Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

The dominant event of 1983 was the general election in June, which gave the Conservatives an overall majority of 144 seats. The election results led to the immediate eclipse of Michael Foot as Labor leader and Roy Jenkins as head of the Liberal–Social Democratic alliance; Neil Kinnock took over as Labor head and David Owen as leader of the Social Democrats. The Conservative victory was attributable in part to a fall in the inflation rate; in May it stood at 3.7 per cent, the lowest figure in 15 years. The “Falklands factor” also contributed to the Conservative win, in that the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher appeared resolute in the pursuit of its aims. Finally, the Conservative victory owed something to disunity in Labor's ranks.

The extreme right-wing parties fielded about 66 per cent fewer candidates in 1983 than in 1979; there were 59 National Front (NF) candidates, 53 British National party candidates (this party had broken away from the NF in 1980), and 14 candidates belonging to other right-wing groups. The extreme-left Workers' Revolutionary party fielded 21 candidates. In October Home Secretary Leon Brittan announced plans to raise the electoral deposit to an “acceptable minimum,” thus making it more difficult for extremist candidates to run for office.

A report issued in October by the national advisory committee of the Young Conservatives maintained that “extreme and racialist forces are at work inside the Conservative party.” Despite this, however, Jacob Gewirtz, director of the Board of Deputies of British Jews' defense and group relations department, indicated in December that in recent years the focus of antisemitism in Britain had shifted dramatically from the extreme right to the extreme left. The NF had become seriously fragmented since its massive defeat in the 1979 election. On the other hand, extreme left-wing elements had successfully infiltrated the Labor party. Particularly disturbing was the close working relationship between leading figures in the Greater London Council (GLC) and the anti-Zionist Workers' Revolutionary party.

The Holocaust Memorial Garden, consecrated in London's Hyde Park in June, was vandalized in August and September. Other attacks against Jewish property in Britain, particularly cemeteries, occurred sporadically throughout the year. In
August the Jewish community was warned to be on guard following an explosion at Bank Leumi's central London office.

In 1983, 28 Jews were elected to Parliament—compared to 32 in 1979—including a record 17 from the Conservative party. Nigel Lawson became the first Jew appointed chancellor of the exchequer; Leon Brittan was named home secretary; Sir Keith Joseph received the post of secretary of state for education and science.

The number of work days lost through strikes was the lowest in Britain since 1976. On the other hand, levels of productivity, employment, and manufacturing failed to show gains.

**Relations with Israel**

British efforts to play an active role in Middle East peace-making continued in 1983. Prime Minister Thatcher affirmed the government's determination to work for a comprehensive peace settlement based on the two principles of the June 1980 Venice declaration of the European Economic Community (EEC): existence and security for all states in the region, including Israel; and justice—involving self-determination—for the Palestinians.

A breach in British-Arab relations was healed when the delayed visit of an Arab delegation, including Palestinian spokesman Walid Khalidi, took place in March, and Foreign Secretary Francis Pym traveled to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in April. Following the visit by the Arab delegation, Pym told the House of Commons: "We have encouraged King Hussein and the PLO to reach agreement on a joint approach to negotiations, and have urged Israel to reconsider its rejection of President Reagan's proposals." Yoav Biran, chargé d'affaires at Israel's London embassy, rejected any suggestion—implied in the statements of British officials—that Israel, rather than the Arabs, was obstructing Middle East peace efforts.

In April Israel formally protested to Britain about a meeting in Tunis between Minister of State Douglas Hurd and Farouk Kaddoumi, chief of the PLO's political department. The foreign office explained this departure from government policy, whereby contacts with the PLO were to be limited to low-level officials, by arguing that the PLO had a crucial role to play in creating conditions that would permit King Hussein and the Palestinians to enter into negotiations with Israel on the basis of the Reagan plan.

In July Britain welcomed Israel's decision to redeploy its forces in Lebanon, seeing this as a first step toward complete withdrawal. The foreign office warned that a de facto partition of Lebanon "should be avoided at all costs," since this would "undermine the stability of the region." In August Britain was one of 13 United Nations security council members to vote for an Arab-sponsored resolution—vetoed by the United States—censuring Israel for its West Bank settlement policy and calling for the dismantling of existing settlements.

