammatory literature attacking Jews be prosecuted. Jo Wagerman, president of the Board of Deputies, said that the National Union of Teachers (NUT) had committed itself to oppose any boycott of Israel.

The annual Blackpool conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in September was suffused with an anti-Israel atmosphere, David Mencer, director of Trades Union Friends of Israel (TUFU) calling it "the nastiest" he had ever experienced. Already before the conference opened, Sir Ken Jackson, the TUFU chair, was narrowly defeated by a left-wing candidate for the position of general secretary of Amicus, one of the country's largest unions. The conference called for an "immediate termination of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and of its settlement policy," and it was with great difficulty that the pro-Israel forces managed to add language urging the Palestinian Authority to halt "terror bombings" against Israeli citizens. Afterwards, in November, Britain's largest union, Unison, joined the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and other groups in a pro-Palestinian lobby of Parliament to mark the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians.

An ADL survey released in June found that 13 percent of people in Great Britain sympathized with Israel in the Middle East conflict, 30 percent with the Palestinians, 27 percent with neither, 17 percent with both, and the rest had no opinion.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

The ADL report also compared attitudes toward Jews in five European countries. It found that the British as a whole were less likely to have anti-Semitic attitudes than the residents of the other four nations studied: Belgium, Denmark, France, and Germany. Even so, the numbers for Great Britain were hardly encouraging: 21 percent felt that Jews had too much power in the business world, 34 percent that they were more loyal to Israel than to Britain, 11 percent that Jews were more likely than others to use “shady practices,” and 10 percent that Jews did not care about anyone but “their own kind.”

The Community Security Trust (CST) reported 350 anti-Semitic incidents in 2002—an average of one a day—marking a 13-percent rise from the 2001 figure of 310. Although this was still far less than the total of 405 in 2000, the CST noted that the community faced a “general upward trend” of incidents since the 1990s. Just as the worst period in 2001 followed the events of 9/11, so too 94 of the 2002 incidents—more than a quarter of the annual total—occurred in April and May, the time of the Israeli incursion in Jenin. Mike Whine, who headed the CST, noted that the upsurge was “a direct consequence of tensions in the Middle East.” The shift noted in the 2001 report, away from verbal and written anti-Semitism to physical attacks on Jews and on communal property, continued in 2002. Forty-seven of the incidents were violent assaults—a 15-percent rise since 2001—and 55 incidents involved damage to Jewish institutions. 56 percent of all incidents happened in London. The number of cases of distribution of anti-Semitic literature dropped from 20 in 2001 to 14 in 2002.

In March, British Jewry was placed on highest alert after attacks in France and Belgium “created a mood of apprehension in Britain, the like of which I have never known,” said Mike Whine. In April, when 51 anti-Semitic attacks were reported—the second worst monthly total on record—the Nottingham Holocaust memorial was defaced, 80 Jewish gravestones in Hull were smashed, and Finsbury Park Synagogue (North London) was ransacked. The synagogue at Swansea was desecrated in July and two of its Torah scrolls burned, and the next month 300 Jewish vacationers there were pelted with rocks and racial abuse.

The extreme right-wing British National Party (BNP) organized its biggest campaign in several years in the May local elections, contesting 68 seats and winning three in Burnley. A local government by-election in Blackburn in November won it a fourth East Lancashire seat.

After Nottingham University students voted against adopting the policy of the National Union of Students that refused racists a platform, Forum, the university's student-union-financed debating society, invited Holocaust denier David Irving to address it in January. Protests by the Board of Deputies and the local Beit Shalom Holocaust study center were in vain, and the invitation was withdrawn only because of the high cost of policing the meeting. In March, Irving had to declare bankruptcy due to the legal costs of his failed libel action against Penguin Books and American historian Deborah Lipstadt (see AJYB 2001, p. 310).

The role of extremist Islam in fomenting group hatred received considerable attention. In February, a Muslim cleric, Sheik Abdullah al Faisal, was arrested under the Offenses Against the Person Act that had been passed in 1986. He was charged with incitement to murder, based on allegations that he urged his followers to kill Jews. In April, Southwark crown court found Iftikhar Ali guilty of possessing and distributing material with intent to foment racial hatred, actions barred under the Public Order Act of 1986. Ali, who had distributed leaflets advertising a meeting of the radical Muslim, anti-Israel, anti-gay, anti-Western Al-Muhajiroun group, was fined and sentenced to 200 hours of community service. In August, three law lords (functioning as the nation's highest appeals court) confirmed an April decision of the Court of Appeal to maintain the ban on Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan from entering Britain. Home Secretary Blunkett supported maintenance of the ban. In December, the charity commissioners ordered the removal of Sheikh Abu Hamza from his position with a mosque in Finsbury Park, North London, on the grounds that his open support for the Taliban conflicted with the mosque's status as a charitable institution. The sheikh's assets had already been frozen when he was accused of links with terror groups. Also in December, Al-Muhajiroun received a summons from the Greater London Authority to appear in court in January 2003 to answer charges arising from its march through Central London on August Bank Holiday Sunday in defiance of a ban by London mayor Ken Livingstone.

Following private meetings with Chief Rabbi Sacks in November, the prime minister condemned campus racism and anti-Semitism as well as moves to impose an academic boycott on Israel. Home Secretary David Blunkett, for his part, pledged tough action against any individuals or groups on campus who targeted Jews or other minorities. With this government backing, the Union of Jewish Students teamed up with the

National Union of Students and with black and African groups to campaign against racism and extremism in the universities. The same month, London police arrested dozens of suspected racists in a series of raids. "The purpose of such a high profile day," said Commander Cressida Dick, "was to demonstrate our commitment to cutting out hate crime."

Attempts to improve intergroup relations continued throughout the year. In January, Prime Minister Blair hosted a series of meetings with leaders of different religions to stimulate dialogue. In January too, plans were announced to "twin" Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain. This initiative was the brainchild of Rabbi Tony Bayfield, chief executive of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB), and Sir Sigmund Sternberg, cofounder of the Three Faiths Forum. In June, the forum combined with the Leo Baeck College Center for Jewish Education to sponsor shared study of religious texts by Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and in November, Central London's City University launched a program for Israelis and Palestinians to study together.

Nazi War Criminals

The government issued a white paper on immigration policy in February that, among other provisions, proposed stripping suspected Nazi war criminals living in the country of their British citizenship so that they could be expelled. Home Secretary Blunkett explained that this would enable the immigration and nationality authorities to "target both convicted and suspected war criminals" and "avoid repeating the mistakes of history." The document came at a time when Scotland Yard Special Branch officers were investigating a Nottingham pensioner named by the *Daily Telegraph* as Julius Damasevicius. The Simon Wiesenthal Center claimed that he had belonged to the German-backed Lithuanian police battalion that committed atrocities against slave laborers while overseeing construction of a highway in the Ukraine during World War II.

In April, the Wiesenthal Center's Israeli office described British efforts to bring suspected war criminals to justice as "insufficient and unsuccessful." Over the previous year, the center charged, British authorities had initiated six investigations under the 1991 War Crimes Act of which none had led to a prosecution, and no new cases were currently under investigation.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

Data on Jews from the 2001 British census was not yet available, and since the census question on religion was voluntary, the official numbers, when released, would undercount the Jewish population. The Board of Deputies estimated that there were 285,000 Jews in the country. Demographic statistics of Anglo-Jewry for 2001 published by the Board of Deputies Community Research Unit reflected a community in decline. Numbers of synagogue marriages recorded in 2001 fell to 845 from 907 the previous year, and only the Reform sector registered a rise, from 104 to 118. The number of gittin (religious divorces) went down as well, from a revised figure of 270 in 2000 to 256 in 2001. Burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices fell from 3,791 in 2000 to 3,610 in 2001.

Although statistics based on figures for circumcision showed births rising from 2,509 in 1999 to 2,647 in 2000, the Research Unit did not believe that the increase affected the persistent overall downward trend of the 1990s. This mirrored the national trend, but in exaggerated form: births in England and Wales in 2000 were 93 percent of those in 1991; for the Jewish community, the comparable proportion was 76 percent.

The religious court of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain converted 87 proselytes in 2002 as compared with 112 in 2001.

Communal Affairs

In January, the Board of Deputies moved its offices into the first building of its own, in central London's Bloomsbury Square. Almost immediately it got caught up in a controversy over the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, which took place on January 27. In February, a memo was leaked, allegedly written by board vice president Jerry Lewis, challenging the chief rabbi's representative role at the ceremony. When Lewis refused to resign, the board decreed that he be denied access to any sensitive information. A second embarrassing leak occurred in March, when a private letter written by board president Jo Wagerman criticizing Home Secretary Blunkett's failure to attend the Manchester launch of Holocaust Memorial Day found its way into the *Jewish Chronicle*. Wagerman apologized for her "angry language" in the letter.

Several charities opted for a new look. In April, Norwood-

Ravenswood, British Jewry's main children and family service, announced a name change and makeover to increase community awareness of its services and attract younger supporters. In July, the organization reverted to its former name of Norwood and opened a £1.25-million residential home for people with learning difficulties, its 45th residential home. In June, Jewish Care, the community's largest social-service organization, sought to improve its image with a new logo. In February, it bought a 16-acre site in Stanmore, Middlesex, where, in conjunction with the Jewish Association for the Mentally Ill, it opened its first residential home for young Jewish adults with mental health problems in October. In September, the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) also "rebranded," changing the titles of its twin missions of supporting Israel and Anglo-Jewish education from "Rescue" and "Renewal" to "Israel Now" and "Jewish Future." UJIA's income rose from £13.9 million in 2000 to £14.8 million in 2001, mainly due to its Victim Support Campaign for Israeli victims of terrorism.

Concern for the community's future needs elicited three reports. *Facing the Future: The Provision of Long-term Care for Older Jewish People in the United Kingdom*, prepared by Oliver Valins and published in May, was part of a larger project, Planning for Jewish Communities, launched by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR). This report found that increasing longevity and a low birth rate would bring a 50-percent rise in the number of British Jews aged 90 or over by the year 2012. Already, almost a quarter of British Jews were 65 or over, far more than the national average of 16 percent, and approximately 14 percent were 75 or over, as compared with 7 percent in the general population. The report warned that reduced levels of state funding would put increasing pressure on Jewish charities. Another in the same JPR series, *A Portrait of Jews in London and the South-East: A Community Study*, appeared in December. It found London Jewry for the most part middle-aged, relatively affluent, and possessing typically middle-class values and lifestyle. While 83 percent belonged to a synagogue, more than half felt more secular than religious. A closer look at a specific London area was *Torah, Worship and Acts of Loving Kindness*, a study of the Haredi (strictly Orthodox) community in Stamford Hill, North London. Published in November and based on research by members of De Montfort University in Leicester, the report found an average family size of 5.9 persons as compared to the national average of 2.4, and noted that 53 percent of families had four or more children, whereas the national rate was only 2 percent.

Religion

There were 362 congregations in the United Kingdom in 2001 with a membership of 87,790 households, as compared with 359 with a membership of 93,684 in 1996, the last time that such a survey was made, a Community Research Unit report found. *British Synagogue Membership in 2001*, by Marlena Schmool and Frances Cohen, showed that 70 percent of these households and 56 percent of the congregations were situated in the Extended London area.

The mainstream Orthodox sector, which included inter alia the United Synagogue (US) and the Federation of Synagogues, comprised 182 congregations (a decline from 192 in 1996) and 50,043 household members (a drop of 12 percent from the 1996 level of 56,895). Still, US members constituted about 57 percent of total British synagogue membership. All other groups either grew or remained relatively stable during that time span. In 2001, the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (Haredi Orthodox) had 86 congregations and 7,509 members; Reform 41 congregations and 17,745 members; the Liberals 30 congregations and 7,941 members; there were 15 Sephardi congregations with 3,096 members; and eight congregations with 1,456 members affiliated with Masorti Judaism, roughly equivalent to the American Conservative movement.

Meanwhile, the US itself reported in July that membership had risen from 39,033 in 2000 to 39,139 in 2001. Although the number of male members fell from 20,385 to 20,332, the number of females increased from 18,648 to 18,807. In January, the 65th US synagogue opened in Shenley, Hertfordshire. In February, the US treasurer predicted a £254,000 surplus, primarily from selling its synagogue in Hammersmith, West London, for an estimated £1.2 million. In January, June, and November, the US raised money by selling books and manuscripts from its Bet Din (religious court) library at New York auctions.

Jewish women's religious role showed only "patchy" improvement, according to Diana Welsher, whose book, *Jewish Women in the Twenty-first Century*, came out in January. The book, which acknowledged the US's wish to improve women's status in the religious sphere, was sponsored by the Women in the Jewish Community Greater London Update Committee, formed to monitor implementation of Chief Rabbi Sacks's suggestions for enhancing the role of women, issued in 1994. Rabbi Sacks accepted one important recommendation in the book — the establishment of a liaison committee of rabbis and women to implement change — but

he assigned this task to the Association of United Synagogue Women rather than to Women in the Jewish Community.

The predicament of women who might become *agunot* (“chained” wives, whose husbands would not give them Jewish divorces) was ameliorated in July when the Divorce (Religious Marriages) Bill passed into law. A private member’s bill, it permitted spouses to apply to a judge to delay a civil divorce if the religious marriage was not yet dissolved.

During the summer, a new book by Chief Rabbi Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference*, came under criticism on theological grounds, and in October, the London Bet Din, made up of Orthodox rabbinic scholars, found that parts of it were “open to an interpretation inconsistent with basic Jewish beliefs.” The specific charge was that Sacks’s suggestion that religions other than Judaism might possess some element of spiritual truth undermined belief in the uniqueness of the Torah. In November, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv of Jerusalem, widely considered the leading Orthodox authority in the world, condemned these passages as heretical (though, knowing no English, he could not have read the book himself). Thereupon Sacks instructed his publisher to cease printing and promoting the book, and promised an amended version shortly.

British Jews and Israel

The Jewish community was divided about Israeli policies. In March, Board of Deputies president Jo Wagerman urged solidarity and claimed that the community supported Israel in all its efforts against terrorism. But she made these remarks in response to an ad placed in the *Jewish Chronicle* by British Friends of Peace Now urging Israel to start withdrawing from the Territories, signed by some 300 prominent Jews—including Lady Levy, wife of the prime minister’s envoy to the Middle East. On April 16, veteran Labor MP Gerald Kaufman, a Jew and a former shadow foreign secretary, said on the floor of the House of Commons that Ariel Sharon was a “war criminal” leading a “repulsive government.”

In April, 100 Orthodox rabbis signed a letter to Sharon declaring support for Israel’s “war against terror,” and more than 5,000 people attended a Solidarity with Israel/Israel Independence Day celebration inside Wembley (Middlesex) conference center, while outside, anti-Zionist Jews demonstrated side by side with pro-Palestinian Muslims. There was a major Solidarity with Israel rally in Trafalgar Square in May attended by some 55,000 people, and the speakers included Benjamin Netanyahu and Chief Rabbi Sacks. Yet members of Jews for Justice for the Pales-

tinians and of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign attending the rally waved their banners in protest. Some Jewish groups also backed a pro-Palestinian demonstration in London the following week. In October and November, British Friends of Peace Now organized meetings addressed by Courage to Refuse, a group of Israeli soldiers who refused to serve in the Territories, and also sponsored another ad in the *Jewish Chronicle* signed by prominent personages criticizing Sharon and calling for Israel to evacuate the West Bank and Gaza.

Chief Rabbi Sacks, already under attack for his new book (see above), found himself engulfed in another controversy in late summer when the *Guardian* newspaper (Aug. 27) published an interview with him under the front-page headline: "Israel set on tragic path, says Chief Rabbi." Among the comments the article attributed to Sacks was that some Israeli policies "make me uncomfortable as a Jew." The Board of Deputies issued a statement that "the chief rabbi's views do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by every section of the community," while the right-wing Zionist youth group Betar called on Sacks to resign. Rabbi Sacks's office claimed that his words had been taken out of context and that his real message was his "passionate support for Israel."

Education

Race riots in the north of England during the summer of 2002 coupled with the lingering impact of the events of September 11, 2001, raised serious questions about the wisdom of encouraging more "faith schools"—schools run by religious denominations with government funding—since they might inculcate intergroup hostility. In April, the annual conference in Scarborough of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers passed a motion opposing faith schools. Since 1997, when the present government assumed office, six Jewish primary schools had obtained state funding. A JPR survey of multicultural education in Jewish schools found that some of them failed to deal effectively with this topic.

In July, plans for a new Orthodox Jewish secondary school that was to open in Hertfordshire by September 2005 hit a snag. The US-backed Hertsmere Jewish High School Trust was challenged by another group that wanted a cross-communal rather than an Orthodox school, meaning that children recognized as Jewish by any mainstream synagogue body—including those with Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers—would be admitted. The controversy still raged as the year ended.

In September, The Jewish Free School, Britain's oldest and largest Jewish secondary school, moved to new £43-million premises in Kenton, North London.

In February, Dr. Abner Weiss resigned as principal of the cash-strapped London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS, formerly Jews' College), citing stress over LSJS's fate and the community's indifference, as well as personal considerations. The South-African-born Weiss, who came to London from Los Angeles in September 2000, also resigned as rabbi of London's Western Marble Arch Synagogue, and returned to the U.S. Despite vigorous efforts by Chief Rabbi Sacks, who became acting head of LSJS, a plan to rescue the school by splitting it into two separate organizations failed to win the required unanimous support of the leadership. A sale in New York of Hebrew manuscripts and books from LSJS in December raised record sums, but the survival of the school remained in doubt.

The number of students at the Leo Baeck College Center for Jewish Education (Progressive) rose from 60 in 2001 to a record 75 in 2002, with 23 in the five-year rabbinic ordination program and 23 working for degrees in Jewish education.

In March, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded Southampton University library £951,000 for the upkeep and enhancement of its Jewish collection. That same month London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) axed Britain's only M.A. program in Yiddish.

Foreign Aid

Aid to East European communities was both financial and hands-on. In January, Belarus United, a group of businessmen and medics, visited Belarus to offer help to the Pinsk Jewish community. In June, Leeds World Jewish Relief contributed towards Lviv's Chessed community center. In March, Norwood-Ravenswood ran a training program for staff from Belarus orphanages. In June, children from Harrow and Wembley Progressive Synagogue donated pocket money to help poor Jews in the Ukraine in a "Kippers for Kiev Kids" campaign, and on June 15 the Radlett (Hertfordshire) Reform congregation hosted children from Grodno, Belarus. In August, Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue sent £1000 to help flood-stricken Jews in Prague.

Some British communities identified closely with specific Eastern European communities. North London's Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, which had supported the Lviv community in Ukraine for more than

eight years, raised more funds for it at a concert in January, and, in June, entertained children from that community in London. Also in June, Dunstan Road Congregation, Golders Green, North London, adopted the 20,000-member community in Zaporozhye, where World Jewish Relief supported a Jewish day school as well as communal and welfare projects.

Publications

The 2002 Jewish Quarterly-Wingate literary award for fiction went to the late W. G. Sebald for his novel *Austerlitz*, and the nonfiction award to Oliver Sacks for *Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood*.

The year yielded a large number of books on the Holocaust. These included *Holocaust and Rescue* by Pamela Shatzkes; *The Hidden Life of Otto Frank* by Carol Ann Lee; *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* by Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing; *The Villa, the Lake, the Meeting: Wannsee and the Final Solution* by Mark Roseman; *Flares of Memory: Stories of Children during the Holocaust*, edited by Anita Brostoff; *"Bystanders" to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation* by David Cesarani and Paul A. Levine; *Hitler and the Holocaust* by Robert S. Wistrich; *Holocaust: A History* by Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt; *Telling Lies about Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial* by Richard J. Evans; *The Gold Train: The Destruction of the Jews and the Second World War's Most Terrible Robbery* by Ronald Zweig; *Saved by My Face* by Jerzy Lando; *Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust*, edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth; *Storeys of Memory*, edited by Ben Barkow, Katherine Klinger, and Melissa Rosenbaum, a collection of reflections delivered at the 2001 Holocaust Memorial Day at London's Wiener Library; *Desperate Journey* by Freddie Knoller with John Landaw; and *The Righteous—The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* by Martin Gilbert, who also published *Letters to Auntie Forie*, explaining Judaism in simple terms, and the heavily illustrated *From the Ends of the Earth: The Jews in the Twentieth Century*.

Publications on religious themes were *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham Ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah* by Irene Lancaster; *The Jewish Prophet: Visionary Words from Moses and Miriam to Henrietta Szold and A. J. Heschel* by Michael Shire; *The Eternal Journey: Meditations on the Jewish Year* by Jonathan Wittenberg; *Revelation Restored* by David Weiss-Halivni; *Companion to the High Holy-Days Prayer Book* by the late Immanuel Jakobovits, who was the subject of a biography, *Immanuel Jakobovits: A Prophet in Israel*, compiled and edited by Meir Persoff;

Reader's Guide to Judaism, edited by Michael Terry; *The Blackwell Reader in Judaism*, edited by Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck; *The Philosophy of the Talmud* by Hyam Maccoby; *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* by Jonathan Sacks (for the controversy over this book see above); *The Shabbat Elevator and Other Sabbath Subterfuges* by Alan Dundes; *Ignaz Maybaum: A Reader*, edited by Nicholas de Lange; *The Shabbat Siddur Companion* by Harvey Belovski; *He Kissed Him and They Wept*, an introduction to Catholic-Jewish dialogue edited by Tony Bayfield, Sidney Brichto, and Eugene Fisher; *A Rabbi's Journal* by Yitzchak Reuven Rubin; *Judaism: Key Facts* by Nissan Dovid Dubov; and *Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge* by Michael Rosenak. *The Rebbe, the Messiah and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference* by David Berger challenged the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, and *The Messiah Problem: Berger, the Angel and the Scandal of Reckless Indiscrimination* by Chaim Rapoport responded.

Works of biography and autobiography included *Claude Montefiore: His Life and Thought* by Daniel R. Langton; *The Jerusalem Diary: Music, Society and Politics 1977 and 1979* by Hans Keller, with drawings by Millein Cosman, edited by Christopher Wintle and Fiona Williams; *Israeli's Jewishness*, compiled and edited by Todd Endelman and Tony Kushner, based on papers from a conference at Southampton University in 1994; *Where Did It All Go Right?* by Al Alvarez; and *Nazi Hunter: The Wiesenthal File* by Alan Levy.

Books on Israel were *The Land beyond Promise: Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream* by Colin Shindler; *Holy Land, Unholy War: Israelis and Palestinians* by Anton La Guardia; *A History of Israel* by Ahron Bregman; *Breaking Ranks: Turbulent Travels in the Promised Land* by Ben Black; *The Lost Testament* by David Rohl; *Historical Atlas of Jerusalem* by Meir Ben-Dov; and *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide* by Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud El-Alami. Cohn-Sherbok also published another volume, *Antisemitism*.

Fiction published in 2002 included *From Here to Obscurity* by Yoel Sheridan; *Coralena* by Michael Mail; *Nothing I Touch Stands Still* by Jane Spiro; *The Book of Israel* by Jeremy Gavron; *Nine Lives* by Bernice Rubens; *The Song of Names* by Norman Lebrecht; *Impossible Love: Ascher Levy's Longing for Germany* by Roman Frister; *The Autograph Man* by Zadie Smith; *Dorian* by Will Self; *Still Here* by Linda Grant; *Who's Sorry Now* by Howard Jacobson; and *The Strange Case of Dr. Simmonds and Dr. Glas* by Dannie Abse. Collections of short stories were *Cherries in the Icebox: Contemporary Hebrew Short Stories*, edited by Marion

Baraitser and Haya Hoffman; *Meet the Wife* by Clive Sinclair; and *The Complete Short Stories* by Muriel Spark. Poetry published included *Carrying the Elephant*, prose poems by Michael Rosen on the death of his son; *An English Apocalypse* by George Szirtes; *Stranger in the House* by Eric Donner; and *If That Spoon Could Only Speak* by Joan Gordan.

Collections of articles and essays were *Personal Terms* by Frederic Raphael; *Scenes and Personalities in Anglo-Jewry 1800–2000*, the third volume of Israel Finestein's collected essays; *British Romanticism and the Jews*, edited by Sheila A. Spector; and *The Shtetl*, edited by Joachim Neugroschel.

Varied aspects of English life were covered in *Waddesdon Manor: The Heritage of a Rothschild House; East End 1888* by William J. Fishman; *Nightingale: The Story since 1840*, which traces the development of the Nightingale House home for the aged; and *Capturing Memories: The Art of Reminiscing* by Jewish Care volunteers Jeanie Rosefield, Sue Gordon, Pat Stanton, and Vivienne Wolf.

Other notable publications were *Sunlight and Shadow: The Jewish Experience of Islam* by Lucian Gubbay; *Henry Ford and the Jews* by Neil Baldwin; *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* by Tudor Parfitt; and *From Falashas to Ethiopian Jews* by Daniel P. Summerfield.

