Federal Republic of Germany

National Affairs

Federal elections held on January 25, 1987, after a calm and relatively uneventful campaign, produced no great surprises. The ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) dropped by about 3 percent to 37.5 percent of the vote; their coalition partner, the Free Democrats (FDP), increased by about 2 percent to 10 percent. On the opposition side, the Social Democrats (SPD) dropped one percentage point to 38 percent; and the Greens went up 3 percent to 8 percent. Some right-wing parties, such as the neo-Nazi National Democratic party (NPD), also increased their shares somewhat, but were far from getting any of their candidates elected.

Following the elections, Hans-Dietrich Genscher's FDP was prepared to form another coalition with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's CDU/CSU (Christian Social Union). Even before that, the party's leadership had decided to make concessions to the CDU/CSU, in particular, support for a crown's-witness statute offering reduced penalties to defendants in terrorist trials who were willing to testify against associates. Following the elections, the FDP also agreed to the imposition of criminal penalties for wearing masks at public demonstrations (by persons seeking to remain unidentifiable). Both concessions were decided on against strong opposition by the FDP's rank and file and under strong pressure from the CDU/CSU.

A major scandal that shook the country was the Barschel affair in Schleswig-Holstein. Premier Uwe Barschel was accused of conducting a "dirty tricks" electoral campaign against his political opponents. He was later found a suicide, albeit under mysterious circumstances, in a Geneva hotel. This and other scandals tarnished the image of the CDU/CSU party, and Chancellor Kohl was reelected party chairman with the lowest number of votes he had ever received. The party financing scandal (see AJYB 1988, vol. 88, p. 317), continued this year with court verdicts announced against top-ranking figures in business and government, including former Flick manager Eberhard von Brauchitsch, Hans Friderichs, and Count Lambsdorff, the former federal economics minister. The three were convicted of tax fraud and sentenced to payments of high penalties.

The Social Democrats (SPD) experienced two losses in 1987. First was the defeat of their candidate for chancellor, Johannes Rau, premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, in the federal elections. Second was the resignation of Willy Brandt, who had chaired the party for 23 years, in response to protests against some of his appointments. The new executive presented a more leftist image of the party, especially with Oskar Lafontaine, premier of the Saarland, as vice-chairman. This opening to the
left involved greater sensitivity to ecological and women's issues and a willingness to deal with the alternative and Green-oriented movements.

The Green party continued to be divided by conflict between "Realists" and "Fundamentalists" in the party—the latter representing a hardline, more traditionally leftist position, the former advocating a closer working relationship with others, especially with the Social Democrats. One issue dividing the factions was the party's attitude to Israel. In the early 1980s, under the leadership of Jürgen Reents and the Fundamentalists, the party issued strong condemnation and criticism of Israel. In more recent years, however, the party expressed virtually unqualified support for Israel, as a result of efforts by Otto Schily and other members of the Realist wing in the party, which also made a number of moves toward closer relations with the Jewish leadership in the Federal Republic. In light of the continuing divisiveness, which had never been as bitter as this year, the party scheduled a crisis meeting in mid-December. The consensus was to seek cooperation and consolidation of the warring factions.

The economy, while slow overall, was relatively healthy, with record foreign-trade figures; however, the crisis in the steel industry worsened. There was serious unrest in the Ruhr and numerous strikes, especially by Thyssen steelworkers whose Duisburg-Rheinhausen steel plant was slated to be closed down, with a projected loss of 30,000 jobs. Negotiations between the DGB (German Federation of Unions) and the CDU government were largely unsuccessful. The government did, however, agree to subsidize the steel industry with DM 150,000, with the help of state and European Community (EC) funds.

CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUES

Overall, 1987 was not a good year for civil rights. While the state of Hamburg was the first in the Federal Republic to drop the Berufsverbot legislation barring leftists from civil- service jobs, the Bavarian government drafted legislation requiring mandatory AIDS tests for civil-service applicants, citizens from non-EC countries, and prisoners. Also in Bavaria, a court rejected the demand for a plebiscite on Wackersdorf, site of a highly contested nuclear plant, and there were regular reports that local citizens opposed to this project were being intimidated by police and local officials. A large demonstration at that site in September encountered massive police brutality, especially by a special crack unit brought in from West Berlin. The shooting of two policemen trying to break up a demonstration at a Frankfurt airport construction site in turn reinforced demands for greater limitations on the right to demonstrate.

