Central Europe

Federal Republic of Germany

Domestic Affairs

In the domestic sphere, 1981 and 1982 saw growing problems for the government coalition consisting of the Social Democratic party (SPD) and the Free Democratic party (FDP). Finally, on October 1, 1982, the government fell in a no-confidence vote—the first time this had occurred in the post-World War II period. The new coalition that assumed office was made up of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU), with the participation of the FDP; Chancellor Helmut Kohl headed the new coalition.

There was a further decline in the economy in 1983—1981 and 1982 had been marked by economic recession—although the situation began to stabilize toward the end of the year. The change of government was confirmed by the public in the general elections held on March 6, 1983: the CDU-CSU won 48.8 per cent of the vote; the SPD 38.2 per cent; and the FDP 7.0 per cent, just narrowly escaping elimination from the Bundestag. The Greens, a party supported by a variety of environmentalist and pacifist groups, entered the federal parliament for the first time, having won 5.6 per cent of the vote. One of the leading representatives of the Greens, Werner Vogel, returned his mandate after an internal party dispute concerning his Nazi past.

The peace movement and the Greens, often seconded by the SPD, were extremely critical of the policy of Western military strength advocated by the Reagan administration in Washington. More than half a million people participated in a series of peaceful demonstrations against nuclear weapons in October. Nonetheless, in November, the federal parliament, after a heated debate, approved the stationing of additional U.S. medium-range missiles on West German territory.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's advent to power, Chancellor Kohl underscored the need for a rigorous defense of tolerance and democratic freedom, particularly on the part of Germans. News media were filled with stories about the Nazi era; there were special public gatherings and seminars. Students in West German schools were provided with detailed information and critical analyses relating to various aspects of Nazism.
In May 1983 the federal ministry of domestic affairs branded as a forgery alleged Hitler diaries that were published in Stern, the weekly magazine. Konrad Kujau, a West German dealer in Nazi and military paraphernalia, confessed to the crime; his accomplice was Stern reporter Gerd Heidemann.

**Extremism**

As in the past, government agencies, in the period 1981-1983, stressed that neither right-wing nor left-wing extremism constituted a serious threat to the democratic order in the Federal Republic. This claim was put forward despite a sharp increase in the number of acts of violence. Moreover, while neo-Nazi activities clearly accelerated, government agencies were convinced that left-wing terrorists, such as those organized in the Revolutionäre Zellen (RZ, Revolutionary Cells), represented a greater threat to society. There were 129 left-wing terrorist acts in 1981; 183 in 1982; and 215 in 1983. Some 175 left-wing extremist organizations existed, with a total membership of 61,000. The RZ, in particular, pursued a policy of "armed resistance" with growing intensity; the group was responsible for the murder of Hesse minister of state Heinz-Herbert Karry, as well as acts of sabotage against U.S. installations.

Government agencies differentiated between two types of ultra-right groups: extremists and neo-Nazis. The former opposed the democratic order on the basis of racial-nationalist ideology, while the latter derived their program directly from Nazism. In 1981 the authorities recorded a total of 1,824 illegal acts by right-wing extremists, including 328 with antisemitic motives; the corresponding figures for 1982 were 2,475 and 479; in 1983 the figures were 2,169 and 405. Neo-Nazi terrorist acts numbered 17 in 1982 and 11 in 1983.

At the end of 1983, there were 52 right-wing extremist groups, with a total membership of around 18,000. Some 1,130 individuals—most of them under the age of 30—belonged to 16 neo-Nazi groups; there were an additional 270 neo-Nazi activists who operated independently. The largest ultra-right group, Gerhard Frey's Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union), had a membership of over 11,000; the National Democratic party (NPD) had dwindled to around 6,000 members. There were 45 ultra-right publishing houses and book mailing services. Frey's Deutsche National-Zeitung, with a circulation of over 100,000, was the largest ultra-right publication; indeed, it was one of the largest national weekly newspapers appearing in the Federal Republic.

The two most militant right-wing extremist groups were the Aktionsfront Nationaler Sozialisten (ANS, Action Front of National Socialists), led by Michael Kühnen, and the Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands (VSBD, People's Socialist Movement in Germany) headed by Friedhelm Busse; they were outlawed by the federal interior ministry in 1982 and 1983, respectively. Other militant groups included the Aktion Ausländerrückführung-Volksbewegung gegen Überfremdung and Umweltzerstörung (Action Group for the Return of Foreign Citizens-People's Movement Against Foreignization and Environmental Destruction), outlawed...
in December 1983, and Bürger- und Bauerninitiative (the Citizens and Farmers Initiative). Among ultra-right youth groups were the Wiking-Jugend (Viking Youth), the Bund Heimattreuer Jugend (Union of Patriotic Youth), the Junge Nationaldemokraten (Young National Democrats), and the Deutsche Arbeiter-Jugend (German Labor Youth).