Personalia

Honors conferred on British Jews in 2002 included knighthoods to Nicholas Winton for his work rescuing Jewish children in World War II; Howard Bernstein, chief executive of Manchester City Council, for services in the reconstruction of Manchester and for helping secure it the 17th Commonwealth Games; Alan Fersht, the Herchel Smith professor of organic chemistry, Cambridge University, for discoveries in protein science; Lawrence Freedman, professor of war studies, King's College, London; and David Garrard, chairman of Minerva, a commercial property company, for charitable work.

Notable British Jews who died in 2002 included Joseph Finklestone, on the staff of the *Jewish Chronicle* for 40 years and ultimately its assistant editor, in London, in January, aged 77; Harry Rabinowicz, rabbi and expert on Hassidism, in London, in January, aged 82; Barry Weinberg, musician, in London, in January, aged 53; Arthur Shenkin, psychiatrist, poet, and Jewish scholar, in Glasgow, in January, aged 86; Basil Bard, scientist, lawyer, and communal leader, in London, in February, aged 87; Ruth Goldschmidt-Lehmann, for 25 years librarian at Jews' College, the

first woman to hold that post, in London, in February, aged 71; Trude Dub, writer and teacher, in Leicester, in February, aged 91; Rita Rosemarine, Manchester communal leader, in Manchester, in March, aged 78; Chaim Lipshitz, youth leader and teacher, in London, in March, aged 96; Israel Kolvin, child psychiatrist, in London, in March, aged 72; Nancy Hurstbourne, communal professional and life-long worker for Jewish Child's Day, in London, in March, aged 88; César Milstein, biochemist and joint Nobel prizewinner, in Cambridge, in March, aged 75; Joseph Witriol, linguist and translator, in London, in March, aged 89; Solomon Evans, minister to congregations in northern and western cities for over 60 years, in Leeds, in April, aged 89; Henry Pack, Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX), welfare expert, in London, in May, aged 82; Sydney Davis, AJEX general secretary for 25 years, in London, in May, aged 80; Eva Mitchell, first woman chair of the council of Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, in London, in June, aged 73; Donald Silk, Zionist and communal activist, in Oxford, in June, aged 73; Lionel "Rusty" Bernstein, antiapartheid fighter, in Kidlington, Oxfordshire, in June, aged 82; Harold Miller, former chair of British Poale Zion and Zionist Federation, in London, in June, aged 90; Martin Savitt, major Jewish communal figure and defense expert, in London, in June, aged 81; Arnold Lord Weinstock, electrical and electronic tycoon, in Bowden, Wiltshire, in July, aged 77; Caesar Aronsfeld, scholar and historian, in London, in July, aged 92; Robert Halle, executive chairman of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, in London, in September, aged 88; Beatrice, Baroness Serota, civil servant and politician, in London, in September, aged 83; Myrella Cohen, eminent judge, in London, in September, aged 74; Michael Cohen, photographer for the antifascist magazine *Searchlight*, in London, in September, aged 67; Zina Cohen, long-time member of the Board of Deputies, in London, in September, aged 86; Frank Allaun, left-wing Labor MP for Salford East for nearly 30 years, in Manchester, in November, aged 89; Saul Amias, founding father of Rosh Pinah Jewish primary school and Edgware (Middlesex) Synagogue, where he was minister for more than 40 years, in London, in December, aged 95; Boris Schapiro, bridge champion, in Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire, in December, aged 93; and David Elias, patron of London's Indian and Far Eastern Jewish communities, in December, in London, aged 86.

MIRIAM & LIONEL KOCHAN

France

National Affairs

THE CENTRAL POLITICAL EVENT of 2002 in France was the presidential election, which took place in two rounds, on April 21 and May 5. Under the French constitution, the president is elected by all citizens through direct universal suffrage. If no one receives a majority in the initial balloting, the people vote again two weeks later to decide between the two top candidates. Since getting on the ballot was not difficult, the field of candidates could be quite large—in 2002, there were 16—making it very difficult to achieve a majority on the first ballot and almost insuring a run-off.

On April 21, in the first round, conservative incumbent Jacques Chirac received 19.88 percent of the vote. His principal adversary, the Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin, won 16.18 percent. But another candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen of the far-right National Front, just managed to beat out Jospin for second place with 16.86 percent. A difference of slightly less than 200,000 votes was enough to eliminate Jospin and get Le Pen into the second round, ensuring a resounding victory for Chirac on May 5.

The vote for Le Pen was no doubt significant: one in six French voters supported a man who had been denounced by his adversaries, starting with Chirac and Jospin, as racist and anti-Semitic. But Le Pen's showing was not an isolated phenomenon. The National Front had played a role in French politics over many years, and Le Pen had received 15 percent of the vote in the previous presidential election, in 1995. It was true that the party has no seats in Parliament, but that was due to the single-member-district system for electing representatives, which put fringe groups at a disadvantage. In fact, the National Front had succeeded in electing representatives whenever the vote was on a proportional basis by party, either within a region or in France as a whole. This was the case for the French representatives in the European Parliament and in the representative assemblies of France's 22 regions.

What was unusual about this election was less Le Pen's strong performance than the poor showing of Jospin, who would have needed only another 0.68 percent to make it to the second ballot. The missing votes were those of many on the left who, confident that Jospin would face Chirac

in the second round or unhappy with Jospin's government, chose to stay home or to vote for other left-wing candidates. Thus the little-known Christiane Taubira, candidate of the Left Radical Party (one of the smaller players in Jospin's parliamentary coalition), received 2.32 percent of the vote. Had her party withdrawn her candidacy before the first round, Jospin would certainly have made it to the second.

Taken together, the seven candidates of the left and far left (three Trotskyists, one Communist, one environmentalist, and two from the center-left) other than Jospin who ran in the first round obtained 26.71 percent of the vote. Thus, fewer than four of every ten voters who supported left-wing candidates voted for Jospin. This division on the left, showing up the weakness of the man who sought to be its leader, was politically much more significant than the small vote gain that allowed Le Pen to "steal" Jospin's place in the second round.

First and foremost, the election represented the defeat of Jospin, and he paid the price, announcing that very night that he would leave political life (he was replaced by one of his loyalists, François Hollande). But the election also marked the end of an era of Socialist ascendancy that began when François Mitterrand was elected president in 1981 and continued with the left controlling the National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, for two decades, except for two interruptions totaling six years. The Socialist record, while certainly respectable, did not excite the voters in 2002. The left's internal divisions, evidenced by the multiplicity of candidates, were symptomatic of its lack of clear direction. Leftist rhetoric still bore the stamp of revolutionary ideology, but the left's behavior in government did not differ from that of center-left parties elsewhere in Europe. This inconsistency — which François Mitterrand, in his time, knew how to play to his advantage — came back to haunt the Socialists, who were not "left" enough to please a good part of their constituency, but too "left" for the majority of voters.

The presence in the second round of Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front, came as a shock to most people in France and around the world. Was the country threatened with a turn toward fascism? Had racism and anti-Semitism gained legitimacy in a France that still considered itself the homeland of human rights? In Paris and other large cities, demonstrators turned out by the hundreds of thousands to "defend democracy." Much of the political left called on French voters to "confront the danger posed by the far right" by backing the incumbent president, Jacques Chirac, candidate of the "parliamentary right" —

that is, unlike Le Pen's far right, it was represented in Parliament. In the end, Chirac was reelected with more than 82 percent of the vote.

For people outside France, the (relative) rise in power of the National Front was big news. It seemed for a brief moment that France was divided between the traditional right and the far right. Some thought that the demons of the past, from the Dreyfus Affair to Pétain's Vichy regime during World War II, had returned. In reality, things were more complicated. Viewing the first round as an opinion poll of the entire electorate, the left as a whole was in the minority: all the different leftist tendencies together (including the three Trotskyist streams) received only 43 percent of the vote. In this respect the first round was the continuation of a deeply rooted French political phenomenon in which the left is structurally a minority, whose victories are exceptions that happen when centrist elements lend support.

But even with the left in a minority position, the right too was seriously divided between the 38 percent of French voters who supported one of the "parliamentary right" candidates in the first round, and the 19 percent who voted for a far-right candidate (either Le Pen or his former second-in-command, now a rival, Bruno Mégret). Ironically, the "parliamentary right" was even more a minority than the left because it refused to ally itself with the far right. This situation had been going on for years. It was brought to the light of day only in the spring of 2002 because of the "technical" incident that deprived Lionel Jospin of his chance in the second round, but the problem ran much deeper. The persistent presence of the far right, incapable of attaining power but endowed with a real talent for playing the spoiler, revealed a national malaise. And this malaise directly concerned the Jews—not the Jews alone by any means, but the Jews along with others.

The French were not particularly sympathetic to far-right ideologies, with their antidemocratic, racist, and anti-Semitic elements. The current wisdom, reinforced by all the public-opinion polls, had it that the French were no different in this respect from most other Europeans. Where they seemed to differ, however, was in feeling more insecure. This sentiment had many dimensions—insecurity with regard to France's place in the world, insecurity about the future of French identity, and, increasingly, insecurity in the conduct of everyday life. Le Pen's special talent for capitalizing on these insecurities enabled him to benefit from the weaknesses of politicians from the right and the left.

In the year preceding the presidential election, the public had been af-

fectured by the rise of urban violence, a phenomenon hitherto largely unknown in France. While it rarely resulted in deaths, it convinced many in France that the authorities were not doing their jobs. The perpetrators were frequently identified as belonging to the Arab-Muslim community, and the politicians of the left who were in power were suspected of purposely minimizing the magnitude of the problem for fear of subjecting a population already suffering from social disadvantage and racism to further disapproval. One of the most shocking aspects of this new insecurity involved incidents in the public schools—traditionally a bastion of French republican ideology—where, according to numerous reports, students terrorized their fellow classmates and even their teachers.

Anti-Semitism—expressed by a marginal but not negligible element of the Muslim population, and with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a backdrop—played a role in all of this. There were attacks against Jewish sites and Jewish people of all ages, and even pressure in classrooms not to talk about the Dreyfus Affair or the Holocaust. But if the way in which Jews were targeted was particularly shocking, the physical and verbal violence of which they were victims arose within a general climate that was increasingly unhealthy. In a country where cities had for several generations been considered quite safe, and where people customarily responded to news of violence in American cities and schools with a mixture of surprise and irony, this sudden eruption of brutality came as a shock.

Faced with an increasing number of press reports of violence, some left-wing politicians, including members of the government, responded with simple denials. “Psychological” interpretations that made insecurity an essentially subjective phenomenon proliferated. These words were meant to calm, but among those most directly touched by the violence they strengthened animosity toward the “caviar left,” whose members were assumed to be living in the most comfortable neighborhoods, sending their children to private schools, and ignoring the real problems of ordinary people. Le Pen benefited from the tide of protest this mood engendered—though not very much, since his vote, as noted above, was only marginally higher than in the previous election. The main victim was Jospin, whose failure to address the new urban violence in any serious way led some traditional left-wing voters to stay home in the first round.

The weak government response to incidents that seriously alarmed many French people undoubtedly stemmed from ideology. Immigrants from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa were perceived as “new proletarians” and as representatives of the “South,” the portion of human-

ity mired in suffering, and leftist politicians found it difficult to distance themselves from this group. Another factor was the guilt the French left felt over the ambiguous positions taken by a large number of its representatives during the colonial period. Finally, electoral considerations clearly played a role. Pascal Boniface, an academic and member of the Socialist Party, had suggested in an internal memo to leaders of his party in 2001 that since Arab-Muslims were much more numerous than Jews, it was important to move closer to them as the election drew near (see AJYB 2002, pp. 331–34).

Public manifestation of bitterness toward the Socialist Party did not end with the presidential contest. A month after Chirac's reelection the French returned to the polls to choose their representatives to the National Assembly. The left, previously in the majority, was crushed as the Union for a Presidential Majority (UMP), a party that was hurriedly constituted to bring together most of the right-wing politicians loyal to Chirac, obtained 64 percent of the seats, 369 out of 577. The National Front, without enough support in any one district to gain a seat, remained shut out. But the new government, led by Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, understood that if it wanted to escape the pressure from the far right once and for all it would have to prove to the French people that democratic politicians—of the left or the right—could ensure their security. Nicolas Sarkozy, the new minister of the interior and, in that capacity, overall chief of police services, became personally responsible for carrying out this commitment.

The night the results of the first round were announced and it became clear that Le Pen would face Chirac in the run-off, a minor incident occurred that had long-lasting repercussions. A reporter for the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* interviewed Roger Cukierman, president of CRIF (Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France), the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France, about the likely effect of Le Pen's presence on the second-round ballot. Cukierman's response, according to the Israeli journalist, was that this development would be "a message to the Muslims to keep quiet." Immediately taken up by the French media, this was interpreted by some as support for Le Pen.

But this was not Cukierman's intent. The CRIF president—a retired banker with little experience in political matters or in dealing with the press—spoke as if he and the reporter were having a private conversation, forgetting for the moment that he was a public figure. Furthermore, he spoke in English with the Israeli journalist, his remarks were translated into Hebrew to appear in *Ha'aretz*, then retranslated from Hebrew

to English for the paper's international edition, and then translated again from English to French for the French newspapers. Thus Cukierman's response had no chance of being understood with any degree of subtlety or nuance. While he might indeed have attributed Le Pen's strong showing to resentment against Arabs and Muslims, he strongly asserted that Le Pen was an anti-Semite, and, like virtually all French political figures right and left, urged people to vote for Jacques Chirac.

Adding to the misapprehension, French television broadcast a quote from Jo Goldenberg, owner of a well-known Jewish restaurant in Paris, which was also widely interpreted—inaccurately again—as expressing support for Le Pen. Despite later clarifications, the damage was done, and the allegation that the president of CRIF and large numbers of French Jews supported Le Pen was added to the arsenal of criticisms of the Jewish community. This naturally raised the question of why they would have done so. Those who were relatively well informed said it was a reaction to the attacks on Jews that had proliferated in France during April and had made Jews more receptive to accusations against “the Arabs.” Others, less sophisticated or more partisan, accused the Jewish community of turning to the far right in order to support Israeli government policy.

Israel and the Middle East

The two main political streams in France—Chirac's right-of-center neo-Gaullists, and the Socialists, led by Jospin and then François Hollande—had similar policies with regard to Israel. Though the details might vary according to the person and the circumstances, the basics were: friendship toward the Jewish state and affirmation of its right to live in peace and security; support as well for the Palestinians' right to an independent state; and a desire for a peace agreement that would include Arab recognition of Israel and Israeli withdrawal from the Territories.

However, Israel's image in the eyes of the French public was severely damaged in 2002. The change happened in April, when the fighting in Jenin and the occupation of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem were presented as expressions of Israeli brutality toward the Palestinians (see above, pp. 201–04). The media, which had given little coverage to the attacks against Israelis in February and March, now devoted considerable attention to stories and images depicting the suffering of the Palestinian population.

At the same time, far-left elements—the Communist Party, some of the Greens, and at least two of the Trotskyist factions—engaged in strong

pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel agitation. They were motivated by several related factors. One was an “anti-imperialist” ideology in which Israel, representing the West, stood against the “just cause” of the “oppressed,” represented by the Palestinians. Another was principled anti-Zionism, fed by the personal resentment felt by some activists of Jewish origin and the anti-Jewish prejudices of some non-Jews. A third was an open desire to win the favor of young Muslims who, making up some 10 percent of their generation of French people, represented a future electoral force not to be ignored. Two additional elements also came into play: agitation carried out by Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim organizations representing a variety of allegiances, and the activism of human-rights and other general-interest groups whose leaders, for various personal or political reasons, were also drawn to “the Palestinian cause.” Often “ad hoc” committees, tied to one or another of the tendencies mentioned above, would be formed to organize a specific action.

The results were not long in coming. Competition between all these streams resulted in a kind of rhetorical bidding war, with propaganda statements reverberating endlessly as if in an echo chamber. A rumor about “Israeli atrocities” put on the Internet by an unknown source would turn up months later in newspapers, on radio and television, in pamphlets, and sometimes even in books. Young journalists working in mainstream media outlets, often knowing nothing of the realities of the Middle East, were influenced by propagandists (who, being of a similar age and education level, shared similar values and assumptions) and recycled these themes for the public at large. The myth of a “Jenin massacre” anchored itself in people’s consciousness, in turn justifying more anti-Israel prejudices. That the bearers of such slogans were almost always sincere, convinced that they were acting in the name of peace and harmony between peoples, only increased the effectiveness of the message.

Little by little the center of gravity for public debate moved from the Middle East to the international scene—most notably through denunciation of the “pro-Likud neoconservatives” who allegedly influenced American policies—and to France itself. The hydra of “world Zionism,” a term hitherto used only by small far-right groups and in the most unrestrained Arab propaganda, was suddenly a legitimate topic in publications identifying themselves as on the far left. With disarming good faith, people truly believed that secret organizations dictated the laws that governments passed and the words the media published. Even in the minds of the most rational, the threefold figure of Zionist, Jew, and Israeli became the object of very strange reveries.

An excellent illustration of the misunderstandings (and fantasies) surrounding the image of Israel in France occurred early in 2002. Rabbi Michael Melchior, leader of the left-wing religious party Meimad, was at the time a member of the Israeli government with the title of deputy minister of foreign affairs, responsible for relations with the Jewish diaspora. In this capacity, he called a meeting to set up a body to monitor the state of global anti-Semitism. An Agence France Presse report dated January 6, 2002, quoted Melchior as saying, "France has the worst record of all the Western countries in terms of the number of anti-Semitic attacks and incidents." This statement was made in response to a question posed by journalists at a press conference. Factually accurate, it was confirmed a few months later by a spate of anti-Semitic attacks in France.

Rabbi Melchior's remark passed unnoticed in Israel. But in France, it elicited a virtual storm. President Chirac set the tone at an informal meeting with the press to mark the new year. "There is no anti-Semitism in France," he declared to journalists. "Those who say there is have ulterior political motives." People close to Chirac said that he was devoid of any anti-Jewish prejudice and that he took the characterization of his country as anti-Semitic as a personal insult. However, his reference to "ulterior political motives" was an allusion to the Middle Eastern situation, a connection that was immediately taken up by the press.

Rabbi Melchior tried to clarify his words, in response to a journalist from the Jewish newsweekly *Actualité juive* (Jan. 17, 2002): "I do not think that France is an anti-Semitic country. I do not think that French society is anti-Semitic. I did not accuse the French government. But the numbers are indisputable." However, no one wanted to hear this. Just a few months before a presidential election, the reality of the numbers of anti-Jewish attacks was taboo for both the right and the left. Nor were commentators interested in delving into the rabbi's personal motivations (he was an open, moderate politician of the left), preferring not to see beyond his title of deputy minister and his *kippah* and beard.

A paranoid interpretation took hold and spread throughout the French media and political circles, and even into senior levels of the French government, according to which Melchior's remark had three objectives: 1) to smear France's image in Western countries and especially in the U.S., since the real source of anger at France was its refusal to support the policies of the Sharon government toward the Palestinians; 2) to turn public attention away from the allegedly reprehensible actions of the Israeli army in the Territories; and 3) to create a sense of panic among French Jews so that they would move to Israel and become a counterweight to

Palestinian population pressure. At this very time, word came that in Israel, the Jewish Agency had characterized the Jews of France, Argentina, and South Africa as “communities in danger,” a designation entitling French Jews immigrating to Israel to special financial support. The French press highlighted this news as additional proof of Rabbi Melchior’s mischievous intentions.

Anyone at all familiar with Israeli reality could attest that the image—fed by the title “deputy minister responsible for the diaspora”—of a Jerusalem-based mechanism to activate the Jewish diaspora was pure fantasy. But in the collective French imagination, Rabbi Melchior had become the representative of a grand Israeli scheme to disgrace France. A few months later, Michael Melchior was no longer deputy minister; instead he sat in the Knesset on the opposition benches, along with the MKs from the Labor Party. But for those in France caught up in the story, he continued to symbolize the Israeli far right, religious and nationalist, and his very name was anathema. He was the one who said that anti-Semitism existed in France at a moment when no one wanted to hear this truth.

The idea that anti-Jewish violence could happen on a regular basis in France was odious to many French people not only because of concern for their country’s image but also because of a sincere aversion to anti-Semitism. But the people committing these acts were generally Muslim immigrants or their sons, a group that only the far right always felt comfortable criticizing. Resisting anti-immigrant racism was part of French “political correctness,” just as resisting anti-Semitism was. How could the two be reconciled? One way was to blame Israel.

And so it was that the antiglobalization leader José Bové, when questioned about anti-Semitic violence in France on his return from a “solidarity visit” with Yasir Arafat, was quoted in the daily newspaper *Libération* (Apr. 3) as saying that one must ask “whom the crime benefits.” He explained that “the Israeli government and its agencies have an interest in creating a kind of psychosis, to make people believe that an anti-Semitic climate has taken hold in France, so as to better divert their attention.” Strongly criticized for this statement, Bové did not apologize until several months later, and even then without retreating from his anti-Israel activism. Supporters of the Peasant Confederation founded by Bové and of Attac, the antiglobalization organization of which he was a leader, remained absolutely convinced that anti-Semitic violence in France was really the work of the Israeli Mossad.

What worried the Jewish community was that Bové was not an isolated case. People had been associating French Jews with the Israeli-Palestinian

problem for a long time, but with the outbreak of the intifada in late 2000 this association had acquired a highly emotional, even frightening dimension. The question, "How can the Jews do to others what was done to them?" had become common, and hardly anyone pointed out that even asking such a question both distorted the current reality and denied the enormity of the Holocaust.

Caught in this sea of rhetoric, most French Jews were stunned. Whether or not they identified with the policies of the Israeli government, they deeply resented the way that Israel was portrayed in their country and, by extension, the way that they themselves had come under attack. (Without much exposure to the foreign press, they generally had no idea that they were not alone. From one European country to the next, the nature of the anti-Zionist obsession varied somewhat; an allegation that was shocking in one place might be commonplace in another. But the intensity of the obsession was more or less constant.)

Simply invoking the name of Ariel Sharon conjured up the specter of evil, and representatives of the Jewish community were suspected of collusion with the government identified by that name before they even opened their mouths to speak. Called on to endorse grossly exaggerated accusations against Israel or to disavow crimes that might well be imaginary, they chose the path of silence. And the experience of the public representatives of the community was increasingly extended to every Jew—even down to schoolchildren who were called on by classmates and sometimes by teachers to account for "the Sharon government's policies."

Put on the defensive in this atmosphere of paranoia, many Jews reacted with a kind of counter-paranoia. It seemed to them that the whole world had become hostile toward Israel, and that this hostility was nothing other than a horrendous resurgence of age-old anti-Semitism. Some people stopped reading newspapers, watching television or listening to the radio. Others, by contrast, started monitoring the media compulsively, searching out the smallest mistakes and then sending belligerent (and not very effective) responses to the editors or producers. Most of these ferocious Jewish wolves had previously been lambs, filled with the milk of human kindness, wishing ardently for a world of peace and harmony. Confronted with patent lies that were repeated as if they were gospel truth, wounded incessantly by malicious remarks that seemed to echo the hostility that had been directed against Jews since time immemorial, they no longer had a reference point for distinguishing between bitter enemies and inept friends. In their ardor to defend Israel and the Jews at any cost, they only intensified the conflict.

To complicate matters even further, there were also Jews who, whether out of conviction, cynicism or ignorance combined with a desire to do good, added fuel to the fire by taking on the role of the “courageous Jew” who was willing to denounce Israel. In doing this, they (consciously or not) tarred all Jews who would not denounce Israel—that is, the overwhelming majority—with the same brush: as running dogs of evil. In short order, citing “courageous Jews” became a necessary complement to any anti-Israel polemic. This ritualized reference made it possible for the speaker to avoid any suspicion of anti-Semitism or even a priori opposition to Israel.

There could be no doubt, however, about how the great majority of French Jews felt. On April 7, a demonstration in Paris organized by CRIF brought out an impressive crowd (53,000 according to the police, 150,000 according to the organizers). Given that some 300,000 Jews lived in and around Paris, a significant proportion of the adult Jewish population turned out that day. Well-known Jewish writers and actors joined the demonstration, along with some politicians, generally from the right. At the same time, tens of thousands were marching in other cities, including Strasbourg, Lyon, Toulouse, Montpellier, Nice, Marseille, and Bordeaux.

CRIF chose the slogan “Against Anti-Semitism, For Israel” for the march. At the time, anti-Jewish violence was on the rise throughout France (police recorded 56 “serious” incidents in the first week of April), and Israel was the object of strong public attacks (the battle in Jenin was still going on, and no one knew until later that accusations of an Israeli massacre were unfounded). Some Jews and many non-Jews criticized the juxtaposition of the two themes “Against Anti-Semitism” and “For Israel.” They would have preferred a demonstration against anti-Semitism that could also draw support from people who were against the government of Israel. Most Jewish leaders replied that it was more important to support Israel at a time when it was under attack, regardless of personal policy preferences. According to them, it was impossible to march against anti-Semitism while ignoring the threats and attacks against Israel (the suicide bombing that killed 29 people at a Passover seder in Netanya on March 27 was still fresh in people’s minds).