Another major issue was the national census, with opponents concerned about confidentiality and the possibility that the data might be pooled with those in police computers. Despite the threat of severe penalties, an estimated 1 to 3 percent of the population boycotted the census, refusing to answer questions. In West Berlin, where both the opposition and police response were particularly strong, on May 1
police raids related to anticensus activities triggered riots. There was also some opposition in the Jewish community. While the Central Council of Jews in Germany had specifically endorsed inclusion of the question on religious affiliation, many other Jews opposed it, recalling that it was through the Nazi censuses that Jews had become easily identifiable targets. The boycott activities of the Jüdische Gruppe Berlin, a group that considered itself in critical opposition to the organized community, led to an official decision permitting Berlin Jews not to answer the question on religion. In addition, many of the court proceedings against Jewish boycotters were eventually dropped.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS; EAST GERMANY

In 1987 the Kohl government continued its overtures toward Eastern Europe and its efforts to ease Soviet-West German relations. In early July, President Richard von Weizsäcker and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher visited the USSR, the first in a series of planned mutual visits. In the course of the meetings, a number of agreements were ratified, including a memorandum concerning scientific-technical cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Soviet Union. Although the Germans were received in a somewhat cool and businesslike manner, and the mission was considered to have been a difficult one, it was seen, in the end, as a great success for von Weizsäcker.

In December President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed the INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces) treaty that involved the destruction of all American and Soviet medium-range missiles. In West Germany, as elsewhere in Europe, there was considerable opposition to the proposed disarmament moves. While the more liberal forces in the coalition supported the initiative, it was surely with considerable reluctance that, at the beginning of May, Chancellor Kohl wrote to President Reagan to express support for the INF treaty. As A. Mechtersheimer, Green party defense expert, put it in a parliamentary debate on December 10, "The government boasts about a treaty that it was unable to stop."

In early September, East German leader Erich Honecker came to the Federal Republic on a five-day visit that had been planned originally in 1984 and been postponed several times due to disagreements between the two German governments. While Honecker's visit did not change the basics of East-West German relations—indeed, both sides reiterated their traditional positions—it did bring about a considerable improvement in the climate between the two countries. Other officials of the Federal Republic and the GDR exchanged visits as well during the year.

These improvements had no influence, however, on the frosty relations surrounding the status of West Berlin. On the occasion of Berlin's 750th anniversary, Honecker turned down an invitation from Lord Mayor Diepgen to come to West Berlin, and Diepgen in turn, some weeks later, decided not to visit the eastern part of the city. Visitors to West Berlin's anniversary celebrations included the heads of
state of the three major Western allies—Queen Elizabeth II, President Reagan, and President François Mitterrand. President Reagan's presence caused major protests and riots, which were exacerbated by the repressive measures taken by local officials, including summarily closing off main arteries of the borough of Kreuzberg from the remainder of the city. In his public remarks, Reagan called on General Secretary Gorbachev to “tear down the Wall” and proposed holding the Olympic Games in both parts of the divided city.

**Relations with Israel**

The most important event in German-Israeli relations this year was Israeli president Chaim Herzog's five-day visit to Bonn, beginning April 6. This visit, publicly endorsed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir but opposed, on historical grounds, by many members of his own Likud party, reciprocated President von Weizsäcker's visit to Israel in 1985. Herzog was received with full military honors, and the German president described the visit as an exceptional event in the history of the two peoples. Herzog visited, among other places, Bergen-Belsen (which he had last seen only a few days after the camp's liberation in 1945), Berlin (with stops at the Jewish community headquarters and the memorial to resistance fighters at Plötzensee), and the Worms synagogue and cemetery, the oldest Jewish burial ground in Europe.

Herzog's visit was preceded by yet another internal controversy over proposed arms shipments by the FRG to Saudi Arabia. In the course of debate on the matter, Bavarian premier Franz-Josef Strauss criticized Israel and claimed that Germany had a special responsibility to “think about Israel and its problems.” In his view, Saudi Arabia was a moderate Arab country, as such in a position to help integrate Israel into the Middle East, and therefore should be supported with arms shipments in order to help it realize a stabilizing role in the region. These statements aroused considerable criticism and protest in all parties, particularly in the opposition Social Democratic and Green parties.

The Israeli minister of agriculture made a visit to West Germany in February and two follow-up visits later in the year. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres came to Bonn at the end of June, reiterating his call for a Middle East peace conference, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin arrived in September to discuss both military cooperation between the two countries and arms shipments to the Middle East. Chief German participants in the talks were Defense Minister Manfred Wörner, Franz-Josef Strauss, premier of Bavaria, and Foreign Minister Genscher. A highly publicized visit to Israel by a Green party delegation sought to counteract the negative effects of another Green party delegation three years earlier that had voiced extremely strong criticism of Israel.
Neo-Nazism and Anti-Semitism

The continued growth of the extreme Right was clearly discernible in 1987. It could be seen in the annual report of the German secret service as well as in frequent newspaper accounts of trials of the new breed of young neo-Nazis who belonged to recently formed organizations that demanded a new order for Europe and opposed its present borders. Prominent among these groups was the Gemeinschaft Deutscher Osten/Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), founded in 1981, which was attempting to recover the eastern territories and considered itself a government in exile.