In November Prime Minister Thatcher described a series of attacks on Israeli, French, and American installations in Lebanon as "terrorist atrocities of appalling
proportions.” Still, the foreign office deplored “in the strongest possible terms” an Israeli retaliatory raid.

In September Britain and eight other EEC countries sent observers to the United Nations conference on Palestine in Geneva. In October Minister of State Richard Luce visited Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. In November it was announced that Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh would visit Jordan in spring 1984. In December notice was given that Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe would go to Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the new year.

In December Prime Minister Thatcher told Parliament that the British contingent in the multi-national, peace-keeping force in Lebanon would not be withdrawn unilaterally.

The Labor party’s election manifesto supported both the right of Israel to live in peace and security and the right of Palestinians to self-determination, including the establishment of a state. In December it was announced that Labor leader Kinnock would visit Israel in 1984.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

In March an interim report issued by the Board of Deputies research unit estimated the size of Anglo-Jewry in 1975–1979 as 354,000, plus or minus 32,000. This compared with a figure of 410,000 in 1960–1965. In November the research unit’s final report, published in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, lowered the Jewish population estimate to 336,000, plus or minus 34,000. Nearly two-thirds of all British Jews lived in the London area.

Statistics on synagogue marriages in 1982, published by the research unit in July, indicated a new low for the century—1,110—compared to 1,180 in 1981, and an average of 1,275 in the five-year period 1977–1981. Marriages in the modern-Orthodox sector declined most sharply; there were 750 such marriages in 1982, compared to 818 in 1981 and an average of 872 in the five-year period 1977–1981. Burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices rose to 4,846 in 1982, compared to 4,654 in 1981 and an average of 4,751 during the five-year period 1977–1981. A greater proportion of marriages than deaths in London—72 per cent of all marriages, 66 per cent of all burials—suggested that younger Jews were moving there.

Communal Activities

In November plans were announced for a major study of charitable giving to Jewish causes in Britain. This followed critical comments by Ellis Birk, new Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) chairman, who pointed to the disparity in the amount of
money raised for Israel in 1982 (some £16 million) and that raised for the JWB (£500,000). The percentage of the JWB budget provided by the Jewish community had been steadily decreasing, and currently stood at only 12 per cent. Much of the JWB’s work was funded by local government authorities.

Cutbacks in government services led the JWB to give priority attention to two groups—the elderly and the mentally ill. The JWB operated 13 homes for 500 people and four day centers which served about 600 clients; it also organized numerous support services. In July it was announced that the JWB would cooperate with the North London Hospice in caring for the terminally ill—the first JWB project in the general community.

In May the Jewish Blind Society (JBS) offered to provide the Jewish Deaf Association with social work facilities for its clients. In June the JBS announced plans for a new £850,000 home in North West London that would serve 360 elderly Jews who were visually handicapped.

In January the Jewish Society for the Mentally Handicapped sponsored a community project for low-ability youths. The funds for the project were provided by the government’s manpower services commission, which in March approved a £100,000 grant to build a residential home for mentally handicapped adults in Stanmore, Middlesex. In June Ravenswood Village, Berkshire held a workshop on the use of microcomputers in aiding the mentally handicapped.

In January the Alexander Margulies Youth Center, built in North West London by the Bachad Fellowship, was formally opened. In October Prince Philip opened the £7 million Birchland extension of Nightingale House, the home for the aged. This made Nightingale House the largest facility of its kind in Britain and the largest Jewish home in Europe.

In October an action-research program was begun, with the aim of lessening the hardships caused by marital breakdown. This had become a significant problem on the Anglo-Jewish scene, according to Jack Wolkind, chairman of a conference on divorce that was sponsored by the West Central Community Development Center in May.

Zionism and Israel

In June, after months of speculation, Yehuda Avner was named Israel’s new ambassador to Britain. In July Prime Minister Thatcher attended a dinner launching a campaign to establish two professorial chairs at Israeli universities in honor of Avner’s predecessor, Shlomo Argov, who was gravely injured by terrorists in London in 1982.