In truth, most Jews saw the two causes as being inextricably linked. It would have been practically impossible for Jewish leaders to establish a common front against racism with organizations on the far left, several of which were involved in anti-Israel actions that were in turn contributing to anti-Jewish violence. Furthermore, had the April 7 march

been organized solely as a demonstration against anti-Semitism, it would undoubtedly have been disrupted by people within the march wanting to express their unconditional support for Israel.

Tensions were high during the march. Jewish extremists confronted a group of young North Africans, some with Palestinian flags, who had positioned themselves near the demonstration. Just before and not far away from the CRIF march, several thousand people took part in another demonstration organized by French Friends of Peace Now (complementary to and not in competition with the CRIF march, explained organizers, and timed so that demonstrators could subsequently join the main group). This demonstration also came under attack, and a police officer who intervened was stabbed, no doubt by an unidentified Jewish extremist.

On July 31, 2002, David Gritz, a French student, was killed in a bomb explosion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The only child of a Jewish American father and a Catholic Croatian mother who had settled in Paris, David Gritz was born and had grown up in France. An exceptionally bright student and a talented violinist, he had embarked on a path toward Judaism, as could be seen in his journal, in which an entry dated July 27 and written in Hebrew read, "Little by little, I am going back." With the help of a scholarship from Maskilim, a French organization that supported the study of Jewish thought, the young man had arrived in Jerusalem in mid-July for a one-year program at the Hartman Institute. He had planned to work on his doctoral dissertation in philosophy on "the politics of Creation," taking his inspiration from the Tower of Babel story as the first example of "the political problem of human coexistence within the City." Gritz died two weeks after arriving in Jerusalem, at the age of 24. In an announcement published in the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, his parents wrote, "May the circle of love that surrounded David triumph over the hate of which he was a victim."

La Francophonie, an international organization bringing together France with other countries where French was widely spoken, met in October 2002 in Beirut. (Israel, which had several hundred thousand French-speaking residents, had always been blocked from participating by the Arab countries). Jacques Chirac attended the event, which was in fact more diplomatic than cultural. One of the many journalists accompanying the president was Gideon Kouts, a French reporter representing the Jewish monthly *L'Arche*. Kouts was also the Paris correspondent for an Israeli television station, to which he filed a report on the summit on his portable telephone. The Lebanese daily *As-Safir* printed an indignant ar-

ticle about this on October 18, and Arab journalists harassed Kouts when he arrived at the press center. Kouts was then expelled and escorted by French agents to his hotel, where he remained under a kind of house arrest for more than two days. The Lebanese minister of justice accused Kouts of committing a “crime” by establishing a telephone link with Israel, and for a time there was some doubt regarding his position under Lebanese law. The French press took the side of the Franco-Israeli journalist threatened with being held hostage in Lebanon. Finally, after a tense period—during which the official French delegation, by President Chirac’s express order, looked out for his safety—Gideon Kouts was allowed to return to Paris.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

The year 2002 was marked by an unprecedented flare-up of anti-Jewish violence. According to police statistics cited by the Ministry of the Interior in the annual report of the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights (CNCDDH)—an agency attached to the prime minister’s office—193 acts of anti-Semitic violence (defined as acts “presenting a certain degree of seriousness”) were identified in the course of the year. Three of these were bombings, 57 acts of arson, 75 of vandalism, and 58 of “aggression.” In all, 17 people were injured, and no one was killed. The attacks were directed against synagogues, Jewish schools, school buses, and individuals of all ages. In addition, the same police sources identified 731 anti-Semitic “threats”—insults, pamphlets, anonymous letters, etc.

These figures were significant from two perspectives. First, in relation to previous years, they constituted an all-time record. And second, in relation to all acts subsumed under the category of “racist or anti-Semitic” violence, the 193 anti-Semitic acts constituted 62 percent of the 313 acts tabulated by the Ministry of the Interior for the year. This latter figure would be even higher if acts of xenophobic violence in Corsica, arising out of a very specific conflict based on separatist nationalism, were eliminated from the calculation. Using only figures from “continental” France, the total number of incidents dropped to 240, so that the 193 anti-Semitic acts amounted to more than 80 percent. The racist “threats” showed an equally striking predominance of anti-Semitism: the 731 threats directed against Jews represented 74 percent of the total of 992 acts of racist intimidation or threat tabulated in 2002.

Who were the perpetrators? The far right was barely involved at all. Of the 193 acts of violence, only three were attributed to the far right. As

the 2002 report of the CNCDH, again citing analyses by the Ministry of the Interior, expressed it, "The perpetrators of the tabulated incidents are adolescents or young adults, who to a large extent come from 'sensitive' neighborhoods where their parents, who are often North African immigrants, live." The report emphasized that these young people were "often delinquents with respect to the law" and that the acts of anti-Jewish aggression "have been vigorously condemned by authorities in France's Muslim communities, except for a minority of Islamist radicals." Although it was impossible to establish any systematic link with political organizations, especially Islamist ones, the official report noted that the aggressors "seek to exploit the Middle East conflict." But ideology appeared to play only a secondary role. The perpetrators were primarily young people, long accustomed to carrying out acts of violence and breaking the law, whose deep-seated hostility to Jews was exacerbated by the manner in which events in the Middle East were reported in the French media and in other sources of information—Arabic radio and television, Web sites, reports, and pamphlets.

The strongest wave of anti-Semitic violence was recorded in April, when, as noted above, both the mass media and activist organizations intensified their anti-Israel messages. Of the 193 acts of violence committed during the year, 118, more than 60 percent of the total, took place in April. However, the special circumstances prevailing in April 2002 did not explain everything. Even during the other 11 months of the year, 75 of the 109 acts of racist violence in continental France recorded by the Interior Ministry—69 percent of the total—were directed against Jews.

That Jews should be singled out as targets of racist violence was even more extraordinary in light of the fact that they represented only a small proportion of potential victims of racism in France. The 500,000–600,000-strong Jewish community was dwarfed by the Muslim community, which had between five and six million members. Adding non-Muslim Africans, Roma, and a few other minority groups yielded a total of almost ten million people in France who ran the risk of being targets of racist acts. That a large majority of such acts were directed against the half-million Jews indicated the peculiar way that the "Jewish question" manifested itself in France in 2002.

While anti-Semitic violence occurred in all regions of France, it was especially concentrated in a limited number of localities and neighborhoods where Jews lived side-by-side with Arabs and Muslims. Many French people living elsewhere, including Jews, became aware of these in-

cidents only indirectly, and this explained—although it did not justify—their relative indifference. Comfortable neighborhoods in large cities were not greatly affected, and Jews who did not wear *kipot* or other noticeable articles of clothing ran few risks. Schools where Jewish students were regularly harassed by classmates (to the point where some had to change schools at the request of principals powerless to ensure their safety) and where history teachers had to stop inviting Jewish Holocaust survivors to give presentations for fear that students would insult them, were also located in areas that most middle-class people rarely saw.

Some characterized the incidents as a “war of communities” on French soil. It was no such thing, if only because the war was in one direction only—according to the Ministry of the Interior’s statistics, there were “about ten” Jewish acts of “self-defense or vengeance” in response to 190 acts of anti-Jewish violence carried out by Arabs and Muslims. The need to propose a (spurious) moral equivalence was rooted in guilt over France’s colonial history in North Africa and current anti-Arab racism in the country. The fact that violent denunciation of the State of Israel was often the context for verbal or physical aggression against Jews also greatly contributed to the perception of these acts as normal. Cabinet ministers were heard to say that since young Jews stood up for Israel, it was natural that young Arabs should stand up for the Palestinians.

The number of those guilty of anti-Jewish attacks was unknown, but could hardly have been more than a few thousand in an Arab-Muslim community of several million. Any Jew living in France had daily contact with Arab or Muslim fellow citizens who were far from being extremists in any sense, desiring nothing more than to build a better future for themselves and their children and feeling no hostility toward Jews. Yet the extent to which a small minority could wreak havoc was graphically demonstrated in *Les territoires perdus de la République* (The Lost Territories of the Republic), a book published by Fayard/Mille et Une Nuits in September 2002. In it, a group of teachers described how many schools had been ravaged by the behavior of small groups of students who combined anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial with racist and sexist attitudes.

Polls consistently indicated that anti-Semitism was a marginal phenomenon in French society. In a BVA Institute poll, carried out between November 29 and December 6, 2002, 89 percent of a representative sample of the population agreed with the statement that “Jewish French people are French people like anybody else” (63 percent “agreed completely” and 26 percent “agreed somewhat”). Only 9 percent disagreed (6 percent

“somewhat” and 3 percent “completely”). By comparison, 74 percent agreed that “Muslim French people are French people like anybody else,” while 25 percent disagreed. Commenting on the poll for the CNC DH, political researcher Nonna Mayer noted that when the same question had been asked in 1946, a little more than a third of French people answered that a French person of Jewish origin was “as French as anybody else”; in 2000, a little over two-thirds answered affirmatively; and by 2002, the figure was approaching 90 percent. Acceptance of Jews within French society had made rapid progress.

Though Mayer did not address the issue, there was room to wonder what significance such “acceptance” held at a time when Jews were being singled out through anti-Zionist propaganda and anti-Semitic violence. Thus, when Daniel Vaillant, the Socialist minister of the interior in the Jospin government, received Jewish leaders who complained about the rise of anti-Semitism, he told them that their fears were exaggerated, and it was a long time before he took specific measures to protect Jews. President Chirac, as noted earlier, was also opposed to any acknowledgement of French anti-Semitism. The consensus embodied in the statement that “Jews are French people like anybody else” thus masked a refusal to see expressions of malice indicating that Jews were not precisely like anybody else. Indeed, the hostility of which Jews were targets could even be turned against them, since by their very presence they had the capacity to disturb the serenity of a world in which all citizens were supposed to be “French people like anybody else.”

In her commentary published by the CNC DH, Mayer also drew attention to another recent poll, a major survey surrounding the 2002 presidential and legislative elections. One question in it asked people to agree or disagree with the assertion that “Jews have too much power in France.” This statement, considered a good indicator of anti-Semitism, was rejected in various polls carried out between 1998 and 2000 by slightly more than 50 percent of French people. During this period there was also a substantial drop in the “no answer” category, along with a rise in the number of affirmative responses from 21 to 34 percent. Analyzing this phenomenon in an earlier article, Mayer had noted a climate favoring “free expression of anti-Semitic views,” a phrase that was widely quoted. In 2002, however, Mayer noted that the number of people rejecting this form of anti-Semitic prejudice had increased drastically, from 54 percent in 2000 to 59 percent just before the first round of the 2002 presidential election, and to 66 percent immediately after the second round. And the number of people who agreed that “Jews have too much power in France”

dropped from 34 percent in 2000 to 25 percent in 2002. She interpreted these results to mean that the situation was developing “as if repeated acts of violence against the Jewish community, far from inflaming anti-Semitism or making it seem normal, had raised awareness of the danger it represents.”

The question on “Jewish power” in the survey tied to the election could be correlated with political preference, and thus be used to gauge the strength of anti-Semitic sentiments on the far left and far right. Ironically, the far right, responsible for almost none of the anti-Jewish violence in the country, was far more susceptible to the anti-Semitic stereotype than the left. Of those supporting Le Pen’s National Front, nearly 40 percent clung to the myth of Jewish power, far higher than the 25-percent figure among the French population as a whole. And yet that still left 60 percent of Le Pen’s backers who were not, by this criterion, anti-Semites. Supporters of the far-left parties were neither more nor less likely than other French people to subscribe to the notion that Jews were especially powerful.

For voters on both of the political extremes, of course, the presence or absence of a belief in “Jewish power” did not rule out their leaders’ recourse to racist or anti-Israel rhetoric that could have negative practical consequences for Jews. In psychoanalytic terms, acts of anti-Semitic violence, carried out by marginal elements that are often attracted to all forms of violence, could be *passages à l’acte*, an acting out of more broadly held ideas, and hence tolerated and even authorized, if not actually desired by society as a whole. According to various accounts, some of the perpetrators experienced their acts of violence in precisely this way.

In November, a novel entitled *Rêver la Palestine* (Dreaming Palestine) was published in Paris by Flammarion. It was a French translation of a novel for young readers originally published in March in Italy under the title *Sognando Palestina* (see below, p. 442). The author, Randa Ghazy, was an Italian of Egyptian origin who was 15 years old when she wrote the book, which told the story of a band of young Palestinians who fall into violence. *Rêver la Palestine* portrayed Israeli soldiers as violent, bloody, and immoral, and justified the Palestinians’ recourse to violence, including suicide bombings. Given what was happening in France—indeed, in Europe generally—such a book could be expected to incite young people of Arab origin to acts of violence against Jews. However, the publisher rejected all protests against the book, and the press, on the whole, remained indifferent to its message of hate.

Holocaust-Related Matters

The annual memorial day for victims of anti-Semitic persecution, mandated by law, took place on July 21, 2002. On this occasion, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin reiterated President Chirac's 1995 acknowledgement of the French state's responsibility for the arrest of Jews and their transfer to German hands. "Yes," the prime minister said, "the Vel d'Hiv, Drancy, Compiègne [places where Jews were interned in France], and all the transit camps, those antechambers of death, were organized, managed, and guarded by French people. Yes, the first act of the Holocaust was played here, with the complicity of the French state." Referring directly to anti-Jewish violence in France in 2002, Raffarin said, "To attack the Jewish community is to attack France, and to attack the values of our Republic, which can allow no place for anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia."

On September 18, 2002, Maurice Papon left the prison where he had been held for just under three years. A civil servant in the Vichy government under the German occupation and later a cabinet minister, Papon had been sentenced to ten years in prison for "complicity in crimes against humanity" — helping the Germans arrest Jews in the Bordeaux region. His lawyers had tried various strategies to get him out of prison, including a request for a presidential pardon, but in vain. He finally obtained his freedom through a law passed on March 4, 2002, allowing for the early release of prisoners for health reasons. While the law was not passed with his case in mind, Papon, 92 years old and suffering from heart trouble, was the first to benefit from it. The Court of Appeal granted Papon's early release on the basis of medical reports and against the advice of the government's representative. Strong feelings surrounded the decision, with the seriousness of Papon's crimes weighing on one side, and the application of a humanitarian law on the other. Even the lawyers for Papon's victims were divided.

An international conference was held in Strasbourg, October 17–18, on the representation of the Holocaust in the plastic arts, film, television, theater, literature, and museums. When it was over, education ministers of the Council of Europe met and ratified a decision to establish an official day devoted to Holocaust remembrance and the prevention of crimes against humanity. In France, the date chosen was January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

On October 24, the public television network France 2 broadcast Thomas Gilou's *Paroles d'étoiles* (Words of Stars), a film devoted to tes-

timony by Jews who, as children during the World War II, had been hidden by French families. The same stories were also told in two books with the same title released at the same time, one in illustrated format and the other in paperback.

Four important French films on the Holocaust were released during 2002. Early in the year, *Amen*, by the Greek-born French director Constantin Costa-Gavras, came to the theaters. Inspired by Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*, which condemned Pope Pius XII's silence during the Holocaust, and with a screenplay by Costa-Gavras and the writer Jean-Claude Grumberg, the film gave a balanced presentation of the reasons why the pope chose not to speak publicly against Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews. It was generally well received, both for its cinematographic qualities and for the way it dealt with a historical debate that had aroused strong feelings. The only controversial element was the poster for the film, designed by a leading Italian graphic artist, which showed a swastika turning into a Christian cross (or vice versa). The poster's presence all over the walls of France's large cities elicited protests, including one from 22 leading Jewish figures who issued a joint statement terming the mixture of the two symbols "unhealthy." But only a far-right Catholic organization urged that the poster be banned, a request rejected by a Paris court on February 21.

Gérard Jugnot's *Monsieur Batignole* was released in March. It recounted the adventure of an ordinary Frenchman who, Jugnot said, could have been himself two generations earlier. Knowing nothing about Jews and not particularly well disposed toward them, through a combination of circumstances this character finds himself saving a Jewish child under the Nazi occupation.

The Pianist was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in June. Directed by Roman Polanski, who had been born in Poland, lived in the United States, and fled to France to avoid a rape charge, the film told the story of a Jew who survived the Warsaw Ghetto partly due to his musical ability. It was awarded the Palme d'Or at Cannes and went on to win Oscars for best director and best actor. In addition to its outstanding formal qualities, *The Pianist* expressed a feeling of humanity that deeply affected the French public.

Late in the year Michel Deville's *Un monde presque paisible* (An Almost Peaceful World) was released. Adapted from Robert Bober's 1993 novel *Quoi de neuf sur la guerre?* (What's New on the War?), the film portrayed a women's fashion workshop in Paris just after the war. The characters, almost all of them Jewish (and almost all played by non-Jews), learn to

live again after the Holocaust, remembering the dead and hoping for a different world.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

In December 2002, the results of a study of the Jews of France carried out under the leadership of the French-Israeli sociologist Erik Cohen were published in *L'Arche*. Commissioned by the FSJU (Fonds Social Juif Unifié, the United Jewish Philanthropic Fund), it was the first of its kind since 1988. Surnames were used to construct a sample of France's Jewish population, addresses were chosen at random on the basis of that list, and only the names of 1,132 heads of families who reported that they were Jewish were retained for the rest of the survey. In addition, 842 individuals whose names were on the list of Jewish surnames reported that they were not Jewish, and 1,130 refused to participate before answering the initial question about their self-definition as Jews. This rate of non-participation was substantially higher than in the previous survey conducted according to the same method, probably reflecting a rising feeling of discomfort about Jewish identity in France, the present condition of French Jews, or both.

The study found some 500,000 Jews currently living in France, or 575,000 counting the non-Jewish spouses of people identifying as Jews. Since people with at least one Jewish parent who refused to self-identify as Jews were not included in the survey, it was plausible to assume the existence of a broader "Jewish galaxy" whose boundaries reached beyond the core Jewish population, as was the case in all diaspora countries. The new study, then, dealt with the "recognizable" Jews in France.

The majority of these French Jews were born in France. This was a new phenomenon, since many of the older generation of Jews in France tended to be immigrants from Eastern Europe and, later, from North Africa. While about 50 percent of French Jews had identified as Sephardim in 1988, the figure was now 70 percent. Neither immigration nor natural increase explained this phenomenon. Rather, it reflected the loss of Jewish identity by a portion of the "old" Ashkenazi Jewish population, which was therefore less heavily represented in the new survey. Not only were an overwhelming majority of the Jews (96 percent) French nationals, but few of the generation now reaching adulthood had ever

lived in another country. Asked which Jewish identity they would choose if they could be born again, 42 percent chose to be diaspora Jews and 38 percent Israeli Jews. More than half of French Jews lived in and around Paris. Their demographic indicators (age, number of children) were similar to those of the French population as a whole. Almost 48 percent of the Jews surveyed reported having attended university, and this figure rose to more than 60 percent in the Paris region. Politically, Jews were more likely to be on the left (59 percent) than on the right (41 percent).

On the key question of choice of spouse, the evolution of attitudes in France was similar to that in other countries, although with a time lag: 70 percent of French Jews in permanent relationships had partners who were Jewish either by birth or conversion, while 30 percent were married or living with non-Jews. Among Jews under 30, however, the proportions were 60 and 40 percent respectively, the same as for those who had completed at least four years of university education. Only 36 percent of those interviewed said they would try to prevent their children from marrying non-Jews, another 21 percent said they would not resist this eventuality but would be "troubled" by it, and 42 percent saw no problem.

A little over a quarter of all Jews reported having registered their children in Jewish day schools. (The close correspondence between this figure and available data on enrollment in Jewish schools strengthened the credibility of the survey.) There was a broader consensus on the importance of Jewish education—56 percent considered it "very important" and another 30 percent considered it "somewhat important." Moreover, if conditions were favorable, 70 percent said they would enroll their children in Jewish schools.

A degree of religious practice still appeared to be the norm. Shabbat candles were lit and kiddush said on a regular basis in 50 percent of Jewish homes in France. Only 29 percent of the sample identified themselves as "non-practicing," 51 percent identified as "traditionalist," 15 percent as "liberal" (not necessarily indicating affiliation with the Reform movement, which referred to itself as "Liberal" in France), and 5 percent as "orthodox."

Attachment to Israel was an important element in the identity of French Jews, 48 percent saying they felt "very close" and 38 percent "rather close" to Israel. A factor contributing to this attachment was that more than half of French Jews had close relatives, including children, in Israel, while only 16 percent had neither relatives nor friends there. Among those surveyed, 18 percent were considering making their homes in Israel, while 81 percent said they would be happy if their children did

so. One of the survey questions dealt with Israeli policy: "Should Israel trade land for peace?" A significant plurality (48 percent) answered "yes" to this question, 39 percent answered "no," and 13 percent felt that "it's not up to a Jew living in France to say."

Religion

The AJCF (l'Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France), France's Jewish-Christian friendship organization, gave its 2002 award to Father Jean-Baptiste Gourion, abbot of the monastery in Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem. The presentation took place in late October when a delegation of some 30 people went to Israel where the speaker of the Knesset and France's ambassador to Israel received them. The honor given to Father Gourion, a Jewish-born Catholic priest, was all the more remarkable in that it came only a short time after the Jewish origins of another priest, Jean-Marie Lustiger, had been a source of unease in the Jewish community (see below). In fact, the only discordant voices this time came from another direction—pro-Palestinian Catholics who suspected the award's initiators of trying to make a political point by suggesting Christian support for Israeli policies.

This accusation appeared to be part of a wider debate within the Catholic Church about the legitimacy of the Jewish people's relationship with its historic homeland. Another manifestation of the same controversy was the appearance of *Paix sur Jérusalem* (Peace over Jerusalem), a book consisting of speeches and writings by Michel Sabbah, Latin patriarch of Jerusalem—the Vatican's representative to the Christians in the Holy Land—edited by Yves Teyssier d'Orfeuil. The book contained vigorous criticism of "the theology of the mystery of Israel," which, in the patriarch's view, led to justification of the actions of the State of Israel. The volume also included a bizarre appeal to Christians to take into account "the theology of the mystery of Palestine." Sabbah, a Palestinian, seemed to speak less as a church leader than as a spokesperson for Palestinian nationalism, especially when he justified "resistance" to the Israeli occupation.

But his words came as a shock for Catholics who remembered that, since the Second Vatican Council, deepening the significance of the "mystery of Israel" had been a central element in the church's *aggiornamento* with the Jews. While the resulting controversy had little impact among the general public, it made its mark in the French Catholic world and among Jews active in promoting Jewish-Christian ties. Some observers pointed to the paradox that while support for the Palestinians was gen-

erally linked with a “progressive” political position, Sabbah had now tied it to a questioning of the church’s new attitude toward the people of Israel, and therefore with highly retrograde theological conceptions.

Related issues were raised by the publication of Jean-Marie Lustiger’s book *La Promesse* (The Promise), which created uneasiness in both Christian and Jewish circles. Significantly, the cover illustration was a photograph of Pope John Paul II in front of the Western Wall, and the subject of the book was the place of the Jewish people in the divine plan. The author was cardinal archbishop of Paris and one of the central figures in the Catholic Church in France, but no one forgot—least of all Cardinal Lustiger himself—that he had been born Aron Lustiger, that both his parents were Jewish, and that his mother died in an Auschwitz gas chamber. In the book, consisting partly of “spiritual interviews” intended for French nuns a quarter-century earlier and partly of more recent speeches before Jewish and Israeli audiences, the cardinal presented a Christian vision of Judaism that some Jews regarded as too Christian and some Christians saw as too respectful of Judaism. Cardinal Lustiger, unlike Patriarch Sabbah, did not discuss the political situation in the Middle East, but he left no doubt that the “mystery of Israel” remained alive in his interpretation of Catholic doctrine.