Two surveys of attitudes of German youth confirmed the existence of rightist trends. In one, which became the subject of a hearing in the Baden-Württemberg parliament, 13 percent of respondents thought that Nazism was a good idea, badly executed, and 32.9 percent thought that all talk about the murder of Jews should stop. Another study of German youth (aged 16–17) and neo-Nazism, conducted in Bielefeld (Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Rechtsextremistische Orientierungen bei Jugendlichen, Juventa Verlag), found that about 40 percent inclined to violence and power, favored inequality, and agreed with the concept of biological superiority; nevertheless, few appeared interested in joining radical groups. In addition, 44 percent wanted foreigners out of the Federal Republic, and 24 percent thought that, except for the action taken against Jews, Nazism was good.

Government policies toward neo-Nazism tended to be contradictory. The right-leaning, conservative federal interior minister, Friedrich Zimmermann, for example, decided not to ban the neo-Nazi Freiheitliche Arbeiterpartei (FAP). He and some of his colleagues expressed openly racist attitudes toward foreign workers and those seeking political asylum from Third World countries, while warmly welcoming Eastern European immigrants of "German descent." Similarly, despite protests by Jewish representatives, a high federal court acquitted a right-wing lawyer for making anti-Jewish statements. In his defense of an SS leader in the Warsaw ghetto, the lawyer, Jürgen Rieger, had claimed, among other things, that with even a minimum of solidarity among themselves, the Jews living in the ghetto could have avoided hunger and disease. He also asserted that the killings were carried out solely as measures to contain epidemics.

On the other hand, a number of neo-Nazi activists were convicted by lower courts, which sentenced them to substantial fines and jail terms. Moreover, when a DVU candidate won an election in Bremen, a statement denouncing this neofascist splinter group was published by labor unions, churches, and immigrant/foreigner groups. Similarly, when an anti-Semitic campaign was directed at a Jewish physician, Dr. Kiesel, in the Hessian town of Gedern, the magistrate of the city and the city council supported him and offered a reward for information about those responsible for the hate campaign. Many neo-Nazi meetings were sabotaged or demonstrated against by anti-Nazi coalitions, often composed of groups with Social-Democratic and Green leanings. In Schlüchtern (Hesse), 1,500 people demonstrated outside a meeting attended by 40 neo-Nazis.
Demography

As of January 1, 1988, the 65 local Jewish communities in the Federal Republic and West Berlin had a total of 27,612 members—14,017 males and 13,595 females. (Comparative figures for 1987 and 1986, respectively, were: 27,533—13,998 males and 13,535 females; 27,538—13,990 males and 13,548 females.) The age distribution of registered community members was as follows (the figure in parentheses is for the previous year): 0-15 years—3,668 (3,533); 16-30—4,513 (4,517); 31-40—4,327 (4,269); 41-60—7,067 (7,013); 61-70—3,934 (3,977); and over 70—4,103 (4,224). These figures confirm a trend observable since the early 1980s, namely, a slowing down of the severely overaged character of the population and noticeable increases in the category of young families (the 31-40 age bracket) and in the numbers of young children.

Estimates for Jews not registered with the organized community ranged from the 6,000-8,000 figure of the Central Jewish Welfare Agency (Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden) to the 25,000-30,000 cited by various other sources. Conversions to Judaism (43) were matched by membership cancellations (41). Total losses resulting from deaths (423) and emigration (237) essentially canceled out gains from births (11) and immigration (546). Most of the immigrants came from the USSR and a considerable number from Israel. Many of the Israelis settled in Frankfurt, while most of the Soviet Jews settled in West Berlin. The largest communities were West Berlin (6,132), Frankfurt (4,957), Munich (4,031), Hamburg (1,374), and Cologne (1,278). Together these six communities accounted for about two-thirds of the entire registered Jewish population in the Federal Republic. Many of the smaller communities had no, or only very few, younger Jewish members and were judged likely to disappear completely within the next few decades. All things considered, Jews in the Federal Republic still lacked critical mass. One indication of this was the frequent appeal for the involvement of the younger generation in community work; at the same time, the younger generation was too weak to consolidate and assume an identity of its own—at least inside the community structure. This was exemplified in the self-dissolution of the Federation of Jewish Youth at a January meeting. It was a small group that simply failed to attract new members.

Communal Affairs

Elections to the board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland), held in February, confirmed Werner Nachmann, a businessman from Karlsruhe, as chairman, by a large majority. Max Willner of Offenbach (Hesse), director for many years of the Central Jewish Welfare Agency, and Michael Fürst, a lawyer from Hannover, were elected vice-chairmen.