The Hilfsorganisation für Nationale Politische Gefangene und deren Angehörige (HNG, the Organization in Aid of National Political Prisoners and Their Families) was an integrative factor on the neo-Nazi scene and at the same time served as a liaison for contacts with neo-Nazi elements abroad. The HNG had particularly close ties to neo-Nazi groups in France and Spain. Fueling the propaganda efforts of neo-Nazis in the Federal Republic were hate materials supplied by Ernst Zündel’s Samisdat Publishers (Canada), George Dietz’s White Power Publications and Gary Lauck’s NSDAP/AO (United States), DNSU Forlag (Denmark), Courrier du Continent Publishers (Switzerland), and Ediciones Bausp (Spain).

Several members of the Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Hoffmann Military Sports Group), as well as their leader, Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, were arrested and sentenced to prison. Hoffmann was also awaiting trial for his part in the murder of publisher Shlomo Lewin in Erlangen at the end of 1980. VSBD leader Busse received a 45-month prison term. Manfred Roeder, leader of the militant neo-Nazi Deutsche Aktionsgruppen (German Action Groups), and about a dozen of his followers were found guilty of a series of terrorist acts in which two persons were killed and several wounded; they were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 months to 13 years. Neo-Nazi activist Erwin Schönborn was sentenced to 32 months in prison for inciting hatred against Jews. Two other notorious neo-Nazi propagandists, Edgar Geiss and Thies Christophersen (the latter an ex-SS officer), were sentenced for the same offense.

Nazi SS veterans continued to hold rallies in various towns in the Federal Republic, but met with growing opposition from democratic elements. Some 100 former SS members and their families gathered in Bad Hersfeld in May 1983, following a heated public debate over the matter. The SS members were confronted by more than 8,000 demonstrators, who demanded the banning of all SS gatherings and the outlawing of SS veterans groups. Imo Moszkowicz, the stage director at the Bad Hersfeld theater festival and a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz, resigned his post in protest against the SS meeting; Ernst Ehrlich, European director of B’nai B’rith, congratulated Moszkowicz for his action. Democratic circles were critical of the fact that the umbrella organization of SS veterans’ groups in the Federal Republic, the Hilfsgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit der ehemaligen Waffen-SS (HIAG, Society for Mutual Aid Among Former Waffen-SS Members), was dropped from the list of unconstitutional groups. However, the government explained that there was no evidence that the HIAG’s activities had violated constitutional principles in recent years.

In September 1982 the SPD submitted a bill calling for intensified legal action against the importation of neo-Nazi materials and against public denial or minimization of Nazi crimes. The bill was rejected as incomplete by the upper house of the
federal parliament in October. While the SPD retabled the bill toward the very end of 1982, no action was taken on it during the whole of 1983.

Government agencies voiced alarm over the continued activities of extremist groups made up of foreigners living in the Federal Republic. At the end of 1983 there were 123 such groups, with a total membership of 114,000. Of particular concern to the Jewish community were 19 Arab extremist groups, with some 3,200 members in all. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon fueled a strong anti-Israel campaign that was led by two such groups—the Palestinian Workers Union and the Palestinian Students Union. In January 1982 a bomb exploded at Mifgash Israel, a Jewish restaurant in West Berlin, killing a baby and wounding 25 other people; the “Arab Organization of the Fifteenth of May” claimed responsibility. A group calling itself “Justice for Palestine” took responsibility for a bomb attack in the transit hall for passengers to Israel at Munich airport in July 1982; in September the same group claimed responsibility for explosions at several Frankfurt travel agencies that operated in Israel. Still another group, “Seventeenth of September Sabra and Shatilla Organization,” boasted of having murdered Israeli businessman Ephraim Halpern in Hamburg in September 1983.

**Antisemitism**

The quickening of neo-Nazi tendencies led to a sharp increase in manifestations of antisemitism. Neo-Nazi propaganda materials were filled with talk about the “Jewish-Zionist world conspiracy against the German people” and the “Auschwitz lie.”

Anti-Jewish sentiment came strongly to the fore as a result of developments in the Middle East, with German Jews being held responsible for Israeli actions. Gerhard Brandt, head of the Protestant church in Rhineland-Palatinate, warned in January 1983 that the Middle East situation was engendering antisemitism in the guise of anti-Zionism. The church leader expressed outrage at the equation of Israeli military moves with the Nazi “final solution.” In the Jewish community the view was widespread that many Germans had latched upon the Israeli invasion of Lebanon as a means of legitimating pre-existing anti-Jewish attitudes; what was latent had now become manifest.

Culminating four years of planning, a center for research on antisemitism was opened at the Technical University in West Berlin in 1982; German-born professor Herbert Strauss, a resident of New York, was appointed the director. The center cooperated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the City University of New York in conducting its research activities. An international symposium on “antisemitism today” was organized by the center in September 1983.