Publications

Many books of Jewish interest were published in France during 2002. In the realm of ideas: Alain Finkielkraut’s *L’imparfait du présent* (The Imperfect Present); Betty Rojzman’s *Une rencontre improbable* (An Improbable Meeting); Pierre Birnbaum’s *Sur la corde raide* (On the Tightrope); and Shmuel Trigano’s *L’ébranlement d’Israël: philosophie de l’histoire juive* (The Trembling of Israel: Philosophy of Jewish History). Historical works: *Regards sur la culture judéo-alsacienne* (Perspectives on Jewish-Alsatian Culture), edited by Freddy Raphaël; Laurent Joly’s *Darquier de Pellepoix et l’antisémitisme français* (Darquier de Pellepoix and French anti-Semitism); Marian Apfelbaum’s *Retour sur le ghetto de Varsovie* (Reflection on the Warsaw Ghetto); and Serge Klarsfeld’s *La Shoah en France* (The Holocaust in France). Current affairs: Benoît M. Billot, Zuhair Mahmood, and Michel Serfaty’s *Le moine, l’imam et le rabbin* (The Monk, the Imam and the Rabbi); Elie Barnavi and Luc Rosenzweig’s *La France et Israël: une affaire passionnelle* (France and Israel: A Passionate Affair); Ghaleb Bencheikh and Philippe Haddad’s *L’islam et le judaïsme en dialogue* (Islam and Judaism in Dialogue); Marianne Rubinstein’s *Tout le monde n’a pas la chance d’être orphelin* (Not Everyone

is Lucky Enough to be an Orphan); and Salomon Malka's *Emmanuel Lévinas, la vie et la trace* (Emmanuel Lévinas: His Life and Legacy). Novels: Elie Wiesel's *Le temps des déracinés* (The Time of the Uprooted); Henri Raczymow's *Le plus tard possible* (As Late as Possible); and Jacquot Grunewald's *L'homme à la bauta* (The Man in the Bauta). Translations: Henri Meschonnic's *Au commencement* (a translation of the Book of Genesis) and *Gloires* (a translation of Psalms). Art books: Esaias Baitel's *Jérusalem* and Sonia Fellous's *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel* (The Story of Moses Arragel's Bible). Cartoon: Joann Sfar's *Le Chat du Rabbin* (The Rabbi's Cat).

Personalia

Marcel Greilsammer, one of the leading figures in the Liberal (Reform) Jewish movement in France, celebrated his 100th birthday on November 26. Greilsammer had been born in Paris to a family of Alsatian origin, and graduated from one of France's most prestigious engineering schools. He played an important role in France's Jewish community both as president of the Rue Copernic Liberal congregation and as vice president of the FSJU. When he was 88 years old, he and his wife left France to settle in Israel, where their four children were already living.

Among the notable French Jews who passed away in 2002:

Louis Mittelberg, born in 1919 in Kaluszyn, Poland, died on January 7. Under the pseudonym "Tim," he became one of the leading cartoonists in the French press. His most famous cartoon appeared in *Le Monde* in response to President Charles de Gaulle's statement after the 1967 Six-Day War that the Jews were "an elite people, sure of themselves and dominating." It showed a Jew in inmate's clothing, proudly striking a Napoleonic pose on the barbed-wire fence of a concentration camp.

Francis Lemarque, whose real name was Nathan Korb, was a composer, lyricist, and singer, born in Paris in 1917. Paris was the subject of many of his songs, which remained a central part of the French popular repertoire. He died on April 20.

Devi Tuszynski, born in 1915 in Brzeziny, near Plock, Poland, was a talented miniaturist. Much of his work was devoted to the Jewish heritage and the memory of Eastern European Judaism. He died on December 16.

Belgium

National Affairs

BELGIUM HAD A POPULATION of almost 10.3 million in 2002. Its population density of 336 inhabitants per square kilometer made it one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. The fertility index was low, only 1.62 children per woman of childbearing age. The long life expectancy (75 years for men and almost 82 for women) and the consequent aging of the population were characteristic of an industrialized country with extensive modern hospital facilities and health care.

The two major groups in Belgium were the Flemings, who spoke Dutch and various Dutch dialects and tended to live in the northern part of the country, and the Walloons, who spoke French, Picard, and Walloon dialects and lived primarily in southern Belgium. The inhabitants of the eastern cantons of Eupen and Malmedy, near the German border, were largely German-speaking.

Since its origins in 1830, Belgium has been a constitutional monarchy. The titular head of state in 2002, whose powers were ceremonial and symbolic, was King Albert II. Beginning in the 1970s Belgium had moved toward the adoption of a federal structure of government. Article 1 of the Belgian constitution now stated, "Belgium is a Federal State composed of communities and regions." Policy decisions were no longer made entirely by the central government but rather by a variety of bodies that wielded independent powers in the specific areas assigned to them.

The distribution of powers followed two major axes, the first connected to language and culture, and the second to geography and economic aspirations. "Communities" denoted groups united by language and cultural ties: the Dutch Community, the French-speaking Community (which was renamed the "Wallonia-Brussels Community"), and the German-speaking Community. Dutch, French, and German were all official languages. The three "Regions" of the country were roughly comparable to the states in the U.S., though they enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy. They were the Flemish Region, Brussels-Capital Region, and Walloon Region. The country was also subdivided into ten provinces and 589 municipalities.

The federal government retained powers in many areas, such as foreign

affairs (including relations with NATO and the European Union), national defense, justice, finance, social security, and large parts of public health and domestic affairs (through the Department of the Interior). The Communities and Regions were nevertheless empowered to establish relations with foreign states in matters over which they had jurisdiction.

Federal legislative power was in the hands of a Parliament composed of two chambers, the House of Representatives and the Senate. Proposed legislation had to be approved by both chambers and signed by the king's ministers (the cabinet had to contain an equal number of French- and Dutch-speaking ministers). While the House of Representatives was elected by universal suffrage, virtually the entire Senate was chosen by a complicated system of proportional representation for the different Communities.

Since 1999 Belgium had been governed by a so-called "rainbow majority" composed of the two traditional big secular parties, Socialists (PS) and Liberals (VLD), and the recently founded Ecolo, a "green" party made up of defectors from the Communist Party (itself now practically nonexistent) and left-wing Christians. The prime minister was Guy Verhofstadt of the VLD. National elections were scheduled for 2003.

On the regional and local levels in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels power was in the hands of similar alliances of "greens" (Ecolo), "reds" (Socialists), and "blues" (Liberals). In Flanders the government also included a party created on a Flemish-language platform, the Volksunie, which splintered early in 2002 into two parties. As was the case on the national level, the two Christian parties—the CVP in Flanders and the PSC in Wallonia and Brussels—were in the opposition. What is more, the PSC underwent a partial split with the birth of the MCC (Mouvement du Changement Citoyen, or Civic Change Movement), which joined forces with the FDF (Front des Francophones) and Liberal Party to form a united political front in some local election districts.

The far-right National Front, which had practically disappeared in Wallonia and Brussels, enjoyed a new lease on life in Flanders, especially Antwerp Province, under the banner of the Vlaamse Blok, a Flemish nationalist party. This party, itself a radical offshoot of the Volksunie that was in the Flemish government, made spectacular gains, winning 10 percent of the vote in 1999, and 15 seats in the House of Representatives. Indeed, in towns such as Antwerp and Mechelen, up to 20 percent of the voters supported the Flemish far right. While this trend certainly reflected a xenophobic reaction to rising immigration, it also indicated

heightened concern about personal safety, especially a rise in the number of attacks on elderly people.

The Belgian government strongly supported the concept of a united Europe, seeing it as a potential global power that projected "European values" and served to counterbalance American power. Belgium's capital, Brussels, was the headquarters of the European Commission, the administrative heart of the European Union, and on January 1, 2002, Belgium, along with 11 other EU members, adopted the euro as its currency.

Domestically, Belgians debated further steps on the road toward a decentralized federalism. The downturn in the global economy, which affected Belgium as well, exacerbated the grievances of those living in the Flemish area, since there was a large net flow of money from it to the less productive French-speaking part of the country, largely to pay for social welfare programs (the unemployment rate in Wallonia was 15 percent, far higher than the 4.9 percent in Flanders). A number of leading mainstream Flemish politicians called for a separate Flemish constitution that would provide, among other things, an autonomous welfare system for Flanders. Leaders of French-speaking Belgium reacted with dismay and warned that such a move was a recipe for splitting Belgium into two separate states. Journalists began referring to the ethnically divided country as "Belgoslavia."

The long-drawn-out Dutroux affair came to public attention again in January when a Flemish-language television station broadcast an interview with Marc Dutroux that had been taped by a reporter smuggled into Dutroux's prison cell. In 1996, Dutroux had been arrested for abducting, raping, and killing four young girls, and the bodies of two of them were found under his house. At the time, it became clear that the police had been negligent in their investigation, and hundreds of thousands of Belgians demonstrated in the streets to call for reform of the law-enforcement system. Rumors that political influence was being applied on Dutroux's behalf gained credibility when his trial was delayed several times; it was now scheduled for 2003. In his television interview, Dutroux admitted the kidnapping charge but denied the murders. He acknowledged belonging to a pedophile ring, "however," he added, "the law does not want to investigate this lead." Dutroux's comments added to speculation that prominent members of the Belgian establishment were part of the ring, and were doing what they could to cover up their involvement.

Belgium held the EU presidency during the second half of 2001, and on February 18, 2002, Prime Minister Verhofstadt delivered an address

to the Transatlantic Journalists Forum on his nation's role in the war on terrorism in the wake of the events of September 11. He expressed some skepticism about the American administration's "unilateralism and even simplicity" in addressing the issue, and doubted whether it was possible to root out international terrorism entirely. While backing American military efforts in Afghanistan and ensuring Belgium's full cooperation in hunting down Al Qaeda operatives, the prime minister also advocated dealing with what he considered a root cause of the problem, "to make failed states work again." Thus he advocated "dialogue with the so-called antiglobalists, who have a point in stressing that globalization does not always work."

Belgium took the lead in seeking the arrest of Victor Bout, a well-known but elusive international arms trafficker of Russian nationality suspected of supplying weapons to Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In February, Belgium issued an arrest warrant for Bout on the charge of money laundering, the first formal move by any country to go after him. It was the climax of a four-year probe into allegations that he had moved millions of dollars of profits from illicit arms sales into Belgium. But Bout could not be found, and remained at large as the year ended.

Nizar Trabelsi, a native of Tunisia who had been arrested in Belgium on September 13, 2001, confessed in November 2002 that Osama bin Laden had taught him how to build bombs in Afghanistan, and that he had been planning an attack for spring 2002 on the Kleine-Brogel air base in Belgium, where about 100 U.S. Air Force personnel were stationed. That base, rumored to hold U.S. nuclear warheads, was a popular site for protests by Belgian antinuclear activists.

Belgium took a major step toward addressing the dark side of its colonialist past on February 6, when it released the results of a two-year investigation into its role in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, prime minister of the Republic of the Congo—formerly the Belgian Congo—in 1961. When the Congo achieved independence in 1960, it became Belgian policy to ensure that the resource-rich Katanga province secede and become a Belgian puppet state. The investigators found that after Lumumba was captured by Belgian-led rebel forces, his execution was supervised by a Belgian captain. Foreign Minister Louis Michel said: "some members of the government and some Belgian actors at the time bear an irrefutable part of the responsibility for the events that led to Patrice Lumumba's death." Michel issued a formal apology and announced the creation of a fund in Lumumba's memory to promote democracy in the Congo.

Reaching even further back into Belgium's history as an imperial power, the Royal Museum for Central Africa, located near Brussels, announced that it was sponsoring the first full-scale historical study of the colonial period, in preparation for a major exhibition on the subject that was to open in 2004. Guido Gryseels, director of the government-owned museum, explained the need for the study: "My generation was brought up with the view that Belgium brought civilization to the Congo, that we did nothing but good out there. I don't think that during my entire education I ever heard a critical word about our colonial past."

Israel and the Middle East

Israel's image in Europe, Belgium in particular, began to deteriorate in the 1980s, and the downturn accelerated after the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000. This often spilled over into antagonism toward Jews, and the word "Judeophobia" was sometimes used to describe the atmosphere.

Over the course of 2002 the overwhelming majority of the media continued to hound Israel, sometimes in vulgar fashion. Both the press—especially *Le Soir*, the French-language newspaper with the largest circulation—and the electronic media tended to ignore the broader context of events in the Middle East, displaying scenes of violence and Palestinian suffering that could readily lead to one-sided and partial judgments. For many Belgians, there was a sense of *schadenfreude*, the enjoyment of others' moral distress: Jews, the constant victims throughout history, had now allegedly turned into their erstwhile bloodthirsty oppressors, the Nazis.

An additional factor was the presence of some 450,000 practicing Muslims in the country, making Islam Belgium's second most popular religion, next to Catholicism. Anti-Israel feeling was encouraged in Belgium by the Arabic press and virulent sermons in mosques and Muslim schools, as well as at pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

The Belgian government officially supported a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but, in the UN and other international forums, Belgium consistently supported resolutions critical of Israeli policies. In fact, many politicians on both the left and the right—and not just the extremists—voiced anti-Israel sentiments. In April, hostility to the Jewish state reached a new level after Israeli troops moved into Palestinian towns to hunt down terrorists and destroy their infrastructure. Foreign Minister Michel announced a suspension of Belgian military sales to Is-

rael. As noted above, the three regions of Belgium had the power to conduct certain aspects of foreign policy for themselves, and the council of the Brussels Region voted to suspend the cooperation agreement it had signed with Israel in 2000. The proposal received widespread backing across the political spectrum. In December 2001, the Flemish Region had approved a similar resolution. Throughout the country, ordinary Belgian Jews reported feeling pressured to distance themselves from the policies of the Israeli government in order to maintain their acceptance in Belgian society.

The Belgian Jewish community took steps to counteract hostility toward Israel and convince the public that the Jewish state sought peace. The Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCOJB) placed pro-Israel op-eds in newspapers and argued Israel's case on radio and television. The CCOJB also organized pro-Israel rallies on April 2, May 29, June 19, and November 27. The May 29 demonstration was the largest, sponsored by all the major Jewish umbrella organizations and including Jews from several other European countries. Toward the end of the year the CCOJB met several times with government officials to advocate steps to ensure that Palestinian textbooks published with Belgian financial support include maps of Israel and acknowledge the Jewish state's existence and legitimacy.

THE SHARON PROSECUTION

In 1993, Belgium had adopted legislation incorporating the principle of "universal jurisdiction" for war crimes and crimes against humanity into Belgian law. This meant that anyone of any nationality suspected of carrying out such crimes anywhere in the world could be tried in Belgium. Only once, however, had anyone been successfully prosecuted under the law: in 2001, four Rwandans were convicted of involvement in crimes of genocide against the Tutsi minority during the 1994 civil war in that country.

In June 2001, survivors of the September 1982 massacres in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps for Palestinians near Beirut filed suit in Belgium against Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon and a number of others. The charges were war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. (The Kahan Commission, which Israel set up at the time to investigate the massacres, had ruled that as defense minister, Sharon bore indirect responsibility, and he had to resign his post.) But even though Lebanese

Christian militiamen carried out the killings, the Belgian and Lebanese lawyers for the plaintiffs argued that Sharon, as the government minister in charge of Israeli forces at the time, was in control of the area where the massacres occurred and therefore bore criminal responsibility.

Sharon's lawyers countered that the case was politically motivated. They pointed out that war-crimes charges had been brought in Belgium against 30 other world leaders, including Yasir Arafat, Saddam Hussein, and Fidel Castro, but only Sharon's case had been expedited for prosecution. They also noted that none of the Lebanese militia leaders who had actually perpetrated the massacres had been charged, and that the plaintiffs had waited until Sharon became prime minister to launch their complaint. The Belgian government, for its part, was unhappy with the prosecution, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commenting that it caused "diplomatic embarrassment" for Belgium and made it more difficult for the country to play an evenhanded role in the Middle East.

Several pretrial hearings were held during 2001 to determine the admissibility of the case. On January 23, 2002, came the announcement that an appeals court would rule on the complaint on March 6. In defiance of the separation between judicial and legislative branches mandated by Belgian law, two members of the country's Senate, Vincent van Quickenborne and Josy Dubie, were especially eager to help the prosecution (the former, a lawyer and the youngest person ever elected to the Senate, originally expressed eagerness to argue the case against Sharon in court himself). The two men traveled to Lebanon in January to persuade witnesses to come to Belgium and testify.

One of the people they met with, Elie Hobeika, reputedly the militia leader who actually ordered the massacres but who was not named in the suit, told them that he would like to testify and present "irrefutable proof" of his own innocence and Sharon's guilt, but that he felt "threatened." Two days later, on January 24, Hobeika was killed by a car bomb planted by unknown parties. Sharon's detractors immediately suggested an Israeli hand in the car bombing, but Hobeika had many enemies who might have wanted him dead.

The appeals court decision was postponed until June 26. On that day—after a delay of nearly two hours—the court issued a 22-page ruling voiding the complaint against Sharon. It was based on a provision of Belgian law dating back to 1878 stating that proceedings could be initiated only if the crime took place on Belgian soil or if the suspect was himself

located in Belgian territory at the time of prosecution. Israel and its supporters applauded the decision as a triumph of justice over anti-Israel prejudice, while Palestinians and their sympathizers complained that American Jewish and U.S. government pressure on the judges had thwarted the demands of justice. The decision in fact followed the precedent set by the recent case of Ndombasi Yerodia, a former foreign minister of the Republic of the Congo, whose prosecution for inciting racial hatred in his home country had been thrown out in April because he was not then on Belgian soil.

The plaintiffs immediately launched an appeal to the Court of Cassation in Brussels, Belgium's supreme court for criminal cases—with backing from Amnesty International and other nongovernmental human-rights agencies—maintaining that the principle of universal jurisdiction was at stake. Meanwhile, legislators sympathetic to the Palestinians announced that they would propose repeal of the 1878 law barring criminal prosecutions for actions outside the country if the suspect was not situated in Belgium.

Those pressing the case against Sharon were heartened in November, when the Court of Cassation overturned the appeals court ruling in the Yerodia case and reinstated criminal proceedings against the former Congolese minister. Also, the high court postponed ruling on the appeal of the Sharon case, a move widely interpreted as providing time for the Belgian Parliament to pass legislation canceling the 1878 provision and explicitly introducing universal jurisdiction into the country's law code.

Anti-Semitism

Unlike several other European countries, Belgium had no bureau or organization that monitored incidents of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, no one could doubt the fact of an upsurge in violence against Jews during 2002 that created an exceedingly hostile climate for them. To a great extent this was linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and perhaps triggered particularly by the Sharon prosecution. There were some in the Jewish community who refused to call what was happening anti-Semitism, preferring to ascribe the incidents solely to Middle Eastern tensions. Already in December 2001, Belgian Jews were shocked to learn that Rabbi Albert Guigi of Brussels had been roughed up by young men of Moroccan descent. The following catalog of incidents for 2002, far from complete, provides a representative sample:

January 25—Swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans were found plastered over the baggage of El Al passengers at Brussels National Airport. According to authorities, the deed was committed in the off-limits, “secure” area of the airport.

March 4—Local youths threw stones at the synagogue in Rue de la Clinique, in the Brussels borough of Anderlecht, shattering several windows.

April 1—Five firebombs were launched on that same synagogue around midnight. No witnesses were found. Luckily, the fire brigade doused the fire quickly and the damage was contained.

April 3—Molotov cocktails were hurled at the back of the Bouwmeesterstraat Synagogue in Antwerp, which belonged to the strictly Orthodox Shomre Hadass community and was the city’s oldest synagogue.

April 22—Charleroi’s synagogue was hit by shots from an automatic rifle, apparently fired from a car. Eighteen holes made by 9-mm bullets were found on the building.

May 3—Several Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Sephardi Synagogue (Rue du Pavillon) in Brussels during the night. The bottles hit the synagogue wall but failed to explode or do any damage.

May 5—As the European Rabbinical Conference was meeting in Brussels, a group of rabbis who had gotten off a train at the Central Station was insulted and called “dirty Jews.” A youth of North African descent spit on them.

May 14—The wall of a playground in the Saint Gilles borough of Brussels was defaced with graffiti reading “TSAHAL=SS” and “SHARON=ASSASSIN.” (TSAHAL was the Hebrew acronym for the Israel Defense Force.)

August 29—An anonymous call to the French-language state broadcasting network warned that a bomb was going to explode in one of the synagogues in the Brussels Region at 1:30 in the afternoon. The synagogues went on alert, but nothing happened.

September 8—A Jewish family was attacked on Place de Bethléem (Bethlehem Square!), in Brussels. The incident began with insults, and when the father responded, the assailants punched him and his children.

October 3—A Brussels family with a subscription to the *Jerusalem Post* received its mailed copy covered with swastikas.

October 19—The windows of three cars belonging to people attending a pro-Israel event in the Brussels borough of Schaerbeek, or-

ganized by Israel Bonds, were smashed, and swastikas were carved on the cars.

In 2002 the Jewish community continued to rely on its collaborative relationship with the police and gendarmerie (paramilitary federal police) that had been in place for over two decades, to provide heightened surveillance for the country's Jewish institutions and their buildings. These officials worked in tandem with the Jewish community's own security service, set up by the Central Consistory, which had a staff of paid professionals assisted by several dozen young volunteers trained in self-defense and antiterrorism tactics. On February 18, the Orthodox community of Schaerbeek and the Sephardi community of Brussels organized a brief ceremony of tribute to Schaerbeek's police force—its canine brigade in particular—to thank them for ensuring the community's safety.

Holocaust Restitution and Remembrance

The 1995 commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the country's liberation and the end of World War II triggered a new awareness of the Holocaust. It also coincided with the opening of government archives that had remained closed for 50 years under the laws governing the declassification of official documents.

Belgium voluntarily contributed the equivalent of \$1 million to the compensation fund set up in the aftermath of the conference on gold stolen by the Nazis that took place in London in December 1997. This sum was subsequently paid out to the Jewish community and split between the country's two Jewish museums, the Jewish Museum in Brussels and the Museum of the Deportation and Resistance in Mechelen. The Belgian Jewish community and the Belgian government participated in several subsequent international conferences on the Holocaust.

On July 6, 1997, the Belgian government, following the precedent set by France and the Netherlands, created a National Study Commission to determine what happened to Jewish-owned assets during the Holocaust era. It consisted of five senior civil servants representing government ministries; representatives of the country's war victims; a retired judge; two historians; and four representatives of Belgian Jewry.

Its final report, submitted in July 2001, detailed the role played by the country's banks, insurance companies, and government officials in the disposal of the assets and the approximate worth of what was taken by each sector. To implement the report, the government proposed a bill pro-

viding for the restitution of the stolen assets to the victims and their heirs in the Jewish community. It called for the creation of a new commission to examine the validity of all submitted claims and the conditions for returning assets or paying out compensation. A portion of the sums collected from banks, insurance companies, and the Belgian state would go toward the creation of a foundation, managed jointly by representatives of the country's Jewish institutions and government appointees, that would use the interest generated by its endowment to finance social, cultural, and educational projects. This legislation was adopted in November 2001. The exact amount of the endowment was not yet known, but the Belgian Jewish community's National Commission for Restitution was already meeting regularly in preparation for the foundation's creation, and negotiating with banks, insurance companies, and government bodies.

In addition, a law passed in December 1998 provided that Jews living in Belgium during World War II who were not Belgian nationals could henceforth claim the status of political prisoners, a designation with moral but no financial implications. The Jewish community had earlier secured government recognition of this status for hidden children, hidden adults, and the orphans of deportees. In 2001, however, the community demanded compensation for the Jewish orphans as well as for other children and adults who lived in hiding during the war. The number of surviving Jews who had lived in Belgium at some time between 1940 and 1945 was not expected to exceed 5,000, including 300 deportees and 3,000 hidden children (1,800 of them orphaned). France and the Netherlands already provided such compensation.

In 2002, the National Commission for Restitution finalized an agreement for the creation of the national foundation that would manage the balance of funds that could not be returned to descendants of the despoiled families. Moreover, the government recognized a special legal status for hidden children and Jewish deportees that would place them on the same footing as political deportees, with the same privileges and benefits. The status of the country's Jewish war orphans remained to be settled.

A number of public events related to the Holocaust took place during the year. The CCOJB organized a ceremony at the Memorial to the Jewish Martyrs of Belgium on March 8, the day officially marked in Belgium for commemorating the Holocaust. Prime Minister Verhofstadt and other top officials addressed the gathering. In October, several members of Parliament held a press conference to announce the launching of an in-

vestigation into the responsibility of Belgian authorities for the deportation of the country's Jews. Later that month, at a ceremony on the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the deportations, the prime minister said that the country must acknowledge and assume responsibility for them.

The Auschwitz Foundation brought 87 Belgian teachers on its annual study trip to Auschwitz in April. The foundation also provided schools and organizations with speakers on the topic of the Holocaust—some of them camp survivors—maintained a traveling exhibit about the concentration camps, and ran a cycle of four seminars for teachers to delve deeply into the Nazi genocide.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of Belgium was estimated at around 31,400. While the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the communist regimes stimulated Jewish immigration from the East, this influx was more than offset by the emigration of young people to North America and Israel, and the low Jewish birthrate. The rate of intermarriage was estimated at around 50 percent.

As Jewish activities came increasingly to be concentrated in the large urban centers of Brussels and Antwerp, each home to about 15,000 Jews, smaller Jewish communities such as those of Liège and Charleroi grew smaller. The community was rapidly aging overall, though more so in Brussels than in Antwerp, where the large Orthodox presence included many young families.

Religion

The Belgian constitution guaranteed freedom of religion and provided for government financial support to all recognized faiths. Even before Belgian independence in 1830, when the country was under the control of Napoleonic France, Jewish communities were organized under the consistorial system that had been established for French Jews in 1808. That framework, the Jewish Central Consistory of Belgium, comprised 16 communities in 2002, two of them Sephardi (one in Brussels, the other in Antwerp) and the rest Ashkenazi. Consistorial policy was set by an as-

sembly whose 40 delegates were elected democratically by their respective communities.