At meetings in Berlin in December, the council discussed the problem of mixed
marriage, which it saw as a serious threat to the survival of the Jewish Gemeinden (local communities), one that was likely to produce Christian-Jewish rather than Jewish communities. It was pointed out that, especially in the small communities, young people faced considerable difficulty meeting suitable Jewish partners. Many more youth seminars and meetings were needed in order for younger people to meet each other, and it was suggested that young Jews should be encouraged to spend time at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien (College for Jewish Studies) in Heidelberg.

Although the Jewish community in West Germany no longer felt isolated on the international Jewish scene, the council favored greater contact between the various Jewish communities in Europe in order to help keep the Jewish community in Germany "dynamic." Participants in the meetings warned against the revisionist theories of historian Ernst Nolte and others in the "historians' dispute" and urged the council to take a more active role in public debates of this type.

On the occasion of East German leader Erich Honecker's visit to the FRG, Werner Nachmann requested that scholars be granted access to the Central Archive of Jewish History in Germany now located in East Germany. Honecker promised that action would be taken on this request. In another matter, the Central Council was involved in negotiations that resulted in the creation of a final West German reparations fund of DM 5 million. Called Hilfe für Opfer der NS Willkürherrschaft, the monies were intended for those victims of Nazism who to date had not received any assistance.

In Darmstadt a foundation stone was laid for a new synagogue. The idea of rebuilding the synagogue originated in 1984 with non-Jewish citizens and was eventually taken up by the entire city council. In Freiburg a new synagogue was dedicated on November 5, close to the date of the pogrom in 1938 on which the old synagogue was destroyed.

The Central Jewish Welfare Agency of Jews in Germany (Zentralwohlfahrtstelle der Juden in Deutschland, ZWST), which was reestablished in 1951, celebrated its 70th anniversary in 1987. It was generally regarded as the most active, best-financed, and best-organized Jewish welfare and social-service organization in Europe. In terms of youth work, for example, in 1986 the ZWST conducted 13 summer camps with a total of 735 participants; the figure had been rising steadily over the years. The agency's youth department also conducted group Bar/Bat Mitzvah tours to Israel for 13-15-year-olds, twice a year. Two summer-camp sites and resorts, one in Wembach (Southern Black Forest) and the other in Sobernheim/Nahe, were available for younger children and the elderly. The ZWST assisted the major Jewish communities (except for Hamburg, but also including Stuttgart) in running nursery schools, which had a total enrollment of about 460 children. The three largest communities, in turn, also had Jewish day schools at the elementary level, with a total enrollment of almost 300 children. The ZWST awarded 779 student scholarships, up from 688 in 1984. Jewish nursing homes for the elderly in ten German cities served a total of 800 persons.
The ZWST saw as an important task demonstrating its solidarity with the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. On various occasions it assisted the small remaining Jewish community in Poland with kosher food supplies and offered elderly Jews from Czechoslovakia medically supervised vacations in the Federal Republic.

THE JÜDISCHE GRUPPEN

Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, many younger Jewish intellectuals in West Germany voiced public opposition both to the invasion and the support given the Lebanon campaign by official Jewish representatives in the Federal Republic. As a result of threats and reprisals suffered by a number of these individuals—such as being barred from writing in Jewish publications—they joined together, first in small groups in several cities, eventually linking up nationwide and even including like-minded groups in Switzerland and Austria. Numerous meetings were held over the years, many at a retreat near Frankfurt, at the invitation of the Protestant Church; others in West Berlin, Zurich, and Vienna. Originally recruited from graduates of the 1968 student movement, the groups later began to draw younger people as well. While they continued to criticize Israeli policies and to explore ways to enter into dialogue with Palestinians, most of their activities related to the problems of living as Jews in Germany and to questions of neo-Nazism and racism in West German society. Some of Germany's most prominent younger Jewish professors, other intellectuals, and artists belonged to the groups, which had already produced a considerable number of publications, some receiving wide attention. In a few cities, notably Frankfurt, attempts were being made to bring the group closer to the organized Jewish community.

Jewish-Christian Relations

The visit of Pope John Paul II to Germany on April 30, in part to officiate at the beatification of Edith Stein, a Jewish-born Carmelite nun who perished in the Holocaust, highlighted the ongoing controversy in the Catholic Church between conservative and reforming forces, those adhering to traditional anti-Jewish conceptions and those supporting change in Catholic-Jewish relations. Cologne prelate Dr. Jakob Schlafke, who had been promoting Stein's beatification for many years, argued in a television interview that she "died for the infidelity (Unglauben) of the Jewish people." He said, "She sacrificed herself so that Christ would be recognized by all." According to Schlafke, Edith Stein's last will included the following passage, which was an important factor in the drive for her beatification: "I ask the Lord that he may accept my life as atonement for the infidelity of the Jewish people and so that the Lord be accepted by his own [people] and his Kingdom come in eternity." Schlafke argued that while the Church had "deep respect for the faith of the Jews," it of course hoped that the time would come when the Jews recognized Christ. "We
cannot take away,” he said, “the fact that the Christian faith is the fulfillment of
the Jewish faith.”