In April the National Zionist Council of Great Britain and Ireland (NZC) and the Zionist Federation (ZF) protested the Hurd-Kaddoumi meeting; the Board of Deputies saw in the meeting a “shocking reversal of government policy.” The Board of Deputies, the ZF, and other Jewish and non-Jewish organizations made a concerted effort to counter what they regarded as a growing pro-Arab bias in Britain’s Middle East policy.
In December the Board of Deputies questioned the advisability of Queen Elizabeth's projected visit to Jordan, suggesting instead that she visit Israel.

In September Michael Fidler, director of Conservative Friends of Israel, indicated that his group's 218 members constituted the largest pro-Israel faction in Parliament. In July a Trades Union Friends of Israel group was formally launched in response to a spate of anti-Israel resolutions that had been passed by a number of unions.

In March dissatisfaction with the organizational structure of the Zionist movement in Britain led the General Zionist Organization and Herut to leave the ZF. The two organizations joined with the Mizrachi in forming a new umbrella organization, the NZC. At the same time, the United Zionists, a non-party movement, reaffirmed its support of the ZF. In June a delegation belonging to the World Sephardi Organization attended the ZF biennial conference for the first time. In August the NZC asked the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem to either freeze all funding to the competing British Zionist federations or equalize funding between them. In the same month, the Board of Deputies Zionist group issued a strong appeal for the reunification of the Zionist movement in Britain.

In November, at the Jewish National Fund's London conference, plans were announced for a new £500,000 agricultural project in the Galilee.

In February the ZF launched a new campaign to promote emigration to Israel. The World Zionist Organization announced that aliyah from Britain and Ireland was up by 30 per cent in 1982, with a record 1,256 individuals departing for the Jewish state.

Soviet Jewry

The Greater London Council angered Soviet Jewry supporters twice during the year: in February when an exhibition, "60 Years of the USSR," sponsored by the British-Soviet Friendship Society, was held in London's Royal Festival Hall; and in July when a Soviet delegation, including the mayor of Moscow, visited Britain at the invitation of Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone. Protests were mounted by the 35's, the Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry, Concerned Jewish Youth, and other groups. The House of Commons condemned the Soviet delegation's visit as "an insult to the plight of Jewish people in the Soviet Union."

Campaigns for Soviet Jewry took place throughout the country. In June a demonstration was directed against a visiting delegation from Donetsk, Sheffield's twin city. In August the Bournemouth B'nai B'rith Youth Organization mounted an effort on behalf of refusenik Iosif Begun. In November members of the Brighton and Hove Committee for Soviet Jewry protested a Soviet art-book exhibition at Brighton's central library. In December the Greater Manchester Council passed a unanimous resolution denouncing the denial of basic rights to Soviet Jews.

A London rally on behalf of Anatoly Shcharansky, planned for March, was cancelled as a result of false hopes of his early release. In October a major march
for Soviet Jewry took place in the city, with more than 7,000 people from all over Britain participating.

In February Foreign Secretary Pym summoned the Soviet ambassador to appeal for Shcharansky's release on humanitarian grounds. In March both Prime Minister Thatcher and Labor leader Foot sent messages of support to the British delegation attending the Third International Conference on Soviet Jewry in Jerusalem.

**Religion**

Eighty-eight per cent of Britain's Jews, residing in 109,426 households, belonged to synagogues, according to *Synagogue Membership in the UK 1983*, published in December by the Board of Deputies research unit. These figures, while seemingly high, in fact fell short of previous totals. There was also a decline in the number of congregations—down from 351 in 1977 to 328 in 1983—due to the merging or closing of synagogues in areas of shrinking Jewish population. While the modern Orthodox element remained preeminent, claiming 70 per cent of all male synagogue members, it experienced the sharpest rate of decline. The traditionalist Orthodox and Reform groupings grew substantially between 1977 and 1983.