The Central Consistory was the uncontested religious and moral authority of Belgian Jewry, and not only because it was the oldest Jewish institution in the country. By encompassing all of Belgium it brought together in one federation all Jewish communities despite their varied ideological currents—from Orthodoxy to moderate religious liberalism—and thus included the vast majority of the Jewish population. The Central Consistory also personified the model of Jewish integration into modern Western society. As the representative institution of Judaism in Belgium, it engaged in dialogue with other religions, and, like the representative institutions of all the recognized faiths, the Consistory was given radio and television slots for broadcasts in French and Dutch.

Belgium hosted the 23rd annual European Conference of Rabbis, held in the Charlemagne Building of the European Communities, May 2–5, 2002. This exceptional event brought together rabbis not only from all over Europe but also from Israel and the U.S. This year's topic was "The Concept of the Jewish Family in Europe." The conference was conducted under the patronage of Prof. Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission, who addressed the participants, as did Viviane Reding, the EC commissioner in charge of education, culture, youth, the media, and sports. Immediately after the conference, on May 5–6, the Central Consistory—Union of Jewish Communities of France held its European Council Meeting of Synagogue Organizations there.

The last official chief rabbi of Belgium retired in 1980. To help fill the rabbinical vacuum, the Consistory had prevailed upon the Justice Ministry in 1996 to create the position of regional chief rabbi. In 2001 there were four such governmentally recognized rabbis, two in Brussels—one for the general community and the other for the strictly Orthodox—and two in Antwerp, one for each of the main Orthodox communities. In addition, Rabbi Albert Guigui, rabbi of the Brussels general community since 1983 and thus one of the regional rabbis, was given special responsibility as rabbinic advisor to the Consistory, making him, in effect, a *de facto* chief rabbi.

BRUSSELS

The Great Synagogue, built in 1878, was the center of religious life for the Jewish Community of Brussels (JCB). Recognized by the govern-

ment as a national historic landmark, the synagogue was also the site for major communal ceremonies. Even though it was Orthodox, it had traditionally featured organ music on Sabbath and holidays, as well as a mixed male-female choir. Albert Guigi, however, the present rabbi, eliminated both practices, arguing the need to bring the JCB into line with other Orthodox Jewish communities.

Rabbi Israël Chaikin, the other “regional rabbi” in Brussels, led the Orthodox communities of the boroughs of Saint Gilles and Schaerbeek, and presided over Beth Israel Synagogue. In addition, the Maale community had become attractive to a number of young Jewish academics who were sympathetic to the Orthodox tradition. The Sephardi Synagogue of Brussels was noted for taking the initiative in meeting with Muslims. In 1999 the Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel came to Brussels to install Rabbi Chalom Benizri as the city’s Sephardi chief rabbi.

The borough of Forest had the greatest concentration of Orthodox Jews. There were two relatively new *shtieblach* (prayer rooms) run by Orthodox Sephardi Jews, one sponsored by Chabad. An ultramodern *mikveh* (ritual bath) was located in this borough, installed in the headquarters of the Brussels Bet Din (religious court), which supervised it. There was also a Sephardi Community Center set up primarily for educating Jewish children living in the area.

The Liberal Jewish community in Brussels, whose synagogue, Beth Hillel, was also in Forest, grew gradually after World War II at the initiative of a group of American Jews, and most of the current officers were formerly affiliated with the Great Synagogue in the city. Though the Ministry of Justice recognized this community, thus putting it on a par with the Orthodox communities, it was not accredited by the Consistory. Nevertheless, its activities that were not of a religious nature were represented within the Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCOJB).

ANTWERP

Three Antwerp communities were represented within the Consistory, all labeled “Orthodox.” The largest was Shomre Hadass, which supervised important religious activities as well as the Tachkemoni School. Machsike Hadass was a federation of all the city’s Hassidic groups and considered itself more strictly Orthodox than Shomre Hadass. It had its own kashrut certification system. The “Portuguese” community, smaller than the other two, was supported by many Sephardi Jews.

Jewish Education

The Consistory played a key role in Jewish education. Two of its appointees, rabbis who held the title of "religious inspectors," supervised the teaching of Jewish religion to Jewish students in the nation's public schools. These classes were voluntary, but the right to attend them was guaranteed by Belgian law. About 60 percent of public-school children from Jewish families in Brussels and 30 percent in Antwerp attended them. In addition, the Consistory largely funded, directly or indirectly, the three large Jewish schools in Brussels (attended by some 2,000 children) and all the Jewish schools in Antwerp (attended by some 5,000 children). A significant percentage of Belgian Jewish children attended Jewish schools (the ratio in Antwerp outstripped that in Brussels), and it was probably the highest of any European Jewish community.

Of the three schools in Brussels, the Maimonides Athenaeum was the most religiously traditional and had the most intensive program of Jewish studies. It had a large nursery school, a primary school, and a secondary school. The Ganenou Athenaeum, which had grown exponentially over the previous few years, had started primarily to service the children of Israelis living in the country. It now had a secondary school offering excellent preparation for university study. The third and newest school, Beth Aviv, consisted of a nursery school and a primary school.

In Antwerp more than 3,000 children attend the city's two main Jewish schools, Tachkemoni and Yesode Hatora. The latter was for the children of Orthodox families only, and boys and girls were taught separately. Both institutions had secondary schools, and Yesode Hatora also had a program for training future elementary-school teachers. Yavne, a third large Jewish school in Antwerp, was run by Modern Orthodox Jews, and included the teaching of Zionism. The Hassidic Jews of the Belz and Satmar movements had their own schools in Antwerp, attended by nearly 800 kindergarten and primary-school pupils. The Jewish community also supported Tikvatenu, a school and center for children with mental and physical disabilities servicing more than 100 children.

There was an Orthodox yeshivah in the Brussels borough of Forest that had been functioning for over 20 years. In Antwerp there were two such yeshivahs, attended primarily by Hassidic youths, as well as a weekly *kollel* (intensive seminar) that brought together erudite adult scholars for the study of Jewish texts.

The Jewish Studies Institute (originally known as the Martin Buber Institute), the first school of its kind to be established in Europe, operated

under the auspices of Brussels Free University (ULB), and some of its academic courses were recognized as part of the regular curriculum of the university. Besides the regular two-year curriculum leading to a degree, the institute held seminars on Jewish topics for secondary-school teachers and summer classes in Yiddish. The institute's Dutch section, originally located at the ULB's sister institutions, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), was moved to Antwerp's university center (Instituut voor Joodse Studies at the UIA) and was expected to become gradually more independent from the Brussels section.

In addition, almost all of the Belgian universities had programs in Jewish studies.

Communal Institutions

The Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCOJB) had 41 affiliates in 2002. It was recognized, along with the Central Consistory, as a representative spokesman for Belgium's Jewish community in dealings of a political nature with Belgian and foreign official bodies, such as, for example, on the question of Holocaust restitution.

Most of Antwerp's Jewish institutions, however, stayed out of the CCOJB and founded the Forum der Joodse Organisaties (Forum of Jewish Organizations) in 1994 to represent Dutch-speaking Jews to the authorities of the Flemish Community. Both it and the CCOJB participated in the Central Consistory.

In the area of social welfare, the Brussels-based Centrale des Oeuvres sociales juives (Central Administration of Jewish Welfare Organizations) was primarily a fund-raising body, much like the federation system in the U.S. The money raised went to the Jewish Social Service (equivalent to Jewish family and children's services in the U.S. and open to all, regardless of religion), an old people's home, the three Jewish schools in Brussels, two cultural centers, an athletic center, summer camps, and an education loan fund, all of which also sought to raise money on their own. The Central Administration published a cultural magazine, *La Centrale*.

A similar coordinating role in Antwerp, where bad economic conditions and the 1996 collapse of the Fischer Bank had greatly increased the number of people needing assistance, was played by the Central Beheer van Joodse Weldadigheid en Maatschappelijk Hulpbetton (Central Administration for Social Welfare Organizations). Its most recent achieve-

ment was the creation of the Queen Elisabeth Residence, consisting of studio apartments for elderly persons.

The *Belgisch Israëlitisch Weekblad* (BIW) was the only regular Jewish newspaper in the country. A weekly, it was published in Antwerp by Louis Davids, who was also the head of an association to promote the Flemish language in the Jewish community. The paper reported on Jewish life in Antwerp and avidly defended Israel.

The Cercle Ben Gurion (Ben-Gurion Circle) was founded in 1977 by socialist Zionists in Brussels to counteract anti-Israel propaganda. Among its activities were a youth center with seminars, festivals, tournaments, Hebrew and Bible classes, Sabbath dinners, and trips. In 1987 it began publishing a monthly on Jewish issues. Most important, the circle created the first Jewish community radio station in Europe, Radio Judaica, on March 11, 1980, and it quickly became a force to reckon with in Belgium and elsewhere in Europe. It broadcast on matters of interest to the Jewish community, providing a forum for the expression of diverse points of view, round the clock Sunday through Friday. In a sense, Radio Judaica became the voice of Belgium's Jewish community.

A number of other pro-Israel organizations operated in Belgium. The Centre d'Information et de Documentation (Center for Information and Documentation, or CID), created in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, promoted understanding of Israel and its security concerns, especially in the media. Since the start of the second intifada, Solidarité avec Israël (Solidarity with Israel) had collected funds for Israeli projects. L'Aide médicale à Israël, an association of doctors and members of the allied paramedical professions, created in 1967 and now working under the aegis of Solidarité avec Israël, raised money for Israel's hospitals and health-care projects. There were also groups allied with specific Israeli educational and social institutions, and with the different Israeli political parties. Finally, the Maccabis, the country's oldest Jewish athletic association, organized in a Brussels section and an Antwerp section, promoted sports in the Jewish community and participated regularly in the international Maccabiah in Israel.

The Jewish Secular Community Center (CCLJ), founded by former communists, was the most important voice of secular Judaism, and its headquarters was one of the most active meeting places for Brussels Jewry. The CCLJ organized lectures, colloquia, and seminars on ethnic, historical, and cultural topics outside the traditional religious structure, as well as Yiddish and Hebrew courses. Its members tended to be politi-

cal leftists, favoring a negotiated peace in the Middle East and the creation of a Palestinian State. The CCLJ prepared children for a “secular bar mitvah” at age 13 and published the magazine *Regards*, the most widely read Jewish magazine in the community.

The Union of Jewish Progressives of Belgium (Union des Progressistes Juifs de Belgique, or UPJB) was situated even farther to the left than the CCLJ and had a much smaller following, most of whom belonged to the Ecolo and Socialist parties. The organization was not only pro-Palestinian but openly supportive of the PLO. Like the CCLJ, it sponsored activities centered on Jewish history and culture, and the Yiddish language. Its monthly, *Points Critiques* (Critical Points), and its quarterly, *Entre Points Critiques* (Between Critical Points), had very limited circulation. The Jewish community of Belgium excluded the UPJB from federative institutions such as the CCOJB.

L’Union des Etudiants juifs de Belgique (UEJB, Jewish Students’ Union of Belgium) was created in the wake of World War II to bring the Jewish students of the entire country under one organizational structure. Most of the current leaders of the community had been active in the UEJB when they were students. In 2002 it had several hundred members from the country’s main universities, and constituted a chapter of the World Union of Jewish Students.

The Conseil des Femmes Juives (Jewish Women’s Council), an affiliate of the International Council of Jewish Women, defended the rights of Jewish women, particularly in regard to the problem of the *agunot* (women whose husbands refused to give them a Jewish divorce).

Interreligious Relations

CHRISTIANS

The Central Consistory remained deeply involved in relations with Belgian Christians, especially the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed the allegiance of some 90 percent of the population. The Consistorial Commission for Pluralistic Relations had conducted these activities for more than a quarter-century.

There was another organization, Organe de Concertation entre Juifs et Chrétiens (OCJB), a consensus-building body for Jews and Christians. It promoted regular “summit meetings” among Protestants, Catholics,

and Jews to review issues facing them, especially on educational matters and on major international events. An ongoing aim of the Belgian Jewish community was to ensure that schoolbooks did not include negative Christian stereotypes about Jews. The OCJB worked with the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) in Europe and globally to carry on dialogue between Jews and Christians.

Jewish-Catholic dialogue groups existed in the main cities of Belgium where Jews lived. Seminars, colloquia, and other meetings were held regularly in a climate of mutual respect. The Brussels chapter of B'nai B'rith also organized a number of Jewish-Christian dialogue groups in coordination with the Consistory.

Jews participated in a number of joint events with the Sisters of Zion group during 2002, all designed to enhance Christian-Jewish understanding and promote peace in the world. On November 25, the CCOJB presented a medal to the Sisters of Zion for their interfaith work.

MUSLIMS

After World War II, Belgium brought in immigrant workers from North Africa and Turkey to work in its mines, steel mills, and other heavy industries. Two-thirds of this group were of Moroccan descent; the remaining third were primarily Turkish nationals, but also included Algerians, Tunisians, Pakistanis, Albanians, and others. There were some 300 mosques in Belgium.

The Executive of Muslims of Belgium (EMB), the Muslim equivalent of the Central Consistory of the Jews, was created in 1998. It was the official representative, to the government and to the Jewish community, of all those claiming the Islamic faith, with the right to recognize mosques and certify the credentials of imams and religious teachers. There was also a Federation of Unions of Mosques, made up of eight associations of mosques totaling 140 individual mosques in Belgium. It represented only North African, mostly Moroccan, mosques. There was a separate federation of Kurdish and Turkish mosques.

Despite the growing number of incidents of young Muslim men vandalizing Jewish property and attacking Jews, relations between the Muslim and Jewish communities and institutions were generally proper and peaceful. Personal relations between the rabbis (who were often themselves of Moroccan descent and spoke Arabic fluently) and the imams were courteous. One or another imam at the Great Mosque of Brussels

had received representatives of the Jewish community on several occasions, just as Jewish leaders received representatives of the EMB at the Consistory. Each time an incident occurred, such as the attack on Rabbi Guigui in December 2001, the president of the Consistory and the president of the Muslim Executive issued a statement calling for calm and mutual respect.

During 2002, the CCOJB held several meetings with leaders of the Muslim community in the hope of cementing good relations between the two religious groups. The official reopening of the Orthodox Synagogue of Brussels on April 20, the day commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, turned into an ecumenical demonstration against group hatred as a dozen Muslim leaders and several Belgian political figures participated. And yet observers noted a palpable change as the year wore on, as Muslim leaders, expressing intense anger over Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, tended to withdraw somewhat from their earlier engagement with the Jewish community.

Culture

On March 10, as part of its ongoing series on Halakhah and modernity, the Consistory's Women's Commission held a colloquium on the role of women in Jewish liturgy. It took place on the campus of Brussels Free University (ULB).

The Jewish Social Service continued to run its programs in Yiddish for senior citizens—one of the last remaining places in Brussels where Yiddish remained a living language. Many of the lectures and discussion groups in 2002 were devoted to the theme of the return of Jewish property stolen during World War II. Jewish Social Service also set up a permanent exhibition on the photographic work and writings of Luc and Viviane Rabine.

The Jewish Museum of Belgium, initiated by leaders of the Consistory in 1980 to display the art and history of the Belgian Jewish community, teach visitors something about the Jewish religion, and demonstrate the Jewish contribution to Belgian life, was now run by a nonprofit organization, Pro Museo Judaico. On November 4, 2002, an agreement was signed with the government giving the museum the right to occupy all buildings at 21 Rue des Minimes. The next evening, the first exhibition at the new site opened, "Setting Up a New Museum." It was attended by leaders of the Jewish community, political figures, and leading academics.

The Jewish Museum of Deportation and Resistance was located in Mechelin on the site of the Dossin Barracks holding camp where Belgian Jews and Gypsies had been taken to await deportation. Some 30,000 people visited the museum annually, the great majority of them high-school seniors brought by their schools. As it did each year, the museum participated in European Jewish Culture Day, which, in 2002, took place in June. Its aim was to introduce the public—Jews and non-Jews—to the variety of Jewish culture. In July, the museum participated in Flemish Museum Night, which attracted many visitors. The museum also organized two concerts of Jewish music under the aegis of the Flanders Festival. The first, in October, featured liturgical music sung by the choir of Antwerp's municipal synagogue, accompanied by its cantor. At the second, in November, the music was klezmer. From September through November, the museum hosted a major exhibition on the history of the Jews of Lithuania, with the help of the Lithuanian embassy and Mechelen's Municipal Cultural Center.

The Contemporary Memory Foundation (La Fondation de la Mémoire contemporaine) sponsored a number of research projects in 2002, among them studies of the illegal immigration of Belgian Jews into Palestine before 1948 and of Jewish education under the Nazi occupation. Catherine Massange's manuscript on the history of Jewish Social Service since 1944 was published in 2002 under the title *Bâtir le Lendemain—L'aide aux Israélites victimes de la guerre et le Service Social Juif de 1944 à nos jours*. The foundation also prepared for publication the fourth volume in its *Cahiers de la Mémoire Contemporaine* series, and made progress on its project to establish a map of Jewish memory in Belgium, *Lieux de Mémoire—pour une géographie de la mémoire juive de Belgique*. This involved a methodical search through the country's archives to establish a list of towns, villages, and other sites of significance in Belgian Jewish history.

The Jewish Secular Community Center (CCLJ) sponsored numerous events during the year focusing on Jewish cultural topics and on the situation in the Middle East. Among the featured speakers were Foreign Minister Louis Michel; Theo Klein, honorary president of CRIF and founding president of the European Jewish Congress; Elie Barnavi, Israel's ambassador to France; Shaul Amor, Israel's ambassador to Belgium; Jacques Attali, author of a new book on the connection between Jews and money; and Yossi Beilin, Israel's former justice minister. Over several days at the end of November, the center held a colloquium on "Where is Israel Heading: We Are All Concerned."

Personalia

Baron Jean Bloch, an outstanding figure in Belgian Jewish life, passed away March 30, 2002. Among other positions, he had served as president of the Central Administration of Jewish Welfare Organizations (Centrale d'oeuvres sociales) and the Jewish Central Consistory. As a young man, Bloch fled to England after Belgium capitulated at the start of World War II, and became a company commander in the independent Belgian Legion. He participated, with the famous Piron Brigade, in the Normandy campaign and the liberation of Brussels. In the last years of his life, this exceptional eyewitness worked on a book that would relate the Jewish community's role in the fight against Hitler. He completed the manuscript a few days before his death, and it was published in December 2002 under the title *Epreuves et Combats 1940–1945—Histoires d'hommes et de femmes issus de la collectivité juive de Belgique*.

The last surviving chief rabbi of Belgium, Robert Dreyfus, died in Israel on April 12, close to 90 years old. He was the oldest of the 25 French-born rabbis living in Israel, and one of the few whose rabbinical career had begun before World War II.

GEORGES SCHNEK
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The Netherlands

National Affairs

THE NETHERLANDS REMAINED the most densely populated country in Europe even though its net population growth decreased from 118,000 in 2001 to 88,000 in 2002. The number of immigrants arriving in the country during the year was 124,000, down from 133,000 in 2001, and emigration out of the Netherlands increased.

The influx of Muslim immigrants from countries like Morocco and Turkey, however, remained fairly stable, and the population growth of non-Western inhabitants was eight times the overall rate. Many lived in the poorer inner-city neighborhoods. In 2002, their number was estimated at 1.6 million, or 10 percent of the general population. Because of a higher birthrate and a tendency to “import” relatively young spouses from their countries of origin, this percentage was even higher in the younger age brackets, and would undoubtedly continue to rise.

The assimilation of such immigrants into Dutch society was high on the priority list of Pim Fortuyn, the right-wing populist whose rise and fall dramatically shook up Holland’s normally stable politics in 2002.

The ruling government coalition, made up of Labor (PvdA), Conservative Liberals (VVD), and the small center-left Democrats 1966 (D’66), had begun its tenure in August 1998. Wim Kok, PvdA leader for 15 years, was due to be succeeded by Ad Melkert after the May 15 elections. But on April 16 the government abruptly resigned over the findings of a report of what happened in the Balkans seven years earlier. Dutch troops had been guarding the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica in July 1995 when it was taken by Bosnian Serbs, who then massacred some 7,400 men whom the Dutch were supposed to protect. Kok was vice premier at the time. The 2002 report from the Dutch Institute for Wartime Documentation did not blame the Dutch government and troops for failing to prevent the massacre. But critics said the report was both too lenient and too late: the 1995 government should have taken appropriate action, and its successors should have investigated.

Thus the major political parties went into the elections under a cloud, most with new leaders. PvdA candidate Melkert was much less popular than Kok had been; Christian Democrat leader Jan Pieter Balkenende

was nicknamed "Harry Potter." Pim Fortuyn, the flamboyant leader of a new party called Livable Netherlands, made mincemeat of them in public debates.

Fortuyn "has the guts to say what we think," his followers said. The 54-year-old former Marxist held fiercely anti-immigrant views, calling for a halt to immigration on the grounds that Holland was "full up." Yet he angrily rejected comparisons between himself and other European far-right leaders, notably Austria's Jörg Haider and France's Jean-Marie Le Pen. He said of Le Pen: "I am appalled by his anti-Semitic thoughts. A man who describes the Holocaust as a footnote in history is beyond my comprehension." Fortuyn charged that Muslims posed a threat to such Dutch national values as full rights for women and gays. Islam was clearly what he had in mind when he claimed that Holland was much too tolerant towards intolerant cultures. Openly gay himself, he called Islam a "retarded culture" that rejected modern values, and said that antiracism clauses should be struck from the national constitution because they impeded the freedom of speech.

On February 9, Livable Netherlands removed its popular leader for airing these views in a newspaper interview, but two days later he had his own party, the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF). In the Rotterdam municipal election on March 6, the LPF went from zero to being the largest party in the city council. National polls predicted that the LPF might get one-fifth of the May 15 vote. But on the evening of May 6, just one week before the national elections, Fortuyn was assassinated by a left-wing environmental activist, Volkert van der Graaf. This was the first political murder in the Netherlands since 1672, and the Dutch public, still appalled by the violence of September 11, 2001, was in a state of shock. Thousands came to a memorial service for Fortuyn, and the pavement in front of his house was covered with flowers. Fortuyn's followers accused the media, the political establishment, and left-wing groups of "demonizing" their leader. After threats were made against politicians, many of them hired bodyguards.

Dutch Jews, while echoing the sense of national shock at the assassination, also conveyed deep ambivalence about Fortuyn's political views. Some Jews had joined his party, but others abhorred it. Ronny Naftaniel, a member of the Netherlands Central Jewish Organization, highlighted the assassinated leader's contradictory impact on the country's Jewish population. "Fortuyn was one of very few politicians who was definitely pro-Israel," he said. "On the other hand, he also called wartime restitu-

tion money 'our money,' claiming that Dutch leaders were 'giving in to the Jewish lobby.'" Orthodox Rabbi Shmuel Spiero said that he "wouldn't have voted for Fortuyn." But he added: "It's a great shame. His views about Israel won't be heard anymore." A Jewish law student in Amsterdam explained that he had intended to vote for Fortuyn: "He's anti-Muslim. We lost an ally," he said.

The now leaderless LPF was the big winner on May 15, going from 0 to 26 seats in the 150-member lower house of parliament. The Christian Democrats (CDA), also winners, became the largest party, but still needed others to form a majority coalition. PvdA, VVD, and D'66, which had made up the previous government, all lost dramatically. After difficult negotiations, CDA's Jan Pieter Balkenende formed a government of CDA, VVD, and LPF. But conflicts were rife among the inexperienced "new politicians" in the LPF. On October 16, Balkenende's government disintegrated due to a conflict between two of its LPF ministers. It had lasted 87 days. For the remainder of 2002, the country was ruled by a wobbly minority government left over from Balkenende's cabinet.

The Jewish community was traditionally close to the Dutch royal family, and Jewish leaders were invited to the marriage of Crown Prince Willem Alexander to Maxima Zorreguieta. Some attended even though the ceremony took place in an Amsterdam church on the Sabbath, February 2. The death on October 6 of Prince Claus, husband of Queen Beatrix, deeply affected many members of the community. Beatrix's marriage to the German-born Claus had originally met with much resistance in the Jewish community, particularly since he once had been a member of the Hitler Youth. Claus, however, never sought to deny his past, expressed his regret, and befriended many members of the Jewish community.

The Dutch economy, which had already slowed significantly in 2001, ground to a standstill as the international economic situation deteriorated. By the end of 2002, the projected rate of economic growth for 2003 was set at 0.75 percent, as compared to as much as 4 percent in recent years. Unemployment, which had declined from half a million in 1996 to a quarter million in 2001, went up by 50,000 to reach 300,000, a level last seen in 1999. Unemployment among immigrants, though declining, was still much higher than among the general population (among those of Moroccan origin, it was three times as high). More people fell below the poverty line, and, with prices rising due to the introduction of the euro currency, even some who were not poor found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

In May, the euro received the Karel Award for promoting European cooperation. The award was presented to Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch president of the European Central Bank.