The Central Council of Jews, whose delegates also had a brief ceremonial meeting
with the pope, questioned Cardinal Höffner, head of the German Conference of
Bishops, about the propriety of Schlafke’s remarks. Höffner responded that Schlafke
was expressing his own personal opinion and did not reflect the views of the cardinal,
who, together with the Catholic Church in Germany, firmly supported the declara-
tion “Nostra Aetate” of the Second Vatican Council. In cordial terms, Höffner also
expressed his hope for a continuation of dialogue with the Jews.

Stein’s American relatives reported that some Jews had tried to discourage them
from coming to Germany to attend the beatification ceremonies. However, Susanne
Batzdorff, a niece who resided in California, indicated that despite some misgivings,
she considered the beatification an attempt by the Church to improve its relations
with the Jews.

On the more positive side of Jewish-Christian relations, this year’s Brotherhood
Week featured the State of Israel as its theme, using as its motto “Suchet der Stadt
Bestes” (Seek the Peace of the City—Jer. 29:7). The Coordinating Council of
Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation awarded its Buber-Rosenzweig
Medal to Neve Shalom, an interfaith Jewish-Arab settlement near Latrun, Israel.
Gertrud Luckner, a non-Jewish former inmate of Ravensbruck concentration camp,
received the Sir Sigmund Sternberg Award for her work in behalf of Christian-
Jewish understanding and her help to Jews under Nazism. The award was presented
by the International Council of Christians and Jews.

The Börneplatz Controversy

In the course of excavations for the new administrative headquarters of Frank-
furt’s municipal gas company, the foundations of the Steinerne Haus, a palatial
Jewish home built in 1717, and a mikveh (ritual bath) dating from 1462 were
unearthed. The construction was taking place at the Börneplatz—named for Ludwig
Börne, an important Jewish writer and contemporary of Heinrich Heine—which
was also the site of the historic Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt. The discoveries raised
questions about whether the original conception for the gas company’s headquarters
should stay unchanged and some of the remains simply be placed into a museum—
as suggested by the city—or whether, as suggested by opposition groups, the plans
should be thoroughly revised in order to preserve the remains in situ. After all, it
was argued, this was the historic home of one of the most important Jewish commu-
nities in the Diaspora.

As discussions proceeded, more foundations were unearthed, mostly those of
more ordinary living quarters of the Judengasse. The new excavations conveyed a
sense of the cramped living conditions in the Jewish quarter before 1811, after which
the Jews were allowed to leave the ghetto and live in other sections of town. (When
the ghetto was razed in 1884, one of Frankfurt’s most important synagogues was
built on the site, together with the square. The Börneplatz synagogue, destroyed on November 9, 1938, was immortalized in one of Max Beckmann’s most famous paintings, while the square was renamed Dominikanerplatz by the Nazis, a name kept until 1977.) A number of people in the Jewish community as well as some non-Jewish intellectuals had been urging for some years that the area be redesigned so as to preserve its historic significance.

In August a group of young opponents of the construction—Jewish and non-Jewish, representatives of the churches, of the SPD, and the Greens—began to occupy the construction site, blocking further work. A few days later they were carried off by police, and construction proceeded virtually without any changes, with the city agreeing merely to preserve the foundations of the mikveh and the Steinerne Haus.

Through all this, the Frankfurt Jewish community was divided. Before construction was even planned, its leaders had demanded that a memorial be built on the site. They had also, however, given permission for the construction to proceed. Once the foundations were excavated, the community tried to reopen the matter; however, when the city administration would not budge, except for the symbolic preservation of a few of the remains, Jewish representatives did not press their case. Without the engagement of the younger Jewish generation, the entire matter would never have become a hotly debated public issue.

**Cultural and Commemorative Events**

Many of the events held in connection with the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the founding of Berlin focused on the important Jewish role in the city. The main anniversary exhibit included a large section on Jewish life, pointing to the presence of Jews in Berlin from its earliest years. The Fasanenstrasse Community Center featured an exhibit titled “Jewish Artists from Eastern Europe.” A Jewish cultural festival (Jüdische Kulturtage) was held for the first time, in June, sponsored and organized by the Jewish community, with lectures, presentations on exiled Jewish writers, and a film retrospective. Other exhibits included one on artist Arthur Segal, originally from Berlin, and another on Jewish life in Berlin, in the Fasanenstrasse center. The villa of the noted Oppenheimer banking family in Berlin featured an exhibit of paintings by Annemarie Oppenheimer, a descendant of the family. The author of the novel *Alexanderplatz* was the subject of “Alfred Döblin as Example: City and Literature.” Another exhibit was devoted to theater director and teacher Max Reinhardt. A public school was renamed the Moses Mendelssohn School.