In June the United Synagogue (US) decided to close the Putney and Wimbledon synagogue due to dwindling membership. The US also approved the sale of the Brixton and Streatham synagogues, which amalgamated to form the South London synagogue. Membership fell at the Hendon and Wembley synagogues and rose at the Stanmore, Canons Park, Pinner, Boreham Wood-Elstree, and Bushey synagogues.

A scholarship program, aimed at drawing talented individuals into the rabbinate, was established in March by the Stanley Kalms Charitable Foundation.

In August the youth and community department of the US announced plans to create a careers structure for youth workers, beginning with the appointment of a youth officer.

In December a 7.5 per cent surcharge on membership was approved by the US council. This was intended to cover various financial outlays, including proposed salary increases for the clergy. The Council of the Federation of Synagogues also increased membership contributions—in this case by 25 per cent.

While exploratory talks were held in March to effect a reconciliation between the kashrut authorities of the US and the Federation of Synagogues, in December the Federation's executive council decided to initiate its own shechita activities. Kashrut supervision by the Federation of Synagogues expanded in 1982; under the aegis of its beth din, the Federation supervised 365 functions and granted licenses for the manufacture of numerous food products.

A decision by the board of elders of London's Spanish and Portuguese Congregation to remove Rabbi Pinchas Toledano as head of the beth din was rescinded in December. Rabbi Abraham Levy, the communal rabbi, was also appointed spiritual head of the London congregation.
In September the London beth din decreed that marriages and conversions performed by Rabbi Louis Jacobs of the break-away New London Synagogue lacked validity under Jewish law.

In December the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain approved a resolution to hold talks with the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues aimed at forming a single synagogal association.

Jewish Education

According to the Jewish Educational Year Book, published in September, Jewish day school enrollment stood at 12,600 in 1982, up 1,000 over the 1981 figure. Approximately 23 per cent of all Anglo-Jewish children attended day schools. Edward Conway, consultant to the Jewish Educational Development Trust, indicated that newly established day schools were attracting substantial numbers of students.

In December the London Board of Jewish Religious Education raised the salaries of teachers in part-time religion classes and regional centers by 25 per cent.

In September Philip Skelker became headmaster at Carmel College, Britain's only Jewish public school. Skelker replaced Rabbi Jeremy Rosen, who assumed responsibility for developing ties between Carmel College and the wider Jewish community.

In October it was announced that a new £750,000 Jews' College building would open in Hendon, London in 1984. Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits became acting principal of Jews' College in the wake of the departure for Israel of Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch. Jakobovits split the leadership of the school between Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, head of rabbinc studies, and Irving Jacobs, head of academic studies. Jews' College opened the 1983 academic year with 48 full- and part-time students.

A new £250,000 student residential center opened in London's Bloomsbury section in September, named in memory of former Hillel chairman J.C. Gilbert. In July a commission recommended that Hillel House, London be sold.

In March the Oxford Center for Post-Graduate Hebrew Studies and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem established two joint-fellowship programs in modern Jewish history. In May, Oxford University agreed to allow an option in Yiddish literature as part of the work toward a bachelor degree—a historic first for a British school.

In April Rabbi Norman Solomon was appointed lecturer at a new center for the study of Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations established at Quaker-run Selly Oak College, Birmingham.

Publications

The £3,000 Harold H. Wingate Prize for a book of broad Jewish interest was shared by Israeli president Chaim Herzog (The Arab-Israeli Wars) and Chaim Raphael (The Springs of Jewish Life).

Biographical and autobiographical works published during the year included And Nothing but the Truth by Roman Alan King-Hamilton; The Brothers Singer by
Clive Sinclair; The Blessing of Eliyahu, part biography, part festschrift in honor of Rabbi Eli Munk; and two Rothschild studies, Dear Lord Rothschild: Birds, Butterflies and History by Miriam Rothschild and Baron James: The Rise of the French Rothschilds by Anka Muhlstein.

Among historical works were Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870–1939 by Edward J. Bristow; From the Wilhelminian Era to the Third Reich, edited by Arnold Paucker; Atlas of the Holocaust by Martin Gilbert; and Immigrants and the Class Struggle: The Jewish Immigrant in Leeds, 1880–1914 by Joseph Buckman.