Israel and the Middle East

Tourism to Israel was still down at the beginning of 2002, and reached an all-time low when the IDF reentered the territories after the Passover suicide bombing in Netanya (see above, pp. 198–99). Dutch Jews who had been spending Passover in Israel returned to a severe culture shock. The media, the politicians, and ordinary Dutch citizens appeared to have forgotten the many terror attacks against civilians that provoked the IDF actions, and rumors about a massacre in Jenin were widely believed. Former foreign minister Hans van den Broek (CDA) called Sharon “the Nero of Israel” and implicitly compared him to Hitler. Prime Minister Kok held Israel—and particularly Sharon—responsible for the “escalating violence,” and supported the efforts of his foreign minister, Jozias van Aartsen (VVD), to convince the EU and the U.S. to issue a joint reprimand. The atmosphere had become more anti-Israel than ever, and it spilled over into anti-Semitism.

In Amsterdam on April 13, demonstrators against the Israeli occupation of the Territories burned Israeli flags and carried anti-Semitic banners. They even attacked those they recognized as Jews, chasing an American tourist into the Krasnapolsky Hotel, which they then pelted with stones. A small group of Jewish young people later presented members of parliament with photos, banners, and burned flags taken from the scene. Almost (but not quite) all the parties voiced concern about this new anti-Semitism. (One member of the left-wing Jewish dissident group Another Jewish Voice, however, who had joined the demonstration and was seen standing beneath a swastika, said he hadn’t noticed anything anti-Semitic.)

The demonstration included not only Moroccan youngsters who identified with Palestinians, but ordinary Dutch citizens as well. One of the latter was Wim Duisenberg’s wife, Gretta, carrying a Palestinian flag she had bought over the Internet for the occasion. It was to be the beginning of her activist career. After the demonstration, the 60-year-old Mrs. Duisenberg hung the PLO flag from the balcony of her house in an affluent Amsterdam neighborhood and left it there for six weeks. When her Jewish neighbors complained, she told them that “the rich Jews in America” enabled Israel to continue the “colonial oppression of the Palestin-

ian people.” A local Jewish lawyer filed a formal complaint against her for anti-Semitism and incitement. The case was dismissed, but Gretta Duisenberg soon provoked a second one. In June, she founded a new organization, “Stop the Occupation.” When a Dutch radio interviewer asked her how many signatures she hoped to collect for the new group, she responded “six million,” and laughed. This prompted a group of Jewish lawyers to file a second complaint with the Dutch attorney general. Duisenberg denied she was referring to the six million Jewish Holocaust victims. Again, the claim was dismissed, although the attorney general said that Duisenberg was “poisoning the atmosphere.”

In a telling indication of popular sympathies in the Middle East conflict, Mrs. Duisenberg was elected “Amsterdammer of 2002” by the readers of a national daily, and her husband, Wim, was widely admired for stating that he fully supported his wife. Still, some non-Jews, mainly evangelical Christians, joined a solidarity demonstration “for peace and against terrorism” in Amsterdam on April 21. Organized by students and heavily guarded by riot police, it drew about 1,500 people.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

The Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), which tracked anti-Semitic incidents, found that the increase in number and gravity of incidents that started in 2001 continued in 2002. In the first four months of 2002 alone, the number of incidents recorded, 110, was almost four times the number for the whole of 2001, 31. For the first (recorded) time after World War II, a Jew was threatened at gunpoint. Still, the situation was nowhere near as bad as in France and Belgium.

Anti-Semitic incidents were clearly related to the situation in Israel. Especially after the alleged Jenin “massacre,” the number of incidents rose considerably. They included verbal abuse, anti-Semitic e-mails, and physical threats. Many, though not all, of the incidents took place in Amsterdam—the city with the largest number of (recognizable) Jews. Orthodox Jewish men adjusted to the situation by wearing hats or caps in public—hardly anyone wore a *kippah* in the center of town.

There were many incidents (experts estimated as many as three out of every four) that went unrecorded, as Jews who sought police help and did not receive it gave up trying to report anti-Semitic occurrences to law-enforcement authorities. Incidents involving young people also often went unreported as Jewish children became used to the phenomenon. For example, a youth soccer team with recognizably Jewish players was sub-

jected to verbal and physical abuse by a Turkish-Moroccan team called Orient, in a game in Amsterdam. The referee ignored the situation, pretending not to see or hear what was going on. When two of the Jewish players had to be helped off the field—one with a torn ligament and the other with a concussion—Orient players waved them out with Hitler salutes. After the game, while they were in the showers, Orient players barricaded the door, and the Jewish team had to be “rescued” by adult members of their club who were called by mobile phone. The chairman of the Jewish club invited the Orient board to a meeting, but did not report the incident to the police.

This type of incident was not restricted to the streets and playing fields. Jewish children in non-Jewish schools met with varying reactions when reporting anti-Semitic abuse to school authorities, they told the Dutch Jewish weekly *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* (NIW). Some principals took firm and immediate action, but others ignored the incidents or even suggested that Jewish students provoked them. Anecdotal evidence indicated that the phenomenon was widespread, but no statistics were available.

In the last week of February, the Dutch Domestic Security Service published a report on Muslim schools. The service had been asked to undertake an investigation in 2001, in the wake of claims that some schools were inciting hatred; in one, for example, a copy of the magazine *Al Tawheed*, containing blatant anti-Semitism, had been circulated. The report, however, concentrated on the problem of integrating Muslim children into Dutch culture; anti-Semitism was only mentioned in a footnote.

One worrisome development was the rising popularity among young Dutch Moroccans of the Belgian-based Arab European League (AEL), which had already evoked tensions and anti-Semitic incidents in Belgium. At the end of 2002, AEL leader Abu Jahjah announced plans to establish Dutch branches of the organization in cities such as Utrecht and Amsterdam, which had large numbers of youngsters of Moroccan descent. In the Netherlands, the AEL appealed to those who felt threatened by the growing pressure to integrate into Dutch society, which they saw as forcing them to assimilate totally and give up their own Muslim culture. This was the very same group of malcontents who identified with Palestinians and were responsible for most of the anti-Semitic incidents in Holland.

Interestingly, some of the AEL's greatest adversaries were also to be found in the Moroccan community. Its leader, Abu Jahjah, an Arab from Lebanon, propagated “Arab pride,” but a large percentage (some said 90 percent) of Moroccans living in the Netherlands were not Arabs, but

rather Berbers from the Rift Mountains, most of whom did not speak Arabic. Many resisted the “Arabization” of their own culture in Morocco—though they are Muslims—and continued to do so in the Netherlands. For the same reason, they did not particularly identify with the Palestinians.

Countering ethnic tensions and anti-Semitism in Dutch society were intercultural initiatives that brought together worried Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the hope of jointly countering both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. The (Jewish) mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, set up one such interfaith group. There were other examples: a group of Jewish and Muslim students organized communal meals and discussions; Moroccan “neighborhood fathers” worked to get wayward youngsters back in line in inner-city neighborhoods where tensions had risen; and antiracist groups started projects to counteract prejudice and anti-Semitism in Dutch schools.

Holocaust Restitution

Many of the international and national restitution schemes that had been set in motion in 2000 continued.

In April, there was a “second distribution round” of restitution monies to individual Dutch survivors. The monies were put up by the government, banks, insurance companies, and the stock exchange in 2000 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 347–48). About \$235 million was available for distribution among an anticipated 50,000 Dutch survivors of the Holocaust, each of whom would receive \$5,500 from the fund. In those cases where a survivor died after the war, the money would go to the surviving spouse or be divided among the children. As of January 2002, about 26,000 claims had been satisfied. Just over 18,600 went to survivors and the rest to 14,000 heirs sharing a portion. Clearly, not all survivors or their families had been reached.

Of the unclaimed money, 20 percent was to be distributed to Jewish institutions for communal purposes, and the remainder went to individuals who qualified in the “second round.” However, dividing the money destined for communal purposes—“Jewish infrastructure”—in the Netherlands proved a lengthy process. Preparations continued all through 2002, and payments looked unlikely to start before the end of 2003 at the earliest. One problem was that only 28 percent of Dutch Jews were synagogue members, and a large majority of the rest was not associated with any Jewish organization at all. To assess the demand for Jewish activities,

a survey was held among some 250 organizations. Forms were sent out in the first week of January, but recommendations on how to distribute the money were not ready until the fall. Because of the small number of active Jewish leaders in the country and the relatively large number of organizations, most candidates for positions on a board to distribute the money had a vested interest in at least one organization that was hoping to make a claim. Detailed rules were clearly necessary for distribution, and discussions about these rules were still going on at the end of the year.

On March 19, the Jewish Humanitarian Fund started its operations with a capital of about \$22.6 million. The board—including Dutch Jewish leaders, politicians, and Avi Beker, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress—was to allocate part of the money returned to the Dutch Jewish community to humanitarian projects outside the Netherlands. Most of the sponsored projects were educational programs for Jews in Central and Eastern Europe; the only exceptions were two projects in Argentina, where students were dropping out of school because their parents were unable to pay for bus fares, tuition fees, and even lunch.

In the area of art restitution, Project Origins Unknown continued researching the provenance of 449 paintings in Dutch museums that had been stolen, confiscated, or sold to Germany from the Netherlands during the war, and later retrieved. Research into the drawings, graphic art, and applied arts was due to be completed in 2003. The project was started in 1997, when the secretary of state at the time, Aad Nuis, opened an investigation into the identity of the original owners of these works. In November, the names of many Jewish original owners were made public, along with the circumstances under which they had lost their property, and, in some cases, how they had tried, unsuccessfully, to recover the artworks after the war. Recommendations issued by the Ekkart Commission for the restitution of looted art had been adopted, and claims were slowly beginning to be processed (see AJYB 2002, pp. 368–69).

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

A demographic survey of the Jews in the Netherlands published in 2001—the first in 35 years—estimated the Jewish population of the country at 44,000, or 0.275 percent of the total Dutch population of 16 million. In 2002, the general population rose to 16.2 million, but the Jew-

ish community undoubtedly grew at a lower rate. According to the 2001 survey, Dutch Jews were postponing marriage to a later age than the general population. More Jewish women remained childless, and those who did have children had fewer (1.5) than the national average (1.9).

Fully 30 percent of the community in 2001 was not Jewish according to Halakhah, traditional Jewish law, because they were children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers. (Among the bona fide Jews—those with Jewish mothers—24 percent had non-Jewish fathers.) Inter-marriage was accelerating. Among younger married Jews, 76 percent of men and 68 percent of women were married to non-Jews. Even of the roughly 46 percent who had two Jewish parents, fully half were themselves married to non-Jews.

Communal Affairs

Perhaps because Dutch society was becoming increasingly less tolerant of minority cultures, the government intervened in the affairs of the Jewish community on several occasions in 2002.

The kosher slaughter of heavy bulls was halted temporarily several times by the Dutch Veterinary Inspection, and ordered stopped on May 8. The vet supervising all ritual slaughter claimed that because of their thick skin, ritual slaughter of these particular bulls (called “limousine bulls”) took too long and caused “unnecessary suffering.” The Inspection proposed new rules for ritual slaughter to make the slaughter of these bulls impossible. The threat was removed at the very last moment after the Board of Orthodox Communities in the Netherlands (NIK) demonstrated to the outgoing agriculture minister, Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, that the new rules were more restrictive than those in any other European Union country. Slaughter of all permitted animals was restored in July. A revised set of instructions for kosher slaughter became operative, which the Jewish community “accepted on pragmatic grounds,” according to a statement.

Brinkhorst had only agreed to meet with NIK representatives after much political pressure, including a letter to the official then in charge of forming a new government coalition warning that religious freedom was at risk. This was the Jewish community’s first attempt in centuries to influence party negotiations regarding the formation of a government coalition.

Beside the proposed restriction on the Jewish community’s freedom to choose which types of cattle to slaughter, the outgoing government also

wanted to do away with an exception to the Dutch burial laws that guaranteed that Jewish graves would never be disturbed. After a certain number of years, according to the suggested revision, Jewish graves might be “cleared,” just like other graves in Holland. The NIK intervened again, pointing out that the new rule would require Orthodox Jews to bury their dead outside the country. The new government, distracted by other matters, took no further action.

A third potential threat to religious freedom was the proposed restriction on “importing” spouses from abroad. Targeted at badly integrated foreigners from Muslim countries, the law could also affect Orthodox Jews unable to find suitable spouses among Holland’s small population of halakhic Jews—a mere 30,000—many of whom were not religiously observant. Further debate on this issue was certain for 2003.

Despite the influx of 30 new people, the “Portuguese” Sephardi Congregation still hovered between 400 and 500 members in the whole of Holland, with most of the active members attending the “secondary minyan” in Amstelveen rather than the historic 17th-century Esnoga in the center of nearby Amsterdam. The community was barely able to afford the enormous costs of maintaining that monumental building.

The Ashkenazi Jewish community of Amsterdam continued to struggle with the high costs of kosher slaughter, and meat prices were sky-high. In 2001, the ritual slaughterer had resigned and returned to Israel, and the community continued to fly a replacement in from Israel periodically through 2002. This caused the community’s budget deficit to rise to about \$172,000, far higher than the \$73,000 previously agreed by the board. The community’s capital decreased by \$96,000 to \$7.3 million. In 2001, 146 new members joined the community, but another 147 resigned or died, leaving membership constant at just under 2,900.

In other communal news, the Jewish community of Amersfoort celebrated the 275th anniversary of its synagogue. In June, the board of the Federation of Netherlands Zionists held its first meeting in over two years and installed several new members, including three of the younger generation. The meetings had been discontinued in 2000; the board members then said they had no time to devote to the cause, but could not resign since there were no available replacements. In Utrecht, the kosher (and organic) bakery closed due to the health problems of owner/baker Eli van Leeuwen, who died later in the year, leaving a wife and three young children. The number of kosher bakers outside Amsterdam was thus reduced to two, one in The Hague and one in Amersfoort. This accelerated the general trend in recent years, which saw more and more religious Jews

moving to Amsterdam, where such amenities as kosher shops and restaurants, community buildings, and Jewish schools were to be found, while such establishments closed down elsewhere in the country.

Yet a revival was beginning to show in smaller communities such as Haarlem, and in newly constructed towns like Almere, where small numbers rejoined synagogues they had not visited in years or started new synagogues. Many had been made more aware of their Jewish roots by publications about Holocaust restitution, and the situation in Israel may also have been a factor in reawakening Jewish feelings. Their reentry was eased by the Jewish community's outreach programs, which had been stepped up in response to dwindling membership outside Amsterdam, and to the results of the population survey of 2001 that predicted a further decrease in numbers.

Another positive development saw young Jews, many of them students, getting together in small, informal groups. One such group organized the solidarity demonstration with Israel. Others organized a huge concert in Amsterdam to raise funds for Israeli terror victims, visited high schools to share information about Israel, or monitored media reports on the Middle East, setting the record straight by writing to apparently misinformed papers and politicians. Most of the participants in and around Amsterdam knew each other from the Jewish youth movement. Several said they were not ready to join Jewish communal institutions, but were propelled into action by the general anti-Israel atmosphere.

Publications

British historian Carol Ann Lee's biography of Anne Frank's father, Otto, was widely criticized for inaccuracies and even dubbed "a study in character assassination" by some reviewers. Lee named a new suspect in the betrayal of the Frank family and claimed that Otto Frank allowed himself to be blackmailed into protecting this man, because, said Lee, Frank had done business with the suspect and with the German occupation army during the war. The National Institute of Wartime Documentation later announced that it would evaluate Lee's sources, and a report would be ready in 2003. It would not, however, investigate the betrayal of the Frank family.

The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam placed its Yiddish collection on the Internet, including all the printed works of the Jewish Labor Bund, and pictures of Yiddish poets, revolutionaries, and artists (see www.iisg.nl, and under "search" enter "Yiddish").

An exceptionally large number of new books chronicled prewar Jewish life in small country towns—including Veenendaal, Ede, Edam, Alphen aan den Rijn, Amersfoort, Vriezenveen, The Hague, and Haaksbergen—and “Jewish neighborhoods” in Amsterdam. These latter included Henriëtte Boas’s posthumously published memoirs of her childhood neighborhood, *Terug in de Den Texstraat. Sarphati, een biografie* chronicled the life and work of Samuel Sarphati (1813–66), who greatly influenced social projects and new housing developments in Amsterdam. In *Minhagé Amsterdam*, Rabbi Jehoeda Brilleman minutely described religious customs peculiar to the various Ashkenazi Amsterdam congregations through the ages, and attempts to unify their rituals. Ab Caransa’s *Vrijmetselarij en jodendom. De wereld een tempel* described the (not always positive) relationship between Dutch Jews and freemasons. *Storm in the Community. Yiddish Polemical Pamphlets of Amsterdam Jewry 1797–1798*, by Jozeph Michman and Marion Aptroot, elucidated the differences of opinion in Yiddish pamphlets between “old” and “new” congregations just prior to the emancipation of Dutch Jewry.

Hebreeuwse en Jiddisje woorden in het Nederlands set down rules for transliteration into Dutch of Hebrew and Yiddish words. *Dutch Jewry—Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)* consisted of 17 articles on a wide range of aspects of Dutch Jewish history. In *Kopgeld* (Head Money), Ad van Liempt revealed that Dutch “Jew hunters” caught over 8,000 Jews during World War II (and not just under 3,000, as was previously presumed). This earned them a premium amounting to about \$37.50 per head, the money taken from property stolen from Jews. *Eksters* (Magpies) was part three of historian Gerard Aalders’s trilogy describing wartime robbery and postwar restitution of Jewish property; this volume covered the Nazi robbery of 146,000 kilos of monetary gold from the Dutch National Bank. *Binnenskamers* (Behind Closed Doors) and *Polderschouw* (View of the Flatlands) were parts three and four of a series launched in 2001 about the reception of various groups—including Jewish survivors—who returned to the Netherlands after the war.

Personalia

Rivka Weiss-Blok resigned as director of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. She was succeeded by the Dutch-born Joel Cahen, formerly head conservator of Beth Hatefutsoth, the Diaspora Museum, in Tel Aviv.

Historian Evelien Gans was awarded the prestigious Henriëtte Roland

Holtsprijs for her study of Jewish social democrats and socialist Zionists in the Netherlands. On September 1, she became professor of contemporary Judaism at the University of Amsterdam.

Henri Markens resigned as chairman of the Orthodox community of the Netherlands. He remained the principal of one of Holland's two Jewish high schools.

Author Leon de Winter was awarded the prestigious Welt-Literaturpreis, a German prize, for his collective works.

The death of Pee Koelewijn, an evangelical Christian who organized many solidarity events for Israel, was mourned by many in the Jewish community.

Prominent Jews who died in 2002 included: author Siegfried E. van Praag, 102, whose postwar books (he published more than 50) described Jewish dilemmas; author and criminologist Andreas Burnier (Dessaur), 71, a women's-rights activist who, after a visit to Dachau in 1989, studied Judaism and Hebrew and published a new translation of the Psalms; Martin van Amerongen, 60, journalist and editor of *Vrij Nederland*, one of Holland's leading weeklies; Boudewijn Büch (Buch), 53, author, critic, and art collector; Sem Dresden, 87, former professor of French literature and comparative literature and author of erudite essays, including his best-known work on how to read literary testimonies of war and destruction, who, just before his death, received the P.C. Hooft Award for his collective works; Annie van der Heijden-Lob, 91, the "grand old lady of Jewish childcare" in the Netherlands; Bram Jacobs, 92, who helped rebuild Jewish life in The Hague after the war; Bob Levisson, 87, a leader of the Liberal movement in The Hague and founder of CIDI; Joop Al, 54, attorney general at the court of Amsterdam and expert in Jewish family law; Simon Meerschwan, 88, greatly mourned by members of "his" small Gerrit van der Veenstraat-synagogue, a hugely successful businessman who quietly supported many individuals and Jewish institutions; and Chaim Natkiel, 85, much-decorated Jewish resistance fighter and chairman of the Committee Jewish Resistance.

ELISE FRIEDMANN

Italy and the Vatican

National Affairs

IN JANUARY, PRIME MINISTER Silvio Berlusconi of the center-right coalition also assumed the post of foreign minister after Renato Ruggiero quit over a dispute with other cabinet members skeptical of the euro, which was introduced as Italy's currency on January 1. Berlusconi served as foreign minister until November, when he appointed Franco Frattini to the post.

Berlusconi remained firmly in the saddle despite an economic slowdown (including heavy losses for the giant automaker, Fiat), strikes, and mass protests against his government. In April, millions of Italians staged the biggest strike in decades to protest the government's plans to reform labor laws and make it easier to fire newly hired workers. The strike came just two weeks after the main architect of the reform, economist Marco Biagi, was assassinated by left-wing terrorists.

The center-left opposition was weak and divided. Fed up with traditional leftist politicians, some prominent intellectuals and artists—such as film director Nanni Moretti—sparked the formation of a grassroots left-wing movement. The type of peaceful street demonstrations it organized in many cities was called the *girotondo* (the Italian name for the children's game ring-around-a-rosy), because demonstrators linked hands to form “protective” circles around a building or square.

Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini, leader of the right-wing National Alliance (AN) and chosen by the prime minister to be Rome's representative at the convention on the Future of the European Union, moved further to distance himself from the AN's fascist roots. In January, he retracted an earlier comment that fascist dictator Benito Mussolini was the greatest statesman of the twentieth century, and during the course of the year Fini proved himself one of Israel's staunchest supporters. In September, Fini publicly apologized for Italy's persecution of Jews under Mussolini. In an interview with the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, Fini said that “fascism quashed human rights, and racial laws created one of the greatest atrocities in the history of humanity.” He added, “As an Italian I have to accept responsibility, in the name of the Italians. This is something I must do. The Italians bear responsibility for what happened after 1938,

after the racial laws were legislated. They bear a historic responsibility, a responsibility that is inscribed in history, a responsibility to issue declarations and ask for forgiveness. I am speaking of national, not personal responsibility.” The apology was seen as a run-up to a hoped-for invitation to Israel.

Fini’s apology was followed by a similar public statement by Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, son of the last king of Italy, Umberto II. In July, Parliament passed a constitutional amendment allowing the male heirs to the Italian throne to return to the country, and in December, Vittorio Emanuele, his wife, and his son made a four-hour trip to Rome, where they had a private audience with the pope. A referendum had abolished the monarchy in 1946, and Italy’s 1948 constitution banned all male members of the Savoy family from the country, since the king had collaborated with Mussolini.

In November, an appeals court shocked Italy by convicting former prime minister Giulio Andreotti of ordering the Mafia to kill a journalist in 1979, and sentencing him to 24 years in prison. The verdict overturned a 1999 acquittal on the same charges.

During the year, Jews and Muslims protested a proposed bill, sponsored by the anti-immigrant Northern League, to hang crucifixes in public offices, schools, and train stations.

Israel and the Middle East

Repercussions from the Middle East conflict, threats of global terrorism in the wake of September 11, and the possibility of war with Iraq had a powerful impact on Italian politics. Italy was at the center of several investigations targeting alleged Al Qaeda operatives or cells. In February, for example, authorities investigated whether holes found in the walls of a utility tunnel near the U.S. embassy in Rome were linked to a group of Moroccan men suspected of planning an attack on the embassy. In July, police in Milan arrested eight men for allegedly aiding Al Qaeda by preparing and distributing forged documents. Also in July, a heavy police presence guarded the historic Venice ghetto for three days following an unspecified terrorist threat.

The question of how to deal with a growing immigrant population, many of whom were Muslims, remained a high priority. Hundreds of illegal immigrants entered Italy by boat, often smuggled in by organized-crime gangs. A poll of 3,000 Italians between the ages of 15 and 34 was released in April. More than 75 percent of the respondents agreed with

the view that there were too many immigrants in the country, 40 percent agreeing "strongly." In addition, some 21 percent of respondents "strongly" agreed that most immigrants were involved in illegal or criminal activity. At the same time, however, 68.1 percent said they felt a sense of solidarity and a duty to help the immigrant population.

A movement opposed to possible war in Iraq grew over the course of the year, attracting many mainstream Italians as well as anti-Americans, pro-Palestinians, and antiglobalization forces. In November, more than half a million people staged an antiwar demonstration in Florence. This protest climaxed the first European Social Forum, a four-day meeting of antiglobalization campaigners from all over Europe. Some placards depicted President Bush as Hitler and Berlusconi as Mussolini.

Italy tried to mediate in the Middle East. At an EU summit in March in Barcelona, Berlusconi outlined plans for a 6.2-billion-euro aid package for Palestinians that was based on the post-World War II Marshall Plan for the economic recovery of Europe. Italy strongly backed the creation of a Palestinian state and Israel's right to exist in security, though it criticized Israel's hard-line response to the intifada that began in 2000. Leftist parties and movements were generally antagonistic toward the Sharon government and its policies. Right-wing parties, including the National Alliance, were more supportive of Israel. The small Radical Party formally called for Israel to be admitted to the European Union. On separate official visits in December, Israel's president, Moshe Katzav, and its foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, called Prime Minister Berlusconi one of Israel's firmest friends in Europe. While serving as foreign minister earlier in the year, Shimon Peres also visited Italy. In late December, Palestinian representatives complained to the media that Italy had become too supportive of Israel.