This year was also the 45th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, at which Nazi leaders planned “the Final Solution.” Participating in a commemoration at the site were Lord Mayor Diepgen and the heads of all political parties. It was decided that the villa, currently a schoolchildren’s resort, would be turned into a museum and study center. A museum was opened on the grounds of the former headquarters of the Gestapo and SS, with an exhibit called “Topography of Terror.” The museum
afforded access to the basement prison cells where victims of Nazism were held and tortured. Another noteworthy exhibit, entitled “T4, 1939-45,” documented the Nazi euthanasia program. It was shown at Tiergartenstrasse 4, the building where the murders were planned. A commemorative exhibit opened at yet another infamous site, that of the Nazi party’s former headquarters for mass events, the Reichsparteitagsgelände, in Nuremberg.

Among many other commemorative events, too numerous to list in their entirety, both Munich and Düsseldorf featured exhibits of art works considered “degenerate” under Nazism (Entartete Kunst). Düsseldorf mounted a show honoring Alfred Flechtheim, a noted art collector and gallery owner in the 1920s. In Osnabrück, deliberations began concerning future use of the Nussbaum villa, built by the parents of Felix Nussbaum, the noted artist who lived in exile in Belgium and was killed in Auschwitz in 1944. The Cologne city archive opened an exhibit on the history of that city’s Jews. Kassel and Frankfurt presented exhibits to mark the occasion of Franz Rosenzweig’s 100th birthday.

Commemorative plaques and monuments were erected at the sites of numerous synagogues in small towns and villages. These were frequently accompanied by the publication of books, written by local teachers and amateur historians, on the history of the Jews in those locales. Such events included, this year, an exhibit on Jewish life in the town of Weiden (Upper Palatinate) and one in Viernheim, a small town near Mannheim. The latter, following the example of other towns, invited former Jewish inhabitants now living in the United States, Israel, and elsewhere, to visit as guests of the town. By contrast, the municipality of Dachau rejected a proposed Memorial and Youth Center, planned at the initiative of Aktion Sühnezeichen (Project Atonement). City officials said, “The CSU in Dachau will fight to the last drop of blood and with all determination against a youth meeting center. With the best of good will, it cannot be expected that we agree to a linkage between our city and the general guilt. Such centers would have to be built in Munich, Nuremberg or Berlin.”

Publications


Among new works on the Holocaust were Elisabeth Endres, Edith Stein. Christ-

In the area of Jewish thought, new works included Aron Ronald Bodenheimer, Wir und die anderen (“We and the Others”); and Henryk M. Broder and H. Recher, eds., Jüdisches Lesebuch 1933–1938 (“Jewish Reader”), texts from the Jüdische Almanach that appeared between 1933 and 1938 in Czechoslovakia. Among other new works of nonfiction were Peter Sichrovsky, Schuldig geboren—Kinder aus Nazifamilien (“Born Guilty—Children from Nazi Families”); Ralph Giordano, Die zweite Schuld oder von der Last Deutscher zu sein (“The Second Guilt, or, About the Burden of Being a German”); and Yohanan Meroz, In schwieriger Mission—Als Botschafter Israels in Bonn (“A Difficult Mission—Ambassador of Israel in Bonn”).


**Personalia**

Ignatz Bubis, executive chairman of the Frankfurt community, member of the administrative council and the board of directors of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, president of the Keren Hayesod and of State of Israel Bonds, board member of a number of Jewish philanthropies, and a member of the Hesse State Rundfunkrat (media supervisory council), was elected to the executive of the Jewish Agency. At a reception hosted by him on his 60th birthday, he announced the establishment of a foundation for the advancement of Jewish education and scholarship, in honor of his parents.

Heinz Galinski, leader of the West Berlin community for 40 years, was made an honorary citizen of West Berlin, the city’s highest distinction, on the occasion of his
75th birthday. In his honor, the Gemeinde established the Heinz Galinski Foundation.

Alisa Ilse Fuss, a retired teacher, was awarded the Ingeborg Drewitz Prize for her work with the International League of Human Rights and her campaigns against racism in the FRG.

Sen. Henry Ehrenberg, long active in German-Israeli relations, was honored with the Great Cross of the West German Order of Merit, on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Philosopher Hans Jonas was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Booksellers' Association. Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson, long active in Jewish-Christian relations, retired this year from his post in Baden.