Harm Menkens, a teacher at the Nautical College in Grünendeich, was dismissed from his post for publicly denying the Nazi mass murder of Jews. On the other hand, Hans-Jürgen Witsch, a teacher at the Commercial College in Nuremberg, was allowed to continue in his position after circulating a leaflet denying the Holocaust
and German responsibility for World War II. A man and a woman in Zweibrücken were arrested for producing and circulating an antisemitic board game.

A total of 65 Jewish cemeteries in the Federal Republic were desecrated in the period 1981–1983, 16 of them by ultra-right elements. A number of synagogues, Jewish community centers, and memorial sites—including the former Nazi concentration camp at Flossenbürg—were also targets of antisemitic vandals.

**Nazi Trials**

At the end of 1983, West German prosecutors and courts were still handling more than 1,700 cases involving Nazi crimes. In addition, the Central Agency for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Ludwigsburg was conducting over 100 preliminary investigations; these cases, however, involved relatively minor crimes and individual perpetrators, rather than mass murder. All investigations relating to Nazi crimes were running into mounting difficulties because of the old age and ill health of suspects and failing memory of witnesses.

Adalbert Rückerl, head of the Central Agency, pleaded for the continuation of the work of his office, arguing that the investigation of Nazi crimes was a historic German commitment. The Central Agency had compiled over 500,000 documents relating to Nazi crimes, and Rückerl wanted them preserved and displayed as a reminder of what had happened in the aftermath of Hitler's rise to power. Rückerl rejected charges that the West German judiciary had failed in the prosecution of Nazi crimes, pointing out that since the inception of investigative efforts in 1950, more than 6,450 individuals had been found guilty, with 12 being sentenced to death and some 160 to life in prison. In all, around 13,000 legal proceedings against Nazi suspects had been initiated by the Central Agency.

Rückerl was given an award by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in the United States in recognition of his efforts to bring Nazi criminals to justice and to improve German-Jewish relations.

**Düsseldorf.** In the Majdanek trial, sentences were handed down on June 30, 1981, after 474 court sessions. The proceedings, which started on November 26, 1975, had proved to be the longest and most costly in German legal history. Hermine Ryan-Braunsteiner was sentenced to life in prison; Hildegard Lächert received 12 years; Hermann Hackmann, ten; Emil Laurich, eight; Heinz Villain, six; Fritz Patrick, four; Arnold Strippel, 13; and Thomas Ellwanger, three. Heinrich Groffmann was acquitted. In January 1983 former SS medical aide Heinz Wisner was sentenced to six years in prison for complicity in the murder of Jews.

**Hamburg.** In March 1981 former police officer Ludwig Schröder was acquitted of murdering Jews. In July 1981 Walter Stegmann and Ernst Benesch were sentenced to six and six and one-half years in prison, respectively, for the murder of Jews in Poland. In December 1981 Arpad Wigand, former SS and police chief in Warsaw, was sentenced to 12½ years in prison for complicity in the murder of Jews; co-defendants Rolf Büscher and Richard von Coelln received prison sentences of three
and one-half and two years, respectively. In August 1982 former SS sergeant Walter Kümmel was acquitted of murdering Jews. In May 1983 former SS sergeant Karl Tollkuhn was sentenced to three and one-half years in prison for complicity in the murder of Jews.

**Frankfurt.** In March 1981 former SS member Josef Schmidt was sentenced to eight years' detention for the murder of Jews. In February 1982 former SS captain Friedrich Paulus was sentenced to four years in prison.

**Kiel.** In July 1981 Kurt Asche, former SS lieutenant in charge of Jewish affairs at the Brussels headquarters of the Nazi security service, was sentenced to seven years in prison for his part in the murder of Belgian and French Jews.

**Hanover.** In April 1981 former police officer Leopold Puradt was acquitted of murdering Polish Jews. In July 1981 former SS member Friedrich-Wilhelm Rex was sentenced to six years in prison for the murder of concentration camp prisoners; co-defendant Alfred Grams was acquitted.

**Stade.** In August 1981 former SS lieutenant Joachim Nehring was acquitted of murdering Jews.

**Dortmund.** In July 1981 former police officer Karl-Wilhelm Kampmann was acquitted of murdering Russian civilians. In December 1982 the retrial of former Nazi district commissioner Wilhelm Westerheide and his former secretary Johanna Zelle ended in their acquittal; they had been charged with murdering Jews.

**Frankenthal.** In January 1982 former SS captain Gustav Richter was sentenced to four years in prison for complicity in the murder of Jews in Rumania.

**Stuttgart.** In February 1982 former SS member Heinrich Hesse was sentenced to 12 years in prison for complicity in the murder of Ukrainian Jews; co-defendant Johann Hermann received a three-year sentence. In August 1983 former SS member Karl Pöhlmann was acquitted of murdering Jewish concentration camp prisoners.