Berlusconi made several trips to the Middle East and also met with Middle Eastern leaders in Rome. In February, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad met Berlusconi and other Italian leaders on his first visit to Europe since the September 11 attacks. Jewish groups, human rights activists, the Radical Party, and the Greens protested the visit. Berlusconi, on a one-day visit to Libya in October, met with that country's leader, Col. Muammar Qaddafi. Italy was Libya's leading trade partner, and Libya supplied one-quarter of Italy's energy needs.

Rome Mayor Walter Veltroni sponsored several Middle East peace initiatives. Under his auspices, the city of Rome opened an Office for Peace in Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Rome representatives of both the Italy-Israel and Italy-Palestine associations. The city of Rome and those

two associations also organized a peace march on March 20 whose slogan was "Peace and Security in the Middle East: Two Peoples and Two States." In May, Veltroni offered Rome as a possible location for an international peace conference on the Middle East, and a peace concert in the ancient Colosseum brought together Israeli and Palestinian artists. In June, a Rome cultural association, in association with the Italian foreign ministry and the Dutch-based Education for Life organization, hosted a three-day brainstorming session for an influential group of 25 Israelis and 25 Palestinians. Veltroni revealed in July that, under his auspices, representatives of Israel and the Palestinians had held secret talks in Rome in 2001. In September, Veltroni hosted an event sponsored by the Israeli-Palestinian Coalition for Peace. Featured speakers were Yasir Abd Rabbo, the Palestinian Authority's minister for culture and information, and former Israeli justice minister Yossi Beilin.

An Italian Center for Peace in the Middle East operated in Milan. In January, it set up a "twinning" arrangement between a Milan high school, the Terra Sancta College in Bethlehem, and the Nisui Experimental College in Jerusalem. Some 150 teenagers in the three schools exchanged letters, tapes, and gifts. In October, five Milan families hosted five Israeli and five Palestinian teenagers. They attended a concert, "Voices of Peace," which was organized by an Israeli and a Lebanese, and included choral renditions of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian songs. In June, 20 Israeli and Palestinian children took part in a floral-painting festival near Rome whose theme was "symbols of peace and solidarity."

Jewish observers believed that much of the media demonstrated a pro-Palestinian bias. Criticism of Israeli policy mounted sharply with Israel's military incursions into the West Bank in the spring. A political cartoon in *La Stampa* newspaper showed the baby Jesus in a manger, threatened by an Israeli tank and saying, "They don't want to kill me again, do they?" Another cartoon by the same artist, published during the Israeli siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where 200 Palestinian gunmen were holed up (see above, p. 206), showed the pope, crucified against flames and bursting bombs. "How's this?" he says, referring to the siege. "You fire on the house where my God was born, you shoot at his tomb, you target the statue of his mother, you terrorize my priests and my nuns in order to get rid of a few Palestinian ragamuffins . . . and if I protest, you call me an anti-Semite?!!!"

Italian pacifists embraced the Palestinian point of view, and for months pro-Palestinian demonstrators maintained a permanent camp just off central Rome's main square, Piazza Venezia.

The pro-Palestinian cause became part of the leftist, anti-establishment youth culture. Members of a rock band, for example, were part of a group of Italians who traveled to the West Bank at the end of March to protest Israel's military operations. (They were among hundreds of pro-Palestinian foreigners who went to Ramallah as "human shields" for Palestinians fearing a massive Israeli military response to the suicide bombing in Netanya that killed 29 people at a Passover seder.) A leftist music magazine wrote up their experiences, portraying Israelis as aggressors. One group from a "Young Communist" organization unfurled a huge pro-Palestinian banner on their return to Rome's Fiumicino airport. Likewise, a book, *Sognando Palestina* (Dreaming Palestine), aimed at teenage readers, was published in the spring. Written by Randa Ghazy, a 15-year-old Egyptian-Italian girl who had never been to Israel or the Palestinian territories, it sympathetically described a group of young Palestinians fighting against Israeli troops. A theme throughout the book was that Israel was persecuting the Palestinians in the same brutal way that Jews had previously been persecuted. (In December, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and other Jewish organizations protested against the French version of the book.)

Various leftist "peace demonstrations" with an anti-Israel slant were held. One, in Rome on April 6, turned into a display of anti-Israel invective so vicious that most of the political organizations that sponsored it pulled out. Youths dressed as suicide bombers marched alongside others carrying placards equating Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel with Hitler.

This rally prompted the organization of an "Israel Day" counter-demonstration a few days later under the slogan "Israel Must Live." The driving force behind it was the newspaper *Il Foglio*, which had promoted a "USA Day" rally in November 2001 to show solidarity with America following the September 11 attacks. This was believed to be the first pro-Israel demonstration in Italy organized by people from outside the Jewish community. More than 10,000 demonstrators walked through downtown Rome carrying Israeli flags.

Also in reaction to the April 6 march, journalist Oriana Fallaci published a scathing indictment of Italy, Italians, the Catholic Church, the left wing, and Europeans in general for abandoning Israel and fomenting a "shameful" new wave of anti-Semitism (see below, p. 447). At the same time, some 260 prominent Italians—Christians and Jews—issued an open letter expressing concern over the new wave of anti-Semitism in Europe and the media's role in fostering it.

Vatican-Mideast Relations

A number of times during the year, Pope John Paul II condemned terrorism and bloodshed, called on the parties in the Middle East conflict to return to the negotiating table, and stressed that religion must not be used as an excuse for killing. The pontiff set the tone in his New Year's Day message (Catholics mark January 1 as the World Day of Peace) in which he called on monotheistic religions to condemn the use of violence. No one, for any reason, he said, had the right to kill in the name of God. And, he went on, a "cry of blood" in the Holy Land must persuade Christians, Muslims, and Jews, "all sons of the same Patriarch Abraham," to seek peace. The pope added that the September 11 attacks on the United States and their aftermath had shaken the world. "Perverse interests," he said, threatened to turn the world into a "theater of war."

Three weeks later, speaking four days ahead of an interfaith Day of Prayer for Peace in the World scheduled for January 24 in Assisi, he declared that Palestinians and Israelis appeared to have entered a "blind alley" of conflict with no apparent way out.

In March, Israel's deputy foreign minister, Michael Melchior, was among a group of Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders who attended a general audience with the pope. The group had recently signed a declaration against violence. During the audience, the pope appealed for an end to Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed.

The pope reiterated his appeal for peace in the Holy Land in his Easter message on March 31. On April 7, he led Roman Catholics around the world in prayers for peace in the Middle East and called for a resumption of negotiations. This latest appeal was made five days after about 200 Palestinian gunmen and unarmed civilians stormed into the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to escape Israeli soldiers. The Palestinians remained in the church with about 40 priests, Franciscan monks, and nuns, for 39 days as Israeli troops ringed the complex. Israel said that the armed Palestinians included terrorists wanted for killing Israeli soldiers and civilians.

This siege of one of the holiest sites in Christianity strained relations between the Vatican and Israel. According to Israel, the Palestinians were using the church as a sanctuary and the clergy inside as hostages; even so, Israel said that its troops were under orders not to fire at holy places. The Christian clergy inside, however, denied that they were hostages. A day after the siege began, the Vatican denounced acts of terrorism targeting Israel, but also sharply criticized Israel for imposing "unjust con-

ditions and humiliations” on the Palestinians. It summoned the Israeli and U.S. ambassadors to the Holy See to discuss the crisis, and also called in a representative of the Arab League to demand an end “to indiscriminate acts of terrorism” against Israel.

On April 8, the Vatican issued a statement saying it was following events with “extreme worry,” and warned Israel and the Palestinians to respect religious sites in the Holy Land that were central to the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths. The Vatican called on Israel to give the Palestinians in the church safe passage to the Gaza Strip. Israeli president Katzav told the pope, in a letter, that Israeli forces would not permit armed Palestinians it considered terrorists to escape from the church. Katzav also indicated that Israel was ensuring that the church did not “become a focus of hostilities.” Sporadic gun battles flared during the siege.

The standoff ended May 10 with an agreement to deport 13 Palestinian militants to Europe—three of them to Italy—and to send another 26 to Gaza. Soon after the Palestinians left the church, the Israeli army pulled out of Bethlehem. (The siege provided the backdrop for an Italian television drama, aired in December, in which the hero, an Italian TV cameraman, helps a Palestinian woman holed up in the church to give birth, and smuggles her baby out to a hospital. The film depicted Israelis as well-armed and intimidating soldiers.)

In June, the pope denounced a suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem that killed 19 Israelis. Expressing frustration that his pleas had gone unheeded, he said, “I tell those who plot and plan these acts of barbarity that they will have to answer before God.”

In November, the Vatican announced it was giving \$400,000 to Roman Catholic causes in Israel and the West Bank so as to improve life for Christians in the region and persuade them not to flee. The Vatican’s charity arm noted that many Christians wanted to leave the Holy Land not only due to the fighting, but also because of economic hardships linked to the sharp drop in religious tourism.

In February, Syrian president Assad had an audience with the pope at the Vatican. In December, Moshe Katzav became the first Israeli president to visit the Holy See. He had a 15-minute audience with the pope and also met with the Vatican secretary of state. The Israeli embassy to the Vatican called the papal audience “warm and cordial” and reported that the pope said he felt the meeting could be a “turning point” in relations, possibly leading to a deepening of ties. The Vatican reiterated to Katzav that it supported both an Israeli and a Palestinian state, and urged Israel to allow “free access” to Bethlehem over Christmas. Israeli

troops had reoccupied the city after a suicide bomb killed 11 Israelis in Jerusalem. According to the Israeli embassy, Katzav promised an Israeli troop withdrawal from Bethlehem “if there will not be warnings of terror operations.” Meanwhile, it said, the Israeli president pledged that the army would “do everything possible to enable pilgrims to celebrate the Christmas holiday as appropriate.”

At Christmas, the pope again reiterated his call for peace. He also came out against a possible war in Iraq.

Holocaust-Related Developments

January 27 was Holocaust Memorial Day in several European countries, including Italy. Dozens of cultural, commemorative, and educational events took place on or around that date, which marked the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945. Many schools scheduled special programs. In a televised interview, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi said it was “our duty to remember. The force of memory must be passed on to our children and grandchildren.” A project to set up a national museum in Ferrara to commemorate the Shoah advanced in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament. As part of the observances, a cache of valuables confiscated from a local Jew before World War II was restituted to the Jewish community in Trento, northern Italy. In Rome, the Jewish Culture Center, the German Goethe Institute, and the German embassy sponsored two days of events focusing on the Terezin ghetto. On January 28–29, Italian state television aired a two-part miniseries based on the life of Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian businessman who saved Jews in the Budapest ghetto during World War II. An exhibition devoted to Perlasca opened in the town of Abano Terme on February 3. Milan’s Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation published a comprehensive new book detailing the Shoah in Italy.

Two weeks before this outpouring of commemorative events, however, Amos Luzzatto, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), accused the government of being indifferent to Holocaust Memorial Day.

Tensions over historical revisionism that had been simmering in Italy for several years came to the fore during the January 27 observances in Trieste, the site of the only Nazi death camp to have operated on Italian soil. The Risiera di San Sabba served mainly as a transit camp, but as many as 1,000 Jews were killed there, in addition to thousands more Croats, Slovenes, and antifascist Italians. In 2001, the new rightist mayor

of Trieste had appointed Roberto Menia, a leading figure in the National Alliance who had been a hard-line activist in the old neofascist MSI party, to be the city's chief cultural assessor, and thus head of the commission governing the Risiera, now a memorial museum.

Menia presided over the January 27 Holocaust memorial ceremonies at the Risiera, but his presence created controversy. Several thousand people attended the event. They included Amos Luzzatto, who gave a speech urging that bridges be built between religious and ethnic groups, and warning: "If we want a different future, we cannot lower a veil of forgetfulness over a past that is still all too present." Local Jews and members of other minority groups had asked Luzzatto to take part as a counterbalance to Menia. Still, about 300 left-wing demonstrators heckled Menia from outside the gates and waved posters bearing old photographs of him giving the fascist salute. About 100 of Trieste's 600 Jews boycotted the ceremony altogether, and instead held their own commemoration in the city's Jewish cemetery.

Nostalgia for fascism and for Mussolini remained a troubling issue. In April, thousands of posters bearing a photograph of Mussolini were plastered on walls all over Rome. Other posters put up at the same time, carrying the name of the neofascist National Social Front, urged citizens to place memorial flowers at an obelisk in Rome erected by Mussolini. The posters were apparently displayed to protest the commemorations of April 25, marking the liberation of Italy from Nazi occupation in 1945. During Liberation Day ceremonies this year, President Ciampi branded revisionism "unacceptable."

During a state visit to Italy in April, German president Johannes Rau paid homage to Italian victims of the Nazis in World War II. Accompanied by President Ciampi, he visited the village of Marzabotto where, in September 1944, nearly 2,000 Italian civilians were massacred by Nazi soldiers for allegedly harboring antifascist partisans. Also in April, Italy's highest appeals court upheld a life sentence for former SS officer Erich Priebke, who was sentenced in 1998 to life in prison for his role in the March 1944 execution of 335 Roman men and boys (75 of them Jewish) in reprisal for a partisan attack that killed 33 German military police. In his mid-80s and in ill health, Priebke was serving his sentence under house arrest.

As part of ceremonies on October 16 marking the anniversary of the deportation of Roman Jews to Auschwitz, the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation and the Italian Central State Archive announced they would join forces to catalog some 400 Italian-language testimonies

of Holocaust survivors. These would be made available to educate Italian young people about the Shoah. Other events marking the anniversary included a torchlight march through downtown Rome, religious services, an exhibition on art and memory, and a conference on anti-Semitism held at City Hall. The main piazza in the old Rome ghetto was renamed "October 16, 1943 Piazza."

Anti-Semitism and Racism

Jewish leaders and individuals expressed deep and continuing concern about a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel bias in the local media, and its likely connection to what they perceived as a growing atmosphere of anti-Semitism in everyday discourse.

In her attack on anti-Semitism in April, Oriana Fallaci (not herself Jewish) warned of "the resurgence of a new fascism, a new Nazism" (see above, p. 442). The thousands of participants at the Israel Day rally on April 15 cheered her article. Some politicians applauded her, but others condemned her tone as inflammatory and accused her of sowing racial and religious hatred.

UCEI president Amos Luzzatto warned often during the year about the rise of a culture of anti-Semitism rooted in Catholicism, Islam, and a left-wing mentality uncritically supportive of third-world countries and causes. He and other Italian Jews feared that pro-Palestinian political sentiments were bringing back classic anti-Semitic rhetoric in both public discourse and private conversation.

In June, in an address to the UCEI Congress, Pierfernando Casini, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, minimized these concerns. Anti-Semitism, he said, "could be the expression of a crazed and criminal fragmentation of society, but not certainly a mass phenomenon. To evoke the presence of anti-Semitism in our society, or in some political forces, or in the Catholic Church, demonstrates a mistaken image of our country."

Italy did not suffer the wave of anti-Semitic violence that hit other countries, such as France, but there were a few confrontations. In June, Yasha Reibman, a Jewish member of the pro-Israel Radical Party, was roughed up by a group of extreme left-wingers for carrying an Israeli flag during a gay pride march in Milan. Also in June, several dozen young Roman Jews jeered and harassed a leading Italian pro-Palestinian activist when he tried to have lunch in a restaurant in Rome's old Jewish ghetto quarter. Riot police led Vittorio Agnoletto to safety after he was trapped in the restaurant for more than two hours. Agnoletto was the spokesman

for Italy's main antiglobalization movement. In April, he and other members of a pro-Palestinian Italian delegation had been turned back by Israeli authorities when they landed at Ben-Gurion Airport.

In July, vandals smashed about three dozen tombs in the Jewish section of Rome's Verano cemetery on the eve of Tisha B'Av. The desecration shocked the Jewish community and drew sharp condemnation from government leaders, the pope, and international Jewish organizations. Jewish groups and officials initially viewed the desecration as part of a wave of attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions in several countries, linked to the conflict in the Middle East. Police, however, focused their investigation on local cemetery-maintenance rackets, and at the end of July charged an unauthorized cemetery worker with extortion, contempt, desecration, and damaging of tombs, and placed five other people under investigation. At the time of the attack, U.S. Anti-Defamation League national director Abraham Foxman was in Rome to meet with Prime Minister Berlusconi as part of a series of consultations with European leaders on how to combat the new wave of anti-Semitism.

Traditional extreme right-wing anti-Semitism remained a problem. A big gathering of skinheads from all over Europe was held in February in the village of Sarentino, in northern Italy. In May, the tiny fringe neo-fascist Ordine Nuovo group held a meeting in Trieste. It scheduled another meeting, which it billed as an international convention, in Verona, but local authorities barred the event following protests from the Simon Wiesenthal Center and other groups. It was to have been called "To the Memory of Millions of Civilian Victims of Democracy and Their Lies," and was to have included the participation of Holocaust deniers and anti-Semites. In October, more than 8,000 people gathered in Mussolini's hometown, Predappio, to mark the 80th anniversary of the 1922 march on Rome that brought him to power. About 80 right-wing extremists marked the day with an anti-immigrant march in Rome.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

About 28,000 Jews were officially registered as members of Italian Jewish communities, but the actual number of Jews in the country was believed to be between 30,000 and 40,000. Three-quarters of Italy's Jews lived in two cities where there was a full infrastructure for an active Jew-

ish life: Rome, with about 15,000 Jews, and Milan, with about 10,000. The rest of the country's Jews were scattered in 19 other towns and cities, mostly in northern and central Italy, in communities ranging from a handful of Jews to a thousand or so. About half of Italy's Jews were native born, and the other half were immigrants who had come over the past few decades. Between one-third and one-half of Rome's Jews were members of families that had emigrated from Libya following the Six-Day War of 1967. At the beginning of 2002, in fact, the Rome Jewish Culture Center held a daylong event, including an exhibition and food-tasting, dedicated to the history and culture of Libyan Jews. The Milan Jewish community included recent arrivals from more than two dozen countries. The largest contingent was Iranian, with most of the rest coming from other Muslim states.

Communal Affairs

Orthodoxy was still the only officially recognized form of Judaism in Italy, encompassing three ritual traditions: Sephardi, Ashkenazi, and Italian, the latter a local rite that evolved from the Jewish community that lived in the country before the destruction of the Second Temple. Most Italian Jews, however, were not strictly observant, and even many of the observant Italian-born Jews were highly acculturated, with a strong Italian as well as Jewish identity. On the other hand, many of the Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries were very observant and not as acculturated. Chabad-Lubavitch maintained its strong presence, particularly in Rome, Milan, and Venice, where the movement ran a yeshivah. Milan was the site of the Chabad-run Rabbinical Center of Europe. In February, nearly 100 Orthodox European rabbis attended a seminar on Jewish law at the center. Also in attendance was Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel.

In February, Dr. Riccardo Di Segni was formally installed as Rome's chief rabbi, at a crowded ceremony in the main synagogue. Di Segni, 52, replaced Elio Toaff, who retired in October 2001 after 50 years in the post. Di Segni, who was also a medical doctor, had been elected the new chief rabbi in November.

Reform and Conservative streams were not recognized by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities and did not officially exist. Nonetheless, Lev Chadash, an independent liberal Jewish association affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism, operated in Milan, and hosted visiting rabbis from London. Over the year it expanded its activities. It

opened permanent premises and a prayer room, held regular weekly services, and, in November, received a Torah scroll. Another similar congregation, Beth Shalom, was established in Milan in the fall. Established community leaders criticized the new groups, some warning that they could lead to an outright schism in Italian Jewry.

Italian Jews had a well-organized (though financially troubled) infrastructure of schools, clubs, associations, youth organizations, and other services, including a rabbinical college. The women's organization ADEI-WIZO was active nationwide, sponsoring numerous bazaars, lectures, meetings, and other social, cultural, and fund-raising events. Jewish community and culture centers in Milan and Rome also had a full schedule of such activities. In April, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities held its annual four-day Moked cultural and educational conference. This year's theme was Jewish identity as reflected in the Jewish community and the Jewish family. In June, the Rome Jewish community center hosted a conference, organized by the European Association of Jewish Community Centers, for directors of such centers from all over the continent.

Italian Jews, many of whom had close family ties with Israelis, followed the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians with great concern. Italians were among the dead and injured in terrorist attacks. Israeli soldier Yochai Porat, 26, whose family came from Rome, was killed by a Palestinian sniper on March 3. Danielle Manchell, 22, who died in a terrorist attack on the Matza restaurant in Haifa on March 31, was born in Rome and spent her first ten years there. An Italian student was among those wounded in the terrorist attack at the Hebrew University in July. Furthermore, an Italian photojournalist was killed covering violence in the West Bank in March. During the summer, Italian Jews organized vacations in Italy for dozens of Israelis, including about 60 children, who were victims of terrorism.

Jews worried about the negative portrayal of Israel in the media, the pro-Palestinian stance of many political parties and public figures, and the "one-sided pacifism" of peace advocates who aligned themselves with the Palestinian cause (see above, p. 442). In the spring, a Roman Jewish activist group, I Ragazzi del '48 (The '48 Guys), granted awards to more than a dozen journalists whose reporting, it felt, was unbiased.

These broader issues, and not internal Jewish problems, dominated the national congress of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities in June. The congress is held every four years to elect national officers who chart community policy and also serve as the official political face of Ital-

ian Jewry. Amos Luzzatto, a physician and Jewish scholar who had headed the organization for the previous four years, was reelected.

The run-up to the congress showcased political differences within the community over whether Diaspora Jews had the right — some would say the duty — to criticize Israeli policies. Delegates were split between “conservatives,” who unreservedly supported the government of Israel, and “progressives,” critical of Prime Minister Sharon’s course. However, Israel-bashing in the media moved the two groups closer to each other. Two leading media celebrities headed the competing factions in the elections to the union’s board. Gad Lerner, a well-known TV personality and longtime leftist activist, led the progressives. In a published open letter and in television commentaries, he accused Italian leftists of anti-Israel bias. The conservative Fiamma Nirenstein, Israel correspondent for Turin’s *La Stampa* newspaper, urged greater resistance to granting concessions to the Palestinians. Her book, *L’abbandono — Come l’Occidente ha tradito gli Ebrei* (The Abandonment: How the West Has Betrayed the Jews), caused a stir with its denunciation of Europe’s failure to support Israel and to counter rising anti-Semitism. In the end, the number of “progressives” elected to the board was slightly greater than the number of “conservatives.”

The congress passed resolutions that condemned official delay in confronting the “new anti-Semitism,” and expressed “apprehension” at the “systematic manipulation of information about Israel and the history and nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.” Delegates called “forcefully” on Europe to assume a more balanced position on the Middle East, to ensure the accurate dissemination of information about Israel and the Middle East conflict, and to further authentic peace initiatives.

On October 9, Jews marked the 20th anniversary of the Palestinian terrorist attack on Rome’s main synagogue. The attack, on members of the congregation leaving Shemini Atzeret services, killed a toddler, Stefano Tache, and wounded 100 others. A newly established library and the Jewish community’s nursery school were named for the boy. Since that attack, police had kept Jewish sites and institutions in Rome under constant armed guard. Coinciding with the anniversary, the October issue of the Rome Jewish monthly, *Shalom*, included a nine-page manual of anti-terrorism security guidelines called “Some Useful Advice on How to Live More Safely.” Prepared by Rome Jewish community security director Gianni Zarfati, the brochure provided a 24-hour hotline number for use in case of emergency. This was not the first time that the community had

issued security guidelines, but Jewish leaders explained that now the information was being distributed with *Shalom* in order to reach as many Jewish families as possible.

Jewish-Catholic and Interfaith Relations

After the pope, in his New Year's Day message, set the tone by calling on monotheistic religions to condemn the use of violence, there were a number of interfaith initiatives throughout the year.

January 17 marked the Catholic Church's annual Day of Dialogue with the Jews. At a meeting in Rome, the city's new chief rabbi, Riccardo Di Segni, gave a major address in which he asserted that a prerequisite to sincere Christian-Jewish dialogue was Christian agreement that the Jews did not need Jesus to achieve salvation.

To coincide with the Day of Dialogue, the Vatican published a Polish translation of a book-length document, *The Jewish People and the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, the fruit of years of scholarly work by the Pontifical Biblical Commission. The book had originally appeared in the fall of 2001 without publicity, and only in French and Italian versions. Signed by the Vatican's chief theologian, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the document said that Catholics should regard what Christians call the Old Testament not just as literature but as a source of moral teachings. In addition, it explicitly stated that "The Jewish wait for the Messiah is not in vain." Jews and Christians, it went on, shared the wait for the messiah, but while Jews waited for the first coming, Christians waited for the second. The text also expressed regret that certain passages in the New Testament condemning individual Jews had been used to justify anti-Semitism. Nowhere in the New Testament, it declared, could one find passages reflecting "an attitude of scorn, hostility or persecution of Jews as Jews." Jewish observers considered the document a potential turning point in the official Roman Catholic view of Jews and their Holy Scriptures.