Fritz Stern, German-born professor (emeritus) of history at Columbia University, New York, delivered an address to the West German parliament on June 17, a national holiday marking the 1953 uprising in East Germany. (Stern's address was reprinted in the New York Review of Books, Dec. 3, 1987.)

Among prominent Jews who died in 1987 were Minna Aron, head of the Recklinghausen Jewish community since 1958, aged 73; Hans Rosenthal, a well-known TV entertainer who survived Nazism as a young orphan by hiding out in summer cottages outside Berlin, aged 62; Jacob Taubes, former professor at the Hebrew University, Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, and since 1966 professor of Judaism and hermeneutics at the Free University of Berlin, aged 64; and Mary Gerold-Tucholsky, in Rottach Egern (Bavaria), aged 89.

Y. Michal Bodemann
German Democratic Republic

Holocaust-Related Issues

The GDR government's current position regarding Germany's Nazi past was reflected in two major events in 1987. In June Rabbi Israel Miller of the Jewish Claims Conference visited Dresden and East Berlin, where he met with the East German head of state, Erich Honecker, to discuss restitution payments by the East German government to Jews who lived or owned property in what is now the German Democratic Republic. Negotiations regarding restitution payments proceeded throughout the year. In contrast to West Germany, the GDR, since its founding in 1949, had refused to make restitution payments to nonresident former Jewish citizens, or to Israel, on the grounds that as the antifascist Germany, it bore no responsibility for crimes committed under Hitler. That attitude had created tensions in the GDR's relations with international Jewish organizations.

Although it was barely noticed outside the GDR, the trial of former Nazi Henry Schmidt received wide publicity within the country. From April 1943 to February 1945, Schmidt served as head of the Dresden Gestapo and SS, in which capacity he organized the deportation of over 700 Dresden Jews. Schmidt disappeared during the bombing of Dresden in February 1945 and lived quietly and unnoticed in Leipzig until his former identity was discovered in April 1986. Many Jews participated in the trial as witnesses. Schmidt was sentenced to life imprisonment (there is no capital punishment in the GDR).

Relations with Israel

Bitter complaints continued to be heard regarding coverage of the Middle East conflict in the East German press. There were still no official ties between the GDR and Israel, but contacts were expected to develop within the foreseeable future. First steps toward the eventual establishment of relations between the two states could be seen in the many visits of Israelis to the GDR. Ari Roth, publisher of the Jerusalem Post, and former minister of the interior and of religion Yosef Burg visited East Berlin in private capacities. Several Israelis were invited to take part in the Protestant Church conferences in East Berlin in June and in Buckow in September; in Buckow the Israelis constituted the largest foreign delegation. Israeli scholars also lectured at smaller events organized by the Jewish community and the Protestant Church. In 1987 the number of East German Jews—especially individuals below retirement age—who visited relatives in Israel was larger than previously, though not all Jews who applied were granted travel permits.
Attitudes Toward Jews

Over the course of the year, popular manifestations of dissatisfaction with the government increased, largely in the form of unauthorized political demonstrations, requests to leave the country, and resignations from the Socialist Unity party. In this atmosphere of growing restlessness, diverse attitudes toward Jews were revealed.

On the one hand, several prominent Jews from within and without the GDR were invited to participate in the Protestant Church's major annual conference in East Berlin in June. The workshops on Christian-Jewish relations were the best attended at the conference, with 700 people registered and at times over 1,000 listeners in the auditorium. On the other hand, Jews both in and out of the Jewish community complained of increasing anti-Semitic harassment, especially from lower-level state and party functionaries and gangs of young men.

A significant anti-Semitic incident took place in East Berlin at the end of the year. A gang of young skinheads burst into a church-sponsored rock concert, shouted Nazi slogans, and began to beat up members of the audience. Jews and antifascists were distressed, first of all, by the violent and racist behavior of members of a generation that had no direct experience of Nazism. They were equally upset by the slow response of the East Berlin police to calls for aid and the light sentences—one to two years—handed the youthful offenders by the courts. As a result of massive protests, largely from within the Socialist Unity party, the sentences were later revised upwards.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

According to the League of Jewish Communities of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), approximately 400 Jews were registered with the GDR's eight organized Jewish communities: around 180 in East Berlin, 50 in Dresden, 40 in Leipzig, 30 in Erfurt, and very small groups in Schwerin, Magdeburg, Halle, and Karl-Marx-Stadt. In all the Jewish communities, after several years of decline, membership was stabilizing, although over half the members were above 65 years of age. An additional 2,000 to 3,000 GDR citizens of Jewish ancestry were not affiliated with any Jewish community. The Jewish community of East Berlin admitted 16 new members in 1987, this being the first gain in membership in several decades. Even with further additions of new members, the long-term outlook would still be affected by the low fertility rate and loss of population—especially of young people—resulting from increased emigration.
**Communal Affairs**