Books about the Middle East and Zionism included Between Battles and Ballots: A Study of the Relationship Between Israeli Governments and the Military Establishment by Yoram Perl; An Ambassador Speaks Out by Shlomo Argov; Final Conflict by John Bulloch; Lebanon: The Fractured Country by David Gilmour; and The Essential Chaim Weizmann, extracts from articles, speeches, and letters, selected by Barnett Litvinoff.

Among literary studies were Heine's Jewish Comedy: A Study of His Portraits of Jews and Judaism by S.S. Prawer; Problems of Jewish Writing Today: Jewish Writing and Identity in the Twentieth Century by Leon Yudkin; Marrano Poets of the Seventeenth Century, edited and translated by Timothy Oelman; and A Strong Dose of Myself, a collection of autobiographical papers, essays, and lectures by poet Dannie Abse.

Fiction included The House of Women by Chaim Bermant; Coming from Behind by Howard Jacobson; Falls the Shadow by Emanuel Litvinoff; Brothers by Bernice Rubens; and Pilgermann by Russell Hoban.

An important study was The Jewish Community in British Politics by Geoffrey Alderman.

**Personalia**

Joel Barnett, chief secretary to the treasury in the last labor government, was made a life peer. Knighthood was conferred on Abraham Goldberg, Regius professor of medicine at Glasgow University; Leslie Porter, chairman of Tesco Stores; and Alfred Sherman, director of the Center for Policy Studies, the Conservative think-tank. Stuart Young was appointed chairman of the BBC. Sir Zelman Cowen was named chairman of the Press Council.

British Jews who died in 1983 included Avrohom Stencel, Yiddish poet, essayist, and journalist, in January, aged 85; Tessie Cohen, honorary vice-president of the Federation of Women Zionists, in January; Joseph Leftwich, Yiddishist, poet, translator, and journalist, in February, aged 90; Phyllis Jacobs, co-chairman of Jewish Child's Day from its inception until 1963, in February; Peter Nidditch, professor of philosophy at Sheffield University, in February, aged 54; Dora Margulies, communal worker, in February, aged 74; Meyer Fortes, emeritus William Wyse professor of social anthropology at Cambridge University, in February, aged 76; Samuel
Jenkins, chemist and water purification expert, in February, aged 81; Polly Goldstein, vice-president and founder of Children and Youth Aliyah of Great Britain, in February; Martin Lawrence, singer and musical director, in March, aged 73; Alexander Gordon, Zionist and communal worker, in March, aged 83; Arthur Koestler, writer and leading intellectual, in March, aged 77; Yasha Shapiro, aeronautical engineer, in April, aged 71; Dolf Rieser, scientist, artist, and teacher, in April, aged 84; Lenore Goldschmidt, educator, in April, aged 85; Simon Perbohner, industrial chemist, in April, aged 86; Harry Titchener, youth-service leader, in May, aged 82; Maurice Sumray, Leeds Zionist leader, in May; Mac Goldsmith, engineer, philanthropist, and Leicester communal figure, in May, aged 80; Tessie Kleeman-Jacobs, Youth Aliyah worker, in May; Jack Rubie, pediatrician, in May, aged 68; Emanuel Wax, lawyer and man of the theater, in May, aged 71; Walter Paget, historian of science and medicine, in June, aged 84; Michael Katanka, authority on antiquarian books, in June, aged 61; Margery Weiner, writer, in June; Berenice Sydney (nee Frieze), artist, in July, aged 38; Leon Joseph, footballer, in July, aged 63; Philip Zec, political cartoonist and journalist, in July, aged 73; Eric Kann, chemist, in August, aged 81; Eli Gottlieb, property developer and philanthropist, in August, aged 59; Lady Susan Elizabeth Karminski, communal worker, in August, aged 79; Alexander Easterman, Zionist leader and journalist, in August, aged 92; Morris Swift, senior dayan of the London Beth Din, in September, aged 76; Celia Sevitt, artist, in September, aged 67; David Toff, music publisher and manager, in October, aged 81; Sam Goldberg, Yiddish actor and singer, in October, aged 86; Leonard Schapiro, professor of political science at London University and leading expert on Soviet affairs, in November, aged 75; Young Johnny Brown of St. George's, boxer, in November, aged 78; Alfred Woolf, former United Synagogue president, in December, aged 86; David Jaques, entomologist, in December, aged 77; Henry Inlander, expressionist painter, in December, aged 58; and Jack Harris Barnett, communal worker and journalist, in December, aged 57.