**Traunstein.** In May 1982 former police officer Franz Bauer was sentenced to five and a half years in prison for complicity in the mass murder of Ukrainian Jews; co-defendant Hans Hertel received a three-and-one-half-year sentence.

**Kaiserslautern.** In July 1982 former police captain Hans Heinemann was sentenced to three years in prison for complicity in the murder of Ukrainian Jews.

**Munich.** In November 1983 former Nazi policeman Kurt Hänsel was acquitted of charges of murder.

**Memmingen.** In December 1983 former policeman Josef Jarosch was sentenced to five years and six months in prison for complicity in the murder of Jews. The high court in Düsseldorf ordered the closing of the state's case against Werner Best, former deputy chief of the Nazi security service and Nazi plenipotentiary in Denmark, for reasons of failing health. Best had been charged with complicity in the murder of thousands of Jews.

Former SS captain Richard-Wilhelm Freise committed suicide in his prison cell in Bonn in August 1983; he was facing charges of complicity in the mass murder of French Jews. Former SS staff sergeant Albert Rauca died in a prison hospital in Kassel in October 1983, while awaiting trial for his part in the mass murder of
Lithuanian Jews; he had been extradited to the Federal Republic from Canada in May. In April 1983 United States authorities ordered former SS member Hans Lipschis deported to the Federal Republic; he was suspected of complicity in the murder of Jews in Auschwitz.

The federal constitutional court in Karlsruhe ruled in July 1983 that Nazi convicts serving life sentences could not be denied the right to temporary leave on parole under circumstances of old age or illness. The ruling involved a former SS medical aide in Auschwitz and the commander of a Nazi special operations unit in Russia, who had been sentenced, respectively, in 1965 and 1976. Their pleas had earlier been turned down by the Hesse justice minister and a lower court on account of the nature of their crimes.

**Restitution**

September 1982 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the reparations agreement between West Germany and the State of Israel; East Germany, on the other hand, refused even to discuss the matter. As of January 1, 1983 West German reparation and indemnification programs had disbursed DM 68 billion. Of that total, DM 54.2 billion had come under the federal indemnification law; DM 3.9 billion under the federal restitution law; DM 3.4 billion under the reparations pact with Israel; and DM one billion under agreements with 12 different countries. DM 292 million had been set aside for the settlement of hardship cases; probable future payments were likely to reach DM 17.8 billion.

**Foreign Affairs**

Serious domestic controversy arose over the issue of German arms sales to Arab countries. While the SDP-FDP government had decided against such sales, Chancellor Kohl, during his visit to Saudi Arabia in fall 1983, promised to sell weapons to the Saudis. Kohl claimed that offensive weapons would not be included in the prospective deal and that Saudi Arabia in any case would not use West German arms against the State of Israel. Needless to say, Israel was outraged by Kohl's decision. Official United States circles reportedly asked the West German government to cancel the project, and there were indications that it might, indeed, do so.

The West German government continued to deny full diplomatic status to the PLO, while calling for mutual recognition between the Palestinian group and the State of Israel. The Federal Republic welcomed U.S. president Ronald Reagan's Middle East peace initiative; it also had praise for an eight-point Saudi peace program and the decisions taken at the Arab summit meeting in Fez. The West German government sharply condemned Israeli military intervention in Lebanon and called for the speedy withdrawal of Israeli troops.

In a public opinion poll, 52 per cent of the respondents favored German arms sales to Saudi Arabia, while 33 per cent were opposed. In the same poll, 56 per cent of
the respondents said that the Palestinians had the right to a state. On the Middle East conflict, 24 per cent of the respondents sided with the Arabs, while 21 per cent backed Israel.

Relations with Israel

German-Israeli relations were severely shaken in 1981 and 1982, but improved somewhat in 1983. A low point was reached in fall 1982, following the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in Beirut. The West German government found much to criticize: Israeli settlement policy in the occupied areas; the Israeli bombing of the nuclear reactor in Baghdad; Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights; the Israeli attitude on Palestinian autonomy; and Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's statements with regard to the PLO, as well as those that he made in connection with his visit to Saudi Arabia early in 1981, were strongly criticized by Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, who made blunt reference to Germany's Nazi past and Schmidt's service as an army officer during World War II. Begin's attacks, in turn, drew unanimous sharp criticism from West German political parties and the news media. CDU leader Kohl, then in the opposition, deplored the "shocking deterioration" in German-Israeli relations. Referring to Prime Minister Begin's declaration that he would not shake hands with a German who had taken part in Hitler's war, Kohl said that this was perhaps understandable in the light of Begin's personal history, but it was hardly statesmanlike. The CDU leader declared that German friendship for Israel could not be taken to imply unconditional approval of all Israeli policies.