The most dramatic event in the East German Jewish community in 1987 was the arrival of Rabbi Isaac Neuman of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. After four years of negotiations involving the GDR government, the U.S. State Department, and the American Jewish Committee, arrangements were made for an American rabbi to serve in the GDR, where there had been no permanent rabbi since 1965. The East German government agreed to pay the rabbi a salary and to provide him with an apartment and a car. Rabbi Neuman's arrival created much excitement in East Berlin; over 1,000 people, including representatives of the governments and churches of both Berlins, attended his inauguration at the newly renovated and rededicated synagogue on the Rykestrasse. Although friction soon developed between the rabbi and the East Berlin community's board of directors, as a result of the contacts developed during the previous few years, relations between the East German Jewish community and the United States became closer and warmer. Over the course of the year, the community received visits from U.S. deputy foreign minister John Whitehead, Congressman William Lehmann of Florida and five other congressmen, and a delegation of 18 members of the American Jewish Committee. A member of the board of directors of the East Berlin Jewish community traveled to New York to make a film about her childhood in Washington Heights.

A new Jewish group was founded by approximately 150 East Berliners of Jewish or partly Jewish ancestry, most of them between the ages of 25 and 50. Most members of the group had grown up in the militantly atheistic Socialist Unity party—many of them children of party functionaries—and therefore had few ties to traditional Judaism or to the Jewish community. However, they had become interested in learning more about Judaism and getting involved in Jewish life. Working closely with the Jewish community's board of directors, the group sponsored a lecture and discussion series and organized a children's group; in addition, many members attended religious services and holiday celebrations. Despite this cooperative relationship, only about 15 percent of the new group's members had applied to join the Jewish community: for the many who still considered themselves atheists, the narrowly religious orientation and strict admissions procedures were deterrents. But the existence of the group meant that there was now an interested Jewish public around the Jewish community, this public consisting largely of writers, state and party functionaries, intellectuals, and artists, people whose ideas inevitably found their way into the political culture of the East German state.

Outside East Berlin, the seven Jewish communities, with 3 to 50 members each, remained largely wards of the Protestant Church. Besides communal celebrations of the most important holidays, their activity revolved around maintaining the local Jewish cemeteries, setting up commemorations of the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht (now being called Pogromnacht) in November 1988, sponsoring an occasional lecture or concert around a Jewish theme, and representing the Jewish community at events organized by the churches, the Socialist Unity party, and the state. There
were signs of new interest in Judaism among young East Germans and Jews, but, with the exception of Dresden, these small, isolated, and overaged communities maintained a marginal—and sometimes merely administrative—existence.

Particularly important in breaking the isolation of the Jewish community in the GDR was the warming of ties between the Jewish communities of East and West Berlin. The leaders of the two Jewish communities exchanged visits, and the West Berlin community donated a photocopying machine to the East Berlin community. The West Berlin Jewish youth group attended Simhat Torah services in East Berlin, and the West Berlin Jewish dance group performed for the East Berlin Jewish community in December.

Culture

Three major cultural events with Jewish themes took place in East Berlin during the year. The Deutsches Theater staged a new production of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, and the Deutsches Staatsoper performed Arnold Schönberg's *Moses and Aaron*, which had previously been banned in Berlin. Especially significant, for the first time since the founding of the East German state, in January a three-day festival of Yiddish culture, organized by Jalda Rebling and Jurgen Rennert, was held in East Berlin. Another event was the 100th anniversary of the birth of novelist and playwright Arnold Zweig, which was observed with lectures and ceremonies.

Publications

Altogether, 31 new books on themes of Jewish interest were published in the GDR during the year. Among the most noteworthy were the following: *Bronstein's Kinder* ("Bronstein's Children"), a novel by East German Jewish author Jurek Becker about Germans and Jews working through the Nazi past, originally published in West Germany in 1986; *Erkundungen: 20 Erzähler aus Israel* ("Inquiries: 20 Israeli Writers"), edited by Jutta Jahnke, an anthology of short stories by three generations of writers in Israel, translated from Hebrew and Arabic; *Der Gelbe Fleck: Wurzeln und Wirkungen des Judenhasses in der Deutschen Geschichte* ("The Yellow Patch: The Roots and the Effects of Anti-Semitism in German History"), by Rosemarie Schuder and Rudolf Hirsch, the first comprehensive treatment of this theme in the historical literature of the GDR; Theodore Lessing's *Wortmeldungen eines Unerschrockenen: Publizistik aus 3 Jahrzehnten* ("Reports of an Intrepid Inquirer: Three Decades of Essays"); and Arnold Zweig's *Ein Bisschen Blut. Erzählungen* ("A Little Bit of Blood: Short Stories"), a collection of his best short works.

ROBIN OSTOW