LIONEL AND MIRIAM KOCHAN
France

National Affairs

In 1983 there was deepening disillusionment with the Socialist government of President François Mitterrand, disillusionment that extended even to people on the left. Inflation and unemployment rose to crisis levels—more than two million people were out of work. In factories, work stoppages were directed by the powerful Confédération Générale de Travail (CGT, General Confederation of Labor), whose top leaders held equally important posts in the Communist party. Protests by the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT, French Workers Democratic Confederation) often outdid those of the Communists.

During the year, the franc was devalued for the third time. The government’s austerity program, designed to reduce the budget deficit by about 20 billion francs ($2.5 billion), included such things as an increase in the tax on fuels, a compulsory loan to the government, reduction in the amount of money tourists could take out of the country, and advance withholding of one per cent of taxable income.

Political debate centered on the school issue. Government proposals to license teachers in the free—i.e., non-government, largely parochial—schools, were rejected by Catholics, who conducted several protest actions. Jewish groups, wishing to protect the independence of Jewish religious schools, had no choice but to align themselves—to their embarrassment—with elements on the right.

The two rounds of municipal elections that were held on March 6 and March 13 resulted in clear losses for the government majority. In 31 cities, all with populations of more than 30,000, the opposition took power, with the Communists suffering the greatest losses.

While the reunited parties of the right—the Rassemblement du Peuple Républicain (RDR, Rally for the Republic) and Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF, Union for Democracy in France)—sharply attacked President Mitterrand’s domestic policy, they generally approved of the direction of his foreign policy. Indeed, Mitterrand’s conduct of foreign affairs, emphasizing independent decision-making by France, could well be described as Gaullist. Mitterrand’s attitude toward the Soviet Union and its satellites was much firmer than that of his predecessor, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. During an official visit to Belgium in October, Mitterrand sharply criticized the neo-pacifist campaign in Europe, pointing out that “pacifism is in the West, Euromissiles in the East.”

On April 5, France expelled 47 employees of the Soviet embassy who were involved in industrial espionage. Contrary to expectations, Moscow did not take any retaliatory measures, contenting itself with verbal protests.
French Middle East policy remained extremely cautious, with an attempt being made to preserve good relations with the Arab countries, while also taking Israeli sensibilities into account. An official visit to Paris by PLO chief Yasir Arafat—an event eagerly awaited by pro-Palestinian elements and adamantly opposed in Jewish circles—did not take place, although it could not be ruled out as a future possibility.

In Beirut, on October 23, the headquarters of a company of French paratroopers was destroyed in a truck-bomb suicide attack, leaving 58 dead. In retaliation, French planes raided the training camp of a pro-Iranian Shi'ite militia near Baalbek on November 17. The results of the action, however, were not known.

Paris played an active role as an intermediary in the exchange of 4,500 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel for six Israeli soldiers captured by the PLO in Lebanon.

On December 20, PLO chief Arafat and 4,000 Palestinian fighters, under siege by Syrian-backed dissidents, left Tripoli in Greek ships under the protection of the French navy.

**The Barbie Affair**

Klaus Barbie, the notorious Nazi war criminal, was returned to France on February 8. As the head of the Gestapo in Lyon during World War II, he had been responsible for the deportation of many Jews, including children. Barbie had been living comfortably in Bolivia for many years, since that South American country refused to extradite him. Finally, he was brought back to the scene of his crimes through a procedural artifice: Bolivia, having once again turned down a request for Barbie's extradition, agreed to his "expulsion." The principal charge against Barbie—that he murdered French resistance leader Jean Moulin—had to be dropped because the statute of limitations had run out. However, he still stood to be punished for his actions against Jews, which were categorized as "crimes against humanity," and thus were not linked to any statute of limitations.