Thousands of West Germans participated in public demonstrations against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that were organized, for the most part, by German leftist groups and Arab agitators; the demonstrators denounced Israel's "war of annihilation" and "genocidal policy." Right- and left-wing extremists asserted that Israel was aiming at a "final solution of the Palestine question." Even the Union of Anti-Fascists, a leftist group made up of Jewish victims of Nazism and anti-Nazi resistance fighters, demanded that Israel "stop [its] genocide in Lebanon." Former West Berlin mayor Heinrich Albertz said that no German who was critical of what the Nazis had done could remain silent in the face of events in Lebanon.

The Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft (DIG, German Society for Israel) and Jewish groups publicly deplored one-sided reports and tendentious anti-Israel comments that appeared in the news media. Particular shock was expressed about the frequent equation of Israeli military operations and the Nazi actions linked to the "final solution." With rare exceptions, West German media coverage of events in Lebanon, particularly on television, provided the occasion for unrelenting condemnation of Israeli policy.

Despite setbacks in political relations, German-Israeli programs of cooperation in the industrial, agricultural, and scientific sectors continued to move ahead. In July
1983 the German-Israeli economic commission agreed on a number of agricultural research and exchange projects. Israeli science minister Yuval Ne’eman, visiting West Germany in October 1983, praised the “epochal role” of scientific cooperation in German-Israeli relations; over the period of a decade, more than 600 German and Israeli scientists had worked together on joint projects. In December 1983, Paul Piazolo, secretary of state at the West German ministry of education and science, went to Israel to discuss joint activities.

The volume of trade between the Federal Republic and Israel rose from DM 2.8 billion in 1981 to DM 2.9 billion a year later. The Israeli trade deficit rose to DM 873 million in 1982, 26 per cent more than in 1981. Israeli products were displayed at a number of trade fairs in the Federal Republic; Israeli publishers were represented at the international book fair in Frankfurt.

An agreement on cooperation was signed by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Heidelberg University; agreements had earlier been concluded between the Hebrew University and German universities in Göttingen, Frankfurt, Freiburg, and West Berlin. Tel Aviv University and Munich University agreed to work together in the area of scientific research; the Israeli institute was already involved in joint projects with the Max Planck Institute of Sciences and the Institute of German History. A tripartite agreement on research cooperation was signed by the Haifa Technion, the Technical University of Aachen, and the Nuclear Research Institute of Jülich.

A total of 111,400 West German tourists visited Israel in 1983, as compared to 159,000 in 1981 and 107,000 in 1982.

The city of Jerusalem conferred the honorary title “Friend of Jerusalem” on Berlin publisher Axel Springer. The Hebrew University bestowed an honorary doctorate on SPD representative Herbert Wehner, who had labored for many years to promote German-Israeli reconciliation and cooperation. Tel Aviv University conferred a similar award on Cologne mayor Norbert Burger.

Yad Vashem bestowed the title “Righteous Gentile” on a number of German citizens who had rescued Jews during the Nazi era: Charlotte Oewerdieck; Erhard Oewerdieck (posthumously); Mathias Niessen; Josef Niessen (posthumously); Joseph Neyses; Hilde Neyses (posthumously); George Ufer; Elli Fullmann; Hans Hartmann (posthumously); Alfred Battel (posthumously); Gustav Nikulai; Maria Haardt; Herbert Haardt; Baroness Maimi Celina von Mirbach; Hans Seidel (posthumously); Esther Seidel; Max Kohl (posthumously); and Michael Jovy.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

On January 1, 1983 the 66 local Jewish communities in the Federal Republic and West Berlin had 28,202 members—14,450 males and 13,752 females. A year later the
communities registered 28,100 members—14,500 males and 13,600 females. An additional 25,000 unregistered Jews were thought to be living in the Federal Republic.

The largest Jewish communities, as of January 1, 1984, were West Berlin with 6,500 members (40 per cent of whom were recent arrivals from the Soviet Union); Frankfurt with 4,200; Munich with 3,800; Dusseldorf with 1,720; Hamburg with 1,640; and Cologne with 1,280.

Communal Activities

The various problems facing Jews in the Federal Republic today were debated at the annual meeting of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany) in October. Key items on the agenda were the growth of neo-Nazi tendencies and the marked increase in hostility toward Jews resulting from Middle East developments. Alarm was expressed over the failure of the older Jewish generation in the country to pass on Jewish identity and knowledge to younger German Jews. It was hoped that the Central Council's College for Jewish Studies in Heidelberg could help fill the gap in the area. The Central Council's sixth youth and culture conference, which was held in Stuttgart in November 1983, focused on the issues of assimilation and mixed marriage. More than 100 youngsters attended the gathering.