On January 24, about 200 rabbis, imams, priests, patriarchs and other representatives from a dozen world religions joined the pope in the central Italian town of Assisi to pray for peace and condemn violence committed in the name of God. In the wake of September 11 and the war in Afghanistan, the pope had invited them for a Day of Prayer for Peace in the World. The aim was to stress that religion must never be the excuse for violence, war, or terrorism. During the day, participants read statements recognizing that religions are all too often misused to justify con-

flict and exploit inequality. In a concluding declaration, they jointly pledged to work for peace and declared their “firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion.” They committed themselves to “doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism” and also pledged themselves to the principles of dialogue and forgiveness.

Also in January, the first Middle East Interfaith Summit took place in Alexandria, Egypt. The two-day meeting, which drew very little publicity, brought together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders from across the region. A joint declaration condemned “killing innocents in the name of God” and called for “a religiously sanctioned cease-fire, respected and observed on all sides.”

About a week later, the European Jewish Congress organized a high-profile meeting between Jews and Catholics. Attended by senior Vatican officials, it took place at the Paris City Hall.

In early September, Rome’s chief rabbi, Israeli minister Dan Meridor, and the Palestinian Sari Nuseibeh, president of Al-Quds University, were among more than 450 representatives of world religions at a three-day seminar in Palermo. This was the annual meeting on Faiths and Cultures within Conflict and Dialogue sponsored by the Roman Catholic Sant’-Egidio community. Seminar topics included “Israelis and Palestinians: Dialogue about the Future,” and “Three Faiths and the Book,” and there was a roundtable discussion on the theme: “After September 11: An Unavoidable Clash of Civilizations?”

The Jewish world’s official dialogue partner with the Vatican changed its leadership. The International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) elected Rabbi Israel Singer of the World Jewish Congress as its new chairman effective July 1, replacing Seymour Reich. It also named Rabbi Joel Meyers, executive vice president of the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly, as chairman of its governing board.

In August, “Reflections on Covenant and Mission,” an unofficial document drafted by a group of American Catholic and Jewish scholars, was posted on the Web site of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which cosponsored it along with the National Council of Synagogues. In it, the scholars said that the Church’s goal in its relations with Jews should be dialogue, not conversion (see above, p. 100). It explained, “In view of our conviction that Jews are in an eternal covenant with God, we renounce missionary efforts directed at converting Jews.”

In October, a conference in Rome marked the 37th anniversary of *Nos-*

tra Aetate, the Second Vatican Council document that opened the way to the contemporary Jewish-Catholic dialogue. *Nostra Aetate* deplored anti-Semitism and repudiated the charge that all Jews throughout the generations were collectively responsible for killing Jesus. During the meeting, Cardinal Walter Kasper, the Vatican official in charge of relations with Jews, affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church was more committed than ever to improving relations with Jews. The conference was organized by the Dionysia Center, a Rome-based cultural institute that promoted dialogue among religions and peoples. Other participants included the Israeli Jewish scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz.

In February, the Vatican announced that it would begin opening some of its secret archives for the period before, during, and immediately after World War II in order to clarify the role of the Holy See and Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. It said that the first material to be released would be diplomatic documents dealing with relations between the Vatican and Germany from 1922 to 1939, the period when the future Pius XII served as Vatican representative in Germany and then Vatican secretary of state. Documents relating to Vatican-German relations during Pius XII's papacy would begin to become available in about three years.

In December, the Vatican announced that the first documents would be opened to scholars on February 15, 2003. These would include records from the Vatican diplomatic missions in Berlin and Munich, as well as a series of other documents relating to the rise of Nazism and the "condemnation of racism." However, it reported, the Berlin diplomatic archive for the years 1931–34 had been "nearly completely destroyed or dispersed" during the 1945 bombing of the city and a fire at the apostolic nuncio's palace.

Culture

As every year, there were numerous Jewish cultural events, some organized by Jewish communities, some by private organizations, some by civic and state bodies, and some by a combination of sources. The Israeli embassy sponsored performances, exhibits, and appearances by Israeli cultural figures. The following is a small but representative sample of Jewish cultural events throughout the year.

On the annual European Day of Jewish Culture, held this year on June 16, dozens of sites of Jewish heritage, Jewish museums, and other venues in 45 Italian cities and towns were opened to the public, drawing some 18,000 visitors. Special performances, exhibits, and concerts were staged.

In October, tourism officials and local authorities in Trieste introduced a set of Jewish heritage itineraries in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

There were several festivals devoted to aspects of Jewish culture. The annual Klezmer Music Festival took place in Ancona in July. A Jewish culture festival in Turin, September 30–October 6, featured lectures, exhibits, performances, concerts, and food tastings. The fifth annual “Pitifest” Jewish film festival took place in the Tuscan town of Manciano in December. It was sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Culture, local authorities, the Israeli embassy, and Jewish organizations.

There were many concerts of Jewish music by local and foreign Jewish musicians. In February, the Italian Jewish music group Lokshen Quartet gave a concert of klezmer music, Yiddish song, and Jewish liturgical music at the Quirinale Palace, the official residence of Italy’s president. A CD of Italian Jewish liturgical music, *Italian Jewish Musical Traditions*, was released in association with Hebrew University and Rome’s Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. It was based on recordings made in the 1950s by Italian Jewish ethnomusicologist Leo Levi.

There were numerous Jewish-themed exhibits and performances. In January, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, an opera by American composer John Adams about the killing of American Jewish passenger Leon Klinghoffer during the 1984 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, was performed in Ferrara and Modena. A series of talks, films, and exhibitions in Rome in February commemorated the writings of Etty Hillesum, a Dutch woman who died in Auschwitz in 1943 at the age of 29 and kept a diary chronicling her Holocaust experiences from March 1941 through September 1942. In the summer, Rome’s Palazzo Barberini hosted “Palestina 1927,” an exhibition of photographs taken in Palestine in the 1920s by photographer Luciano Morpurgo. In July, top fashion design graduates from Tel Aviv’s Shenkar College presented shows in Rome, Gorizia, and Trieste. In October, stage artist Enrico Fink premiered a production based on the biblical story of Jonah. In November, an exhibit of the works of the Italian Jewish painter Clemente Pugliese Levi (1855–1936) opened in his native town, Vercelli. Also in November, popular Jewish performer Moni Ovadia premiered his new production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which was performed partly in Yiddish.

As usual, numerous books on Jewish topics or by Jewish authors were published, and there were book launches, readings, roundtables, and other literary happenings throughout the year. The Milan bookstore Tikkun, which specialized in Jewish books, sponsored readings and other events, including a series of lectures and performances about Jewish

music, from January through March. Several Israeli authors, including David Grossman, Aharon Appelfeld, Alon Altaras, Nava Semel, and Uzi Weill, gave readings and lecture tours in Italy. Appelfeld won the second annual ADEI-WIZO literary prize for his book *That Which I Loved*, published this year in Italian translation. A.B. Yehoshua gave a well-attended series of four lectures at the Roma Tre University in November. He and Grossman inaugurated and closed the first International Festival of Literature, held in Rome May 21–June 20.

In March, *Fossoli: Transito per Auschwitz*, a new book by Danilo Sacchi about the World War II Fossoli transit camp, was discussed at a roundtable at Rome's City Hall, the Campidoglio. A similar panel discussion was held at the Campidoglio in October based on a special issue of the Jewish intellectual journal *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* that was devoted to the impact on European Jewry of the fall of communism. That same journal issue was the focus of a daylong international seminar at Rome's Goethe Institute in December.

Numerous conferences and seminars took place. In April, in the town of Agira, Sicily, there was a conference on Jews in Sicily. In November, a daylong conference on martyrdom in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim experiences took place at Milan University. That same month, the Jewish Museum in Bologna hosted a three-day conference of the Association of European Jewish Museums. Representatives of some 23 Jewish museums from 14 European countries attended. Daniel Dratwa, director of the Jewish Museum in Brussels, was elected the new chairman of the association. Work proceeded, meanwhile, on plans to enlarge, modernize, and revamp the Jewish Museum in Rome, changing it from a traditional display of Judaica to a museum that also incorporated narrative history. Donations from a private Catholic study group paid for the restoration of several items in the historical archives of the Jewish community of Rome. In December, a center for Jewish studies was established at Rome's Tor Vergata University, thanks to an agreement between the university and the Rome Jewish community.

Personalia

In January, journalist Fiamma Nirenstein was awarded the Women for Journalism prize. Later in the year, she won several literary prizes for her book *L'abbandono—Come l'Occidente ha tradito gli Ebrei* (The Abandonment: How the West Has Betrayed the Jews). In February, Rome's chief rabbi emeritus, Elio Toaff, 86, was awarded the Golden Livornian

award by his hometown, Livorno, for his "high political and human importance." On February 8, Genoveffa Astrologo, the oldest member of the Rome Jewish community, turned 101. Milan's former chief rabbi, Elia Kopciowski, died in July at age 81. Writer Ferruccio Fölker, born in Trieste in 1921, died in Milan in August. In October, American producer and director Bruce Paltrow, father of Oscar-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow, died at age 58 while vacationing in Italy. Prominent journalist Willy Molco died in December, aged 59.

During the year, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem recognized several Italians as Righteous Gentiles. In April, writer Umberto Eco received an honorary degree from Hebrew University. In July, the Golden Dove of Peace award was given in Rome to Italian Luisa Morgantini, along with Palestinian Suhad Amery and Israeli Terry Greenblatt, for their involvement in the peace group Donne in Nero (Women in Black). In December, UCEI president Amos Luzzatto was awarded the San Giusto d'Oro award from the city of Trieste. This award honors people born in Trieste or with Triestine origins who "honor the city in Italy and the world."

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

Switzerland

National Affairs

THE YEAR WAS ONE OF closure for Switzerland, but also one of a new openness. What closed was the Holocaust chapter in Swiss history, as most of the special agencies that had been created to address Switzerland's role during World War II and the "dormant accounts" of Jews in Swiss banks completed their work. The new openness was signaled by a decision of the Swiss people to join the United Nations: Switzerland became the 190th member of the world body on September 10, 2002.

Switzerland still struggled over its refugee policy. In October, Swiss citizens rejected by a narrow margin (3,422 votes) an initiative of the Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC) "against abuses in asylum laws" that would have barred refugees living in bordering countries—France, Germany, Italy, and Austria—from requesting asylum in Switzerland.

Israel and the Middle East

The general climate of opinion turned increasingly against Israel over the course of the year. There were more pro-Palestinian rallies than in previous years, greater distribution of anti-Israel material on street-corners, and shriller calls for boycotting the Jewish state.

Pro-Palestinian organizations such as Urgence Palestine led weekly demonstrations and vigils where the banners indicated the agenda: "Stop Repression in Palestine," "Stop the Massacre," "Against Imperialism and Zionism." While most of the participants were Muslims, left-wing Swiss citizens and a handful of anti-Zionist Jews attended as well. After many of these demonstrations, graffiti were sprayed on Jewish buildings, including Geneva's Holocaust memorial, located in front of the main synagogue, where swastikas and several inscriptions of the word "Nazi" were written. A growing number of similar graffiti equating Israel, Ariel Sharon, and/or the Magen David (Star of David) symbol with Nazism, fascism, and/or bloodshed were found in school classrooms, on public buildings, and on sidewalks.

Programs offering a unilaterally pro-Palestinian view of the Middle East conflict took place all around the country, featuring Palestinian

journalists, left-wing filmmakers, and human-rights activists, always presenting Israel as the aggressor and the Palestinians as victims.

Petitions calling for the boycott of products from the occupied Territories multiplied in 2002. Signatures were often solicited and collected at street stands set up on market days, and in front of well-attended shopping malls. The Swiss media echoed such calls and pretended to investigate whether some fruit grown in the West Bank and Gaza, picked by Palestinian workers, had deceitfully been labeled “made in Israel” so as to evade the boycott. Since no such trail could actually be discovered, consumers were urged: “when in doubt, abstain,” that is, not to buy anything bearing the word “Israel.” Leaflets were handed out to help customers at food stores identify the bar code of goods of Israeli origin, whether vegetables, fruits, or groceries. Thus, certain Israeli products traditionally sold in Switzerland all year round, such as small potatoes, melons, and strawberries, mysteriously disappeared from supermarkets.

Boycott ideas were voiced at a much higher level in April when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Ministry of Defense to “examine the means of restricting military cooperation with Israel,” and the Ministry of Economy to “draw the consequences” of “possible violations of trade agreements by Israel”—a reference to goods produced in Gaza and the West Bank but allegedly sold under the “made in Israel” label. The two ministries receiving the requests did not take public action, and the issue was not raised again in governmental circles. The reason for backing off might have been the fact that Switzerland stood to lose more money than Israel if trade agreements were suspended, since Switzerland exported many more goods to Israel—high-precision tools, chemical products, metal, machinery—than it imported from the Jewish state.

Criticism of Israel came from politicians and other public figures, and from extremists both on the right and the left, who joined forces in denouncing “imperialist Zionism” and charging that the “Jewish lobby” manipulated the U.S. government to give Israel unconditional support.

Muslim leaders in Switzerland were especially outspoken, among them Tariq and Hani Ramadan, grandsons and followers of Hassan al-Bana, the Egyptian founder of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood. While Tariq defended Islam in sophisticated and moderate-sounding language, Hani, head of the Islamic Center of Geneva, explicitly called for the strict application of the sharia (Muslim law) and advocated an anti-Zionism that bordered on anti-Semitism. While his comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany and his justification of suicide attacks against Israelis drew no outrage, he went too far in September 2002, in an op-ed piece

published in the French daily *Le Monde*. There he declared that if the world followed Islamic principles, there would be no AIDS epidemic, and stated that the two Nigerian women convicted under sharia law of adultery should indeed be stoned to death. Complaints both in France and Switzerland induced the Geneva minister of education to suspend him from his teaching position in a French-language junior high school in the city on the grounds that being a teacher—and thus a civil servant—was incompatible with support for execution by stoning. Hani Ramadan appealed the decision, but early in 2003 the government of Geneva confirmed his firing on different grounds, ruling that one cannot be both an imam and a public-school teacher at the same time.

As the general climate in the country turned more anti-Israel, the Jewish community asserted a higher profile in defending the Jewish state. The first sign of this occurred in April, in the wake of media reports about an Israeli “massacre” of Palestinians in Jenin (see above, p. 203). A number of Swiss Jews began media campaigns to denounce the biased coverage, some writing dozens of letters-to-the-editor questioning journalistic ethics, others buying advertising space in newspapers to publicize their opinions. Jewish leaders met with editors and reporters to discuss concrete examples of breaches in professional ethics in the reporting and publication of certain stories.

Following numerous anti-Israel statements by Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss regarding the events in Jenin, the presidents of the Jewish communities of Geneva and Lausanne wrote a letter of protest to Deiss. In his response weeks later, Deiss did not go into detail, but stated that Switzerland’s position was based on international law, and that he also condemned Palestinian suicide attacks. The Jewish leaders followed up with a second letter, questioning how the foreign minister could claim to be evenhanded given his singling out of Israel regarding alleged violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, his systematic critique of Israeli military actions, and the inconsistent nature of his opposition to suicide attacks. In his answer to this letter, Deiss admitted a double standard, clearly stating that respect for international law could not be demanded from the Palestinian Authority as stringently as from Israel.

Alfred Donath, president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, gave a forceful speech at the annual meeting of the federation in May. He accused Switzerland of indirectly funding, through its financial aid to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which ran Palestinian refugee camps, textbooks that contained anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic

content. He was immediately attacked in the press for his charges, and received a considerable amount of hate mail, including threats. Swiss national radio launched an investigation into Donath's charges about the final destination of Swiss humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, but eventually reported that it could not trace the money.

The Zurich-based organization David, Center Against Anti-Semitism and Defamation, filed a suit with the Swiss Press Council after a newspaper called Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon a war criminal. The council ruled that this did not constitute libel, and found in favor of the newspaper.

The only supporters of Israel outside the Jewish community were Christian evangelicals, more than 1,500 of whom gathered at a pro-Israel rally in Bern. The media, which often reported on pro-Palestinian rallies with fewer than 50 participants, barely covered it.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

Beside the anti-Semitic fallout of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, another national debate triggered a serious wave of anti-Jewish feeling: the government-proposed lifting of the longstanding legal prohibition on *shehitah* (Jewish ritual slaughter).

Since 1893, Jews (and Muslims) were forbidden to slaughter animals according to their religious laws. The impetus for this ban was an anti-Semitic attempt to limit Jewish immigration into Switzerland (there being no Muslim immigration to speak of at that time). Since then, kosher and halal meat had to be imported from France and Germany.

In late 2001, the Swiss government decided to repeal the law as a sign of religious tolerance. The popular reaction was unexpectedly hostile, especially from spokespersons for societies protecting animals, who often lapsed into anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric. Jews and Muslims were accused of following inhumane customs stemming from an uncivilized age that were not acceptable in modern Switzerland. Some went so far as to suggest that observant Jews and Muslims "either become vegetarian or leave the country." The media gave considerably more coverage to the opponents of change than to those affected by it, and the government, which had ignited the debate, remained silent. Jewish leaders were mailed hundred of hate letters ("Jews, kill the cows in your kibbutz," "Nazis"), and one received death threats. The threatened woman (the author of this article) sought to file suit against her tormentor in Geneva, but the pub-

lic prosecutor dismissed the case with the argument that the man who made the threats “never had the intention to kill,” and was merely expressing his strong feelings.

At the high point of the debate, in February 2002, two formal initiatives were launched to ban the import of kosher meat into Switzerland, an even greater limitation than the status quo. Each of the initiators had until 2003 (for one the deadline was July, for the other it was September) to collect 100,000 signatures and thus put the issue to a popular referendum, which would occur in 2004 at the earliest. The author of one of the the initiatives was Erwin Kessler, president of Verein gegen Tierfabrik (Association against Animal Factories), who had already been convicted twice for anti-Semitic statements, such as equating kosher slaughter to Nazi treatment of the Jews.

Ritual slaughter was one of the matters addressed by far-right leaders in their publications, among other traditional anti-Semitic themes. For years, the most active far-right group had been Vérité & Justice (Truth and Justice), headed by Jürgen Graf, Philippe Brennenstuhl, and René-Louis Berclaz. It promoted Holocaust denial and allegations of Jewish wealth, greed, and power. Graf escaped to Iran in 2000 to avoid a prison sentence in Switzerland, and the other two men were sentenced to prison terms in 2002 for publishing Holocaust-denial articles in their bulletin, which the judges ruled a form of racial discrimination. Their organization was disbanded by the court.

Veteran neo-Nazi Gaston-Armand Amaudruz, sentenced to a three-month prison sentence in 2001, was due to serve it beginning in January 2003. Until that date, however, and in spite of his conviction, Amaudruz continued to publish his monthly *Courrier du Continent*, a 12-page bulletin advocating racism, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust denial.

In April 2002, Jürg Scherrer, an elected official from the city of Biel, gave an interview to Swiss national radio in which he supported French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen’s statement that “gas chambers are a detail of history.” Local antiracist groups sued him, but the judge decided that Scherrer’s words were too vague to make him liable to prosecution.

Skinheads were also active on the far right. Swiss Federal Police estimated that there were about 1,000 of them in the country, and that their ranks were growing. They held concerts and gatherings, published and distributed propaganda (CDs, films, insigna, clothes, magazines), and collected weapons. However, they still lacked a charismatic leader to unify the scattered groups and give the movement cohesion.

On the intellectual end of the far right, Geneva lawyer Pascal Junod continued to host lectures by extremist figures from France, such as Roger Garaudy and Pierre Vial. Like skinhead events, Junod's evenings were by personal invitation only, and, under the Swiss law banning public expressions of racism, one could not be sued for racist statements uttered at private gatherings.

Some other ongoing anti-Semitic publications that had small but loyal readerships were Geneviève Aubry's *L'Atout*, Ernst Indlekofer's *Recht + Freiheit*, and Claude and Mariette Paschoud's *Le Pamphlet*.

Holocaust-Related Matters

The year 2002 saw the culmination of Switzerland's reckoning with the record of its actions regarding Jews during and after the Holocaust.

In March, the historical commission headed by Professor Jean-François Bergier completed publication of its 25-volume, 14,000-page work, covering all aspects of Switzerland's policies during World War II—refugees; Jewish-owned artworks and insurance policies; the provision of electricity, money transfers, armaments, and gold to Germany; the role of its legal system and the press; and much more. The conclusion of the final report provided a nuanced analysis of Switzerland's responsibilities, clearing the nation of some unjustified accusations (no trains carrying deported people ever crossed Switzerland), as well as confirming serious wrongdoing (abuse of neutrality; requiring the J-stamp on passports of German citizens who were Jewish; turning down refugees at the border). The study recommended that Switzerland come to terms with its history and that this five-year research project mark the beginning rather than the end of discussions, debates, and evaluations. The commission was officially dissolved on March 31, 2002.

The Special Fund for needy Holocaust victims completed the distribution of \$175 million (298 million Swiss francs) donated for humanitarian purposes by Swiss banks and industries. The fund, headed by Rolf Bloch, identified beneficiaries around the world, among them Jews, political prisoners, gypsies, Christians of Jewish descent, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and non-Jews who had helped Jews. The fund was dissolved in December 2002, with the remaining \$8 million to be shared between a Jewish organization in Switzerland helping needy Holocaust victims and the Swiss Red Cross Fund for victims of war and torture.

The Swiss Solidarity Foundation, proposed by President Kaspar Villiger in 1997, was intended to use more than \$4 billion (7 billion Swiss francs) from the national gold reserves for humanitarian projects. Originally, Holocaust victims were included on the list of proposed beneficiaries, but political and popular pressure later forced them off. In the end it made no difference, since, in a popular referendum held in September 2002, the Swiss people (51.1 percent of them) rejected the entire idea. The nationalist Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC) proposed that the money go toward social security, but this too was rejected by popular vote. No new suggestions were under consideration for the use of this gold.

The global settlement reached in August 1998 between Swiss banks and the lawyers bringing class-action suits in the name of Holocaust victims or their heirs determined that \$1.25 billion would be distributed, \$800 million to heirs of dormant-account holders, and the rest distributed to other victims of the Nazis (see AJYB 2000, p. 331). Since many of the potential beneficiaries were very old, new rules were established to accelerate and simplify the distribution process. By the end of 2002, it was expected that 32,000 requests would be honored. Forced laborers would receive \$1,450, refugees \$3,625, and people incarcerated in Switzerland \$750. The Claims Conference would receive \$10 million on behalf of survivors who were robbed of their property.

In December, Stuart Eizenstat, the former U.S. undersecretary of state who had handled restitution issues during the Clinton administration, published a book, *Imperfect Justice*, about his experiences negotiating restitution claims. Before the book was even published and its contents discussed, the design for its cover created a major controversy in Switzerland. It showed a Swiss flag (white cross on red background) covered with a swastika made of gold bars. Political leaders, journalists, and historians complained that the design unfairly smeared their country's reputation. Two lawyers filed suits against Eizenstat for defaming the Swiss emblem. Some Swiss reacted hysterically, sending anti-Semitic e-mails to the World Economic Forum, which had invited Eizenstat to speak at its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2003. The Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities stated that it too was shocked by the cover, which, it charged, reinforced the very association of Jews with money that it had tried to combat during the controversy over the dormant accounts. Eizenstat gave numerous interviews to the Swiss press in which he stated that he was sorry if the cover shocked some people, but that it did reflect the historical reality of Switzerland's wartime attitude. He added that the content of the book gave a balanced and fair analysis.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

The size of the Jewish community remained stable at around 18,000 people, some 0.25 percent of Switzerland's population of seven million.

In reaction to the media's biased coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities created the Jüdisches Medienforum Schweiz (Jewish Forum of Swiss Media) in August. Its goals were to observe and analyze how the Swiss media covered issues related to Israel and Jews, and to counter anti-Semitic statements and attempts to delegitimize Israel. It began its work in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where it was headed by Prof. Ekkehard W. Stegemann of the University of Basel's theology department.

Yitzhak Dayan, former rabbi of Salonika, was elected rabbi of the Communauté Israélite de Genève, Geneva's traditional congregation.

In December 2002, Minister of Interior Ruth Dreifuss quit the Swiss government in which she had served since 1993. In 1999 she had become the first woman and the first Jew to be president of Switzerland (the president of the country is chosen from among the ministers, on a rotating basis). A biography of her, *Dreifuss ist unser Name* (Dreifuss Is Our Name), by Isabella Maria Fischli, was published upon her resignation.

BRIGITTE SION