Because of the length of the examining magistrate's preliminary investigation, it was not known, at the end of 1983, when Barbie would be tried. Media coverage of the Barbie affair served to make the younger generation aware of the extent of the Nazi reign of terror in France. Barbie's choice of Jean Vergès—a leftist lawyer who had defended Algerian FLN militants some years ago—as his defense counsel held out the promise of a stormy trial.

**Antisemitism**

While there were many racist occurrences in France in 1983—most being attributable to the fallout of the economic crisis—antisemitic incidents were relatively few in number.

A number of extreme-right journals ran a hate campaign against Minister of Justice Robert Badinter, a Jew, who sought to liberalize the French prison system. Another target of the extreme right was Simone Veil, the second leading figure in
the RDR opposition. There was special sensitivity to the attacks on Veil because she was a Holocaust survivor who—more so than any other French politician of Jewish origin—openly proclaimed her ties to the Jewish community.

Antisemitism intruded into the political campaign, most especially in the precipitous rise to prominence of extreme-right agitator Jean-Marie Le Pen. While Le Pen, who had played a conspicuous role in the neo-Fascist Poujadist movement of earlier years, maintained that he opposed racism and antisemitism, people in his entourage did not hesitate to use anti-Jewish arguments in lashing out against immigrants and other non-native groups. Both the pro-Zionist Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (LICRA, International League Against Racism and Antisemitism) and the pro-Communist Mouvement Contre le Racisme et Pour l'Amitié des Peuples (MRAP, Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples) took up the cudgels against Le Pen and his followers. On occasion the two organizations—which were usually rivals—joined in court actions against racist activities. However, while the LICRA fought against anti-immigrant racism even when it had nothing to do with antisemitism, the MRAP was unwilling to protest anti-Israel activities of any sort, even those that were clearly antisemitic in nature. For obvious reasons, the MRAP was also silent about the situation of Soviet Jewry.

The LICRA's most intense efforts, which had broad support in the Jewish community, aimed at assisting refuseniks and other victims of official Soviet antisemitism. The organization sponsored demonstrations, collected signatures on petitions, mailed packages to refusenik families, and counseled travelers to the Soviet Union about how to make contact with Jews there. Regrettably, the general public in France remained indifferent to the plight of Soviet Jewry.

Libération, the leftist daily, published without comment a letter from a reader that was a veritable incitement to a pogrom. The LICRA took the letter writer to court, and he was convicted and fined.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of France was estimated to be 530,000. Leading Jewish population centers were Paris, Marseilles, Nice, Lyon, and Toulouse.

Communal Activities

Jews appeared to be less affected by France's economic crisis than other Frenchmen, since they participated only in a limited way in heavy industry, where cuts in production and worker layoffs were most pronounced. Still, many Jewish "repatriates" from North Africa were vulnerable to job losses on a last hired-first fired basis.
While the devaluation of the franc took a considerable toll on the real value of the funds that French Jewry raised for Israel in 1983, the amount did not decrease in absolute terms.

The chief negative factor in French Jewish life was the limited participation of Jews in communal affairs—the great majority did not belong to any Jewish organization. The Conseil Réprésentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF, Representative Council of French Jewry) encompassed a broad range of religious, cultural, and political groups, including the Communists. Under the leadership of Théo Klein, the CRIF provided important support for the State of Israel and Soviet Jewry. The leadership of the Fond Social Juif Unifié (FSJU, United Jewish Philanthropic Fund) underwent significant changes, with younger people assuming positions of power. Seeking to combat assimilation and dejudaization, the FSJU focused its attention on cultural matters.

Henri Hajdenberg's Renouveau Juif (Jewish Renewal) movement—which had broken with the policy of political neutrality of the older, established Jewish organizations, and conducted a vigorous campaign to "vote sanctions" against the former Giscard d'Estaing government—failed to acquire sufficient influence with President Mitterand and his advisors to bring about any real change in France's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a result, Renouveau Juif lost some of its "revolutionary" character, and gradually began to align itself with the mainstream Jewish organizations.