Central Council representatives held numerous meetings with German politicians and trade union leaders to discuss a broad array of issues. Chancellor Kohl expressed satisfaction over the "excellent nature of the dialogue" between the government and the Central Council. Werner Nachmann, chairman of the organization, was elected head of the political commission of the World Jewish Congress—European section. In this capacity he met with Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreou to discuss the situation of Jews in Greece, as well as Greek-Israeli relations. Central Council delegates to the World Jewish Congress gathering in Stockholm in May 1983 refused to attend a meeting with Swedish prime minister Olaf Palme because he had earlier held talks with PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

The fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and forty-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht were commemorated at special meetings and religious services that included the participation of leading figures in German life. In a number of West German towns and villages memorial plaques and stones were unveiled honoring the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

Leading Israeli figures participated in the opening meetings of the 1983 Keren Hayesod/United Israel Appeal fundraising campaign. The hundredth anniversary of the establishment of B'nai B'rith in Germany was celebrated in June 1983. In October of the same year, a Jewish Musical Theater Association was set up in West Berlin.

Rabbi Nathan Levinson of Heidelberg was elected chairman of the Conference of Rabbis in the Federal Republic, succeeding Rabbi Emil Davidovic. Rabbi Henry
Brandt was inducted as rabbi of the Jewish community in Hanover and the Jewish communities in the state of Lower Saxony. A new Jewish community center was opened in Brunswick; a home for the aged was established in Munich.

The Bundesverband Jüdischer Studenten in Deutschland (BJSD, National Union of Jewish Students) held its annual conference in Aachen in January 1985. Joram Hess was reelected chairman; Michael Arnon was the vice-chairman. Delegates complained about the lack of participation of Jewish youth in organizational activities. The BJSD, which had branches in eight university towns, sought to promote Jewish awareness and knowledge among its members; it also conducted information campaigns on Jewish and Israeli affairs, and coordinated Jewish student activities on a national level.

In 1983 the BJSD published another issue of *Cheschbon*, a periodical magazine. It also organized a series of seminars: on the presentation of Jews and Israel in the West German media, in Düsseldorf; on Jewish identity in the aftermath of the Holocaust, in Sobernheim; on Jewish student activities, in Munich; and on Jewish responses to political emancipation, in Heidelberg.

Some 300 young Jews from the Federal Republic, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Switzerland participated in a seminar on Israel-Diaspora relations that was arranged by the Central Welfare Agency of Jews in Germany in May 1983.

Makkabi Deutschland, the Jewish sports organization in the Federal Republic, sent several dozen athletes to compete in the European Maccabi games in Antwerp, Belgium, in July 1983; German-Jewish competitors won one gold and four bronze medals. Jakob Nussbaum was reelected president of Makkabi Deutschland; Peter Guttman and Henry Majngarten served as vice-presidents. Makkabi Deutschland had nine local branches, with a total membership of 2,200.

In November 1982 Rashi House in Worms was opened after its complete restoration; it was to serve as an international gathering place for Christians and Jews, as well as a research center and Jewish museum. In September 1982, Literaturhandlung opened its doors in Munich as the first Judaica bookstore in post-World War II Germany. A Society for the Promotion of Jewish Culture and Tradition was also established in Munich. A Society of German Friends of the Leo Baeck Institute was established in Bonn. A Raoul Wallenberg Action Committee was formed in Düsseldorf at the end of 1982.

A brochure on “Jewish Collections in German Libraries” was prepared by Jutta Bohnke-Kollwitz, director of Germania Judaica in Cologne; Peter Freimark, director of the Institute on the History of German Jews in Hamburg; and Martin Seiler, librarian at the Jewish section of the Frankfurt Municipal and University Library. The largest collections were those of the Frankfurt Municipal and University Library (80,000 volumes); Germania Judaica (28,000); the Martin Buber Institute at Cologne University (25,000); the Bavarian State Library (24,000), and the Tübingen University Library (20,000).
Christian-Jewish Cooperation

German criticism of Israeli policies and the growth of anti-Jewish sentiment in the context of Middle East developments seriously marred Christian-Jewish relations in the period 1981-1983. There was a reduced Christian readiness for dialogue, and this, in turn, fueled Jewish distrust and fear. Archbishop Joseph Höffner, head of the Catholic church in West Germany, urged that dialogue be continued, "even if this will not be easy for obvious reasons known to us all." Bishop Eduard Lohse, chairman of the council of the Evangelical church in the Federal Republic, asked that "we may meet again in growing trust, and cooperate for the benefit of this country."

Problems of Christian-Jewish coexistence were examined at the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews, which was headquartered in Heppenheim. In conjunction with the American Jewish Committee, the University of Duisburg, and the University of Freiburg, the International Council convened a meeting of religious educators in April 1983 that examined manifestations of anti-Judaism in religious textbooks. "Jews in Christian Religious School Lessons" was the subject of an international symposium at the Evangelical Academy in Arnoldshain. The Walberberger Institute near Cologne, in conjunction with the German Coordinating Council of Christian-Jewish Associations, organized a symposium on "Yiddish: Mother Tongue of Jews in Eastern Europe." The Catholic Academy of Aachen and the Evangelical Academy of Arnoldshain held a joint symposium on aspects of Christian-Jewish dialogue. The Evangelical Academy in West Berlin and the Berlin Historical Commission convened an international conference dealing with the historical connections between Germans, Jews, and Poles. The Academy of Science and Literature in Mainz held an international symposium on Franz Kafka. The 1983 "Berlinale," the international art and film festival held in West Berlin, paid special tribute to former German actors and actresses who had been forced to flee from the country during the Nazi era.

"Worshippers and Rebels: History and Culture of East European Jewry" was the theme of West German brotherhood week in 1981. In conjunction with brotherhood week, the German Coordinating Council of Christian-Jewish Associates awarded the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal for 1981 to Yiddish author Isaac Bashevis Singer. The 1982 Buber-Rosenzweig Medal went to German-born Israeli author and philosopher Schalom Ben-Chorin, who was praised for his pioneer work on behalf of Christian-Jewish and German-Israeli understanding. Brotherhood week in 1983 focused on "Resisting at the Right Time," and the Coordinating Council's award was given to Helene Jacobs, a Christian woman in Berlin, who had been imprisoned for anti-Nazi activities. At its 1983 annual meeting, the Coordinating Council reelected as joint chairmen Father Willehad Eckert, Rabbi Nathan Levinson, and Reverend Martin Stöhr. West Berlin rabbi Ernst Stein gave a speech on "Christian-Jewish Cooperation after the Lebanon War" in which he pleaded for a resumption of Christian-Jewish dialogue.
A growing number of West German cities and towns invited former Jewish citizens living abroad to return to their places of origin for free visits; thousands did so, traveling to West Berlin, Bonn, Frankfurt, Marburg, Essen, Tübingen, St. Wendel, Hohenlimburg, Emden, Mannheim, Hameln, Meinerzhagen, Hadamar, Giessen, Düsseldorf, Ulm, Stuttgart, and other cities.

In May 1983 the Bavarian town of Murnau commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Jewish art collector and philanthropist James Loeb. A new memorial was unveiled in Erlangen in tribute to Jakob Herz, who had lived there until his death in 1871; the original memorial, established in Herz's honor in 1875, had been destroyed by the Nazis. A statue and plaque in memory of Albert Einstein were unveiled at the site of his birthplace in Ulm. A Jewish museum was opened by the Frankfurt municipality, with Berlin Jewish historian Andreas Nachtma appointed as director; the museum contained a valuable collection of Judaica that had been assembled by Berlin Jewish educator and art collector Siegfried Baruch, who died in 1970.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Ernst Strassmann Foundation arranged an international seminar on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and its aftermath that was attended by German, Israeli, and Polish scholars, among them Czeslaw Pilichowski, head of the Polish state commission on the prosecution of Nazi crimes, and Israel Gutman, director of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. A West German state memorial to the victims of Nazism was unveiled at the site of the former Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen in Austria in November 1983. The memorial site at Dachau concentration camp was visited by 924,000 people in 1983, a record number.

Several Germans who had aided persecuted Jews during the Nazi period were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross of the Federal Order of Merit: Elisabeth Wust; Susanne Witte; Gerda Charlotte-Wasilke; Stefan Kubicek; Helene Reimann; Käthe Hauschild; Elisabeth Flügge; Paul Wossmann; Maria Lahusen; and Anny Kreddig.

Publications


**Personalia**

Werner Nachmann, chairman of the board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, received the Great Service Cross with star and ribbon, the highest distinction the Federal Republic can bestow.

The Great Service Cross of the Federal Order of Merit was awarded to Ida Ehre, actress and stage producer, living in Hamburg; Elias Canetti, author and Nobel laureate, living in Great Britain; Eva Reichmann, historian and author, living in Great Britain; Yeruham Meshel, former secretary-general of the Histadrut in Israel; Schalom Ben-Chorin, German-born Jerusalem author and philosopher, who also received the Medal of Honor in gold of the city of Munich; Akiba Hoffmann, chairman of the Israeli organization of Jews from Central Europe; and Adi Amorai, Knesset member and chairman of the Israel Public Council on Youth Exchange.

The Federal Service Cross was awarded to Hans Rosengold, chairman of the Jewish community in Regensburg; Blandine Ebinger, actress, living in Berlin; Carolina Künstler, active in Christian-Jewish cooperation, living in Munich; Hans Rosenthal, popular television and radio personality, living in Berlin; Isaak Behar, representative of Makkabi Deutschland for many years, living in Berlin; Raphael Schier, chairman of the Jewish community in Bonn; Heinz Bleicher, chairman of the Jewish community in Wuppertal; Wilhelm Tichauer, chairman of the Jewish community in Bad Kreuznach; and Simon Snopkowski, president of the union of Jewish communities in Bavaria.

Israeli citizens who received the Federal Service Cross for promoting German-Israeli understanding were Avraham Bar-Menachem, former mayor of Netanya; Meir Faerber, German-born author; Inge Lunger, chief librarian at Tel Aviv’s Goethe Institute; Henny Reyersbach; Gad Golinski; Mira Avrech; Francis Ofner; Joseph Canaan; Zwi Schulman; Chaim Haberfeld; Herson Cohn; Yohanan Ortar; Meir Viskoop; Uri Aloni; and Assaf Fraenkel.