Among Zionist youth groups, only the Zionist-Marxist Hashomer Hatzair on the far left and the pro-Likud Betar on the far right showed signs of vitality.

Young Lubavitcher hasidim, consisting mainly of immigrants from North Africa, were intensely active as neighborhood proselytizers. While they enjoyed much sympathy among the masses of Jews, they were less appreciated by the leaders of the community, who looked askance at the Lubavitchers' flamboyant propaganda techniques and thinly veiled opposition to the Consistory's rather lusterless Orthodoxy.

Jewish Culture

Adam Loos, a leader of the FSJU, became the director of L'Arche (The Ark), the leading Jewish magazine in France. Jean-Luc Allouche was forced to resign as associate editor of L'Arche when it became known that he had sent a message of solidarity on the magazine's stationery to the director of Libération.

The opening of the air waves to private-sector broadcasting encouraged the development of programs with Jewish content. Two Jewish radio stations in Paris—"Communaute" and "Chalom"—worked closely together, alternating programs. In the main regional centers—Lyon, Marseille, Nice, Toulouse, Lille—Jewish radio programming functioned independently of Paris. While liturgical music and Yiddish popular songs were heard and appreciated everywhere, serious discussions of ideas were rare.
"Écoute Israel" ("Hear, O Israel"), the Consistory's religious-oriented radio program, directed by Victor Malka, continued to be broadcast each Sunday morning. Rabbi Josy Eisenberg's television program was also maintained.

The Centre Universitaire d'Études Juives (University Center for Jewish Studies) in Paris was authorized to grant graduate degrees.

The Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France (Federation of Jewish Organizations in France), which for many years served as the umbrella agency for groups with an East European membership, was renamed the Cercle Jefroykin (Jefroykin Club). Under its new name, it sought to disseminate Yiddish culture among the children and grandchildren of earlier immigrants.

Jack Lang, the French minister of culture, who was Jewish, indicated his intention to encourage the spread of Jewish culture. This was the first time that a government official—Jewish or other—had taken such a position.

Publications

Raymond Aron's Mémories made a very strong impression on the French public, even becoming a best-seller—a rare success for a work of such quality and seriousness. This was the last book that the great political scientist, historian, and journalist published before his death. Among other things, Aron explained the nature of his ties to the Jewish world, especially his pro-Israel position.

Vie et destin ("Life and Destiny," Julliard), by Vasili Grossman, a Russian author unknown in France at the time of his death in 1964, captures the despair of an old Bolshevik who has become disillusioned with Communism.

In Marek Halter's novel Le fils d'Abraham ("The Son of Abraham," Laffont), the author imaginatively reconstructs his own genealogical history, moving through time and space with his ancestors.

While rumor had it that Elie Wiesel's most recent fictional work, Le cinquième fils ("The Fifth Son," Grasset), would win the 1983 Goncourt Prize, it did not. However, Wiesel was showered with other distinctions, including the Legion of Honor medal. He also enjoyed the friendship of President Mitterrand. All in all, it was clear that Wiesel had truly "arrived" in France.

In Jean-Luc Allouche's first novel, the autobiographical Les jours innocents ("Innocent Days," Lieu Commun), the author exhibits both a fine literary style and keen knowledge of things Jewish.

Personalia

On October 17 Raymond Aron died in Paris at the age of 80. Aron was a professor at the Sorbonne, a columnist for Le Figaro and L'Express, and the author of numerous works on politics and history, the most famous being The Opium of the Intellectuals. As a young man, Aron had studied at the elite École Normale Supérieure, where he was a classmate and friend of Jean-Paul Sartre. Because Aron
opposed the revolutionary mythology of the left, he was mistakenly classified as a man of the right. In fact, however, he was a true liberal. Aron initially had serious reservations about the State of Israel, but he assumed an openly pro-Israel stance during the Six Day War. In his later years, he participated in numerous demonstrations on behalf of the Jewish state and was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Arnold Mandel