The West German Booksellers Union awarded its Peace Prize for 1983 to Galician-born author Manès Sperber, living in Paris; Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher praised Sperber as “a pragmatical optimist” who encouraged efforts on behalf of peace, a united Europe, and the defense against tyranny. The Karl Jaspers Prize of Heidelberg University was awarded to Lithuanian-born philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, living in Paris. The Ruhr city of Mulheim awarded its 1983 prize for drama to Hungarian-born George Tabori. The city of West Berlin presented its highest distinction, the Ernst Reuter Medal, to actress
Elisabeth Bergner. Hilde Domin, lyric poet and author, living in Heidelberg, received the Nelly Sachs Prize of the city of Dortmund. Bar Ilan University in Israel bestowed an honorary doctorate on Heinz Galinski, chairman of the Jewish community in West Berlin. The Free University in West Berlin bestowed an honorary doctorate on Professor Yakov Malkiel of the University of California, Berkeley. The municipality of Oldenburg presented its children’s book award for 1983 to Michael Brenner, for his documentation of the history of Jews in the Bavarian community of Weiden. The West German athletic organization presented its Medal of Honor to German-born Gretel Lambert, of New York, who had been ousted from the German team at the 1936 Berlin Olympics on racial grounds.

Professor Herbert Weichmann, leading SPD politician, former mayor of Hamburg, and president of the upper house of the West German parliament in 1968–1969, died in Hamburg on October 9, 1983, aged 87.

Friedo Sachser
In the entire German Democratic Republic (DDR) there were less than 600 registered Jews in eight communities—about 200 in East Berlin, 70-75 in Dresden, 50 in Leipzig, and smaller groupings in Halle, Karl Marx-Stadt, Magdeburg, Mecklenburg/Schwerin, and Erfurt. Most Jews were quite elderly, making further population shrinkage inevitable.

The Jewish community received financial aid from the DDR, which also provided funds for the maintenance of more than 100 Jewish cemeteries. Since the end of World War II, new synagogues had been erected in Magdeburg, Erfurt, and Karl Marx-Stadt; synagogues in other towns had been restored.

Helmut Aris, president of the Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden der DDR (Federation of Jewish Communities in the German Democratic Republic), turned 75 in 1983. State and Communist party chief Erich Honecker praised Aris for laboring for more than two decades to spread an awareness among Jews that antisemitism had been completely uprooted in the DDR.

Guests of the East German Jewish community during the year included an American B’nai B’rith delegation headed by David Blumberg and Warren Eisenberg, and Jerusalem Post correspondent Meir Merhav.

The deportation of thousands of Berlin Jews to Auschwitz in February 1943 was commemorated at a public meeting in East Berlin that was attended by representatives of the state, the Communist party, anti-Nazi resistance groups, and members of the Jewish community. The state and the Jewish community also commemorated the forty-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht in November. In connection with the latter event, Klaus Gysi, state secretary for church affairs, sent a message to Aris which read in part: “Since the soldiers of the Soviet Union liberated us from fascism, we have been determined to preserve the legacy of the dead through our exertions for a humane world in all future times.” Günther Grewe, an official of the church affairs section of the DDR national council, wrote to Aris: “We pay homage to all those who lost their lives under fascist barbarity ... We must dedicate our action, speech, and thought to the promotion of human justice and preservation of peace.”

An exhibit, “Yellow Star in Austria,” was put on display at Humboldt University in East Berlin. The materials had initially been assembled by Vieninese university professor Kurt Schubert on behalf of the Jewish museum in Eisenstadt, Austria.

In June former SS lieutenant Heinz Barth was sentenced to life in prison by an East Berlin court for taking part in Nazi massacres. In November former Nazi policemen Karl Neumann, Erich Mettke, and Josef Böhle were given life sentences by a court in Schwerin for their roles in mass murders in Poland and Russia.
Government spokesmen and the news media continued to denounce Israel, lining up solidly behind the Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organization. There were claims in the press that Israel was preparing a military assault on Syria. 

_Bauernecho_, organ of the DDR farmers union, railed:

The hypocrisy shown by the Israeli expansionists knows no limits. Only recently they committed barbarian aggression against Lebanon under the camouflage of security protection, murdering tens of thousands of peaceful citizens and occupying the biggest part of this sovereign state. Now they are whetting their knives against Syria. . . . When the Israelis cover Arab land with fire and sword, everyone knows that Washington put the sword into their hands. Strategic cooperation between Washington and Tel Aviv has already resulted in untold victims among the Arab peoples. . . . Syria does not stand alone. Arab patriots, the Socialist countries, and all those cherishing peace stand by its side.

_Friedo Sachser_